CULTIVATING A MORE DURABLE PEACE

Comparative Perspectives on Projecting Stability

NATO ALLIED COMMAND TRANSFORMATION

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Executive Summary

The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw revived a long-standing notion within the Alliance – that of "projecting stability". Under this banner, the Alliance aims to promote peace and security in its broader neighbourhood using a range of means, including military action against groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as well as training for partner governments. However, little else is known about what projecting stability may look like in practice beyond counter-terrorism and training initiatives, and it seems that NATO is still determining how to cultivate a more durable peace within its neighbourhood. To feed into these deliberations, this paper takes up this concept – projecting stability – and asks fundamental questions about how non-NATO stakeholders understand contemporary security and how they are working to promote peace and security. The following observations and findings are based on a review of the pertinent literature from academics, research institutions and various international organisations (IOs) and international nongovernmental organisations (INGOs). They also emerge in part from the author's twelve years of research experience on relevant issues with UN agencies, INGOs, universities, think tanks and others.

Trends in Peace and Stability

International peace and stability have been the subject of competing-but-complementary narratives in recent years, which have significant implications for how NATO and the broader international community attempt to cultivate a durable peace. Several stakeholders view the rise of ISIL, protracted crises in places like Syria, Yemen and Libya, and migration flows as signs of mounting chaos. Still others note that conflict and terrorism data, while generally rising since 2010, is still near historic lows and that the vast majority all of today's battlefield deaths and terrorist attacks are occurring across roughly half a dozen countries. This secondary viewpoint sees less global chaos and, to the contrary, failures in terms of providing adequate humanitarian assistance, creating livelihoods and bolstering governance.

Those adopting the former viewpoint tend to call for renewed attention to security institutions, border restrictions, defensive measures and counter-terrorism cooperation. Quite the opposite, those focused on the latter interpretation call for more attention to humanitarian aid, support for education and livelihoods, a renewed commitment to peace processes and improved governance. However, neither understanding nor approach needs to be adopted to the exclusion of the other; hence, NATO may consider these as complementary and in need of some degree of balance – a degree of balance, which the Alliance is currently lacking.

Furthermore, NATO should increasingly consider the literature on correlates of conflict, which shows that around the world and particularly in countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), issues like education, employment and demographics (i.e., youth bulges) are among the most decisive factors – combined with a lack of economic diversification and poor government performance – in driving conflict. The full text thus posits whether NATO has a tangible security interest in getting involved with these sorts of issues more fully rather than relying solely on support to partners' security capabilities and hoping that non-NATO entities such as the United Nations and INGOs support socio-economic conditions in a manner that strengthens regional stability.

Non-NATO Approaches to Projecting Stability

In part driven by research, which shows the economic, demographic, social and education-related nature of contemporary conflict, non-NATO entities have tended to respond to conflict in a number of ways. These increasingly move away from state-based "liberal peacebuilding" models – common during the 1990s and in the engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan – and increasingly focus on local-level economic conditions.

Concerning specific programme designs, a small number of trends become apparent. Those programmes, which have proven the most effective in bolstering local security – and in reducing outward migration rates –, have relied time and time again on livelihoods as well as on education. Consider, for instance a small number of examples of activities, which have been empirically shown to improve local security conditions.

- *Addressing Former Combatants in West Africa:* In Liberia, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) attempted to prevent former combatants and other young men from becoming involved (or re-involved) with armed groups. A study found that former combatants who received a relative modest amount of assistance to become farmers or start small businesses spent more time farming and less time on illicit work. They also earned more money than those who remained in illegal employment and were 51% less likely to say they would sign up as mercenaries amidst a conflict in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire for $1,000 and 43% less likely to say they had met with mercenary recruiters.

- *Community Stabilisation in Iraq:* The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) focused on mitigating conflict in Iraq by providing a combination of small-scale infrastructure, employment-generation, business-development and youth-oriented programming across 15 cities in an attempt to counter armed group recruitment. The programme was accompanied by a reduction in daily attacks from 10.6 to 9.0 on average, and an independent evaluation of the programme found that 84% of those in beneficiary communities perceived an improvement in security over a three-year period.

- *Combating Crime in Central America:* The USAID-funded Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama used a community-based approach that involved the establishment of Municipal Crime Prevention Committees that implemented community-led plans to improve security, improvements in infrastructure such as lights in high-crime areas and various activities targeting youth employment and education. These and other programme components ultimately, according to an empirical evaluation, led to major improvements in targeted municipalities versus municipalities, which were not involved in CARSI. For instance, 51% fewer residents in beneficiary communities reported being aware of extortion and blackmail and 51% fewer residents reported being aware of murders.

These are just a small number of the most promising and evidence-backed approaches to improving local security conditions. They show the need for sustained, local-level engagement in socio-economic circumstances – and the active involvement of communities. In contrast, programmes, which sought "quick wins", had a lesser likelihood of success. For instance, national dialogue processes – in which the international community pushes for a grand political bargain and symbolic "new beginning" – tend to have limited success, as do programmes that attempt to reduce migration by advertising its risks to communities in places like East Africa and Central

America. Indeed, research from places like Mindanao in the southern Philippines actually shows that aid, which is given quickly in an attempt to quickly extend state authority and cement peace, can actually lead to increases in attacks.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The available research shows that NATO's preferred approaches, including training and equipping local forces or undertaking quick-impact projects (as evident in Provincial Reconstruction Team activities in Afghanistan) may not be the most effective way of projecting stability. Instead, the Alliance may need to consider getting out of its customary comfort zones and engaging more overtly with socio-economic dynamics as a means of responding to and preventing instability. The following are a small number of options for NATO to consider as it seeks to identify where to engage, with whom and how. These options are not necessarily presented as hard and fast recommendations but instead as jumping off points for elaboration into a plan of action through discussion and debate.

Where to Engage: One of the most fundamental questions for the Alliance is not only what to do but also where to focus its attentions. The most obvious option would see NATO engaging in countries such as Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and perhaps Mali or Nigeria, countries that are home to extremist groups that have targeted NATO members and which have impelled displacement towards Europe, in particular. Yet these countries are also exceptionally complex internally and reflect webs of regional and international interests. Instead, NATO may wish to focus on ostensibly stable countries whose peace and security is increasingly undermined by their war-torn neighbours. These include countries like Jordan and Lebanon, which are home to large numbers of Syrian refugees, as well as Kenya, Mali, Algeria and other countries affected by instability in places like Somalia and Libya. The greatest opportunity, however, may be for NATO to engage in what one could term neglected crises, those that do not necessarily have extensive international engagement but which could be future sources of chaos in the wider region. These include places like Mali, Niger and the wider Sahel, which have seen growing-but-inadequate levels of external security and humanitarian engagement.

With Whom to Partner: The Alliance's geographical focus will largely influence its on-the-ground partners, though this is still a question that requires attention since nearly any context will offer a wide range of potential partners beyond governments and security services (who would need to be a major component of any NATO engagement). While NATO has a record of accomplishment of reaching out to UN agencies and INGOs, those types of civilian actors will never be willing to engage more broadly with a military alliance except as a "last resort". Hence, NATO has a greater chance of collaborating with regional entities such as the Gulf Cooperation Council, the African Union (AU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and a number of others. To some extent, these entities view NATO as a fellow regional organisation and have fewer qualms about collaborating with the Alliance given that the AU and others have their own military and security apparatuses and forums. Lastly, NATO may see benefits in engaging more fully with the private sector building on lessons from, for instance, the US Taskforce on Business and Stability Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The private sector is at the forefront of using technology to counter some of the root causes of conflict, including limited access to education and unemployment. NATO could work with these sorts of initiatives and firms and greatly scale them up in order to tackle issues like employment and

education in a manner that many IOs and INGOs do not – thus avoiding too much risk of overlap or duplication.

What to Do: There are dozens of options for what NATO could focus upon as it considers non-security approaches to projecting stability. That said, a few broad lessons apply. First, NATO needs to avoid – as it has in the past – spreading itself too thin and being seen as a "tinkerer" rather than a "doer". The Alliance should identify one or two topics at the intersection of security and socio-economic development and establish world-leading expertise in them. Second, NATO needs to consolidate its already-wide range of research, training and education activities into a large-scale institution tasked with building a global profile and reputation for generating knowledge and innovation. A well-funded training and education institution should be seen as something that senior police and military officers, city mayors, civil society leaders and others from within and beyond NATO should aspire to attend, and its research outputs should be widely read like those produced by the former NATO Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC). Lastly, NATO should follow the model of the UK and its Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and consider establishing an instrument to finance stability-related projects in high-priority locations. The idea would be for NATO to engage in what one might term "venture donorship" in which the Alliance gives funds to field-level organisations in areas of concern for targeted projects that are catalytic and gap-filling in high-priority countries and sectors.

Final Thoughts. Across all of the options above is a recurring motif: NATO should avoid asking permission from those outside of the Alliance to get involved in issues beyond its core military competencies. It ought to act proactively and independently where necessary to tackle the real issues underlying conflict in its neighbourhood. As NATO prepares to do so, the Alliance may wish to consider questions such as:

- Given that the language of "projecting stability" is likely to be misunderstood or perceived poorly among many non-NATO actors, what terminology could be adopted while conveying the same meaning and intent?
- How can NATO monitor the current and future state of peace and stability within its neighbourhood in a way that goes beyond traditional methods that primarily focus on proximate, traditional security threats?
- To what extent can and should NATO engage directly and overtly with social, economic and governance-related elements of peace and stability within its neighbourhood? How should it do so – including through and beyond the set of options outlined here?
- How can NATO's military train-and-equip programmes avoid pitfalls, seen elsewhere, of bolstering repressive elements in particular governments and societies and instead emphasize things such as community policing and accountable, transparent governance?
- As NATO continues to refine its approach, what stakeholders should it engage with and why? Particularly consider how the Alliance should pursue partnerships if – as this paper strongly suggests – it is unlikely to develop deep collaborations with UN agencies and INGOs.

By addressing these sorts of questions, NATO will be better poised to consider why, where, how and with whom it can genuinely cultivate a more durable peace.

1. Introduction & Background

The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw revived a long-standing notion within the Alliance – that of "projecting stability". Specifically, the Summit Communiqué stated: "Against the background of an increasingly unstable, global security environment, and based on a broad and strengthened deterrence and defence posture, we seek to contribute more to the efforts of the international community in projecting stability and strengthening security outside our territory, thereby contributing to Alliance security overall." Doing so would, per the Communiqué, involve a commitment to enduring principles such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law – as well as partnerships. The Communiqué emphasized collaboration with stakeholders such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as well as individual governments throughout NATO's neighbourhood.

Subsequent public statements have refined this ambitious-but-vague agenda, advising NATO to focus not only on military action against groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) but also on training forces in places like the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to tackle armed opposition groups that threaten regional stability and risk generating large flows of refugees, migrants or asylum seekers. Building on NATO's past experience with building the capacity of local security institutions in places like Afghanistan and Iraq – and its more recent efforts in Georgia, Moldova, Jordan and Tunisia – the Alliance is reportedly looking to develop rapidly-deployable capacity building teams capable of working with ministries, militaries and police forces, among others.

This agenda has deep roots within the Alliance. NATO first, at a London Summit in 1990, expressed its intent to "project stability" into eastern and central Europe in order to prevent regional fallout from the dissolution of the Soviet Union. At that time the term was seen not only to encapsulate security cooperation but also the promotion of democratic norms and institutions and the economic integration of Europe. The return of this term suggests that NATO may see in the present regional security challenges – growing numbers of migrants, ISIL-linked terrorist attacks in the Middle East and within NATO Member Countries and an increasingly aggressive Russia[2] – as similarly historic in nature and meriting a comparably new approach.

However, little is known about what projecting stability may look like in practice beyond training-and-equip initiatives, and it seems that NATO is still determining how to cultivate a more durable peace within its neighbourhood. To feed into these deliberations, this paper takes up this concept – projecting stability – and asks some relatively basic questions: To what extent does NATO's understanding of stability and how to promote it align with leading research into global and regional trends on peace and security? How are other international stakeholders approaching peace and stability at the strategic and operational levels? Lastly, what should the Alliance consider doing in order to enable it to cultivate a more durable peace in concert with others and, where appropriate, independently?

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[2] For a further discussion of these issues, also see a panel discussion with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Brussels Forum organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_129425.htm.
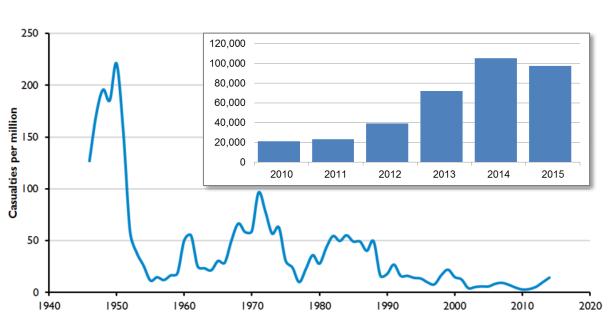
The following observations and findings are based on a review of the pertinent literature from academics, research institutions and from various international and non-governmental organisations around the world (see the bibliography at the end of the report for a full list of materials which were consulted). They also emerge in part from the author's twelve years of field-based research experience on issues ranging from humanitarian action and aid worker security to civil-military interaction, regional cooperation and post-crisis stabilisation and transitions in contexts as diverse as Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lebanon, Somalia Syria and Yemen for governments, UN agencies, the World Bank, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), NATO's former Civil-Military Fusion Centre and others. The author's intent – and that of NATO's Open Perspectives Exchange Network (OPEN) – is not to have the "final word" on any topic but rather to reflect a range of views in order to spark a free-flowing discussion and debate within and outside of the Alliance.

2. Global Threats & Drivers of Instability

The concept of "projecting stability" requires consideration of very basic questions about (a) the current levels of peace and stability and (b) those factors that research has shown to correlate with increased and reduced violence (i.e., the outcomes that NATO may view as key levers in its quest to project stability).

2.1. The State of Global Stability

International peace and stability have been the subject of competing-but-complementary narratives in recent years, which have significant implications for how NATO and the broader international community attempt to cultivate a more durable peace. How the Alliance perceives the level and nature of security challenges feeds directly into how it attempts to project stability.

Figure 1
*Conflict casualties per million head of population (line graph)
and increasing battlefield deaths since 2010 (bar graph, inset)*

Taking the mainstream view, reflected in the Warsaw Communiqué, instability seems to be spreading. Over the past half-decade, conflicts have broken out or significantly intensified in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Gaza Iraq, Libya, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen and elsewhere The [number of battlefield deaths](#) has risen five-fold since 2010 (see Figure 1, inset bar graph), and [deaths from terrorist attacks](#) tripled from 2012 to 2014 and have included a number of high-profile attacks, including in NATO Member Countries, in recent years. Furthermore, conflicts have proven [increasingly protracted](#), now averaging upwards of [15 years](#) in duration. Despite some successes in resolving long-standing conflicts in places like Colombia and Mindanao (Philippines), violence in northern Nigeria, Somalia, the eastern DR Congo, Yemen and elsewhere persists and periodically intensifies. Such conflicts have increasingly affected entire regions as [higher-than-usual levels of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers](#) flow out of places like Syria and Afghanistan and into neighbouring countries (e.g., [Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan](#)) and further afield into Europe. Trends such as these have convinced policymakers that a renewed commitment to peace and "projecting stability" is required.

That said, the troubling indicators noted above could also be interpreted differently particularly if one takes a somewhat [wider-angle perspective](#). The number of conflicts taking place around the world declined, overall, from the 1990s, and leading conflict data scientists predict that the proportion of countries affected by conflict would [decline from 14% in 2008 to 9% in 2050](#). The [level of casualties globally](#) from armed conflict (see Figure 1, line graph) has decreased markedly in recent decades and remains well below the level seen during much of the Cold War – despite the aforementioned uptick since 2010. From this perspective, the world is a more peaceful and stable place than it has previously been and any spikes in violence in particular locations should be treated as anomalies which are constrained to a small number of countries; more than three-quarters of all battlefield deaths in 2015, after all, occurred in only three countries (Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria), and nearly [80% of terrorism deaths in 2014](#) occurred in just five countries (Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria). Even if migrants and displaced populations are increasingly entering Europe and other countries – [overwhelmingly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq](#) – this can be seen not entirely because of conflict but also because of non-security factors. These include factors such as: (i) inadequate humanitarian efforts in the Middle East (e.g., in Iraq and countries hosting Syrian refugees) and Afghanistan which lead families to opt for onward migration over staying in place; (ii) failures to support governments of refugee-hosting countries in places like Kenya and Lebanon; (iii) improvements in information and communications technology which make migration fundamentally easier; and (iv) authoritarianism and other governance challenges in countries such as [Eritrea](#).[3]

These two differing perspectives are at the heart of what it means to project stability. The first narrative, which is generally adopted by NATO and many of its Member Countries' defence establishments, promotes added attention to security cooperation, border security and kinetic military and counter-terror operations with secondary attention to issues like governance and the quality and level of humanitarian assistance. Yet the second narrative, which is far more

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[3] One in 50 Eritreans sought asylum in Europe between 2012 and mid-2016, and the notion of governance migrants from parts of Eurasia, the Middle East, Africa, and beyond appears increasingly likely.

prevalent among civilian actors such as humanitarian and development agencies alongside many diplomats, looks very different, with a primary focus on humanitarian action, livelihoods, poverty alleviation, good governance and education as well as increased attention to conflict resolution and mediation capacities in places like Syria, Libya, Mali and Yemen. To a real extent the difficulties that civilian and military actors have faced in communicating come down to these basic differences in how they view the world around them and the tasks at hand.
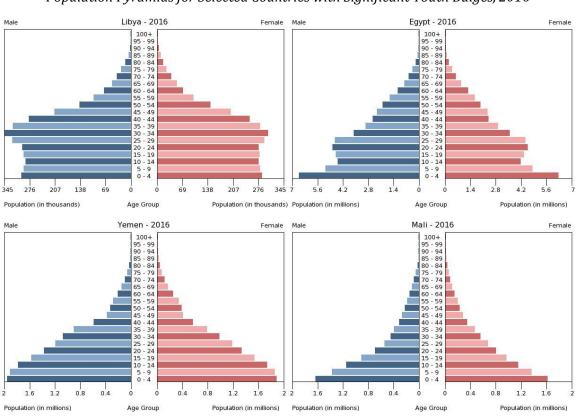
Figure 2

Comparative Perspectives on Peace, Security and Strategic Responses

NATO/Military	Issue	Non-NATO/Civilian
Increasing dramatically and spreading at an alarming rate	**Global Conflict**	Historically low and concentrated in just a few locations
Extremist ideologies, outside influence by other countries, weaknesses in security services in affected areas	**Causes of Conflict**	Lack of education, youth bulges, unemployment, poor governance, economic inequality/decline
Strengthening security services, counter-terrorism operations	**Priorities for Engagement**	Education, job creation, improved governance, conflict resolution
Syria, Iraq, North Africa (especially Libya), Ukraine	**Geographical Priorities**	Syria, Iraq, Yemen, South Sudan, Mali, CAR, Burundi, NE Nigeria, Myanmar/Burma
Strengthening security services, counter-terrorism operations, border security	**Security Priorities**	Aid worker security, peacekeeping, preventing military abuses/promoting human rights

2.2. Correlates of Conflict & Stability

A second foundational question pertains to the drivers of conflict and stability – which academics have examined through the lens of statistical correlates. That is, what measurable conditions are prevalent in countries that experience conflict versus those which do not? This literature is nuanced, and policymakers must realize that correlates apply to global data sets and may apply to differing extents to individual contexts. That said, they merit consideration given that promoting stability across a broad region (i.e., NATO's extended neighbourhood) will almost certainly require cultivating those factors prevalent in peaceful societies and eroding those linked with conflict onset or recurrence.

Social Factors: Youth bulges, as defined by the proportion of a population comprised of 15-to-29-year-old males versus 30-plus-year-old males, are positively correlated with the onset of conflict. A greater proportion of young men makes low-intensity armed conflict increasingly likely though has little role in producing high-intensity conflicts like that in Syria today. Likewise, limited education is correlated with conflict onset, and increased educational attainment helps to diminish the likelihood of conflict even when one controls for income (i.e., education can reduce the likelihood of conflict even where economic prospects are limited). Lastly, data going back to the Second World War demonstrates a strong correlation between high rates of infant mortality and conflict. Infant mortality is not itself seen as a key factor in motivating war but instead is seen as a proxy for the overall level of hardship that a population is facing in a given time period (and as one which is more accurate than poverty rates).

Figure 3

Population Pyramids for Selected Countries with Significant Youth Bulges, 2016

Source: US Census Bureau, International Data Base, accessed 15 November 2016.

Economic Factors: While poverty itself is a poor predictor of conflict, significant year-over-year declines in economic conditions are associated with conflict onset and recurrence, though, conversely, increases in per capita gross national income (GNI) has the potential to reduce the potential of conflict recurrence. As Oxford University's Paul Collier wrote: "the most important risk factors were three economic characteristics: the level of per capita income, its rate of growth, and its structure. Doubling the level of income halves the risk of conflict. A percentage point on the growth rate reduces the risk by around a percentage point. Reducing dependence upon natural resource exports powerfully reduces the risk of conflict."

One study from the World Bank found that in the MENA region, conflict and instability are most likely in countries that have middling levels of natural resource wealth in per capita terms (i.e., not enough to bring per capita incomes above $5,000). While there is no clear explanation for this trend, which applied to places like Egypt, Libya and Yemen, experts hypothesize that this level of wealth creates a dangerous combination of dynamics: a government which is adequately financed by natural resources and hence has little incentive to promote inclusive growth, a fixation on securing resources and the state in relatively authoritarian ways rather than building state legitimacy or goodwill among the population, and an inadequate level of resources to comprehensively buy the population's loyalty with jobs/benefits or genuinely ensure security and control their territory (as countries with higher levels of resource wealth are commonly able to do). The research thus suggests that, particularly in an era of widely vacillating resource prices, economic diversification and good governance (discussed below) – to build state legitimacy – should supplant resource dependency.

Political Factors: Governance – that is, the effectiveness of the state, the rule of law, the control of corruption, freedoms related to expression and so on – is strongly correlated with conflict risk, particularly in the MENA region, which is of deep concern for NATO and others in the international community. While the research is complex, countries with weak governance indicators according to a range of measures are more likely to experience conflict relapse – though not to have a conflict in the first place. The primary exception concerns repression; countries with high scores in terms of repression and authoritarianism tend to face a heightened risk of civil war[4] where those states do not have access to substantial levels of per capita resource wealth. Unfortunately, research shows that conflicts tend to lead to repressive responses in the short term, which may temporarily halt a conflict while also planting the seeds of a renewed bout of violence in the coming half decade.

Security Factors: It is important to note that similar evidence is not available on security spending, though econometric analysis shows that the presence of UN peacekeepers tends to reduce the likelihood of conflict recurrence. The Peace Research Institute-Oslo (PRIO) notes that "Research has shown that the risk of conflict recurrence drops by as much as 75% in countries where UN peacekeepers are deployed." That said, does military training – the type that NATO has particularly emphasized in the name of projecting stability – reduce the likelihood or perhaps the duration of conflict? Analysis along these lines is not currently available from the sources, which the author reviewed, though it is important to note that available qualitative and case study research shows a mixed picture. In Colombia, greater levels of US military assistance tended to lead to an uptick in pro-government paramilitary attacks and reduced levels of voter participation in politically contested areas near Colombian military bases. Likewise, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) noted in 2011 that monitoring of US international military education and training – a subset of US military cooperation with other countries' officers – was lacking and did not allow policymakers to understand basic elements such as whether trainees' skills were measurably improved or whether they were ultimately more effective in their professional duties. A 1993 RAND study – which is dated but still applicable – notes that military training efforts focused on partner nations' internal security "cannot complete with the powerful historical, political, cultural and economic influences on foreign militaries' behaviour and development" and often focuses only on a relatively small proportion of troops.

3. Projecting Stability: Non-NATO Approaches

The preceding sections suggest that the challenges facing peace and stability are multi-faceted – and that there are vastly different perspectives on the true state of global security and the means necessary for building it. Some see the world as increasingly chaotic and in need of increased security measures and capabilities. Yet others see positive trends in much of the world and fear that investments in security measures will lead to reduced investment in economically-productive areas, basic services (e.g., health and education) and good government and – in doing so – plant the seeds of future conflict and displacement.

These differing understandings lead to distinct approaches on the ground. That said, few actors have systematic approaches to "projecting stability" or promoting peace, even where strategy documents or guidelines exist (e.g., as in the UK Approach to Stabilisation). This in part results

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[4] Interestingly research also suggests that countries with substantial youth bulges also tend to be more authoritarian and are more likely to use repression in order to reduce the risk of opposition.

from the sheer diversity of actors operating in insecure environments and their respective mandates. A UN agency like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) may focus on governance and livelihoods in line with its mandate while the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), will focus on education and on peacebuilding activities among youth. Such agencies' efforts are only tangentially aimed at promoting stability and are instead geared towards their mandates, such as poverty alleviation and protecting youth. That is, only a small share of assistance around the world is necessarily being provided according to any overt or evidence-based security logic.

Furthermore, strategies – where they exist – may not be implemented in the same way they are presented on paper. A single UN organization may have a dozen policy documents on peace and stability, some of which are global while others may be more focused on a particular country or region. These strategies may then be [translated into particular project and program proposals](), which are adjusted to meet not only the local conditions on the ground but also the priority of donor governments (and the priorities of those donors' in-country representatives) and government officials in the countries where they intend to work. Ultimately, the proposal, once finalized and funded, is only a jumping off point as field-based program staff members undertake ad hoc adjustments to the activities based on their own priorities and competing demands in terms of time and resources. This is a process of translation that may ultimately mean a program, as implemented, differs markedly from the broad-based strategy crafted by international experts at the headquarters level. Hence, overarching strategies or generic, off-the-shelf approaches should be approached dubiously, and NATO should ultimately recognize that there is no substitute for detailed analysis of what is actually happening on the ground in individual countries where the Alliance seeks to engage. This is all the more important given that international organisations (IOs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) commonly tend to inflate their on-paper descriptions of what they are doing in conflict areas in order to access more funding – despite increasingly being unwilling to engage on the ground in most parts of Somalia, Yemen, Iraq or Syria according to a major forthcoming UN study on "[Humanitarian Action Under Fire]()" led by the author.

Despite the caveats above, it is useful to consider some of the most prevalent approaches – including broad-based models, sectors of intervention and programmatic designs – which non-NATO entities have typically adopted in insecure contexts.

3.1. Models

The following models have been particularly influential since the end of the Cold War.

- ***Liberal peacebuilding:*** Increased discussion of so-called "failed" or "fragile" states in the 1990s led to the development of [a "liberal peacebuilding" model]() that includes "the promotion of democracy [particularly elections], market-based economic reforms and a range of other institutions associated with 'modern' states". The crux of this model was the promotion of states that were modelled largely after Western democracies. The state-building approach was, in contexts such as Timor-Leste, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Eastern Slavonia and Kosovo, preceded by a [transitional administration]() in which international actors helped to establish liberal-democratic institutions, generally under the protection of international peacekeepers, which could later be handed over to national authorities once peace was adequately established. This model has since been pilloried and is seen as [unrealistically ambitious](), as

destabilising (e.g., by promoting the privatisation of lucrative assets) and as prone to re-igniting conflict by pushing for quick elections before peace is firmly established.

- **Stabilisation and counterinsurgency:** Over the past decade, there has been increased emphasis on pursuing security through a combination of development assistance and coercion. The result is the targeting of assistance where is it considered most likely to prevent spoiler violence and enhance the legitimacy of the state. In the case of stabilisation, the end goal is often the promotion of a political settlement in which the local population pushes armed groups to the negotiating table (or to stop fighting) in order to enable development to proceed; in the case of counterinsurgency the focus is more on using development assistance to gain access to ground-level intelligence in order to militarily defeat armed groups. Both stabilisation and counterinsurgency tend to involve whole-of-government approaches (or whole-of-system approaches in the case of the United Nations) which bring together several agencies and institutions in civil-military collaborations. This sort of model is evident not only in places such as Afghanistan but also in the eastern DR Congo, southern and central Somalia and Mali. And while many in the United Nations may have formerly seen stabilisation and counterinsurgency as fundamentally distinct, it is also evident that there has been a greater alignment between the two in recent years in places like the DR Congo, where the UN has since 2013 deployed an offensive Force Intervention Brigade comprised of peacekeepers and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

- **_Peace dividends_**: Similar in many respects to stabilisation, a peace dividends model presumes that conflicts are driven by grievances over material conditions and/or by combatants' desire for an income (even if provided by an armed group or earned through predatory behaviour). Hence, adherents of this model commonly call for large-scale activities such as cash-for-work or major infrastructure undertakings in order to create jobs among young men – or former combatants – or community-based initiatives in which local populations are provided with resources to improve their conditions. The peace dividends approach is also rooted in the notion that these forms of assistance should be concentrated on areas and groups, which are relatively stable or pro-peace in order to demonstrate to others (e.g., remaining combatants or restive provinces) that stability comes with tangible benefits. Such a model is potentially likely to see added attention now that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include an element dedicated to the security-development nexus.[5]

- **_Social justice and cohesion_**: Where conflicts have severely damaged relations not only between the state and citizenry but also between various social, political or identity groups, a model focused on social justice and cohesion may be more likely. This model places more initial emphasis on reintegrating displaced persons, addressing the legacy of war-time violence (e.g., through transitional justice mechanisms) and creating opportunities for people to come together on local recovery activities in order to rebuild social cohesion. Individuals and identity groups are the primary focus rather than necessarily the state, and greater attention is paid to political accountability rather than material socio-economic conditions. This approach particularly emphasizes social justice, and aims to undo social inequalities and focuses on the promotion of

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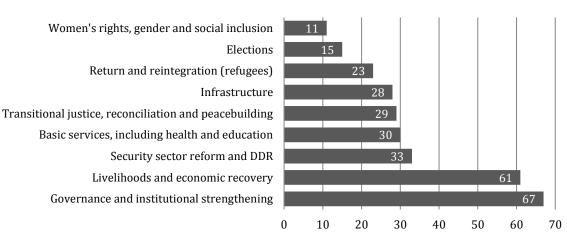[5] This SDG goal was in part bolstered by studies such as:
http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/conflict_assessment_-_hoeffler_and_fearon_0.pdf.

human rights and accountability for past misdeeds (either through prosecution of some form or truth and reconciliation commissions).

In practice none of the models noted above has singularly pursued, and they are most commonly combined based on various actors' understanding of the local circumstances.

3.2. Sectoral Focus

The models noted above are reflected in selection of particular sectors of intervention. A forthcoming review of 70 documents from UN agencies, INGOs, the World Bank and think tanks for UNDP identified 192 "good practices" that were categorised according to the sector involved (with many pertinent to more than one sector).[6] The results show a decisive emphasis on governance and livelihoods and economic recovery over other sectors. Security sector reform (SSR) as well as the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of combatants were also emphasised alongside basic services, reconciliation and peacebuilding, and infrastructure.

Figure 4
Number of Good Practices for Post-Crisis Stabilisation/Transitions, by Sector

Source: Steven A. Zyck, Lessons Learnt for the Reconstruction of Syria, forthcoming 2017.

International assistance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a region of particular concern for NATO, appears to conform relatively well to the sorts of lessons noted above. The top two priority areas according to existing research, governance and economic development (see Figure 3), are also the two highest areas in terms of non-humanitarian donor spending (see Table 1). In terms of basic services, education is receiving a significant level of support.[7]

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[6] This review was conducted by the author, Steven A. Zyck, though it is not publicly available and cannot be linked to here.

[7] Spending on security cooperation is more poorly documented, often makes it impossible to distil training/technical assistance versus military hardware, and is not captured in such databases.

Table 1

Development Spending in the MENA Region by Donor Type and Sector, 2014[8]

Sector	Total Donor Spending	DAC Government Spending[9]	International Organisation Spending
Humanitarian Aid	30.5%	36.7%	17.9%
Economic Infrastructure and Services	20.2%	12.5%	33.3%
Government and Civil Society	13.2%	18.8%	6.7%
Education	11.8%	11.7%	14.3%
Productive Sectors	7.9%	5.3%	6.4%
Water Supply and Sanitation	6.8%	8.2%	5.0%
Social Infrastructure and Services	5.5%	4.5%	9.4%
Health	3.4%	1.6%	5.8%
Population/Reproductive Health	0.8%	0.7%	1.3%

Source: OECD, Creditor Reporting System, accessed 15 November 2016.

3.3. Selected Programme Designs and Performance

The strategic approaches noted above are comprised of individual programmatic designs and operations at the community level. These are far too diverse to capture in their entirety, though a few key programmes are presented below in order to provide readers with a sense of the most common and potentially impactful field-level practices, which international organization and INGOs, in particular, are pursuing.

- *Addressing Former Combatants in West Africa:* In Liberia, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has attempted to prevent former combatants and other young men from becoming involved (or re-involved) with armed groups. The former combatants in question were, in the post-conflict period, actively involved in illegal resource extraction (mining and rubber, mostly) and were provided with approximately $125 in agricultural assistance in order to encourage them to establish licit and peaceful livelihoods. A research project focused on this program led by Christopher Blattman from Columbia University found that the former combatants who had received this assistance – as well as training on agriculture – spent more time farming and less time on illicit work. They also earned more money than those who remained in illegal employment and were 51% less likely to say they would sign up as mercenaries amidst a conflict in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire for $1,000 and 43% less likely to say they had met with mercenary recruiters. This is a significant impact.

- *Community Stabilisation in Iraq:[10]* The US Agency for International Development (USAID) focused on mitigating conflict in Iraq by providing a combination of small-scale infrastructure, employment-generation, business-development and youth-oriented

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[8] This is the most recent year for which figures are available.

[9] This refers to spending by donors which are part of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC); the DAC includes nearly all of the largest governmental humanitarian and development donors around the world, including many NATO MCs.

[10] For more information on this programme, readers may be interested in watching this video from the United State Institute of Peace (USIP) at: http://www.usip.org/events/usaid-s-community-stabilization-program-and-counterinsurgency-in-iraq.

programming across 15 cities – via International Research and Development, a private firm – in an attempt to counter armed group recruitment. The program reduced unemployment in the areas in question and, most importantly, was accompanied by a reduction in daily attacks from 10.6 to 9.0 on average (though the level of attacks cannot be necessarily attributed to any single programme). An independent evaluation of the programme also found that 84% of those in beneficiary communities perceived an improvement in security (over a three-year period) as opposed to 70% of those in control-group communities (i.e., those that had not benefited from this programme). Promising results with regards to security and governance have also been report in relation to similar programmes such as the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan.

- **_Combating Crime in Central America:_** After years of "mano dura" (iron fist) approaches to crime prevention in the Americas that relied on aggressive security measures and harsh sentencing for those convicted, a number of governments – often in partnership with international donors – attempted a new approach. This is typified in the USAID-funded Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. CARSI used a community-based approach that, while complex, involved the establishment of Municipal Crime Prevention Committees that identify crime 'hot spots' and implement community-led plans to improve security, by improving infrastructure such as lights in high-crime areas, by tackling domestic abuse and by offering education, life skills, job training and recreation opportunities to youth. These and other programme components ultimately, according to an empirical evaluation, led to major improvements in targeted municipalities versus municipalities which were not involved in CARSI: 51% fewer residents in beneficiary communities, reported being aware of extortion and blackmail; 51% fewer residents reported being aware of murders; 25% fewer residents reported being aware of illegal drug sales; and 14% fewer residents perceived youth in gangs as a problem.

- **_Mitigating Migration in Central America, East Africa and Elsewhere:_** Migration into NATO member countries is increasingly perceived as a potential source of social and physical insecurity. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is tackling this challenge by working to ensure orderly migration and to discourage relatively high-risk migration, which often helps prevent harm to migrants and trafficked persons. This has involved, for instance, awareness campaigns across Central America and in places like Ethiopia and Somalia in order to raise awareness about the risks posed by migration and trafficking networks, in particular. Yet research has shown that such awareness-raising efforts have a relatively limited impact on preventing migration; hence, IOM has also taken steps to reduce the drivers of migration by supporting livelihoods among those persons, particularly young men, deemed most likely to migrate. Such employment-orientated efforts have largely been found to be effective in reducing the level of irregular migration.

- **_Using Dialogue to Establish Peace and Stability:_** National dialogue processes have become among the most non-developmental approaches to peace and security. These processes, which have been attempted in Afghanistan (Loya Jirga), Iraq (National Conference), Yemen (National Dialogue Conference) and across sub-Saharan Africa through the 1990s and since, attempt to promote a grand political bargain among national elites while also engaging the population in forward-looking discussions about their future hopes. Yet available research raises concerns about these high-level processes, which often: (i) result in compromise

solutions, such as the inclusion of figures responsible for past human rights abuses, that leave many people feeling disappointed; (ii) produce few material benefits for ordinary people and actually distract aid agencies from socio-economic programming; and (iii) raise expectations among the population that leave them soon feeling disenchanted. While conflict is increasingly viewed as political in nature, solutions such as these which are primarily political in nature – and which are not accompanied by near-term material benefits for the population – have little chance of success.

The examples above support the perception that employment-creation is the single most effective means of preventing both conflict and migration. Additional evidence from the US Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) in Iraq and from the NSP in Afghanistan point to a similar conclusion. Simply put: sustained improvements in employment and local economic conditions are the most effective factors in discouraging migration and mitigating the allure of armed groups.

That said, most evidence cited above pertains to relatively short-term impacts of programmes and does not necessarily capture the longer-term impacts of education, economic development, governance, or security sector programming. Hence, there is good reason to believe – in line with the econometric evidence cited in Section 2 – that a range of other interventions are likely to be significant in the medium-to-long terms. These include: family planning and women's education and labour market participation (to reduce youth bulges), promoting education among boys and girls, strengthening governance and enabling economic diversification (to counter resource dependency).

Box 1: Mini-Case Study – Libya

Libya's conflict began in February 2011 during the Arab Spring, when rebels took up arms against the Qaddafi regime. NATO launched Operation Unified Protector that year to avert large-scale civilian casualties. After years of unstable governance, Libya descended into civil war in May 2014; numerous militia groups and three opposing governments between Tripoli and Tobruk eventually rose to fill the resulting power vacuum. At least 20-armed groups are engaged in the conflict, each fitting into one of three general categories: non-jihadist, jihadist and pro-government. The internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) – one of three competing governments between Tripoli and Tobruk – is plagued by infighting and has little popular support.

The state's instability and governance gap had destabilizing effects across the region. Due to extremely porous borders between Libya and neighbouring countries, illicit arms, drugs and refugees consistently flow across the Sahara and the Sahel. The influx of arms and trained fighters from Libya has already played a critical role in the destabilization of northern Mali, for example, and risks affecting Tunisia, Algeria and the wider Sahel.

Already a launching point for refugees and migrants seeking asylum in Italy, competition for territory and resources shifts fighting throughout the country and contributes to an ever-greater number of refugees travelling towards Europe. As of August 2016, UNHCR reports 37,000 registered asylum-seekers and refugees in Libya and 435,000 internally displaced persons, many of whom intend to migrate north. Recent operations against ISIS in Sirte are likely to increase this, though as cities are liberated refugee numbers may stabilize. The ongoing conflict and Libya's otherwise limited capacity portends refugees will continue to use dangerous trafficking and smuggling routes to reach Europe.

Current Efforts to Support Stabilisation

The United Nations operates in Libya through the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), which does not include a peacekeeping component. It has been pursuing a political settlement to the conflict under the leadership of the UN Special Envoy since but has faced limited buy-in from particular sides of the crisis; and the UN's envoy position has changed hands repeatedly over the past few years. Beyond the peace talks, and despite being comprised of 15 agencies, the United Nations has found it difficult to maintain a robust humanitarian and development field presence or support the following: technical advice to the GNA, the creation of a new constitution, promoting the rule of law, controlling the proliferation of arms, building governance capacity, SSR and DDR. Other IOs and INGOs have had a hard time operating in Libya. Nearly all international staff were withdrawn from the country when the civil war began in May 2014. Most IOs and INGOs operate today from Tunisia with minimal in-country staff, thereby minimizing their programmes' effectiveness. These organisations' results has also been blunted by funding shortfalls; Libya has (as of mid-November) received only 30% of the funds requested in the UN-coordinated humanitarian appeal. Most of the funds contributed to far are focused on health, refugee and migrant issues and civil society development – which is not uncommon for a humanitarian portfolio but which also means relatively lesser investment is going into areas such as livelihoods, education and peacebuilding.[11]

Foreign militaries have operated in Libya sporadically since 2011 and have primarily been focused on operations against extremist groups. For instance, the United States, in coordination with the GNA, conducts airstrikes against ISIL and against terrorist strongholds throughout Libya in support of US-led Operation Odyssey Lightning.

Brief Commentary for Discussion

Ultimately, what emerges from Libya is not necessarily a fragmented strategy but rather a situation, which offers no clear entry-points for genuine engagement. Diplomats have little leverage over armed groups to promote compliance with peace agreements, and the absence of security means that foreign aid is hard to deliver effectively (not to mention that it would have little chance of making a dent into a conflict of this scale). Military options have likewise remained limited aside from counter-terror operations given the number of armed groups in the country and the relatively sophistication of their weaponry. Ultimately this brief case study – which has parallels in Syria, Yemen, the eastern DR Congo and potentially elsewhere – ultimately points not to any overarching strategic or tactical failure but instead reflects international actors' realist decision not to engage to aggressively in an entrenched situation that offers few prospects for international actors to "project stability". Containment, rather than stabilisation, may instead be viewed as the appropriate security strategy. Such a strategy, buoyed by humanitarian aid, essentially appears to be the de facto reality adopted by most international actors today.

4. Implications for NATO[12]

NATO, as an Alliance focused on collective defence, has little record – aside from supporting small-scale reconstruction activities through national Provincial Reconstruction Teams – in primarily civilian realms. One could also argue that the Alliance lacks the culture, mind-set or consistency – in terms of personnel and priorities – to get involved in areas like social and economic development or other traditionally civilian realms. Even NATO's renewed rhetorical emphasis on "projecting stability" reflects a lack of appreciation for the perspective of international civilian entities. That is, the term "stability" – despite the controversial use of the term "stabilisation" in a growing number of UN peace operations – is greeted with hostility by much of the UN and INGO

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[11] Refugee and migrant response programs have received $7.8 million, health initiatives have received $9.8 million, and food security has received $10.8 million.

[12] This section of the paper begins to provide more overtly the author's analysis and opinions; hence, in-text citations are kept to a minimum in order to avoid implicating external organisations in the positions presented here.

world as an authoritarian term. Furthermore, the notion of "projecting" stability suggests a sense that NATO intends to impose stability on others from afar rather than truly investing in collaborative partnerships on the ground.

In addition, the available econometric evidence raises real questions about NATO's current notion of projecting stability via security sector capacity building. Will external security support lead to repression or military abuses and further alienate the state from its citizenry, as some research suggests? Or will international security sector engagement genuinely be able to overcome deep-rooted political, social-cultural and economic issues and interests, particularly where local security services have for years or decades been in corruption, smuggling, or factionalism, ethno-tribalism or sectarianism like in many parts of contemporary Syria and Libya?

These questions merit serious consideration as NATO continues to refine just what it means by projecting stability. Such deliberations should go beyond a narrow understanding of collective defence and instead consider whether the Alliance ought to return to the definition of projecting stability embedded in the 1990 London Communiqué – one which included security cooperation but also economic and political/governance support for countries in its wider area of concern. As the options listed below suggest, NATO may need to move fundamentally beyond the security sector if it really wishes to engender a durable form of peace and stability.

4.1. Where to Engage

One of the most fundamental questions for the Alliance is not only what to do but also where to focus its attentions. While such a question may appear to be unnecessary given that particular countries appear to pose the greatest challenges for terrorism, displacement and so on – NATO should approach this question carefully and consider options such as those below.

- *Clear Security Threats:* The most obvious option would see NATO engaging in countries such as Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and perhaps Mali or Nigeria, countries which are home to extremist groups that have targeted NATO members and which have impelled displacement towards Europe, in particular. While these countries clearly have tremendous needs and pose incredible risks, they may also be viewed as quite crowded. Each has extensive political, humanitarian and developmental engagement by UN agencies and dozens of major NGOs (and hundreds of smaller ones). They are also host to competing regional and international interests that would create major minefields for the Alliance and likely put NATO into conflict with individual Member Countries. NATO security support would likely be minor in relation to recorded and un-recorded support to factions in these countries, and any civilian-type aid would risk conflicts with aid agencies and would have limited impact given challenges related to humanitarian access and fraud.

- *Neighbours to Instability:* Rather than engaging in countries most directly affected by particular security crises and conflicts, NATO may wish to focus instead on ostensibly stable countries whose peace and security is increasingly undermined by their war-torn neighbours. Here one may clearly see benefits of engagement in countries like Jordan and Lebanon, which are home to large numbers of Syrian refugees, as well as Kenya, Mali, Algeria and other countries affected by instability in places like Somalia and Libya. NATO engagement in such countries could focus on both security sector strengthening as well as on targeted aid projects intended to mitigate discontentment among their citizenries.

- ▪ ***Neglected Crises:*** The greatest opportunity, however, may be for NATO to engage in what one could term neglected crises, those that do not necessarily have extensive international engagement but which could be future sources of chaos in the wider region. These include places like Mali, Niger and the wider Sahel, which have seen growing-but-inadequate levels of external security and humanitarian engagement. Alternatively, there is scope for NATO to engage in countries with major neglected crises, which have nonetheless been hesitant to engage with the United Nations given that it is seen as overly intrusive and concerned with dictating to authorities. These include countries with unpopular regimes in places like Ethiopia, Sudan and Algeria (specifically with regards to the Western Sahara question). NATO could provide an alternative to the UN in these contexts and one which is less afraid to work with governments and security services that may have room for improvement with regards to civilian protection and human rights.

The options above are presented for NATO to consider, though it is clear that NATO may wish to avoid overly crowded and complex crises where its added value may ultimately be relatively negligible and where its engagement could draw more criticism than accolades. That said, the Alliance might – in determining where to engage – need to recalibrate its sensitivity to criticism. If NATO is less concerned with criticism from human rights and humanitarian groups, it may find itself more willing and able to engage where its security support is needed rather than necessarily popular.

4.2. With Whom to Partner

The Alliance's geographical focus will largely influence its on-the-ground partners, though this is still a question that requires attention since nearly any context will offer a wide range of potential partners beyond governments and security services (who would need to be a major component of any NATO engagement).

- ▪ ***IOs and INGOs:*** NATO has a track record of reaching out to UN agencies and INGOs and de-conflicting activities with them in places like Afghanistan. However, the Alliance but doesn't actually collaborate with these two types of actors – which are themselves heterogeneous and fraught with tensions[13] – on any scale outside of periodic exercises and trainings. There is a good reason for this: those types of civilian actors will never be willing to engage more broadly with a military alliance regardless of anything that representatives of such organisations say in meetings. While the risks facing humanitarians and military actors will drive periodic collaboration, including de-confliction, in hostile environments, humanitarian organisations will continue to abide by policies, which render more robust engagement at the project-level with the military (or a military alliance) a "last resort". Such thinking also permeates much of the international development community even outside of crisis zones. Hence, extensive NATO engagement with these sorts of actors is a low-odds prospect and one which would likely yield relatively limited successes primarily with smaller organisations, those at the fringes of humanitarian and development work and periodically with certain elements in more security-conscious bodies such as the UN Department of Peacekeeping

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[13] This refers to the fact that IOs and INGOs tend to differ widely in terms of their scale, funding, approaches, adherence to different principles and institutional cultures. Consider for instance that even the INGO category includes everything from small-scale, volunteer-driven organisations to global INGOs with more than a billion dollars in funding annually.

Operations (DPKO) or the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the latter of which has a generally poor reputation among other UN agencies and INGOs.

▪ ***Regional Organisations:*** NATO has a greater chance of [collaborating with regional entities](#) such as the GCC, the African Union (AU) – and its sub-regional economic communities like ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD[14] – as well as with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and a number of others. To some extent, these entities view NATO as a fellow regional organisation and have fewer qualms about collaborating with the Alliance given that the AU and others have their own military and security apparatuses and forums. Furthermore, as the author's own research shows, these organisations are increasingly engaging in humanitarian work as well, often by more willingly engaging national militaries. Hence, NATO may wish to consider collaborating with these organisations on a range of issues, from migration management and border control to counter-trafficking (in persons, weapons, narcotics, etc.), humanitarian response and in other to-be-determined areas. As NATO proceeds to do so, it should be cognizant of the varied reputations of individual organisations and the behind-the-scenes control that particular countries exercise over them. For instance, the League of Arab States has a controversial reputation in the region, thus suggesting that NATO may prefer to engage instead with organisations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the GCC, which have somewhat overlapping memberships.

▪ ***Businesses and the Private Sector:*** Lastly, NATO may see benefits in engaging more fully with the private sector in a range of ways. For instance, the experience of the US Taskforce on Business and Stability Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq shows the potential to have military actors promote economic linkages between businesses in unstable countries and those in NATO members like the United States. Alternatively, it is clear that the private sector is at the forefront of using technology to counter some of the root causes of conflict, including limited access to education; Intel and Pearson, for instance, have been engaged in promoting low-cost e-learning tools among Syrian refugees in Lebanon. NATO could work with these sorts of initiatives and greatly scale them up in order to tackle issues like employment and education in a manner that many IOs and INGOs do not – thus avoiding too much risk of overlap or duplication.

4.3. What to Do

The following are some options for NATO to consider rooted in the discussion above. The author has consciously attempted to avoid typical areas like military-to-military cooperation and training initiatives and instead to consider less conventional proposals.

▪ ***Develop Focused Expertise:*** As the saying goes, "to defend everything is to defend nothing". By attempting to engage with several elements of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work, NATO will spread itself too thin and be seen as a "tinkerer" rather than a meaningful contributor. To avoid this issue, the Alliance should identify one or two topics at the intersection of security and socio-economic development and establish world-leading expertise in them. The most likely candidates here include issues like DDR or the negotiation

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[14] These acronyms refer to the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, and the Inter-governmental Authority on Development.

and implementation of ceasefires and humanitarian "pauses" (i.e., how governments and non-state armed groups can ensure their members avoid violating them). A slightly broader issue area would focus on the most effective means of discouraging migration through livelihood assistance and communications campaigns – or even something such as e-learning. NATO should recruit leading experts in the thematic area ultimately selected and should take others steps such as develop relevant guidelines or establishing a roster of deployable experts. This would involve engaging overtly and publicly with these issues, a move which could be politically complicated for the Alliance. To that end, such work would generally need to be "firewalled" into a completely separate research and advisory institution (a notion that is further outlined below).

▪ ***Establish a Genuine NATO Research, Education and Training Arm:*** At present NATO has internal research capability and engages in regular training activities, missions and exercises. However, the Alliance lacks a genuine, large-scale research, education and training entity that has the capacity to build the capacity of military officers, government officials, INGO personnel and other from around the world. Instead, NATO has divided these sorts of engagements across myriad entities such as centres of excellence, the NATO Defence College, NATO School Oberammergau, training centres and so on. This fragmentation prevents NATO from establishing deep connections across areas of concern and with civilian and military entities. To overcome this gap, the Alliance should consider establishing a major research, training and education institution that produces public research documents – similar to and far beyond those published by the former and widely-known NATO Civil-Military Fusion Centre – and which is open to applicants from around the world (see Annex A for a more detailed description of such an institution). A well-funded training and education institution should be seen as something that senior police and military officers, city mayors, civil society leaders and others from within and beyond NATO should aspire to attend. The institution should take in promising young leaders and academics, offering and offer them fellowships in a comfortable and engaging atmosphere that they will remember fondly as they rise through the ranks (akin to what the US and UK defence establishments already provide to partner militaries).

▪ ***Build Capacities for Conflict Resolution:*** NATO has the best chances of making a meaningful difference in those areas of international peace and security that other stakeholders have neglected. Conflict resolution, including mediation and the facilitation of peace talks and national dialogue or constitution-writing processes, is one such area. At present, the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and its Mediation Support Unit (MSU) play a role in this area but have generally have exceptionally limited financial and human resources, as evident in their continued reliance on fewer than a dozen senior figures such as Lakhdar Brahimi and Staffan de Mistura to tackle major crises. Other UN agencies periodically get involved in such issues, but rarely in a substantial and sustained manner. This is not to suggest that NATO should take over mediating disputes around the world, though it could become involved in training negotiators and mediators both in member countries and in the broader neighbourhood. Doing so would increase the potential for conflicts at the local level to be addressed before they grow out of control and might also lead to more peaceful cultures and political processes. Indeed, NATO's work in this area would likely need to begin at the relatively low levels, among subnational government officials, mayors and so on in places like Libya, Tunisia or Jordan, before focusing on higher levels. To do so NATO would likely need

to partner with a major institution involved in this area or, more likely, establish and fund a network among institutions (e.g., the [Berghof Foundation](#) in Germany, [PRIO](#) in Norway, etc.) across and beyond Member Countries to work closely with NATO on this initiative.

- ***Create a Development Financing Institution.*** Among the most ambitious proposals would be for NATO to establish an independent civilian institution in order to undertake assessments of conflict and security dynamics – with a focus on socio-economic and governance factors – and then target resources to those sectors and locations where they would do the greatest good in promoting stability. Doing so could not be done within the scope of the Alliance as it is currently structured and would require the establishment of a largely independent, civilian-led development agency or trust fund that would consolidate resources from Member Countries then pass along funds to local actors for project implementation in the same manner, say, as the UN Peacebuilding Fund. The goal would not be for NATO to replicate a UN agency with its high overheads and tendency to use numerous layers of subcontracting. Instead, the idea would be for NATO to engage in what one might term "venture donorship" in which the Alliance gives funds to field-level organisations in areas of concern for targeted projects that are gap filling and catalytic. The Alliance would need to be willing to accept the greater risks (e.g., corruption or fraud) and potential rewards that come with channelling resources to smaller, field-level organisations.

4.4. Concluding Thoughts and Questions

Across all of the options above is a recurring motif: NATO should avoid asking permission from those outside of the Alliance to get involved in issues beyond its core military competencies. While NATO needs to be aware what the United Nation and others are generally doing on issues such as DDR, conflict resolution and humanitarian action – no one owns these issues. There are tens of thousands of international and local NGOs working on humanitarian and development issues as well as peacebuilding and related issues in war-torn and otherwise unstable environments.

NATO has the right and perhaps responsibility to plant its flag, make decisions based on evidence, systematically monitor and improve its work and ultimately earn a "place at the table" through high-quality action on vital regional security issues, including education, employment and migration management, in a new and traditionally civilian manner. As NATO prepares to do so, it may wish to consider – alongside the options presented earlier in this section – questions such as:

- If, as this paper suggests, the language of "projecting stability" is likely to be misunderstood or perceived poorly among many non-NATO actors, what terminology could be adopted while conveying the same meaning and intent?

- How can NATO monitor the current and future state of peace and stability within its wider neighbourhood (i.e., strategic spaces in North Africa, the Middle East, Eurasia and beyond) in a way that goes beyond traditional methods that primarily focus on proximate, traditional security threats?

- To what extent can and should NATO engage directly and overtly with social, economic and governance-related elements of peace and stability in its wider neighbourhood? How should it do so – including through and beyond the set of options outlined here?

- How can NATO's military train-and-equip programmes avoid pitfalls, seen elsewhere, of bolstering repressive elements in particular governments and societies and instead emphasize things such as community policing and accountable, transparent governance?

By addressing these sorts of questions, NATO will be better poised to consider why, where, how and with whom it can genuinely cultivate a more durable peace across key areas of concern.

Annex A: Outlines of a NATO Research, Training & Education Centre

As this paper suggests, NATO may benefit from a consolidated research, training and education institution that is able to gain a global reputation outside of the Alliance. This would aid NATO in being seen as a major player and thought-leader in cultivating a more durable peace. This annex briefly offers some additional thoughts on what such a centre might entail.

Research

- *Fellowship programme:* This would enable NATO to build relationships with young scholars and experienced professionals (e.g., aid workers, civil society leaders, business figures) who are seeking out fully-funded fellowship opportunities that would allow them to produce major research documents that would be released under the centre's banner. Fellows could also contribute to the various other activities noted below.

- *Data resources:* Consolidating data on a particular issue or set of issues is a tried and true means of gaining attention for any relatively new institution. NATO's research centre could produce a security-oriented index akin to the Global Peace Index but may instead wish to avoid sensitive issues and instead focus on assembling a large database from existing sources. This could allow readers, for instance, to click on a particular country on a map and access humanitarian, development, governance, aid funding and security indicators assembled from dozens of other websites (akin to what the NATO Civil-Military Fusion Centre previously provided in the Afghanistan Provincial Indicators website).

- *Commissioned publications:* The centre would also benefit from other papers to be produced by NATO personnel, by personnel from Member Countries and by external experts. These could be commissioned as appropriate or could be proposed by potential authors in response to calls for papers issued by the centre. Such documents would help to ensure that the centre is consistently releasing new content in order to build its reputation.

Training

- *In-depth trainings:* The centre should provide training on issue areas where it sees a gap. These might include issues like civil-military collaboration in disaster relief, the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants or the implementation of ceasefires. The important thing will be for NATO to provide in-depth trainings in any areas it chooses and to ensure that trainings are both in-person and offered remotely in the form of online modules that are self-guided (thereby freeing the centre from hiring large numbers of tutors or faculty).

- *Summer schools:* Civilian and military figures commonly seek out advanced training (especially during the summer months), which their employers commonly finance. To this end, NATO may wish to independently, or with another institution, provide weeklong summer schools on broad-based issues such as peace and security or migration and displacement. These courses could be kept relatively low cost so that they are accessible to a wide audience from within and beyond NATO Member Countries. Some courses could be targeted at recent university graduates and early-career professionals while others could be more senior in nature and focused on those with 10+ years of experience.

Education

- *Online certificate programs:* NATO should provide longer online-only courses targeting officials, civil society figures and others in developing and conflict-affected countries in the Alliance's neighbourhood. These could address broad-based issues such as "peace and conflict studies" or "conflict and transitions" and could last anywhere from three to six months. Educational programs will generally need to result in a formal qualification such as a certificate. This is something that NATO could do in partnership with the NATO Defence College or with a university based in a Member Country. Ideally, NATO would be able to provide such an offering while essentially outsourcing much of the work to a partner university rather than hiring its own set of faculty and online tutors.

Outreach/Other

- *Events:* The centre would likely need to organise events in a variety of countries, something which could be done in partnership with universities, think tanks and government agencies across Member Countries and beyond. Such events should be webcast so that they are accessible to a wide audience.

- *Podcasts:* Increasingly people are accessing information in audio format. While the return-on-investment from a podcast will need to be assessed, it could be a useful means of reaching an educated audience around the world. Podcasts could deal with different themes or could be the equivalent of TED talks from NATO – and available not only in podcast form but also as YouTube videos.

- *Online bibliography:* A NATO centre could draw attention simply by better organising the wide range of publications available on peace and security issues around the world. This online bibliography would index – rather than host – publications so that they are easier for readers to find. It could be seen as an authoritative directory of several thousand publications, which students, academics, policymakers and practitioners could use in order to find the most relevant materials. It could include, for instance, a functionality where readers could rate various publications or "recommend" them to other users of the bibliography.

Annex B: Mini-Case Study – Mali

A host of interconnected and complex challenges threatens Mali's stability,, but three immediate problems have widespread repercussions beyond the West African region: porous borders, extremism and a refugee crisis. The borders between the countries of the Sahel, including Mauritania, Mali and Algeria, are notoriously porous, allowing a steady stream of illegal arms, people, drugs and black market material across the region. As such, Malian instability is both a product and a cause of greater regional instability. The flow of well-armed fighters from Libya played a crucial role in the 2012 coup d'état, and fighters from Algeria continue to join extremist movements in northern Mali.[15] Furthermore, attacks allegedly committed by Malian terror groups destabilize border towns and refugee camps in neighbouring Mauritania and Niger.[16]

As of late 2016, the effects of the radicalization in Mali is largely contained to the country and its neighbours, however the groups and their popularity are growing. The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), a terror group operating in central and northern Mali, has pledged allegiance to ISIS.[17] Ansar Dine, another extremist group, also pledged to impose Shari'a throughout the region.[18] The strong ideological opposition Islamist groups hold towards the West has manifested in violent attacks on Westerners in Mali, particularly targeting aid workers, missionaries and foreign peacekeepers.[19]

UNHCR reports that September 2016 saw the largest exodus of Malians from the north into neighbouring states since the height of the crisis in 2013.[20] As of September 30, 2016, 134,811 Malians were living as refugees in neighbouring countries and 33,042 remain internally displaced.[21] UNHCR documented 17,895 refugees in Mali of mixed origin in August 2016, a third of whom intended Italy to be their final destination via Libya.[22] This influx of people will further strain the neighbouring countries' capacity and resources, and their movement through Libya and Tunisia toward Europe will contribute to crises there.[23]

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[15] Marina Caparini, *The Mali crisis and responses by regional actors* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2015), 7.; May Ying Welsh, "Making sense of Mali's armed groups," *Al Jazeera* 17 January 2013, accessed 1 August 2016, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/20131139522812326.html.;

[16] Balima, Boureima. "Gunmen kill five Niger soldiers as Mali insurgency spreads." *Reuters,* 8 November 2016. Accessed 9 November 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-niger-security-idUSKBN1331MV.; PressTV. "22 soldiers killed in attack on Malian refugee camp in Niger." *PressTV,* 7 October 2016. Accessed 10 November 2016, http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/10/07/487988/Niger-Mali-terror-attack-Daesh-ISIS-alQaeda.

[17] Prince, S.J. "WATCH: al-Qaeda in Mali pledges Allegiance to the Islamic State." Heavy. http://heavy.com/news/2016/10/isis-islamic-state-bayat-allegiance-mali-murabitin-al-mourabitoun-brigade-al-qaeda-aqim-full-youtube-video-mp4-download/ (retrieved November 11, 2016).

[18] Agence France-Presse. "Sharia law enforced in Mali." The National. http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/africa/sharia-law-enforced-in-mali (retrieved November 11, 2016).

[19] U.S. Passports & International Travel. "Mali Travel Warning." United States Department of State. https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/mali-travel-warning.html (retrieved November 13, 2016).

[20] United Nations High Commission for Refugees. "Despite Mali peace accord, more flee persistent violence." UNHCR. http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/11/582043509/despite-mali-peace-accord-flee-persistent-violence.html (retrieved November 11, 2016).

[21] OCHA. "Mali." *Humanitarian Bulletin*, September 30, 2016, 1.

[22] United Nations. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. October 2016. Accessed November 13, 2016. http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR Mali Operational Update - September 2016.pdf.

[23] OCHA. "Mali." *Humanitarian Bulletin*, September 30, 2016, 1.

Current Efforts to Support Stabilization

In the face of these challenges and chronic underdevelopment in most areas of society, a range of actors are working in Mali to both help stabilize the current situation and prepare Mali for a more resilient and peaceful future. The United Nations has a strong presence in Mali, most notably through the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This peacekeeping mission employs 13,289 military personnel, 1,920 police, and 1,619 civilians.[24] Due to the attacks on Western institutions carried out by extremist groups in the ungoverned north, MINUSMA is the world's deadliest peacekeeping mission. [25] MINUSMA's primary mandate is to support all parties to the conflict in implementing the 2015 peace agreement and the "gradual restoration of state authority." [26] In addition, peacekeepers have a strong mandate to protect civilians and promote human rights, assist international development efforts, and defend the UN and civilians against asymmetric threats. [27] MINUSMA and related UN agencies are some of the only international actors still present in the remote and dangerous north, playing an important role in supporting Malian army capacity and defending against jihadi group re-occupation of northern towns.[28]

While NATO is not directly involved in the Malian conflict in 2013, the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM-Mali) provides training and logistical support to the Malian armed forces (FAMA), with the aim to improve FAMA's capacity to undertake, eventually, military operations to restore Malian territorial integrity and reduce the threat posed by terrorist groups.[29] Since EUTM-Mali's inception in 2013, the mission has delivered training to two-thirds of Mali's army.[30] EUTM-Mali also has a mandate to contribute to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process where applicable. However, EUTM-Mali's mandate does not include the far north; this is consistent with a historical pattern where southern Mali receives the primary share of investment and international aid. It is important to note that while the European Union also has a civilian mission designed to bolster the Sahel more broadly, it too focuses on fighting terrorism and crime.[31]

The French national forces further support FAMA through Operation Barkhane. Extending throughout Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso, the operation is designed to coordinate and implement a regional response to transnational security threats in the Sahel. Roughly 3,500 French soldiers make up Barkhane.[32]

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[24] "MINUSMA's Personnel (March 2015)." MINUSMA. 2016. Accessed November 13, 2016. http://minusma.unmissions.org/en/personnel.

[25] Gaffey, Conor. "Peacekeeping in Mali: The U.N.'s Most Dangerous Mission." Newsweek. http://europe.newsweek.com/mali-un-mission-northern-mali-conflict-aqim-africa-peacekeeping-468907?rm=eu (retrieved November 10, 2016).

[26] United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. "Mandate." MINUSMA. http://minusma.unmissions.org/en/mandate (retrieved November 8, 2016).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Vermeij, Lotte. *MINUSMA: Challenges on the Ground.* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, 2015), 2-3.

[29] European Union Training Mission in Mali. "Mandate & Concepts." EUTM-Mali. http://www.eutmmali.eu/about-eutm-mali/mandate-concepts/ (retrieved November 8, 2016).
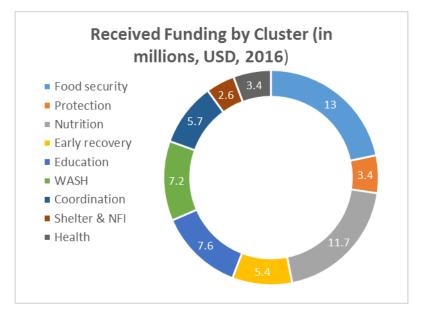
[30] Ibid.

[31] European Union Training Mission in Mali. "The EU's comprehensive approach." EUTM-Mali http://www.eutmmali.eu/about-eutm-mali/the-eus-comprehensive-approach/ (retrieved November 8, 2016).

[32] Ministère de la Défense. "Opération Barkhane." Gouvernement de la Republique de France. http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/sahel/dossier-de-presentation-de-l-operation-barkhane/operation-barkhane (retrieved November 12, 2016).

While transnational and state actors provide immediate capacity support for the Malian army and government, INGOs generally implement projects concerning long-term growth and prosperity; few engage in reconstruction and medium-term conflict stabilisation efforts. Agriculture and food security is the largest concern for many development agencies, though they dedicate several programs towards education, health and promoting women's empowerment. Mercy Corps, an American INGO, bases many of its operations on increasing agricultural yield and promoting resilience amongst Malian farmers and pastoralists. The IRTOUN program, for example, supplied emergency food vouchers during the drought season in exchange for the completion of agricultural improvement projects. This program developed irrigation systems, drainage canals and improved gardens.[33] MyAgro, a new agricultural start-up, sells fertilisers and seeds to rural farmers using a layaway system that recipients pay into using a mobile phone platform. The organisation also provides training on agricultural techniques designed to boost output, with the goal of moving families away from subsistence farming and doubling average household income from $2 to $4 per day.[34]

NGOs like Oxfam focus programming on the empowerment of vulnerable communities, particularly women and youth. Through the My Rights My Voice campaign, beginning in 2015, youth ambassadors campaign for greater youth involvement in governance and advocate for the rights of youth across Mali. In 2014, this program worked with schools to raise awareness about education rights, built a partnership with the National Youth Association, met with ministers in the national government, and received training to increase the efficacy of their advocacy. They also hosted an international dialogue that was attended by roughly 200 people, and raised awareness about Ebola prevention during the height of the epidemic. [35]

From a sector-level perspective, development efforts in Mali continue to be critically underfunded; the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) called for a $116.2 million investment to bolster food security in Mali in 2016, but so far only $13 million has

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[33] Mali Office, "A Better Life Grows from Four Tons of Potatoes." Mercy Corps.
https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/mali/better-life-grows-four-tons-potatoes (retrieved November 13, 2016).
[34] myAGRO. "Our Model." myAGRO. http://www.myagro.org/model/our-model/ (retrieved November 13, 2016).
[35] Davies, Imogen, Jane Garton, and Richard Chilvers, *My Rights, My Voice Annual Progress Report 2014, (*Oxfam International: London, 2015), 14.

been received. Food security represents the largest sector in international aid for Malian development. An additional $11.7 million has been distributed in support of better nutrition, and $7.6 million for education efforts. In comparison, early recovery and protection have received only $5.4 and $3.4 million respectively.[36]

Due to security concerns and accessibility, INGO activities are largely concentrated in the southern half of Mali. Where northern programs exist, they rarely stray from the banks of the Niger. While these geographic restrictions may provide aid to most of the Malian population, this reality also serves to widen existing inequalities in service and resource delivery to impoverished and alienated northern populations.[37]

Moving Forward and Lessons Learned

Mali continues to suffer from an acute lack of capacity in all areas of society, from governance to funding to human security. High-level engagement by actors like the UN and the EU focus greatly on strengthening military capacity, which, while very important in the immediate term, may be undermined in the long run if the actors do not implement a comprehensive transition effectively. This is reflected in the fact that international funding for peace and reconciliation efforts dropped drastically after the Algiers Accord was signed in 2015. Between 2015 and 2016, the UNHCR's budget fell by $19 million, from $68 million to $49 million.[38] Support for stabilisation cannot end with the inking of a piece of paper.

Conversely, INGOs and civil society tend to focus their efforts on long-term development projects, like increasing agricultural productivity to help combat food insecurity. In situations like Mali, international engagement by all actors must build a stronger bridge between the two levels of engagement. Putting greater resources into medium and long-term reforms, like security sector reform, could help bridge the current divide. All international organisations must seek the correct moral and financial balance between impactful short-term projects and longer-term, comprehensive development and liberalization efforts if meaningful change is to be achieved.

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Let us know your thoughts on this Projecting Stability report by emailing us at **natocde@act.nato.int**

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[36]OCHA. "Mali." *Humanitarian Bulletin*, September 30, 2016, 5.

[37] Lackenbauer, Helene, Magdalena Tham Lindell, and Gabriella Ingerstad. *If our men won't fight, we will: A Gendered Analysis of the Armed Conflict in Mali* (Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut: Sweden, 2015), 32.

[38] United Nations High Commission for Refugees. "Mali." UNHCR. http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2554#_ga=1.261830154.623342751.1479171950 (retrieved November 14, 2016).