



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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BOUTELLIS: Today is the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2008, and I am now sitting with Mr. Sheka Mansaray, former National Security Advisor to the President of Sierra Leone. First thank you for your time. Before we start the interview, I'd like you to please confirm that you've given your consent.

MANSARAY: Yes, I have.

BOUTELLIS: I'd like to start by learning a little bit more about your personal background and the position you held in the past.

MANSARAY: *I started out as a Foreign Service Officer, served in the Sierra Leone High Commission in London as First Secretary and then as Head of Chancery, the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations. I came back in 1990 and got into the Home Service and ended up becoming National Security Advisor. That was after I'd been an advisor, special advisor to the President on the peace process. Soon after I came back we were in a civil war. Of course after the National Security Advisor job, I took a year off and went to Princeton. I took an MPP (Master in Public Policy) degree, came back and soon after I became Secretary to the President and Head of the Civil Service.*

BOUTELLIS: What year was that?

MANSARAY: *I left in 2000 and came back in 2001. Then became head of the civil service, Secretary to the President, which is equivalent to chief of staff. I'd been on that job until January this year when I took voluntary or early retirement they call it. Since then I've been doing some teaching at the university here.*

BOUTELLIS: Thank you. Can you give us—before we enter more technical areas of police reform can you give us a brief overview of your own history of the years since you were Special Advisor to the President, sort of the status of public order and crime and maybe the evolution of the main challenges in terms of national security.

MANSARAY: *In terms of national security? It was chaos. There was a war, it was escalating and the population kept shifting. Urban areas became totally crowded and with such crowding you had an explosion in crime. So my time as Special Advisor to the President, we tried first of all to engage the rebels in negotiations which we successfully did. The hope was that after the war was ended we would embark on demobilization of the combatants and simultaneously would be sending people back to their communities where they came from without which we could not decongest particularly urban areas. We believed that that would have an impact on the law and order situation in the country.*

*After that, or simultaneously as we were sending people back, we called it repatriation of people to their localities, we embarked on the training of the security agencies. Of course training was grounded on a reform program that we had conceived with the help of Nigerians initially and subsequently the British joined in. So when the war was over and the reform of the security sector started we targeted the police and the military initially.*

BOUTELLIS: So this is in—?

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**MANSARAY:** *In 1998, 1999. Since 1996 we have been doing all of these activities simultaneously. Even as we were talking to the rebels, we were developing plans to reform the security sector because we expected at some point we would be able to overcome the existing insecurity (caused by the war) and obviously you have to prepare. You have to be able to contain the situation so it doesn't degenerate into war again.*

**BOUTELLIS:** So then you said you embarked in starting the training of security agencies in '98 and '99.

**MANSARAY:** Yes.

**BOUTELLIS:** What was the focus of the training at the beginning?

**MANSARAY:** *It was not straight training. It was first of all to develop a blueprint on the structure of the security sector. We wanted to have platforms for each of the agencies like the military, mostly the military and the police, and define their functions clearly. Then embark on restructuring the police and the military. Of course, the restructuring of the sector itself, when I started, when I became National Security Advisor we had two objectives in mind. One was to get the police to focus on law and order issues and prevention of crime, investigation of crime, professional ways of dealing with these activities. (The other was to bring the military under the control of civilian authority.)*

*What we did was to define the terms of reference as they call it. We drew up new charters, let's call them charters. We got the Commonwealth to supply trainers. They gave us an IG, an Inspector-General of Police was loaned from England called Mr. Keith Biddle.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Can you explain the history of this decision? How was the decision of asking for a British IG to take over the Sierra Leone police made? How did it come about? What was the rationale?

**MANSARAY:** *The police force we had was completely fractured. When the 1997 coup occurred they co-opted the police force as part of the team to run the country. So there was a public demand for complete restructuring of the police force. In fact, all the security forces, the public wanted us to clean them out. One of the ways to re-establish confidence with the local constituency, with the people, was to get somebody neutral because nobody in the system could command the kind of respect and trust that the public was looking for. So that was one driver for the decision.*

*The other one was the question of expertise because for over 30 or more years there had not been a major reform of the police force. So we thought this was an opportunity to reform, restructure and retrain. So we went around—of course, being a member of the Commonwealth, and we know the Commonwealth has a facility for police support in member countries, it was a natural kind of decision to make, to ask. Especially at the time it would have cost us money. We did not have to go out and do this thing; to buy some expertise, we got this for free. It came with packages too, vehicles, all the things, training materials, uniforms. So that's how we came by it, that decision.*

- BOUTELLIS: So back in '98 when the decision of majoring restructuring of the Sierra Leone police was taken, what were the priorities, the main challenge identified? Can you recall back then?
- MANSARAY: *Well yes, as I said the main challenges were: one, the crop of police officers that were there had a problem with the public. They were not fully trusted, rightly or wrongly. So we thought we had to address that because if people have a feeling of insecurity you have to address that, whether or not it's correct. So that's the challenge, how to restore public confidence in the police force. The second one was a question of restoring the capability of the police personnel to perform. There were no—.*
- BOUTELLIS: Professionalism?
- MANSARAY: *Professionalism, yes. We had to address that and the only way you do that really is retraining and possibly recruiting new people with high caliber which we did. The other one was the question of logistics. Policemen didn't even have vehicles. I think at the time they didn't have more than half a dozen.*
- BOUTELLIS: In the whole country.
- MANSARAY: *The whole country. There were no communication facilities, equipment, radios and things like that, even uniforms were a problem. So all of these were serious challenges. Even when you try to restore confidence in the police they should appear respectable to the public. So we took the question of appearance and equipping of the police as major challenges that we addressed.*
- BOUTELLIS: So as National Security Advisor you had the bigger picture of the reform of the whole security sector.
- MANSARAY: *Right.*
- BOUTELLIS: How did the police reform fit into the broader reform maybe of defense, prison, justice, SSR (Security Sector Reform).
- MANSARAY: *That's right. That's interesting because before the reform, the roles of the security agencies were not clearly defined. For example, the police had a paramilitary component, which is called the SSD (Special Security Division). In previous years, the paramilitary police were seen to be assuming the role of a military force. Granted you knew when you addressed questions of law and order you sent some more robust—but they were more or less. There was a time when it was believed that they were being used as a counterweight for the military to prevent them from staging coups which they did regularly.*
- So the issue of these kinds of conflict between the police and the military existed so we thought we had to diffuse that. Where we did that was to clearly state the police role was to address questions of law and order in the most benign sense of the word, try to solve crime or prevent crime. Mostly its own role, the core function of the police was to prevent crime. Of course preventing crime you have to not only prevent but also investigate and solve criminal issues. The military was going to be molded in the pattern of a democratic military which answers to the civilian authority. In other words, we introduced civilian control of the military concept. The way we did that was to fuse the leadership of the military and civil service in defense where both civilian and military personnel worked together to*

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*administer the department, with a civilian as head of Administration in the Ministry. The civilian head became Director General of Defense and the Chief of Defense Staff and other senior officers play a supporting role serving in all the departments of ministry and became part of the administrative structure. So this was one way we tried to close the distance between the two (i.e. the civil service establishment and the military)*

*The military used to have, it still has an intelligence service, it wasn't easy to tell where their own mandate stopped and the mandate of the Special Branch of the Police started. They were tripping over each other's territory. One was doing anti-smuggling operations and the other was also involved in that and there were conflicts over territory and all of that. So we redefined the roles and clearly stated what was to be done by Special Branch and the CID (Criminal Investigation Division), the military's own intelligence was to focus on the conduct of the military and the enforcement of military rules.*

BOUTELLIS: So the police intelligence falls under the CID, the Criminal Investigation Department of the police?

MANSARAY: *When I was Security Advisor and even my successor we had committees, Joint Intelligence Committee, Joint Assessment Committee. For example if the police have information about crime and say, an other agency, we have a National Intelligence Unit now. We will not just depend on one, the information or intelligence of one agency. We have a more professional group that will sit down and make sure that we have uniform intelligence to give to the principals.*

BOUTELLIS: So the reform effectively started in '96, then in '98 in practice. What happened to the reform, particularly of the police and more broadly the security sector during the crisis that happened right after that?

MANSARAY: *Well, it was difficult, trying to reform during the crisis, because we didn't even have—if you like, a clear police structure. Even the personnel we had to retrench some of them. The same goes for the military. So in between the war and the end of the war it was more a concept of reform that we had. We did some piecemeal activities to at least address some emergency situations like supply of logistics. We had to structure that and find a very systematic way of addressing that. Before that it was an ad hoc kind of thing. Nobody tried to correctly assess what the military would need in terms of food from now on and what the police would need in terms of riot gear and other things. So we sort of structured it even to the extent of trying to get the army's supply of rations integrated into their salaries because we used to give rice. Then there were complaints that the senior people appropriated most of it and then there was this conflict so we tried to solve it. Everybody's ration which was a bag of rice went into his salary and he could decide what to do with it.*

BOUTELLIS: I'd like now to move into a number of functional areas of police reform and some of them might not be relevant and we'll just move to the next one. The first one is recruitment. I was wondering if the issue of recruitment was one of the areas that you looked at in the police reform.

MANSARAY: *Both for the military and the police. The recruitment was, as I said to you before, the populace had lost confidence. When I say that, not just in the institution but also in the personnel that were there. But over and above that there had been a lot of attrition during the war. Some people got killed, some police officers got*

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*killed, others just disappeared, others went away. That applied to the army as well. So recruitment became a very important priority. Then the problem was you don't recruit when you don't have money. That's why we sort of left it until much later on when we had the Commonwealth support and the British support through DFID (Department for International Development).*

BOUTELLIS: So the police force coming out of the war was approximately 5000?

MANSARAY: *Roughly, nobody knew. That was part of the problem because when you give money for salaries, you were just throwing money out there. We didn't have records of who was there, who was not. That goes for logistics and food as well, rations. But that's the issue exactly.*

BOUTELLIS: So you said you had to wait for some money to come in. When did the recruitment start again?

MANSARAY: *I don't have a precise date but definitely after 1998. It started slightly before that but then was upset by the 1997 coup. It started seriously after the return of the government in 1998.*

BOUTELLIS: What were the standards, new requirements for recruitment of police and were these discussed?

MANSARAY: *They were discussed and I must say here that some of the details I'm not familiar with because there was a police council which discussed these matters of recruitment and operational orders and things like that. But yes, the question of minimum standards has always been there. Don't forget the police force is modeled on the British system, so there have always been standards but of course, this is part of the problem. Over the years there has never been complete reform, serious reform of the police force. So even some of these standards might have become obsolete. I can mention one of them in the case of the military, recruiting illiterates in the military. I had a big row with the DFID military advisors. I said this, 21<sup>st</sup> century to recruit illiterates into the army? They said, well there have to be things like driving, cleaning. Even cleaning, they have to use sophisticated equipment. If they can't read the instructions how can they—. So it was a big fight. Normally I think some of us who stood for that, upgrading the standards had our way. But it has been some time now. But that is one of the issues. I think the police probably didn't spend time on that. I don't know, maybe you can check that with the police.*

BOUTELLIS: Given the history of the police being partly actors in some of the incidents before, was there any attempt to do vetting of the existing police force or at least to vet new recruits in terms of their past involvement possible in war crimes and so on?

MANSARAY: *That is part of the problems we've had. We thought that the police had become so politicized that even the recruitment standards were not complied with, and above all, if a relation has power in the system or minister or whatever wants somebody recruited, they're recruited, without any background check. What I believe, there is always provision for that. That's what the Special Branch is for. Even in the civil service, the government service, a starting position, you need a background check and it is the Special Branch that does that.*

BOUTELLIS: The Special Branch? Can you explain how they're organized and how they work?

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MANSARAY: *They have, of course—.*

BOUTELLIS: The Special Branch looks at all government—?

MANSARAY: *It is the arm of the police force that looks into the character of people if you like, in the entire government. They look at what people do, even before we had the anticorruption commission it would have been the role of the special branch to find out if somebody was living above their means and raise the alarm that somebody might be engaged in corruption. But it is like the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) in the US.*

BOUTELLIS: This is senior positions, they look at only senior positions?

MANSARAY: *Yes, exactly.*

BOUTELLIS: So there's no systematic vetting of the police force.

MANSARAY: *There should have been but I don't think—I'm not sure. I'm not really grounded in the details of this.*

BOUTELLIS: The next area is training and professionalization. I'd like to ask, there have been a number of trainings and re-trainings that took place. Can you maybe highlight some of the major training components and how was this again decided and negotiated with some of the partners?

MANSARAY: *Again, as I said, most of these decisions are taken in the police council where the Vice President sits as chairman but we have had two components of training, one for the regular police personnel, and we have a local training school here. The curriculum is standard. They go there for six months or whatever I think. They can do refresher courses. For the officer corps, invariably the training is some institution outside of the country, Nigeria, mostly Britain, places like that. But one of the things I noticed, even when we were talking this morning is that compared to the military—maybe leave that comparison alone, the capacity in the police force is not diffused enough from the top right down. If you look at the top it is well trained, articulate, highly professional. Maybe the middle as well. But when you come down to the policeman on the beat, you have serious problems.*

*This is where your question about having entry standards, recruitment standards comes in because many of the police units on the street—this is my own experience and I checked it out. They do not have the level of competence or confidence to be able to interact with the population that they're policing. As I said many police officers on the beat can hardly write a statement of an event. So when you have people like this really trying to maintain order in a population as volatile as ours you have a serious problem.*

BOUTELLIS: In your opinion this confidence is due to basically literacy issues, lack of training? Lack of equipment?

MANSARAY: *It is this low level of entry capacity. Like I said if people, maybe fourth or fifth graders, you put them out to police a people—these are the people that come in contact with the public. The senior people you find in the office, they're not policemen if you like, they're really administrators and managers. But the man who is on the street is the man who should have received the most sophisticated education. On human rights, I know they do human rights training but it is done*

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*mostly by ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and when the special court was there, UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone) they did a bit of that. But that is not structured. I don't know if it is now in the police training school.*

*But the point I'm making is if you want to have an impact on the law and order situation in the community, you have to have a police force of people that interact with the public to be of sufficient caliber, sufficient professional training, understand the laws and know the rights of people, so that they can really have an impact. But if you challenge some police people, even the police don't know the law, they just capitulate because they don't know it. This is a serious problem. We've been spending a lot of money on training and I think we should concentrate now on training the police on the beat, particularly as they have so much power in this country. The autonomy of the constable as they call it is very, very much alive here. In fact, that's one of my problems, that we have given too much autonomy to the police, not only on operational matters, to some extent even on policy matters.*

*For example, you have what they call Military Aid to Civil Authority, it is called MACP, Military Aid to Civil something.<sup>1</sup> The point is, the police invoke that, have the right, the police commissioner has the right to invoke that, not the government, not the Police Minister. Not the Minister of Internal Affairs. That's a major policy decision. The police have to say we cannot manage this and then we call the military, often we believe it is done too late. So these are some of the issues.*

*Then we don't have an independent police complaints authority like you have in most democratic countries in the world. The one they have is an internalized kind of system.*

BOUTELLIS: The CDIID (Complaints, Discipline Internal Investigation Department).

MANSARAY: *Yes. So if you take a complaint to the police, the police have the judgment and people get frustrated, they don't go there. I understand that in the review of the Constitution they have tried to address that. But this is really part of the training difficulty that I see in the police force. That is a concern that needs to be rectified. I'm sure eventually they will get over that, but it is a serious problem.*

BOUTELLIS: When you said too much autonomy was given to the police and you mentioned two examples, is this also—there is still talk about the ideal number of police. Is this something that is put forward, the number was 9500, now it seems the police is putting forward the need for a larger number, 12,000 police officers. Is this something that comes from the police itself, or is this something that is also debated at the national security level? What is your take on the question of the number?

MANSARAY: *It is debated at the highest security apparatus which is the National Security Council. All matters of this type, major policy decisions for the security sector are taken there. The initiatives come from the individual agencies. The IG of police has to say I'm comfortable with this size; I'm not comfortable with this size. Then you have to take it to the National Security Council, not the Police Council but*

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<sup>1</sup> Military Aid to Civil Power

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*above that, because it has serious financial implications and other implications as well.*

*The fact that they need so many, they say they need so many, should not come as a surprise. These people look after their turf naturally. That's why the National Security Council is there, to balance the competing needs. At a time there were so many, we thought they didn't need that many we need to reduce it. So it is going to be discussed. Periodically it comes up. That's the way it is.*

BOUTELLIS: So you mentioned the two main types of training, are there any other types of training that got your attention that you thought might have been particularly useful or might have led to good results?

MANSARAY: *Again it is a matter of what you can afford. That is why you need to bring diplomacy into play here because we know certain countries in the world that are very good at police training like Canada, Australia and all of these. We used to really have some support from them. You cannot do with less training. It is an agency that is on a 24-hour engagement with the rest of the public, particularly for a country that has been through some of the experiences that we have been through. I don't think you have to go easy on training. I think it has to be a continuous process because for example, the crime division of the police.*

*Crime has evolved and it is becoming more and more sophisticated. You have human trafficking, you have organized crime, money laundering. We have a more serious problem here which is that of smuggling of rich resources, diamonds in particular, gold. So if the police force is not well trained, and of course there is also the prosecution section of the police which has to handle certain levels of prosecution against criminals. Most of these criminals or many of them have very good lawyers. So you have to have a police force that can match that, otherwise you keep losing cases which is one thing that we have been doing.*

*So the training aspects for me should assume the mold of human resources development concept that is used in public services otherwise. It is a continuous process of fine tuning to respond to challenges, new challenges in crime which is even more onerous. I mean thank God we do not have to deal with serious cases of, you know, terrorism, yet. We hope we don't come to that. But it all depends on how well trained the police are to be able to sniff that. Of course we now have a National Intelligence Unit. They should be working together, really, to be able to address this. The training, at all levels—but more so, the professional components like the investigation part of the police, the crime fighting as well as the police on the beat who should be very astute and very professional.*

BOUTELLIS: As part of the restructuring was an attempt to integrate—we mentioned integrate the security sector of course, and define their responsibility, but was there an attempt to integrate different police services into a coherent police unit?

MANSARAY: *There have been a lot of attempts to address that dichotomy of paramilitary and regular police. On a personal level, I think that aspect of policy debate should be kept alive because it is like we're in permanent crisis mode when you have a paramilitary police standing there.*

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BOUTELLIS: So we're talking about the divide between the regular unarmed police and the SSD (Special Security Division) which became the OSD (Operational Support Division), the armed support.

MANSARAY: *Right, because what you find in the SSD they relaxed the standards for entry a lot, very much diffused. Then when you have sometimes illiterates. I have nothing against that, but when you handle these kinds of assignments, you have to have some level of sophistication. So when you have this kind of unit operating in a society, that only stand for law and order, go in and quell something, it is like you are living with that all the time. Let's have a part of the police, regular police with regular police training, regular entrance requirements but trained in handling these kinds of issues, particularly now that we have a military component that is trained to provide aid to the police in terms of riot control or those kinds of things.*

*One, it is expensive, two it creates institutional rivalry because some of the people in the police think that these people are favored for whatever reason. But also the question of their looting the standards in the police force. I think that for me is more serious.*

BOUTELLIS: Is that something that is inherited from the past SSD or is it something—my understanding was that OSD was selected out of police who had already gone through the regular training.

MANSARAY: *The regular training, what is it? You go in and learn how to recite certain things and all of that. That's not the kind of training that we want of a policeman. As I said, we need to even raise the bar higher because the population is becoming more sophisticated and you have to have a police force that matches that. But these people have the minimum of training, minimum. You don't see them going to these staff colleges and all of that. All of them handle guns, but as I tell you, they are mostly low academic standards. The most important thing is one, we don't have the resources to maintain a separate unit with all its management structure, logistics and everything as against the regular police force which is the one that really does the policing most of the time. So over 90% of their existence, they don't do anything. That's why I say, if it is for riot control, there's not a riot every day. We don't have a riot every day. When you have a riot for a small population like us, if you train people in the police—that's why in some countries, they do policing by programs.*

*You have a program in the police force and you put it there, the police commissioner says okay, they call program budgeting. For example, even the Australians practice it. You do program budgeting. You give them a program, you anticipate what you're going to be facing in the next year or two or three and then you structure your programs to suit that. So we don't have this kind of permanent marriage to paramilitary outfit that may be used for maybe two or three, four, five, six years. As I said, the way to overcome the possibility of having a big problem is to have the linkage between trained police component which is not paramilitary, it is regular police force that can handle guns and then you invoke the MACP when you need it.*

BOUTELLIS: So moving on to internal management. We were already discussing internal management matters when we discussed this divide. Are there other major issues in terms of management of the police? There has been a rank restructuring. You mentioned earlier the internal disciplinary system, CDIID. What are some of the major issues in terms of internal management?

**MANSARAY:** *Again, I think it is repeating what I said. We need to review to so-called operational autonomy of the police force. We need to review the autonomy of the police force. One, to have the civilian authority have some oversight, serious oversight. I know the Police Council would say we have oversight over the police operations. I'm not saying you micromanage the operational aspects of the police. But I think at more regular intervals on a continuous basis, there would be an oversight facility from the authorities.*

**BOUTELLIS:** You mentioned the limits of the internal complaints and disciplinary unit, the CDIID due to the fact that it is in the police.

**MANSARAY:** *Yes, manned by police.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Manned by police officers. There has been talk for quite a long time about a civilian oversight body under the Parliament.

**MANSARAY:** *Right.*

**BOUTELLIS:** What are the obstacles for the creation of this sort of external accountability mechanism?

**MANSARAY:** *I think like somebody said about democracy, it's not perfect, but it's the best you can have. You have police complaints commitments commissions all over the world that are outside of the police force. You have it in England, you have it in Scotland, even New York when I was there. So these are tested outfits and these seem to be working better than the internalized kind of outfit. So by comparison alone, if these are the only two options, I would go for the independent one.*

**BOUTELLIS:** The CDIID claims to have dismissed already a number of officers, maybe 80 in the past year. Some have even been charged.

**MANSARAY:** Yes.

**BOUTELLIS:** Has this been a positive trend?

**MANSARAY:** *It is positive to have had it, but it is a question of efficiency. Could they do better? Yes, they could do a lot better. And for public confidence, it is better—we could—you could have the referee and the player in one hat. That's the whole issue. It's a conceptual issue. I think it has to be separated.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Following up on this. Another major issue in the reform of the police due to past history is the depoliticization. Can you talk about the issue of depoliticization of the police force and what has been the measures put in place maybe since the beginning of the reform.

**MANSARAY:** *One of the major measures was to grant operational independence to the police IG. This incidentally came about when we tried to get an expatriate police commissioner. One of the issues that was raised was the question of control by political authority. The police force used to be, well it still is under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Minister of Internal Affairs had complete control over the police, even their budget was managed by Internal Affairs and all of that. So what the Commonwealth did was to prevail on the government to broaden the independence of the IG on operational matters.*

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*As I said to you we also took along some policy independence with that. So that has been there. What I suggested is to review this because I think we went overboard in trying to really satisfy the requirements of these external donors, gave them more than just operational independence. So that's policy now, that the Minister has no authority over the IG, cannot question him on anything. So that they're there simply as onlookers. I have no particular reason to want the Minister to have greater power over the police. The point is that in terms of responsibility to the public, it is the elected official that has that responsibility. So if you sit by and watch the police officers messing up, they don't get questioned, they bring the Minister to Parliament to account for that. So I think there has got to be some role for the elected authorities over the conduct of the police. How it should be done or what form it takes, I don't know. I just feel as a matter of principle, you need to have that.*

*But the fact is that we had given operational control to the IG. Even their budget is what is called a self-accounting budget. In other words, we don't micromanage the budget lines. They ask for their money, they have their account. They disperse it and at the end of the day they account for it. That's another major decentralized kind of—.*

BOUTELLIS: The budget is approved by Parliament?

MANSARAY: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Then they have independence in how to spend it.

MANSARAY: Yes, exactly. *That's a very important aspect of this independence.*

BOUTELLIS: Last year in 2007 there were presidential elections and parliamentary elections and there was a change in Party in power and none of the senior officers nor the IG of the Sierra Leonean police was removed. Was that seen as positive?

MANSARAY: *It is a positive development but the question is, is that done because it is by law that they should not be sacked? I think that is what we should be looking at. I frankly think that we should have—if we don't already have—because, as I said, I'm not very close to this, the security of tenure of public officials holding such important offices like the IG of Police, the head of the military and maybe the Chief Justice, people like those. I think it was as a matter of good practice that they were left there, they could have been sacked. There was nothing preventing that from happening because you don't have a list of conditions that you have to satisfy to sack them. I don't think there is any.*

BOUTELLIS: There is no list of positions reserved to political appointees?

MANSARAY: *In the police force?*

BOUTELLIS: Generally.

MANSARAY: *In the government as a whole?*

BOUTELLIS: Yes.

MANSARAY: *There are many.*

BOUTELLIS: But not the IG, Chief Justice?

MANSARAY: *Yes, because—although still, if you want to put a fine point on it, they are all subject to political influence or decisions because the appointment of police is not something that just comes up. It is not competitive. It is the President that decides that that is who I want, this man is the one I want. So it is still a political appointment in that respect. But even after it has been—and it goes for the Chief Justice too. It is political. But once he is there, there are safeguards for his removal. They don't easily get him out. I would want the same to happen for the police unless there is serious misconduct, they should have what is called security of tenure. Otherwise it can compromise their diligence and competence.*

BOUTELLIS: Now taking a step back and looking into different areas of the reform, I would like to ask you now, after ten years of reform of the police, where are some of the broader challenges that remain in your opinion?

MANSARAY: *Let's look at where we came from initially. I do this precisely because I want you to know that we have come a long way and we have probably overcome the most difficult challenges so therefore we should not be shy of tackling what is remaining. We had a police force that was totally politicized and somehow allied to dysfunctional elements in society. There were very few well-trained people particularly at the medium, mid-level and upwards levels. There were poor logistics, no idea of what the purpose of the institution had been. That's one of the challenges that we still face, I don't think that there is enough of that at this point.*

*Police officers used to buy their own uniform. They had different shoes, different types, even the color of their uniform were different. Their appearance was very poor and they lost respect in the eyes of the public and also self confidence. But most of that has been addressed now. Training was mostly at the initiative of officers and contacts they have to go on training, but now I think it is a structured training thing. If you follow what is going on recently, there is a big fight between the IG and officers who just want to take off, go on courses. He said no, this is a regimental institution, you have to go by what is prescribed. So all of this has been done.*

*Over and above that, the synergy between the police force and the other security agencies, principally the military, the structured way of linking the operations of the police and the military when there is need for that and the military aid to civil powers, the MACP that I told you about. The military respects the mandate of the police and the demarcation of their authority. It never used to be. The military used to take over police function. They'd go on the road side, the police get out. So there is a healthy respect among the agencies.*

*Then the integration of the intelligence activities of the forces, the security agencies, the National Intelligence Unit, the Special Branch of the police and then the Military Intelligence branch where collectively they bring all the intelligence they got independently and then they assess, by a common body comprising senior police officers, national intelligence agency and national security office people as well as the military. So you have one intelligence that goes to the principals. But before Presidents could have intelligence coming from the military, from the police and from some other sources, all of them giving you*

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*contradictory intelligence information. So you paralyzed decision making. That's how we've been having a lot of coups. These days it doesn't happen.*

*I think these are major achievements. But of course, the challenges are, as I've said, one, I don't think we are still allowed to run our own show because after ten years we still have police advisors from Britain. Really they're doing a good job but they cannot baby sit us forever. Let these people out. There be an exit strategy. Let them operate now, you don't have to be there all the time. I think there are still these kinds of things.*

*Another one is not so serious attention being paid to the training or raising the level of sophistication and competence of the police on the beat. As I said, the man in the office is an administrator. They have the highest level of intelligence and training, but he deals with matters that reach him from the bottom. So if there is no capacity to really analyze these matters from the bottom, you have a serious problem making informed decisions. I think there has been a reflection of that in the number of crimes that the police solve. Very few. Murders, I don't think for the last many years we have solved any murder here because the information that comes from the ground is not really well assessed or collected. So this is part of the problem. It is the most important problem for me, really, the problem of getting a really sophisticated cadre of police officers on the beat. Even if on a regular basis senior people would go around to big police posts to be there and give a hand with normal policing activities and know that they have got this community policing thing, but it mostly ends in conflict because the police and the people in the community don't get on together. I think it has to do with the level of competence and sophistication of that group. Otherwise I think that this is something that can be addressed. As I said, we've gone through the most difficult ones of getting the police that were completely fractured, not together as a whole.*

*Then the final one is getting, like all government institutions, to have the average police officer to know how their role impacts on the achievements of the total government objectives. Here, somebody just goes around and gets paid, he doesn't know how his activities count in achieving the global objectives of the state, it's a serious problem. I don't know how they do that. But I think there has to be training of the police force. Let them be aware of other activities of the state and what the goal is.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Are there underlying political, social, economic conditions that have made reform harder in general? That continue to make it harder?

**MANSARAY:** *Plenty, one of them is the ethnic issue which is also part of a bigger part of the political issue. But then there is the ethnic impact on the politics, the politics impact on that. Now the way that, I would say subvert reforms, major reforms, is simple and it is even reflected right now in the composition of the police force. For years the overwhelming majority of police officers, senior, have been from one region of the country, mostly from the north. We're still struggling to rectify that. In a society as complex and multi-ethnic as ours, any major public institution like that, that has a public face, has to reflect the structure of the society that you have. It breeds noncooperation. There has been a lot of running battle between the police and some communities that don't feel part of that institution.*

*I think that is the ethnic thing. I said it is part of the politics, because politicians in the past, for all parties, not just one party, tend to favor their own people, for*

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*obvious reasons, because they get pressure from their electorate. Then that also impacts on the competence of the police because you send substandard people who cannot be subjected to rigorous recruitment standards. Then discipline as well, because once you want to touch them they go to their principles. So this is a serious problem. It can be addressed. We tried to address a similar problem in the military, I was there. The recruitment, when we had recruitment of officers, we had what we called a quota system.*

*We went to the statistics office, they gave us a projection of the population of all the regions and we set up units in the recruitment center comprising people from those regions including military officers and Paramount Chiefs. You recruit from your own region. Then I made the public statement that if you recruit lemons, you end up with lemons in the army. Don't blame anybody, no government, if they become sergeant majors for the rest of their lives instead of becoming brigadiers, that's your fault. There was competition. We got the best people. I think we followed that up. Now in the army when they want to recruit they go to the regions, they ask people to send nominations. So it is really fairly based and I'm happy we got that almost right in the army because that's where the problem used to be.*

BOUTELLIS: But that was not done in the police?

MANSARAY: *I don't think so, I was not involved. I negotiated that and I got that through. We got statisticians to come in, they were sitting there in the development of the parameters, the Vice President was there, the Minister. So they listened to it because that was the only way. Even the army was completely skewed in favor of some tribes and some groups.*

*I think if the police were to do that, consider the regional and ethnic dimensions in recruitment—one, you get competition. You don't disenfranchise. You bring your people; we judge them so it is competition among your own ethnic people or your own regional people. So the best comes, nobody complains. You won't say they don't give us a chance. These are, I think some of the challenges that they still have to—the ethnic, regional composition has to be more balanced I think. The caliber and competence of people in the lower level, the police on the beat have to be improved in my view. Obviously there has to be linking of the individual role of the police officer to the global purpose of the government. So they know that if they let it go off, they are subverting their own prosperity. They have been paid for that, but you cannot be an island of success in a sea of misery.*

BOUTELLIS: Are there any innovations or experiments that you know about, whether in the police or also maybe like the one you mentioned for the military, that could potentially be applied to the police, that you think merit more attention that you think we could learn lessons from, things that have been particularly successful?

MANSARAY: *Here?*

BOUTELLIS: Yes, here in Sierra Leone?

MANSARAY: *In terms of the security sector, this is all that I can think of. You know the areas of course, in general recruitment in the public service. We try to pay attention to regional and ethnic divisions and composition. These are the ones that I know of.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Maybe one last question, turning to the donors and looking at the donors and the United Nations. You mentioned earlier that one of the challenges is that maybe after ten years the police could operate on its own, maybe there is not that much of a need. Are there some mistakes or some advice you would have in terms of the way donors and the United Nations work in relation to country personnel and government in general?

**MANSARAY:** *Plenty. I'll limit myself to the police, if I wanted to go into the relationship with the government in general we'd never leave here. I think in this case of police advisors, expatriate police advisors sitting in police headquarters it is a very important example. What it does, it doesn't free the mind of the—even with all these people that you see there with good degrees, sophisticated and all of that, they still think their reference point is these advisors. Now, the problem with that is that the men have not developed full confidence to take responsibility for his division or whatever it is. There is also a tendency to always defer to the advisors. When I say advisors these are not just onlookers and things like that who come in when things don't run. They are involved in real operational matters.*

*Now we all know what those problems are, the societies and cultural differences give serious cause for concern when you take on operational rules in the area of different culture. The tendency is for people when they see an expatriate they think he knows better than they do, even if he has good ideas that are not compatible in their view with what—expatriate advisor or whoever it is feels, they become reluctant to come up with those ideas. So what you do is you're repressing innovation and creativity, creative innovations to address local problems as they come. So this is very serious.*

*There's another problem with that too, foreign advisors. When they arrive, this is my own experience, they assume greater authority than they really have and for some of our colleagues who may not be as exposed, there is always the tendency to, as I said before, to defer to them. There is a relationship of client/master thing that comes and develops. Along the way this is bound to lead to conflict because at some point there is resentment of this kind of relationship as it happens everywhere. So what you do is you upset the smooth running of the police force itself in the case of a police force. I know of Ministries where there have been revolts by indigenous public officials because one, they are favored, they're paid better, they know that. They drive the best vehicles. They have all that they need, the air conditioners in their offices. They have a good time. These people some of them are even better educated, they take more responsibility, carry more responsibilities and why? And they cannot justify why somebody who is here to help is living different from them.*

*Even the military right now, I know of complaints by military officers when I was there. Why is I'm not living in a European environment when we're living in hovels? Why? We all look to the officers and military people when there is a war or something. We go and fight. By rule, by law, they're not supposed to go in the front line, they're advisors and trainers. So we have this—these are serious problems. They go deep into the cohesion of our society because these are specialized institutions, they control the destiny of a nation in a way apart from the political leadership that gives the vision, they control the law and order and the peace, the stability of the country.*

*So I think if they want to have advisors let them come for a short while and whatever it is that is not transferred, they should take people out if that is what is*

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*needed and let them run the show. The duration of advisors should be very limited, that of advisors, otherwise you don't create room for people to grow, they don't grow.*

BOUTELLIS: Any final comment before we close the interview?

MANSARAY: *I have to say that when I read the profile of this program I felt a little inadequate because I could very well have initiated something like this, but of course, I don't think we have the capacity to do it, it can only be done by institutions like yours. Then I would want to urge that you carry this thing as far as you can because we don't want the mistakes that have been committed elsewhere to be repeated. The good lessons that have been developed in some areas should not be missed by other countries and societies that could use them to avoid the problems in the Africa and the world in general. I look forward to reading about the experiences of others in other parts of the world. Thank you very much.*

BOUTELLIS: Sheka Mansaray, thank you very much.

BOUTELLIS: This is a follow up interview, second part, with Mr. Sheka Mansaray. We are going to talk about the major structural reform in the security sector.

MANSARAY: *Right. The reforms were intended to address some weaknesses that we observed in the course of the short time the new government was in power. That was the separate identities and operational activities of the security agencies, particularly the police and the military.*

BOUTELLIS: Just to put it in context, the new government that we're talking about was in 1996. Then learning the weaknesses from 1998 to 2001 events.

MANSARAY: *Well not from that, basically learning from previous administrations, problems of the security of the previous administrations. As I said yesterday, there had not been any major restructuring of the security agencies, the police and the military. So what was found out was that the political leadership did not have a kinds of hands-on lever over these agencies. Normally in peace time they just continue their political and administrative functions while the police and the military function very much on their own. Of course that led to its own problems.*

*As I said yesterday there was conflict between the police and the military in areas of operational authority. So what we thought was lacking was overarching policy-making agency at the political level never existed. Then of course, a coordinating mechanism at the operational level. For this reason the government decided to establish a National Security Council which was chaired or is chaired by the President. Legislation was passed to create this outfit and give it its mandate and its membership. The interesting thing about the composition of the membership is the fact that the oversight on the policy-making authority of the security forces of the security agencies at the political level was broadened. It wasn't just security ministers, like the Minister for Internal Affairs, or the Minister for Defense. We had the Finance Minister there because of the financial aspect of it as well as the financial regulation part of it.*

*We had the Minister for Information to inform the public about any major policy decisions regarding the security agencies. Of course we had the heads of the agencies, the head of the military and the head of the police as members. The Vice President is always there and the secretary to the President and the*

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*National Security Advisor as secretary. In fact the National Security Advisor provides all secretariat support to the council.*

*Now it was not just overseeing and coordinating, monitoring, but also giving policy direction. So this, in a nutshell has been one of the key developments in times of trying to achieve the effectiveness of the police in particular.*

BOUTELLIS: So you described the rationale for this and the challenges it was trying to address. Now in terms of the setup, how was the design put in place and when did this happen and based on what models or discussion?

MANSARAY: *Initially it was an offshoot of the National Security Office. We started off by having a National Security Office which coordinates the operations of the two agencies, mostly the police and the military. Make sure their intelligence gathering was coordinated and professionally assessed. So there was going to be only one channel through which intelligence would be directed to the President or the cabinet for action. From there we realized that there had to be a kind of facility to task the National Security Office to relate with the rest of the agencies.*

*So one we borrowed from the Nigerians and of course partly from the Americans because they have I believe a National Security Council. At least we believed that at the level of the President and the cabinet to be able to have oversight functions over the security system there had to be a format in which they relate with the heads of these agencies and other public officials. So it evolved through a comparative effort, looking at what works in some countries. As I said, partly Nigeria and partly some other countries have that kind of arrangement.*

BOUTELLIS: So this National Security Council, national security coordination mechanisms were established in what year?

MANSARAY: *This was established in 1998, yes, soon after the reinstatement of the government, at least the planning and processes to have it set up. It started in earnest in 1998.*

BOUTELLIS: Can you give maybe specific examples where the context of the situation, the countries or specific incidents, events, solicited and challenged this new structure?

MANSARAY: *First of all before it was set up the respective ministers of the security agencies pretty much operated solo. They would take policy decisions that the Minister of Finance would not know that had financial implications, that the President might not know about and became a fait accompli to the government. That I think was sufficiently or effectively addressed because all proposals for major policy initiatives had to come through the National Security Council with the key operatives in government and the political levels seeing that and arguing the merits and the tradeoffs that had to be made. So that's one.*

*The other one was that there was no way of monitoring whether or not the ministries and the agencies were effectively carrying out government initiatives and reporting was invariably done to the President alone. Even if those reports were made, the President was not in the position to really carry out the kind of analytical work that the council would have done. So we addressed that, the possibility of giving partial policy advice to the President that he might act on that was not helping, to the best interests of the agencies or the nation as a whole.*

*Another issue was the question of accountability. Now having to do with so many principles who report to their respective constituencies. You have accountability spread out and deepened in a way. Over and above that with the inclusion of the Minister of Finance it introduced strict financial discipline in the sense that both the police and the military would now have to subject their procurement to financial regulations, tendering for example, public tendering. The previous manner of procuring for these agencies, many of the procurements were normally classified as secret so nobody would know what it was all about. But since the members of the Security Council were all sworn to an oath, we had to know what the secret was all about. In that sense we cut out all these confusing layers of behavior.*

**BOUTELLIS:** So the reform of the security sector—actually, coming back to my previous question, there is a new architecture, security sector architecture in place. Are there some particular events or major incidents that have put this new architecture to the test of reality that you can recall and maybe tell us about?

**MANSARAY:** *Yes. You can always say that the fact that we have not had a major incident with either the military or the police, you could attribute it to that, but it could be something else. The more important one is the quick reaction to events, national events, like challenges to law and order, like how the security forces respond to challenges like the elections. We've had two fairly tense elections and the police in particular had their mandates respected fully. It used to be that with the politicization of the security forces, like the last election, if anybody was disposed to creating problems, they would have had to deploy the military, otherwise dictate to the police to do things. But with the broad guidelines given by the National Security Council on how these agencies operate, nobody had a mandate, not even the President to alter them.*

*So we had strict clear guidelines under which they operated, and they took their own decisions as to the operational activities they had to undertake. No interference in operations, we voted the budget, we made sure it was honored and that's it.*

**BOUTELLIS:** So the reform and restructuring of the security sector was aiming at more civilian oversight. That was one of the driving goals?

**MANSARAY:** *Well civilian oversight, yes, but more for the military, because the police is a civilian institution, that's how we look at it here, but that's a key part, because we integrated. In times of operation the police can call on the military for support and all of that. But the key drivers to the reform, one was to increase effectiveness of the agencies, that's point number one. Then transparency. It's very important for the police to be accountable, both in financial dealings and its operational activities. So there was no standing institution before this restructuring was done that would summon the police to account, to representatives of the people, like ministers and members of Parliament. They can now summon the police, they had that authority but now it is more structured because there are reports of Security Council meetings and reports of National Security Office meetings, like assessment of intelligence, what decisions they arrive at.*

*So basically it is to improve the effectiveness of the institutions and also improve on accountability. Suddenly the question of relationship with other civilian agencies was extremely important because we tried to create or introduce a*

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*human rights component in the police, even in the training. Civil society was empowered to engage with the police at any time. So in a way, you're right, civilian control makes standards diffuse all across society was achieved. I think it was one of the purposes as well.*

BOUTELLIS: So now, focusing on the police, I'd like to ask you a couple of follow up questions. Some of the things that have been presented as the main successes and innovation of the Sierra Leone Police and which have been mentioned again and again in the interviews which are the Family Support Unit, the CDIID and the local community partnership boards. These are all very much geared towards civil society inputs and oversight; however, they all came from the police itself.

MANSARAY: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: To start with the Family Support Unit maybe. There has been discussion recently about possibly taking it out of the police to put it under the Ministry of Social Welfare. What is your take on that?

MANSARAY: *First of all on the question of initiatives brought about by the police, I give them credit for that, but also the environment existed for them to not do anything other than come up with initiatives to maintain their relevance to the community. By opening the police up to society, civil society included, they demanded some of these initiatives, either directly or indirectly, addressing concerns of civil society, about what the police are doing about child abuse, gender problems, wife battering, these kinds of things. These are initiatives that were taken by the police but I think the impulse came from society as a whole. I think they were able to do it, to take up these initiatives because of the efficiency and the use of public funds that had been introduced in the grand restructuring exercise, because we can now monitor that yes, you have money in the budget. If you want to use it why don't you use it for that? Don't buy uniforms because we just authorized new uniforms, batons and all of that. So it is a combination of factors.*

*Now, about the Family Support Unit, I'm not really an expert in that, in these kinds of issues. I have to really study them carefully to make some comment on it but right now I have not been dealing with it.*

BOUTELLIS: Any further comments?

MANSARAY: No.

BOUTELLIS: Thank you very much.