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**Fostering a Farewell to Arms:
Preliminary Lessons Learned in the
Demobilization and Reintegration
of Combatants
(PN-XXX-111)**

**Kimberly Mahling Clark
March 1996**

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Executive Summary

Since 1990 USAID has been involved in efforts to demobilize and reintegrate combatants in several different countries, most notably countries that were emerging from the havoc of civil war. This issue brief highlights experiences from El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Uganda, analyzing them in terms of policy and legal issues, political context and program implementation. The special needs facing female, disabled and child ex-combatants are also discussed, along with recent initiatives in Haiti and Angola. Conclusions and lessons learned are analyzed in detail.

From a policy and legal perspective, providing support for demobilization has been challenging for USAID because of the legal restrictions on providing assistance to foreign militaries and inflexibilities of development assistance. Staff have found creative solutions enabling USAID to be supportive and still uphold the spirit of the legislation. Congressional appropriations, such as the Demobilization and Transition Fund (DTF) for El Salvador and the African Disaster Account (ADA), have been important vehicles for USAID involvement.

In the context of a war-to-peace transition, demobilization assistance has been risky for USAID because of the political nature in which it is carried out. USAID must constantly assess whether the parties are sincerely committed to peace before obligating resources. The demobilization process, though complicated by political issues, is usually straightforward, with a checklist of issues that staff need to address.

Demobilization and reintegration programs need to address the critical period right after demobilization, when ex-combatants have returned to their communities. Providing short-term monetary or in-kind assistance facilitate veterans' reinsertion into society because they serve as a transitional safety net, enabling the ex-combatants to get back on their feet and providing them with an important buffer period to think about how they can earn a living in a civilian economy. The experience with in-kind assistance has not been fully satisfactory, in part because "Buy America" restrictions have raised the cost of such assistance. Monetary assistance can be provided in one or two payments or in monthly payments extended over time. There are advantages and disadvantages to each, and donors need to examine several factors before deciding which is most suitable for a given country.

The purpose of reintegration programs is to ensure ex-combatants' financial independence and their acceptance in the community. In many cases, combatants have spent years fighting in civil wars. Their combat skills have no value in a post-war economy and, without assistance, they will likely find it difficult to establish themselves and engage in a productive livelihood. There is significant evidence that reintegration programs should not target ex-combatants as individuals, but instead should be oriented toward and based in the community. In addition to initiatives that seek to improve their financial status, such as credit or microenterprise programs, or training programs to give them vocational skills,

USAID has had positive experience in establishing information and referral centers that link ex-combatants with job opportunities and credit or training programs, as well as vocational centers that seek to assess ex-combatants' skills and aptitude.

The paper concludes that demobilization and reintegration efforts have been successful, despite many complications and bumps in the road. One issue that has not been sufficiently addressed pertains to security. Countries emerging from a war-to-peace transition have experienced increased incidents of banditry and lawlessness, at a time when peace is expected to prevail. USAID may well want to consider initiating programs to strengthen respect for the rule of law to fully consolidate and increase personal and property security in post-transition situations.

List of Acronyms

| | |
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| ADA | African Disaster Assistance |
| BDP | Popular Development Bank |
| BHR | Bureau for Humanitarian Response |
| CORE | Reintegration Commission |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| DA | Development Assistance |
| DFA | Development Fund for Africa |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| DRSP | Demobilization Reintegration Support Project |
| EPRDF | Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front |
| ENI | Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States |
| ESF | Economic Support Funds |
| FMLN | Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front |
| GAO | General Accounting Office |
| GCA | Global Coalition for Africa |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| IRS | Information and Referral Service |
| MREs | Meals-Ready-to-Eat |
| NGO | Nongovernmental Organization |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| OFDA | Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance |
| ONUSAL | United Nations Observer Mission for El Salvador |
| OTI | Office of Transition Initiatives |
| PVO | Private Voluntary Organization |
| REDSO/ESA | Regional Economic Development Support Office, East and Southern Africa |
| RENAMO | Mozambican National Resistance |
| RSS | Reintegration Support Scheme |
| SGSR | Secretary General's Special Representative |
| SRN | Secretariat for National Reconstruction |
| TGE | Transitional Government of Ethiopia |
| UCAH | United Nations Humanitarian Affairs |
| ULIMO | United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAVEM | United Nations Angola Verification Mission |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commission for Refugees |
| UNITA | National Union for the Total Independence of Angola |
| UNOHAC | United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs |
| UNOMOZ | United Nations Operation in Mozambique |
| UVAB | Ugandan Veterans Assistance Board |

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I. Introduction

With the resolution of many civil conflicts in the developing world, the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants has emerged as an important issue for donors. The transition from civil war to peace is not easy because disarming combatants and reintegrating them into civilian life is politically sensitive and fraught with risk. Successful combatant demobilization reduces the risk of soldiers' destabilizing society and signals the opposing parties' willingness to comply with the peace accords. It thereby contributes to the transition from governing through force to governing through democratic institutions. In the case of a peacetime demobilization, the government benefits over the long term from reduced public expenditures on the military, thereby easing fiscal pressures or releasing resources for development efforts.

USAID is rapidly acquiring expertise in the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants as it has undertaken efforts in Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Uganda. Not all of USAID's efforts have been successful, nor have all countries made successful transitions, but USAID has learned from both the successes and failures. This paper highlights some of the more important lessons learned in the past few years in the demobilization and reintegration of soldiers. It is meant to inform continuing discussions within the Agency on when and how to get involved in demobilization and reintegration programs.

The paper draws on USAID documents and reports, cables from the field, interviews with USAID staff and outside experts, and other reports and journal articles.

II. Definition of Terms

The demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants represent two heavily interdependent phases on a continuum. Demobilization is the process of converting combatants to civilians. Combatants are in the process of demobilizing when they have reported to an assembly area or camp, have surrendered their weapons and uniforms, but are awaiting final discharge. Combatants are demobilized when they have received discharge papers and have formally left the military command structure. In most cases, departure from the camp has immediately followed demobilization. An exception to this pattern was the Nicaraguan Resistance, some of whom demobilized as they repatriated from Honduras and, to a lesser extent, from Costa Rica to Nicaragua in time to participate in the February 1990 elections. The remainder demobilized in camps in Honduras after the elections and then began to repatriate to Nicaragua. Repatriation subsequently lasted six months.

The World Bank defines economic reintegration as achieving the "financial independence of an ex-combatants' household through productive and gainful self-employment" (Colletta 1995a: 14), though gainful employment may be too high of a benchmark in countries with high unemployment. Social and political reintegration is achieved with the acceptance of ex-combatants and their families by the host community and

its leaders (Colletta 1995a). A USAID-funded evaluation in El Salvador suggests that ex-combatants' reintegration be measured against their civilian neighbors, taking into consideration their increased income, economic vision for the future, and plans for economic activity.

In cases where combatants have fought in long-lasting civil wars, the former combatants have little experience of civilian life, their combat skills have no value in a post-war economy, and they tend to lack other marketable skills. Without assistance, they will likely find it difficult to establish themselves and engage in a productive livelihood. Their situation is somewhat similar to those of the refugee and internally displaced population because all groups are in need of reintegration assistance. The situation of ex-combatants is, however, more precarious because veterans' feel they have made great sacrifices for the country or their cause and are now owed something for their sacrifice. In this sense, they present more of a threat because without assistance, they could use their combat skills in a manner detrimental to the rest of society.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of demobilization. First, there are the cases where parties to a conflict have signed a peace accord with neither side achieving a military victory (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Angola, and Mozambique). Second, there are the cases where one party has won an outright military victory, and is demobilizing the losing party (Ethiopia) or reducing the size of its own army (Uganda and Eritrea). While there are many issues common to both post-conflict and peacetime demobilization, there are also certain characteristics specific to each situation. In particular, the peace accords and subsequent negotiations between the warring parties have propelled USAID and other donors to design activities to support post-conflict demobilization and reintegration.

III. Policy and Legal Issues

A. Providing Assistance to Foreign Militaries

Normally, USAID is prohibited by law from providing assistance to foreign militaries, and since demobilization involves the military, USAID easily runs into gray areas of the law. In Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, Congress passed specific laws that provided guidelines for USAID's work with demobilizing combatants, guerrilla forces, government soldiers and police.

In Nicaragua, legislation precluded U.S. Government (USG) entities from working with government security forces, whereas in El Salvador, USG entities worked directly with both government and rebel forces. Consequently, USAID's ability to deal with ex-combatants in a comprehensive manner was greatly increased.

In Mozambique, the situation was complicated by the fact that the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the government defense forces reported to separate assembly areas to register for assistance and wait to either demobilize or join the new army.

USAID/Mozambique wanted to provide assistance to the assembly areas, but encountered legal obstacles because some of the beneficiaries were planning to join the new army; thus USAID would be providing incidental support to the military. The issue was resolved when the regional legal advisor determined that "financing for each activity...will not be a greater percentage of the total cost of such activity than the percentage who are expected to be demobilized" (Riedler 1993). In other words, if 70 percent of the troops entering the camps were going to demobilize, then USAID could provide no more than 70 percent of the assistance to the camps. USAID consequently was able to provide assistance without discriminating between those who were to demobilize and those who were to join the new army, a potential logistical and political nightmare.

USAID/Mozambique was, however, prevented from assisting disabled combatants prior to their demobilization, because that would have entailed working directly with military doctors to verify their status, which was determined to contravene U.S. law. The perspective in the fall of 1994 was that the disabled ex-combatants were "causing great trouble throughout the country" (94 Maputo 5206). Even with the improved flexibility, USAID was not able to respond to all needs.

In a peacetime demobilization, the process involves only those to be discharged. The legal constraints are still present, but are easier to deal with. In Uganda, the government established the Ugandan Veterans Administration Board (UVAB) to oversee the process. The UVAB has a clear mandate, is legally defined, and is controlled by civilians. The UVAB has served as an important partner for donors, serving as the center of all activities. The experience from Uganda indicates that having a civilian institution as a partner facilitates overcoming legal obstacles.

B. Funding Sources

How USAID intends to fund a program can make a big difference in how it is designed, and what it can do. Development assistance funds, including the Development Fund for Africa (DFA), generally require demonstrating a contribution to long-term sustainable development. In addition, the development project design cycle can last from six months to two years (94 Maputo 5206), and in most cases donors do not have two years to design a demobilization program.

When designing demobilization programs in Mozambique and Uganda, USAID field staff were unable to use DFA resources for certain parts of the programs. In Mozambique, the Demobilization and Reintegration Support Program (DRSP) was funded in Fiscal Year 1993 from the Africa Disaster Assistance (ADA) account. A cable from USAID/Mozambique asks:

Is it enough to show that demobilization is a necessary condition for development (as we could in Mozambique) to justify the use of the DFA, or must we also link to critical sectors or functional account areas, at the risk of

distracting attention from the essential first steps of separating the soldiers from their armies and weapons? (94 Maputo 5206).

In Uganda, USAID wanted to provide direct support in the form of pay packets for demobilizing combatants and administrative costs incurred by the Ugandan government. Since legal staff did not view these activities as supporting long-term sustainable development, Economic Support Fund (ESF) monies were used instead. In both Uganda and Eritrea, ESF funds did not prove to be totally suitable, because the USAID efforts involved commodity procurement, which still fell under Buy America restrictions (see section C below).

In El Salvador, the \$300 million package of programs came from a variety of sources. In addition to host-country-owned local currency (HCOLC)¹ and ESF, Congress provided a special appropriation, the Demobilization and Transition Fund (DTF)², to assist the demobilization and reintegration of combatants. Two existing projects received an additional \$14 million in Development Assistance (DA), to be channelled to the ex-conflictive zones. Existing project funds enabled USAID/El Salvador to launch activities within days of the signing of the peace accord.

These experiences suggest that certain elements of demobilization and reintegration programs require more flexible funding sources than traditional development assistance. The ADA and DTF were particularly useful appropriations because of the 'notwithstanding' authority they contained, whereas reliance on ESF funds was less successful.

C. Contracting Procedures

Contracting procedures within USAID can be time-consuming. In Mozambique, the onset of peace meant a significant increase in the Mission's activities and consequently, in the number of contract actions, purchase orders, and travel authorizations that the Mission and the regional legal advisor needed to process. The Mission prioritized its own contract actions, putting those related to demobilization at the top. Nonetheless, the regional legal advisor quickly became overburdened and other contract actions sat in the queue, sometimes for as long as several months.

When rebel armies defeated Mengistu's Marxist government, known as the Derg, in Ethiopia in 1991, approximately 250,000 ex-combatants of the defeated army ended up in transit centers throughout the country. Hunger and disease set in, and the international community agreed that assistance was needed as long as the Transitional Government of

¹HCOLC represented about \$66.5 million of the \$300 million program.

²After the signing of the peace accords, a portion of USG resources for military assistance to the Salvadoran government was converted to create the DTF.

Ethiopia (TGE) move quickly in releasing the Derg soldiers. USAID responded in several ways, and encountered many bureaucratic obstacles that prevented it from providing timely assistance.

- Department of Defense (DOD) donated nearly 4 million Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MREs) remaining from the Gulf War to feed Derg combatants as they transited home from camps in different parts of the country. USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) paid for 1.8 million MREs to be airlifted from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia. The remaining 2 million were shipped to the port of Djibouti where they sat for five months, waiting for USAID to both determine who would pay to transport them to Addis Ababa and respond to proposals from organizations that would transport and distribute the MREs (Fenton 1994).
- Despite the emergency nature of the program, USAID/Ethiopia was forced to adhere to standard procurement procedures. Being a relatively new office, it had to rely heavily on procurement and contract staff in the regional office in Nairobi who carried multiple responsibilities and could not always respond immediately to USAID/Ethiopia's needs (Fenton 1994).

USAID/Mozambique ran into similar contracting and procurement problems, and also attempted to minimize some of the problems. First, the regional contract and legal staff agreed to make Mozambique contract actions a priority because resolving the civil war in Mozambique was crucial for development in the region as a whole. Second, USAID/Mozambique decided that contract actions related to demobilization would have precedence over its other contract actions. This helped USAID/Mozambique and the regional legal advisor to better manage the chaos.

Provisions in U.S. law stipulate that goods purchased with taxpayer dollars must come from the United States. These Buy America provisions have had a detrimental effect on USAID demobilization and reintegration programs.

- USAID/Ethiopia wanted to purchase all-terrain vehicles to support the TGE Demobilization Commission, and found that those produced by Toyota were the most suitable for the country and the easiest to service. Pressure from senior members of the US Congress forced USAID/Ethiopia to procure vehicles from Chrysler, which does not provide parts and repair service in Addis Ababa. These and other capital goods did not arrive until June 1993, more than two years after demobilization had begun (Fenton 1994).
- In Eritrea, USAID relied on ESF monies to procure tractors for the Eritrean Ministry of Agriculture. Because ESF has the 000 geographic code, all goods must be purchased in the United States. USAID was forced to procure John Deere tractors at a cost of \$49,000 per unit, compared to FIAT's price of \$22,000 per unit. As a result, the project was able to procure 33 units instead of 65. In addition, the

Eritrean government has been unable to rent the tractors to demobilized combatants for a fee that covers the purchase price, contravening its policy to not subsidize any rental fees.

D. Donor Coordination

Experience indicates that donor coordination is critical to successful demobilization and reintegration efforts. The programs themselves are usually expensive, and no one donor funds an entire program, either because of limited financial resources or because it does not want to commit all of its resources in a given country to just one program. Donors need to decide which aspects they will fund; therefore, it is important for them to discuss how their respective contributions will complete the picture. Demobilization and reintegration programs need to be well thought out and adequately funded to succeed. Accomplishing this requires a great deal of advance planning within each donor agency, in addition to coordination among them and with the appropriate host government institutions. No existing institutional mechanisms for donor coordination function seamlessly; thus, coordination of demobilization and reintegration programs has depended heavily on the capabilities of the people and the agencies on the ground.

Several examples illustrate the importance of donor collaboration:

- In Mozambique, bilateral donors were forced to coordinate after many delays because of the United Nation's failure to act in a timely manner (94 Maputo 4033). USAID, the German government's development agency, GTZ, and the Netherlands each came forward with proposals for reintegration programs. Donors then developed their respective proposals to be compatible.
- In Uganda's first demobilization, donors provided support to different elements of the program. USAID modified an existing program to provide roofing materials for demobilizing soldiers, but this was only one aspect of demobilization support provided by several donors. The World Bank took the lead in coordinating donor assistance.
- In El Salvador, several donor coordination meetings were held to determine areas of each donor's comparative advantage and establish financial pledges to the Salvadoran government's National Reconstruction Plan.
- In Ethiopia, donor coordination was haphazard, and instances of miscommunication caused serious problems in implementing demobilization (Fenton 1994).

Who should take the lead in coordinating efforts is an unresolved question. In cases of a post-conflict demobilization, it has usually been necessary to have an outside organization oversee the process, because the parties to the conflict have little confidence in the national government's neutrality. The United Nations has frequently played this role, but has not always been able to effectively implement its mission.

- In Mozambique, the Demobilization Technical Unit within the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) monitored and coordinated demobilization, whereas the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (UNOHAC) chaired the Reintegration Commission, the forum for coordinating reintegration assistance. USAID staff noted that UNOMOZ was effective in coordinating demobilization, whereas UNOHAC's approach was found to be counterproductive. Donors used the Reintegration Commission meetings to discuss their different reintegration proposals and work out the differences between them, thereby overcoming the lack of coordination from UNOHAC. The programs were not developed in collaboration, but eventually the donors coalesced around a number of alternatives that would attempt to meet both short- and medium-term needs.
- In Nicaragua, the United States provided \$43.3 million³ to support the voluntary demobilization, repatriation, and resettlement of the Nicaraguan Resistance. In its appropriation, Congress specified that assistance go through a joint commission of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) (GAO 1991). In practice, the United Nations and the OAS divided responsibilities for the ex-combatants and did not get involved in each other's activities.
- The United Nations Observer Mission to El Salvador (ONUSAL) played an important role in the registration of demobilized combatants and development of a database that proved useful during the benefit distribution phase of USAID's program, and was a positive example of UN involvement in a war-to-peace transition.

In cases of a peacetime demobilization, finding a neutral coordinator is less problematic. In Uganda, the World Bank had been encouraging the government to reduce public expenditures, including military spending, and worked with local consultants to develop a plan for downsizing the military. The government opted to implement the Bank plan in March 1992, subsequently requesting donor assistance. In that case, it was natural for the Bank to coordinate the programs, but this has been the only instance of its active leadership.

Within the United Nations, coordination and cooperation between UN agencies can be another significant obstacle. In Mozambique, the Secretary General's Special Representative (SGSR) Aldo Ajello performed remarkably, but his office did not supervise all UN activities in Mozambique. The United Nations Office of Humanitarian Affairs Coordination (UNOHAC), which was responsible for reintegration programs, reported directly to the Department for Humanitarian Affairs in New York and was under no obligation to "coordinate or cooperate with broader UNOMOZ objectives" (94 Maputo 4033). There were many battles over programming that a weak chain of command was unable to resolve.

³Another \$20 million was subsequently added. Since 1994, CIAV has focused on human rights monitoring and building local capacity to resolve conflicts.

Rejecting UNOHAC's proposals, donors were compelled to develop their own reintegration programs a year into the transition. Using the Reintegration Commission (CORE) as a forum, USAID and other donors convinced UNOHAC to accept their initiative. Mozambique was a success for the international community because free and fair elections formally ended the civil war, but there were many obstacles along the way.

E. U.S. Government Coordination

Within the U.S. government, the three principal players in demobilization and reintegration efforts are the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense (DOD). The Department of State is the principal policymaker, and is frequently actively involved in or is an observer at peace talks, where decisions are made about the process of demobilization, including the numbers of combatants to be demobilized, the time frame, and the severance package. USAID is an implementing agency, and may fund portions of demobilization and reintegration assistance. DOD may also be involved, as in Angola, where U.S. Air Force transport planes flew former combatants from assembly points throughout the country back to their home provinces ("U.S. Flying..." 1992). USAID/El Salvador found that having a DOD representative sit half-time in USAID was extremely beneficial in coordinating efforts. Nonetheless, how these three institutions coordinate their decisions has yet to be fully fleshed out, because no institutional mechanisms exist to ensure that they communicate with each other on programming decisions.

IV. Political Context of Demobilization and Reintegration

One of the basic requirements for a demobilization program is the presence of a comprehensive peace agreement under which all parties to the conflict will demobilize. In Sierra Leone, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) responded to a host government request to assist with the demobilization of 4,000 combatants affiliated with the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) faction, a party to the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars, that was based in Sierra Leone. CRS agreed to provide assistance to the assembly areas and training to the combatants to help them reintegrate into the civilian economy, but the program failed when the government re-mobilized the troops six months later in light of renewed fighting in Sierra Leone.

The post-conflict demobilization process is fragile because it requires two or more parties who do not trust each other to lay down their arms and give up their armies—the two things that made them powerful and established their importance. After the cease fire is in place, demobilization becomes the first important test of the peace process. Donors may not want to get involved unless they are confident that the peace process will go forward. On the other hand, they need to be involved early in the planning phase to determine what they can contribute to make the demobilization and reintegration process succeed.

If the peace accords include a calendar for the demobilization process, failure to meet deadlines is sometimes used as a ploy to extract more compromises from the other side or

from the international community. Virtually every demobilization has encountered delays of one kind or another, and they usually stem from political hurdles:

- In Mozambique, demobilization occurred a full year later than originally planned, and the delays stemmed from several sources. The United Nations program did not become operational as soon as expected, and RENAMO and the government negotiated for several months over the location of the assembly areas. In addition, RENAMO refused to begin any encampment until all sites were selected and had adequate food and supplies.
- In Nicaragua, demobilization and repatriation of combatants was originally scheduled to take place in April 1990, but the leaders of the Nicaraguan resistance were hesitant to proceed until security concerns in Nicaragua had been fully addressed. Repatriation began in July 1990 and formally ended in December 1990 (GAO 1991).
- In El Salvador, demobilization of both sides occurred mostly on schedule, with some delays. Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) combatants were to be demobilized by October 31, 1992, and a portion of the El Salvador Armed Forces (ESAF) (31,000 of 66,000) by December 31, 1992. The ESAF actually completed its demobilization in February 1993, two months later than scheduled. The FMLN demobilized in five stages, 20 percent of the forces (8,800) in each wave. Demobilization began in June 1992 and ended in December 1992, about six weeks later than scheduled. The ONUSAL registration of the FMLN dragged into 1993 because some of the FMLN leaders had not officially demobilized and because ONUSAL agreed to recognize a political officer group of about 3,000. Due to reluctance at different times on both sides, the FMLN and ESAF did not strictly adhere to the schedule agreed to in the peace accords. The United Nations was instrumental in keeping the peace process moving ahead by working to overcome obstacles.

V. Program Implementation

A. Demobilization

While the demobilization phase is politically challenging, it is relatively uncomplicated to plan and execute demobilization assistance. Building on previous experience, there is a checklist of issues that need to be addressed in the demobilization process, with some variance according to how it is actually being implemented. Unfortunately, political hurdles will frequently throw off demobilization schedules and plans.

1. Assembly of Troops

Establishing and equipping the assembly or cantonment areas, if they are to be used, is the first task. Selection of assembly areas can be part of the political process, though the international community has been able to influence the decision by suggesting sites that are easier to gain access to from the outside, thereby reducing logistical costs (GAO 1991). In cases of a post-conflict demobilization, it is likely that the United Nations or a similar international organization will verify the encampment of troops and collection of weapons, particularly when the combatants are physically located within the country.

The assembly areas need food, water, health facilities, and basic supplies to maintain minimal health and nutritional standards. Without food and water, combatants have little incentive to remain in the camps. International observers must also be present to ensure that combatants do not have access to their weapons, as happened in Angola where combatants resorted to banditry to obtain food ("Old Angolan..." 1991).

Food assistance can be a political challenge. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reduced the food rations that the Honduras-based Nicaraguan Resistance received to make them on par with the assistance other refugees in Honduras were receiving. USAID had been providing them 3,500 calories per day, based on active duty requirements and the UNHCR reduced the allocation to 2,200 per day. Though the leaders of the resistance complained, USAID/Honduras declined to encourage the UNHCR to increase the allotment. An independent evaluation found that some combatants were malnourished, but that the rates were on par with the rest of the population in Honduras and Nicaragua (GAO 1991). In Sierra Leone, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) provided food to demobilizing ULIMO combatants, and chose to distribute the food to heads of households rather than commanders because staff wanted to lessen the commanders' influence over their troops.

How food is distributed in the camps is another question, because sufficient global allocation will not necessarily ensure individual allocation. For the Nicaraguan Resistance based in Honduras, the UNHCR distributed food to the Honduran Red Cross, which in turn distributed food to the commanders, who in turn distributed the food to community kitchens. There were some reports of diversion of food, but a team of GAO evaluators was unable to verify the allegations. The Honduran Red Cross began watching the distribution of food, and the commanders began distributing some of the food to individuals (GAO 1991).

Demobilization and Disarmament.

Demobilization of warring parties generally involves the collection and securing of weapons, and experience has demonstrated that this is not easy because warring parties have not always surrendered all weapons in their possession. The proliferation of weapons makes it difficult for war-torn societies to recover from war and establish societies governed by the rule of law.

Along with the provision of food, donors should ensure that combatants have access to health facilities. In Mozambique, Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) already active in the area established health clinics that served nearby populations, including combatants and their dependents. The UNHCR worked with the Honduran Red Cross to provide health care to the Nicaraguan Resistance based in Honduras.

One note of caution is that combatants should spend as little time as possible in the assembly areas, even though delays will likely occur in the process. In Mozambique, delays in demobilization left many combatants in the camps for more than a month and some for several months. With little information being provided to them when they would be demobilized, combatants waiting in camps began rioting, which forced the United Nations to speed up demobilization (Carlson 1995). Delays occurred beyond donors' control, but donors pushed the process forward when social unrest began to threaten the peace process.

2. Registration

The registration of combatants is an important task undertaken in the assembly areas. This registration serves as the final tally of who will receive reintegration assistance, for those leaving the government or guerrilla forces entirely, as in El Salvador. It is also at this point that host governments and donors alike are able to determine a final headcount, though this is not always the case. In El Salvador, ONUSAL continued to increase the headcount for months after the initial registration.

It is important to get accurate information on those to be demobilized as early as possible in the demobilization process, and to use the information throughout the phases of demobilization and reintegration. Problems emerged when the UNHCR began providing food assistance to the Nicaraguan Resistance. Because it was continuing a USAID effort, it did not implement a strict registration of combatants and their dependents, allowing people to enter the Honduran camps for the combatants based on their word or with a USAID registration card. When the OAS took over assistance for the demobilized in Nicaragua, it attempted to verify the individuals' status, and found that only a small portion of the beneficiaries were actually ex-combatants, spouses, or dependents under the age of 18. The OAS purged people from their rolls, and the Nicaraguan Resistance complained, prompting USAID to suggest that they re-expand the rolls. As a result, the OAS served 95,000 beneficiaries instead of the expected 60,000, nearly a 58 percent increase. The registration process was complicated by the fact that no clear tally had been done initially, and qualification guidelines were never firmly established (GAO 1991).

In El Salvador, USAID staff indicate that the United Nations played an important role in the registration of combatants and development of a database that proved useful during the benefit distribution phase of their program. In Mozambique, combatants received identification documentation for receipt of benefits (94 Maputo 4033), but no central database was ever established and various organizations have conducted duplicative surveys of demobilized soldiers.

3. Educational Programs

An option in the assembly areas is to undertake educational programs with the combatants and their dependents, including vocational counseling, literacy training, basic education, and health education. Such efforts may increase soldiers' ability to reintegrate (World Bank 1993; Creative Associates 1995).

- Early vocational skills training programs in FMLN assembly areas in El Salvador provided rebel forces an indication of the government's and the international community's commitment to their reintegration.
- The Honduras-based Nicaraguan Resistance received short courses in civic education, vocational skills, primary health care, and literacy (Creative Associates 1995).
- In Mozambique, however, "side programs, such as pre-literacy and health education, were a distraction from the main point and generally did not work" (94 Maputo 5206). Combatants spent too much time in the assembly area, and staff argued that the focus should be on processing them in and out as quickly as possible.

These experiences suggest that the success of side programs has varied. The value of the programs will depend on the goals of the programs, the expectations of the combatants, and the time frame in which demobilization is occurring. First, if side programs are implemented, they should not keep combatants encamped for longer than they otherwise would be. Second, programs of any type that give ex-combatants something to do with their time may prevent boredom and frustration. Third, orientation-type activities are important, and demobilizing combatants should be made aware of the assistance they will receive upon demobilization and after returning to their home areas, in order to prevent them from developing unrealistic expectations. Orientation should also be tailored to meet the needs of those combatants wives' who come from different communities than their husbands and must develop ties for the first time with their husbands' ethnic group and kin. In addition, training in financial planning could help combatants determine how to use their demobilization benefits more wisely.

4. Exit

Demobilization typically occurs while combatants are in the assembly areas. In Mozambique, this was tied closely to their departure from the camps and transportation home. In Nicaragua, repatriation began on the same day that demobilization concluded, but then continued for several months. It was scheduled to end on October 1990, but the deadline was extended until December 1990 to allow dependents to finish the school term in Honduras, which ended in mid-November, and bring in the coffee harvest.

Facilitating the ex-combatants' departures from the assembly areas, or army barracks in the case of a peacetime demobilization, is another area where outside assistance is usually required. The logistics of these efforts are tremendous.

- In Nicaragua, the UNHCR operated a program to transport refugees, including ex-combatants, to a specified number of locations in Nicaragua. Ex-combatants chose when to repatriate, leaving less room for the UNHCR to develop a logical schedule. Towards the end of the repatriation effort, some trips were canceled due to low participation (GAO 1991).
- In Mozambique, USAID funded approximately half of the costs associated with transporting ex-combatants and their dependents to the destination of their choice. The effort was more orchestrated, however, because the International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized transportation based on a demobilization schedule.

5. Needs Assessment

Donors need to participate in the design of reintegration programs early in the process in order to ensure that they are ready to respond to ex-soldiers' needs as soon as possible after demobilization. Conducting a thorough assessment of ex-soldiers' skills, abilities, and expectations, broken down by rank, improves program design because it provides a picture of the total number of ex-combatants and the needs of specific subgroups. Announcing plans without having conducted a needs assessment or providing reintegration counseling may raise soldiers' expectations, giving them something to complain about later on. The easiest place to collect this information is in the assembly areas, but by then it may be too late to design an appropriate program. The problem is difficult to avoid, because parties sitting across the negotiating table do not want to share information about force size.

In Uganda, USAID staff indicated that a thorough needs assessment was not conducted and problems subsequently arose. Two years after the first phase of demobilization, USAID has found that other donors are hesitating to fund reintegration programs. Dispersed throughout the country, veterans had expectations of assistance and little in place to meet their needs.

In El Salvador, USAID initially attempted to overcome this obstacle by gathering information from sources knowledgeable of the soldiers' backgrounds (Creative Associates 1991). USAID/El Salvador later relied on counseling to ex-combatants to provide guidance on the desired training and match it to beneficiaries' abilities. USAID gave the information to the Salvadoran government, though the government was slow in implementing the courses. For the subsequent demobilization of the police forces, USAID tasked the same NGO to provide both counseling and contracting for training courses to strengthen the linkage between beneficiaries' needs and the benefits they received. Donors and program implementors need to be flexible in their willingness and ability to change planned programs.

To develop a reintegration program, one suggestion has been to conduct both macro- and micro-economic assessments. The macro-economic assessment would examine recent economic performance and current employment patterns, including levels and characteristics of unemployment and underemployment. The micro-economic assessment would identify feasible income generation activities, required skills and training, the scale of activities involved, and the capacity of the vocational training and skill development system (Srivastava 1994).

B. Reinsertion Assistance

1. Cash Payments

Demobilization programs typically involve some sort of cash payment to combatants as or after they demobilize, whether in the form of a lump-sum payment at the time of demobilization or two or three payments after demobilization. The payments serve two purposes. First, the cash payment facilitates the ex-combatants' ability to reestablish a life outside the military by enabling them to purchase needed commodities or to undertake entrepreneurial endeavors, both of which may require a sizable amount of capital. Second, the payments are important tools that demonstrate to combatants that their years of service, often while risking their lives, are appreciated. USAID experience suggests that an incentive system that encourages demobilization is necessary and worthwhile because it contributes to the war-to-peace transition.

The principal benefit of a lump-sum payment is that it is administratively easier to distribute because it is only done once. A single distribution can be done while the combatants are still in one place. As a result, there is less need for a bureaucratic structure to administer payments, and there is less chance for corruption. The downside of lump-sum payments is that the temptation is great to spend the entire amount on items or services that will not serve the demobilized ex-combatant beyond the short term. The Nicaraguan Resistance, for example, received the equivalent of \$50; a USAID staff person who observed the ex-combatants noted that most spent the funds on food and drink within a few days.

An option is to provide cash subsidies on a regular basis over a given period of time. Their benefit stems from the fact that they provide a stable source of support for a lengthy period of time. In Mozambique, donors agreed to fund a Reintegration Support Scheme (RSS) that extended the veterans' benefits from six months

Demobilization-Reinsertion-Reintegration. The World Bank suggests that demobilization payments are important to facilitating veterans reinsertion into society, because they serve as a transitional safety net, enabling the ex-combatants to get back on their feet and providing them with an important buffer period to think about how they can earn a living in a civilian economy (Colletta, November 1995). The payment actually serves as a bridge between demobilization and reintegration.

to two years and increased the monthly pay to 75,000 meticaiss⁴ per month for lower-ranked combatants, slightly above the minimum wage. Over the short term, the RSS bought the donors additional time to design activities to help the veterans reintegrate over the long term. High levels of inflation are reducing the value of the monthly stipend, thereby gradually weaning the recipients from relying exclusively on the payment.

While monthly cash benefits added a great deal of stability to the transition period in Mozambique, they were also complicated to administer, much more so than lump-sum payments would have been. The United Nations used the Popular Development Bank (BDP) because it was the only institution with enough geographic spread to be able to redeem the monthly vouchers that the combatants were given as they demobilized. Ordinary bureaucratic problems sprung up that the BDP was unable to resolve. For prolonged cash assistance to succeed, the country's banking system must be capable of dispersing payments in all regions (Creative Associates 1995).

Because there are advantages and disadvantages to each approach, donors and host governments need to weigh them within the political context of the country, the administrative capacity of host government institutions, and donors' other assistance programs. In any case, combatants are generally not accustomed to having large amounts of cash, and are not familiar with "concepts such as saving, investment, the value of money, and banking" (Creative Associates 1995: 19).

2. In-kind Assistance

Alternatives or supplements to cash payments include providing materials, training, or scholarships to help ex-combatants start a civilian life and build a livelihood. The experience with these alternatives is varied.

- USAID provided agricultural starter kits to both government and rebel combatants in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The experience from Nicaragua, applied in El Salvador, showed that the kits must contain identical items to prevent accusations of bias or favoritism from either party to the conflict (Creative Associates 1991).
- In Nicaragua, a rice and seed package was distributed to 15,000 families of Miskito ethnic origin, including ex-combatants and refugees. The effort was very successful because it used locally available resources, well-understood technologies, and beneficiaries perceived it as genuinely responsive to their problems (Creative Associates 1995). The effort was part of USAID's reactivation program for the Atlantic Coast, which also mobilized thousands of able-bodied individuals for infrastructure improvement. Because participation was not restricted to ex-combatants, USAID staff indicate that it served to reduce tensions.

⁴Equivalent to US \$14 in February 1994. Officers received up to 1.27 million meticaiss per month.

- In Uganda, USAID provided iron roofing sheets for veterans to use to build new homes, thus encouraging them to settle on the land. The program did not work well because significant procurement delays meant that veterans received their roofing materials long after they had demobilized, making the assistance less relevant to their immediate needs. The UVAB further concluded that the vast majority of the veterans who sold their sheets received less than half of the cost associated with acquiring them in the United States and delivering them to the veterans in their home areas. The UVAB is consequently recommending that cash be substituted for the roofing sheets in the third and final phase of the Ugandan demobilization.

USAID/El Salvador took a slightly different direction by providing 6-month agricultural and vocational training and two- to five-year academic scholarships. Attendance at training provided ex-combatants with modest stipends. Staff felt that the combination of training and stipends provided a financial safety net for participants, gave recipients the opportunity to further their education, and created an important buffer time by giving the ex-combatants something to do. Consequently the benefits were not limited to just training received. Comments on the cash payments in Mozambique indicate that they too offered a financial safety net and helped give combatants time to think realistically about their options to earn a living in a civilian economy.

C. Reintegration Programs

1. Design Options

USAID and host governments have developed a variety of approaches to reintegrating ex-soldiers. Helping ex-combatants to reintegrate supports, along with other programs, the goal of achieving long-term sustainable development. Many of the same programs that are targeted to other groups may be modified to incorporate the needs of ex-soldiers. In El Salvador, for example, USAID was able to build on programs for the non-conflictive zones by redirecting portions to benefit those in the ex-conflictive zones. These included training and education, credit initiatives, job programs, and land distribution (Creative Associates 1991).

It is important to keep in mind that the countries in which demobilization and reintegration programs have been developed are extremely poor, with few opportunities for formal employment. Combatants tend to come from the most vulnerable groups in society, and their literacy and education levels tend to be lower, particularly for those in the lower ranks. Indeed, one reason for taking up arms may be in part because these groups had the least to lose and the most to gain from fighting. The power of their guns was also tremendous, and gave them great authority, which they may have abused significantly. Their expectations are usually high, and returning to civilian life may be humiliating, especially when they see little to do and fear that they may not be accepted in their communities of origin. Consequently, host governments and development planners need to meld short-term needs with long-term realities.

In conjunction with other large donors such as USAID, the Salvadoran Secretariat for National Reconstruction (SRN) developed a medium-term reconstruction plan, relying on donor contributions and its own funds. The SRN also developed a reinsertion program for the FMLN, the ESAF, and the National Police. USAID, in conjunction with the government's reconstruction plan, developed the Peace and National Recovery (NRP) Project. USAID support for demobilization and reintegration of combatants was part of a wider effort to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to the ex-conflictive zones, reactivate the ex-conflictive zones, support land distribution, and rehabilitate small infrastructure. The NRP project was authorized at \$300 million, and as of October 1995, USAID had committed \$273 million, of which \$120 million supports demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

Institutional capacity of partner organizations is an important question. The SRN served as a relatively strong partner organization for USAID because it had the institutional capacity to develop a strategy and funds to implement it, committing 63 percent of the total cost (SRN 1995). USAID and other donors collaborate extensively with the SRN, and USAID staff indicate that they have a joint, biannual strategic implementation plan to which both institutions closely adhere. In Mozambique, USAID was in a more difficult situation because the Mozambican government did not have the institutional capacity to develop such a program. USAID developed a war-to-peace transition strategy that included support for demobilization, funding efforts that other donors could not. USAID had to work very closely with other donors, the United Nations, and the Mozambican government to ensure that all needs were met.

Ensuring that the design of program interventions corresponds to political reality is challenging because reintegration programs can be politicized. USAID/El Salvador, for example, designed a program on technical grounds in the period leading up to the signing of the peace agreement, before the FMLN could reasonably be involved. Consequently, the program was not politically realistic, and USAID staff found that the FMLN made certain demands, and were adept at lobbying USAID, both in the field and in Washington (USAID/El Salvador 1994). El Salvador was a high-profile country in Congress, and when the FMLN demanded increased assistance for veterans, USAID amended its original program to coincide with an additional \$50 million appropriation from Congress for demobilization and reintegration in El Salvador.

2. Information Centers

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways in which donors can assist ex-combatants is by establishing information centers to which they can turn with specific questions or problems in accessing benefits. Centers can further link them with training, credit, and employment opportunities (Colletta 1995a).

- USAID/El Salvador funded a counseling and referral center to link veterans with reinsertion services (training and credit) contracted by the Salvadoran government.

USAID found that these services were slow in coming and subsequently tasked the information/referral center provider to implement the reinsertion services themselves, ensuring timely linkages between counseling and the selected reinsertion service.

- USAID adopted a similar approach in Mozambique, where the IOM has established an Information and Referral Service (IRS). Initially, the IRS served in a counseling and short-term problem-solving capacity, because there were few other programs currently functioning in Mozambique. It is now implementing the Provincial Fund, designed to provide seed money to groups seeking to train ex-combatants or launch microenterprise activities that include ex-combatants.

In Uganda, the purpose of the demobilization was to downsize the Ugandan army and reduce military expenditures in order to reduce government expenditures. Instead of establishing a UVAB bureaucracy throughout the country, which would have mitigated the goal of reduced military expenditures, the Ugandan government relied on existing government offices located throughout the country. This is a reasonable option when government services are available throughout the country. In Mozambique, for example, the BDP handled the distribution of the monthly payments, but it was unable to handle the problems that arose when combatants lost their payment vouchers, changed addresses, or had incorrect vouchers. The IRS played a role in solving these problems for the soldiers.

3. Training

Training veterans in useful job skills is one way that donors can facilitate the transition. Experience shows that the training must be demand-driven, rising from the needs of the local economy. Training is not a solution to unemployment; rather, it is a vehicle for the unemployed to obtain skills needed in the market. In general:

- Training programs work best when designed and implemented by local organizations that are most aware of the needs in the local economy and are therefore less likely to train people for jobs that do not exist (Creative Associates 1991; World Bank 1993).
- NGOs are frequently the best equipped to train individuals because they are more flexible and open-ended in establishing learning centers. This in turn enables NGOs to design more innovative programs, adapt and learn on an ongoing basis, maintain a strong people focus, and transfer skills and motivations more easily (Srivastava 1994).
- In Mozambique, the IOM has found that efforts to place two or three ex-combatants in small companies for on-the-job training have been more successful than larger efforts, possibly because it is easier for them to integrate into the firm.

Training is likely to encompass one of three sectors: agriculture, the urban informal sector, and the urban formal sector. The mix will vary according to the skills of the combatants and the geographic composition of the country, but the agriculture sector is likely

to dominate because it is the activity that most ex-combatants participated in before they joined the armed forces. In El Salvador, 8 out of 10 interviewed in a 1994 survey indicated that they had received agriculture training (Gallup/CID 1994).

In El Salvador, USAID has funded several agriculture and vocational training initiatives. Even though the training had other positive effects (see page 15), early results did not meet with expectations because the FMLN leadership picked individuals for training programs randomly, so that they could receive the stipends that were being offered as a part of the training program, not because they would benefit from training in a particular program. The results were less than expected, with only 25 percent of FMLN graduates obtaining a job for which they received training (USAID/El Salvador 1994). Subsequent training efforts were more successful because they employed better diagnostic studies of needs.

The short-term benefit from training programs is that they give combatants something constructive to do, and when done properly, give them some basic skills which will greatly enhance the possibility of their being able to find gainful employment in a civilian economy. Training should be tailored as much as possible to both the skills of the ex-combatants and the needs of the current or projected job market. The experience from El Salvador suggests that ex-combatants must have the power to decide for themselves which of the various training activities they wish to receive and that commanding officers should not make these decisions for them. The experience from Mozambique suggests that expectations are a problem, because ex-combatants frequently request training for a career that is far beyond their skills and education level.

4. Credit

Credit programs are another tool for empowering veterans to launch entrepreneurial activities as a means to earn a living, though payback rates have been very low in Latin America (Creative Associates 1995). Basic skills training for beneficiaries is recommended (Colletta 1995a), as is training to acquaint participants with financial and organizational concepts (Creative Associates 1995).

In El Salvador, the provision of credit appears to be one of the most visible aspects of its reintegration program. In a 1994 survey of ex-combatants, 92 percent of those surveyed were familiar with SRN's credit programs, and about half had received some type of assistance. Of those who had not received credit, the majority responded that they would likely solicit credit in the future. A small minority (9 percent) indicated that bureaucracy and paperwork had prevented them from getting credit in the past (Gallup/CID 1994).

Credit programs are not always recommended. In Ethiopia, the National Bank of Ethiopia proposed a revolving loan fund, to be managed by the Agriculture and Investment Bank. An assessment commissioned by USAID advised against providing assistance to the revolving loan fund, because it would not be financially stable due to the fact that the bank

had been charging below-market interest rates, projected default rates were high, and the effects of inflation on buying power would be high (Cotter and Aryan 1994). If social and political considerations outweigh economic ones, then implementors may decide to offer credit at concessional rates (Colletta 1995a). If a credit program is to be used, then program implementors need to be clear on the objectives and the ability of the participants to understand basic business concepts.

5. Land Distribution

In a few cases, land has been distributed to ex-soldiers, and problems emerged outside of donors' control that demonstrate the political nature of demobilization. In Nicaragua, for example, negotiations between newly-elected President Violetta Chamorro and the Nicaraguan Resistance resulted in an agreement to provide former Resistance combatants land for resettlement (Gruson 1990). A GAO report found that land distribution was far behind schedule because of the Sandinista government's land distribution to its own officials just prior to leaving office, technical and administrative problems, and delays by the Sandinistas after Chamorro took office (GAO 1991). Dissatisfied with unfulfilled promises from the Chamorro government, some ex-combatants on both sides of the conflict took up arms against the government (French 1993). USAID staff indicate that all politically-motivated groups laid down their arms in 1994. USAID is providing assistance to one of these groups, which is also receiving title to land. Only isolated bands of criminal elements remain.

Similar delays were encountered in El Salvador, where only 21 percent of targeted beneficiaries had received land as of January 1995, only four months before the window of opportunity was to close (Ryan 1995). The deadline was subsequently extended, and as of January 1996, approximately 90 percent of the targeted beneficiaries have received title to land.

Even if land distribution proceeds smoothly, USAID must also consider the quality of services in that particular area, including roads, potable water, access to health facilities, and schools. If, for example, roads are inadequate, farmers will not be able to get crops to market or purchase seeds and other materials. If the land does not have potable water, then it is not habitable over the short term. In addition, the timing of these efforts should correspond to the planting calendar. When repatriation fell behind schedule in Nicaragua, few ex-combatants and their dependents arrived in Nicaragua in time to get land and plant for the fall season. Land distribution for the second subsequent season was greatly improved, but still did not reach set targets. This suggests that the original timetables were not realistic.

Consequently, success depends on land availability, the government's willingness to redistribute land, and the opposition's cooperation, all of which are politically-charged issues. Technical and administrative difficulties have also taken their toll, such as the ability to provide clear title, measure the land, and settle price disputes. Timing of efforts also makes

a difference. Land distribution is above all a political tool to compensate for previous inequalities, but requires careful planning and a willingness to overcome political obstacles to succeed.

6. Implementors

NGOs have been used in varying degrees in reintegration programs. In El Salvador, USAID relied extensively on U.S. and local NGOs. In the case of local NGOs, they had established themselves throughout the country as important actors. During the civil war, many were sympathetic to one of the warring parties, and in the post-conflict atmosphere it was important to use them in a balanced fashion to maintain the momentum of the peace process. Staff indicate that several capable U.S. NGOs contributed greatly to the USAID program by showing quick results during tense periods. The SRN indicates that 32 percent of the funds it expended for the Reinsertion Program went through NGOs as opposed to government organizations (SRN 1995).

In some cases, U.S.-based firms and NGOs have worked with numerous local organizations like an umbrella project, or have established partner organizations in country. One of the major obstacles that USAID encountered in working with NGOs in El Salvador was weak institutional capacity. The NRP was not designed to strengthen local organizations, but USAID found that it had to devote time and resources to institutional strengthening in order to work with these organizations, particularly those that were sympathetic to the FMLN (USAID/El Salvador 1994). The efforts paid off, because the Mission notes that NGO participation improved the effectiveness of the NRP, as noted below:

NGOs have played an instrumental role in delivering services to beneficiaries, enabling the program to act more quickly and effectively, improving access to specific beneficiary groups (e.g., National Police, FMLN), strengthening local level democratic institutions by invigorating municipal governments and grassroots institutions, and enhancing outreach to marginal and oftentimes isolated target groups (USAID/El Salvador 1995).

In Uganda, USAID and other donors worked with a multitude of organizations, both local and U.S.-based, to implement projects. In Mozambique, there are fewer local organizations because the tradition is much weaker and the war is more recent, so donors instead are relying on international organizations already active in the country, as well as local organizations, to participate in the Provincial Fund.

VI. Ex-Combatants with Special Needs

A. Women

Women appear to have served in significant numbers in El Salvador and Eritrea, but not in other countries. In general, USAID has not paid close attention to the needs of women ex-combatants in the design and implementation of demobilization and reintegration programs, and there is only some recognition of the need to work with spouses of male veterans. In Uganda, for example, donors acknowledge the need to work with wives of male veterans, particularly in the reintegration phase when programs target veterans in communities where veterans' wives are recent arrivals. This stems in part from the recognition, especially in rural Africa, that it is the women who carry the brunt of the workload and are the most responsive to receiving development assistance.

Women combatants comprised 30-35 percent of all combatants in Eritrea, and their demobilization and reintegration is a major concern. The liberation movement demanded freedom from both Ethiopia and from cultural restrictions. Many of the demobilized women combatants (a large number of whom have children) do not have the means to support themselves, but do not want to return to their families where they would have to give up some of the independence for which they fought so hard. The challenge is to enable them to support themselves and retain their independence. The Eritrean government is addressing the problem through its Women's and Demobilization Bureaus, both of which have units dealing with the specific needs of women soldiers.

The Ethiopian government is handling women combatants as part of the army, rather than treating them as a special group. For the most part, the Ethiopian government is working with few women combatants for several reasons. First, many had husbands and simply went home when the Derg fell. Second, they were never collected in the retention camps prior to resettlement as were the male soldiers, so the government has never had a complete listing of women soldiers. Finally, when the government has tried to locate and follow up with them, it found them uninterested in receiving further assistance. Nonetheless, some of the women ex-Derg combatants who were resettled in urban areas have participated in credit schemes, enabling them to establish small shops.

Women comprised 11 percent of the demobilized ex-combatants in El Salvador, and a 1994 evaluation noted that the reintegration programs did not adequately address the needs of women (DAI 1994). For example, women were unable to avail themselves of training opportunities because no child care was provided. A USAID-funded assessment of women ex-combatants' needs recommended that programs in El Salvador be developed to:

- target female heads of household, since 49 percent are not married;
- help women obtain legal documentation, e.g., tax identification numbers, electoral cards, and birth certificates;
- enable women to access psychological and family planning counseling;

- establish health programs with female doctors and health workers;
- accredit women for the responsibilities in the areas of health and education that they took on during the conflict;
- provide education or technical training; and
- help women obtain formal employment and access to credit (PACT 1993).

Women are, however, accessing other USAID-funded activities in El Salvador, including land transfer, micro-business activities, and vocational and agricultural credit and training.

Socio-cultural and legal constraints prevent women from participating in the upper range of the informal sector, where there is more money. While education is breaking down these barriers, women ex-combatants can use training to their advantage in overcoming these constraints. The best approach to serve women ex-combatants is to localize training, provide remedial programs to precede technical and business training, and provide access to credit and support services (Srivastava 1994). This approach suggests that training initiatives should be closely linked to microenterprise activities to ensure maximum participation is achieved.

B. Children

The use of children as combatants has been an alarming trend, particularly in Africa. In many cases, they have not been used on the front lines as soldiers, but instead have performed support roles carrying weapons and other materials, gathering information and intelligence, or guarding prisoners and patrolling. In Mozambique, children were often kidnaped and forced to perform an act of murder to "induct" them into military service. In Liberia, children have been active combatants, often engaging in human rights atrocities. In cases of long-lasting civil wars, children have grown up in the military, and have received no formal schooling and have missed what would be considered a normal childhood. In addition, those who have been active combatants face a high probability of severe psychological problems.

Child combatants do not appear to be a great problem in Ethiopia. The Derg required a minimum age of 18 years. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the armed movement that defeated Mengistu in 1991, had child combatants but there is no official information as to how they were demobilized. The Ethiopian government is presently providing education to those young combatants still in the army, prior to demobilizing them.

Of the approximately 40,000 to 60,000 combatants in Liberia, as many as 10 percent may be under the age of 18. A significant number of these are under the age of 15. The children have either volunteered or been conscripted, and some have been initiated by being forced to kill a family member or friend. The children, as a group, have been responsible

for terrible atrocities, and counselors believe that many carry terrible burdens of guilt (Human Rights Watch 1994).

Two organizations are working with child combatants who have left the army in Liberia:

- The Children's Assistance Program (CAP) runs three residences in which children receive counseling to ease the transition back into the community and some training, primarily in carpentry and graphic arts. As of April 1994, the program had received 168 former combatants, one of whom is female.
- The United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) has established community-based transit homes with comprehensive services. The goal of the program is to help the children overcome trauma and reunite them with their families. The program has reunited 57 children with their families, and has followed up to see how the children are doing.

Many of the children are experiencing immense problems, including post-traumatic stress syndrome, lack of discipline, family reluctance to take them back, and community rejection because of past actions. In some cases, it has been impossible to reunite children with their families because they are orphans or because their families are inaccessible behind battle lines (Human Rights Watch 1994).

The question of child combatants was expected to be serious in Mozambique because RENAMO had forcibly recruited children into the military to carry out various tasks. Those who were obviously children did not report to the assembly areas, whereas older youths (i.e., 16-17) reported as adults. Save the Children, with funding from USAID and other donors, has had for several years a project to address the needs of traumatized and unaccompanied children. During the transition, the project's goals were to help make a difference in the daily lives of war-affected children, enabling them to resume the tasks of normal social and psychological development, and to strengthen and increase the Mozambican government's capacity to meet the long-term needs of this population. To accomplish this, it has undertaken to establish a nationwide documentation, tracing, and reunification program for displaced and unaccompanied children, and to explore culturally-appropriate therapeutic interventions for children who experience problems after reunification (Green 1993).

C. Disabled Ex-Combatants

The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports that the number of disabled combatants has increased dramatically in the countries affected by armed conflicts (Srivastava 1994), particularly in countries such as Mozambique, Angola, and Afghanistan, where landmines were part of the strategy in the war. Landmines have affected civilians as well as combatants. Since disabled civilians might resent ex-combatants' receiving assistance that

they are unable to access, programs should consider targeting both civilians and ex-combatants.

Program design for disabled ex-combatants should separate those with minimal disabilities from those with serious impairments, because those with minimal disabilities may require only initial medical and psychological counseling. Impairment levels alone will not indicate reintegration needs, and disabled soldiers, along with other soldiers, should have their skills and interests assessed (Srivastava 1994). One way to get a firm grasp of impairment levels is to have assessments conducted at various periods of time, because the war-wounded are generally scattered in isolated parts of the country. Consequently, finding them, identifying their medical and psychological needs, and then setting up follow-up treatments and evaluations is logistically complicated.

As with other reintegration programs, the evidence suggests that community-based approaches work the best (Creative Associates 1995). For example, a regional project covering El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua makes no distinction between disabled ex-combatants and civilians, and has been supported by empowerment organizations and trade unions. This and other programs suggest that separate programs for demobilized disabled combatants are not needed. Instead counseling and guidance services can link disabled veterans with physical, psychological and professional rehabilitation, training opportunities, access to credit, and distribution of tools and other materials (Srivastava 1994).

VII. Recent Initiatives

A. New Thinking

New thinking is emerging among those that have undertaken or been involved with demobilization and reintegration programs for USAID. They recognize that reintegration programs have not fully succeeded in helping veterans establish productive livelihoods within the time period expected. Rather than continue with these programs, some are suggesting that reintegration programs not target ex-combatants, but instead should target communities as a whole that need reintegration assistance.

This approach has particular merit in war-torn countries where combatants are being demobilized in the context of a peace accord. The civilian populations may be resentful of special benefits for ex-combatants. In Mozambique, for example, 90,000 combatants demobilized and returned home, a tiny number in comparison to 1.6 million refugees and nearly 4 million internally displaced persons. Justifying reintegration programs exclusively for the demobilized is difficult in this situation, considering the large numbers of Mozambicans that need assistance to reestablish economically productive livelihoods. In this type of situation, donors could provide demobilization payments and short-term assistance in the form of counseling and training, and serve demobilized combatants over the long term by incorporating them into reintegration programs for war-affected communities.

In cases of peacetime demobilization, there may be greater incentives to target assistance for demobilized soldiers. In such cases, USAID could develop community-based projects in areas where veterans are concentrated. USAID/Uganda has adopted this approach in providing technical and commodity assistance in select districts of Uganda (USAID/Kampala).

B. New Programs

Since 1994, USAID has committed significant resources to reintegration programs in Haiti, and has planned activities for Angola. The programs are different from each other, even though both were designed by the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in the Bureau for Humanitarian Response (BHR). They build on the lessons learned in previous efforts, taking into consideration the political context in which they are to operate.

In Haiti, USAID has focused on three phases: voluntary demobilization, training, and reintegration. USAID had originally anticipated entering Haiti following a military invasion and forcible disarmament of the military. When the military stepped aside peacefully, many of the commanders fled went hiding.

The demobilization phase has been completed, training is underway, and plans are being laid for the reintegration. The demobilization that has occurred has been entirely voluntary; thus, the people who are leaving are doing so because they want new opportunities. Consequently, they enter training with more enthusiasm because they recognize it is going to help them succeed in civilian life. USAID contracted with IOM to register combatants for demobilization and provide reintegration training, much of it in vocational-technical fields such as mechanics, electrical work, and plumbing.

In Angola, the situation is quite different. Angola has a much higher national income; thus, it is less likely to receive a huge influx of donor resources as occurred in Mozambique. Also lingering in donors' minds is the memory of renewed civilian conflict following the presidential elections of 1992. With this in mind, the Angolan government and rebel armies are not going to demobilize on a strict calendar. Instead, UNITA troops are going to join the government army and then the army will downsize over the next two years. Consequently, USAID is unable to provide assistance to the encampment phase, since that would entail direct support to the military. Instead, OFDA will integrate assistance to demobilized combatants and their families into OFDA-funded relief activities. OTI will continue to offer assistance to the United Nations Humanitarian Affairs (UCAH) office in Luanda, through a cooperative agreement with a U.S.-based firm, which in turn will establish three units:

- The Documentation/Analysis Unit will monitor, map, and analyze progress in select geographic zones. Their focus will include monitoring the quartering areas, the presence and progress of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM), and NGO and UN demobilization and reintegration programming.

- The Technical Assistance Unit will support UCAH in its efforts to design demobilization and reintegration programs by conducting relevant workshops, preparing analyses of relevant country experiences, design social programs in the quartering areas, and recruit and field short-term consultants to provide technical assistance.
- The Quick Impact Community Revitalization Projects Unit will develop a pilot program to improve infrastructure and agricultural production, and establish water and sanitation facilities in select districts. The program will be heavily geared toward facilitating the return of displaced ex-combatants and refugees.

Using this approach, USAID will provide relief assistance to all war-affected persons, incorporating the demobilized into efforts for the internally displaced. Demobilization will occur, but it will be managed by the Angolan government. Consequently, USAID will not provide direct assistance. USAID will direct its reintegration programs toward rebuilding entire communities, including the demobilized (OTI 1995).

C. Unresolved Issues: Security

The conclusion of long civil wars in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mozambique has had some bitter side effects. Peace has meant the end of war, but crime rates have also risen in all of these countries. Crime may have existed during the war, but it was not seen as crime per se. Rather, it was camouflaged by the war. During the war, if combatants raided civilian communities, it was part of the war, but today the same action is seen as banditry.

If the purpose of demobilizing combatants is to increase security, then it has not been universally achieved. In some cases demobilization programs have had loose guidelines, and the countries are still awash with weapons. In Mozambique, for example, when combatants reported to assembly areas, they had to turn in only one weapon when they may have had many more. Not all crime has been linked to demobilized soldiers, but there are indications that demobilized combatants have taken up weapons to express their dissatisfaction with the post-peace accords environment. Some are disgruntled because promises have not been kept and opportunities in the post-war economy have not met their expectations. In Nicaragua, USAID's efforts on the Atlantic Coast suggest that increasing economic opportunity over the short-term goes a long way toward reducing banditry.

Vigilantism has increased in many of these countries. This pattern points to a larger problem within the legal and judicial systems of these countries.

- In Mozambique, the rule of law is very weak because police are widely viewed as corrupt, and there is a huge backlog in the court system. Weapons continue to float around the country, and crime increased dramatically in the period after the peace accord was signed and before elections were held.

- In El Salvador, the police were seen as part of the government's oppressive security network and participated in "disappearing" individuals that opposed the government. Demobilizing the police force and creating a new one drawing on recruits from the demobilized government and rebel combatants became part of the peace process, yet members of the new police force were arrested recently on charges of participating in the Black Shadow, a vigilante group that executes criminals (Christian Science Monitor). On the one hand, these arrests are disappointing if indeed the new police force is taking on many of the same characteristics of the old one. On the other hand, they were arrested, indicating action is being taken to prevent vigilantism.
- Even Uganda, a country that has been stable and experienced dramatic economic growth since the end of its civil war in 1986, has witnessed greater banditry in the countryside (Lorch 1995). These trends seem to follow the second phase of demobilization, yet it is not clear that the two are linked.

At a conference organized by the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) in November 1994, African military officials acknowledged the seriousness of security concerns and the need to deal with them effectively at both national and regional levels. At the national level, several participants noted "the need for confidence building, not only between previously conflicting parties, but also with the civilian population" (GCA 1994: 4). Such confidence building measures should take place within a context of broader peace building and conflict management efforts. At the regional level, participants recognized the need for conflict prevention and greater control of cross-border arms trade.

What is clear from all these examples is that demobilization does not automatically lead to increased security. Reintegration programs, if successful, will help demobilized combatants regain their footing and develop alternative income sources. The dissipation of the old authority has not been fully replaced by a new authority, and banditry and vigilantism have in many cases gone unchecked. In addition to increasing economic opportunity, greater work to strengthen the government's respect for and institutional capacity to govern through legal institutions may be needed to ensure that security does in fact increase. USAID may want to look to programs to strengthen the capacity of the judicial, prosecutorial, and police systems in the years after demobilization in order to ensure that the goal of increased security does in fact materialize.

VIII. Conclusions

USAID has learned much from its involvement in the demobilization and reintegration of soldiers, but it is also left with unanswered questions. It has grappled with the legal restriction of assisting foreign militaries, and has managed to design flexible programs to respond to demobilization needs. In the policy area, USAID, other U.S. government institutions, and other donors are still working out several issues. Significant political hurdles to donor involvement exist because of the uncertainties of the peace process, yet there is no simple answer to overcoming these risks. Bureaucratic obstacles are a hindrance, and the

evidence suggests that some programs have failed because of them. Donor coordination is important, yet donors do not know how to institutionalize that coordination.

On the operational side, USAID knows more about the successes and failures of demobilization than about reintegration. The lessons from demobilization processes and programs are quickly evident. If combatants are rioting or have returned to the battlefield, it is relatively easy to know why and therefore easier to determine what was not addressed or what needs were not met. Through experience, USAID has learned that assembly areas require a minimal amount of assistance to ensure adequate living standards, and that combatants should be processed in and out as quickly as possible. Donors also know that providing assistance to combatants as they demobilize gives them an incentive to leave the military or permanently abandon the life of a guerrilla.

This paper has shown how many of the programs have been established and modified over time. USAID has adapted to different circumstances in designing programs, and modified programs to respond to changing circumstances. This paper did not measure as effectively the impact of USAID's support in demobilization and reintegration. Measuring impact has been hindered by several complications. First, the reintegration programs are new, and it takes time to determine long-term impact. Only in El Salvador, where reintegration programs have been operational a year or more, does USAID have any kind of basis to determine impact. Second, USAID has not clearly articulated why it is undertaking these programs and what constitutes success. For example, demobilization in the context of a peace accord may rid the country of guerrilla forces only to witness an increase in banditry. Is the goal of demobilization to reduce the armed forces in the countries, a narrow goal, or is it to increase security, a broad goal? Determining exactly what constitutes a successful reintegration has also been challenging. High levels of poverty in countries such as Mozambique make it difficult to determine how much reintegration programs can or will contribute to long-term sustainable development, the overarching goal of the Agency.

The evaluations that have been conducted have been helpful in analyzing program performance, particularly where efforts have not worked well, but have not been as thorough in determining what beneficiaries have done with the support they received, whether it was training, a scholarship to study, or a loan to start a microenterprise.

Finally, there are mixed signals about the status of demobilized soldiers. There are some statistics about the satisfaction of demobilized combatants, but there have also been incidents of ex-combatants taking to the streets to protest promises not kept. Associations of demobilized combatants have been vocal in many countries, particularly in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mozambique, where they have taken to the streets in protest or disrupted government operations. In El Salvador, disgruntled demobilized combatants seized members of the National Assembly and held them for four days to protest unfulfilled government promises. This and similar incidents contrast starkly with a 1994 survey of ESAF and FMLN ex-combatants in which more than 75 percent indicated that their lives had improved since the end of the war; 97 percent felt they had the same opportunities as their neighbors;

80 percent considered themselves an integral part of society; and 90 percent were active in their communities (Gallup/CID 1994). It appears that only a minority of ex-combatants are dissatisfied, suggesting that although USAID has not reached all potential beneficiaries, it has reached many, and their lives are consequently greatly improved.

IX. Key Lessons Learned

Policy and Legal Issues

- USAID must confront and resolve early on the legal obstacles to providing support for demobilization. USAID will always work within legal constraints, but developing specific guidelines on what activities USAID can—and cannot—undertake will help to speed the program design process.
- Within USAID, "Buy America" restrictions have hindered commodity distribution, whether to government institutions or veterans. Experience from Uganda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia suggest that the American commodities procured were more expensive and harder to repair in-country than European equivalents, and significantly reduced program impact.
- Accessing flexible funding sources, such as disaster assistance, will improve USAID's ability to respond to transition situations in a timely and effective manner. The DFA or other sources of development assistance are less appropriate because of the need to demonstrate the links to long-term sustainable development.
- Effective donor coordination and collaboration has been critical to the successful implementation of demobilization activities.
- Bureaucratic obstacles, whether within USAID or the United Nations, will always be present, but program managers and USAID leadership need to ensure that they do not hinder the demobilization process.
- In a war-to-peace transition, programs and program managers need to be flexible to adapt to changing circumstances on the ground.
- A major question for USAID is whether it should focus on linking demobilization efforts with security issues when designing a demobilization program.

The Political Context of Demobilization and Reintegration

- Post-conflict demobilization is highly political in nature; consequently, politics in the host country will affect donor programming. Adequate political will and agreement from all factions to begin demobilization is an important precondition for launching any demobilization scheme. Partial demobilization has failed when attempted, and led to the remobilization of armed forces. Politics will also affect the mechanics of demobilization programs and will likely throw off schedules. Program implementors consequently need to be aware of the political dimensions of their interventions.

- There is a tension between support for combatants and support for victims of the war. Assisting combatants to demobilize and reinsert themselves into society is seen as necessary for peace and stability, but too much assistance can cause resentment among civilian populations. Finding the balance is challenging, but once combatants are demobilized, the focus should turn to war-torn communities.
- The pressure and political factors that will affect the peace process are more challenging in a post-conflict demobilization than in a peacetime demobilization. Time pressures, such as the need to hold national elections, will affect the process and the political atmosphere in which demobilization takes place.

Demobilization Activities

- It is important to ensure that the assembly areas meet minimal living standards, and have adequate food and medical supplies. Without these supplies, combatants will have no incentive to remain in the camps while awaiting to be demobilized. Observers should also be present to ensure that weapons are secured in a place that combatants cannot access.
- Program implementors need to maintain an accurate register of those entering the assembly areas to ensure that benefits are distributed to bona fide recipients. The register of ex-combatants should be readily available to donors and implementing partners to avoid having to conduct additional surveys that gather the same information.
- Combatants should be processed through the assembly areas as quickly as possible. When combatants remain for several months without knowing when they will be able to return to their community of origin or of choice, they can become bored, restless, and even agitated. Educational programs, by providing basic skills training in assembly areas, can help to avoid this problem.

Reinsertion Assistance

- Providing assistance to combatants as they demobilize, including a lump-sum cash payment assistance and/or commodities, as well as transportation to the area of their choice, facilitates the soldiers' ability to reestablish a life outside the military, though it is only part of an effective reintegration programs. These payments are important political tools, demonstrating to combatants that their years of service are appreciated. Without such payments, combatants have little incentive to demobilize.
- Preliminary evidence suggests that commodity assistance has not met expectations, and that the administrative and transaction costs have rendered it less effective.

- There are advantages and disadvantages to both lump-sum and periodic payments spanning many months. Lump-sum payments are easier to administer because the distribution occurs only once or twice and payments are large enough to enable the recipient to make a significant capital investment, whether in agriculture or business. Lump-sum payments are, nonetheless, risky because, once expended, recipients have nothing left to support them if they have not made wise investment choices. Periodic payments are logistically more difficult and expensive to administer, but are less risky because they support recipients for an extended period of time, allowing them the chance to receive and benefit from training, technical assistance, or credit.
- When periodic payments to demobilized combatants have been utilized, information centers have helped demobilized combatants deal with bureaucratic problems in obtaining payments, e.g., lost vouchers, change of address, and identity cards.

Reintegration Activities

- Overall, reintegration programs must reflect ex-combatants' skills levels and the needs of the national, regional, and local economy if they are to work over the long term. They must also address the special circumstances in the former war zones.
- Donors need to do advance planning for reintegration, preferably during the negotiations leading up to the peace agreement. Donor governments and their development agencies need to be involved as early as possible in order to get a sense of the options for and costs of reintegration, and subsequently be ready to put programs in place.
- Reintegration programs should incorporate the needs of ex-soldiers' families and communities, and should target communities as a whole that need reintegration assistance. Indeed, programs should not treat ex-combatants in isolation because it only reemphasizes to them and their community their former status.
- It is necessary to pay attention to calendars because the school year and planting season have affected the demobilization and reintegration process. Design and implementation of agriculture assistance and land distribution should consider how the planting season can be factored into the timetable.
- Counseling and referral centers have played valuable roles in assisting demobilized combatants make the transition from military to civilian status. By linking veterans to existing reintegration and development activities, referral centers lessen the need for donors to develop activities specifically for veterans. Counseling centers help combatants find opportunities to earn a living in a civilian economy.
- USAID experience with training has been mixed, partially because of political problems and partially because of expectations. Training should be geared to the

needs of the local, regional, and national economy, and the skills that ex-combatants possess. Further, on-the-job training has in some cases been more effective than more sophisticated training, particularly with ex-combatants that have low skills levels.

- The bulk of reintegration activities have focused on agriculture, because that is the most widely available option for ex-combatants. Distribution of seeds and tools, the provision of credit, and the provision of training and technical assistance have attempted to help ex-combatants and their families reestablish productive farming activities, though it is still too early to determine long-term success.

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