



PROGRAM ON HUMANITARIAN POLICY
AND CONFLICT RESEARCH
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

SECURITY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

PROGRESS REPORT

First Quarter 2005

The purpose of this note is to present a first report on the progress of the Security Management Initiative project as of March 15, 2005. This report covers the research and consultation phase, in preparation for the development of a draft curriculum and assessment tools, to be presented to an expert group in May 2005.

I. PRELIMINARY RESEARCH AND CONSULTATIONS

The purpose of the Security Management Initiative (SMI), launched by the Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard University (HPCR), is to develop a series of trainings, and assessment and management tools for international agencies (governmental and non-governmental) engaged in conflict areas. This initiative is conducted with a view to foster a system-wide strategic and professional approach to the management of the security of personnel and material assets in hazardous missions.

A concept paper was prepared and presented by HPCR Director Claude Bruderlein in Nice, France in November 2004.¹ A draft proposal for the initiative was submitted subsequently to the Swiss government and the Crisis Management Initiative in Helsinki.² A first phase of research and consultation, conducted primarily by Pierre Gassman, was completed in March 2005.

The present report summarizes up the findings of the documentary research (see the bibliographical note in Annex 1) and the consultations (see the list of organizations and individuals consulted in Annex 2).

1. Objectives of the research and consultations

The research and consultation phase was conducted with a view to

- test the hypotheses of the concept note and the background of the draft proposal;
- circumscribe the scope of the target public of the Security Management Initiative (security specialists, line-managers, general managers) and identify major obstacles and opportunities for a system-wide approach encompassing both governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- identify other relevant current research on security of staff;
- test the interest of stakeholders for the various components of the initiative (capacity building, assessment, expert group, discussion fora, policy papers, portals); and
- identify potential members of a select expert group.

This report presents a review of the observations made by the professionals interviewed on the relevance of the SMI in terms of managing the security of personnel.

¹ Claude Bruderlein, "Towards a Common Security Framework: Securing Access and Managing Risks in Hazardous Missions," paper presented at the Conference on Crisis Management and Information Technology, Nice, France, November 3-6, 2004.

² "Security Management Initiative: Advanced Training, Policy, and Information Tools for Integrated Management of the Security of Personnel in Hazardous Missions," Draft Project Proposal, HPCR, November 2004.

2. Review of the basic assumptions of SMI

The Security Management Initiative is based on a series of key postulates regarding the availability of training tools, capacity of agencies to manage the security of their staff, accountability of their managers, and the ability to undertake security management reforms. The research and consultations phase of the project was meant to test the validity of these different assumptions.

a) Review of quality and availability of current security training in terms of security management

SMI is based on the understanding that international agencies and organizations are in need of more sophisticated tools and training capabilities to build the capacity of their managers to address the evolving security challenges. In that respect, the results of this initial evaluation are as follows.

- Basic security skills training for staff is available in most agencies, through in-house training courses of variable length and intensity, outsourced training with specialized NGOs or private security companies, or through distance learning via video and/or CD-ROM. For instance, the European Community Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) has produced a reference manual on training resources available to European non-governmental organizations.³
- These training resources address practical issues encountered in fieldwork (passive protection, interaction with belligerents, negotiation techniques, mine awareness programs, and so on) and present each agency's specific security regulations and operating standards.
- Basic security training is, generally, not made available to nationally-recruited staff.
- Amongst major agencies, capacity building for senior security management is in its initial stages. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is at the forefront of such efforts, with a comprehensive security management review released in January 2005.⁴ A test training simulation has been run by the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) for members of the UN Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) in 2003, in cooperation with the United Kingdom Police Institute for Applied Learning Techniques (INCAIT). Since a number of years, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) runs middle management capacity building courses on "Stress and Security" that focus on ICRC's security policy and debate about specific contexts. InterAction has organized a seminar of senior officials of its member agencies on security management issues.

³ European Community Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), "Report on Security of Humanitarian Personnel, Standards, and Practices for the Security of Humanitarian Personnel and Advocacy for Humanitarian Space," Brussels, 2004 (with a Training reference compilation and a Generic Security Guide).

⁴ Senior Management Security Management Seminar, "Managing Staff Safety at UNHCR," Accra, Ghana, January 24-26, 2005.

- All agencies interviewed agree that security management capacity building for senior security advisors and senior operations management is required urgently.

b) Review of strategies to enhance security of staff in hazardous mission

SMI's approach distinguishes between community-based and system-based strategies to enhance the security of personnel. It emphasizes the importance of an integrated approach that combines both aspects of acceptance by the local community and standardized systems of risk assessment and mitigation. Observations of agencies were as follows.

- Humanitarian agencies, both within the UN system and amongst international NGOs, continue to rely heavily on the importance of local acceptance by all stakeholders in hazardous environments, and of their compliance with the principles of political neutrality, independence, and impartiality as the best guarantees for the security of their staff. Many organizations continue to disregard the perception of the political implications of their activities by the parties to the conflict in each context, and focus on a doctrine of abstract neutrality as the main parameter of their security strategies.
- In the wake of the bombing attacks in Baghdad and the targeted attacks on staff in other operations, agencies are recognizing increasingly the importance of a thorough examination of the perception of stakeholders in their political analysis of a given situation and in their assessment of operational risks, with the realization that they have to adjust security measures for their staff accordingly.
- There is, in this context, continued debate about the existence of a direct global terrorist threat against western humanitarian agencies. The investment, since the UN and ICRC bombings in Baghdad, of some one hundred million US Dollars in the physical protection of the agencies' headquarters buildings and field offices is being criticized as excessive in the absence of direct threats against specific locations, and is considered out of proportion with the dearth of resources invested in staff capacity building and analytical capability.
- Critics of the 'global threat paradigm' point out that agencies should gear their security measures to the specific, contextualized vulnerabilities.
- Most agencies consider that their capacity to analyze the political contexts where they work and their ability to assess threats and risks are hampered by:
 - the lack of human resources sufficiently familiar with the languages, culture and political environment of the contexts where they operate;
 - the scarcity of seasoned generalist managers;
 - a high staff turn-over;
 - deficiencies in the transmission of key information; and
 - 'arms-length' policies with regard to security forces able to provide key information on security issues.

c) *Security management led by security specialists vs. political/operational managers*

A central assumption of the SMI project is that political and operational managers should be essentially responsible for the management of the security of the personnel in hazardous missions. These managers should be trained and equipped with the necessary tools to discharge such responsibilities. Security experts ought to be able to provide advice to the managers on specific security functions (assessment, mitigation, prevention). They should not be entrusted with direct security responsibilities. Below is an overview of the reactions among agencies.

- Most agencies agree with the SMI assumptions and affirm that operational decisions should be taken by operational line managers, with security experts confined to an advisory role.
- Agencies acknowledge that security experts tend to optimize the application of security regulations and enhance risk mitigation to an extent that often forces agencies to 'bunkerize' their operations, prohibiting access to beneficiaries or forcing the organizations to withdraw from operational theaters altogether. Consequently, agencies are compelled to develop alternative operational approaches that diminish the exposure of their international staff and operate at a distance.
- Most agencies recognize that their operational managers do not have the required security management competencies to evaluate or overrule technical recommendations of their security experts.
- Most agencies recognize that their selection processes for assigning managerial staff to hazardous missions are not taking into account their personal competencies as leaders, coordinators, and crisis managers. There are no clear tools yet to assess the skills and competences of managers in terms of security of staff.

d) *Issues of accountability and institutional risk management*

As noted, a key aspect of the SMI project is the acknowledgment of the role and responsibility of the line managers for the security of staff. For it to be consequential, this responsibility must be embedded in a new framework of accountability in which managers are aware of their critical responsibilities in this context (and of the limits of these responsibilities). Based on these responsibilities, managers are in a position to request better tools and preparation to address the new security challenges. Observations of the interviewees were as follows.

- Accountability frameworks of agencies range from a complex, static, and hierarchical system in the United Nations⁵ to the absence of formal frameworks in some NGOs.
- Within the UN system, operational agencies are reluctant to accept the further centralization of the security management framework, as they consider that the process will not take into account sufficiently their specific methods of work and their mandates.⁶

⁵ See A/57/365, "InterOrganizational Security Measures: Framework for Accountability for the UN Field Security Management System," August 28, 2002, and UNSECOORD Accountability check list.

- Most agencies favor the delegation of decision-making with regard to compliance with security regulations to the managers closest and most familiar with the immediate context and stakeholders.
- A number of interlocutors regret that, in highly complex security environments, accountability frameworks are, generally, disregarded in favor of micro-management by headquarters, including interference by agency governance.
- Accountability frameworks, rather than providing decision-makers with proper mechanisms to address new challenges (post-Baghdad bombings and related investigations) tend to serve as arguments to refer decisions upward and to justify risk-averse attitudes in order to avoid responsibility for security incidents.
- Most agencies have no clear and transparent risk threshold. Their risk-management is not based on a predictable calculus of risks considered unacceptable versus compelling emergency response and imperative nature of compliance with institutional mandates. For the most, reactions to security incidents are dealt with in an emotional manner, rather than through pre-established, transparent processes and clear rules for examining the respect of due diligence by decision makers in the field and at headquarters.

e) *Issues of institutional and personal liability*

Arising from this assessment is the issue of institutional and personal liability of organizations and managers for damages and compensation due to negligence. It appears that the exposure of organizations to financial risks plays an important role in mobilizing interest in new security management capabilities.

- In the post-Baghdad bombings context, most aid agencies affirm that the security and health of their staff is their foremost concern. Many agencies are extremely concerned that they cannot cope adequately with the implicit institutional and possibly individual liabilities that security incidents might imply. They agree that liability issues must be included in any security management system.
- Agencies are employing an increasing number of professionals on short-term missions. The latter are also much more demanding with respect of their security and safety.
- Professionals and other staff of international agencies are becoming more litigious.
- Small agencies have considerable problems in obtaining insurance cover for war risk, in particular for the consequences of terrorist acts.

⁶ See "Managing Staff Safety at UNHCR," p. 24. It notes: "The larger framework of the UN Security Management System is currently also under review, and significant changes are expected. The assumption of the Working Group in preparing this report is that in addition to its membership in and commitment to an effective UN Security Management System, UNHCR must have its own security policy and approach not least because the security and safety of staff members is an organizational and managerial accountability."

- The current Malicious Acts Insurance Policy of the United Nations System (MAIP) puts severe reserves on presentable claims.⁷
- Some donors, amongst whom the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), refrain from making any recommendations with regard to their partners' security management. They do so mostly out of concern of being held liable in case of incidents.

f) *Resources for security management*

SMI is based on the recognition that resources for security management are insufficient. The observations to that effect raised in this phase are as follows.

- Agencies consider that resources for capacity building and security management are insufficient or have been invested disproportionately in real estate security.
- Agencies complain that, in the current competitive environment for earmarked program grants and under donor pressure to keep overhead costs down, they cannot invest in pre-deployment security assessments, sufficient physical security resources, security advisors, or adequate information systems.
- Donors claim that they are well aware of the security resources needs of agencies, and that they are willing to fund such requests. They point out that it is, more often than not, the agencies that claim to be able to operate in any context, without need for substantial security related human or material resources. Donors note, further, that they would rather fund such requests than see programs flounder because agencies are finally unable to implement them, for security reasons.

g) *Relations with the military and other security forces*

A key assumption of the SMI project is the need for the establishment of a more coherent and transparent relationship between civilian agencies and military forces, particularly in terms of responsibility for the maintenance of a secure environment for international agencies. Observations were as follows.

- With the exception of the ICRC, where constructive working relations with the military and other security forces and armed actors are part of the organizational culture, and a few North American NGOs and some national Red Cross-Red Crescent Societies that have structural relationships with the military, most agencies are reluctant to cooperate with military and other security forces.
- In particular, most agencies are adverse to be included in current counter-terrorist or counter-insurgency operations, or even in peacekeeping operations where their

⁷ “[C]aims will only be accepted under this policy if the organization and/or the Insured Person concerned has demonstrated to UNSECOORD that it has complied with all UNSECOORD security guidelines.” UN/Lloyds Malicious Acts Insurance Policy, January 27, 2003, p. 7.

emergency response, reconstruction, and development activities are integrated within a political and military framework.

- Most agencies recognize that a clear separation of tasks between humanitarian agencies and the military is getting more and more complex, and that there is little chance to expect the military to simply “open and protect humanitarian space,” especially within security strategies that consider humanitarian action (including emergency response, reconstruction, and development) as one of their pillars or as a force-multiplier.
- Most agencies recognize the need for an improved dialogue and eventually for a form of cooperation with the military and other security forces, namely for reasons related to the security of their staff and their capacity to operate in conflict-affected contexts.
- Civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) is a necessary integral part of security management.

3. Review of the target audience and system-wide approach to security management

Most of the agencies consulted agreed that there is a need to review and strengthen security management systems both within the UN system and the international NGO community. Comments were as follows.

- Each agency finds itself in a different phase with regard to progress towards a security management system adapted to each agency’s needs.
- All agencies could benefit from each other’s own reflections and efforts, and there is a demonstrated need to share best practices and other relevant information.
- Current consultation mechanisms such as UNASM, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), different NGO consortia and working groups, including military and agency representatives, are working on the issue in relative isolation.
- All agencies could ultimately benefit from capacity building modules for senior management, an international, crisis-management competencies benchmark setting assessment process, and a common locus for information exchange and debate.

4. Other academic research efforts

The research also delved into the identification of other existing initiatives, in terms of the development of security management tools and with a view to establishing ways of cooperating with institutions and organizations involved in security management. Key findings were as follows.

- The Overseas Development Institute’s Humanitarian Policy Group and the New York University’s Center on International Cooperation are proposing a project on “Humanitarian Action in the New Security Environment: Policy and Operational Implications.” This project started in March 2005 and its covers three areas: (i) measuring

the insecurity of aid workers (a statistical and qualitative analysis of the risks incurred by aid workers over time); (ii) service delivery in high risk environments, (a study of the implications of tighter security constraints), and (iii) the role of local aid organizations (an examination of 'remote control' operations).

- The University of Notre Dame is pursuing a general research project on "The United Nations and Global Security." Conducted in cooperation with the United Nations Institute, this project is not focusing directly on staff security issues per se. Rather, it is meant to examine the UN's role in the 'war against terrorism' and on the High level Panel of the UNSG on "A more Secure World."
- The Johns Hopkins University's Center for International Emergency, Disaster, and Refugee Studies (CIEDR) is reported to have a project under way to review and complement an earlier study on "Deaths among Humanitarian Workers."
- As noted, InterAction is holding a seminar of senior officials of its member agencies on security management issues, which it proposes to link with SMI, in order to avoid overlaps. SMI is liaising with the ODI-HPG-NYU-CIC project and supports InterAction's effort.
- SMI should share its research and findings widely with concerned stakeholders.

5. Stakeholder interest

Among the donors consulted – besides the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss Ministry of Defense –, the European Commission, ECHO, DFID, and USAID expressed interest in the project. Generally, they deemed it timely and needed. ECHO indicated that it may consider funding the second phase of the project.

Representatives of the United Nations agencies were interested in participating in both the senior management capacity building component, as well as the assessment project. They also committed to participation in the expert group and expressed interest in a Staff Security Web Portal.

French NGOs were, by and large, non-committal. They regarded SMI as too UN-centered and committed insufficiently to advocacy of a neutral, independent humanitarian space. British NGOs expressed interest in participating in the development of the project in all its components. UK NGO consortia were interested in sharing SMI's proposals with their constituencies and undertook to keep HPCR informed of their own research efforts. British academics consulted found SMI's concept document and the draft proposal interesting and encouraged SMI to share its further findings and information about continued research.

6. Expert group

Following this initial evaluation, HPCR intends to invite the following experts to be part of the expert group tasked with the establishment of the content framework of senior management capacity building modules and of management competencies to be assessed.

- Mike Aaronson, Chairman of the British Overseas Aid Group and of Save the Children Fund, UK
- Catherine Bertini, outgoing UN USG for Management
- Dr. Jonathan Crego, Director of the UK National Centre for Applied Learning Techniques
- Michael Dellamico, Senior Security Advisor, UNHCR
- Francois Grunewald, President of the Urgence, Rehabilitation, Développement Group (URD), France
- Kevin Kennedy, Senior Security Advisor, Office of the UN USG for Humanitarian Coordination, OCHA
- Anthony Val Flynn, Senior Security Advisor, ECHO

SMI will, additionally, seek the cooperation of experts in civilian-military cooperation, crisis management structures, risk management, and insurance. The Swiss Government, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), and USAID will be asked to participate in expert group meetings.

HPCR will continue to explore ways of cooperating with non-governmental organizations in Europe regarding the development and implementation of the project. In particular, it is holding continued discussions with the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) in Helsinki on its interest and capacity in working on SMI.

Annex 1

INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED

United Nations System

Catherine Bertini, UN USG , Management
Michael Dellamico, Security Coordinator, UNHCR
Alan Drew, Director Health and Security Department, EBRD, London
Bill Gent, Security Coordinator, UNICEF
Stuart Groves, Security Coordinator, OHCHR
Kevin Kennedy, Security Coordinator, Office of the USG-ERC, UNOCHA, New York
Robert Painter, Humanitarian Security Coordinator, UNDSS
Sebastian Rhodes-Stampa, Security Coordinator, UNOCHA, New York
Sir David Venness, UN USG, Safety and Security

NGO Consortia

Ambassador James Bishop, Director, Humanitarian Policy and Practice, InterAction, Washington
Shawn Bardwell, Security Coordinator, InterAction, Washington
Francois Grunewald, President, Urgence, Rehabilitation, Développement Group (URD), France
Joel McLellan, Secretary General, SCHR

International Committee of the Red Cross

Peter Simon Brooks, Military Advisor, ICRC, Brussels
Patrick Brugger, Security Advisor, ICRC
Raj Rana, CIMIC specialist, Military Advisor, ICRC
Andreas Wigger, Deputy Director General and Head of the internal unit dealing with relations to the Islamic world, ICRC

Donors

Jason Aplon, Senior Field Advisor, Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), USAID, Washington
Peter Cavendish, Head of the Evaluation Unit, European Community Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)
Angel Carro, Deputy Head of Delegation, European Commission Delegation to the United Nations, New York
Dr. Erwin Dahinden, Head International Relations of the Swiss Armed Forces
William S. Garvelink, Deputy Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), USAID, Washington
Charles-Michel Geurts, Counselor, EU Commission Delegation to the UN, New York
René Guth, Director Training, ECHO 5
Ken Isaacs, Director, Office of the United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), USAID
Jenny Marion, USAID
Ambassador Peter Maurer, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, New York
Mike McCarthy, Deputy Director, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD), DFID, UK

Claudia Moser, EDA-MSO, Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Major Markus Schefer, Head Mine Action, International Relations Department, Swiss Armed Forces
Paul Schulte, Director, Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU), UK
Georg Stein, EDA-SOG, Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Anthony Val Flynn, Senior Security Advisor, ECHO 5
Gordon West, USAID
Michael Winzap, Head of Section, Humanitarian Policy and Migration, Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Non-governmental organizations

Dr. Graziella Godain, Deputy Director of Operations, Médecins Sans Frontières, France
Thomas Gonnet, Director of Operations, Action Contre la Faim (ACF)
Heather Hughes, Head of the Security Unit, OXFAM, UK
Maret Laev, Head Security Training Unit, Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief (RedR), UK
Stephane Sisco, Head of the Political Analysis Unit, Médecins du Monde (MDM) France
David Throp, Deputy Director, in charge of security, Save the Children Fund (SCF), UK
Dr. Fabrice Weissmann, Director, MSF Research Fund

Academics and research institutes

President Martti Ahtisaari, President, Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)
Dr. Jonathan Crego, Director, National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT), Metropolitan Police, UK
Adele Harmer, Researcher, ODI-CIC Project, New York University, New York
Paul Harvey, Senior Research Fellow, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK
Dr. Sami Makki, Researcher, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)-Centre d'Études Interdisciplinaire de Recherches sur la Paix et d'Études Stratégiques (CIRPES), France
Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Former Director of PRM, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Advisor to UNDP
Dr. Kristina Rinkineva, Director, CMI
Professor Adam Roberts, Balliol College, Oxford, UK,
Dr. Hugo Slim, Senior Researcher, Institute for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva
Abby Stoddard, Research Associate, Center on International Cooperation, CIC, New York University
Jaqui Tong, Research Assistant, HPN-ODI, UK
Victoria Wheeler, Researcher, ODI, UK

Private Security Groups and Specialists

Christopher Beese, Armorgroup, London
David Carroll, Olive Security, London
Paul Reese, Centurion Risk Assessment Services, Andover
Christopher Hetherington, Attorney at Law, former Deputy Commissioner, New York Police Department

Insurance specialists

Guy Malyon, Insurance Broker, Marsh McLellan Inc, Risk Management and Insurance
Paula J. Singleton, Insurance Advisor, Lloyds

Annex 2

WORKS CONSULTED

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