

**Proceedings of the U.S.-Swiss Dialogue on
“Whole of Government Approach to Global Development Policy”
Willard Hotel, Washington, DC
December 11, 2009**

As part of a U.S. – Swiss Dialogue series, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Embassy of Switzerland co-hosted an event on December 11, 2009 at the Willard Hotel on the U.S. and Swiss governments' progress to date to create a ‘whole of government’ approach for global development policy to improve results in fragile and conflict situations. This conference provided a forum for debate to increase communication and coordination between leading policymakers and international actors from the United States, Switzerland, and the international community. This half-day conference convened over 100 experts in the field, as well as representatives from the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Defense, USAID, NATO, OECD, World Bank, UN, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to discuss and define a more integrated, streamlined, and efficient structure and policy for global development aid.

Update on the Implementation of the 3C Roadmap

With over 1.2 billion people living in more than 40 countries affected by fragility and conflict, a solid framework and implementation strategy for global development policy is of increasing urgency. In March 2009, the Swiss government organized a conference in Geneva to advance the “3C approach” to encourage a “whole of government” or “whole of system” strategy, stressing the need for a coherent, coordinated, and complementary (3C) approach in order to deal with the challenges of coordinating different actors and stakeholders with the end goal of achieving sustainable development and security.

Switzerland’s Ambassador to the U.S., Urs Ziswiler, noted that the 3C Roadmap represents the first time when representatives from the finance, security, defense, and diplomacy fields have agreed on a common language and a common approach. As the United States seeks to increase interagency collaboration through the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) process, Switzerland also has undertaken efforts to strengthen the coherence of its efforts in the fields of development and diplomacy. Establishing effective coordination must confront the challenge of working with different agencies, actors, and donors that operate within different strategic frameworks with varying priorities, capacities, and experiences, often leading to competition, duplication, and significant gaps.

Christina Hoyos from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation outlined the 3C roadmap’s six key policy recommendations that address these coordination challenges: 1) strengthen national ownership and national capabilities; 2) respond in a

timely and appropriate manner to the evolving situation in the partner country; 3) strengthen mutual accountability of partner countries and international actors; 4) reduce the burden of aid management on partner country capacity; 5) use limited resources efficiently, avoid duplication and funding gaps; 6) and, improve and deepen joint learning and increase response. The greatest challenge, however, lies in the implementation and execution of the 3C roadmap, in capitals and in the field.

Ambassador John Herbst, Coordinator for the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization at the U.S. Department of State (S/CRS), provided a brief overview of how his office was utilizing the principles of the 3C approach on the ground in both the Malakand region of Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In Malakand, the Department of State was leading an international team involving participation from local Pakistani officials, the UN, UK, Japan, Sweden, and other bilateral partners to develop a strategic plan to transform Pakistan's "wish list" of projects into a truly comprehensive and integrated strategic plan. In the Congo, Secretary Clinton's August 2009 trip crystallized five priority areas for collaboration with the DRC government including economic governance, anti-corruption, agriculture and food security, sexual- and gender-based violence, and security sector reform. Teams were set to deploy to consult with senior DRC government officials, civil society groups, NGOs, various UN agencies, bilateral partners, and other key DRC players. These two examples demonstrated that the 3C approach is beginning to pay dividends for the U.S. government as S/CRS is fulfilling its mandate to help connect the expertise of traditional foreign affairs agencies with domestic departments in support of stabilization and reconstruction missions.

Representing NATO's Political Affairs and Security Policy, Eirini Lemos-Maniati aptly stated that military instruments alone are not sufficient to deal with complex crises. NATO seeks to build synergies by working closely with other international actors to become more proactive and less reactive in future contingencies. NATO has undertaken specific actions to adapt its crisis management instruments and mechanisms to better cooperate, thereby enabling the alliance to contribute to a coherent, coordinated, and complementary response to a crisis. NATO recognizes that it needs to better understand the civilian world and in order to do so it must: (1) Plan and conduct operations taking into account all the civilian and military requirements; (2) have adequate staff at HQ and Strategic Commands with the necessary expertise and experience in dealing with complex operations; (3) and, cooperate effectively with international actors, NGOs, partners, and local actors in a structured way rather than an ad hoc or reactive fashion. NATO understands that by being more civilian oriented, it will be militarily stronger. It advocates a comprehensive approach which improves civil-military coordination and ensures "dialogue long before an operation is launched."

In the area of operations planning, NATO is working to improve its methods to take full account of all military and non-military aspects of an engagement, improve the synchronization between NATO HQ and the Command planning processes, and finalize the modalities for the establishment of a database of national expertise in the fields of political reconstruction, stabilization, and media. Communication is another key component to the success of the comprehensive approach, requiring NATO to improve information and analysis sharing and to proactively communicate with a broader range of actors and agencies, not just the media. For NATO, the comprehensive approach

represents a cultural change which will take time. But by working pragmatically within the 3C framework, NATO can solidify its network of coordinated partners to “plug and play” before a crisis even erupts.

National ownership and state legitimacy are key elements to a successful strategy for addressing fragility and the aftermath of conflict, according to Alastair McKechnie from the Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries Group at the World Bank. “The heavy reliance on aid modalities that bypass partner governments continue to undermine state-building and creates long-term dependency.” Indeed, direct local influence over development projects and achieving long-term state legitimacy are mutually reinforcing goals. The World Bank recognizes the importance of finding the balance between short-term stabilization and the longer process of building institutions that enable countries to govern themselves and “not become passive spectators in their development.” In the case of the recent announcements on Afghan security strategy, he noted the significant emphasis on enabling Afghans to manage their own security in the medium-term. But as Mr. McKechnie pointed out, the World Bank sometimes finds itself in situations where development institutions are being asked to fund reconstruction in a country that lacks well conceived political or security components in an integrated strategy. In countries where there are gaps in governance and leadership, one must identify “islands of excellence” that can be constructively engaged. As in the case of Afghanistan, when faced with subnational powerholders of dubious legitimacy, the World Bank found success in “community based approaches.” But as Ambassador Herbst so clearly pointed out, although we must work to develop domestic capacity to ensure an exit strategy, “when the bullets are flying, stabilization is the short term priority.”

Alexandra Trzeciak-Duval, head of the Policy Coordination Division at OECD, stressed the necessity of investing more heavily in joint training, joint planning, and joint assessments, not only between development agencies, but also with their diplomatic and civilian partners. With such a variety of international institutions working on the ground, the excessive number of assessments becomes a huge burden to the host nation as well as to the organization, often resulting in redundant reports. Greater communication and coordination between organizations can eliminate duplication of efforts, while increasing efficiency and maximizing resources and capabilities. In addition to prioritizing joint planning, the OECD is a strong advocate of “transition financing” whereby donors are encouraged to be more actively engaged over a longer period of time to prevent funds from falling off when they are needed the most.

Critical Stakeholders to Achieve a Coordinated U.S. Global Development Strategy

The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), considered an extension of “smart power” combines multiple elements of American influence and power, is not so much a strategy as it is a capabilities review. The QDDR is primarily designed to help frame a series of questions examining why the U.S. government is not adequately meeting and responding to global challenges. Its goal is to strengthen and retool the U.S. Department of State and USAID to act as more effective partners. But to do so, as Director and COO of the QDDR Karen Hanrahan pointed out, we must first “look inwards, examine the capabilities, strengths, weaknesses, and come to the table as a stronger partner.”

Ambassador James Michel, Counselor at USAID, further elaborated on the format of the QDDR, which is based on five working groups made up of senior experts from the U.S. Department of State and USAID. He noted that the QDDR process is examining the strategic issues that confront U.S. diplomacy and development cooperation and highlighted that a “remarkable convergence of forces” has elevated interest in development itself as a crucial element in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century.

Daniel Silverberg from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs noted there are numerous domestic political challenges that prevent the United States from implementing the “whole of government” approach. Although understanding that the stakes are extraordinarily high both in terms of our national security and irrelevance of U.S. civilian missions, Congress believes that the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act must be rewritten or scrapped altogether. Mr. Silverberg noted that the appropriations process causes legislative choke points (particularly in various sectors), unpredictability in funding between yearly budgets, and rigidity in spending. Therefore, it is Congress’s goal to give individual agencies greater flexibility to fund their programs in a manner that can respond adequately to constantly evolving circumstances.

From the perspective of the NGO community, Sam Worthington, President and CEO of InterAction, made the case that while the “whole of government” approach is an improvement compared to the current development strategy, it is not sufficient. Although he applauded the transparency with which the U.S. has engaged in the QDDR and the NSC-led Presidential Study Directive (PSD) and noted the unprecedented alignment of Executive and Congressional interests, Mr. Worthington stated that a successful QDDR would see “an elevation of development, a strengthening of USAID, and assurance that development is not simply a tool for the U.S. defense and diplomatic establishment.” A “whole of government” approach will likely be unsuccessful without thorough consultation with civil society representatives who have better contextual knowledge than U.S. government representatives. It will require a “whole of society” perspective with a “local face.” Mr. Worthington strongly believes in coordination in the field, but he advocates for a system in which “civil institutions should set the strategy in humanitarian and development aid, and the military should support it, not the other way around.” Therefore, it is his contention that the “whole of government” leadership must come from an elevated civilian-run development agency.

Colonel Urs Gerber from the Swiss Armed Forces provided a perspective from a defense angle, pointing out that the Swiss military establishment was very much inward oriented initially, but close cooperation with major other government actors on building up processes “from 3 D to 3 C” closed the gap considerably. The Swiss DoD engagement in the Southern Sudan is serving as a sort of practical test bed to that and provided three useful lessons so far: 1) it created an important confidence building environment so that the various actors could work together and trust one another; 2) it developed a joint training effort which brought different actors together to learn similar methodologies; 3) and, it utilized the “smart power” concept, which requires smart people who know what they are doing and are capable of implementing strategies.

Ambassador Thomas Greminger from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs outlined key institutional changes made within the Swiss government to support the 3C approach. Demonstrating its adaptability, the Swiss government addressed the need for an integrated policy framework on stabilization and reconstruction by institutionalizing inter-departmental coordinating mechanisms – between and among the relevant stakeholders from all federal departments involved – in order to serve as effective platforms to exchange information, coordinate efforts, and ensure greater coherence in Swiss policy. Switzerland’s experience applying the 3C approach to its work in Nepal was a successful model for integrated and coordinated conflict resolution. With its extensive development cooperation presence in Nepal, Switzerland was forced to adapt its cooperation tools as a result of the conflict’s intensification in 2002-2003 by introducing a system of Conflict Sensitive Program Management. This effort created a type of “rules of engagement” between half a dozen important donors and the two conflicting parties through the establishment of discrete back-channel communication between the parties. The success of this “whole of ministry” approach led to a ministerial decision to launch conflict resolution action, deploy a senior facilitator to support the peace process, and ultimately implement not just a “whole of ministry” but a “whole of government” approach.

Conclusion

The U.S. – Swiss Dialogue provided an excellent forum for dialogue and debate over the challenges that the Swiss Government, the U.S. Government, and the international community all face in implementing a 3C framework for a coherent, coordinated, and complementary strategy toward achieving sustainable development and security in fragile states. The two panels of experts emphasized the necessity of engaging all relevant actors and stakeholders with policy driven by civil society and supported by the military.

The United States has undertaken the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) as well as the Presidential Study Directive (PSD) in order to address key concerns over capabilities, strategy, and interagency cooperation. While the emphasis has been placed on a “whole of government” approach, experts stressed the importance of balancing the equation with a robust “whole of society” approach, benefiting from national expertise and empowering national ownership of its institutions and domestic development. It was clear that the United States Government needs to engage Congress in dialogue early in the process, long before the final decision is made, to build Congressional support and multiply the odds of securing the funding necessary for a successful “whole of government” approach to global development policy. Finally, it is recommended that the U.S. armed forces, when engaged in a stabilization and reconstruction effort, must increase its effectiveness by developing relationships with regional development actors and relevant stakeholders through joint planning and joint training to achieve greater interoperability and deepen cultural understanding.

As Washington moves forward with its own deliberative process, the 3C framework provides an unprecedented opportunity to maximize cooperation, strengthen interagency collaboration, and produce a comprehensive and effective long-term global development strategy. However, its successful execution remains the greatest challenge at hand.