Wider Lessons for Peacebuilding: Security Sector Reform in Liberia

June 2010

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Key Points

- **Avoid Formulaic Approaches.** Failure is often guaranteed by robotically following some inflexible, linear list of things to do in chaotic and complex situations. Success is better promoted by innovative responses to circumstances on the ground.

- **Maintain Momentum.** The real objective in the immediate years following Charles Taylor's departure was to redirect the course of the situation from continuing chaos toward something more manageable. In other words, the intention was to create enough momentum in favor of peace in an operating environment that remained complex, nonlinear, and uncertain. Hope and progress are gained by keeping a steady tempo on your side.

- **Mobilize Networks for Peace to Counterbalance Networks for War.** Serious ceasefire violations and overall instability created a palpable sense that the brittle peace agreement could crumble at any moment. To reduce tension and limit risk, recovery leaders actively developed networks for peace to counteract networks for violence. These leaders assisted in the building and rebuilding of multilateral, nongovernmental, and Liberian networks that wanted a warless Liberia as a check on opportunistic warlords.

- **Consolidate the State's Monopoly of Force to Uphold the Rule of Law.** Strengthening the rule of law in a country as anarchic as Liberia was an initial priority and remains an ongoing challenge and objective. However, for rule of law to take root, the state must first have a monopoly of force to provide at least minimal protection for its citizens. In Liberia, this required robust and early disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) programs.

- **Recognize That Restructuring Security Institutions is Deeply Political.** DDR and SSR are political and dangerous efforts as they dismantle the de facto institutions of power in conflict-affected countries. A general or warlord may not welcome the suggestion to put down his gun and become a farmer. As such, purely technical approaches to DDR and SSR will fail.

- **Integrate DDR and SSR.** Conventional wisdom holds that these two programs are separate and sequential because they involve different actors, priorities, time lines and functions. DDR is often viewed as a relatively quick process, while SSR is imagined to pick up where DDR leaves off and progress over an extended period of time. In reality, they share the same objective—the consolidation of the state's monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law. They should be planned, resourced, implemented, and evaluated together.

- **"Operationalize" Human Security.** Human security is an abstract theory that does not translate well into practice. The goal of Liberian peacebuilding efforts was to transform a soldier into a figure that women and children could run toward for protection, rather than away from in fear. Recovery leaders incorporated this concrete imperative into their approach to security sector reform and used it to shape the reconstructed military and police in unconventional ways.

Introduction: What Worked in Liberia

In 2003, *The Economist* predicted that Liberia would soon be "the world's worst place to live." Indeed, it was a horrible year to be in Liberia. Today, after a troubled history and 14 years of civil war, Liberia is slowly recovering. The country's future may not yet be secure, and much progress has yet to be made, but most of those present in the immediate aftermath of the war in 2003 would agree that today's Liberia is a comparative miracle.

Three individuals who partnered with Liberian leadership and assisted Liberia's transition from war to peace authored this report to help bridge the gap between theory and practice in peacebuilding. While emphasizing that every conflict is unique, they hope that some of their insights into what worked—and why—may prove useful to others engaged in similar efforts around the world.

Liberia is a relatively rare success story—one that underscores the inescapable complexity of post-conflict peacebuilding in both the short and longer term.

It is difficult to convey the extent of damage inflicted on Liberia and the suffering endured by its people under the regime of President Charles Taylor and the 14-year civil war. By 2003, the country was virtually post-apocalyptic. With a population of three million, more than a quarter million people had been killed, while another million were displaced or missing. Abductions, torture, rape, and other human rights abuses occurred on a massive scale, and it was estimated that at least one child in ten had been abducted and forced into service as a child soldier or sex slave.[1]

The country's infrastructure was destroyed: there were no electrical grids, public running water, sewage, or other utilities. There was little evidence that Liberia had once been a premier European and American vacation destination, with lush beaches, luxury high-rise hotels, and three direct flights a week from New York City to Monrovia on Pan Am Airlines. By mid-2003 those hotels were burned husks packed with squatters. Bullet holes adorned the buildings, lampposts, and street signs. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Liberians fled to Monrovia, a city that could accommodate far fewer, resulting in massive slums of tin shacks, garbage, human waste, and disease. Unemployment was rife, and despite a tenuous ceasefire, child soldiers still stalked the night with Kalashnikovs. It was grim.

Now, seven years later, the country continues its slow process of recovery, with the help of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), one of the largest peacekeeping missions in the world. Liberia has resisted backsliding into conflict and, in 2005, elected Africa's first-ever democratically-installed female president. Its progressive stability is a significant achievement, given the myriad of would-be spoilers along the way and the tough geopolitical neighborhood of West Africa.

Though violence could erupt anytime, as most assumed it would in 2003, it has not. Rather, confidence in Liberia's future is growing.

The Larger Lessons for Peacebuilding

Below are a few ideas from those on the ground in the early days, the so-called "golden hour" of Liberia's post-war recovery.

Avoid Formulaic Approaches

Doctrinal templates, standardized metrics, and received wisdom should serve on-the-ground leadership, not vice versa. Failure is often guaranteed by robotically following some inflexible, linear checklist in a nonlinear, chaotic situation. Often these "solutions," concocted from afar, are built on dubious assumptions that stem from abstract theory. In some ways, the overadherence to such approaches is understandable, as donor countries, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) expend great intellectual and real capital developing commendable handbooks, frameworks and other materials for peacebuilding, and are eager to implement these tools in missions. However, the temptation to let the tool drive the mission should be resisted.

For example, the peacekeeping maxim that security, in the form of a ceasefire, must precede any additional progress toward peace did not really hold in Liberia. During the most intense fighting from June to August 2003, which Liberians referred to as "World War Three," the possibility of large-scale military intervention on behalf of the United States or NATO to end the violence and create a secure context for peace negotiations was remote, though thoroughly considered in some quarters. In fact, Ambassador Blaney and his staff were urged strongly by some to abandon the US embassy, though they refused to do so.

Without potential for US or NATO reinforcement, the only peacekeepers initially available to help secure the situation and pave the way for a peace agreement were a few small Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) units, hastily moved from Sierra Leone to form the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL). Given the size of the units, there was little confidence that ECOMIL could provide enough immediate security to form the conventionally-required basis of a workable peace.

In this context of anarchic violence, the only alternative to a bloodbath was creative battlefield mediation. In fact, local diplomacy effectively sealed the peace long before friendly forces secured any ground or the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in Ghana. This involved eschewing formulaic thinking and encouraging individual leaders on the ground to be innovative and responsive to local circumstances.

Achieving a peaceful end to conflicts as complex and deeply rooted as Liberia means being open to all possibilities, including those that others see as unworkable. In this case, it meant being receptive to the possibility of working with an unlikely interlocutor—a warlord. Received wisdom holds that such characters are impossible vehicles for peace and stability. However, received wisdom was wrong in the case of General Mohamed Sheriff (aka "Cobra"), the field commander of the biggest army of the largest rebel group, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

Sheriff's LURD rebels spearheaded the attack on Monrovia that ignited this period of chaos. Sheriff intended to press the attack, overrun downtown Monrovia, and seize power for LURD while his men sacked the city. But he did not. Interestingly, Sheriff broke with LURD political leadership and acted independently. He ultimately negotiated and delivered a LURD ceasefire and pullback, which allowed the permissive entry and interpositional placement of the ECOMIL peacekeepers. He agreed to this pullback as a result of an unconventional battlefield mediation effort on behalf of the US ambassador, and

others, who he viewed with some credibility. This mid-battle agreement essentially ended the war and laid the groundwork for conclusion of the CPA, which is the reverse order of many "textbook" solutions.

Additionally, the creativity required to forward the peace process may involve strategic deception. A large US Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) was nearby, but not visible, in the course of these battlefield negotiations. At that time, they had no mandate to intervene militarily in Liberia. Fortunately, neither rebel army knew how limited the US military's scope of action truly was. The ambassador and the MEU commander decided to have a few harrier jets hover in a training flight above the building where the negotiations with Cobra were taking place. The deafening roar of the jets sent an unmistakable message to the warring parties: you want the United States as your friend and not as your enemy, so listen up and let's negotiate a peace deal. This helped tip the negotiation calculus in favor of peace.

Strategic deception is an idea that is ignored and even shunned in peace studies literature yet, as Sun Tzu told us 2500 years ago, it is fundamental to the art of war.[2] Clearly, deception can sometimes be useful in the art of peace as well.

Maintain Momentum

The immediate objective in the years following Taylor's resignation and exile was to redirect the course of the situation from continuing chaos toward something more manageable. In other words, the intent was to create enough momentum in favor of peace to enable progress in an operating environment that remained complex, nonlinear, and uncertain. Conflicts like Liberia are highly complex and defy simplistic cause-effect analysis, especially by outsiders. When ending armed conflicts and reducing chaos, it is imperative to keep the tempo of events in your favor, sometimes by acting boldly even when unsure about the possible results of your actions. Rarely can you afford to sit tight and wait to see what happens next. Hope and progress are gained by proactively keeping a steady tempo on your side.

For example, in the weeks and months following the signing of the CPA, those charged with its implementation had to maintain the momentum of the peace agreement and dissuade aggrieved armed groups from reviving the war. Momentum was a vital tool since recovery leaders then lacked enough peacekeepers to control widespread violence. Simply put, one needed to create the impression that the proverbial "train was leaving the station," and that those who wanted a stake in postwar Liberia had to get on or be left behind. To this end, the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DDRR) program was initiated as quickly as possible, beginning on December 7, 2003. On the ground, the dynamic was simple: either start to disarm the warring factions very soon, or risk a quick return to war.

In Liberia, DDRR was an early step in the transition from conflict to peace by removing weapons, demobilizing armed units, returning combatants to civilian life, and enabling them to earn livelihoods through peaceful means instead of violence. Starting the DDRR program quickly kept the combatants, whose chains of command were still intact, focused on material gain through employment rather than on coup attempts or fighting. It also demonstrated to the populace that the forces of peace retained critical momentum and had the capacity to shape the future.

The DDRR program in Liberia disarmed and demobilized 101,449 combatants, collected 61,918 weapons, and 6,486,136 units of ammunition, ranging from AK-47s to rocket propelled grenades, heavy machine guns, and crew-served weapons. Simultaneously, the United Nations disposed of ordinance and addressed the tough challenge of sealing Liberia's borders. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Liberians and refugees were returned home.

Detractors argue that the United Nations started the DDRR program in Liberia too quickly, before enough UN peacekeepers were present. Indeed, for ten days during December, serious riots erupted at Camp Schefflin, a DDRR site just outside of Monrovia, and this initial effort was shut down. However, the riots were a planned attempt to disrupt the United Nations' efforts and create instability, largely to increase monetary profits for warring factions, and would have happened whenever the DDRR program began. The DDRR program was resumed four months later, without incident, and remains one of the most comprehensive programs of its kind. This sent a reassuring message to all Liberians: peacebuilding was moving forward and would not be derailed.

Similarly, momentum was critical to keep the 2005 presidential election on schedule, despite numerous challenges. Some senior statesmen and other respected Liberian figures suggested national conventions and a rewriting of Liberia's Constitution before any election took place. Such a process would likely have taken years. At the same time, and often with entirely different motives, several interim government officials moved to prevent, or at least postpone, the 2005 elections. Their concerns were mostly self-serving: a delay would have prolonged their time in office as unelected officials. Moreover, many interim officials sought a personal slice of the $520 million raised from the February 2004 donor conference. Liberians have termed this time-honored practice of government corruption "chopping," as in chopping off bits of one's budget for personal gain. For some, more sinister motivations joined with personal profit incentive in their efforts to undermine the elections.

The authors positions on this point were consistent and firm: nothing should prevent or postpone the 2005 election. Doing so would retard the momentum for peace, jeopardize the stability of the country, and imperil the freedom and rights of ordinary Liberians. Today, Liberians stand proud with the election of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first modern, and currently the only, elected female head of state in Africa. More importantly, there is absolutely no doubt who is the legitimate head of government in Liberia.

Mobilize Networks for Peace to Counterbalance Networks for War

The period between the signing of the CPA and the demobilization of the combatants proved a difficult time on the ground. Warring groups with access to weapons still wandered the streets, a fact which threatened to reignite the civil war if they preemptively attacked enemies in a classic "prisoner's dilemma" scenario. Moreover, it was evident to all that insufficient numbers of peacekeepers were present to contain the violence. Numerous serious ceasefire violations created a palpable sense that the brittle CPA could crumble at any moment. Such violations and other nefarious activities were countered, at first by ECOMIL and US Embassy personnel, and later by UN peacekeepers.

To reinforce the peace process against these pressures, recovery leaders actively helped develop networks for peace to counteract networks for violence. They assisted the building and rebuilding of multilateral, national, and nongovernmental webs of people and organizations that wanted a warless Liberia as a way to check opportunistic warlords. Indigenous Liberian networks expanded, as the country was seized with genuine war fatigue. A number of Liberian women's peace groups, in particular, autonomously and actively struggled to promote the peace. As formerly evacuated foreign embassy staff and NGOs trickled back into the country, they were quickly integrated into post-conflict stabilization efforts and informal contact groups.

This group networking approach served to absorb failures and shocks, hedging the risk of a relapse into war. It also began to address the fundamental requirement of post-conflict peacebuilding that distinguishes it from broader state-building processes: the need to repair social ties severed and structures destroyed by years of systemic violence.

Consolidate the State's Monopoly of Force to Uphold the Rule of Law

Strengthening the rule of law in a country as anarchic as Liberia was an initial priority and remains an ongoing challenge and objective. However, rule of law is one of those concepts that briefs well in Washington, New York, and Geneva but is elusive in the field. This is partly because it is a broad notion that resists common or comprehensive definition. The UN secretary-general defines it as the "principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards."[3] But what exactly does this look like in post-conflict Liberia?

Before there is rule of law, the state must possess a monopoly of force.[4] States that do not enjoy the monopoly of force must compete with insurgents, militias, organized crime, and revolutionary movements, all of which challenge the state's legitimacy and effective governance. Worse, they can cast a state, or entire region, into war. Accordingly, consolidating the state's monopoly of force through DDR and SSR was an early priority and even mandated in the CPA.[5]

SSR is the complex task of transforming the "security sector"—those institutions that protect the state and its citizens from security threats—into professional, effective, legitimate, apolitical, and accountable actors. SSR is more than simple "train and equip" programs. While training and equipping actors is necessary for SSR, its comprehensive achievement requires considerably more. For instance, the SSR program that drove the reconstitution of the Armed Forces of Liberia and Ministry of National Defence involved recruiting, vetting, training, equipping, fielding, sustaining, and mentoring the force. It also involved constructing bases across the country, establishing a professional ministry, drafting a national defense strategy, and designing a new force structure.

Similarly, the program to restructure the Liberian National Police force involved purging unqualified policemen, extensive recruiting and training of new police forces, creating a police academy, and developing an emergency infrastructure, such as a national toll-free emergency telephone number (e.g., the equivalent of dialing 911 in the United States). These innovations go well beyond simple "train and equip" programs. Consolidating the state's monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law is a highly complex process.

Recognize That Restructuring Security Institutions is Deeply Political

Conducting DDR and SSR is dangerous because they are inherently political processes, as they dismantle the de facto institutions of power in conflict-affected countries. Convincing a general or warlord to put down his gun and become a farmer may not be welcomed and might even provoke violence, as occurred in neighboring Cote d'Ivoire. In 2002, the government of Cote d'Ivoire attempted to demobilize 750 soldiers, who then staged a coup, requiring a French and UN armed intervention to maintain peace. Unfortunately, this intervention did not prevent a civil war, which still simmers today. DDR and SSR are inherently political and dangerous efforts, and purely technical approaches will fail.

In the case of Liberia, the problem was even more severe. For many years, corrupt security forces ravaged Liberia and Liberians, resulting in a broad consensus that the country needed a *new* police force, *new* armed forces, and a *new* (or resurrected) judicial system that would work in concert to establish the rule of law. The United Nations took the lead in creating a civilian law enforcement capacity, which included a judiciary, a police force, and corrections facilities. Meanwhile, the United States was largely responsible for the demobilization and reintegration of the legacy military followed by the reconstitution of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and Ministry of Defense. This task was outsourced to private companies such as

DynCorp International, which had advantages and disadvantages worth exploring but are beyond the scope of this report.

In addition, there is sometimes a natural tension between transitional justice programs and efforts to restructure security institutions. In theory, it is assumed that justice and security buttress one another in situations like post-conflict Liberia, but in practice this relationship is less clear. Take for example the notion of amnesty. Granting amnesty to those who committed atrocities during the civil war is anathema to transitional justice, which seeks to redress past crimes through special courts or truth commissions. However, programs like DDR and SSR depend on some form of temporary amnesty to succeed. For example, ex-combatants seldom show up to a DDR site if they have not been granted temporary amnesty. If they suspect they might be arrested, detained, or investigated for the purposes of a special court or truth commission, it would discredit the DDR process and perhaps encourage ex-combatants to bury their weapons and clandestinely regroup their command structures.

To be clear, in spite of pressure from various warlords and factions, blanket or general amnesty was never issued in Liberia as it would have compromised the later Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, efforts were made early to postpone implementation of transitional justice long enough to at least disarm and demobilize armed groups. In short, some form of amnesty may prove vital to DDR, yet it can also be contrary to transitional justice.

Integrate DDR and SSR

Conventional wisdom holds that DDR and SSR are separate and distinct programs because they involve different actors, priorities, time lines, and functions. DDR is often viewed as a relatively quick process, while SSR is imagined to pick up where DDR leaves off and progress over an extended period of time.[6] In reality, they share the same objective—the consolidation of the state's monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law—and they should be planned, resourced, implemented, and evaluated together.

Integrating DDR and SSR was our approach to transforming the AFL. The United Nations disarmed the legacy military. The United States then, in a single program, combined the demobilization and reintegration with SSR. The natural point of intersection between DDR and SSR was reintegration, as many ex-combatants sought employment in the new military. Assuming they were fit for duty and properly vetted, this transference was a "win-win" for everyone. First, it provided ex-combatants a quick reintegration into society, maintaining that critical momentum for peace. Second, it provided a ready-made labor pool to the SSR effort. Third, it reinforced the peace settlement by encouraging ex-combatants and their followers to actively participate in the road to peace. This was particularly true if ex-combatants had a perception that they would have a substantive role in crafting and serving in the new government. Fourth, it built mutual trust between former enemies who now served in uniform together for a single purpose: a better Liberia.

Of course, in a downsized new AFL, most ex-combatants could not become part of the new military and had to be reintegrated elsewhere or retired. This fact is directly linked to one of the primary challenges that continues to frustrate further peacebuilding progress in Liberia: the difficulty of absorbing large numbers of young, unskilled workers into a highly fragile post-conflict economy. While it could not address the entirety of the idle youth problem, reintegrating vetted former combatants into a professionalized, retrained army was one useful tool applied within a much larger and longer-term reintegration process that continues today.

One hurdle faced in the larger DDR and SSR process was funding for security-related programs. Although there was a balanced multilateral approach to overall donor funding, the security sector was the exception. Financing

support for foreign security forces is unpopular among the parliaments of the world. Thus much of the funding obligation to restructure the Liberian armed forces fell to the United States. Though implemented by the United Nations, the United States also financed most of the rebuilding of the police force. The corrupt police force that operated during the Taylor years was left largely intact after the war stopped. Had it remained, its officers would have posed a threat to peace, and to the entire reconstruction and recovery effort. In response to this threat, the United States initially put even greater attention and priority into creating an effective police force than into building Liberia's army. Both of these efforts, however, were challenged by the lack of balanced and multilateral sources of funding.

"Operationalize" Human Security

"Human security" is an attractive idea that has stood up better in theory than in practice, and for valid reasons. First, it was born of academia and institutional headquarters rather than the field. Second, it remains a highly ambiguous and abstract idea. The term comes from a fundamental rethinking of "security" in the post-Cold War era, as the nature of warfare evolved from primarily interstate to intrastate. In other words, warfare between states was decreasing and replaced with what one theorist calls "war amongst the people."[7] These wars, such as in the Balkans or Liberia, were often fueled by the failures of development, such as social injustice, disproportionate distribution of wealth, political exclusion, ubiquitous economic hardship, ethnic tensions, inadequate public security, and the failure of democracy.

Accordingly, the focus of security in some quarters shifted from the state to the individual, encapsulated in the 1994 UN Development Programme (UNDP) report, which termed this new paradigm "human security."[8] This idea held that in intrastate conflicts, state security could be achieved only when individuals are first secure from "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear," which are principally accomplished through the instruments of development rather than military means.[9] The problem, however, is obvious: what do "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" look like on the ground? Furthermore, what are the immediate needs on the ground in contexts where an adequate level of genuine "human security" is not achievable in the foreseeable future, as in the case of Haiti?

Given the nature of the Liberian conflict, recovery leadership charged with security sector reform relied more heavily on the human security paradigm than a traditional national security model to inform the restructuring of the AFL. There was no precedent to emulate, and scholarship on the topic was too abstract to be useful on the ground. In many ways this effort was experimental. The primary concern was ensuring that the population had "freedom from fear" *of the military* (which had certainly not been the case during the civil war) and that the military was competent, apolitical, and supportive of the rule of the law.

International recovery leaders worked in partnership with the Liberian government to attain a seemingly simple, yet often elusive objective: the transforming of a soldier into a figure that women and children would run toward for protection rather than away from in fear. First, the legacy armed forces were fully discharged, given their reputation for past atrocities. All discharged soldiers were then offered the opportunity to reapply for service in the new AFL, requiring them to undergo the same vetting and qualifying tests that all other recruits undergo. This was done to help reestablish the credibility of the military in the eyes of the population, which did not fully welcome the rebuilding of the army, and also to assure them that the new military was in fact "new." Background checks were an important part of this process.

Second, the human security imperative "freedom from fear" largely influenced the force structure of the re-formed army. The size of the AFL is now slightly more than 2,000 soldiers, which can be scaled up if necessary.

Clearly it would require more than this number to fully secure the borders of Liberia. However, in the Liberian context, the primary threat was not a neighboring country's *blitzkrieg* across the border to seize Monrovia. While this secondary threat was, and remains, a genuine concern in Liberia's dangerous geopolitical neighborhood, the greater threat was soldiers staging a coup. Owing to this, the size of the military was limited according to the government's ability to pay them consistently and on time.

In deference to these realities, the AFL was structured in such a way that it now has a defense-oriented force posture with limited force projection capability. This allows the military to defend Liberia, yet makes it not so capable as to provoke its neighbors. For example, the AFL has very limited aircraft, tanks, artillery, etc. The AFL also has very few special operations units, militias, and other secret organizations that can easily become the personal weapon of corrupt politicians. Previously there had been a number of special units, such as the Special Secret Service (SSS), which were loyal to individuals and not to the state, and occasionally went rogue. Those structuring the new armed forces strongly desired to prevent this practice by not introducing the concept of special units in the first place.

Third, nontraditional training was incorporated into basic training. Basic training, or boot camp, is a fairly standard affair, no matter what military you hail from. It involves copious amounts of physical, tactical, and weapons training. Our training challenge was not basic rifle marksmanship—many Liberians already knew how to shoot a rifle—but rather *when* to shoot it and at *whom*. Discipline, moral judgment, and respect for the laws of war were the true training needs of the basic recruit. Accordingly, they spent less time on the firing range and more time in the classroom learning about the civil-military relationship, military professionalism, and the laws of war.

Another challenge was the creation of a strong Liberian national identity that would transcend tribal loyalties in service to the state. For this classes were taught on Liberian history, the constitution, and civics. Literacy was included in the curriculum for those needing it. One of the tragedies of the old Liberia was that not all 14 ethnic tribes had equal access to education; consequently, not everyone was fully literate. However, the reconstruction process sought an ethnically balanced military so that one or two tribes would not dominate and abuse the military for parochial interests.

Lastly, the courses were designed and delivered by Liberians, not foreigners. The only exception was the International Committee of the Red Cross, which taught classes on the laws of war. Sadly, this classroom portion of basic training was ultimately dropped due to lack of funding, though it remains a valuable model for what can be done.

Conclusion: Effective Peacebuilding and the Security-Development Nexus

In accordance with a guiding focus on "human security," the true mission of the military being created was to further peace by securing space for development, a purpose incorporated into the early drafts of the Liberian National Defense Strategy. The principal threats to Liberian security were frankly acknowledged as not interstate but intrastate. Since the 1980 coup staged by Sam Doe, armed nonstate actors have waged the majority of armed conflict. Such groups find it easier to change governments through violence rather than through the legitimate means of democracy, given the political exclusion of many regimes, paltry rule of law, easy access to small arms, and expanses of ungoverned territory in which to find sanctuary.

However, armed rebel factions face a potentially debilitating obstacle: they must rely upon the support of local populations to hide, survive, and thrive within the borders of a country. To attain this support, they must gain public sympathy by exploiting public grievances—real or perceived—that often can

be attributed to failures of development, such as social injustice and economic hardship (i.e. roughly the elements that threaten "human security"). Therefore, the best way to prevent conflict is by promoting and protecting forms of development that address core grievances and deny nonstate actors a popular support base for refuge and resupply.

Effective peacebuilding thus implies a long-term commitment to institution building, eco-nomic growth, and social recovery, for which DDR and SSR provide a crucial foundation. To be clear, the AFL's mission is not, nor should it be, to direct the implementation of development projects. Yet, the failures of development may shape the AFL's future missions. Only by addressing the challenges of development can security be achieved and maintained: this is the core of the security-development nexus.

Endnotes

[1] US Agency for International Development (USAID), *Overview of Activities in Liberia*, May 4, 2004, *http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2005/afr/lr.ht ml*, accessed August 26, 2007.

[2] "All war is based on deception." Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p 66.

[3] United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General: The Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies*, UN Doc. S/2004/616 (August 23, 2004). See also David Tolbert and Andrew Solomon, "United Nations Reform and Supporting the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict Societies," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 19, Spring, 2006, *www.law.harvard.edu/stud ents/orgs/hrj/iss19/tolbert.shtml*.

[4] The concept of "monopoly of force" is derived from German sociologist Max Weber's classic definition of the state as "a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." See: Weber, Max. "Politics as a Vocation," *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills, editors and translators (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 77.

[5] See Articles VI, VII, VIII of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between The Government of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and Political Parties, Accra, August 18, 2003.

[6] This view is confirmed in recent academic literature and even in practitioner-focused manuals, which have developed in relative isolation of one another. See for example: *UN Integrated DDR Standards* (IDDRS), *http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/iddrs _guide.php*; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development—Development Assistance Committee, *The OECD DAC Handbook on SSR: Supporting Security and Justice*, *www.oecd.org /dac/conflict/if-ssr*.

[7] Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

[8] UNDP, "New Dimensions of Human Security," *Human Development Report*, 1994, *http://hdr.undp .org/en/reports/global/hdr1994* (accessed July 20, 2008).

[9] For more information on "human security," see S. Neil Macfarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

The Stanley Foundation

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