



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

AN INITIATIVE OF
THE WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AND THE BOBST CENTER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Series: Policing

Interview no.: A27

Interviewee: Kristiana Powell

Interviewer: Arthur Boutellis

Date of Interview: 18 June, 2008

Location: New York, NY
United States

Innovations for Successful Societies, Bobst Center for Peace and Justice
Princeton University, 83 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey, 08544, USA
www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties

BOUTELLIS: Good afternoon. Today is the 18th of June 2008 and I am now sitting with Kristiana Powell who is security sector reform programme officer in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions at the United Nations (UN) in New York. My name is Arthur Boutellis, I'm an interviewer with the Institutions for Fragile States. First, thank you for your time. Before we start the interview I'd like you to please confirm that you have read and understood the informed consent and legal release forms.

POWELL: *I have.*

BOUTELLIS: I'd like to start the interview by learning a little bit more about your personal background, particularly the jobs you held before you took this position and how did you get involved in police reform and security sector issues overseas?

POWELL: *Ok, after I finished my graduate work in International Relations, I took an internship that then evolved into a longer term position with the Canadian research center called Project Ploughshares where I was looking primarily at conflict mapping and also led a project on the African Union's emerging peace and security regime. I then took that research to a Canadian research center called the North-South Institute where I continued to do work on, with my colleagues there, the African Union (AU), particularly their engagement in Darfur and in Burundi. Throughout that piece of research we started asking questions about the "what next?" What happened after the AU transitioned into the UN and then the UN made decisions to either downsize or disengage? It brought up questions of security sector reform (SSR) which we saw as a key component of a sustainable transition from an international engagement to a nationally led peace-building process.*

So, because Burundi was chosen as one of our examples for the AU's engagement and its transition to the UN we decided to focus our efforts, in full partnership, with a Burundian research center called the Centre d'Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits (CENAP). I was sent to look at the SSR process in Burundi over a longer period of time, about a year and a half. I should note that CENAP is still doing cutting edge work in this area, they really are a leading research center on SSR in Burundi. That project itself which took place—the research itself took place between June 2006 and October 2007. It looked at three elements of security sector reform: military transformation, civilian disarmament, and I think most importantly- for this project but also in general for our focus on protection of civilians- was police reform.

So that project, as I mentioned, is ongoing. It is also linked to similar research that the North-South Institute is undertaking with partners in south Sudan and in Haiti. Particularly in Haiti they focus almost exclusively on police reform. I left the North-South Institute in November 2007 to take a position here with DPKO (Department of Peacekeeping Operations), in the emerging security sector reform team, and that's where I am at present.

BOUTELLIS: Which is part of a new office of Rule of Law?

POWELL: *That's right. The security sector reform team is actually embedded in the front office of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, which then in itself is in DPKO and that is headed by Assistant Secretary-General Dmitry Titov.*

BOUTELLIS: Before we get back to the Burundi case, do you want to say anything about your current work and the mandate of this SSR unit based in the headquarters?

POWELL: *Absolutely. The security sector reform team in DPKO is one element of a broader system-wide initiative to develop a common approach to security sector reform. With UNDP (United Nations Development Program) we co-chair a security sector reform taskforce which also engages or has membership from six other UN entities engaged in security sector reform across the system. I can list those if you want, or we can get back to that later.*

We were, on the basis of a mandate given by the C34 – which is the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations within the General Assembly,- requested to prepare a comprehensive report on the UN's approach to security sector reform in order to develop a coherent and holistic UN position and approach to SSR. Over the past nine months—since my time here- we worked on producing this Secretary-General's report entitled: "Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform." This report is being debated by the C34 and the Security Council.

We are now moving forward with this report in full partnership with our SSR task force members and developing a number of different specific initiatives to build the UN's capacity to deliver on SSR in a holistic and coherent way. There are a number of initiatives: the development of guidelines and training, assessment of best practices and lessons learned as well as other pieces of a fairly comprehensive inter-agency program on SSR.

Ultimately our end goal is to put ourselves in the position to provide timely and high quality support to SSR, or field missions that have an SSR mandate, as well as other UN field presences with an SSR which are mandated to support national authorities in SSR.

BOUTELLIS: Now getting back to Burundi where you have done most of your work related to SSR. You said the project ran from June '06 to October '07. When did you arrive in Burundi and can you give us your description of the situation, the main stakeholders and generally the status of public order and crime in the country at that time?

POWELL: *At that time? The project itself actually is still running, so it ran from basically November 2005, it started in November 2005, with funding from the International Development Research Center in Canada, and is continuing to run now with funding from a number of difference sources including 'la coopération belge'. So I don't want to say that it started and ended with the timelines that I gave you. I actually lived in Burundi between June 2006 and July 2007.. So with an exception of about a three month period I was in Burundi at that time and then returned for about a month in October 2007. So June 2006 to July 2007 and again October 2007. So a lot of my information, I should note, a lot of my information is dated. I haven't been to Burundi since October 2007 and I haven't been following the situation as closely as I was then.*

BOUTELLIS: So in June 2006 when you first arrived in the country can you give us an overview of the status of public order and crime and what are the major challenges in terms of security sector?

POWELL: *Sure, I think the best, the most accurate information that I have on that is a survey that we conducted through this project. It was a public perception survey which included a sample size of 400 people in eight different provinces of Burundi. Sorry, I should say eight different communities, five different provinces. Apologies, eight different communities, five different provinces. We conducted this survey in November 2007 at which time we asked people what their main*

concerns were about the security situation in Burundi and what their priorities were for security sector reform. I think that, telling you a bit about that survey, would be the most accurate assessment of the security situation.

BOUTELLIS: So what were the main findings?

POWELL: My work on that focused largely on what people wanted from the police and the military, but their main concerns at that time, and I would imagine it is still the case although I can't say that with any authority, is the high levels of criminality and banditry. And of course more recently there have been fairly consistent outbreaks of conflicts as well. But mostly for people within those communities they were concerned about the day-to-day levels of high crime.

BOUTELLIS: What kinds of crime?

POWELL: It depended on who they identify, largely it was unknown. They weren't sure who was committing these crimes. In some cases it was the demobilized, the ex-combatants, and in some cases it was actually organized groups of gangs that had existed for a fairly long time within the community. So it really varied from community to community. In a number of conflict-prone provinces it was actually the FNL (Forces nationales de libération), or members of the FNL.

BOUTELLIS: One of the rebel groups.

POWELL: Right, one of the rebel groups.

BOUTELLIS: The one that hadn't signed the peace accord.

POWELL: That's right, that's exactly it.

BOUTELLIS: And who just signed in the last two weeks, right?

POWELL: Yes. Also of note is, a not insignificant percentage of the population interviewed, it was about 14%, actually identified the security services as the main perpetrators of crime.

BOUTELLIS: When they say security services, is this like indifferently military and police?

POWELL: Most of them identified the police.

BOUTELLIS: The PNB, Police Nationale du Burundi.

POWELL: Exactly, because of— but some identified the military.

BOUTELLIS: The Forces de Defense Nationales (FDN).

POWELL: Exactly, as well. But where they identified the FDN was more where the FDN was actively combating the FNL. So our conclusion from that was, people identified the PNB (Police Nationale Burundaise) as perpetrators of crime because they had much more daily interaction with the PNB. So they were dealing with these folks on a regular basis. I don't want to suggest that the FDN is any better or worse behaved than the PNB, it's just that people had much more interaction with the PNB than they did with the FDN.

BOUTELLIS: So now looking at security sector reform that had already been engaged for a couple of years, how far along was it and what were some of the major challenges facing security sector reform, again at the time?

POWELL: *Security sector reform writ large or the component pieces?*

BOUTELLIS: Writ large, yes—and what did it consist of, because that is part of the question also. What was the understanding of security sector reform, which components of the security apparatus were part of that?

POWELL: *Good question. The peace agreement in Burundi actually has some fairly clear language on security sector reform revolving almost principally around the reform of the core services, so around the police and the military. The fact that the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission are now engaged in Burundi and looking at security sector reform has, I think really in my view anyway, really broadened people's understanding of what SSR is in Burundi. It's not solely about police and military reform and primarily training of police and military. It is much more about assessing, doing a comprehensive threat assessment, developing a long-term vision strategy of how to reform all elements of the security sector. It is looking at everything about training but all the way up to oversight bodies. So I think we have a much more comprehensive understanding of SSR in Burundi now than we did—.*

BOUTELLIS: With the peacebuilding commission?

POWELL: *In part because of the Peacebuilding Commission, yes. Not solely, but certainly because the Peacebuilding Commission has started to use that language and has provided some modest funding for SSR-related activities. So the question was, what was security sector reform at the time?*

BOUTELLIS: Back then.

POWELL: *Largely focused on police and military. And because the UN had a small arms, or civilian disarmament, rather, mandate, there was a civilian disarmament element of the government strategy as well, in this area. In terms of some of the major challenges— I mentioned some of the concerns about the security services themselves engaging in crime. There are a couple of dimensions there. I think it is easier to talk about the PNB than it is with the FDN with respect to this, but there were, sort of, concerns that the PNB didn't have a real understanding of what job they were meant to perform, what their duties were as a police de proximité. They were meant to be more or less a community police service but there was no real clear understanding of what that means. And there still isn't, I think, in many parts of the world. I think it is very challenging in Canada, for example, and Canada has a lot of resources and a lot of experience in this area. So I'm not judging the Burundians for this, I'm just— this has been our experience, that there was no real understanding of what police de proximité meant, and how the police were meant to engage with the population.*

The flip side of that is that the population didn't really know what they could ask from the police either. So from our surveys we were able to generate a sense that people wanted the PNB to play a much more active and engaged role in their lives, not less of a role, more of a role, but a role focused on helping to reduce banditry, criminality and some of the social problems that they were facing in the community. That was one side of the story.

But the other side of the story is that they were asking police if they could carry water for them. So they weren't sure what the police were supposed to be doing in the communities. There is that sort of fundamental misunderstanding of the actual intended role of the police. That's at the day-to-day level. In addition, at that time, there had not been any basic training of the police. The police was a conglomeration of, some of them former military, but largely ex-combatants coming together to form the security service without any training.

BOUTELLIS: Can you give us a quick background, you're referring to what the 2000 Arusha Agreement led to? Can you give us a quick background of the composition of the new national police?

POWELL: *Yes, so, the PNB at the time that I was there was comprised of about 20,000, and it drew from— 20,000 individuals. They hadn't actually at that time done a census of the composition of the police but there was a general consensus that a large majority of them were former CNDD-FDD (Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie - Forces de défense de la démocratie).*

BOUTELLIS: So ex-combatants from the rebellion.

POWELL: *From the biggest rebel group, which is also the government which may raise issues in terms of chains of command and objectivity. I should mention that in the surveys themselves, in communities where the police were more or less rated as doing a relatively good job, one of the main reasons for that was because the police force was seen as being heterogeneous. It was more ethnically diverse than it had been in the past. There was a lot of fuzziness here, we didn't have a census at the time, we didn't know who was exactly part of the PNB, even how many police officers there were in the PNB. But we were getting some signals from communities that at least some police presences were more diverse in their composition.*

BOUTELLIS: And that was seen as positive.

POWELL: *This was seen as positive. I imagine that would only be relevant in mixed communities, but I don't have that data on me so I can't say that with certainty.*

BOUTELLIS: Were there any other challenges?

POWELL: *Yes. There was this fundamental lack of training, people coming largely from fighting the rebellion or in some cases working within the FAB (Burundi Armed Forces). There was also— that was sort of at the day-to-day level, but at the strategic level, at the time there was no strategic plan for the police. The peace agreement had certain elements built into it about combining or separating different elements of the police with different responsibilities but there was no strategic plan. This resulted in real complications not only for national actors who were trying to think forward, about how to develop a police de proximité but also for international actors and how they might support that. I can maybe talk about international actors a little bit later.*

I would just close that set of challenges by saying that, at the time that I was there, there was also a real lack of fundamental oversight mechanisms within the police. There was the Director General of the Police that was in existence, but its capacity to actually operate or function properly was very, very limited.

BOUTELLIS: That would be considered an internal oversight mechanism.

POWELL: *That's right, that's right. We didn't look a lot at, and I can't speak much about, the external oversight mechanisms. But at the time that I was there the Human Rights Commission was going to get up and running and it was possible that the Human Rights Commission was going to play a role in creating space for civilians to voice concerns about crimes committed by security forces.*

BOUTELLIS: You talked a little bit about the police and military being the main focus of the reform. How did police reform relate to other activities in justice reform or military reform at the time?

POWELL: *I can't speak for justice reform, my work was very much focused on police, probably to its disadvantage. But in terms of military reform, military is a very different institution. In Burundi the military had a fairly clear understanding of the type of training it required. It had a fairly functional military justice system. It didn't face the same kind of challenges that the police did. In terms of relations between the two, of course the DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) process would impact the FDN in the same way that it did the PNB. There was a lot of talk about rightsizing the FDN, as there was talk about rightsizing the PNB. But beyond that I can't talk too much about the linkages between the two.*

BOUTELLIS: So rightsizing because there had been integration of ex-combatants but not—?

POWELL: *Exactly, but not sufficient demobilization. It was an interim measure to bring a lot of these former combatants into one of the security services.*

BOUTELLIS: So the police, for instance, grew...?

POWELL: *Exponentially.*

BOUTELLIS: Exponentially, from, about, prior?

POWELL: *I think it was about 2000 prior, I would really need to double check these figures, but I think it was about 2000 prior to the peace agreement and it grew to about 20,000. They had some thoughts on the ideal size of the force I think it was about 14,000, but I have to—*

BOUTELLIS: 15,000.

POWELL: *Thank you. So that means 5000—.*

BOUTELLIS: Who had some thoughts about—?

POWELL: *Well, that's a good question. The national authorities had one vision and that was much larger than, for example, what the World Bank was suggesting.*

BOUTELLIS: Because the World Bank at that time was leading the DDR process, right?

POWELL: *That's right, the MDRP (Multi-Country Demobilization & Reintegration Program), exactly.*

BOUTELLIS: I'd like now to move to different functional areas of police reform, now, specifically. And if you don't have any particular comments we'll just move to the next one. So the first area is recruitment. I was wondering if you were involved in any ways looking at recruitment strategies.

POWELL: For the PNB?

BOUTELLIS: For the PNB.

POWELL: *No, the only thing I can say on that—we didn't look much at recruitment, other than looking at the fact that there hadn't been a real vetting process.*

BOUTELLIS: There had not been?

POWELL: *There had not been a clear vetting process. Hence, we had this force of 20,000 police officers and they hadn't been appropriately vetted. Vetted meaning there was no sort of background on where they had come from, what kind of training they had. That was due in part to the fact that there had not been a census. But the Belgians, when I was there, had actually initiated a really interesting program to do interviews with each and every PNB officer to find out just how much training experience he or she had, primarily he. Setting up forms that could trace the training experiences of each and every officer. So that we would have some kind of, in five years time, background and understanding of how much training each person had received. That was the first time that anybody had actually put together something comprehensive on how many police there were in the PNB at that time and what their level of education and training was.*

BOUTELLIS: So it was sort of a technical vetting for training and education, but there was no vetting on human rights violation, or—?

POWELL: *No, not through that program as far as I understand. There is a program that is underway right now on the census. I don't know if you're familiar with this. I don't have much information except it is meant to be much more sophisticated.*

BOUTELLIS: Yes, they just launched it a couple of months ago. So your recruitment per se was not at stake because of this integration, right, of former combatants that—?

POWELL: *I'm not sure. That's not a question we asked, it's not something we looked at very closely. But my suspicion would be, since they were trying to downsize, there wasn't a whole lot of recruitment going on. But I can't say that with certainty.*

BOUTELLIS: And when you said the Belgians, you were referring to, was that the Belgian Cooperation, bilateral donor—

POWELL: *The technical, exactly. The BTC (Coopération technique belge), so it is the technical arm of the coopération belge.*

BOUTELLIS: Moving to the next area, training and professionalization. Can you describe some of the training programs that were taking place?

POWELL: *Sure. So there would probably be three main actors, well, two main actors at least in the area of training at that time. The first is Belgium. Belgium is probably the most important actor in the area of training. At the time that I was there they had just launched, this was in, I think, January 2007, had just launched their basic training program which was fundamental training or foundational training for all 20,000 police. That included a whole range of different modules over about three weeks. Some of those modules, I think, I would have to double check that, but at the time I thought it was three weeks. Some of those modules were looking at discipline, ethics and human rights, but there wasn't a lot of focus on those issues. And I understand why, it was really basic training.*

BOUTELLIS: So it was for all new national police officers?

POWELL: All PNB.

BOUTELLIS: Regardless if they were former gendarme, former public security or former ex-combatants.

POWELL: *Exactly, all of them. The French were doing—made a fair bit of progress in leading training at the officers' level. So this was much more in management and executive services, and some in sort of conduct and discipline. But they were focusing largely on the officer level whereas the Belgians were looking at training all police in basic skills.*

There are a couple of non-state actors, civil society organizations, that were doing training as well. One of the most critical ones I think was the Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP), who were doing a lot in terms of bringing together some of the high level command both in the PNB and the FDN. One of the key components of their work was the mixing; it really brought together different actors from different elements of the conflict, who had now come together in a single force but who perhaps weren't communicating with one another.

BOUTELLIS: So though the background was—it was an American led—it is an American NGO—that was originally created not specifically for police programs, right?

POWELL: *That's right.*

BOUTELLIS: And then was applied to the police? How was the—?

POWELL: *My understanding of the BLTP was that it brought together leaders from a whole range of different institutions within Burundi, one of which would have been the security institutions.*

BOUTELLIS: So some of the participants were from the security institutions.

POWELL: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: In terms of the training programs, how well did you think they met some of the needs at the time? With the understanding that you said the basic training was just starting, I mean, most of the trainings were just starting at the time.

POWELL: *That's a good question. Maybe it's a good idea to go back to the survey. Because that, I think, gives us a good sense of people's perceptions. People in our survey had identified human rights training as one of the key priorities for the police. So the fact that the Belgians and the French were responding to that—I mean, there was a coherence between that expressed desire and what the Belgians and the French were doing, is a very good sign. So in that sense I think it was meeting some needs identified by the population. Of course— I mean, the trick is, you have a module on human rights that lasts about three hours over a three-week period, that's not a whole lot. Or you have a small module on interaction with the community that lasts, you know, an afternoon. That's also not a lot of focus on these dimensions. It's a good step forward but it can't be considered a one-off contribution, that would be my assessment of those two initiatives in particular.*

One of the major gaps or challenges that we had identified, certainly in the Belgian training program, that may have been filled since this time, was the lack of focus on the gender dimensions of policing. I remember this well, in one of our interviews we asked a senior official why the Belgian training modules didn't focus on gender, and the response was "because we're focusing on basics." I think that sort of reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the kind of vulnerability that Burundians are facing. Which means there may be a certain mismatch between the training modules that are being developed and delivered and the actual needs of the population.

BOUTELLIS: Have there been any follow up surveys?

POWELL: *Excellent question. My understanding is that CENAP, now funded by 'la coopération belge,' will do a second survey. It will be larger and it will be more comprehensive. And one element of that survey will be to ask people, where PNB who have been trained are deployed, to ask them if it has made any difference, if they've witnessed any behavioral change. I would have to double check that, but as of two weeks ago that was my understanding of what was happening in Burundi with CENAP.*

BOUTELLIS: In terms of the training, who actually conducted the trainings? Who were the actual trainers?

POWELL: *I think it was Kirundi-speaking Burundians. Language was obviously an issue. Delivering training in French to basic level police officers would not have been appropriate.*

BOUTELLIS: Because all police officers do not speak French?

POWELL: *Not all police officers speak French, that's right.*

BOUTELLIS: They speak Kirundi.

POWELL: *Yes, yes.*

BOUTELLIS: At least the Belgian's, so the basic training, was done in Kirundi?

POWELL: *I think it was done in Kirundi. My understanding was that the Belgians were doing a training of trainers, and those trainers who would then go out and deliver were Burundians, which would be very wise.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you have any knowledge of how the curricula were being developed?

POWELL: *I know with the French they had undertaken a comprehensive week-long seminar with higher-ranking PNB officers to help develop the modules that they would deliver. I suspect the Belgians went through a similar process. I would have to double-check that but I'm quite certain that they consulted fairly broadly within the PNB to develop these modules, which is excellent. I would have to confirm that information. What they didn't do, which may be an important lesson learned, is to consult with civil society or representatives of vulnerable populations, which I think could have changed the focus of their module, certainly it would have been much more representative.*

BOUTELLIS: Now looking at your experience from Burundi but other training programs that you may know of, it is often said that when programs are led by the international community they can be quite expensive. Do you have some suggestions or

specific examples of programs that may have been pretty successful and at lower costs?

POWELL: Hm. No, I can't really provide a comparison, to be honest, my experience with this kind of in-depth understanding of training is limited to Burundi. I think cutting costs, we have to be careful what our motivation is there, I think. The only thing I would say about lessons learned from Burundi is that this was an injection of a fair bit of money to do important short-term training, but I hope that it is linked to longer-term strategies for additional funding for longer-term training.

BOUTELLIS: The next area is integration and amalgamation of services. We started talking about the issue of integration because it is a key issue in the Burundian case. We already discussed it a bit but can you describe more in detail how was the integration done following the 2003 cease-fire or the 2000 Arusha Agreements?

POWELL: How was it undertaken?

BOUTELLIS: Yes. How was it undertaken?

POWELL: I can't speak to that, I don't know. I know that by the time I had arrived— my understanding was that MDRP had done a fair bit of work in this area both in terms of helping to integrate the forces but also in terms of some of the DDR process. But by the time I arrived it was already a fairly coalesced group, both the FDN and the PNB.

BOUTELLIS: Are there any lessons you identified from the internal management of the Police Nationale du Burundi, some key challenges in the area of internal management? By internal management we understand the promotion system, finance, asset management, record keeping and so on.

POWELL: I would certainly say, and I don't think many colleagues even within the PNB would disagree, that there was a huge demand on the internal management structure of the PNB and not a lot of capacity. And I mean that in terms of appropriate salary, but also in terms of perhaps even the level of training required to manage a really large police service in a post conflict context. There was not a lot of experience in management either. Now there had been some support from the international community in this area. But, and understandably so I think, Burundians wanted to, want to, set out their own future, set out their own track. I think a number of international actors were quite cautious about the way in which they provided technical support for strategy development and for management development and continue to be quite cautious.

BOUTELLIS: Was there some visible impact of the integration on internal management, meaning having a force going from 2,000 to 20,000? Was this paralleled in building up internal management capacity?

POWELL: Well, keep in mind the majority of the police were probably former CNDD-FDD and that the lines of command or the lines of allegiance between those police, including at the highest level, were probably still quite—lines of command between those high-level police and the government were probably still quite strong. So you could imagine that there may be situations where the police were largely politicized or were instrumentalized by politics. I mean, this is always a risk in any context where these lines of command are still quite clear.

BOUTELLIS: We started talking about the question of external accountability. One of the major issues was the trust of the community and the perception of the communities.

What were some of the efforts to improve that image and enhance accountability to the community?

POWELL: *That's a good question. We worked with some excellent high-ranking PNB who were genuinely committed to improving the service that the PNB was providing to the population. During my time in Burundi there were a couple of initiatives that were undertaken. And I should note that we had the ear of the PNB. Whenever we held consultations on our survey results, whenever we had a question, the PNB were always willing to provide us with the resources we required. We had fairly regular access to the Director General of the PNB. Because I think he and his team really recognized that this was a crucial element in Burundi's recovery.*

So I feel like there was a critical mass at the highest level who were very much concerned about the performance of the PNB and the way that they worked with the population. I do truly believe that. During my time specific initiatives included the development of an ethics commission, that was using our survey results but also doing a whole set of consultations, as far as I understand, with the population.

They also had plans to develop—I don't know if these were actually implemented—but to develop a code of conduct for the PNB. So, there were a couple of versions of this. There was a real sort of understanding that this was a core issue and that the PNB needed to react appropriately.

BOUTELLIS: So you said whenever the survey was presented the PNB was present—

POWELL: *I wouldn't say that. I would say we had, we had, at least, well, several bilateral meetings with very high officials sharing the survey results. We also had at least two focus groups that we shared the survey results with the PNB. We also presented to a whole range of other people.*

BOUTELLIS: What were the responses from the PNB to some of the concerns identified?

POWELL: *Real interest, and also a very frank real interest in the results. Also, I found, very frank, sort of, acknowledgement that the challenges that we were presenting were real challenges that the PNB was facing. That the PNB were in some cases involved in crime. And there was an acknowledgement of that on the part of the highest level. They know this and they're willing—at the time many people seemed to know this and were willing to acknowledge it as a real problem.*

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned earlier in the conversation that there was an oversight, like an internal oversight mechanism, the Director General, that was however not effective. Why was it not effective?

POWELL: *Our view is that it was largely due to real capacity constraints. At the time that I was there—some of this is second hand knowledge, so I can't verify it, but the staff of the Director General of the Police couldn't go out and investigate crimes because they didn't have enough money for petrol. Or there were no computers within the office. Just basic technical capacity constraints, which may have served as a cover for political constraints, but were very real in and of themselves.*

BOUTELLIS: Were there any— well, you said a couple of times that there were a number of cases where the police were involved in crimes, did the Director General investigate some of these?

POWELL: *In theory they were meant to.*

BOUTELLIS: And were there any outcomes from these investigations?

POWELL: *That's a really good question. We had heard that there were a couple of cases that were being investigated by the Director General. I don't know what the outcome was. It was very difficult to talk to anybody who really knew what was happening within that office, in part because of the lack of general organization within the PNB. .*

BOUTELLIS: We started touching on the issue of the risk of politicization because of the number of ex-combatants from the same party as the one who had won the elections.

POWELL: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Were there other issues of politicization, and were there any efforts to build a politically neutral police or to build safeguards against politicization?

POWELL: *The political climate wasn't ripe for that kind of reform.*

BOUTELLIS: That is to say?

POWELL: *That is to say that nobody was talking, at least openly, about how to depoliticize the police or its relationship with the FDN.*

BOUTELLIS: The army then?

POWELL: *Yes, the FDN, the army. So the politics were such that the army was sort of one instrument of—how do I put this? There was a clash, maybe, between the political structure and understanding of the PNB and the FDN. So the PNB was considered largely, perhaps, a CNDD-FDD domain of activity and the FDN was not.*

BOUTELLIS: To understand, because— What was the reason? Was it the army integrated less former CNDD-FDD combatants, or—?

POWELL: *The high command of the army was largely former ex-FAB [ex-Forces Armées Burundaises], is still largely former ex-FAB,*

BOUTELLIS: So there were, at least in the officer ranks, dominated by Tutsis, as well?

POWELL: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: And there was less integration of former combatants—.

POWELL: *At the high level.*

BOUTELLIS: On the army side than on the police side.

POWELL: *That's right, at the high level. Now in terms of the non-commissioned officers I don't know, I haven't seen a census, I'm not sure when it is being done, but I would suspect that it was probably the same configuration more or less as the PNB, but the FDN's high command was not as integrated.*

BOUTELLIS: So the government sort of considered, what you're saying is, the police as a counterweight potentially to the former—.

POWELL: *Yes. I mean, a lot of this is speculation, it is such a sensitive issue, such a sensitive issue.*

BOUTELLIS: Were there any issues with non-state security groups at the time whether they be private security or other traditional mechanisms of policing, community watches?

POWELL: *That's a good question. Not that, our study—this is a caveat of our study, we didn't look at non-state security mechanisms at all. But the Gardiens de la Paix, here was this sort of militia group, apparently parts of it had been integrated into the security services but was also apparently still operating in some communities as a non-state security provider.*

BOUTELLIS: So the Gardiens de la Paix hadn't taken part in the integration of ex-combatants?

POWELL: *Some of them had but there were still elements apparently that were operating. I don't know if that's true or if that was speculation on the part of some of the people we interviewed.*

BOUTELLIS: Now we looked at a number of different areas of police reform, taking a step back, what are maybe the broader challenges, and that may be towards the end of your time in Burundi or even now if you've been following since then, and what are some tasks maybe that should be prioritized over others when looking at these broader challenges?

POWELL: *I would feel most confident talking about the challenges facing the donor community. I don't know if that is a separate part of this interview?*

BOUTELLIS: That's coming after but you can start addressing it now, that's fine.

POWELL: *Ok, because I think I've sort of articulated the challenges facing the PNB, and because I haven't been there since October 2007 I can't say if this is still the case but I would imagine—a lot of this is generational change. This is large-scale behavioral change so I would imagine that the conditions haven't changed radically since I was last there.*

In terms of the donor community, can I talk about the challenges facing the donor community?

BOUTELLIS: Sure, go ahead.

POWELL: *Again this is somewhat dated but I imagine it is still quite accurate. The donor community—there are sort of three main bilateral donors involved in Burundi, the Dutch, the Belgians and the French and they're all doing really good work and a lot of it is quite well coordinated. But that said, it is coordinated in a very kind of ad hoc way and it relies largely, coordination at the time anyway, relied largely on the will of individuals based in Bujumbura as apposed to any sort of real formal structure for coordinating donors in this area. Which means that as soon as you have staff changeovers there's a risk that that kind of collaboration and coordination will not endure. So the donors themselves—I mean, I was there for a year and we were still— I mean, consistently for a year— we were still putting together, mapping pieces of what different donors were doing in this area. There was no clear plan, there was no clear mapping.*

And there are a couple of situations where I would be in an interview with a donor representative and I would mention an initiative that another donor was doing with whom they were meant to work quite closely and they were not aware of that initiative. I'm in no way placing blame, it's a very difficult context and there's a lot going on. There are pressures to spend money, etc. etc. but I'm saying this was a real problem. I think donors would recognize that as well.

BOUTELLIS: So there was no donor coordination mechanism either at the international level or at the national government level?

POWELL: *No, and there was a lot of talk at the time— the National Commission on the Coordination of Aid in Burundi, the CNCA, but it wasn't terribly functional. It was a national institution meant to help coordinate international activities, but it wasn't very functional.*

There was also some talk of the PNB itself putting together a coordination cell, which would have made a lot of sense - to have somebody, a donor liaison person or group, within the PNB itself to coordinate donors.

BOUTELLIS: Specifically for donations on police reform.

POWELL: *Yes. Exactly. But that was not—that wasn't up and running when I left. I'm not even sure it was being talked about seriously. And there are a few reasons for that. We all know that donors, donors have their own national interests at stake. Those interests sometimes override the need to coordinate or a desire to coordinate. But also I think within the PNB there are a couple of reasons why there was no real effort to try to coordinate the efforts of donors, or the initiatives of donors. One was the lack of capacity, certainly, but the other ones are, I think, because there are so many delays in donors actually delivering on their pledges in this area, I think the PNB in some cases were desperate to just take what they could get from donors so X donor country says we're going to do this, Y says we're going to do exactly the same thing and the PNB goes with the one who can deliver the fastest, and I understand that.*

I think there is also some playing of bilaterals against each other. They're giving us this, what are you guys going to give us in exchange? There's a bit of a hedging of bets in terms of the PNB's approach to donors. But I also think, and this is a bigger issue on security sector reform in general in Burundi, there was no strategic plan on the part of, at that time, the PNB. Now this has changed; I think the PNB does have a strategic plan supported by the Dutch but largely led by the PNB, but at the time they didn't—which was emblematic of a bigger issue, that there was no real sector-wide strategy on security sector reform. So we didn't know where we were, we didn't know what the threats were, facing the country in the post conflict context, and we didn't know where we were going. It's hard for donors to contribute to something over the long term when they're not sure where it is going.

BOUTELLIS: We've talked about many challenges. Are there any successes or at least interesting experiments of some kind in the Burundi case that you'd like to mention?

POWELL: *Yes, and I wish I'd focused more on some of those successes. I think that, again, the kind of political will that at least I witnessed on the part of the PNB and the FDN as well, I should certainly stress the FDN, to make this work was really astounding and really encouraging. I mean there are real positive agents of change within the system and they need to be supported. They need to be*

supported by their own system but they also need to be supported by international actors. One good example of that is—you know, the military justice system. The military justice system has a lot of problems, no doubt, it is highly politicized in a lot of cases, but it also has people behind it who are really, really committed and who just push things through. So there are people who really want to see change in Burundi and who need support in that respect.

I think the little initiatives that I spoke about before, the ethics commission is really important, the code of conduct if it is actually developed. The donors' investment in training is also a critical step forward. Surely there are more positive successes that I can tell you about. I think the PBF process is a really important one, at least it was at the time that I was there, the Peacebuilding Fund. In part because the initiatives themselves that are being funded are important. We need barracks. Full stop we need barracks. The FDN and their families need a place to live relatively comfortably. OK, that's an important sort of investment in infrastructure, but more importantly it is the process or the actual space that the PBF decision-making process created for dialogue on security sector reform issues.

Because what it did is it brought together, under UN guidance, it brought together the donor community involved in this area, brought together all the relevant ministries as well as some of their technical experts and it brought together civil society to talk about security sector reform priorities. So it was the first time that these actors had actually come together in this configuration to talk about these issues. Why it was so successful was because it had the money to back it up; modest, but still, money to back it up.

BOUTELLIS: So the PBF started, the mission went from new peacekeeping to peace building in 2007?

POWELL: *Peacebuilding, yes.*

BOUTELLIS: What are some of the—you started mentioning the fact that it created more space, there was more budget for these projects. What are some of the other main changes, and in terms of relations with the host country maybe?

POWELL: *That I witnessed?*

BOUTELLIS: Between the international community and the host country personnel.

POWELL: *We didn't do a lot of research on this particular question, but I have heard that the relations between UN authorities and the government have improved since the transition from ONUB (United Nations Operation in Burundi) to BINUB (United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi) in part because of the transition in mandate, but also because of the fact that the mission is able to through the PBF.*

BOUTELLIS: What were some of the mistakes maybe that donor countries or international organizations like the UN have made in the past in terms of relationship with host-country personnel or politics?

POWELL: *It's a really tricky question. I think, ok, so in an ideal world, there was some stability – a window - following the peace agreement, donors would have worked with national authorities to develop a coherent SSR strategy, for example. But there were a couple of reasons why this didn't work and I think there are lessons learned here maybe for other post conflict contexts. Some analysts have argued*

that there was very little trust between the government and the UN, right after the elections in particular. So there wasn't a lot of openness to having the UN, for example, lead a process of developing a security sector reform strategy or vision. That's one perspective.

BOUTELLIS: Was there a particular reason for this lack of trust after the elections?

POWELL: *There are a couple of studies on this. Some have argued that there was very little trust between the government and the UN right after the (2005 presidential and parliamentary) elections in particular... A number of analysts have suggested that the UN may not have formed the kind of relationship it needed to with the CNDD-FDD before the elections. They won a majority, 80% of the votes. They were highly popular at the time. Some observers noted that the CNDD-FDD felt as if they had a mandate, they had a vision, but they didn't have the support they needed from the UN.*

The argument goes that - here's this democratically-elected government who is ready for the UN to downsize or to get out, we're ready to take responsibility for our sovereignty, so there was some tension between national actors and this international presence. But I would also say in terms of, the question is about sort of challenges, lessons learned from this experience, I would also say that there was a lot of tension between different elements of the government. We talked about the tension between the FDN and the PNB, so different ministries were led by different—people under different political influences. So to ask them to come together at an early stage to talk about security sector reform was really difficult. There was a sort of fundamental trust-building exercise that hadn't taken place yet.

BOUTELLIS: So for instance, the Minister of Interior and Public Security and the Minister of Defense—?

POWELL: Yes, yes.

BOUTELLIS: So you mentioned after the elections, but, what was the situation during the transitional government phase?

POWELL: *And again, just reading from some of the reports that I've read, it was that the UN largely sort of supported the wrong group. Not supported, but, dialogued largely with the wrong group. Not the wrong group, the group that didn't win the elections.*

BOUTELLIS: So based on the few lessons and what we've been talking about, if you could create a wish list— well, back then you were not in the UN, now you're in the UN, it is a little different, but, if you could create a wish list based on the Burundi experience of UN internal management or policy that you could change, two or three changes to make it more effective, what would these be? Maybe some of these, in a sense, the lessons have been learned already with the new peace building commission.

POWELL: *You know, it would be very difficult for me to answer that question, I haven't worked in a field mission with the UN, so I haven't on a day-to-day basis faced the challenges that our field colleagues do. So I'm not in a position to answer that question.*

BOUTELLIS: So maybe one last question. What are the biggest challenges you think the police force will face in Burundi as the UN has drawn down and as, possibly, other main bilateral donors will start to withdraw?

POWELL: *I think they face, sort of big picture, long term, they face behavioral changes that are required for them to be a real police de proximité. That takes a lot of attitudinal change. A piece of that puzzle is training, but another piece of it is enforcement. The PNB needs to be really well trained and they also need the mechanisms to enforce transgressions, to respond to transgressions on the part of the PNB staff. I think that there is a risk that donors will— you know, thank goodness that the PBF is there, but— that donors will start to lose interest in Burundi.*

And Burundi— I mean, you've probably read the PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper), has a wish list of how it may move forward but there is a recognition that it probably won't be self sufficient for another fifteen years, or so, which means that if donors pull out, there is no real viable economy in Burundi, really, certainly compared to some of its neighbors in terms of resources. There is a risk that it will descend even further into poverty.

BOUTELLIS: So before we wrap up the interview, do you have any final comment, whether it be on Burundi or more generally in security sector reform?

POWELL: *I really feel that the UN is in a time and space right now where we can really build our capacity to provide consistent, coherent support to national actors undertaking SSR. We have a real responsibility in this area. There is the will here at headquarters and also in the field to be a resource for national actors undertaking this extremely important process when we're requested to do so or when there's a Security Council or General Assembly mandate. Ultimately, we are at the cutting edge of developing the capacity to be a positive agent of change in this area, if national authorities think that we have a role to play.*

BOUTELLIS: So your security sector reform unit, is that what it's called—?

POWELL: *Team.*

BOUTELLIS: Team, so is it going to either provide advice directly to national governments or to peace-building missions as well as peacekeeping missions, is that what the general framework—?

POWELL: *Exactly. There are sort of two situations in which the UN would become engaged in security sector reform: when we're mandated by the Security Council or in the very rare cases where we're mandated by the General Assembly. So we are primarily speaking of the peacekeeping operation context or where national authorities ask us for assistance. Central African Republic is an example of the latter; the UN was requested to assist with a national seminar on security sector reform.*

So we're working extremely hard to build our capacity to be a resource to support these processes.

BOUTELLIS: How large is the unit currently?

POWELL: *The team here, we're currently three professional staff.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you have counterparts in the fields as well?

POWELL: *There are three missions with a dedicated SSR unit or cell: MONUC (United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo), BINUB (United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi), and UNMIT (United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste). But there are also about eleven or twelve, if not more, PKOs (Peace Keeping Operations) that are mandated to undertake SSR-related activities. It is important to note that DPKO is only one piece of the puzzle. UNDP is playing a very important role in security sector reform. Then there are all the members of the taskforce who are also doing this, such as DPA (Department of Political Affairs), OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), PBSO (Peacebuilding Support Office). There are a number of very important initiatives underway on the part of our partners in this area, once again, in support of national authorities.*

BOUTELLIS: Well, Kristiana Powell, thank you very much for your time.

POWELL: *Thank you.*