



Demobilization in Ethiopia

Lessons Learned



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PARTIAL CHRONOLOGY - DEMOBILIZATION/REINTEGRATION**1991 - 1993**

May 28, 1991 - EPRDF enter Addis Ababa. Mengistu's army capitulates.

June 21, 1991 - Addis 2794. Request for airlift of blankets and tents from DOD excess supplies.

July 16, 1991 - Briefing given by the Demob Commission Chairman to donors on repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation plans. 6-month in camp training and re-education proposed.

July 16, 1991 - OFDA-owned Cessna given to Air Serv to operate in Ethiopia to assist aid organizations in serving their emergency programs more effectively. Initial operating costs of \$ 89,000 provided by OFDA for 1 month.

July 18, 1991 - Meeting between a donor delegation, Minister for Defence and the Demob Commission. Aide Memoire issued.

July 30/31, 1991 - DAS Wolthius visits Ethiopia arriving on a C-5 galaxy. Charge Baas and PA Fenton take him via UN Cessna to Mekele (45,000 ex-soldiers) and Bahir Dar (33,000 ex-soldiers) to observe how DOD excess supplies are being used.

August 6, 1991 - Record of Meeting with Demob Commission and Donor's group.

August 8, 1991 - First meeting of the demobilization technical committee meeting convened at USAID. USAID D/Dir chairs.

August 12, 1991 - DTC meets

August 16, 1991 - DTC meets

August 23, 1991 - DTC meets

September 10, 1991 - Aide Memoire to Commission in which donor group pledges US \$154 million in support of the ILO/WFP/Commission proposal for training.

September 30, 1991 - WFP/Rome reluctantly signs agreement for 5 Million.

October 2, 1991 - In response to DTC request that ILO obtain clearance to proceed with the preparation for the implementation of the ILO/WFP training proposal, ILO reports that authorization to engage in the following preparatory work had been given: a) preparation of timely and reliable statistical estimates of the ex-soldier population on the basis of the sample questionnaire as approved by the DTC; b) physical rehabilitation of agricultural training centers and community skills training centers, including the development and/or improvement of the curricula; c) food supply component to meet basic requirements for personnel involved including FFW in the rehab of training centers; and d) the purchase of training equipment including packages for distribution to trained ex-servicemen on completion of training. ILO also draws

attention to the Committee's need to consider assistance to disabled war veterans.

October 9, 1991 - Meeting between Commissioner Mulugeta, Shimelis Adugna, Pearson, Van egmond, Michael Ellis (WFP) Director, Wolfgang Harbinger (WFP, author of the original training proposal). Meeting focused on finding a quicker way for the approximately 110,000 ex-soldiers to receive orientation courses in general agriculture. Commission proposed involving MOA DAs at the awraja level in the training and orientation and in distribution of general agriculture rehabilitation packages. Commission does not raise issue of training or object to a Project Coordination Unit.

October 13, 1991 - Meeting between Shimelis Adugna, advisor to the Commission, and Mr Mpyisi, ILO representative. The organizational set up of the project and in particular the establishment of an Advisory Committee (to be composed of Demob Commission, MOA, MOE, MOI, ICRC, ERCS, UN and donor representatives) was discussed. There was general agreement that the Commission would provide a chairman and a secretary. The latter would be counterpart to the internationally recruited project coordinator.

October 14, 1991 - Letter from the Commission to USAID, copied to ILO in which Commission comments on WFP/ILO proposal. Commission accepts the proposal in principle but has reservations about emphasis on training during an emergency situation and wants to eliminate a PMU as unnecessary saying TGE line ministries can carry out these functions. Also believes new centers and revised curricula unnecessary. "By mixing emergency and development issues we are not only delaying the start of the program but we are also attempting to divert funds that may have been utilized to directly assist in the rehabilitation of demobilized soldiers."

October 16, 1991 - Letter to donors from heads of WFP and ILO in Ethiopia strongly protesting the Commission's comments (especially in light of the 10/9 and 10/13 meetings at which none of these issues were raised) and insisting that a Project Coordination Unit with accountability towards TGE and donors as well as the necessary technical competence is a sine qua non for involvement of UN agencies in the operation. Letter urges donors and technical committee to take action. This fundamental disagreement puts the future of the proposal in doubt.

October 18, 1991 -

October 21, 1991 - DTC meets.

October 28, 1991 - DTC meets.

November 5, 1991 - Brief on the Status of Ex-Servicemen's re-integration schedule Phase II from ILO staff. Includes changes in the project design as per meeting of Commissioner Mulugeta and ILO and WFP staff members.

November 8, 1991 -

November 11, 1991 - Commission approves and issues the ILO/WFP project under its own

name and requests donor funding for the \$154 million proposal (Aide Memoire 9/10).

November 21, 1991 - Repatriation of 50,888 ex-government soldiers from Kassala, Sudan to Ethiopia completed using a total of 298 flights.

December 3, 1991 - TGE announces that all but 900 of the 18,000 officers being held at Tole will be released. ICRC to handle repatriation.

December 5, 1991 - Bill John Egan and ICRC had a meeting with ICRC who reports that approximately 220,000 ex-soldiers had been repatriated to date.

December 5, 1991 - Memo from WF to KF. "As far as the PHASE II: Rehabilitation is concerned things are at a virtual standstill. The WFP/ILO proposal has been worked and reworked to death. The Commission finally distributed a version of it to donors under their own banner. The donors are in disagreement and disarray about what to do now. Most are greatly relieved the repatriation exercise is nearly over and went so well and are now disinclined to get further mired in rehabilitation activities. Bill seems very negative now about the WFP proposal (which OFDA has contributed USD 5 million for!) and it doesn't look as though it will get off the ground. PVOs are submitting proposals to work with demobilized soldiers after having been encouraged by AVE who almost promised to set up a USD 5 million umbrella grant with CRDA (announced it in a Task Force meeting) for the purpose. The ICRC is getting very nervous about the lack of donor commitment as they have already completed 4 out of the 5 monthly distributions they had committed themselves to."

December 13, 1991 - Rather belatedly, donors decide they can not recommend support for the WFP/ILO proposal in the absence of some sort of assessment. Donor group held during which TOR for consultant group to make recommendations for Phase II were reviewed.

December 17, 1991 - revised TOR submitted to prospective donors.

December 28, 1991 - Commissioner sends letter urging donors to make good on their pledges to support the demobilization/reintegration effort. Almost all ex-soldiers have been released from the camps (a pre-condition for donor assistance) and transported to their areas of origin and food supplies are only guaranteed through January. Planning for the consultancy is underway but there will be a gap while it is carried out, recommendations are considered and a program initiated.

January 4 - February 1, 1992 - UNDP funded consultancy on Rehabilitation Phase of demobilization carried out. (Ret. Lt. Col. Sam Silla, Gambia (experience of demobilization after Biafran War; Theo Erni, UNEPPG; Professor Seyoum Gebre-Selassie, AAU (recommended by B. Pearson); Ato Aklu Girgire (well-known Ethiopian consultant).

February 1, 1992 - Consultancy team completes Mission and issues report and recommendations for Phase II. 10 month project, to begin Feb. 1, 1992. TGE inputs: ETB 5,942,345; donor inputs \$7,870,800; counterpart funds ETB 117,186,920; total food needs 3/92 - 12/92: 52,360 MT [35,700 MT for 210,000 rural people for 10 mos and 16,660 MT for 140,000 urban people

for 7 mos]. Ag inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, tools, draught animals, plastic tubing for coffee seedlings and vehicles and equipment for Commission's HQ + 36 branch offices.

February 7, 1992 - RRC submits plan to WFP for the distribution 8,082 MT of food aid for 237,691 ex-soldiers.

February 19, 1992 - Addis 0909. Mission summarizes report and recommends USG support.

February 27, 1992 - RRC issues distribution plan for food aid to ex-soldiers through WFP. Transportation began on 5 March.

March 9, 1992 - UNDP Rep Painter circulates to donor Missions a draft Note summarizing resource availability and the steps necessary to initiate the Phase II of the reintegration program as a basis for final discussions with the Demobilization Commission and MEEC.

March 13, 1992 - UNDP Rep Painter circulates a further revised draft of the Note reflecting new comments received from donor Missions.

March 26, 1992 - UNDP Rep Painter circulates a final list of resources available (pledged) for the implementation of the proposed reintegration program reflecting the outcome of a meeting on 3/23 with the MOD. In short: \$7.8 million in FOREX (\$5 million USAID); 50,300 MT of food (20,000 MT USAID); 40 million birr from TGE CP funds; \$2.7 million from TGE in kind contribution; 6 million DM from GTZ (US 3.9 million) for separate project; \$1 million from Japan for 1,800 MT of fertilizer. NOTE: "While the follow-up of individual contributions should be managed between the commission and the respective donors, an overall co-ordinating and monitoring mechanism, as recommended by the consultant mission, will now be established with regular meetings, minutes of which will be circulated to all participating donors." This Committee was never convened.

April 8, 1992 - Letter from the Commission to the Mission with suggested budget for the use of the USD 1 million.

April 28, 1992 - Memo from WF to WP re: 5 million. Contains record of conversation with Bob Van Horn who said Jeeps were not true off-road vehicles, that they wouldn't last as long as Toyotas or be as reliable, and that as this was OFDA money, we were under no obligation to 'Buy American'.

May 5, 1992 - Handwritten fax from Dan Wilson, Regional Sales Director of Chrysler International (one of the suppliers Bob Van Horn recommended the Commission contact re: Jeeps). "We do not have sales or service available in Addis Ababa at present time."

May 15, 1992 - Fax from WF to Dina Esposito requesting Jim Kunder's approval for Commission to buy Toyotas.

May 15, 1992 - Fax from Dina Esposito, OFDA Desk Officer, authorizing procurement of non-US vehicles. "Jim [Kunder] says go ahead and give Commission permission to buy Toyotas."

May 20, 1992 - Letter from AVE to Commissioner Mulugeta which authorizes release of money from WFP to Commission for already initiated procurement actions. Mission is unaware that money has not even been transferred to WFP/Rome or that Mission cannot authorize release of funds by such means.

June 9, 1992 - Memo from WF to WP re: 5 million. Three management options for 5 million discussed. OFDA preferred NOT to give the money to the Commission. We preferred TO give the money to the Commission.

June 17, 1992 - Letter from Laurie C. Davis, Zeka Int'l, to Senator Sam Nunn requesting investigation of USAID/Ethiopia plans to authorize large Toyota procurement.

July 17, 1992 - Memo to Walter North from Bill Douglass summarizing status of USD 5 million and asking for confirmation of how to handle it based on WFP's unwillingness, Commission's procurement actions carried out on the basis of Mission's 5/20 letter, and 'Buy America' pressure (even though US vehicles not suitable).

June 22, 1992 - Senator Nunn forwards this letter to Mark Edelman, Deputy Adm. USAID.

June 26, 1992 - Letter from the Commissioner to USAID stating that based on authorization received in May 20 letter, Commission has 1) signed a contract with Ethioplastics for plastic tubes; 2) finalized an agreement with AISCO for vegetable seeds; 3) accepted a bid from Kjaer & Kjaer, Denmark for Toyota LCs to be delivered within 4/5 weeks of placing the order; 5) continuing to review bids for computers, photocopiers, typewriters etc.

June 30, 1992 - State 207421. OFDA agrees to deobligate 5 mill and give to Mission. Asks mission to make formal request and provide management plan. NOTE: Jim Kunder bows to political pressure and urges Mission in the absence of "...compelling evidence that appropriate US manufactured vehicles -- including necessary parts and maintenance -- are not or will not be available..." to procure American vehicles. This is a reversal of his previous position (5/15) based on pressure from Ralph Davis, Zeka, applied through various senators.

July 1, 1992 - Memo from WF to WP re: 5 million. Further discussion of options. UNEPPG, WFP and Mission as possible managers. Urged Mission management to make a final decision.

July 10, 1992 - Memo from WF to WD re: 5 million. Further discussion of management options. UNDP Management Services Agreement; cost-sharing arrangement. These options were discarded because of the perception that establishing an arrangement with UNDP could take 2-3 months and procurements would not be initiated for an additional 6-8 weeks minimum. We thought WE could do it faster?!

July 10, 1992 - Letter from the Commission explaining they had no alternative but to divert resources from other sectors to distribute seeds and plastic tubing to ex-soldiers to take advantage of the planting season and that they are still expecting to be reimbursed by USAID/Ethiopia. Letter also asks that vehicle procurement be expedited so that vehicles can

serve their original purpose of coordinating and monitoring the rural reintegration program.

July 13, 1992 - Fax from RG to BDouglass (acting USAID/E rep). Record of meeting with OFDA (GB and MRZ) at which it was decided Mission should maintain control of 5 million (MRZ did not want it to go to the TGE, even if managed by UNDP). Also, consensus was that Mission should 'Buy American' vehicles.

July 22, 1992 - Addis 3689. Mission makes formal request to OFDA for deobligation of 5 million from WFP and transfer to Mission via Mission allotment. Mission proposes hiring full-time (PSC) monitor for the grant. Mission bows to Buy America pressure on vehicles but records its reservations.

August 3, 1992 - Letter from WNorth to Commission recomfiming AID's commitment to providing the \$5 million & asking Commission to submit a formal proposal requesting \$4 million and outlining use based on UNDP consultant's report of Feb. 1991.

August 5, 1992 - Commission letter clarifying the previous budget submitted. Commission also asked to formalize its agreement to purchase Jeep Cherokees and that the procurement of such be expedited.

September 4, 1992 - Fax from Dan Wilson, Regional Sales Director, Middle East and Africa, Chrysler International re: Request for JEEPS. Apologizing for handwritten fax of 5/5/92 and affirming Chrysler's interest in selling vehicles to USAID-funded projects around the world, "...however, if we do not have parts and service support in the end user country, we normally would not offer our vehicles direct to a USAID project. It has been my experience with USAID over the last 15 years, that they prefer to purchase vehicles that are supported in country by local sales and service [really?] ...hopefully, the next time you require a 4x4 vehicle, we will be in a position (in-country service) to offer one of our Jeep or Dodge 4x4 vehicles."

January 12, 1992 - LSGA signed with Demobilization Commission.

SUMMARY OF AND COMMENTS ON ETHIOPIAN DEMOBILIZATION/REINTEGRATION

Wendy Fenton, USAID/Ethiopia - July 14, 1994

THE CONTEXT

After the EPRDF entered Addis Ababa on May 28, 1991, ending the 17-year military dictatorship of Mengistu, Ethiopia was left with a defeated army comprised of over 400,000 soldiers. An estimated 250,000 of these ex-soldiers ended up in transit centers throughout the country; an additional 50,000, fled as refugees to Sudan where they were held in refugee camps; and another 100,000-150,000 simply melted into the countryside. Small numbers of former military also fled to Djibouti, Kenya, Saudi and the Yemen.

Only two weeks after the EPRDF assumed control of the country, the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Former Members of the Army and Disabled War Veterans (hereafter referred to as 'the Commission') was formed, headed by Ato Mulugeta Gebre-hiwot, former TPLF cadre in charge of all Ethiopian prisoners of war. Technical staff from other ministries and commissions were assembled and the Commission, in an ironic move, took over the offices of the Derg's 'Mobilization' Commission.

Over the next few months the Commission proceeded to roundup, disarm and register as many ex-soldiers as possible. Via radio, television and newspapers ex-soldiers were ordered to report to transit centers/camps located in Adigrat, Mekele, Haik, Kombolcha, Bahir Dar, Tole, Tatek, Hurso, Dedessa and even Jan Meida parade grounds in Addis Ababa. (Populations in these centers ranged from 5,000 - 45,000). Most of the ex-government soldiers were in terrible physical condition and were in several cases held in camps adjacent to others containing large populations of displaced civilians, mainly women and children. Roughly 85,000 of these soldiers had been forced to walk from the border of Eritrea to Adigrat and Mekele, after being expelled by the EPLF.

By mid-June the main rains had begun and lack of food, potable water, and shelter combined with overcrowding and the poor physical condition of the ex-soldiers made conditions rife for the contraction and spread of disease. Outbreaks of relapsing fever and chronic upper respiratory tract infections killed several soldiers and threatened others. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) were rife in all camps. For example, in Camp 603 in Bahir Dar ICRC eventually had to stop treating people with STDs as immediately after treatment the men would become reinfected. Given the eventual dispersal of the ex-soldiers throughout Ethiopia, this problem had grave and far reaching complications.

Overcrowding and the long periods of detention contributed to serious security problems within some of the camps. EPRDF presence in Bahir Dar, for example, was minimal allowing inmates freedom to enforce a type of vigilante justice. Esprit de corps was lacking in the camps as ex-soldiers came from many different areas and were frustrated by their lack of progress through the repatriation system. To complicate matters, over 2,000 petty criminals who had been

incarcerated in Asmara prior to liberation were believed to be mixed in with ex-soldiers in the camps. During a 3 week period in July 1991, 7 murders (3 by hanging) were committed by Camp 603 inmates.

ICRC and the ERCS began working with the TGE in June to better accommodate the ex-soldiers in their respective transit centers. A number of these were administered directly by the ICRC; others were under Ethiopian government control. ICRC launched an appeal to donors in June for funding to facilitate the transportation of all demobilized soldiers to their areas of origin as well as food rations to sustain them prior to and for up to 5 months after repatriation. Donors responded quickly and favorably to this request and began mobilizing resources.

To disband the largest army in Africa was a formidable task and the TGE was determined to carry out this responsibility 'in a gentle way.' In mid-July, the TGE presented a \$47.8 million appeal for funding of a 6-month D/R program to take place in the camps prior to repatriation. The Government's rationale for in-camp training was based on the perception that a) a comprehensive skills and needs survey of all residents would allow better planning of the reintegration phase; b) surveying and training of ex-soldiers could be more easily accomplished in the centers than after dispersal; c) screening and registration of ex-soldiers by the Demobilization Commission was necessary to identify wanted criminals and for reintegration follow-up; d) that ICRC would need the results of the survey, ie area of origin for each soldier, before transport could be mobilized and plans made to repatriate them; and, most importantly, if ex-soldiers did not have immediate access to food and the prospect of receiving rehabilitation packages after returning home, they could not reintegrate effectively and would threaten Ethiopia's stability.¹ The TGE emphasized that the transit camps were not political detention centers but existed to facilitate the orderly demobilization and reintegration of the ex-army and were the only alternative to complete chaos.

The donors responded by acknowledging the TGE's concerns regarding the potential destabilizing effect of dispersing such a large army and the need to provide effective reintegration assistance after resettlement; but emphasized that regardless of the integrity of TGE intentions, donors could not support the maintenance of what could be seen as detention centers. Donors, and the ICRC, were particularly worried that detention would be associated by both the Ethiopian people and the international community with political screening and re-education. If

¹ The TGE strongly believed the ex-soldiers should not be allowed to leave the camps without material and moral support. The ex-soldiers had no income and many of them had dependents. Most had no idea of the current status of their families. In many cases, families had been dispersed, lands re-allocated and even wives had re-married. Some of the soldiers who had been in Eritrea for up to 20 years had even taken second families or formed liaisons with Eritrean women. (This became obvious when thousands of Eritrean women and their half-Ethiopian children were expelled from Eritrea dramatically swelling the ranks of the civilian displaced in Ethiopia.) Many of the soldiers had been recruited as boys (as young as 11 or 12) and/or by force and were likely to find the men who had shanghaied them still in their villages.

The TGE wanted to give them a new start but having inherited Mengistu's empty coffers, did not have the resources to deal with such huge numbers. Pending transport to their homes and the receipt of the support necessary to start a new life, they needed food and shelter in the reception centers. Most of them had been farmers, but the TGE feared that, after years of war, many would be unwilling to resume their former lives would drift to the cities.

The TGE hoped that with donor support rural public works projects, such as road and dam construction, could be set-up quickly to offer them paid employment.

reception centers were necessary, donors argued, then they should be run and publicized as TRANSIT centers. Donors believed the rapid release of the ex-servicemen, followed by immediate transport to their homes, would reinforce the reputation the TGE was gaining for clemency and reconciliation and reduce the threat of instability. And, last but not least, the appalling conditions in the camps, created partly by the onset of the main rainy season, made expeditious dispersal imperative on humanitarian grounds.

From mid-July through mid-September the TGE, the donors and ICRC continued to discuss the terms under which ex-soldiers could be released from the camps. A technical committee comprised of aid professionals from donor and international organizations and the government was convened to develop a viable alternative to the Commission's proposal for which the donor group could then mobilize resources. The basic problem which the technical committee had to address was how to rapidly reintegrate a large number of ex-soldiers with few skills or resources, into productive activities in their respective home communities. In the longer term, donors felt the welfare of the ex-soldiers could only be secured as an integral part of the welfare of all Ethiopian people: through reconstruction and development schemes (separate from this rather hastily politically-motivated program) which it was hoped would be speedily carried out as the government and donors addressed the needs of the nation as a whole.

Under the umbrella of the technical committee, WFP/ILO drafted a training proposal in early August which was used by donors to perform a rough calculation of total resources needed to reintegrate 250,000 ex-soldiers. In an Aide Memorire to the Commission dated Sept. 10, 1991 donors pledged resources totalling USD 154 million in support of the proposal. The proposal was exhaustively reviewed and debated in a number of fora (SC, TC, within the TGE), resulting in a revised version which contained the following main elements: provision of food rations over a 15-month period; the upgrading of existing community skills and farmer training facilities; staggered training courses for the target population of 160,000 rural returnees; and distribution of appropriate rehabilitation packages after course completion. The estimated 90,000 ex-soldiers to be resettled in urban areas were to be supported for a 12 month period with food rations and cash grants, pending the development of an appropriate program.

The Commission assumed ownership of the final version of the proposal in mid-November and requested donors to make good on their previous pledges. Unfortunately, by this time donors had decided the proposal was unrealistic yet they didn't have enough information to identify alternatives. UNDP offered to fund an assessment using appropriate consultants, TOR were debated and agreed and a 4 person team (1 Gambian, 1 Swiss resident in Ethiopia and 2 Ethiopian professors from AAU) identified. The assessment was carried out in January and the results in the form of a report with recommendations issued in early February 1992.

In the meantime, ICRC, together with their ECRS counterparts, prepared for the ex-soldiers' eventual release by mobilizing transportation and organizing schedules, arranging for food ration cards, prepositioning food at the 28 ECRS centers nationwide, and receiving and transporting to the camps USG-donated Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MREs) to sustain ex-soldiers on their journeys home.

UNDP CONSULTANCY RECOMMENDATIONS

The UNDP-sponsored assessment of the reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-soldiers executed between Jan 1 and Jan 31 yielded a project document entitled "A Program to Reintegrate Ex-Servicemen in the Rural Areas." In a presentation of the results given on January 31 team leader Sam Silla stressed that at present it would be inappropriate and ineffective to institute broad-based training programs for demobilized soldiers. To the extent possible, Silla recommended the TGE concentrate on the reintegration of ex-soldiers in society at large. Ex-soldiers, he emphasized, should be targeted in the same way as other needy people.

The team proposed a program that would involve the continued provision of a 17 kg monthly food ration for the 140,000 ex-soldiers believed to be in the urban areas (for 7 months from the end of February) and the 210,000 who have returned to the rural areas (for 10 months from the end of February). The total amount of food requested was 52,360 MT with accompanying ITSH costs of approximately USD 10 million. The target population of 250,000 has been increased to 350,000 to take into account the 100,000 self-demobilized soldiers still scattered about the country. The approximately 40,000 disabled war veterans were to be treated by the Commission in a separate program.

No special provision was made for the dependents of ex-soldiers. The proposal stressed that whenever possible food distributions to ex-soldiers should be made in conjunction with distributions targeted at dependents of ex-soldiers (to be covered by other PVO, IO and TGE programs). It was hoped that this practice would help to dispel the impression that ex-soldiers were being treated as a privileged group and that donors were not sensitive to the needs of dependents.

From data available at the time, the team estimated that roughly 20% of ex-servicemen of rural origin had access to land. The TGE through the MOA was prepared to make available to the remaining 80% 1 hectare (HA) of farmland each. The MOA issued a directive to this effect which was communicated down to the regional level. It was recommended that limited and targeted quantities of tools, cereal and vegetable seeds, plough oxen, heifers, plastic tubes for tree seedlings, and fertilizer should also be provided to rural returnees under the program during 1992/93. Donations of heifers to ex-servicemen in the pastoral zones was also recommended. The program proposes to provide logistical support to 200 awraja or woreda MOA offices with the objective of reducing the program's potentially negative impact on the environment.

For the 140,000 urban returnees the team recommended that with appropriate training a substantial number of them could be absorbed by small-scale individual or cooperative enterprises. For such an objective to be realized the team cautioned that a considerable amount of preparatory work would be necessary. The team suggested the TGE request technical assistance from UNDP to study development of employment opportunities in the urban informal sector. The TGE was encouraged to absorb those who could not find employment by their own efforts in various state-run operations. Those without any significant skill should be employed in extensive public works, the team suggested. It was envisaged at the time that the ERRP and other rehabilitation projects would absorb a substantial number of the urban and rural returnees

in rehabilitation and reconstruction work. In the meantime, the team emphasized, these people would have to be supported with food and cash.

THE RESPONSE

The donor community endorsed the proposal as it appeared to be a more viable cost-effective way of assisting in the rehabilitation of ex-soldiers. Donors pledged to provide the food requested, 117 million birr in local currency and USD 7.9 million in hard currency to meet the foreign exchange requirements of the program. The TGE was to cover the salaries of local staff and administrative expenses amounting to 3.8 million birr. Additionally, donors pledged to provide the cash grants and food supplies necessary to sustain the urban returnees. With full confidence in the donors good will, the Commission began implementing the program in both rural and urban areas.

The Mission suggested that the USD 5 million, initially provided to WFP for the WFP/ILO training proposal, be reallocated to the new UNDP proposal for Phase II. (The Mission had already considered the continuing food needs of the demobilized soldiers in its Title II request.) The Mission believed that the speedy implementation of this program would not only help to defuse a potentially serious security problem, but by satisfying the immediate rehabilitation needs of the ex-soldiers, prepare them for participation in the development of Ethiopia.

By this time, the Commission was in the process of establishing 36 regional coordination offices at which self-demobilized soldiers would continue to be registered and from which field implementation of the program would be monitored. By the end of January the majority of ex-soldiers had been returned to their areas of origin and were receiving their monthly food rations. Responsibility for food ration distribution under Phase II was to be assumed by the RRC, working through the Demobilization Commission's regional centers, as ERCS input for Phase I was to cease at the end of February.

THE GRANT

In the meantime, on September 30, 1991 USAID and WFP/Rome had signed a letter grant committing USD 5 million in OFDA funds to the WFP/ILO training program. WFP/Rome accepted the money reluctantly, after attempting to persuade USAID that ILO was the more appropriate partner. The problem arose because at the Addis level, WFP had drafted the proposal and been more active overall in demobilization related matters. WFP/Rome had not been fully aware of how closely associated WFP/Addis had become with D/R. Almost 6 months later after donors reneged on their support for the WFP proposal, it became clear that Mission would have to find another conduit for channeling and monitoring the funds.

In March, when donors had more or less agreed to support the proposal advanced by the UNDP consultancy, the Commission began collecting pro formas for the procurement of commodities to support their program. These were forwarded to the Mission for review in mid-April 1992 and by this time the Commission had already begun to receive from Ethioplastics the plastic tubing for coffee seedlings. The Commission had accelerated its procurement efforts in an attempt to distribute as many inputs as possible to the rural resettled in order to take advantage

of the summer 1992 cropping season. The Mission understood the Commission's desire to facilitate rapid reintegration and to avoid the prolongation of ex-soldiers' dependency on relief food; and, therefore, in a letter dated May 20, 1992 authorized the release of funds from the USD 5 million for the Commission's purchases. What the Mission did not realize, was that the USD 5 million had never been transferred to WFP; even if it had been, the Mission's letter to the Commission was not enough to effect the release of funds.

The mistake was not discovered until June when the Mission began working to identify the best way to deal with the USD 5 million. Various options such as having UNDP manage the money or giving it directly to the Commission were discussed with OFDA/W. Recognizing the substantial management burden involved the Mission favored giving the money directly to the Commission. OFDA/W preferred to have UNDP manage the money as they were not convinced of the Commission's ability to do so. In late July, the Mission made a formal request to OFDA that the money be de-obligated and transferred to the Mission via Mission allotment. The Mission designated program assistant as a temporary project manager until a full-time monitor could be identified and hired. Due to the unexpectedly long delays in the procurement process, no goods arrived in country until July 1993 - two years after demobilization commenced.

During this time, the Mission was simultaneously responding to and monitoring the Commission's efforts at proceeding with procurement of the agreed budget items. The Commission wanted to buy Toyota Land Cruisers as the most common and appropriate vehicle for Ethiopia. The Mission agreed but given 'Buy America' sensitivities consulted OFDA. Initially, OFDA agreed that Toyota's would be best and that Mission could invoke 'notwithstanding' language in support of this decision. Subsequent complaints to influential senators and congressmen from American businesspeople who had got wind of the planned Toyota procurement, made it very difficult for OFDA/W or the Mission to resist the 'Buy America' pressure. Mission had to go through the REDSO Commodity Officer for all procurements, who followed the normal AID procurement regulations, causing even further delays.

DISCUSSION

Although donors recognized the importance of rapid and effective demobilization and reintegration of the former army, in the end they could not work out a useful and timely response mechanism. Lack of objective information other countries' experiences with D/R made it difficult for donors and the TGE alike to determine and agree on a course of action. When the Commission was initially formed in June 1991 immediately after the EPRDF assumed control of the government, USAID/Ethiopia along with most other donors, was not clear about the Commission's mandate or attitude towards demobilized soldiers. When discussions regarding approaches to demobilization were first initiated between the Commission and donors, the donors were concerned that the Commission might want to detain the ex-soldiers for purposes of political indoctrination. The Mission also believed the newly formed Commission lacked the capability to manage the large amounts of money and in kind resources required for effective D/R.

Delays plagued demobilization/reintegration efforts at every level. Although USAID was one of the first donors to commit funds, we were hampered in following through on that commitment because other donor support could not be leveraged quickly; lack of agreement amongst donors and TGE as to whether relief/rehabilitation, development and/or political criteria should be used to determine program priorities; and, in large part, because of the complexity of our own bureaucracy. When donor confidence in the WFP/ILO proposal disappeared entirely, a further delay was created by the belated decision to carry out an assessment to determine an alternative course of action. Once the UNDP-funded assessment was completed and recommendations submitted to the donors and TGE for review, more than two months had elapsed. Two more months passed while donors and the TGE worked to refine the proposal. At this stage (end of March 1992), the proposal was finally accepted by the donors and the TGE assumed ownership.

Even then, after the Mission had decided to reallocate the 5 million from the WFP/ILO proposal for hard currency costs associated with the UNDP-proposed project, several months elapsed while the Mission debated with AID/W via cable, fax and telephone the pros and cons of various grant management options. It was not until September 28, 1991 - one year after these emergency funds had been made available - that an actual mechanism was in place for their use.

Problems did not stop here. Normal USAID procurement procedures were followed for all commodities, regardless of the emergency nature of this program. Given the Mission's lack of personnel and AID/W-approved systems, the REDSO/RCO assumed responsibility for all procurements. The system followed whereby the Commission's procurement requests had to be approved by the Mission, which in turn had to execute the PIO/C's and then forward the documentation to REDSO/RCO to advertise and then execute contracts resulted in extraordinarily long delays, undermining the Mission's credibility with the Commission in the process. The REDSO/RCO's regional responsibilities also added to these delays as he was often out of Nairobi or busy with other country's procurements and therefore unavailable to assist the Mission.

Unfortunately, the Mission's procedural mistake (letter of May 20, 1992 authorizing Commission to proceed with procurement arrangements) still haunts us today. Agreements the Commission

entered into in good faith at that time became problematic and are still so today. Elaborate measures later had to be undertaken to authorize retro-active procurement of plastic tubing and seeds and 'Buy America' pressure compelled the Mission to insist, against our better judgement, on American vehicles. The Mission should have been more aggressive in invoking the 'notwithstanding' language attached to OFDA money to circumvent the 'Buy America' legislation allowing the expeditious procurement and delivery of appropriate vehicles and other capital items.

In the end, the TGE went ahead with its demobilization efforts with very little resource support from donors. In fact, USAID project assistance, in the form of capital items (vehicles, computers, desk calculators etc.) for the Demobilization Commission, did not begin to arrive until June 1993 - two years after demobilization began. Ironically, the Commission's ability to make substantial progress in the rehabilitation phase of the program without timely donor assistance meant that a lack of urgency was perceived by those not directly involved.

Imbedded in any D/R effort will be a set of political imperatives which the USG cannot ignore. Such imperatives may at worst conflict with, or at best not complement our strategic development objectives. USAID, when facing the inevitable dilemma of when and how to support politically sensitive Demobilization/Reintegration efforts, must be prepared to take risks. The rigorous criteria by which potential development programs/projects are designed and evaluated may have to be relaxed or even ignored.

UNHCR REPATRIATION OF EX-SOLDIERS FROM KASSALA

A tri-partite agreement between UNHCR, the Government of Sudan and the TGE was arranged in order to repatriate to Ethiopia by plane more than 50,000 who had fled to eastern Sudan at the end of the war. The idea was first mooted in the restricted donors' group, taken up by the technical committee and then discussed by the respective governments involved. The Mission played an active role in monitoring and facilitating this operation. UNHCR's responsibility ended at the Ethiopia airports where returnees were received by ICRC (and ERCS staff and Youth Volunteers). As flights arrived at the respective airports, the Commission issued registration cards which entitled the bearer to 5 months of food assistance, 50 birr cash grants and 10 birr travel grants. Cups of tea and pieces of bread were dispensed, and then people were loaded onto buses and trucks (if possible, on the same day) destined for their areas of origin.

The operation began on 9/24/91 and finished on 11/21/91, which was ahead of schedule in spite of delays in negotiations and transport arrangements. According to UNHCR figures 50,888 people were repatriated on a total of 298 flights via Sudan and Ethiopian commercial airlines. The sick and wounded were flown by ICRC planes from the receiving airports to the main reception center at Bole Airport in Addis, where ICRC had set up a field hospital. The USG government made contributions to this operation through the State Department's Refugee Program office.

Although there were many delays and complications in the negotiations between the TGE, GOS and UNHCR (and the two airlines) and problems with registration of and shelter for prospective returnees in the Sudanese camps (several people died of dehydration before even leaving the camps), this operation was considered, overall, a resounding success. The flights were punctual, the ICRC/ERCS did an outstanding job of organizing the logistics at each airport therefore ensuring that returnees began their journeys home within a day of arriving in country.

Note: In a separate operation, UNHCR repatriated an additional 1,375 ex-soldiers by air from Djibouti.

DOD EXCESS SUPPLIES

A total of 1,885,856 Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MRE's) and large quantities of other excess food and non-food relief supplies from DOD's emergency relief operations in post-war Iraq were airlifted to Ethiopia between 6/8/91 and 9/11/91. These supplies were consigned to the ICRC, the RRC and the CRDA for emergency programs assisting demobilized soldiers and displaced civilians. DOD flew a total of 24 C-5 galaxy flights of relief supplies from Dharhan, Saudi Arabia to Addis Ababa. Large assortments of non-food relief supplies such as blankets, tents, cots, B-rations and other food items accompanied these flights. One OFDA-funded C-141 flight carrying plastic sheeting and blankets from OFDA stockpiles in Europe, was also sent to Addis during that period.

An additional 2 million MREs aboard a DOD ship originally destined for Assab, were diverted to Djibouti because of DOD's refusal to dock at the Eritrean port at the end of August 1991 for security reasons. The MRE's were consigned to the ICRC (750,000), RRC (750,000 for displaced people and ex-soldiers) and CRDA (500,000 for displaced people). Total value of DOD excess supplies delivered by air and sea exceeded USD 20 million.

Once the MREs were unloaded at the port, costs related to storage and onward transportation to final destinations in Ethiopia became a problem: there was no money for storage or transportation associated with the consignment. Under pressure from USAID/Ethiopia, ICRC the only consignee with a presence in Djibouti, reluctantly agreed to arrange storage for the entire consignment. Using international contributions earmarked for the Ethiopian Demobilization/Reintegration program, ICRC was able to airlift their consignment to Ethiopia reasonably quickly. Both the RRC and CRDA had presented, at the Mission's request, proposals for moving the MREs from Djibouti to Ethiopia. The Mission passed these proposals on to DOD, AFR/EA, OFDA, and even ICRC Geneva requesting funds for both transport and storage costs. ICRC was unable to assist. Complications with the proposals themselves arose due to the unreliability of the train from Djibouti and the fluid security situation in Hararghe, through which both train and trucks had to pass.² Five months after these urgently required relief items had arrived, no progress had been made in moving the remaining MREs to Ethiopia.

After several months of acrimonious debate between the various arms of the USG over who should take responsibility for these storage/transport costs, OFDA eventually agreed to provide (in two tranches - see files) a total of USD 229,129 for the storage and transport of the MREs consigned to CRDA; by the time this decision was made, however, the original proposals were out of date. CRDA was asked to revise its proposal. In the meantime, the U.S. Embassy in Djibouti which had facilitated the transfer of responsibility for storage of the MREs from ICRC to ETS Marill, forwarded a proposal from that storage and transport company to move the MREs by train from Djibouti to Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. As this was by far the cheapest

² In April 1992, the US Embassy was instrumental in negotiating an agreement between the OLF and TGE that EPRDF and OLF soldiers would remain in camps during the elections. It was agreed between the Mission and the RRC that the MREs consigned to the RRC could be used to sustain the encamped soldiers. The TGE moved the RRC's consignment out of Djibouti and most were used for this purpose. The Mission believes some of the MREs were also used to assist displaced civilians and a few may still be in storage.

and most expeditious proposal (the train had not been operating when CRDA and the RRC had submitted their original proposals), the Mission recommended that OFDA agree to this option.

As of mid-April 1993 Marill had transported by rail 242 MT of MREs to Addis Ababa and 117 MT to Dire Dawa at a total costs of USD 55,373, far below what was originally budgeted for.

USAID/Ethiopia believed that the DOD airlift of excess supplies to Ethiopia was a great success. MRE's and other DOD excess supplies were very suitable relief items for the demobilized soldiers and displaced civilians in transit to their home areas. The consignees of the supplies expressed their gratitude for the magnitude and timeliness of the USG response and stressed the enormous contribution DOD excess supplies made in alleviating the suffering of the demobilized soldiers and displaced civilians. The Mission was impressed with the consignees' careful use of the excess supplies, i.e., ICRC's policy of distributing the MRE rations only in transit or extreme emergency circumstances so as not to make these items an integral part of a general relief policy.

One problem yet to be solved, is the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) outstanding bills for landing and handling fees. The DOD donation came without any monies for such fees, let alone storage and transport. When the DOD donation was offered, the Mission accepted without raising this issue. CAA has letters from the U.S. Embassy Administrative Officer at the time promising that the USG would pay. When approached, DOD refused to pay these costs, suggesting the TGE should waive them as the government's contribution to the humanitarian effort; the Mission could not identify another funding source. The Mission eventually requested a waiver of these fees via diplomatic note to the Prime Minister. No official answer was received (to my knowledge) but the issue was raised again by CAA in August 1993 (US Embassy/Addis/DAO office has again refused to pay), and then in July 1994.

The sea delivery, because of the complications already described, was much less successful. In the end, the MREs were not really used for the purposes for which they were intended and many were wasted or of questionable quality as they had either passed their expiration dates or had been stored in conditions of extreme heat and humidity in Djibouti so as to cast doubt on their suitability for consumption. It is questionable whether the amount of USAID/Ethiopia, REDSO/CO and US Embassy/Djibouti management time spent on resolving the transport and storage funding problems and the resultant extraordinarily long delays in actually moving and using the MREs, justifies the benefits.³ By the time the CRDA-consigned MREs were eventually transported to Ethiopia from Djibouti, the urgent need had passed.

³Relations between USAID/Ethiopia, AID/W, U.S. Embassy Djibouti and ETS Marill became very strained (see cable traffic).

July 15, 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: Steve Morrison, BHR/OTI
Jeanne Pryor, AFR/EA
CDIE/DI - Acquisitions/Office

FROM: Margaret Bonner, USAID/Ethiopia

SUBJECT: Demobilization in Ethiopia

Attached is a parting document, prepared by Wendy Fenton, which looks back at USAID/Ethiopia's experiences with Demobilization. It includes a chronology of events, as well as some lessons learned. I thought it might prove useful reading for those who want to understand why best intentions don't equate to quick response. It also illustrates the difficulty of trying to handle emergency-type programs under "regular" rules and pressures.

cc: USAID/Ethiopia - C&R
Carla Barbiero, PRM
Wendy Fenton, PRM (w/o attachment)