Conference Report No. 1

Promoting Democracy In Postconflict Societies

An International Dialog

Center for Development Information and Evaluation
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Conference Report No. 1

Promoting Democracy In Postconflict Societies *An International Dialog*

by

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Center for Development Information and Evaluation
U.S. Agency for International Development

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The subject of this conference is not new because conflict is not new. People have been striving to ensure that wars, once ended, stay ended, since the dawn of human history.

I am convinced . . . that the U.S. has a vital, strategic interest in seizing the opportunity that now exists to strengthen the international system by bringing nations together around basic principles of democracy, open markets, law, and a commitment to peace.

This conference deals with an important part of that effort: the restoration, reform, and rebirth of societies devastated by conflict or war.

Obviously, providing assistance in postconflict situations is not the responsibility of the U.S. alone. It is a multinational enterprise.

—Madeleine Albright
Secretary of State

In the last several years we have learned a great many lessons about working in the difficult and politically charged environment of transition countries. Not all of these lessons have been easy ones. . . . But as Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, “It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it and try another. But above all try something.” We have heeded President Roosevelt’s advice. We have tried to learn from our mistakes, develop new methods, and better link our diplomacy and our assistance. Sharing these lessons is the goal of this conference.

—Brian Atwood
USAID Administrator

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Introduction

The Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) of the U.S. Agency for International Development has undertaken a program of studies to analyze the role of international assistance in the political rehabilitation of postconflict societies. The center represented USAID in the Multidonor Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda and subsequently authored "Rebuilding Post-War Rwanda." This was followed by a volume, *Rebuilding Societies After Civil War*, that examined the different dimensions of postconflict rehabilitation and drew policy lessons for the international community. CDIE then evaluated international experience assisting postconflict elections in six countries, presenting its findings in a monograph, *From Bullets to Ballots*. A forthcoming publication, *Postconflict Elections, Democratization, and International Assistance*, expands both the framework of analysis and the number of selected case studies, adding greater depth and detail to our understanding of these elections. CDIE is now finishing its case studies of social reconciliation in the Middle East, Bosnia, and South Africa and will prepare a report on this subject.

To share its findings and experience, CDIE decided to organize a major international conference on the political rehabilitation of postconflict societies. That October 1997 conference, Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, and Reintegration in Postconflict Societies, had several objectives: to highlight critical areas of the democratic political transition; to clarify the links between its components; and to draw lessons about the efficacy and impact of initiatives in postconflict societies.

More than 300 representatives of the international community—USAID, the State Department, nongovernmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, and bilateral and multilateral agencies—participated in the conference. The subject drew the attention of the keynote speaker, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and of USAID Administrator Brian Atwood.

In her remarks, Secretary Albright emphasized not only the diversity of challenges ahead, but also the uniqueness of this window for action. She urged the international community to "plant the seeds" of

"human security and prosperity and freedom," aiding those "who have emerged from the ravages of war to rebuild their lives, recreate their communities, and renew the progress of their nations."

In the intervening months, CDIE has prepared two documents on the conference to provide wider access to, and review of, the proceedings. The first is a compendium of the original conference papers and the complete texts of remarks in the opening plenary sessions. The second, a more difficult endeavor, is this thematic essay by Robin Silver, which imparts both a sense of the dialog and its contribution to this field.

Dr. Silver ably weaves together the elements of the political transition, emphasizing several unifying themes, ideas, and perspectives. She reviews the critical areas of endeavor highlighted by the conference: the repatriation and resettlement of refugees, the demobilization of ex-combatants, police reform, mechanisms for human-rights institution building, elections, community-level peace-building, and the impact of economic reactivation programs on reconciliation. She concludes with an assessment of challenges to political transitions.

I am thankful to Dr. Silver for this excellent essay.

I would also like to commend the fine work of the conference rapporteurs from CDIE's Research and Reference Services staff—Stephanie McNulty, Tom Buck, Dan Turello, Anne O'Toole, Paul Prettitore, and Josh Kaufman—who took time out from their demanding schedules to produce thoughtful session summaries.

I am grateful to USAID Administrator Brian Atwood and Chief of Staff Dick McCall for their efforts on behalf of this conference. I would like to thank several colleagues for their support throughout this entire project: Larry Garber, deputy assistant administrator of the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination; Gerald Britan, director of CDIE; Richard Whelden, assistant director of CDIE; and Susan Merrill, director of the Program and Operations Assessment Division of PPC.

I would be most interested in hearing comments on the issues raised as well as suggestions.

—KRISHNA KUMAR
Team Sector Leader
Humanitarian Assistance and Democracy
USAID/CDIE/POA

Summary

The end of the Cold War brought greater prominence to intrastate conflicts. It opened the door for their resolution and for the eventual reconstruction of war-torn societies through the assistance of the international community. Experience has taught that reconstruction in a period of marked turbulence involves three transitions: an evolution from a controlled, or perhaps chaotic, economy to a free market; a rejection of violence in favor of negotiated accords and peaceful methods of conflict resolution; and finally the transition from an authoritarian regime to a fledgling democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The October 1997 conference Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, and Reintegration, held in Washington and sponsored by USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation, stimulated an international dialog on past, present, and future interventions in support of democracy. Participants outlined the obstacles to, and offered suggestions for, appropriate and effective engagement in postconflict societies.

Repatriation and Resettlement of Refugees

Repatriation and resettlement of refugees are prerequisites to the political and social rehabilitation of postconflict societies. Conference participants discussed changes in the very nature of repatriation: differences in the number of refugees, the timing and control of repatriation, and the conditions under which refugees return to their countries of origin—if not actually to their prewar homes. They also analyzed the problems and requirements for resettling refugees and internally displaced persons.

In the 1990s, voluntary repatriation has seldom meant return to stable environments. Refugees have instead come home to territories beset by conflict. Even in these tenuous circumstances, they are perceived as decision-makers. But they now decide to repatriate without amnesty, without the knowledge of international agencies, and without assurance of political change or personal safety.

In response to this troubling context, participants made certain recommendations. International actors should reconsider and redesign their policies and programs. For example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has redefined its role in the reintegration process. It now assumes effective responsibility for refugees within much broader UN peace plans, provides economic and social reintegration assistance through community-based programs in specific areas, and protects refugees and their human rights by working to augment judicial capacity.

Participants encouraged practitioners to think locally in providing assistance, to build capacity and civil society (where possible), and to assist refugees reactively (when necessary). This holistic approach places the legal rights and protections of refugees within the larger frameworks of community and society.

Demobilizing the Military

War-torn societies face the task of transforming themselves from militarized camps into civilian societies. Reintegrating the many ex-combatants into both society and economy has proven an integral condition for a smooth transition to democracy. Effectively maneuvering demobilized ex-combatants is critical to the task of establishing tenable security arrangements in postconflict societies. Participants proposed interventions that combine technical assistance with certain moral force.

Demobilization has several stages: disarmament and relocation, resettlement, reintegration. Ideally, these involve integrated planning, the martialing and organization of resources, preparatory work at the local level, and authoritative implementation. Of course, the postconflict environment rarely is ideal. The urgency of demobilization can also frustrate these efforts. Other factors, such as the nature of the military's relation with civilians during the conflict, can determine a society's eventual acceptance—or rejection—of demobilized soldiers.

Participants suggested that programs be flexible and make use of a wide range of instruments to manage favorable or unfavorable environments, diverse groups of ex-combatants, and unforeseen complications. In this way, programs are better equipped to handle the demobilization of female ex-combatants, children soldiers, and members of armed groups. Participants also recommended that demobilization be incorporated into broader rehabilitation efforts.

Police Reform

Police reforms are essential to an overhaul of internal security—in national and local police forces. They provide a modicum of security to war-fatigued and leery populations while enabling the political transition to proceed. Given an element of political will, well-managed reforms also provide opportunities to bolster institutional capacity. They strengthen local civil-society organizations. And they emphasize values central to democracy.

Participants noted that the immediate and future goals of police reform in postconflict societies—particularly in Central America—stress organizing interim security arrangements, reconfiguring and retraining the police force, instituting civilian over-

sight mechanisms, and monitoring the reform process. The objective here is a professional, humane, and civilian police force committed to the principles of democratic policing. The international community has played a strategic role in providing technical assistance and moral guidance to reform efforts.

Participants observed that while police reforms expedite the political transition, they may take many years to implement. Therefore, they urged the international community to strengthen local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to act as long-term partners in the reform process. By monitoring the police, educating citizens about the role of the police in a democratic polity, and advocating better judicial and prison reforms, these civil society organizations may sustain reform.

Mechanisms for Confronting Human Rights Abuses

The international community has debated how to best address and redress human rights abuses ranging from the negation of basic civil and political rights to regime-sponsored rape, assault, and genocide. The conference examined the postconflict experience of three mechanisms: war crimes tribunals, truth commissions, and human rights field operations. Each mechanism has a specific function in the postconflict period; each can contribute to sustained reform and reconciliation.

Participants observed that *war crimes tribunals* are particularly suited to societies in which human rights abuses included regime-condoned violence. Criminal trials emphasize individual, rather than collective, guilt.

Truth commissions have a different purpose. They try to reconstruct and examine the larger context (social forces, historical events, and political structures) surrounding the incidence of abuse. By allowing victims to contribute to the official record, they also function as a first step in social reconciliation.

A Human Rights Field Operation, as organized by the United Nations, undertakes several tasks as part of the mandate to protect civilian populations and monitor the behavior of signatories. During peacekeeping operations, the HRFO trains candidates selected for the UN civilian police and monitors military peacekeepers. During the political transition the HRFO monitors new institutions, uncovering problems of insufficient capacity, delivering the appropriate technical assistance, and then evaluating the effectiveness of new systems.

Participants proffered some lessons learned. First, human rights mechanisms must make promotion of indigenous human rights organizations a priority. Second, the international community should match the call for early intervention with action. Third, demanding unlikely compliance with unfeasible human rights standards will not guarantee implementation. Participants advised the international community to advocate mentoring, open and reciprocal dialog, and appropriate human rights reforms while new leaders establish stability, gain legitimacy, and learn their craft.

Postconflict Elections

Postconflict elections are perhaps the most widely known and often lauded instruments of democratization in postconflict societies. These rely on critical financial, technical, and logistical assistance from the international community. Participants addressed the not-always-reconcilable functions of these elections, their prerequisites, the common logistical and political problems encountered, and the consequences for democratic governance. Questioning the value of an instrument often unable to produce sustainable reform, participants supported the development of interim alternatives to elections.

The international community has a demonstrated ability in organizing postconflict elections. Yet the demands of establishing even a rudimentary electoral infrastructure have made it difficult to direct sufficient resources to extensive civil education or preparation of a receptive political climate. This is unfortunate, because electoral structures alone cannot compel a broader vision of political reconciliation based on accommodation and compromise.

The panelists outlined some alternatives to early elections: extended periods of negotiation to broaden consensus on critical issues, transitional governments or councils, power-sharing arrangements or coalition governments. These would serve as catalysts for social reconciliation, before potentially divisive elections take place. Such interim arrangements could also prove less costly in the short run and more sustainable in the future.

Community-Level Peace Building

The international commmunity has recognized the value of community-level peace-building efforts. These interventions attempt to reconstitute fractured communities and encourage participation in reconstruction efforts. They often emphasize the management of conflict, nonviolent methods of dispute resolution and debate, and reconciliation.

The conference evaluated three approaches to community peace building. The first approach, *psychosocial healing*, demands that postconflict recovery efforts be holistic and address physical, social, and psychological elements. Participants considered a five-stage model of community reintegration and healing that could act as a guide for interventions.

The second approach employs *peace committees* for dispute resolution to limit communal violence. This had origins in the South African experience. A network of regional and local committees evolved into a locus of democratic debate and problem solving. Peace committees can use their authority to monitor regime institutions and to oblige their representatives to participate in deliberations.

The third approach considers the *role of grass-roots organizations* in peace-building and reconciliation efforts. Using case material from Bosnia, participants discussed the establishment of these associations, civic organizations, and nongovernmental organizations as alternative service providers

during the war. In the postwar period, many of these indigenous organizations mobilize support around common interests and needs, rather than around ascriptive criteria. They form a community-level constituency for peace.

Participants noted several lessons learned here. Environmental factors affect performance. For example, national-level politics and state institutions exert an especially strong influence on community-level interventions. Therefore, successful operationalization of any intervention depends on sensitive adaptation to the institutional environment. Given the influence of environmental variables, participants also urged caution in trying to transfer mechanisms from one environment to another. The psychosocial approach cannot be adapted to, or implemented in, every postconflict situation; the singular factors that afforded the peace committees some relative success are not easy to reproduce. Similarly, international interest in, and subsequent assistance to, postconflict Bosnia helped maintain grass-roots organizations.

The Impact of Economic Revitalization and Media Support on Intergroup Cooperation

The breakdown of social networks in societies once noted for relatively high levels of integration and tolerance is a common consequence of intrastate warfare. Nevertheless, peace building and the democratic political transition require some interethnic cooperation. Participants examining reconciliation in Bosnia reviewed economic revitalization and media support programs that have demonstrated some success in either promoting or facilitating cooperation.

In Bosnia, several interventions have demonstrated some utility in strengthening the private sector and increasing interaction. By activating market mechanisms, small-business lending promotes commerce determined by the laws of supply and demand, not by ethnicity. Business associations and financial intermediary organizations with ethnically diverse directorates seek out and support opportunities for cooperation among different ethnic groups. Reconstructing infrastructure with an eye to interethnic commerce and trade has also contributed to the rehabilitation of the Bosnian private sector. But political and institutional factors have prevented these instruments from fully realizing their objectives. In Bosnia the legal and policy framework impedes further economic development and liberalization. Political leaders at all levels of government continue to use available security sector instruments at their disposal to control trade, commerce, and the economy.

International assistance for new media outlets—print and broadcast—has also been used to promote interethnic cooperation in Bosnia. The nationalist parties, generally opposed to reintegration, control most of the existing media outlets. In reaction to this, international support for "alternative media" with more conciliatory messages has flowed into the region. However, these interventions raised questions about sustainability and the fine line between socially responsible media and propaganda.

Challenges for Democratic Transitions

While reviewing the effectiveness of democracy promotion strategies in several regions, conference participants highlighted both the opportunities and challenges inherent in the postconflict context.

Most strategies of democracy promotion involve transferring purely conceptual models and attempting to give them more concrete form. Participants observed that the resulting structures do not easily take root, do not maintain their pristine form, or do not produce anticipated results. For example, judicial reforms sometimes generate accusations of foreign imposition and encounter opposition from vested interests. Rudimentary and often unsustainable electoral administrations have not been the catalyst for further democratization. As a result, participants questioned the applicability of the original models.

Participants noted that democracy promotion also continues to suffer from the weakness of those political institutions and state structures that should form the foundations for the democratization. Many factors can hinder attempts to strengthen and anchor the institutions that sustain democracy. On one hand, transitional regimes may oppose such capacity-building interventions. On the other hand, international community actions or inactions—lack of vision or planning, short-term commitment of resources, assumptions that constitutions or elections will provide enough institution-building momentum, and donor neglect—can also derail institutional development.

The vagaries of political will present another challenge to democracy promotion. Political leaders and governing regimes can refuse certain interventions outright or limit others. Even relatively weak regimes can frustrate strategies through tepid commitments to democratization.

Under these circumstances, the international community faces a major challenge: what to do with democratically elected governments that refuse to follow the established norms of democracy. Participants engaged in much debate and found no simple answer to the question. They suggested that the international community use judgment in classifying these situations and in selecting the appropriate strategies. Participants identified at least two scenarios. In some cases, leaders do not believe in democracy and may reject or even sabotage democratization efforts. The prudent policy may be to bide time, to lower expectations for change. In other cases, leaders may curtail ongoing democracy promotion activities and not step aside in favor of more democratic arrangements. Democracy promotion strategies must adapt to this limited compliance and work within its confines.

Recognizing this, participants suggested that the international community center its efforts on deliberate institution-building. This has the potential to limit the authority of some authoritarian leaders. Their regimes may eventually "borrow" certain elements

from the liberal democratic model: an emphasis on accountability and other components of democratic governance, reliance on negotiation to settle conflict, subordination of the military in a civilian polity, or the rejection of charisma and the establishment of the rule of law as the basis for legitimacy. Of course, this strategy necessitates a considerable long-term engagement.

1. The Elements of Political Transition

The end of the Cold War—with the eruption of civil wars and the dissolution of political and social structures in the Caucusus, the Balkans, and Central Africa—brought greater prominence to intrastate conflicts. It also opened the door for the resolution of these conflicts and for the eventual reconstruction of these societies, through the assistance of the international community. Experience teaches that reconstruction in a period of marked turbulence must involve three transitions: an evolution from a controlled, or perhaps chaotic, economy to a free market; a rejection of violence in favor of negotiated accords and peaceful methods of conflict resolution; and finally, the transition from an authoritarian regime to a fledgling democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. Of course, this tripartite division should not obscure the fact that a concern for democracy, human rights, and reintegration must inform economic and social rehabilitation initiatives.

> [The political transition] involves institutionalizing the norms of free and fair elections so that government leaders are selected through ballots and not bullets; it involves observance of human rights so that people can live without fear and intimidation; it involves establishing a free media that can disseminate information and ideas without the threat of political reprisals; it involves strengthening grass-roots voluntary organizations to mediate between society and polity; it involves reforming the internal security sector so that the rights and liberties of the populace can be protected; and it involves establishing civilian control over the military.
>
> —Krishna Kumar
> USAID

The objective of the conference was to examine the different elements of political transition in the postconflict context. The themes discussed included the following: the changing nature of refugee repatriation and resettlement, the demobilization of ex-combatants and police reform as prerequisites to change, mechanisms for establishing regimes with increased human rights capacities, the utility of postconflict elections in democracy building, approaches to community-level peace building, the impact of economic reactivation on reconciliation, and the efficacy of democracy promotion strategies. These themes provided the areas of delib-

eration. CDIE commissioned 14 papers from experts in each field.

CDIE originally proposed the conference to facilitate an international dialog on past, present, and future interventions in support of democracy. To order this exchange of ideas on the political transition, conference organizers arranged 15 topical sessions. The plenary sessions and speakers gave voice to the sensibility and spirit of the gathering.

This report does not attempt to capture the richness of this dialog, nor does it attempt to draw any conclusions. Rather, the author has chosen to emphasize those themes that emerged repeatedly in the subject panels, roundtables, and general sessions.

2. Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement

The repatriation and resettlement of refugees are prerequisites to the political and social rehabilitation of postconflict societies. The conference devoted two sessions to these topics. Participants discussed changes in the nature of repatriation—differences in the number of refugees, the timing and control of repatriation, and the conditions under which refugees return to their countries of origin if not to their prewar homes. They also analyzed the problems and requirements for resettling refugees and internally displaced persons. Finally, they reviewed current strategies and offered new approaches to deal with the new challenges.

> United States policy is based on the following premises: protection, life-sustaining assistance, durable solutions, voluntary repatriation under safe conditions, and acknowledging that the care of refugees and the pursuit of solutions are shared international responsibilities.
>
> —Marguerite Houze
> Department of State

At the outset, it was noted that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union have transformed the context in which the international community must respond to the refugee challenge. As major powers are no longer concerned with the outcomes of civil war, they are less eager to fund long-term support for refugees. At the same time, host states realize that they will reap few if any rewards for offering asylum to large refugee populations, especially at certain economic cost. With little to gain from offering asylum, possible host states more readily express their view of refugee populations as potentially destabilizing elements.

This transformation in context has affected the nature of voluntary repatriation. Contemporary repatriation has less and less to do with voluntary repatriations that occur after political change and so guaran-

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Panelists on the roundtable "Reintegration of Refugees and IDPs" (internally displaced persons) included Edmund Cain of the United Nations Development Program, Patricia Weiss Fagen of the World Bank, and Jeffrey Crisp of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Marguerite Houze of the Department of State, Dennis Gallagher of the Refugee Policy Group, and Barry Stein of Michigan State University served on the panel "Repatriation of Refugees and IDPs."

tee the safety of the refugees. Instead, the issue is one of "large returns to troubled countries where repatriation is often violent, compelled, and premature" (Stein 1997, 2). While refugees are still perceived as decision-makers in these tenuous circumstances, they now decide to repatriate without assurances of regime change and despite the continuation of conflict. Furthermore, they repatriate "frequently without any amnesty, without a repatriation agreement or program, without 'permission' from the authorities in either the country of asylum or of origin, without international knowledge or assistance" (Stein 1997, 3). The increasing incidence of repatriation under these uncertain circumstances—with attendant chances for *refoulement* (the forced return of refugees despite great threats to their lives and liberty) and premature repatriation—presents new problems for the international community.

Indeed, participants acknowledged the debate over the current reliance on repatriation. Before the end of the Cold War, repatriation was clearly not an option in many cases. Now the political environment permits agencies to consider voluntary repatriation to countries formerly deemed beyond the pale. As one panelist noted, this predilection for voluntary repatriation is based on the assumptions that refugees want to go home, that states want them back—whether as a point of national pride or economics—and that states are bound to accept repatriating refugees.

Yet, in some postconflict situations, these assumptions are not always valid. Refugees do not always prefer to leave their countries of asylum, whether from fear or from economic or ideological considerations. In some cases, hosts benefit from the contributions of these refugee populations. And, in the aftermath of civil war, countries of origin may view expatriate refugees as political enemies and may impede or obstruct their reentry.

Furthermore, the great number of people now afforded refugee protections often complicates the mechanisms of repatriation. The international community may not have the capacity to intervene effectively when repatriation movements begin. In addition, the magnitude can mask important distinctions among, and thereby the needs of, members of the repatriating population.

Despite these considerable dilemmas, there is an observed predilection toward repatriation. Permanent asylum and third-country resettlement are often not real options. In point of fact, forced returns occur with greater frequency. As a result, international agencies regard voluntary repatriation to be the most viable, or the least disagreeable, solution.

The principle of voluntary repatriation came to be applied widely to mass movements of people across borders caused by internal conflicts, famine, and other man-made disasters. This wide application of the principle of voluntary repatriation was encouraged because there was little desire to send people back to communist, colonial, and apartheid regimes. In this new political era, while there is continued willingness of the international community to respond to humanitarian emergencies, there is also greater impatience for persons displaced by them to return to their homes as soon as possible after the acute emergency is over.

—Dennis Gallagher
Refugee Policy Group

Consequent to this, participants discussed the problem of resettling large numbers of returning refugees and reintegrating them in the fabric of national life. They observed that the economic dimension of resettlement is generally understood, while insufficient attention has been devoted to its political ramifications. Assistance to refugees must be delivered in a fashion that does not create tensions between them and other populations. Often the target of rehabilitation efforts should be the entire community, and not only the refugee population. There is also a need to delve into civil and political rights—legal protection, property rights, and political freedom of refugees. Participants encouraged the international community to rethink and reformulate their strategies and programs in this neglected area.

> Of all the organizations and agencies involved, none necessarily stands out from the others as the leader . . . . Each of the separate entities has its own mandate, governing boards, independent fundraising, and resources. The existing system does not view a complex emergency as a whole problem. It is unable to offer a coherent and comprehensive approach and solution.
>
> —Barry Stein
> Michigan State University

Panelists also acknowledged the singular, difficult, and changing interpretation of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) responsibility in this arena. Given the need to monitor repatriation and reintegration and promote reconciliation, the UNHCR spends larger and larger sums of money in the country of origins, rather than in host countries or countries of asylum. The UNHCR's role in reintegration now includes assuming effective responsibility for refugees within much broader UN peace plans, providing economic and social reintegration assistance through community-based programs in specific areas, and ensuring the protection of refugees and their human rights—by working to augment judicial capacity.

This is a new orientation for the UNHCR. Is the organization suited to perform these functions? As a panelist noted, "Although the UNHCR has an abiding concern the returnees be firmly reintegrated into their societies, UNHCR assistance and involvement is limited to their return and an initial, albeit lengthening, arrival and settling-in period" (Stein 1997, 10). However, participants emphasized, the UNHCR is often harshly criticized for failing to do an impossible job. For example, the UNHCR is often required to design repatriation programs for refugees in areas not under government control. Or, occasionally, a government will request that the UNHCR provide key services to an entire population, not just to refugees.

In addition to the UNHCR, NGOs, bilateral agencies, private voluntary organizations, and UN affiliates assist in repatriation and resettlement. As each organization has its own mandate, agenda, and funding, interagency coordination becomes problematic. Even within the more limited universe of the UN, coordination is no easier. Representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Program admitted to an unnecessary overlap in their efforts and a general lack of communication between the two organizations in the past. A new global memorandum of understanding

between the two should remedy the situation. The participants felt that the different agencies and organizations should consider their comparative advantage. Significant efforts must be made to devise and institutionalize a more rational division of labor within the international community.

Participants encouraged international actors to reconsider and redesign their policies and programs in light of the new challenges and opportunities. They should think locally in the provision of assistance, build capacity and civil society where possible, and assist refugees reactively when necessary. Practitioners should think holistically and consider the whole community. There should be greater emphasis on the legal rights and protections of refugees and internally displaced persons.

3. Demobilizing the Military

Once parties to a conflict have indicated their acceptance of a negotiated settlement, war-torn societies face the task of transforming themselves from militarized camps into civilian societies. Conflicts generate armies, intelligence units, special forces, murder squads. Reintegrating the many ex-combatants into both society and economy has proven an integral condition for a smooth transition to democracy.

Effectively maneuvering demobilized ex-combatants is critical to the task of establishing tenable security arrangements in postconflict societies. Ex-combatants without livelihoods, who have not found a point of re-entry into society, can spread discontent and feed the market in military hardware. They pose threats to both the regime and the civilian population. Participants in the session on ex-combatants outlined the obstacles presented by the postconflict context and offered suggestions for appropriate and effective interventions—a combination of technical assistance and certain moral force.

Conference participants noted that demobilization campaigns in Africa and Central America take place in a variety of political and socioeconomic contexts. Each demobilization must be evaluated in light of the factors that prompted it. These may include a peace accord, shortage of funding, victory and defeat of fighting parties, perceived improvement in the security situation, changing military technologies or strategies, and perceived economic and development benefits of shifting from a wartime to peacetime economy.

> Demobilization and reintegration programs for military personnel constitute a vital part of demilitarization in particular, and of transitions from war to peace in general. Indeed, increased demilitarization is a precondition for reviving civil society, reducing poverty, and sustaining development in Africa.
>
> —Nat Colletta,
> World Bank

This variance in cause and context naturally imposes a variance in the process of, and approach to, demobilization. Nevertheless, participants under-

The session "Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants" included Nat Colletta, of the World Bank; Kees Kingma, of the Bonn International Center for Conversion; and Johanna Mendelson, of USAID.

scored the fact that demobilization often involves the execution of similar tasks. Soldiers must be grouped, encamped, and disarmed. Only then can they be provided with identification and with education about civilian life and outfitted with some basic provisions. After this initial resettlement, reintegration can proceed. The economic aspect of reintegration—the ability to learn a livelihood—depends upon access to credit, land, and opportunities. The social aspect—acceptance by the community—depends upon the military's relations with civilians and respect for civilian social structures, the status of the military in the postconflict polity, and cultural factors.

> Clearly, there is a tension between the political uncertainty that usually exists in a country emerging from a war and the need for advance planning. Nevertheless, important preparatory work includes the mobilization of resources, needs assessment, sensitization of stakeholders, and linking demobilization with reintegration efforts.
>
> —Kees Kingma
> Bonn International Center
> For Conversion

In connection with this, one panelist noted that the World Bank's interventions approximate a "seamless web of transition from military to civilian life" (Colletta 1997, 3). A demobilization phase centers on the disarmament and relocation of ex-combatants—a return to community. Reinsertion supplies ex-combatants with a "transitional safety net" through payments made over several months. Social and economic reintegration then assists ex-combatants in developing a livelihood.

> However, as [World] Bank experience and understanding evolved, we have come to appreciate the developmental linkages between demilitarization, social and economic reintegration of war-affected populations, and the overall reconstruction process.
>
> —Nat Colletta
> World Bank

A World Bank program is designed to first gather information on individual ex-combatants (their characteristics, needs, skills) and then assess "opportunity structures" (markets for labor, land, credit, training) and institutional capacity. In this way, assistance can be targeted to groups of ex-combatants, and coordination mechanisms can rely on existing structures at the national, regional, and community levels. This approach sustains ex-combatants, increases the capacity of local institutions, and facilitates economic and social rehabilitation.

Discussion pinpointed the factors that favor the implementation of demobilization programs. Initial disarmament must precede all else, to avoid security risks and possible disruptions. The programs should be flexible, making use of a wide range of instruments to adequately address both diverse environments and groups of ex-combatants. When possible, demobilization should be incorporated into broader rehabilitation efforts. A strong central authority is necessary to carry out the demobilization effort and orchestrate the services of NGOs and multilateral and bilateral agencies.

Assistance should involve more than retraining or recapacitating service provision structures, however. As one panelist

observed, it must "rebuild social capital," promote a variety of social organizations and forms to ease reintegration, and "work organizing reconciliation activities, open community meetings and other activities for free and transparent public exchanges between formerly hostile groups and individuals" (Colletta 1997, 10–11). The international community should encourage rapprochement.

The dialog on strategies addressed several ongoing debates: whether to target the needs of individuals or those of larger communities; best practices for handling women ex-combatants and child soldiers; the possibility of incorporating nonsignatory armed groups within established arrangements.

> For demobilization to contribute to peace and development, it needs to be embedded in a broader process of peace building and national reconciliation.
>
> —Kees Kingma
> Bonn International Center
> For Conversion

Finally, the lessons learned included the criticality of demobilization to security sector reforms, social rehabilitation, and a smooth political transition. Even so, the morality of supporting ex-combatants when civilian populations face similar economic deprivations raised certain ethical considerations. One panelist outlined the argument advocating special assistance to ex-combatants. On one hand, this group is unemployed and in need of relocation. Yet skill level and competence may favor eventual employment, such that aid to the ex-combatants actually contributes to economic rehabilitation. In some cases, participation in the military was motivated by a dedication to socioeconomic improvement; at other times, enlistment was not a matter of choice. Demobilization assistance could be supported on any of these grounds: in order to meet special needs; because it makes economic sense; and as a compensation for military duty. On the other hand, withholding assistance only increases the risk that ex-combatants will not reintegrate. Experience has taught that the alternative to assisted reintegration is life on the political and economic margins and survival through illegal activities. These would constitute challenges for the new regime and its security arrangements.

4. Police Reform

Like the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, police reforms are integral to an overhaul of the internal security sector. These reforms provide a modicum of security to war-fatigued and leery populations while enabling the political transition to proceed. Experience has taught that, given an element of political will, well-managed reforms also provide opportunities for bolstering institutional capacity, emphasizing values central to democracy promotion, and strengthening local civil society organizations.

The immediate and future goals of police reform in Central America and other postconflict settings stress organizing interim security arrangements, reconfiguring and retraining the police force, instituting civilian oversight mechanisms, and monitoring the reform process. One participant noted that police reform in Central America is primarily understood as "demilitarizing public security—ending the extraordinary military control over and nature of policing" (Call 1997, 2). The objective is the creation of a profes-

During the civil wars of the 1980s, internal security forces became deeply involved in counterinsurgency efforts and were responsible for many of the 300,000 deaths attributed to these internal wars.

—Charles Call
Stanford University

The legacy of authoritarianism remains manifest in corrupt and inefficient judicial systems, abusive law enforcement institutions with little capacity to investigate and solve crimes, continued impunity for the powerful, and in the residue of authoritarian political culture that acts as a drag on efforts to consolidate democratic electoral transitions by making accountable the key institutions responsible for protecting and promoting democratic values and practices.

—George Vickers
Washington Office on Latin America

The session "Police Reform" included presentations from George Vickers, of the Washington Office on Latin America; Charles Call, of Stanford University; and Charles Costello, of USAID.

sional, humane, and civilian police force committed to the principles of democratic policing. Such a force allows new regimes to bring "protection, order, and justice" to the population and reinforces regime credibility (Call 1997, 2).

The participants outlined the similarities in the component elements of police reform programs. El Salvador, like other countries, established a new national police force and a new National Public Security Academy. Participants also formalized mechanisms to monitor the force for human rights abuses and other abuses of power, while reducing the military apparatus and limiting its domain to external security. Demilitarization in the postconflict context must signify the separation of the police from the military, as well as the commission of new personnel guided by doctrine, methods, and missions nonmilitary in orientation.

> The idea that policing is to protect and serve individual citizens rather than the regime or the state is novel in most of Latin America, and requires emphasis and institutionalization.
>
> —Charles Call
> Stanford University

The discussion did not refrain from the debate surrounding police force reconstitution. On the one hand, police reform may act as an instrument of reconciliation. Through the active recruitment of personnel from previously "disenfranchised" and underrepresented groups, a police reform program that seeks diversity may have a salutary effect on reconciliation. It may also provide an additional measure of legitimacy and support for the regime. Of course, such a tactic would force reformers to review current admissions requirements and standards; these need to be restructured to maintain force effectiveness while promoting diversity.

On the other hand, reconstitution may entail a serious demobilization dilemma: Would complete dismissal of existing forces yield risks for security? In some cases, this dilemma prompts reformers to keep at least a segment of the old force operational, either permanently or as part of some interim policing arrangement. Because recruiting and training a new national police force is a time-consuming process, reliance on an interim public security force has been common. Panelists suggested that, in all cases, these personnel should be individually selected, vetted, and retrained—and their activities monitored. If members of the old force remain only in an interim capacity, a firewall should be constructed between the new and old forces, if possible.

Participants elaborated on the problems that reliance on retrained members of the old force may generate. Where the police were associated with human rights abuses and other illegalities, employment of retrained personnel may prompt fear and distrust. Reforming regimes must weigh the benefits—more immediate access to existing security arrangements, and parrying future claims of bias from former personnel—against the risks of popular rejection and preserving the old corps with its antidemocratic values.

In addition to these problems, the postwar period poses specific obstacles for police reform efforts. The associated problems and security risks would challenge a highly professional and well-developed police operation. Police reforms to date have not always anticipated massive infrastruc-

ture damage, the flow of refugees and internally displaced persons, economic crises, soldiers in the process of demobilizing, the wide availability of guns and other armaments, and the documented post-settlement crime rise. These factors have increased the need for strong internal security arrangements yet have made them much harder to maintain.

Resistance to police reform programs has grown among vested interests, the military, and officials harmed by the transformation process. Participants observed that these elements sometimes encourage the infiltration of corrupt or criminal elements to destroy the integrity of new units; they also attempt to mitigate the power of the new force through the creation of a parallel police unit. Police reform efforts depend on internal mechanisms of discipline that can aid the development of "an organizational culture of probity and accountability" (Vickers 1997, 11). Unfortunately, not all of these mechanisms have accomplished their objectives.

The international community has played a strategic role in providing technical assistance, such as training police recruits. Panelists viewed international assistance as providing the moral force behind these efforts. In El Salvador, for example, the "vision for a truly national, apolitical, professional force came largely from the UN advisers, rather than the Salvadoran parties themselves" (Vickers 1997, 3). The UN has been particularly diligent in establishing autonomous monitoring mechanisms and ensuring that new police meet acceptable standards of professional deportment. International involvement has also prompted the extension of police services to diverse sectors of society, not just to the wealthy or politically powerful. The challenge before the international community is to "help countries learn from their own and others' experiences, and to respectfully insist that there are basic values and principles at the root of law enforcement in a democratic society" (Vickers 1997, 16).

The discussion highlighted several other lessons learned from police reform. One panelist noted that "such reforms generally *reflect* the political context in which they occur more than they shape it" (Call 1997, 14). Thus, the absence of political will in new national governments will prevent reforms from achieving their objectives. Actors also should recognize that while these reforms are useful in initially expediting the political transition, they may take many years to put into effect. Participants urged the international community to strengthen local NGOs to act as long-term partners in reform. By monitoring the police, providing citizens with education about the role of the police in a democratic polity, and advocating better judicial and prison reforms, these civil society organizations may sustain the reform process.

5. Mechanisms for Confronting Human Rights Abuses And Sustaining Comprehensive Reform

In recent years, the international community has debated how best to address and redress abuses of human rights, from the negation of basic civil and political rights to regime-sponsored rape, assault, and genocide. In the post-conflict period, there can be a tension between populations that demand restitution and punishment, and the international community that supports these in view of eventual reconciliation. The conference devoted two sessions—one on war crimes tribunals and truth commissions and the other on human rights field operations—to the experience of these mechanisms in handling this tension. Each mechanism has a specific function in the postconflict period, as well as the potential to contribute to sustained reform and reconciliation. Participants assessed the lessons learned and did not refrain from confronting the moral and operational dilemmas that accompany human rights interventions.

> At least in the aftermath of widespread atrocities, justice is a necessary element of any stable peace.
>
> —Neil Kritz
> United States Institute of Peace

There is general agreement that the first mechanism, war crimes tribunals, is particularly suited to societies in which human rights abuses included regime-condoned violence and brutality. Criminal trials, especially, center on the guilt of particular individuals rather than the "collective guilt" of a particular group. In each instance, questions of tribunal supervision must be decided. International commissions have particular advantages—expertise, impartiality, resources, authority—in conducting these prosecutions. There was further agreement that once the decision is made to establish an international tribunal, the actual apparatus should remain in-country. This generally increases effectiveness and ensures greater public access to tribunal proceedings.

The session "Institutional Capacity Building for Human Rights" included Tom Farer, University of Denver; Ambassador John Shattuck, Department of State; and Ian Martin, University of Essex.

Domestic prosecutions—with access to local sources of information—can also play an important role in the prosecution of war criminals. A panelist observed that these trials might be "more sensitive to the nuances of local culture" and might also bring a message of intended reform to the indigenous populace (Kritz 1997, 6). Naturally, not all regimes have the capacity or the moral legitimacy to carry out credible prosecutions. Yet it was suggested that in certain cases the domestic prosecution of these criminals can serve as the cornerstone for judicial reform efforts. In order to facilitate this, the international community can foster links between international legal staff and the local legal community. Of course, these links cannot violate the norms of judicial neutrality and impartiality. Rather, they can perform an educational or mentoring function, assisting the local legal establishment with its professional development during the postconflict period.

Recognizing this, participants urged the international community to be sensitive to opportunities for complementarity between international and domestic efforts. "The best scenario would be for the international community to provide appropriate assistance to enable a society emerging from mass abuse to deal with the issues of justice and accountability itself" (Kritz 1997, 20). One panelist counseled the international community to develop specific criteria to help the host country determine the authority, nature, and duration of any proposed tribunal.

Truth commissions, the second mechanism, perform a unique function: they help the population confront the totality of conflict-era abuse. Because the commissions' task is to reconstruct and examine the larger context—in terms of the social forces, historic events, and political structures—surrounding the incidence of abuse, it is not a criminal prosecution. (Of course, material and testimony gathered by the truth commission may later assist prosecutors in a tribunal.) By testifying, victims of abuse have the opportunity to contribute to the historical record. One participant remarked that "truth commissions permit a cathartic public airing of the evil and pain that has been inflicted" (Kritz 1997, 15). This is part of the reconciliation process. These commissions also should demonstrate the new regime's commitment to reestablishing standards of truth, accountability, and fairness in both society and state.

> A common [misconception] is that the use of truth commissions and the holding of trials are mutually exclusive. This is not necessarily the case. The first truth commission of note, established in Argentina in 1983, produced significant amounts of information which was then utilized by the authorities in their prosecution of members of the military junta which had ruled the country. The two processes were complementary to one another.
>
> —Neil Kritz
> United States Institute for Peace

As more negotiated settlements include multiparty commitments to respect human rights, the international community increasingly finds itself monitoring the behavior of signatories. As a result, human rights field operations (HRFO), the third mechanism, have come to play an expanding role in the postconflict period. This mechanism should augment human rights capacity during peace

building and ongoing political development. However, mounting a human rights field operation is a relatively new task, only recently organized.

> While civilians have always been victims of war, these new types of conflicts involve massive human rights abuses that are at the center of conflicts. These abuses (ethnic cleansing, mass rape, and even genocide) are not the by-product of the conflict, they are the conflict.
>
> —Ambassador John Shattuck
> Department of State

A panelist explained that these units have undergone changes in management, scope, and function in the past few years. The UN's political, and then peacekeeping, departments directed the first human rights field operations. These had no formal relationship with the United Nations Center for Human Rights (UNCHR) in Geneva and could make no use of its expertise. There was an increasing discrepancy between the emerging need for field services and the early mission of the agency. The first high commissioner for human rights, José Ayala–Lasso, officially created the human rights field operations for the Rwandan crisis and subsequently extended the field presence of his bureau to several other conflict and postconflict situations. The UNCHR also advocated a human rights presence in UN or joint UN–regional organization peacekeeping missions.

> Early intervention is far more cost-effective than late intervention. . . . The paradox here is that the world often does not take notice until conditions become increasingly deplorable. By then, it is too late for early intervention. We need to develop early warning systems to combat this problem.
>
> —Ambassador John Shattuck
> Department of State

The human rights field operations now have particular functions, as one panelist explained. During peacekeeping operations, the human rights field operation trains candidates selected for the UN civilian police. It is imperative that the civilian police, while enforcing the law, actively display a respect for human rights. While providing this guidance, the human rights field operation also creates links with the indigenous population useful later in institution building. Other functions protect the security of civilians, to the extent possible. As part of this effort, the human rights field operation monitors military peacekeepers, teaching them to abide by human rights standards and to report any abuses they see.

During the political transition, the human rights field operation should perform a series of "integrated operations": prevention, monitoring and oversight, technical assistance, and institution building (Martin 1997, 7). The HRFO is in position to uncover problems with insufficient capacity, deliver the appropriate technical assistance, and then evaluate the effectiveness of new systems. In this way, the HRFO could reinforce the accountability of new institutions.

In discussion, the participants considered some lessons learned from recent experience. When the international community establishes a human rights presence in postconflict societies, it must make the promotion of indigenous human rights organizations a priority. Links between complementarity and institution building are key. The HRFO, for example, does not replace local civil soci-

ety organizations; rather, it creates an environment conducive to their sustainability and offers capacity-building assistance, when possible. There was broad agreement that the same is true for assistance to war crimes tribunals and truth commissions.

In light of the Bosnian crises and delays in mounting a human rights presence in Rwanda, participants urged the international community to match the call for early intervention with action. It was acknowledged that monitoring numerous intrastate conflicts for abuse may be difficult. The complexities of geopolitics may also make operationalization quixotic. Panelists suggested the development of a mechanism to accomplish this goal.

Finally, the question of setting standards provoked debate. What lessons have interventions offered? The international community tends to view its interventions as supplying a "visible model and standards-setter" (Kritz 1997, 5). When it comes to international tribunals, one panelist maintained, the demonstration effect is useful. A reforming judiciary can only benefit from the presence of a neutral and fair criminal prosecution.

Yet the discussion acknowledged a quandary: Should the international community always impose its standards on new regimes? The realities of the transitional period often place constraints and limitations on regime compliance with certain international standards. Still unstable, these regimes often lack the capacity and resources necessary to adhere to the rule of law. They may also lack some legitimacy. As a result, it may be difficult for them to adequately resolve conflicting societal demands for retribution, justice, and reconciliation.

Participants advised the international community to emphasize mentoring while stability and legitimacy remain tenuous and new leaders learn their craft, to initiate open and reciprocal dialog, and to suggest appropriate and feasible reforms. It is not a question of dismissing or lowering standards, but of creating the institutions and the political goodwill necessary for their implementation.

6. Postconflict Elections

Postconflict elections are perhaps the most widely known and frequently lauded instruments of democratization in postconflict societies. These elections, theoretically held after negotiated peace accords, often rely on critical international assistance. The international community provides technical, logistical, and educational assistance, not to mention extensive financial support, to societies where scarcity is ubiquitous.

The session on postconflict elections presented a considered analysis of these elections, prompting discussion of several critical points. It addressed the not-always-reconcilable functions of these elections, their prerequisites, the common logistical and political problems encountered, and the consequences of postconflict elections for democratic governance. Participants supported the development of interim alternatives to elections, questioning the utility of an instrument not always effective in producing sustainable reform.

> Clearly, elections are necessary to provide legitimate and representative government, maintain stability, and promote progress. But although elections must be part of a postconflict strategy, they are not a sufficient strategy. Nations come to democracy at their own speed. . . . But whether elections are held sooner or later, the international community should strive from day one to help assemble the core ingredients of democracy: free press, political parties, equal rights for women and minorities, and even a new constitution if one is needed.
>
> —Madeleine Albright
> Secretary of State

The international community, participants observed, tends to view the postconflict election as a means to transforming a society in the wake of social and political upheaval to democracy. These elections are often perceived as securing the negotiated settlement and resolving sticking points, while simultaneously establishing democratic structures and institutionalizing nonconflictive methods of decision-making. The entire election process—

The panel "Postconflict Elections" included Krishna Kumar, of USAID; Marina Ottaway, of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace; and Larry Garber, of USAID.

from planning to execution—is viewed as "on-the-job training" for a regime and a populace new to democracy. The international community encourages the governing regime to permit both an independent media and freedom of expression. It also views an election as a true commitment to democratic values such as adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights.

This is a tall order for any intervention: creating the foundations for future democracy, while constituting a more immediate, functioning democratic system. This task is made all the more difficult by the fact that some political leaders do not possess a commitment to democracy. Both opposition parties and transitional governments occasionally agree to an election as a strategy of last resort. Sometimes rewards, such as economic aid or freedom from an international peacekeeping force, prompt regimes to hold swift elections.

Given the complicated context in which elections take place, it is difficult to guarantee that any intervention will be even nominally successful. Postconflict elections often follow a similar sequence: from negotiated settlement and the demobilization of combatants through the adoption of an electoral law to the formation of an electoral administration, the registration of voters and candidates, and, finally, the election. However, panelists emphasized that simply maintaining this trajectory did not ensure even technical success. Rather, the presence of certain preconditions increased the chances for sustainability and reduced overall costs of the intervention.

In South Africa, peace committees were employed primarily as a short-term tool to help manage conflict during an interim period while the country's political transition was being negotiated.

The peace committees were unable to end impunity on the part of the security forces, but they were able to help equalize the balance of power between those in power and ordinary citizens on specific issues and to strengthen the concept of accountability.

—Nicole Ball
Overseas Development Council

Several prerequisites were identified: a state with the capacity to perform certain functions; a consensus among parties about the structure and role of the government and the nature of intergovernmental relations; a "demonstrable political commitment on the part of the major conflicting parties to carry out the peace accord;" and "progress toward demobilization and the reintegration of combatants" (Kumar and Ottaway 1997, 16). Indeed, the three prototypical categories of international assistance—financial, political, and technical and logistical—have targeted particular areas in which the desired preconditions did not materialize and have extended capacity.

The participants recognized the international community's demonstrated ability in organizing postconflict elections. However, the demands of establishing and developing more than a rudimentary electoral infrastructure sometimes prevents the international community from dedicating enough time and resources to enhancing the political climate. Given the difficult nature of the assignment and usually brief period between accords and elections, technical and logistical assistance have tended to overshadow civic education programs, the

training of election workers, and the strengthening of indigenous civil society organizations. The short-term goals of "getting on with the elections" have taken precedence over longer-term processes of political development.

Throughout the conference, in this session as well as in the roundtables on democracy promotion, questions of long-term political development and sustainability surfaced repeatedly. Members of the international community began to assess the cost-effectiveness of elections: Are they worth the tremendous cost? Should the international community spend $2 billion in Cambodia or $85 million in Mozambique when "many of the case studies point with alarm to the disappearance of electoral institutions" (Kumar and Ottaway 1997, 12–13). There are no assurances. International assistance can provide the necessary technical expertise to work out logistical problems, and it can fund prodemocracy local NGOs, but it cannot always dictate or create political will. The international community has succeeded in pressuring political losers to accept immediate election results; it cannot compel a broader vision of political reconciliation based on accommodation and compromise.

The international community should consider certain lessons learned from this analysis of elections assistance. Immediate elections do not cure all ills; in every case, the international community must decide whether, and when, an election is appropriate. As Secretary of State Albright observed, "In the early stages of a transition, an interim coalition government may work better and do more for the cause of reconciliation than a weak elected one." In fact, the panelists outlined some alternatives to early elections: extended periods of negotiation to broaden consensus on critical issues, transitional governments or councils, and power-sharing arrangements or coalition governments. The particular social and political configuration of each case would determine the alternative selected and the duration of its utility.

> The more the success of elections was due to international intervention, the more fragile was the outcome. In postconflict elections, the tendency by the international community has so far been to do whatever possible to make the elections a success. Unless sustainability is taken into account in designing programs, future elections may still require exorbitant amounts of international support—or be doomed to failure.
>
> —Krishna Kumar, USAID, and Marina Ottaway, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

These alternatives would serve as a catalyst for reconciliation before potentially divisive elections take place. Participants viewed these alternatives as occasionally necessary in preventing a postelection "return to conflict or the consolidation of authoritarian regimes" (Kumar and Ottaway 1997, 17). Finally, interim arrangements could also prove less costly in the short run and more sustainable in the future. As experience teaches the international community that a successful political transition requires a longer-term commitment, these considerations carry greater weight.

7. Community-Level Peace Building

The international community has recognized the value of community-level peace building efforts. The objective is to encourage the participation of local residents in social and political reconciliation. Attempting to reconstitute fractured communities, these activities emphasize the management of residual conflict, provide arenas for public debate, and develop mechanisms for the nonviolent resolution of differences.

The conference offered three approaches to community reconciliation and peace building. The first outlined a conceptual model for psychosocial healing. The other two reviewed specific examples of conflict resolution and social reintegration. In South Africa, the peace process itself established a network of regional and local peace committees. These contained violence and supported South Africa's peace accords and embryonic institutions. In Bosnia, grass-roots development initiatives have given attention and support to inclusive, rather than exclusive, associations and organizations.

The first approach, psychosocial healing, posits that postconflict recovery efforts must address physical, social, and psychological elements as well as conflict issues. Using concepts adopted from

> The response of the international community in the aftermath of such turmoil has traditionally concentrated on physical and economic reconstruction, often overlooking the key determinants of social and psychological well-being. At the same time, the attention given to broad recovery programs loses sight of the critical role of the individual. In recent years, however, we have watched how conflict seeps down through all aspects of society, ultimately pooling in the lowest element—that of the community and its members. Consequently, to ignore the grass roots is to overlook a critical component of the rehabilitation equation.
>
> —Kimberly Maynard
> Mercy Corps International

The session "Community-Level Peace Building" included Ambassador Gordon Streeb, of the Carter Center; Nicole Ball, of the Overseas Development Council; and Kimberly Maynard, of Mercy Corps International. Iain Guest, consultant, offered his approach in the session on "Interethnic Conflict in Bosnia: Is Reconciliation Possible?"

the recovery paradigm, this model of community reintegration has five progressive stages: establishing safety and some economic security; beginning the healing process through the communalization of grief and bereavement; rebuilding trust and the capacity to trust to encourage interdependence; reestablishing personal and social morality to replace social anarchy; and reintegrating and restoring democratic—systematic and participatory—discourse.

> The legacies of apartheid cannot be overcome that rapidly, and it is clear that there is a continuing need for trust building and relationship strengthening, particularly at the local level. This same need exists in other countries engaged in significant political transitions. Until adequate mechanisms of governance are in place, and the history of state dominance and repression can be overcome, innovative methods of building trust among the different groups within society will be required.
>
> —Nicole Ball
> Overseas Development Council

The model has certain implications for strategy. As one panelist explained, it asks political leaders, as well as the international community, to expand the "concept of peacemaking from that of negotiating settlements between leaders to ones inclusive of rebuilding a sense of trust, morality, and participation populationwide" (Maynard 1997, 6). According to this holistic perspective, postconflict strategies and interventions should be selected for their longer-term utility in healing community wounds and in reinvigorating indigenous civil society.

> One of the most important innovations among the South African peace committees—which saved an unknown but not insignificant number of lives—was the decision to extend their mandate and engage in the proactive monitoring of public events. The objective was to prevent demonstrations, public meetings, funerals . . . from degenerating into violence and often required peace committee staff and unpaid peace monitors to physically position themselves between armed disputing parties.
>
> —Nicole Ball
> Overseas Development Council

During discussion, participants considered the model's explicit function as a guide for stage-appropriate projects. The dialog explored the possibility of tailoring this conceptual model for practical use. The fusion of the recovery and postconflict paradigms proved controversial, as did the particular sequencing of stages.

The South African experience provided a second and case-specific approach to reconciliation. As explained during the panel, politically motivated violence in South Africa threatened to disable peace building efforts and presented a serious obstacle to reconstitution of the polity. In response, signatories to the National Accords in 1991 sought to "bring an end to political violence in our country and to set out the codes of conduct, procedures, and mechanisms to achieve this goal" (Ball 1997, 1). The National Accords established an instrument for community peacebuilding: a network of regional and local committees to settle disputes and to "find nonviolent solutions to the intergroup conflict" in the absence of effective—or neutral—state structures and institutions (Ball 1997, 2). In effect, the

A conflictwide response needs to incorporate the intergroup dynamics at the leadership, individual, and community levels, since each influences the opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of the other, ultimately affecting the grass roots.

—Kimberly Maynard
Mercy Corps International

peace committees represented a transitional mechanism, one that would assist local communities in resolving some apartheid-era conflicts before the first postconflict elections.

A national peace secretariat established 11 regional committees, with representatives from civil society organizations, local and tribal authorities, trade unions, business and industry, and the security forces. One panelist commented that the purposeful inclusion of such a wide swath of South African society helped the committees gain legitimacy, as anticipated. The regional committees had established more than 260 local peace committees by April 1994. Unfortunately, conference participants noted, opposition to local peace committees often prevented their installation—until actual communal violence made conflict resolution a necessary, but also more difficult, proposition. In addition, the peace committee network did not find support among those with vested interests in extant South African institutions.

Once in place, however, local peace committees exceeded their original mandate for settlement dispute, reconciliation, and liaison with local police and justices of the peace. The peace committees could not eradicate nor prevent the violence endemic to South African society and the apartheid regime. They did serve six broader functions, which the participants addressed: opening channels of communication between opposing communal groups; legitimizing the concept of negotiation; creating a safe space to mediate problems and address sensitive topics; strengthening the accountability of the local police; equalizing the balance of power between "those in power and ordinary citizens"; and reducing the incidence of violence (Ball 1997, 5–6). The peace committees evolved into political arenas where community concerns could be voiced.

The Mission found that civil society is unusually strong and vibrant . . . and there is vitality, individualism, and innovation in the communities of Bosnia. This contrasts with the picture of defeatism, aggressiveness, and toadying subservience to nationalism politicians that characterizes so many accounts of village life in Bosnia. The challenge for international policymakers is to make better use of this formidable resource while they still have leverage in Bosnia.

—Iain Guest
Consultant

Actively monitoring local police and preventing outbursts of violence at public events gave them credibility as institutions of the new order. This evolution enhanced the committees' usefulness as instruments of peace building.

Yet the evidence presented at the session suggested that committee performance and capabilities differed, community by community and region by region. For example, the more successful committees benefited from the political will of community leaders or a network of supportive local civil

society organizations. In fact, the panelist enumerated 14 environmental factors that enhanced or hindered peace committee function. When peace committees received cooperation from political parties and security sector institutions and had access to qualified staff, they were more effective. Similarly, when the committees included important stakeholders or could increase the degree of local ownership, they accomplished more.

Participants noted that environmental factors such as these determine the suitability of any proposed intervention; interventions are not a priori appropriate. National-level politics (including the peace process) and state institutions exert an especially strong influence on community-level interventions; they set limits on peace building. Successful operationalization depends upon sensitive adaptation to the institutional environment. In South Africa, peace committee goals, structure, and composition were not predetermined; these reflected differences, particularly in the configuration of authority (Ball 1997, 13).

The third approach to peace building was also case-specific: assistance to grass-roots organizations in Bosnia. Here, too, postconflict environmental factors have presented certain opportunities, as well as set limits. The disintegration of Yugoslavia forced a certain self-reliance on communities suddenly denied access to state services. In response, grass-roots associations, civic organizations, and nongovernmental organizations were established. These often provided basic services but also served as forms of social organization in the absence of previous structures.

As part of its efforts to promote reconciliation in postwar Bosnia, the international community sustains these grass-roots organizations with program funding and capacity-building assistance. The panelists indicated that these organizations and associations contribute to peace building because they encourage membership based on mutual interest or need, rather than on ascriptive criteria, like ethnic background or religion.

The international community's objective here is to create a constituency for peace—that is, a critical mass of grass-roots organizations that have a stake in the reformation of Bosnian society. Therefore, even organizations that do not make reconciliation a primary goal facilitate the process. The participants described associations representing women, minorities, mixed marriages, victims of war, business and professional groups, and associations representing families of mixed ethnic origin. Some provide services to specific populations, while others concentrate on securing civil rights and human rights protections.

The panelists acknowledged the limitations of this approach in postconflict Bosnia. The current legal framework is clearly prohibitive; Bosnian law allows NGOs to operate only for humanitarian assistance or as savings and loan institutions. This limits broader involvement and enables the government to monitor activities. NGOs are also penalized with an especially high tax burden and are charged more for utilities such as water and electricity (Guest 1997, 32).

During the discussion of lessons learned, participants considered certain questions

posed by these approaches to community-level peace building. Should the international community play a significant role in fostering reconciliation and peace at this level? Can the international community create instruments or models, transfer them from one environment to another, and expect adaptation? The panelists urged caution in the replication, or transfer, of these models. The psychosocial approach cannot be adapted to, or put into effect in, every postconflict situation; the singular factors that enabled the South African model to exceed its original mandate are not easy to reproduce. Similarly, the level of international interest in, and subsequent assistance to, postconflict Bosnia facilitated the continued maintenance of these grass-roots organizations. Panelists also noted that an emphasis on early exit and the subsequent removal of funds from community-level interventions can prevent them from having any significant influence. They counseled the international community to adopt a longer-term commitment.

8. The Impact of Economic Revitalization And Media Support on Intergroup Cooperation

The breakdown of social networks—even in societies noted for relatively high levels of integration and tolerance—is a common consequence of intrastate warfare. When a policy of systematic human rights abuses exacerbates and intensifies social disintegration, the populations involved are not easily convinced that cooperation is either desirable or possible. Nevertheless, the demands of peace building and the democratic political transition require some degree of interaction. The panel on interethnic reconciliation in Bosnia reviewed the experience of economic revitalization and media support programs that have demonstrated some success in promoting cooperation. The Bosnian situation also presented serious problems for implementation, problems not uncommon in postconflict settings.

> The Bosnia that emerged from this war currently resembles a mosaic of tiny city–states. Many ethnic divisions have been reinforced by new municipal boundaries. Fragmentation poses a formidable obstacle to rebuilding Bosnia as a unitary state, and the task to return to interethnic cooperation is even more difficult when political boundaries reinforce ethnic divisions.
>
> —Susan Merrill
> USAID

Economic development programs, relying on the market's ability to organize actors motivated by economic interest, have the potential to generate opportunities for cooperation. The private sector rehabilitation program in Bosnia included the reactivation of medium, small, and microbusinesses; the sponsorship of financial intermediary organizations and business associations; and infrastructure reconstruction.

Over the past few years, lending to Bosnian microbusinesses has increasingly meant investing in populations at risk—women, internally displaced persons, and refugees. While these loans provided necessary financial support, it was noted that their impact on cooperation was insignificant. This was due, in part, to the fact that microbusinesses primarily employ family members.

The panel "Interethnic Conflict in Bosnia: Is Reconciliation Possible?" included David Smock, of the United States Institute of Peace; Susan Merrill, of USAID; and consultants Iain Guest and Julia Demichelis.

Stimulating small businesses has had a greater impact, however. One panelist emphasized that supply and demand prompted these businesses to operate without concern for group identity: "Commerce is ethnically blind" (Merrill 1997, 9). Nonprofit business associations, formed to support regional private sector development, have provided assistance in making these links. Similarly, new financial intermediary organizations intentionally maintain an integrated leadership and organizational structure. Relying on their multiethnic constitution, these organizations can identify and provide loans to a variety of small businesses, encouraging further interethnic arrangements.

Private sector reactivation also included international underwriting of these ethnically diverse business and professional associations. Although some of these organizations existed prior to the conflict, USAID's Office of Transitional Initiatives has been particularly successful in developing new, community-based business associations throughout the region. In an effort to increase both their capacity and effectiveness, USAID provided computer-based e-mail networks to Serbian and Bosnian associations, facilitating communication between communities.

Some participants observed that with international assistance, business associations also have helped consolidate interest on issues of mutual concern. In one case, two associations jointly expressed dissatisfaction with "high employee taxes, the lack of available credit, and existence of nonformal markets" (Merrill 1997, 11). These shared concerns have prompted the associations to exceed their original business mandate and gain a political voice not ethnic in origin.

Through loan provision, the development of business associations and financial intermediaries, and infrastructural reconstruction, the international community has supported the reactivation of the private sector and promoted cooperation. However, it was stressed that political and institutional factors in postconflict societies often prevent these mechanisms from achieving their objectives. In Bosnia, the legal and policy framework remains inadequate to the task of further economic development and liberalization. Federation members have yet to establish a banking system and regulatory structures, devise a new tariff and customs regime, and rationalize policy in this sector. Absent these, political leaders at all levels of government continue to use available security sector instruments to control trade, commerce, and the economy. One panelist concluded, "This is the single greatest obstacle to peace, economic reactivation, and 'reconciliation' in the broadest and most basic sense" (Merrill 1997, 17).

International assistance for new media outlets—print and broadcast—also has been used to facilitate cooperation in Bosnia. Because nationalist parties generally opposed to reintegration efforts control most of the existing media outlets, support for "alternative media" with more conciliatory messages has been forthcoming. However, the dual emphasis on capacity building (increasing the number of accessible outlets) and substance (censoring or disallowing potentially divisive material) raised certain concerns for participants.

On one hand, an independent media is a precondition of postconflict elections and many democracy promotion strategies, and so the new outlets are necessary. On the other hand, the notion of the media's social

responsibility, as advocated and enforced by some members of the international community, constrains freedom of expression and sets a mean example for subsequent democratic development. Can and should the international community pursue both short-term cooperation and long-term political development in this manner?

Media support has also run up against problems with sustainability. Because of the emphasis on short-term objectives and rapid implementation, the new media outlets have tended to be expensive and may prove difficult to sustain once funding is withdrawn. In some cases, one-time grants to a large number of initiatives may broaden the impact of assistance but may make the beneficiaries less secure in the future. Panelists advised the international community to reconsider the costs of these interventions, as well as their benefits.

To facilitate intergroup cooperation, practitioners and policymakers alike should consider the lessons learned from the Bosnian case. The international community must understand the dual character of its role. Programs that encourage interactions that transcend ascriptive criteria may produce a degree of cooperation. By reactivating the private sector and the associational and organizational environment that sustains it, and by establishing an independent media, the international community can promote cooperation. It must also prevail on vested interests to disassemble the institutions, political systems, and ideologies that serve them well yet remain obstacles to cooperative endeavors.

9. Challenges for Democratic Transitions

The conference examined democracy promotion strategies in two ways. The subject panels asked participants to review past and present interventions in their fields. The round tables asked area specialists to consider the nature and effectiveness of democracy promotion strategies in selected postconflict societies. These discussions on Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, and Cambodia invited significant cross-national and cross-regional comparisons.

Participants again raised questions about postconflict elections. As elaborated earlier, the international community generally views these elections as having multiple objectives that create a momentum toward democracy. Yet when ethnic divisions replicate political divisions, elections can reinforce social fragmentation. During discussion, the panelists presented cases in which postconflict elections have had a somewhat more positive impact on nation building. Elections reduced ethnic tensions, to some extent, in Liberia and Uganda. In Liberia, for example, the elections offered the local population an opportunity to voice a national desire for peace and a national commitment to the Abuja peace accords.

However, panelists also noted that elections do not always produce anticipated results for democratization. The international community has often relied on a new constitution and subsequent elections to influence the direction of the political transition. In 1995 the international community pressured the Ugandan government to draft a constitution as the basis for ongoing democratization. Yet, according to observers, the democratization process did not continue after the elections.

Strategies for sustaining grass-roots political development also were a subject of discussion. These bottom-up interventions often complement top-down reforms. The advantage, in the view of some panelists, is that this strategy targets indigenous local institutions; it is not imposed on them. Intrastate conflicts often result in the emergence of local NGOs and civic organizations, as in Haiti and El Salvador. These organizations often require special assistance in the postconflict period.

In some cases, an emphasis on grass-roots development has also provided opportunities to channel funds to neglected rural

areas. Prior to the coup in Cambodia, the international community supported local NGOs responsible for rural rehabilitation and training programs. Co–Prime Minister Hun Sen's recent assumption of power may put this program's longer-term political objectives into question, but not the strategy itself.

Participants stressed two major constraints on democracy promotion in postconflict societies: lack of political will and insufficient attention to institutions that should form the basis for further democratization.

Throughout the conference, practitioners reflected on the vagaries of political will. They emphasized that political leaders and governing regimes establish boundaries for democracy promotion activities. They determine the viability of any proposed intervention. Even relatively weak regimes can frustrate strategies through tepid commitments to democratization. This limits the international community's ability to direct the political transition.

Lack of political will can produce a stalemate. In Cambodia the 1993 elections generated a fragile coalition government and a four-year power-sharing arrangement between the United National Front for an Independent Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia (Funcinpec) and the Cambodian People's Party. The growing weakness of the U.S. partner, Funcinpec, enabled the CPP's Hun Sen to take power. His July 1997 coup made these arrangements and democratization moot. Hun Sen's lack of commitment to democracy has put Cambodia's political transition in jeopardy.

The constraining influence of insufficient institutions is also ubiquitous. In the context of these discussions, the effect of insufficient institutionalization revealed itself in the weakness of political institutions (such as an electoral administration or party system), the weakness of state structures (such as a neutral judiciary), and donor inattention to either. These institutional problems can render democracy promotion ineffective despite the promotion of interventions amenable to political leaders.

Participants suggested that many factors can hinder attempts to strengthen and anchor the institutions that sustain democracy. On one hand, transitional regimes may oppose such capacity-building interventions. On the other hand, international community actions or inactions—lack of vision or planning, short-term commitment of resources, assumptions that constitutions or elections will provide enough institution-building momentum, donor neglect—can also derail institutional development.

Several cases illustrate these points. In Sierra Leone the newly elected political leadership had great difficulty reforming weak and corrupt state structures; the international community's shortsighted democratization strategy emphasized early elections and paid insufficient attention to this problem. One panelist saw this as a factor in the regime's inability to sustain itself after 15 months.

In Uganda the international community did little to promote the nascent institutions and processes that could facilitate and encourage democratic competition. Instead, the absence of postelection institutionalization only reinforced regime resistance to subsequent democratization.

In Cambodia the international community expected sweeping changes in the

political system but did not establish the necessary political institutions or state structures. The 1991 Paris Agreements and the subsequent 1993 elections contained no blueprint that would reorient Cambodia's client–patron society or its zero-sum approach to politics. The 1993 elections did not create the institutions and processes required for future democratic competition. Further, questions of state structure and reform were not addressed or were avoided in subsequent years. This want of institutional reform left little foundation for democratization.

In addition to these constraints, the international community currently faces an obstacle in democracy promotion: noncompliance. On one end of this spectrum, political interests antipathetic to democracy have gained power and reject efforts at democratization—even sabotage them. At the other end, "soft" authoritarian leaders have curtailed further democracy promotion after gaining some legitimacy through postconflict elections. What strategies make sense in these situations? Should the international community retreat, or seek less ambitious objectives?

Hun Sen's repudiation presents a quandary of the first order. Despite a massive international commitment, Cambodia's weak experiment in democracy has reached an impasse. Elections originally scheduled for May 1998 did not take place. Conference participants foresaw little movement in the character of Cambodian politics. As this report was going to publication, new elections had been set for July 26. In the meantime, Hun Sen is an improbable partner in the democratic venture.

The participants maintained that few strategies remain. A maximalist approach, calling somewhat belatedly for a reorganization of the Cambodian political process, would be quite difficult to impose on Hun Sen. A minimalist approach might be more realistic: If the elections take place, they may legitimize the current government. The international community could concentrate its efforts on securing a legitimate government in Phnom Penh while promoting stability throughout Cambodia.

Promoting democracy in societies with soft authoritarian regimes has often meant accepting limited compliance. The panelists observed that postconflict elections tend to sustain existing regimes. It is unlikely that regimes such as those in Uganda or Liberia, for example, will exit the stage quickly in favor of more democratic arrangements. Expectations that elections, or new constitutions, would act as catalysts for the political transition have proven unrealistic.

Recognizing this, participants suggested that the international community direct its efforts on deliberate institution building. It has the potential to limit the authority of these authoritarian leaders. Their regimes may eventually borrow certain elements from the liberal democratic model: an emphasis on accountability and other components of democratic governance, reliance on negotiation to settle conflict, subordination of the military in a civilian polity, or rejection of charisma and establishment of the rule of law as the basis for legitimacy. Of course, this strategy necessitates a considerable engagement.

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