

LEVERAGING FOR PEACE IN LIBERIA: OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Executive Summary

This report explores options and recommendations for the United States, working with other members of the International Contact Group on Liberia, to intervene more extensively in Liberia's costly civil war to end the current fighting and to create conditions for more effective delivery of humanitarian relief. The tragedy of Liberia today is its return to civil war in July 2000 after a devastating period of armed conflict from 1989 to 1996 that cost an estimated 200,000 lives. Since mid-2000, tens of thousands of additional combat-related fatalities are believed to have occurred. The humanitarian consequences of the war are severe.

War and state collapse in Liberia, a country with deep historical ties to the United States, directly and tangibly threatens U.S. interests in the region. These threats include jeopardizing the investment in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL); providing a haven for lawlessness and illicit trading of arms, endangered rainforest timber and "conflict" diamonds; offering opportunities for terrorist activities; and creating conditions for incubation of infectious diseases. If security throughout the region quickly unravels, conflict may interrupt supply of oil to international markets. The U.S. seeks containment of spillovers from Liberia, a cease-fire, and political reform.

Overall Findings

- Current military dynamics suggest that the fighting could escalate dramatically in coming months and that the spillover effects of the Liberian imbroglio on the 15 states and 240 million people of West Africa may widen, precipitating an even costlier emergency international response.
- Both Liberians and the international community should share the burden of peacemaking in Liberia. Liberians must be willing to set aside long-standing feuds and hatreds to save their country from a deeper slide into suffering and misery. The international community should help those Liberians in favor of peace work together and to help them to define, structure, and implement a peace process that demobilizes armed groups and reforms the political system and pursues national reconciliation.
- If necessary, the international community should be willing to act decisively against opponents of peace: those who violate international norms on the conduct of war or who are unwilling to exchange violence, intimidation, and armed struggle for a peaceful political process.



Part I: Conflict Analysis

- The present war is in many ways a recurrence of 1990s conflict in Liberia. Many analysts see the insurgent Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) as a reconstitution of president Charles Taylor's defeated opponents in the earlier war, drawn particularly from the erstwhile ULIMO-J (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia, Krahn-led) and ULIMO-K (Mandingo-led) factions.
- A rapidly deteriorating military situation may be a motivating factor for the parties in conflict to seek a cease-fire if they believe the further escalation of violence holds greater risks than the preservation of the current balance of power. At the same time, the inchoate nature of the parties and the dynamic nature of events may mean that the conditions are changing too quickly and the parties are too disorganized for a stable cease-fire to be a realistic possibility.

Part II: International Engagement

- The international community appears poised to act decisively with the establishment on September 28, 2002 of an International Contact Group; additionally, the UN Secretary General has recently appointed new diplomatic emissaries for Liberia and the West African region to engage in and structure a determined peacemaking initiative. The U.S. is taking a lead role in the international coalition.
- Multiparty mediation through a Contact Group mechanism faces special challenges of coordination and resolve. Because sufficient leverage must be found through collective action, it may prove more challenging to muster consensus on the tough measures that need to be taken and the sharing of financial, troop-commitment and other resource burdens.

Part III: A Phased, Multi-Tiered Peace Process for Liberia

- The peace process in Liberia should be guided by an international Framework Agreement that is negotiated among the Contact Group and enshrined in a new UN Security Council resolution. The framework for peace in Liberia should include specific measures and benchmarks for progress across three principal phases of a transition that provides short-term internal and regional security, longer-term political reform, and initial peace building over a 36-month period.
- A comprehensive mediation strategy should blend sanctions and incentives targeted at the armed factions and political elite with a parallel approach to build conflict management and recovery capacities among national and grass-roots civic organizations. Additionally, a multi-tiered approach should feature carefully designed initiatives to address the forgotten players – armed militia leaders – in a peace process that have the capacity to spoil.

Phase 1. Internal Security and Regional Stabilization (Months 1-6)

- Despite public pledges by the Taylor government to seek a cease-fire, international mediators should proceed with the presumption that he does not yet prefer a verifiable negotiated settlement of the war. Statements of a willingness to negotiate a cease-fire by the Liberian protagonists should be interpreted as playing to the gallery of Western powers and international organizations.

- Nevertheless, the Contact Group should continue to press for a cease-fire. The Group can facilitate negotiations by opening discrete channels of communication, strengthening and broadening the scope of the sanctions regime, pressuring the parties to negotiate, considering indictment of war criminals, and making early decisions about the form of military intervention or observer force that can provide credible commitment. Some options for verification of a cease-fire require extensive resources, such as international troops on the ground, while others such as regional military or civilian observer missions may be less costly but also possibly less effective.
- For Liberia, the mix of sanctions and incentives targeted at the regime and opposition forces should initially involve more stick than carrot. A strategy that begins with a highly coercive approach, including the threat or use of measures such as sanctions, indictment, and military intervention, and then moves toward conciliation and possibly reward over time, is the most effective approach in securing the cooperation of the Liberian forces under arms.
- A determined international coalition that is prepared to intervene forcefully may achieve peace in Liberia *without* a costly peace-enforcement operation. If the parties in conflict believe that the political will exists in the international community for strong military intervention to enforce peace in Liberia, they may take the steps to end fighting and cooperate in a political process without the actual deployment of such a force. That is, coercive diplomacy may work in the Liberian case. If so, lesser expensive alternatives such as a group of African (ECOWAS or African Union) monitors can be successful if the Liberian armed factions believe that failure to comply with internationally supervised truce verification will in fact precipitate a more extensive, decisive military deployment.
- With the advent of a cease-fire, it may be useful to immediately deploy an international fact-finding mission to determine the on-the-ground challenges of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants and to begin the process of direct interaction with commanders, militia leaders, and rebel forces. Such a fact-finding mission could well precede the deployment of an intervention force with a clear assurance for their security from the various factions. The UN Security Council is considering such a mission in early 2003.
- Multi-track forums for dialogue and other conflict-resolution capacity building initiatives should be established early in the transition phase and should include national-level processes and a proliferation of local-level efforts to launch peace initiatives. Dialogue processes for exile communities are also helpful and these should be encouraged and supported.
- In tandem with a cease-fire in Liberia, the immediate period will require a regional approach that seeks to contain the spillovers of the civil war into neighboring states and to manage the cross-border resource flows that keep the armies in the country supplied with arms, fuel, and safe haven. Military monitoring by regional states negotiated through the Mano River Union process, working together with UNAMSIL, appears to be the most feasible approach to gaining control of the region's porous borders.

Phase 2. Interim Administration, Demobilization, Elections (Months 6-18)

- Conditions do not exist for a credible election in October 2003 as presently planned by the Taylor regime and required by the constitution. In addition to on-the-ground security issues, a broader political pact is essential to successful elections in Liberia. The purpose of the pre-election pact is to starkly limit uncertainty surrounding the voting while giving meaning to

the political-party competition and to public participation to elect new, legitimate representatives. To conduct the elections, agreement on a prior interim administration needs to be negotiated.

- Reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia and police forces, together with integration of rebel combatants and the demobilization of irregular militias, should occur prior to any election in Liberia. Critically important is deriving a detailed plan for giving tangible incentives to mid-level commanders to accept military reform and for criminal sanctions for those who have been complicit in war crimes. Private militias, such as those employed by international companies, should also be demobilized.
- Clearly the most important finding is that any intervention force must have the mandate and capacity to deter and defeat any armed challenge to the mission *or* to the election process emanating from either within the government, rebel factions, or irregular armed militias (including criminal syndicates). Spoiling includes the use of violence by the parties against peacekeepers or violence to disrupt the election, intimidate opponents, or to exclusively control territory; international and domestic monitors must document, and external military forces should be ready to confront, violence or other non-compliance by spoilers.
- For meaningful elections to occur in Liberia, an optimistic timeline envisages a six-month period of verification and security stabilization with the following twelve months under interim administration to ensure that the country is sufficiently prepared to hold elections that will be seen internally and externally as truly legitimate.

Phase 3. Peace Building (Months 18-36)

- One of the principal findings about the successful settlement of civil wars is the need for international mediators to take the very long view of “nurturing” peace and sustaining compliance with negotiated agreements well beyond the transitional phase. U.S. and other mediators in Liberia will require staying power during the transitional phase and into an extended phase of consolidating peace.
- Training and equipping of a reconstituted Liberian military and police will take considerable time and may involve ongoing engagement by the international community for the indefinite future beyond an initial election. Putting long-term reform of the military and police on the agenda early may signal early that the international community’s engagement in Liberia will involve a sustained and determined commitment to significant reforms in the security forces.
- Often overlooked in the reflections on peace building are programs that address the psychological, material, social and post-trauma needs of children and youth. Because youth in the Liberian war have been both perpetrators and victims of violence, and that these youth will shape the country’s future, strategic interventions to address attitudinal and social development of this population are urgent.

Introduction

This study explores some of the principal options and recommendations for a diplomatic and operational strategy for U.S. mediation – together with other members of the international community – for a cease-fire in Liberia and for democratization in this war-torn state. The study evaluates the causes of conflict and the internal and external pressures that can be brought to bear to induce the Liberian factions to accept a truce and to embrace a peace process aimed at political reform and national reconciliation. The analysis, options, and recommendations are based on research on Liberia's most recent attempt at forging peace (the 1996 Abuja II Agreement, which led to a period of relative calm and elections in 1997), findings from comparative research on peace processes, and published reports on present conditions in the country. The study was prepared under the auspices of the Academy for Educational Development's Civil Society Initiative by researcher Timothy Sisk of the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

Context

The tragedy of Liberia today is its return to civil war in July 2000 after a devastating period of armed conflict from 1989 to 1996 that cost an estimated 200,000 lives. Since mid-2000, tens of thousands of additional combat-related fatalities are believed to have occurred. Internationally, Liberia is widely seen as one of the preeminent “failed states” in which the central government ceases to provide essential security and services. In the vacuum of state authority territory is ceded to contending militia groups that operate lawlessly and with impunity for crimes against civilians. The Liberia civil war is complexly interwoven with violence in neighboring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire. Liberia is in the eye of the storm of this “regional conflict complex” with recent heightened concerns that Liberian fighters are aiding Côte d'Ivoire insurgents along the eastern border that adjoins the two states.

The present Liberian war re-erupted with fervor in mid-2000 following cross-border incursions by the insurgent group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). In reality, the LURD is an inchoate group of various militias that are driven as much by economic depredation than by a clearly defined political agenda. The LURD is part of a broader regional alliance of foes, including the government of Guinea, to the Taylor regime and its regional allies. Today, there is an oscillating stalemate on the ground, with the rebels occasionally advancing toward Monrovia while at other times the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) push the insurgents into the hinterland and into refuge in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Thus, there is effectively a “mutually hurting stalemate” in Liberia, a condition that may provide an opportunity ripe for a cease-fire and the onset of a peace process to end the country's devastating war. Developments indicating ripeness in the internal military situation dovetail with developments on the diplomatic front. Key states in the region and in the international community formed an International Contact Group on September 28, 2002 to mediate between the government and LURD and other political factions in the Liberian context.

The humanitarian consequences of the war are severe. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, there are about 158,000 refugees from the Liberian war and at least 130,000 internally displaced persons within Liberia (although precise numbers are virtually impossible to determine).¹

Table 1. UNHCR Estimates of Liberian Refugees in West Africa

Sierra Leone	62,000
Côte d'Ivoire	51,000
Guinea	40,000
Other	5,000
<i>Total</i>	158,000

Liberia is among the poorest countries on earth, with 80% unemployment, no running water or electricity throughout the country, and one of the highest rates of infant mortality anywhere (130 deaths per 1,000 births). Malnutrition is widespread, especially among the 43% of the population that is below the age of 14.

U.S. Interests and Policy in Liberia

United States interests in Liberia are defined by humanitarian concern and deep and emotional historical ties between the two countries – the country is the oldest republic in Africa, founded in 1847 by freed American slaves. Beyond humanitarian relief, the escalating tensions in Liberia directly and tangibly threaten U.S. interests in the region. These threats include jeopardizing the extensive financial investment in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), for which the U.S. has provided \$128 million in 2000, \$190 million in 2001, and an estimated \$60 million in 2002. A lawless Liberia provides opportunities for illicit trade in arms, endangered rainforest timber and diamonds in violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

The U.S. faces a number of “soft threats” from Liberia.² In a worst-case scenario, Liberia’s failed state offers opportunities for undetected terrorist activities and regional meddling by longstanding antagonists of the U.S. (such as Libya’s Moammer Al Ghadaffi). Environmental degradation, hunger, and social dislocation also create conditions for the incubation of infectious diseases and which require costly humanitarian assistance, often in lieu of aid for sustainable development. Finally, if overall stability in the region quickly unravels, conflicts throughout West Africa could interrupt oil supplies to international markets.

The United States views failure of the state as the principal concern in Liberia and believes that president Charles Taylor thrives on predatory rule at home and muckraking in the region to stay in power. Mark Bellamy, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, has remarked that the government of Liberia has the “attributes of a gang, not of a government;

¹ Other estimates of IDPs vary. One estimate put the number of internally displaced in Lofa County alone at more than 200,000 in August 2002, and the World Food Program suggests thousands more have fled fighting in Lofa County into Sierra Leone and Guinea. See “Liberia: WFP Concerned about Number of Internally Displaced,” IRIN News, 23 October 2002.

² See the U.S. Institute of Peace *Special Report* “Responding to War and State Collapse in West Africa,” February 2002.

Taylor is more akin to a gang leader than a president.”³ U.S. policy responses flow from this essential premise.⁴ U.S. goals are to:

- Contain the predatory nature of the regime in through UN sanctions and work with West African states to curb weapons and diamond smuggling and cross-border support for insurgents (especially the Revolutionary United Front, RUF, in Sierra Leone). The U.S. intends to advocate renewal of the sanctions regime when the extension of the present resolution comes before the Security Council in May 2003.
- End the war by calling on all factions, including the LURD, to cease armed struggle against the state and to encourage neighboring states such as Guinea not to support Liberian rebels. In the meantime, the U.S. provides humanitarian relief and basic health, education, and other development aid to Liberia’s suffering population.
- Empower the democratic political opposition and encourage political parties opposed to Taylor to coalesce and work together. At the same time, the U.S. is not eager to promote elections in Liberia unless fundamental conditions on the ground change. A superficially free and fair election that leaves Taylor in power will not be abetted.
- Pressure the government of Liberia to stop human rights abuses and political repression. The U.S. has also set specific benchmarks for improved governance and especially ways to externally verify that illicit timber, maritime, regional diamond revenue flows are fenced off and that government accounts are made public. The U.S. seeks to add timber to the list of UN-monitored exports from Liberia.

Some observers believe that U.S. policy should be more proactive toward halting the war and stemming atrocities in Liberia, possibly approaching the extent of British and French involvement in the region.⁵ The United Kingdom has buttressed international forces in Sierra Leone in support of UNAMSIL and France has aggressively intervened with some 2,000 troops in Côte d’Ivoire to stabilize the rapidly evolving situation and to support the embattled government of President Laurent Gbagbo. U.S. policy makers assert that there is little likelihood of direct U.S. military intervention in Liberia given other global and African foreign policy priorities. However, officials insist that the Bush Administration is deeply committed to addressing the problems of West Africa and in particular the simmering civil war in Liberia.

To explore the options and recommendations for U.S. involvement in a peace process at this juncture, this study begins in Part I with an assessment of the causes, characteristics, and recent dynamics of the conflict in Liberia. In Part II, the study reviews the present structure of international engagement and outlines some of the key issues from other peace processes to coordinate and maximize international leverage for peace. Part III is the detailed list of options and recommendations for a phased peace process over a three-year period to end the civil war and to begin the process of rebuilding a legitimate state and reconciling Liberia’s traumatized society.

³ Remarks at the U.S. Institute of Peace Briefing, “Liberia: In the Eye of the Storm,” December 9, 2002.

⁴ The points presented here are a summary by the author of public statements made by U.S. officials and are not an authoritative articulation of the U.S. on Liberia.

⁵ Those who argue that it is time for the U.S. to step up to the plate in Liberia refer to the work of previous U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen (who served under administration of President George Bush from 1988-1992). In his book *Intervening in Africa: Superpower Peacemaking in a Troubled Continent* (Macmillan 2000), Cohen describes how a more assertive U.S. policy in the region could have achieved results in ending earlier Liberia’s civil war of 1989-1996.

Part I: Conflict Analysis

A strategy for intervention and peacemaking in Liberia should be informed by a clear analysis of the underlying root causes of violence and state failure in the region and an evaluation of the protagonists under arms. Although a full, detailed conflict assessment is beyond the scope of this research, certain root-cause evaluations inform the analysis in this discussion paper. The Liberian war can be considered from two important orientations; a prior understanding of which orientation one finds most compelling, or how the two are mixed, has significant implication for conceiving and crafting a coherent conflict management approach.

- *State Failure: “The Coming Anarchy.”* The first orientation argues that Liberia is symptomatic of a broader pattern of post-Cold War conflicts that stem from devastating effects of scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease.⁶ Wars like Liberia’s (or Somalia’s or Sierra Leone’s) occur because of these countries wretched social conditions and marginal place in the global economy. Extreme poverty and a reliance on basic commodity exports (diamonds, rubber, timber) inevitably lead a desperate fight for survival, rent seeking by greedy political entrepreneurs, and a complete breakdown of social order that allows for the most horrible human rights conditions to occur.

Implication: “The Coming Anarchy” point-of-view suggests that very little can be done for basket-case countries like Liberia. Especially, advocates of this point-of-view see international intervention for state building as a futile endeavor: nation-building efforts and donor-led economic development are bound to fail. In sum, this analysis of the causes of conflict leads to the view that conflict management should involve minimizing the effects of the war regionally and limiting its deleterious consequences on the international system through containment or isolation.

- *“Liberia’s Second Independence.”* An alternative perspective, however, suggests that Liberia’s war is part of a longer transition from 150 years of minority rule by Americo-Liberians to full enfranchisement of the indigenous minority. The Liberian war is a symptom of a troubled transition that was hijacked by power-hungry warlords such as Charles Taylor (and earlier, the regime of Samuel Doe). When Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) launched a revolution on Christmas Eve, 1989, it was a response to years of minority authoritarianism and later Doe’s narrow ethnic (Krahn) dictatorship. If the warlords’ iron-grip control over society can be broken, concerted international assistance for nation building and social development can create stability in Liberia and provide conditions under which the country’s vast resources can lead to economic development.

Implication: If this view of the conflict’s root causes is correct, international intervention can help facilitate necessary political reform, inclusive rule, democratization, and economic development. With sufficient political will and resources, the international community can see the country through to a new, reconstructed era despite the path of self-destruction that the civil war has unleashed.

⁶ “The Coming Anarchy” view of the conflict in Liberia is reflected in the views expressed by Robert Kaplan in his original article in *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1994); a more thorough description of the argument appears in Kaplan’s *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy*, Random House, 1996.

A synthesis of these two underlying causal explanations of war in Liberia makes sense. Indeed, war in Liberia *is* a result of the country's rule by a regime that has been accurately described as a "dysfunctional autocratic kleptocracy" under the leadership of warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor.⁷ There is little hope that Liberia's state can be reconstructed under his rule. At the same time, international assistance has helped other post-war societies with equally troubled pasts, such as Mozambique, El Salvador, or Cambodia, turn the tide from state failure to stability and development.

If Liberia's war is caused by both predatory rule under conditions of social meltdown and an aborted transition to majority rule, then a strategy for intervention must combine immediate steps to make war less lucrative and a longer term process of political reform and social reconstruction. This understanding of the root causes of Liberia's conflict is reflected in the strategy outlined in Part III of this report.

Review: Liberia's 1989-1996 War and Peace Process

The present war is in many ways a recurrence of the earlier conflict. Many analysts see the LURD as a reconstitution of Taylor's defeated opponents in the earlier war, drawn particularly from the erstwhile ULIMO-J (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia, Krahn-led) and ULIMO-K (Mandingo-led) factions. Some of the regional alliances are also the same. A careful look at the lessons of the earlier war and its peace process may help inform an approach for handling the present conflict.⁸ However, understanding the interpretations of root causes of the earlier conflict and the present recurrence is important to the present.

The 1989-1996 war escalated quickly and within six months Taylor's NPFL had besieged Monrovia. The fighting featured especially gruesome tactics that victimized the civilian population (although not unlike other conflicts of the era, such as Angola, Bosnia, Mozambique, and Somalia). The intensity of the war led to a military intervention under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which deployed the Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) not long after some 600 civilians had been massacred by the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in 1990. ECOMOG's 4,000 regional peacekeepers essentially become a party to the conflict over time as a dozen peace accords were agreed to and broken by the parties between 1990 and 1996. In the meantime, the war left some 200,000 dead and over a million displaced (of a 2.6 million pre-war population).

Table 2. Liberia's Peace Process 1996-7: Implications and Lessons Learned

- *War was more lucrative than peace.* The incessant ambition of faction leaders in the Liberian war for personal profit through exploitation of the country's considerable natural resources meant that any post-war attempt to demobilize militias would also result in the disbanding of vast commercial enterprises. With illicit diamond trading by NPFL and ULIMO factions at \$100 million in the mid-1990s, the incentives to disarm were wholly absent. The lesson learned for peacemaking is to address directly the economic dimensions of the war, a finding

⁷ Remarks by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, USIP Current Issues Briefing, December 9, 2002.

⁸ For a detailed accounting of the war and the peace process, see Max Ahmadu Sesay, "Bringing Peace to Liberia," *ACCORD: The Review of Peace Initiatives* (Conciliation Resources, London), 1997. For analysis of the war, see Mark Uband, *The Liberian Civil War*, London, Frank Cass 1998, Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African War*, New York University Press, 1999, and Bill Berkeley, *The Graves are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of Africa*, Basic Books, 2001.

that buttresses the March 2001 and May 2002 Security Council resolutions that seek to stem the ongoing diamond and arms trade by the Taylor regime through a UN-monitored sanctions regime.

- *ECOMOG was an ill-considered intervention force.* Although originally conceived of as a peacekeeping force, ECOMOG became a peace enforcement mission. Like in Bosnia, the deployment of forces without a peace agreement was unwise (they quickly become parties to the war), the forces deployed were not trained or experienced in peacekeeping, and there was no diplomatic or operational oversight by a neutral body such as UN Security Council. ECOMOG was by no means neutral among the factions or broadly representative of the sponsoring ECOWAS states (it was largely Nigerian dominated). Moreover, ECOMOG also became caught up in the corrupt practices, and it too profited from the war.⁹ At the same time, ECOMOG did provide some security for the capital and perhaps brought the war to an end sooner than it might have otherwise.¹⁰ Debate continues on whether ECOMOG's intervention prolonged the war in Liberia or eventually facilitated the Abuja pact. Clearly a review of the ECOMOG track record should inform any consideration of a new international security stabilization force and particular decisions about force composition, mandate, and oversight.
- *The Abuja Accords legitimated the warlords as political leaders.* By bringing the leaders of the warring factions into government as the six-member Council of State, the peace agreement legitimized warlords as political leaders and permitted them to contest the presidential elections (a departure from the terms of the earlier peace agreements).¹¹ The August 1996 Abuja II compromise essentially allowed the armed faction leaders to enter Monrovia with their military forces in tact. The logic of Abuja – to include all the major faction leaders with the capacity to spoil the peace – was understandable, yet it curiously excluded ULIMO-J leader Roosevelt Johnson. The power-sharing deal was also criticized because it allowed faction leaders to appoint executive government positions, which led to a dispute among ethnic groups and political parties as to the equitable division of power. Using his manipulative acumen, Taylor eventually out-manuevered the other leaders to wrest control of the Council of State. Selecting appropriate participants and managing spoilers will be an essential decision in any new peace process.
- *Civil society actors were overlooked.* Critical social actors with the capability of bolstering the official peace process, such as the Interfaith Mediation Committee or the Liberian Women's Initiative, were not fully integrated into the formal peace process. That is, there was no apparent linkage between the elite tier of negotiations and the interests of the militia mid-level leaders (especially of the non-NPFL commanders, who were excluded from the

⁹ See Herbert Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States* (Lynne Rienner, 2001).

¹⁰ For a more positive view of the 1990s ECOMOG intervention in Liberia, see Adekeye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, New York: International Peace Academy and Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002.

¹¹ Some analysts argue that the Abuja agreement was the least bad option available in 1996 and that, Given Taylor's strength, Nigeria's intent to withdraw from ECOMOG, and the realities of Taylor's power, the peace process that led to Taylor's emergence as president was the only alternative to continuing war. See Terrence Lyons, *Voting for Peace: Post-conflict Elections in Liberia* (Brookings Institution, 1999).

reconstituted AFL) and of local communities, civil society interests, and (to the extent that they exist) private sector players.¹²

- *The July 1997 elections were held before demobilization was complete.* The principal lesson learned was the elections were held much too early, before there had been sufficient security measures put into place and before progress had been made on demobilization (particularly of the NPFL).¹³ Many observers believe that the 1997 vote for Charles Taylor was not a show of support for him personally, but a vote in favor of the candidate most people believed would bring about peace and stability. Furthermore, the entire notion of an election to a powerful president under the terms of the Liberian constitution (modeled on the U.S. charter) is anathema to post-war conflict resolution.¹⁴
- *Brutality has left deep social scars, which were not addressed in the peace process.* The parties to the conflict were not motivated by ideology, nor were they fighting for the safety and security of their ethnic kin. Instead, the combatants were bloodthirsty, unprofessional militias who conscripted child soldiers, engaged in untold brutality, wreaked well-documented havoc on society, and left a scorched earth behind them. Liberia's collective psyche is deeply scarred, and the social trauma it endures poses a tremendous challenge to reconciliation and development. The 1996 peace agreement, which bolstered the role of the militias and military leaders, did not directly address the need for social healing, reconciliation, and punishment of war crimes. Any durable peace should directly facilitate truth telling, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

Of all the retrospective concerns about the peace process of 1996-1997, the most enduring is the troubling legitimization of the many warring factions and their leaders as the basis for a transition to sustainable peace, and the failure to demobilize or contain the militias before the elections. There may have been no reasonable alternative at the time, but nonetheless the Abuja peace process seems to have set the stage for a renewed civil war in a short time.

- First, the proliferation of warring parties (as many as eight distinct fighting factions) complicated for ECOMOG the process of demobilizing some 60,000 combatants.
- Second, the peace process failed to address the economic incentives of the warlords and strongmen who ran the militias and failed to provide any financial incentive to adapt to peace.
- And third, like in Somalia, the exclusion of any one capable faction meant that a determined, armed spoiler was available to threaten the delicate negotiations.
- Finally, the financial and manpower resources required by ECOMOG to undertake the task were not forthcoming, nor was the enlargement of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL).

¹² See Richard Joseph, "Negotiating for Peace in Liberia: Conclusions and Recommendations," in *New Approaches to International Negotiation and Mediation*, edited by Timothy D. Sisk (U.S. Institute of Peace, 1996).

¹³ Others, such as Terrence Lyons, believe the elections were appropriate for the time. He argues that given the conditions of fear and violence, the most power faction leader (Taylor) won votes as the public tried to appease him; Lyons predicts that elections today would in fact yield the same results. See *Voting for Peace*; comments on recent events are found in personal correspondence with the author, December 2002.

¹⁴ Like in Angola (1992), presidential elections in immediate post-war conditions set up zero-sum, winner-take-all scenarios; for this reason, other post-war elections in Bosnia, South Africa, East Timor, and Kosovo have astutely avoided strong-president systems.

Within this environment, Taylor was able to circumvent the disarmament process, remake the AFL with former NPFL fighters, and eventually to intimidate the war-weary population into electing him president. As one observer notes, by the end of the civil war “Taylor’s NPFL emerged as the most tenaciously cruel, best funded, and the least scrupulous militia in a war of militias backed by foreign sponsors. Throughout the 1990s, he reneged on a series of peace deals brokered by regional international agencies and continued his ruthless military campaign.”¹⁵

The Present War: Causes and Characteristics

There is good reason to believe that flaws in the 1996 agreement and its implementation set the stage for the renewal of civil war. Roy Licklider has found that civil war settlements are inherently unstable, and that often violence erupts among former enemies and allies in the war.¹⁶ As seen in Angola, Burundi, Chechnya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, fragile peace agreements have collapsed with new bloodshed after just a few months or years. Rwanda’s 1994 genocide occurred just eight months after a comprehensive peace accord had been negotiated. At least one reason is because negotiated settlements leave all parties to the accords with sub-optimal results; they have had to compromise, and often see the post-settlement period as an interlude to regroup and seek to win the struggle anew. Surely President Charles Taylor has seen victory in the 1997 elections as opportunity to win at the ballot box what was not definitively won on the battlefield during the seven years of war.

Predatory and corrupt governance since 1997 is a principal and immediate cause of the current insurgency against Taylor’s regime. Taylor’s reign as president of Liberia has been the antithesis of inclusive, transparent, competent, responsible governance. Unlike South Africa’s Nelson Mandela, when Taylor won the at the polls he abandoned any modicum of conciliation and has ruled Liberia as a personalized autocracy, using the power of the state to exclude and oppress ethnic and other political opponents and to maximize profit for himself and his loyalists. Infiltration into Liberia by the LURD began in earnest in mid-2000 although there had been some four earlier outbreaks of anti-regime violence

What are the essential characteristics of the current war that serve as basic premises for crafting a conflict management strategy?

- *Taylor’s autocratic regime.* Virtually any opposition or resistance to complete control of the state by Taylor’s faction has been met with oppression, intimidation, and violence. Ethnic Mandingo and Krahn citizens have faced arbitrary arrest and violence based solely on their identity. Students, journalists, and human rights organizers have been targeted; the government has contended with other elements of civil society as well, including the Liberian Catholic Church. The human rights abuses of the Liberian armed forces – especially the Anti-Terrorism Unit and the Special Operation Division – are well documented. The abuses include war crimes, recruitment of child combatants, violations against civilians seeking

¹⁵ Fadiru B. Koromo, “War in Liberia Threatens to Destabilize Region,” August 14, 2002, www.worldpress.org (reproduced from the Freetown, Sierra Leone *Standard Times*).

¹⁶ Licklider, Roy. 1995. “The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993.” *American Political Science Review* 89 (3).

refuge, attacks on civil society groups, exacerbation of religious and ethnic tensions, and cross-border destabilization of Sierra Leone.¹⁷

- *Corruption and rent seeking.* Having been sanctioned by the UN Security Council for arms-for-diamond trade, Taylor shifted his commercial ambitions to trading timber for weapons using the same network of international smuggling.¹⁸ Some have reported that Taylor makes at least \$75 million annually in that natural resource trade. At the same time, the state has virtually no domestic sources of legal revenue, iron mining has virtually ceased, and the historically important Firestone rubber enterprise is operating at a minimal level of production. The state garners about \$13 million per year in royalties from maritime flagging and about \$2 million per year flows into Liberia in repatriated funds from the Diaspora communities. Corruption is rife in the state and civil servants have had no pay for seven to 14 months, including the security forces.

- *An underground, exiled, and fractured opposition.* Of Liberia's 17 political parties, only the ruling National Patriotic Party really operates throughout the country; most others have been driven into exile or have ceased to assertively operate for fear of the security apparatus. Attempts at forming an umbrella movement of political opposition forces, under the Collaborating Political Party rubric, remains inchoate and weak. For their part, the political opposition also seems focused on capturing the prize – the presidency – for themselves at any cost. They have not openly backed the LURD and they are unlikely to coalesce as a coherent bloc. Many of the most important Liberian political figures are in exile.

War in Liberia: The Ethnic Dimension

Is Liberia's conflict an ethnic struggle? Although moderate political and civil society leaders often assail tribalism, clearly ethnic identities have been closely associated with various political parties and factional militias. Taylor's ties to the Gio and Mano ethnic groups of Nimba County are juxtaposed against perceptions that the Krahn and Mandingo groups are the regime's enemies. Today, ethnic enmity between the Kru and Sarpo in Sinoe County and between the Mandingo and Lorma in Lofa County is reported.

The "ethnicization" of the Liberian war is understandable when understood against the finding that wars harden ethnic identities as people retreat to the social grouping in which they can find security and for allies whom they can trust. Some have suggested that an unmitigated war in Liberia could produce the next genocide on the scale of Rwanda's 1994 bloodletting. Further, various political leaders – like elsewhere – have played the ethnic card to advance personal political interests.

Liberian moderates argue against tribal arithmetic in forging a conflict resolution strategy. Nevertheless, as in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, or even clan-based Somalia, reconstitution of a legitimate state will require a rough ethnic balancing of appointments, military, police, civil service, and in the distribution of state resources.

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch World Report, 2002; Letter from Human Rights Watch to the United Nations Security Council Regarding the Mano River Union; United States Department of State Religious Freedom Report 2002; United States Department of State Human Rights Report 2001 (released March 2002).

¹⁸ Global Witness, "Logging Off: How the Liberian Timber Industry Fuels Liberia's Humanitarian Disaster and Threatens Sierra Leone," September 2002, and Human Rights Watch, "No Questions Asked: The Eastern Europe Arms Pipeline to Liberia," November 2001.

- *The LURD is incoherent and divided.* Most analysts of Liberia concur that the LURD is itself a coalition of various dissident groups, with some former enemies of Taylor, some deserters from the AFL, and some former Sierra Leone fighters (such as the West Side Boys, the RUF, and the Kamajors who have reportedly joined as mercenaries). The LURD's leadership ties to opposition parties remains unclear. At recent meetings such as the July 2002 Ouagadougou Leadership Forum facilitated by Burkina Faso's government and the Washington-based International Republican Institute, LURD political representatives participated and spoke articulately of their cause to remove Taylor from office (the Forum's value is described again below). Less information appears to be available about the command structure of the insurgents, their full military capacity, and of the relationships between civilian and military elements. Beyond removal of autocratic Taylor, the LURD has yet to outline a coherent political agenda.

Military Dynamics

Essential to a conflict management strategy is a clear fix on the present military dynamics of the civil war. Unfortunately, truly reliable military assessments are difficult to determine given the lack of information from and access to the country's interior. Most U.S. government, journalist, and international NGO observers agree that the current military situation is volatile and that the war may escalate sharply in the coming months.

- *A fluid balance on the ground.* Although AFL successes in September 2002 appear to have pushed the LURD back across the northern borders of Lofa and Bong counties (following the retaking of Tubmanburg in mid-July 2002), the LURD has shown its ability to infiltrate and launch attacks, occasionally reportedly striking close to Monrovia. Latest reports suggest that the LURD has begun a dry-season offensive and fresh fighting is reported in the northern towns of Kolahun, Foya, Voinjama and the northwestern provincial towns of Fassama and Gorlu.¹⁹ New attacks by the LURD in early 2003 could well provoke panic in the capital and to seriously undermine the confidence of Taylor's various armed units – the military is highly balkanized and AFL commanders have a high degree of operational and potentially political autonomy.
- *Overall, however, a stalemate.* Most observers agree that the AFL does not have the capacity to definitively defeat the LURD. The reactivation of pro-government militia groups from the 1989-1996 era, along with the creation of new forces such as the Jungle Warriors, is an indication that Taylor's armed forces are preparing for a more intense war. At the same time, the insurgents do not have the military might to topple Taylor; an indication of the LURD's operational weakness is its unwillingness or inability to hold territory (although this could equally be explained in terms of strategy).
- *Highly disparate military units* complicate military analysis, especially among the government forces. Analysts of Taylor's security forces cite the internal differences and tensions within the AFL as a significant factor in understanding the current conflict. Internal reshuffling by Taylor of top commanders suggest he is wary of a military coup and the shadowy former RUF henchman Sam "Mosquito" Bockarie and an estimated 200 former RUF combatants further complicate analysis of palace politics. Finally, within the government security forces there has been what the International Crisis Group has called "a

¹⁹ "Liberia: Fighting Resumes in Lofa County," IRIN News, 29 October 2002.

confusing proliferation of military groups” to include at least seven special forces and a host of other armed factions, some allegedly including forcibly recruited child soldiers.²⁰ Reports also suggest that the military factions are not regularly paid, and that they subsist by “self-financing” through looting and extortion of the civilian population.

Two implications for conflict management strategies flow from the analysis above.

- *Conditions may quickly worsen, without predictability.* The situation on the ground may rapidly deteriorate without early warning as the dry season begins and a period of regrouping and rearming of forces comes to an end. A rapidly deteriorating situation may be a motivating factor for the parties in conflict to seek a cease-fire if they believe the further escalation of violence holds greater risks than the preservation of the current balance of power. At the same time, the inchoate nature of the parties and the dynamic nature of events may mean that the conditions are changing too fast and the parties are too unorganized for a stable cease-fire to be a realistic possibility.
- *Unilateral, military victory is unlikely and undesirable.* The Liberian people would not be well by a military victory of one side or other (unless the LURD were able to quickly and with minimal bloodshed replace the Taylor regime, for example in a deal with rogue insider Taylor loyalists, which seems unlikely). The danger of such a swift victory in such a volatile environment would be massive crimes against the vanquished, including the possibility of genocidal retribution or “vicarious punishment” for specific ethnic groups. Furthermore, a definitive military victory would likely be the result of a very protracted war with its end game inevitably playing out in the streets of the capital, portending devastating humanitarian consequences.

²⁰ International Crisis Group, “Liberia: Unravelling,” 19 August 2002.

Part II: Evaluating International Engagement

The international community seems to appreciate the urgency of action in Liberia. With the creation of the International Contact Group in September 2002 and the appointment of UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Ahmedou Ould Abdullah for West Africa, global powers and regional brokers appear poised to engage with unity and determination. In addition, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's appointment of former UNHCR regional head Abou Moussa to head the UN Peace-building Support Office in Monrovia (and a one-year extension of its current mandate) lays the foundation for on-the-ground international engagement. These developments may signal a new consensus among a coalition of external actors to correct what has been described by the August 2002 International Crisis Group report "Liberia: Unravelling" as a "muddy" international approach in recent years.

The Contact Group, consisting of representatives from the UN, the European Union, African Union, ECOWAS, the U.S., the UK, France, Senegal, Nigeria, and Morocco includes the key organizations and states with influence in Liberia and the region. Members of the group have consistently called for a cease-fire between the government forces and the LURD. Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade, chairman of ECOWAS, and Mobamed Ibn Chambass, executive secretary, have pressured the Taylor government to negotiate with the LURD while at the same time suggesting Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo as a specific interlocutor.

To generate political will in the international community for attention to the Liberian conflict, the Contact Group will need to clearly articulate both the humanitarian and interest-based reasons for strong international intervention in Liberia. In many ways, the adoption of UN Security Council resolutions 1343 (March 7, 2001) and 1408 (May 6, 2002), which imposed diamond-trade, arms and travel sanctions on the Liberian leadership, already indicates an acute awareness of the rationale for extensive intervention to halt the civil war. On December 13, 2002, the President of the Security Council issued a statement endorsed by the Council's members that cited violations of these resolutions and called upon "a comprehensive strategy" for international mediators to seek a solution to the Liberian war.²¹ If the humanitarian tragedy or cross-border spillovers of war in Liberia do significantly worsen, the international community will be called upon to further increase its diplomatic, monitoring, and possibly military intervention strategies to stabilize the situation and to facilitate or manage an extended peace process.

This section describes options and recommendations for managing multiparty mediation such as the efforts of the Contact Group, the U.S., and international non-governmental organizations that have engaged to facilitate dialogues among Liberia's protagonists. It identifies a range of non-coercive and coercive options available to the mediation coalition that constitute the principal elements of an intervention toolkit, and includes recommendations for coordinating international engagement and for improving and extending the current structural and operational components of intervention.

²¹ Security Council presidential statement S/PRST/2002/36, "Security Council Condemns the Government of Liberia, Other Parties for Failure to Comply with Arms Embargo, Continuation of Weapons Imports." December 13, 2002.

The International Contact Group: Multiparty Mediation

Most conflicts on the world stage since the end of the Cold War, and particularly those in Africa, have seen complex mediation by a proliferation of external parties such as international and regional organizations, pivotal global and regional states, international financial institutions, and international non-

governmental organizations. One of the most interesting, and challenging, aspects of the new mediation pattern is the problem of coordination, maximization and pooling of leverage, and consensus on the basic purposes and aims. In addition to the inherent problems posed by many cooks in the intervention kitchen – and the

Multiparty mediation, key premises

1. The multiplication of mediators is less a matter of choice and more a fact of life. In virtually every civil war setting, the UN, regional organizations, key states, regional leaders, humanitarian NGOs, and monitors such as human rights organizations are all engage; sometimes they act in concert, other times at cross-purposes.
2. Multiparty mediation refers to simultaneous, sequential (the baton pass), and uncoordinated or composite mediation efforts. Too many mediators using too many scripts can make matters worse and can prolong violence.

possibility that wily protagonists in conflict settings can play one party off against the other (as the Sudanese have deftly done) – there are certain opportunities created as well. Ahmedou Ould Abdullah demonstrates in his book *Burundi on the Brink, 1993-1995: A UN Special Envoy Reflects on Preventive Diplomacy* how the inherently limited leverage available to a UN special envoy can be augmented by close coordination with the local, diplomatic, and NGO communities.²²

That is, multiparty coalitions allow mediators to “borrow leverage” (or pool resources) from one another to expand the credibility and effectiveness of international action and creating a wider array of opportunities for skillfully blending incentives and sanctions to induce the parties in conflict to de-escalate the conflict. Probably the most effective approach of the contact group will be to coordinate diplomatic communication and messages to the Taylor regime and to send clear signals of the international community’s expectations for specific action as any peace process unfolds.

Table 3. Some Relevant Summary Findings on Multiparty Mediation²³

- *Coordination and legitimacy by the SRSG.* Involvement of and coordination of the mediation effort, often by the UN SRSG, lends a necessary credibility and coherence to the initiative. The most important relationship is between the SRSG and the authoritative representatives of key states who can wield the most leverage vis-à-vis the parties. This may include states within the Contact Group, but may also involve key patron states for parties to the conflict (e.g., Guinea with regard to the LURD). Clear leadership may also signal to the parties that the Contact Group remains united and efforts to divide the group will be futile (this was not the case in the Contact Group that proved unable to successfully mediate an end to the Bosnian civil war.) SRSG leadership may also allow for the comparative advantages of each member of the Contact Group to be utilized most effectively; SRSG coordinators proved

²² Published by the U.S. Institute of Peace, 2000.

²³ Based in part on the book *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, Chester A. Crocker, Fen O. Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. (U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1999).

critical to successful mediation in the Mozambique (Aldo Ajello) and Salvadorean (Alvaro de Soto) peace processes.

- *Close coordination with ECOWAS and the AU.* Similarly, the practice of double-hatting UN and regional organization SRSGs has proven valuable in many conflicts, such as Haiti. As the African Union Peace and Security Council takes shape, the diplomatic, observation, and monitoring capacities of the organization should be evaluated for the role they could play in Liberia.
- *Regular forums for information sharing.* The SRSG or other “lead actor” coordinating the mediation coalition should create a regular forum for interaction with official actors (international organizations and states) and a regular forum for interaction with non-state actors (donors, international and local non-governmental organizations, or NGOs). The purpose of such forums is primarily for information gathering and sharing, and for coordination of implementation; they have also proven critical in Afghanistan, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Somalia as mechanisms for coordinating diplomatic, observer, or military peacekeeping initiatives with the efforts of humanitarian relief organizations (particularly UNHCR and international NGOs).
- *A powerful state to play “heavy.”* One state, usually an especially interested regional state or a global power with significant influence in the region, should sustain the focus and provide the communications, diplomatic consistency, intelligence, and finance, to make the mediation effort effective. This lead-state actor should also be willing to provide strongly structure incentives and sanctions against the parties, particularly states (e.g., leveraging the government of Liberia). Such a state may also eventually be needed to serve as a guarantor of the accord or as a lead state in an international stabilization force (e.g., the U.S. in conjunction with NATO in Bosnia). Chester Crocker has described the role of this lead state as the one who must bear “laserlike strategic focus and intensity” required of a core mediator.²⁴
- *Signal staying power.* Contact-group type mediation succeeds best when the parties are able to signal to the parties that they remain ready to engage as long as necessary to see the process through. Weaker parties, especially, may fear that the international community has a short attention span and that once they have committed to a settlement they may be especially vulnerable to defection by the other side as soon as the Contact Group or UN peacekeeping force has folded its tent and departed. Liberian opposition figures remain wary that the international community has sufficient will to provide the kind of staying power that will be necessary to see Liberia through to sustainable peace.
- *Use the Contact Group to harmonize regional engagement.* Contact Group approaches seem especially well suited to changing the underlying regional sub-systems that allow internal conflicts such as Liberia’s to be sustained. The multiparty mediation approach can lead to major redefinition of hostile relations among states in a region.²⁵ The Mano River Union process is the primary channel for such engagement at the moment.²⁶

²⁴ Chester A. Crocker, “Peacemaking in Southern Africa: The Namibian-Angola Settlement of 1988” in *Herding Cats*, p. 241.

²⁵ The efforts of the UN permanent Security Council members to redefine Chinese-Vietnamese relations in the context of mediating the civil war in Cambodia is cited as an example of how the Perm-5 together with regional players such as Australia and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) fundamentally changed relationships in the region that fueled the conflict. Changing the regional dynamic eventually

Sources of Leverage

International leverage for ending civil wars derives from the parties own dependence on an exit to a costly struggle together with the mediators' ability to creatively develop a formula for settlement. Once the international community has reached consensus on a formula for conflict management, it must be prepared to craft a package of incentives and sanctions to induce the parties to accept the settlement plan. In some cases, the international community must be prepared to deploy military force (the ultimate form of leverage) to enforce the terms of settlement it deems suitable to ending the war. In these exceptional cases, a "coalition of the willing" may be called upon to threaten and eventually deploy military force to induce the parties to settle, in effect, as NATO did in Bosnia in August 1995, to "bomb the parties to the table."²⁷

Multiparty mediation through a Contact Group mechanism faces special challenges of coordination and resolve: because sufficient leverage must be found through collective action, it may prove more challenging to muster consensus on the tough measures that need to be taken and the sharing of financial and troop-commitment burdens. In situations like Sierra Leone, with its gruesome atrocities highlighted on the world stage, key states did not decide that a strong peace enforcement operation was necessary until after the ragtag insurgents embarrassingly held hostage some 400 UN peacekeepers in May 2000. Force is the most extreme form of leverage, and is used only in concert with a broad range of both non-coercive and coercive measures.

Table 4. Mediator Leverage: Non-Coercive and Coercive Measures²⁸

Non-Coercive (rewards)

- *Purchase*: The use of side-payments (material or symbolic) directly to the parties in conflict to induce them to modify their demands. Examples include the use of significant aid packages to states (such as Cyprus) in the post-conflict environment, or direct promises of financial and material rewards. Perhaps the most dramatic example of the latter is the Italian payments to the Mozambique National Resistance, RENAMO, and especially to leader Alfonso Dhlakama to sign a cease-fire and eventually to forego violence during the election.
- *Insurance*: Guaranteeing non-defection by the other parties (if the recipient grants concessions), mediators can induce weaker parties to accept vulnerabilities in the post-accord environment. The British, for example, used insurance approaches during the Lancaster House negotiations to induce the regime of Ian Smith to accept black majority rule; this insurance has proven insufficient over the long run. Insurance may include promises of the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force, although parties in today's conflict realize that Chapter VI peacekeeping operations do not usually provide enduring guarantees against defection by their opponents.²⁹

allowed for a negotiated settlement in Cambodia. See Richard Solomon, "Bringing Peace to Cambodia," in *Herding Cats*.

²⁶ The MRU process is facilitated by Morocco and is known as the Rabat process.

²⁷ See Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (Modern Library, 1999).

²⁸ This typology draws upon the work of Donald Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation* (Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

²⁹ NATO intervention in Bosnia, however, has to date provided a form of insurance to the signatories of the Dayton peace accords

- *Legitimation* (conferring legitimacy): Recognition and validity of a group or faction's cause is a source of leverage in the mediator's toolbox that is often under-appreciated. This may also involve affirmation that a group – for example an ethnic political party – serves as the valid representative of those it purports to represent. When, for example, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in 1975 declaring the ANC to be the authentic representative of South Africa's disenfranchised majority, it augmented domestic political power with international status. At times, international mediators have used contingent recognition to leverage parties into peace, such as in 1992 when the U.S. suggested it would recognize the government of Angola if UNITA's Jonas Savimbi did not participate in the elections in good faith.

Coercive (threat or punishment)

- *Pressures*: Diplomatic pressures are routine moves and take any number of forms, including persuasion, mass media appeals, withdrawing recognition, or public shaming (for example, in human rights reports). For pressure to leverage parties into peace agreements, one of the strongest tools is the threat to withdraw or disengage once the parties have become dependent on the international community. In recent negotiations over a cease-fire in Sudan, the U.S. has used multiple pressures against the Khartoum regime. These include signaling Sudan that it could be the next target of the war on terrorism and through strong Congressional action that imposes sanctions if the regime does not negotiate with the insurgent Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM).³⁰
- *Sanctions*: Punitive measures imposed to reflect explicit disapproval of a particular regime or movement imposed as a way to induce change in policy or behavior by the target. Sanctions regimes have been used in any number of cases, including Liberia, but the purpose is usually related to a specific harmful action (e.g., weapons proliferation, human rights abuses) and not directly tied to the onset of peace talks. An exception is the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 which explicitly called on the South African regime to negotiate and including escalating sanctions if it did not, and easing of sanctions if good-faith talks began. With the increasing use of sanctions by the international community, the debate on “smart” sanctions has intensified, including disagreement about their appropriateness as an intermediate step between pressure and force, their effectiveness, unintended consequences, and the conditions under which they should be imposed or lifted. To date, there has been very little criticism of the UN sanctions against Charles Taylor in this regard.
- *Force*: the ultimate coercive incentive. With the advent of peace enforcement in the UN's civil war lexicon beginning with Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 *Agenda for Peace*,³¹ military force been systematically employed as a means of multilateral intervention to coerce the parties into a cease-fire and to provide security for a broader peace process. Today, coercive intervention under Chapter VII of the Charter seems routine: starting with Somalia, and most recently in East Timor and Sierra Leone, the Security Council has repeatedly authorized member state “coalitions of the willing” to undertake peace enforcement in civil wars.

³⁰ For the details on the Sudan situation and the range of U.S. congressional and executive branch pressures, which include further legitimation of the SPLM's John Garang with an early 2002 White House visit, see Ted Dagne, “Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism, and U.S. Foreign Policy,” CRS Issue Brief to Congress (Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress), March 2002.

³¹ Although the Congo Crisis of 1960-1964 was arguably the first peace enforcement mission in a civil war.

The typology of leverage presented here is not exhaustive, and it does not address what is perhaps the most difficult policy challenge in international mediation of civil wars: how to contextually *mix or blend the incentives and sanctions* to move the parties toward peace. A suggested approach and blend of carrot and stick for Liberia are highlighted in Part III below.

Channels of Negotiation

Finally, one of the distinct advantages of multiparty mediation is the ability of various members of the coalition to open and explore a variety of channels of communication among the warring parties. When one channel is blocked or is not progressing, or where participation is insufficient, another channel may be more fruitful. Likewise, there is a significant body of opinion that suggests successful peace processes bear fruit when there are multiple avenues of negotiation that are open simultaneously, and particularly those that create safe forums for political luminaries and civil society to meet. Some suggest that this “public peace process” approach was the genius that allowed the South African negotiations to succeed when top-level talks between President de Klerk and ANC leader Nelson Mandela became stuck over the problem of intense faction-fighting and violence during the volatile years of 1991-1993.³²

Liberia has experienced some efforts at multi-track diplomacy in the last year, with an internal, regime-led national reconciliation conference having met in late August in Monrovia; this conference was not attended by the most significant major opposition figures, however. Externally, too there have been two major efforts to convene a range of Liberians in opposition (and many in exile) to discussion options for peace and to debate the country’s future. In July, a group of prominent Liberians met in Washington, D.C. and a rather substantial group of leading exiles and opposition figures – including the LURD – met in August 2002 with facilitation by the government of Burkina Faso together with the Washington-based International Republican Institute. (Recommendations emanating from these gatherings are reflected in Part III).

These channels of communication, neither of them fully representative of the Liberian political spectrum, are critical to the multilateral mediation effort in two important ways. First, they facilitate consensus building around key issues, such as participation (or not) in the planned 2003 elections, and, second, they serve as a “focus group” for the international community to gauge the attitudes of Liberians with regard to the war and the country’s political future. Current ECOWAS engagement to promote initial cease-fire talks is especially promising, with Chairman Abdoulaye Wade having met with Taylor on November 27 and the latter reportedly agreeing to initial talks with the LURD.³³ This particular channel may be the most immediate and viable way of establishing direct negotiations between the warring factions, perhaps coordinated through the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security.

³² See Timothy Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa: The Elusive Social Contract* (Princeton University Press, 1995).

³³ “Liberia: Taylor urges ECOWAS to arrange talks with LURD,” IRIN News, 27 November 2002.

Part III: A Phased, Multi-tiered Peace Process for Liberia

If the on-the-ground military conditions and diplomatic framework are in place for a turn to negotiation, the international community will need to intervene strategically, and with innovation, to create and reinforce the incentives for peace. In doing so, lead actors in the international coalition such as the United States will be more effective if they articulate an overall *strategic idea* that drives the peace process. Such a strategic concept may link an immediate process of negotiation for a cessation of the war to a desired longer-term outcome for political reform and reconciliation in Liberia. The Contact Group should clearly define a common approach to working with the Liberian parties, and especially whether to engage or facilitate the removal of key protagonists such as Charles Taylor. The strategic idea should include an envisaged political process that defines a set of sequential steps, to unfold over various phases, to create and encourage progress in negotiations to end the war and reconstruct Liberia's state and society.

An essential part of a strategic idea for leveraging peace in Liberia is a clear political plan to engage the incumbent regime and the Liberian opposition parties in a well-defined process of power sharing, transition, and constitution-making. A clearly articulated political plan should inform the operational plan for managing the containment and eventual demobilization of the armed forces of both the regular and irregular government military and police forces and the insurgent militias. That is, it should define process and outcome linkages. The sections that follow provide the rationale behind a mediation strategy for Liberia together with the principles for an approach, followed by a set of more detailed options for each phase of a proposed three-year plan for international engagement to bring peace to Liberia.

Leveraging for Peace: Rationale and Approach

Analysts of contemporary civil wars are virtually unanimous on a key finding of direct relevance to contemporary, war-torn Liberia. Once a civil war such as Liberia's takes hold, there are very few incentives for the government or insurgents to exchange the relatively predictability of the military confrontation on the battlefield for an uncertain peace process.³⁴ Because of these deep disincentives to seek a peace agreement, or to credibly commit to any terms of settlement if one were reached, there is every reason to be pessimistic about a negotiated cease-fire and peace process as an exit to the Liberian war.

The warring parties in Liberia are essentially caught in what is known as a "conflict trap" from which there is no self-escape – a proverbial "thieves dilemma."³⁵ That is, even though the parties may gain from exchanging war for cooperation, they can't because they know that adversaries will cheat; peace leaves them vulnerable. For this reason, vigorous and highly assertive leverage by the international community, coordinated by the International Contact Group on Liberia, will be needed if Liberia's tragic civil war is to be resolved.

- *A defined process backed by coordinated signals and action.* The Contact Group should clearly articulate a defined plan for a peace process together with specific benchmarks for progress as it facilitates negotiations on a cease-fire. Prior consensus and coordination of policy and message by the Contact Group is key: signals need to reflect that the international

³⁴ See Barbara Walter, *Committing to Peace: Successful Settlements of Civil Wars* (Princeton University Press, 2002).

³⁵ Similar to the classic prisoner's dilemma.

mediation coalition will behave in a consistent and predictable way. Acts of cooperation with the Group's calls for a cessation of hostilities should be met with tangible rewards for the parties that cooperate; those that do not comply should be targeted for gradually more serious and damaging coercive moves such as sanctions. This consistent, predictable and unified action by the international community should continue through the clearly established process guidelines for Liberia's future to unfold over at least a three-year time horizon.

This cooperate-reward, defect-punishment approach will convey to the parties that the Contact Group is unanimous, determined, and has the political will to insist on peace. It should also make clear that failure to cooperate will precipitate coercive intervention and peace enforcement as with the previous instance in Liberia with ECOMOG, or recently in Sierra Leone or Afghanistan. The basis of such an approach to cease-fire is essentially *coercive diplomacy* with the possibility of overwhelming military intervention if the parties do not comply.

- *Coercive diplomacy requires a credible threat of a peace-enforcement operation.* A determined international coalition that is prepared to intervene forcefully may lead to a situation where the international community can achieve peace in Liberia *without* a costly peace-enforcement operation. If the parties in conflict believe that the political will exists in the international community for military intervention to enforce peace in Liberia, they may take the steps to end fighting and cooperate in a political process without the actual deployment of such a force. Lesser expensive alternatives, such as a group of African (ECOWAS or African Union) monitoring mission, are more likely to be successful if the Liberian armed factions believe that failure to comply will in fact precipitate a more extensive military deployment. For coercive diplomacy to work (as in Iraq), the threat of force must be credible. For the threat of force to be credible, the international community must actually take the steps necessary for the deployment of a peace-enforcement mission.
- *Tough measures first, soften if cooperation is forthcoming.* For Liberia, the mix of sanctions and incentives targeted at the regime and opposition forces should initially involve more stick than carrot. A strategy that begins with a highly coercive approach and then moves toward conciliation over time, is often most effective in securing the cooperation of an opponent.³⁶ The reasoning behind this recommendation is the establishment of a clear norm or reciprocity; consistently, cooperation will be rewarded with cooperation (including an easing of coercion) and defiance or resistance (defection) will be met with increased coercion. In sum, leverage should be employed to cajole the Liberian antagonists into a pattern of predictable tit-for-tat, demonstrating clearly and unambiguously over time the value of cooperation with the mediator's objectives. This approach of tit-for-tat reinforces an essential finding that international intervention in civil wars is rarely, if ever, impartial.³⁷
- *A Multi-tiered approach.* A comprehensive mediation strategy should blend sanctions and incentives targeted at the armed factions and political elite with a parallel approach to build conflict management and recovery capacities among national grass-roots civic organizations. Additionally, a multi-tiered approach should feature carefully designed initiatives to address the usually forgotten players in peace processes that have the capacity to spoil. The strategy includes an *intensive focus on the armed mid-level elite* in the AFL and insurgent forces who

³⁶ Donald Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa*, p. 107.

³⁷ See Richard Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," in Chester Crocker, Fen O. Hampson, and Pamela Aall, *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2001.

live by the gun, who organize for violence as a way of life, and who have realistic fears about the implications of peace for their personal interests and survival. Specific initiatives should give mid-level militia leaders a clear choice: join a reconstituted military or police force or face criminal punishment and possible indictment in war crimes. For insurgent forces, the details of an amnesty program (perhaps in exchange for truth telling) should be defined.

The phases of a peace process for Liberia could unfold sequentially over a three-year time horizon from the onset of a cease-fire.

- *Phase 1: internal security and regional stabilization (months one to six).* For both humanitarian reasons, and for reasons of conflict de-escalation strategy, the international community has pressured the government and LURD factions to declare a cease-fire as an initial immediate step. Although everyone appreciates the humanitarian reasons for a cease-fire, the peace process strategy for a cease-fire has logic of its own. It begins the process of de-escalation and allows international mediators to sort out who is a redeemable ally of peace and who is likely to be a spoiler of a pact. For testing the intent of the parties and the durability of any initial containment and troop demobilization process, to allow for an extended period of political negotiations, to repatriate refugees, and to further stave off cross-border spillovers, the internal security period should be seen as a six-month initiative.
- *Phase 2: An interim administration, demobilization and elections (months six to 18).* External observers agree that proposed elections in the second half of 2003 do not provide a potential opportunity for peacemaking as they are presently conceived. Without a leveling of the playing field, the safe return of opposition figures and political parties, and reform of the election administration bodies, elections will be a farce and they will likely be manipulated by the Taylor regime. Instead, the medium-term strategy is the creation of a UN-supervised interim administration that is power-sharing pact among the Liberian factions. Once such an interim administration is in place, priorities are complete demobilization of irregular armed forces, reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia, an internationally supervised election in month 18 to a constitution-making body and transitional parliament, and a comprehensive process of political reform and national reconciliation.
- *Phase 3: Peace-building and conflict transformation (months 18-36).* International mediators should design a strategy at the outset that includes a clear vision of the long-term goal of reconfiguration of politics and the reconstruction of society in Liberia. The third phase would involve a constitutional or national conference, national and local civil society development, a truth-telling and reconciliation process, and socio-economic reconstruction. Such an ambitious vision for Liberia is not just an exit strategy for the international community, but an imagination of the full range of domestic and regional institutions that are needed to manage conflict and prevent yet another recurrence of Liberia's war over the long term.

A longer-term approach of conflict transformation for Liberia foresees stabilizing medium-term gains toward democratization within Liberia and building of a comprehensive, robust regional security regime developed through the Mano River Union (MRU) process. At this point, too, peace building involves design of a comprehensive conflict prevention scheme to pre-empt a possible return to civil war in years to come. The constitution-making process should be seen as an 18-month endeavor with a date-certain deadline for an agreement on a new Liberian charter determined at the outset. Meaningful peace-building activities in war-ravaged Liberia that transform the underlying causal dynamics of conflict are inherently open-ended in duration.

Phase 1: Internal Security and Regional Stabilization

Despite the pledges by Taylor and the LURD political representatives that they seek to end hostilities through peaceful means, international mediators should proceed with the presumption these parties and other armed elements do not yet prefer to seek a verifiable cease-fire and negotiated settlement of the war. Statements of a willingness to negotiate a cease-fire by Charles Taylor have to be seen as playing to the gallery of Western powers and international organizations. For Taylor, there is no reason to exchange certain power now for the uncertainties of an internationally monitored peace process; the presumption is ultimately defection by the Taylor regime to international overtures to peace. The rebels, too, are not inclined to accept a cease-fire. That is because without the assurances and acceptance of a robust external peacekeeping force there is no basis for the insurgents either to credibly commit to any agreement. The situation today is in many ways similar to a condition that pertained during much of the conflict from 1989-1996. One analyst described well the situation then:

What we have in Liberia today is classic case of the ‘prisoner’s dilemma, or shall we say the ‘thieves dilemma.’ All armed groups are keenly aware that none has operated under any informal system of rules that is based on trust, honesty, principles, and respect for law and order. Indeed each leader has so much blood on his hands that none believes the others are capable of using power for the common good.³⁸

If this analysis is true then there is little likelihood of a successful cease-fire accord without an external security force with the capacity and political will to ensure strict compliance with the terms of any agreement reached and to disarm and demobilize the various factions. Absent such a force the international community must rely upon weaker levers of influence for peace, namely pressure, sanctions, and purchase.

Securing a Cease-fire: Options for Diplomacy

An immediate cease-fire would appear to be the most sensible initial step in U.S. and Contact Group strategies for peace in Liberia at this juncture for several reasons.

- *Delivery of humanitarian relief.* Humanitarian interests would be served, allowing for safe transport and distribution of urgently required relief to the internally displaced and war-weary populations of the northern counties. An interlude in the fighting may introduce new resources to Liberia, which both the AFL and insurgents may need at this point.
- *Calculus of the parties: relief from demand and risk of war.* The Taylor regime and elements of the LURD command may have on-the-ground military incentives to accept a cease-fire at this time. They may be feeling the pinch of the arms embargo and the leadership of each individual faction may have concluded that they will be unable to militarily defeat their opponents and risk themselves being defeated. Negotiation could provide some immediate relief from the present demands and risks of the war.

³⁸ Yusuf Bangura, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva, April 1996

- *Window for deployment of international involvement.* The cease-fire may be an opportunity to convince the parties to accept a neutral, international security stabilization force under the guise of monitoring compliance with the cease-fire. The LURD forces may welcome the international engagement whereas the Taylor regime has few if any incentives to agree to intervention.
- *Elections as exit.* The prospect of elections in 2003 may provide both sides with the political “cover” they need to accept a cease-fire: for the Government, a cease-fire commitment by the LURD would be a way to demonstrate that it is open to political competition from any group that does not pursue violence. For the LURD-backed political parties, the cease-fire may be a way to become involved in elections in such a way so as to defeat the government in the voting without further, costly military struggle. While difficult, mediators may be able to skillfully link a cease-fire to the prospect of elections in a way that gives both sides the opportunity to accept a truce and agree to elections without losing face or backing down from long-held demands.
- *Questioning sequencing.* There are reasons to consider deferring negotiation of a cease-fire until basic political issues have been resolved; there is a considerable need to coordinate the security talks with engagement of the political issues. There is a very valid point of view that would suggest the international community’s rush to induce the parties to accept an immediate cessation of hostilities may actually take away the incentives for the parties to fully settle (to sign a more comprehensive peace agreement). If an immediate cease fire were to be but an interim move to allow the parties to re-arm and re-group before fighting again – as with the several cease fires in the Liberian war of the 1990s – then it can actually prolong the war in the long run.

Internal Pressures for a Cease-fire

One answer to the security dilemma faced by the Liberians is found in the concept of “ripeness” for negotiation, in which the parties are so motivated by the desirability of settlement (as compared to continuing the fight) that they are willing to take risks to de-escalate the violence. A conflict is ripe for negotiation when the combatants grow weary of a fight they can’t win and are able to envisage a way through their morass by pursuing talks as a way to advance their security. Any assessment of ripeness needs to take into account both the objective conditions on the ground (the military balance, the degree of discipline within the armies, resources available to fund the war) and the subjective aspects (the parties’ perceptions about the real costs and potential benefits of risking a cease-fire).

Table 5. Indicators of “Ripeness” for Meaningful Negotiation in Liberia

- *Military Stalemate.* The primary motivation to settle arises from a perception that the conflict has reached a military stalemate that is mutually hurting for both sides. The parties come to the realization that they cannot escalate their way to victory and that the status quo is militarily detrimental or especially risky for their own prosperity and survival.

For the *Taylor regime*, the status quo is costly in terms of the UN sanctions regime, the damage inflicted by the LURD in outlying areas, the possibility that the AFL may quickly crumble or disintegrate in widespread defections to the LURD, and the risk of a public outpouring of opposition to the war that can’t be contained.

For elements of *the LURD*, it may have become clear that despite their ability to strike at government forces, and to occasionally hold strategic outlying towns for a short time, their capacity to quickly defeat the well-funded and battle-hardened AFL (and eventually take Monrovia from them) is a hopeless cause.

For a military stalemate to be a significant motivator for a cease-fire, the parties need to believe that the long horizon of the future offers only costs of struggle, with declining benefits. Any gains made by escalating the war on the ground are going to be few and the ultimate prize of winning the war outright is not conceivable now or in the foreseeable future.

- *Deadline.* Deadlines may be internal (such as the constitutional requirement for elections by a date specific in October 2003) or external, established by mediators (such as the next date for review of the UN sanctions regime). The key point about deadlines is that they must focus the minds of the parties on a key set of choices: deadlines are action inducing and they are critical decision points for the parties in conflict. For the International Contact Group to be effective, it may seek to establish a set of deadlines, or benchmarks, in a process leading up to international verification and monitoring of any elections.
- *Coherent leadership.* Parties that are divided and incoherent do not make for good bargaining partners, and much of the assessment on whether the conflict is ripe for negotiation depends on the nature, intent and capacity of government and rebel armed forces. This is a critical concern in Liberia and may take considerable attention by international mediators.

Taylor Regime: The machinations of Charles Taylor in manipulating the many security force factions under his control suggests that he distrusts soldiers he has put into action over the years. Reports of defections among the ranks of the AFL seriously call into question the coherence of the government and the ruling National Patriotic Party as a credible bargaining partner.

The LURD: So, too, the LURD is apparently quite divided although they did send a capable diplomatic delegation to the Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso meetings convened by the Bukinabe government and IRI in July 2002. A critical question is the command and control of the LURD forces on the ground, and the relations among the soldiers, field commanders (mid-level elites) and civilian diplomats within the insurgent group. Also critical is the backing received by the LURD – more implicitly than explicitly – from the Liberian opposition political parties.

- *An Exit: Process.* For a ripe conflict to be turned into an agreement to cease fire, the parties need a clearly defined exit process. The “pre-negotiations” related to cease fires in civil wars are essentially about the security issues: how to resolve the key dilemma that stopping the fight leaves them vulnerable to attack by their opponents. Those negotiations in civil wars that have managed to surmount the security dilemma have found that they are able to establish a pattern of basic cooperation, and a certain momentum develops.
- *An Exit: Formula for Settlement.* Finally, getting the parties to agree early on a basic formula for settlement is essential. The extent to which the basic outcome of the political process they face (elections, constitutional reform, etc) is known, the more willing they are to accept initial moves for cease-fire. The essential elements of settlements in civil wars involve sharing

power, which provides a level of security to parties that they will be reasonably powerful in any post-transition order. Pre-election power sharing pacts have been the essential formula used to exit civil wars in Bosnia, Cambodia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and Zimbabwe (1980, later abrogated) to name a few.

Given the uncertainty of political support among the Liberian factions, and the sour history of the 1997 elections that brought Taylor to power, a pre-election pact that assures each party a place in a transitional parliament/national conference seems a necessary part of any formula for settlement.

- *Public “Exhaustion” Factors.* Most wars end due to sheer exhaustion with the fight, even though some wars (such as Colombia, Kashmir, and Sudan) seem to go on without war-weariness leading to a cease-fire. In Liberia’s context, it is self-evident that the Liberian population tires of war, and that the key is to mobilize that aversion to conflict through programs of civil society (as below). Key to the sealing a cease-fire in Liberia may well a key moment when the population – particularly in Monrovia – perceives the regime is incapable or unwilling to further repress. It is not inconceivable that Taylor’s government could quickly fall like a house of cards. If so, the people may rise up violently in opposition to the regime (as against Milosevic in October 2000).

Public uprisings may help topple dictators, but they are also very risky affairs for those who participate. Many such attempts sometimes spark “deadly ethnic riots,” as have occurred recently Nairobi, Kenya and in Lagos, and Kaduna in Nigeria. Crisis events such as the sudden collapse of a regime can precipitate massacres of genocidal proportions as in Kigali, Rwanda in 1994.

Table 6. Options for Structuring Peace Negotiations (with lessons from South Africa)

1. *Secrecy:* talks occur with key leaders, facilitated quietly and often involving second tier of talks with next-level leaders in a technical process (e.g., Mandela-De Klerk high-level talks, Ramaphosa-Meyer back channel)
2. *Talks about talks:* arranging the venue, terms, and especially participation. In South Africa, the participation started very narrow (just the ANC and NP) and gradually expanded to include all factions with the military capacity to spoil the pact (e.g., the Pan-Africanist Congress or the white right wing political parties).
3. *Basic human security.* Openly addressing the security concerns of armies, militias, local communities, and personal security through agreements on the permanency of the cease-fire and the methods of monitoring and verification. South Africa failed to get these elements in early, and as a consequence violence rose sharply after the talks began; only after violence threatened the peace process did they agree to the community conflict resolution processes of the National Peace Accord. Eventually, the UN deployed the United Nations Observer Mission to South Africa (UNOMSA, with the mandate to work with the local and regional peace committees established by the Peace Accord).
4. *Working committees.* Setting up working committees to address issues of programs for demobilizing soldiers, amnesty or prosecution, assuring the safety of return of exiles, and protection for vulnerable individuals and communities. These committees were mostly internal in South Africa, but it would appear beneficial in the Liberia situation to have the mediators and technical advisors from the Contact Group countries to manage these committees.

Taylor and the Cease-fire

Many have said that engaging President Charles Taylor of Liberia around which to base a new peace process is akin to engaging international fugitive Mullah Omar to lead the process of reconciliation in Afghanistan. In Liberia, it may be simply impossible to break the ability of the Taylor and his elite and their security forces to intimidate and control the population in their insatiable quest to dominate of society, state, and natural resources in Liberia. Many Liberians in exile believe that the “removal of Charles Taylor becomes an urgent and important international obligation.”³⁹ Some believe it is the moral responsibility of the U.S. as a dominant regional power to oust Taylor and change the Liberian regime.

Taylor asserts strongly that it is his constitutional right to contest the presidency in 2003 and that he can only be accepted or rejected from office through the existing election guidelines and votes of the Liberian people. Yet the International Crisis Group reports that for a fair election to occur in October 2003, “facts on the ground will simply have to change.”⁴⁰ International mediators face a stark choice as to how much, and how, to engage President Taylor directly in negotiation on a cease-fire and political reform. The decision rests on accepting or rejecting these premises about the reliability of the current government to negotiate in good faith.

- *Premise 1:* The Taylor regime is incapable of governing in any way other than depredation, intimidation, and violence; it cannot transform or survive in a new order. Taylor has no real incentive for a cease-fire that will expose him to eventual loss of power through international administration or elections or to prosecution for war crimes. Any promise of negotiation for a cease-fire is a calculated move to militarily subdue the LURD elements, undermine opposition parties, and extend power in the region.
- *Premise 2:* The Taylor regime, despite its faults, is necessary for peace as it has the capacity to spoil any peace accord. The National Patriotic Party is an essential part of the Liberian landscape and has the capacity in the provinces to serve as the representative of an important element of the population. In order to rein in the private militias, pull back the ATU and other special-force elements of the AFL, and make progress on basic policing, Taylor’s regime should be engaged and brought in directly as key participants in the peace process.

International mediators today do face a stark choice with regard to Taylor: use leverage to purchase the cooperation of Taylor (through incentives) or to prosecute (through sanctions or other means). There are several possible scenarios.

Table 7. Scenarios for President Charles Taylor

- *The Milosevic scenario.* Milosevic is now on trial for crimes against humanity in The Hague. This scenario would envisage threatening or actually charging President Taylor with Crimes Against Humanity, violations of the 1948 Genocide Convention, or bringing him before the Special Court in Sierra Leone, either for crimes committed in Liberia or for conspiracy in crimes committed by the Revolutionary United Front.

³⁹ Remarks of Amos Sawyer at the U.S. Institute of Peace Current Issues Briefing, December 9, 2002.

⁴⁰ International Crisis Group, “Liberia: Unravelling,” August 2002, p.8.

- *The Mengistu scenario.* Mengistu, the former president of Ethiopia, is now in exile in Zimbabwe. This scenario foresees exile for President Taylor to a third country, without a significant role in politics; Mengistu was defeated militarily and really had no choice but to flee at the moment of regime change.
- *The Pinochet scenario.* In order to democratize and elect a new president, Pinochet stepped aside from the top post and was named “Senator for Life,” immune to prosecution. Despite being charged with war crimes, Pinochet remains in Chile a free man and an influential political figure. This scenario foresees a graceful exit for Charles Taylor, and a continued role for him as a political leader in a reconstituted Liberia.
- *The Hun Sen scenario.* After Cambodia’s civil war, elections in 1993 led to Hun Sen’s affirmation as president, however UN mediators convinced him after the election to share power with his rival (Prince Ranariddh), but he eventually maneuvered to rule absolutely after the peace talks, UN peace operation, elections, and disarmament process. Like Hun Sen, it is equally possible that Taylor could weave his way through any process and emerge as an unbridled ruler through years of international oversight of any transition.

In a way, this is the option that international mediators have brokered for President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who will continue to serve as president for an 18-month interim administration together with four vice-presidents drawn from the rebel factions in that country; cabinet seats and other positions in the government are to be divided among the five groups.⁴¹

- *The Saddam scenario.* The Security Council has given Iraq’s president a clear formula: accept inspectors for violations of international norms or be the subject of a collective defense action. This use of coercive diplomacy suggests that the Security Council must be prepared to agree on coercive military intervention – a high bar indeed – before in the diplomatic strategy can be effective.

The first scenario – indictment of Charles Taylor by the Special Court in Sierra Leone for complicity with the RUF in crimes against humanity – is a compelling consideration for the international community at this juncture. If Taylor is indicted for complicity in crimes in Sierra Leone, his fate could unfold like that of Milosevic: insiders within his administration split on whether this continuation in office is in their own personal interests (particularly, too, if some of the president’s associates are indicted). The result may be a palace coup (much like what happened to former Congo president Laurent Kabila) that quickly topples the regime or leads to new leadership more inclined to negotiate for survival. The January 2002 Special Court Statute clearly provides the basis for an indictment for complicity in crimes against humanity if sufficient evidence of Taylor’s support for the RUF is available to the UN-appointed Prosecutor. The Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone reads:

Article 6
Individual criminal responsibility

1. A person who planned, instigated, ordered, committed or otherwise aided and abetted in the planning, preparation or execution of a crime referred to in articles 2 to 4 of the present Statute shall be individually responsible for the crime.

⁴¹ See Rachel L. Swarns, “Peace Accord Signed in Congo,” *The New York Times*, December 17, 2002.

2. The official position of any accused persons, whether as Head of State or Government or as a responsible government official, shall not relieve such person of criminal responsibility nor mitigate punishment.

The first step for members of the international Contact Group should be investigation and indictment by international legal experts on the jurisdictional issues involved in the January 2002 Special Court Statute and the specific indictment, arrest, venue, and prosecution options for the Taylor case. Clearly the simple act of indictment itself, without provisions for arrest, will dramatically and quickly change the political dynamics of Taylor's regime in Monrovia.

Levers for Peace in Liberia

International mediators have significant opportunities to define each of the elements of a potential move toward a cease-fire and outline the parameters of a basic settlement to the long-running Liberian conflict. These recommendations may help the Contact Group in its pursuit of a truce and settlement in the Liberian civil war.

- *Establish a joint UN-AU-ECOWAS-Contact Group fact-finding mission to establish needs and priorities.* With the advent of cease-fire talks, it may be useful to immediately deploy an international fact-finding mission to determine the on-the-ground challenges of DDR and to begin the process of direct interaction with commanders, militia leaders, and rebel forces. Such a fact-finding mission could well precede the deployment of an intervention force with a clear assurance for their security from the various factions in talks.
- *Develop a Security Council-endorsed framework (formula).* The International Contact Group should develop, in consultation with the Liberian factions and political parties a set of framework principles to serve as the overarching "formula" for the peace process; these should be enshrined in a comprehensive new Security Council resolution. No single Liberian faction would have a veto over its contents; the set of principles could emerge from a special session of the UN Security Council, which would shed a strong spotlight on Liberia. Such a framework document could be similar to the UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978 established the basis for Namibia's transition to independence.⁴²
- *Create a secret Government-LURD negotiating channel for "pre-negotiations."* In other conflict settings, lead countries in the contact groups have been very effective at setting up the opportunities for high-level, secret talks on cease fire options, to include both the major decision-makers as well as representatives of the various military forces. The cease-fire agreement that is drafted (often by the mediator) needs to be exceptionally detailed and thorough and subject to strong Contact Group oversight (e.g., UN and lead-state military assistance, verification, and observation).
- *Continue to pursue smart sanctions and the arms embargo as leverage for talks.* Reinforce and continue to doggedly pursue the compliance mechanisms of the UN-mandated controls on diamond trading and arms transfers and seek out specific methods to hold violators of the

⁴² It served as the basis of the 1988 Tripartite Agreement (Angola, Cuba, South Africa) that strategically linked Namibian independence to Cuban withdrawal from Angola. Also based on Resolution 435, the Western Contact Group established a set of constitutional principles in 1982 that eventually served as the basis for the settlement ultimately reached by the parties in Namibia in a constitution-making forum after the 1990 elections.

embargo accountable. The Contact Group should act collectively to pressure other states and business firms to systematically seek to dry up the sources of revenue which are used to buy arms. The UN Panel of Experts mechanism has proven a useful way to monitor compliance, which has played a useful role in highlighting and curbing cross-border support for rebel groups in Sierra Leone.

- *Broaden the definition of illicitly defined items in sanctions regime.* It may be useful to broaden the Panel's mandate to allow it to monitor timber imports and cross-border support in arms for the LURD factions from Guinea's role. The principal aim of maintaining and strengthening sanctions – it should be pointed out to the Taylor regime and the LURD – is to induce them to end the war and to stabilize the region. The Contact Group should continue to strongly pursue verification of compliance with the Kimberly Process certification scheme on conflict diamonds and should pressure the Taylor regime to cooperate with the international audit of all timber transactions and the Central Bank of Liberia. At the same time, as the Liberian parties in a peace process cooperate, sanctions could be gradually eased; sanctions lifting (a form of reward) should be laid out in terms of achieving the benchmarks laid out by a framework-oriented Security Council resolution on Liberia.
- *Decide and deploy credible commitment in some form to resolve the “security dilemma.”* Both President Charles Taylor and the LURD both reported opposition to any such deployment.⁴³ At the same time, a consortium of some 50 Liberian organizations under the umbrella of the Civil Society Movement of Liberia has urged ECOWAS or the UN to deploy a peacekeeping force to enforce or monitor a cease-fire. This group warns that it will undertake peaceful protest to pressure the government to open a genuine dialogue with the LURD and to adopt a cease-fire.
- *An assertive (Chapter VII) peacekeeper mandate.* If a force is deployed, it should be based on now-common principles in the deployment of peacekeepers, including an assertive mandate that includes the ability to enforce the peace and the dispatch of a force that has overwhelming military capacity. As above, a Chapter VI operation is too weak and places peacekeepers in jeopardy. Senegal has been variously suggested as the ideal state and military to lead the peacekeeping operation. In general, the August 2001 Brahimi report on UN peacekeeping provides a reasonable set of contemporary guidelines to inform the diplomatic and operational side of any military intervention. An international security stabilization force should also be equipped with an interim legal code and offer a considerable ability to conduct local law-enforcement functions.
- *Provide direct protection to political leaders,* especially those of the opposition and vulnerable members of the incumbent government. In Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Burundi, for example, international peacekeepers have played important new roles in providing basic personal security for political leaders through security details dedicated to their survival. This could be one of the most important roles to be played by any stabilization force.
- *Deter and if necessary defeat spoilers.* Any international security force should anticipate violent resistance to the peace process either by signatories of the pact who defect from the agreement or by those who were not included in the pact but whose interests are vitiated by the peace agreement (e.g., private militias). Each case is different because international mediators must make difficult decisions about the spoiler's intent: Is the faction seeking to

⁴³ “Liberia: Taylor Says No to Foreign Peacekeepers,” IRIN 17 September 2002. “There will be no intervention force in Liberia as long as I am president,” Taylor said according to the report.

demonstrate power so as to be included in the settlement, or is the spoiler an irredeemable opponent of peace?

- *Emphasize human security.* Liberia’s faction-ridden, untrained, and ill-behaved security forces need to be trained in basic soldiering. The Liberian security forces, including the ATU and SSS, and the police force need to be carefully engaged to ensure that they are subject to clear and public directives to ensure the safety of civilians and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief. Human rights components should be integrated into all levels of training for a reconstituted police, and effective disciplinary and other enforcement mechanisms should be put in place to respond to allegations of human rights abuse. Provide clear instructions to combatants regarding international human rights and humanitarian law, to ensure that combatants respect the rights of civilians. Allow for freedom of movement of all civilians seeking to flee areas under attack.⁴⁴

Providing Credible Commitment

Choosing among a variety of options for providing credible commitment to a cease-fire accord, while at the same time addressing the escalating and damaging violence in Côte d’Ivoire and threats to the UNAMSIL mission will be one of the most difficult challenges for the Contact Group. The essential issue in choosing among options is whether the international community can deploy a sufficiently strong force to unambiguously override the capacities of any single or group of Liberian spoilers (as the UK-led deployments did with regard to the defection by the RUF after the Lomé accords). What are the options for providing credible commitment by the Contact Group to enable a cease-fire in Liberia? Below are several possible ways to provide for monitoring and compliance verification to a potential Liberian cease-fire, some of which are most costly to the international community and some of which are less expensive. (Please note that the various options of each category below can be pieced together in many ways).

Table 8. Options for Monitoring a Cease-fire

- *A UN-led peacekeeping force*, directed from New York, with a Chapter VII mandate from the Security Council to robustly ensure the terms of any agreement. Such a force would be organized and commanded by UN Secretariat personnel in New York and key decisions would be taken by the Security Council, the Secretary General, and the military command structures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.
Advantages: Broadly legitimate, backed by strong international power, staying power.
Disadvantages: Costly (annually, \$300-500 million; to the U.S., about \$80-120 million per year over three year), difficult to muster support, UN control may be unwieldy, vulnerability of troops.
- *An international coalition of the willing*, or an intervention force mandated by the UN Security Council by commanded and controlled by a lead state. At present, the U.S. is unlikely to lead such a coalition. There are serious constraints to the creation of a U.S.-led international security stabilization force for Liberia at the moment. The principal immediate limiting factor the low order of the conflict on the U.S. foreign policy agenda given other more pressing issues (major war in Iraq, civil war in Côte d’Ivoire, terrorism in Kenya).

⁴⁴See further and specific recommendations in Simon Chesterman, ed. *Civilians in War*, International Peace Academy, 2001.

- Advantages:* Able to act with authority while having a broad international mandate; tied to regional interests; could disarm or eliminate any possible spoiler; clear command and control authority.
- Disadvantages:* Costly, broad international support over the long term is not guaranteed; may fall outside the umbrella of UN legitimacy; vulnerability of external troops; reliance on a single state leader for immediate success and for staying power over time.
- *A regional force*, from ECOWAS (more likely) or jointly sponsored by the African Union (less likely), comprised of troops trained in peace operations from neighboring states. May be overseen by UN military advisors and monitors; mandated to fall under the general direction of the UN Peace-building Office in Liberia. Command and control issues would be the most important aspects to negotiate). The regional force could give early meaning to a regional security pact bolstered by a force negotiated from participants in the MRU process.

Advantages: Drawn from states with the most interest in stabilizing the region; could forcibly disarm any spoiler; could use U.S.-trained battalions of Nigerian soldiers in peace operations experience under the previous African Crisis Response Initiative.

Disadvantages: Concern about repeating the mistakes of ECOMOG; ability of the UN to maintain oversight; financial cost; relationship of the regional troops to the parties in conflict may be insufficiently neutral; concerns about staying power.
 - *International Police Force.* Provides essential monitoring and training for a reconstructed Liberian police and internal security force that is able to secure the country's border to provide for regional stabilization. May be linked by mandate and command and control to the other options above. In the absence of a military force, deploying armed but not militarily capable police may be worse than doing nothing at all; comparative experience shows that monitors and police units are especially vulnerable members of peace operations when the combatants are much more heavily armed. This strategy was used to some effect in Somalia, however, during Operation Provide Comfort in 1992.⁴⁵

Advantages: Gets at the heart of the insecurity issue, provides for a demilitarization of the conflict; creates local capacity through a new integrated police force.

Disadvantages: Not sufficient at providing credible commitment; may be a risk as a force with the inability of self-protection; cannot possibly address the demands of immediate verification of containment and demobilization of forces.
 - *International Observation Mission.* Unarmed or lightly armed observers may make a difference if there is sufficient internal monitoring capability by domestic capacities (e.g., civil society groups) and a group of military and police officers willing and able to quickly form the basis of a neutral, committed, uncorrupted Liberian internal security and policing force. The observer mission could be coordinated through the United Nations Office for Peace-building in Liberia and overseen by the UN SRSG.

Advantages: Oversees essentially internal self-policed internal compliance with an accord; can work with Liberian civil society monitors; direct eyes and ears of the diplomatic process; less expensive.

Disadvantages: No capacity to respond in to cease-fire violations by the parties; observers at constant danger from abduction, violence, intimidation, other abuses.

⁴⁵ For specifics on this option, see Policing the New World Disorder: Peace Operations and Public Security, edited by Robert B. Oakley, Michael J. Dziedzic, and Eliot M. Goldberg (Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1999. Available online at www.ndu.edu/inss/books/).

- *Internal observation only.* If the Liberians themselves are sufficiently motivated for peace, there may be reason to believe that the warring parties can agree to exchange the battlefield for peace without outside assistance. This is, unfortunately, unlikely for the protagonists under arms in Liberia; giving up the gun for all those under arms means sacrificing basic personal security. Although it does not seem possible that Liberian civil society can rise up and resist in the face of armed gangs, the option of an entirely internal process should remain on this list because it should be part of any overall strategy for peacemaking in Liberia.

Advantages: Liberians own the process and take responsibility for peace in their country; the international community assists local civil society organizations and elected officials to monitor and control the demobilization of armed militias, the collecting and destroying of weapons, the reintegration program for soldiers under arms; long-term investments are made for a Liberian capacity to manage conflict constructively.

Disadvantages: The absence of a functioning state and the decimation of civil society means that the capacity simply does not exist for internal observation, much less enforcement, of a cease-fire in Liberia. Only under conditions of internal and regional security – control of the insurgent militias and government forces – can civil society be resurrected as a powerful force for peace.

Civil Society and the Peace Process

Already, international donors have put into place the mechanisms for buttressing national-level civil society outside Liberia and creating community-led mechanisms for capacity building to manage local conflict and guide reconstruction. The goal of such civil society participation is to facilitate external and internal dialogues on Liberia's future and multiply the number of bargaining forums that bring together defenders and challengers of the status quo. Such forums are generally known as "multiple track" diplomacy and have been shown to be essential in bolstering the essentially elite-level official negotiations that produce a cease-fire accord. Multi-track forums should be established early in the transition phase and should include national-level dialogue processes and a proliferation of local-level efforts to establish opportunities for dialogue and debate.

At the national level, efforts such as those of the Liberian Leadership Forum are invaluable to developing a basic consensus about the steps required for the transition phase and for the long-term future of Liberia. The Forum met, as mentioned above, in July 2002 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and was attended by a wide range of opposition elite and at least one representative close to the Taylor regime. It built on earlier meetings in 2002 that brought together Liberian civil society and political party representatives, and there has been an attempt by the Taylor regime to convene an internal dialogue process on national reconciliation.⁴⁶ Key internal conciliators in these meetings include the inter-religious council of Liberia, various civil society groups, and the Mano River Union women peace network.

The general recommendations of the Forum were highlighted in the so-called Ouagadougou Declaration, which outlines a broad consensus on the need to end armed hostilities and for a process of national reconciliation. For the official declaration and the observations of

⁴⁶ Other meetings include the Abuja, Nigeria gathering in March 14-15, 2002 and the Bethesda, Maryland meeting of June 28-29, 2002. The Morovia conference was convened in October 2002, but it is widely seen as lacking essential participation by opposition parties and opposition civil society figures.

the facilitators, these conclusions and recommendations emerge for the transitional phase of Liberia's peace process:⁴⁷

- *Civil society and the LURD.* The LURD is a legitimate party to the conflict and the armed group is backed implicitly by key opposition parties, especially those tied to the Mandingo and Krahn ethnic groups. There is considerable underground support for the LURD's political aims among leaders of Liberian civil society.
- *Civil society and ECOWAS intervention.* There is deep skepticism among civil society groups about the ability of an ECOWAS force to be neutral; there is strong preference among civil society for a UN force. There was no consensus on whether the peacekeeping force should oversee the disarmament process or how it would deal with Taylor's armed forces.
- *Political party consolidation.* Political party leaders and exiled figures do appear to be able to cooperate in advance of elections. The implications of this are important in revisiting the kind of electoral system that may be used. In 1997, Liberians agreed to a Special Election Law that allowed for proportional representation but that retained a directly elected president; the election system (addressed below) needs to be designed to provide incentives for political party coalescence.
- *Internal-external tensions.* Tensions between civil society leaders inside the country and outside the country are palpable and need to be addressed through continuing dialogue. The insiders feel that the outsiders have lost touch with on-the-ground sentiments and have lived lives of relative luxury while they have suffered; outsiders believe that they cannot return to Liberia without fear for their safety.

The relative success of these forums suggests that facilitating consensus among political social leaders in Liberia is critically important. Among the most important civil society actors at the national level are the Liberian religious organizations such as the Catholic Church, the now-suppressed independent media and human rights organizations, women's groups, and representatives. Recommendations for further national-level consensus building include the following.

- *A sustained public peace process.* A mechanism used successfully in other peace processes, notably South Africa, Tajikistan, and Northern Ireland, is a sustained meeting of a core group of representative but unofficial political and social leaders in an ongoing series of meetings to help design and oversee implementation of a peace process. A carefully selected group of influential second-tier elite with close ties to the official decision-makers – meeting regularly to build relationships among themselves – can provide an alternative forum for negotiating the difficult issues. These alternative tracks may be particularly useful in addressing issues such as amnesty, prosecution of war crimes, and compensation for the victims of violence. The essential purpose of such a process is to think ahead of the official negotiations, to probe assumptions that lie behind official positions, and to develop areas of potential consensus and obstacles to progress on the most difficult issues.⁴⁸ This mechanism is different than simply having regular conferences of prominent Liberians; instead, it is an ongoing working group, broadly representative, that provides an alternative internal channel for negotiation and that meets frequently (and often in secret) throughout the transitional period.

⁴⁷ Based on the IRI "Observations" of the July civil society/political party conference.

⁴⁸ See Harold H. Saunders, "Pre-negotiation and Circum-negotiation: Arenas of the Multilevel Peace Process," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Turbulent Peace*, pp. 483-495.

- *Civil society's role in constitution making and a national reconciliation conference.* National civil society leaders will be critical for invigorating and sustaining the impetus for significant constitutional reform. Modeled in the U.S., the current 1986 Liberian constitution – with majority rule, winner-take-all features – seems particularly ill suited to the problems faced by a post-war society. Civil society leaders have much to offer in building support for, designing, and eventually managing a new national conference to address the root-cause issues that have led to the Liberian civil wars.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has taken admirable steps to put into place the necessary civil society capacity to engage in community peace-building work through its support of a five-year “Community Peace-Building and Development Program,” to be conducted by a consortium of international and local NGOs. It is useful to make investments in civil society in the immediate and medium term with the expectation that such support will yield important returns during the transitional period and especially in longer-term efforts for post-conflict reconstruction and development. This is especially true of training and engaging local NGOs that may be able to serve as dispute management forums during the tense election period and as sources of monitors for demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration programs.

In other post-war societies, international organization and NGO observers have successfully established systematic relations with networks of local community conflict-management forums. An essential part of any international mediation strategy for peace-building in Liberia should involve a systematic approach to local empowerment through an integrated, national dispute resolution system. The benefits of such an approach are twofold. First, it provides an arena for management of local problems that could escalate into violence that threatens the overall peace process (e.g., local ethnic tensions tied to political parties). Second, it provides a network for systematically linking the civilian and military dimensions of international intervention – both official and unofficial components – directly with local communities.⁴⁹

In sum, a network of local peace and development committees such as those that will be created in the USAID-backed local civil society initiative seems well suited to lay the foundation for future peace-building tasks. The principal suggestion for the improvement of this initiative is to further develop a broader network approach to its creation and to design early a way for the local peace and development committees to integrate into national and county-based peace committees and to the international community's intervention operation.

Part of building civil society conflict-resolution capacities is investing in human capital. Below are some measures that could be taken in this regard.

⁴⁹ In South Africa, for example, the UN observer mission there linked up with a National Peace Committee run by civil society, together with a plethora of regional and local committees. With representatives of local churches, political parties, security forces (police and army) and the various militia or other armed groups (e.g., local self-defense militias), these committees managed to handle any number of disputes that may have eventually become significant enough to threaten the national peace process. Additionally, when national crises did emerge – for example, when communist party leader Chris Hani was assassinated in April 1993 – the local committees were activated to monitor protests, demonstrations, and marches.

Table 9. Measures for Conflict Resolution Capacity Building

- Supporting public information or other opinion polling to demonstrate public demands for peace and to use this information as leverage for advocating an end to the war.
- Providing community mobilization capacity building to peace groups and providing assistance to communities seeking to reduce local violence, increase local security, or to engage with local militias on protection of civilians.
- Supporting small and medium economic growth projects to increase community security, preempt the recruitment by armed factions, and demonstrate the viability of non-war livelihoods to current and former combatants.
- Providing negotiation and conflict-management training to the parties in negotiation, especially on the insurgent side. It may be useful to have the insurgents work together with other former insurgent groups that have become political players in a post-war context (e.g., the ANC in South Africa, the IRA in Northern Ireland, or even the LTTE in Sri Lanka.)
- Supporting human rights groups to monitor and report on human rights abuses, including investigating abuses to meet evidentiary standards for international human rights tribunal, use of reports to mobilize national and international public opinion, and collaboration with international human rights NGOs.
- Supporting international travel and other linkages with regional and international peace activists to promote advocacy networks.
- Supporting civil society engagement in diplomatic initiatives such as the Contact Group, ECOWAS activities, and UN Security Council deliberations.
- Direct training of Liberian NGOs for border and natural resource trade monitoring, and for cease-fire and demobilization activities.

Managing the Regional Dimension

Achieving a cease-fire in Liberia will require a multiple-level approach that seeks to contain the spillovers of the civil war into neighboring states and to manage the cross-border resource flows that keep the armies in the country with access to arms, fuel, and safe haven.

- *Fencing the Liberian arena of conflict.* To induce the Liberians to settlement, it will require seeking to isolate insofar as possible the arena of conflict (Lofa and Bong counties and along the eastern border with Côte d'Ivoire) in terms of cross-border and transnational support for the parties. That is, the international community should pursue a strategy that systematically cuts the ties to the Liberian warring factions on which they rely for markets and material support. With external support drying up, or at least achieved only at a much higher cost, the incentives for de-escalation through negotiation may become more attractive. The government of Guinea will be a key actor with regard to the LURD, and present international efforts are aimed at gaining a commitment from General Lansana Conteh's government to isolate and minimize support for the LURD. This focus should be an ongoing effort of the UN Panel of Experts process to verify compliance with the UN diamond-trading and other sanctions.
- *Cross-border monitoring.* In cooperation with UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone and the newly created army there, work toward deployment of international military and human rights observers along major trans-border corridors along the Sierra Leone frontier; engage directly with Guinea's armed forces for a military assistance program to enhance capacity along that vital frontier. The deployment of international forces in Guinea may be more problematic;

perhaps a precedent for such a force was the decision in December 1992 to place a UN “preventive deployment” mission along the border between Yugoslavia and its former constituent state, Macedonia.

- *Mano River Union process.* The dialogue process involving the Mano River Union states facilitated by Morocco is a useful channel and it should be pursued to address the interrelated causes of conflict. However, it seems unlikely that this process will make much progress in limiting Liberia’s spillover as long as the internal war situation continues to deteriorate. There is serious concern that as UNAMSIL draws down its deployment the Mano River basin will become even more lawless and inaccessible, suggesting that a cooperative approach to management of the regional interactions will run aground.

Phase 2: An Interim Administration, Demobilization, and Elections

In addition to on-the-ground security issues, a broader political pact is essential to successful elections, one that balances the pursuit of political legitimacy with the realistic fears of various parties that their interests will be undermined by electoral loss. The purpose of the pre-election pact is to starkly limit uncertainty surrounding the voting while giving meaning to the political-party competition and to public opinion in the poll.

Elections in October 2003 seem much too early for a sensible transition period by any comparable yardstick. In other conflict settings, such as Burundi, Cambodia, El Salvador, and Mozambique, a minimal two-year time frame for putting into place the necessary mechanisms to ensure human security – such as force demobilization and disarmament – has been required. To avoid the pitfalls of the 1997 elections, credible disarmament needs to occur before a legitimate test of public support for the various factions can be held. A representative transitional administration, negotiated by the international community, should be established prior to preparations for elections.⁵⁰ Additionally, the future security of all political parties in a post-election period needs to be assured at the outset, prior to elections.

Given the security situation elections in Liberia would be violence inducing and may be the catalyst for an even deeper slide into violence, particularly if the election process becomes clearly threatening to the survival of the Taylor regime. Thus, two key issues need to be addressed before elections are a viable mechanism for conflict management in Liberia.

First is the conclusion of a *pre-election pact*, likely to be struck as part of a linked agreement on a cease-fire that provides for an interim administration.

Second is further *security stabilization*, which most importantly includes the full disarmament, de-mobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of the armed factions together with the establishment of a viable, integrated national military and police.

Negotiating an Interim Administration

The essential elements of the interim administration could include the following sequence of negotiating a pact and an agreement on powers of and participation in and interim administration that could be overseen by UN-administered international administrators.⁵¹ To avoid conferring legitimacy on warlords or perpetrators of human rights abuses, the international community will need to be very clear about acceptable and unacceptable leadership of an interim administration. The guiding principle should be to select members of an interim government who are widely known to be influential with, but not directly in command of, the various militia factions and ethnic groups. The future of those commanders and other factions leaders should be negotiated in terms of a new national army, and here too international mediators will need to very

⁵⁰ In December 2001, the UN facilitated talks among the Afghan political actors to create such an administration prior to the 2002 Loya Jirga that set up a more permanent government for that failed state.

⁵¹ See “Justice under International Administration: Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan,” by Simon Chesterman (September 2002). A report from the Transitional Administrations Project, International Peace Academy. Also relevant is “Tiptoeing Through Afghanistan: The Future of UN State-Building,” by Simon Chesterman (September 2002).

involved. The Burundi peace process is one in which the international community has played an important role in trying to design a power-sharing scheme that does not legitimate warlords but offers them instead a place in the post-war military structures.

Table 10. Negotiating a Political Pact

1. A power-sharing pact negotiated in secret simultaneously with a cease-fire that includes all major factions in Liberia in a governing council and that defines the parameters of continued power sharing after the elections;
2. An interim administration overseen by the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in Liberia (UNOL) to conduct the elections in partnership with Liberia's Electoral Commission, to coordinate the delivery of massive humanitarian relief, to organize observation and monitoring, and to facilitate armed-force encampment and demobilization;
3. An agreement on an elections on the basis of proportional representation to an interim/transitional parliament and a re-definition of the role of the president; and
4. An extended national conference/constitution-making process and a longer period of transition and peace building with oversight and vigorous monitoring by the international community.

Table 11. Terms of an Interim Administration

- Parties agree to share power in legislative and executive functions during an extended transition period (of at least 12 months) in which a national conference on constitution making and reconciliation is held.
- An election based on proportional representation – ideally, through a multi-member district (MMD)⁵² system – is schedule to an interim legislative and executive councils.
- The interim assembly would come together as an elected National Conference on Constitution-Making and Reconciliation.
- Constitutional reform to create a ceremonial presidency with mostly symbolic powers.
- Creation of a new five-person Council of State and a series of committees to oversee function aspects of the government (similar to the Abuja II accord).
- Proportionality of each faction/ethnic group in a newly created army and police, to be determined by a new oversight council chaired by the international community.
- Decentralization of government power to the counties with plans for local elections during the transitional period.
- The creation of a county-based network of peace and development communities prior to the election to address voter education and to allow for community-based monitoring of the elections.
- Agreement on the terms of truth-telling and human rights investigations after the work of the National Conference is complete.

⁵² Liberians have not had good experience with a political-party based (list) system of proportional representation (PR), which was used in 1997 but did not have the result of guaranteeing influence by opposition parties; that is, list PR did not obviate a winner-take-all outcome by Taylor's National Patriotic Party. However, given the experience of Liberia with constituency-based systems (the 1986 electoral law provides for single-member districts), it may be possible to convince the Liberians to accept a multi-member system (recommendation: ten seats per constituency) which would have the indirect effect of producing an overall more proportional (i.e., less winner-take-all) result.

- A set of principles to guide a constitution-making assembly to ensure longer-term mechanisms to harmonize democracy with diversity, such as specific guarantees for minority group protection and rights.
- Equality of representation for all major parties on an independent electoral committee with international (UN) oversight and conjoint UN-ECOM administration of the voting. (Other aspects of election planning are described below).

Demobilization before Elections: Key Tasks

The abilities and constraints of international military forces to provide a secure environment for elections has been well documented and the “best practices” for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration are documented in more detail elsewhere.⁵³ Clearly the most important finding is that any intervention force must have the mandate and capacity to deter and defeat any armed challenge to the mission *or* to the election process emanating from either the government, rebel factions, or armed militias (including criminal syndicates). Spoiling includes the use of violence by the parties against peacekeepers or violence to disrupt the election, intimidate opponents, or for control of territory; international and domestic monitors must document, and external military forces be ready to confront, violence or other non-compliance by spoilers. Beyond this broad and now self-evident finding, these specific points seem especially relevant to the Liberian context at this specific juncture.

Table 12. Options for Effective Demobilization

- *Demobilization without disarmament will be ineffective*, as seen in seen in Angola, Cambodia, Burundi, and Rwanda. In situations where no or insufficient collection of issued weapons took place before demobilization created conditions under which communities fear that ex-soldiers will threaten their security. Elections with encampment, demobilization, and disarmament (with some initial steps toward military integration and police reform) will likely fail in the face of new violence as parties have incentives to escalate to prevent a loss of power at the polls.
- *Address directly the fears of mid-level military and militia leaders*. Begin very early to develop a specific roster of individuals to be included in an integrated army or police forces, and be sure to include on the list the significant mid-level military commanders who have the most to lose from a peace process. While the ordinary soldier may be satisfied to have some personal security and a minimal livelihood, mid-level military commanders face highly uncertain prospects in demobilization. For them, loss of status, fear of reprisals, loss of income flows and profit, and fear of prosecution mean not only fear of what a period of peace may bring, but sufficient paranoia about its implications to actively mobilize to oppose any change in the status quo.
- *Reconstitute basic policing and community security*. Probably the only way in which the interests these key participants in the war can met is to ensure them of a relatively similar role

⁵³ Summarized most succinctly in the Brahimi report on peacekeeping, cited above. Also useful are the various case studies of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) project on “Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project—Managing Arms in Peace Processes.” The work of the Lone-based United Nations Regional Center for Disarmament in Africa has also been useful in assessing issues such as effective methods of weapons buy-back programs.

in a reconstituted army or police. This is a difficult issue for the international community to address, precisely because these individuals are most likely to be the ones who have committed grave war crimes and human rights abuses. They may also be profiting substantially through extortion or as commercial entrepreneurs. Demobilization of such mid-level military elite should be considered in conjunction with an overall strategy for transitional justice (such as amnesty-for-truth deals) in addition to AFL integration.

- *Address legitimate soldier-level, ex-combatant security concerns.* Interviews of ex-combatants suggest that their number one concern is for their own safety once they return to their communities. For this reason above others, they seek to retain their weapons even in the event they are demobilized. They also fear theft of any support packages they may receive in the reintegration process, either from criminals or political opponents. There are no easy solutions to such concerns, other than concentrated efforts to work with local authorities to help them understand and protect demobilized combatants. Other successful approaches are post-reentry poverty alleviation programs that allow ex-soldiers to associate for their collective interest in self-help development projects. This issue requires separate and detailed planning by demobilization and reintegration specialists.
- *Cooperative international and domestic monitoring programs are most effective.* In situations where disarmament has proven more successful, more recently in East Timor, the operative model has been one of intervention force, international NGO, and local civil society monitoring and verification of the demobilization process. Such efforts may be useful in creating nascent domestic NGO-military relations for the Liberian participants. NGO roles are probably best focused on demobilization discharge centers and community reintegration, but oversight of the encampment and weapons abandonment process can also help ease fears of opposing sides that their adversaries are cheating. NGOs should be allowed to monitor the donation process of support packages to former demobilized soldiers. Involvement of NGOs in monitoring of donations can help to ensure that each demobilized soldier receives their chosen package, and that the quality of packages is as promised.

Table 13. Options for Locating and Caring for Child Soldiers

- *Sever the command ties insofar as possible.* Deal directly with the problem of forced recruitment, especially of child soldiers, by considering innovative approaches to sever the ties between the mid-level commanders who may hold considerable sway over the vulnerable recruits. Physical separation of the commanders from the rank-and-file may be the only way to achieve this aim, yet this would be the most challenging and incendiary step peacekeepers could conceivably take. In sum, this recommendation is easier made than implemented; the intervention force should seek to break the command structure of the militias to facilitate reintegration of individual child soldiers.
- *Develop specific standards, and make them publicly known,* for disarmament and demobilization and make these standards a benchmark against which the activities of the various government forces and LURD are measured. All such standards should refer clearly to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and they should be widely distributed to all peacekeepers, humanitarian relief organizations, local civil society groups, and especially any child-related agencies.

- *Separate child soldier demobilization from weapons collection.* Allow child soldiers to be demobilized without producing a weapon. In Liberia's previous peace process, for example, this policy led to the release of many more children than would have been released if they were forced to have a weapon.

Elections

The pre-election pact outlined above is recommended in addition to other detailed steps described in the USAID-sponsored January 2002 pre-election assessment report (prepared by the International Republican Institute, IRI, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, NDI, the International Foundation for Election Systems, IFES, and the Carter Center).⁵⁴ Among the most important recommendations of relevance to an international mediation strategy are: working with the Liberians on sensitive issues such as the delimitation of constituencies; voter registration; political party and candidate codes of conduct; and the creation of a nation-wide network of "peace monitors" drawn from civil society. Not surprisingly, the pre-election assessment mission concluded that: "Little foundation as yet exists for the conduct of free and fair elections in October 2003. The Elections Commission (ECOM) is lacking in funds and technical experience. Political parties are for the most part disorganized and lack resources. Civil society organizations are also inadequately resourced.... Independent media has been restricted by the government."⁵⁵

One aspect of local community engagement for peace in Liberia that seems to be broadly overlooked is the possibility of beginning with or staging local elections prior to or shortly after any national elections. Local elections were to have been held under the terms of the Abuja agreements of 1996 but have been indefinitely postponed, in part due to the deteriorating security environment. There is good reason to consider holding local elections prior to any national election, as was the case in Kosovo and East Timor (and recently in the re-democratization efforts of Nigeria and Pakistan) made sense as a peacemaking and democratization strategy.

Local elections first could serve as a testing ground of public sentiment (to reduce uncertainty) and to provide a local bulwark against a more powerful and centralized state. They tend to have lower stakes and generate less violence than national elections. And they provide early opportunities for public involvement in the peace process. Any local elections, however, should be held on along the lines of a council/professional city manager basis and not on a mayoral model given the need to promote broad consensus.⁵⁶

For meaningful elections to occur in Liberia, an optimistic timeline would envisage a period of six-month security stabilization with the following twelve months under interim administration rule to ensure that the country is sufficiently prepared to hold elections that will be seen as truly legitimate. To minimize the competition over power that have been at the root of the civil war, elections in Liberia should be for a constitution-making body that would serve as a parliament until the new charter is ratified and until elections are due again down the road.

⁵⁴ Report of the Pre-Election Assessment Mission to Liberia, January 28-February 4, 2002.

⁵⁵ Report of the Pre-Election Assessment Mission to Liberia, January 28-February 4, 2002.

⁵⁶ For further on the local election design options, see Timothy Sisk, *Democracy at the Local Level: Representation, Participation, Conflict Management and Governance*, Stockholm: International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, 2001), chapter 4.

Over an 18-month period, Liberians could engage in a thorough consideration of all the opportunities for institutional-redesign of their faltering republic, analyze ways to further provide for basic security and development, and begin to establish the terms for a process of truth-telling and reconciliation.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance), a Stockholm-based intergovernmental organization, is just completing a major project that will outline for policy makers a broad range of truth-telling and reconciliation process options. In the meantime, see *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes*, Neil Kritz, ed. (U.S. Institute of Peace, 1995).

Phase 3: Peace Building

One of the principal findings about the successful settlement of civil wars is the need for international mediators to take the very long view of “nurturing” peace and sustaining compliance with negotiated agreements well beyond the transitional phase. This involves not only staying power and an eschewal of an “exit strategy” approach, but also a carefully designed peace-building program beyond the transitional phase and into a phase known as consolidation.⁵⁸ Although it may be premature to think beyond a transitional phase in Liberia’s present war, some of the issues for the long-term may be pertinent to current negotiations on the parameters of a cease-fire settlement and they are raised here for consideration.

Elements of a Peace-Building Program

- *Security:* Training and equipping of a reconstituted Liberian military and police will take considerable time and may involve ongoing engagement by the international community for the indefinite future beyond an initial election. Putting long-term reform of the military and police on the agenda early may signal early that the international community’s engagement in Liberia will involve a sustained and determined commitment to significant reforms in the security forces. The ability of any one faction to shape the structure and nature of the security and police in the post-transitional order will be prevented by continued international attention and engagement.
- *Economic returns:* research shows that the transitional period needs to deliver clear benefits of peace to the war-weary population, and in particular a secure food and water supply, basic public services, health care, essential education and vocational training, the creation of conditions that allow for investment. Donors must be ready to encourage progress on the path to peace with tangible returns for the Liberian military, political, and social leaders and for the long-suffering public. Early involvement of the World Bank’s Post-Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit may also offer a set of real financial incentives for the parties. The unit offers expertise and resources for land-mine clearance programs, crafting economic reconstruction, military reintegration programs, and establishing institutional mechanisms for transparency with regard to natural resource commodity extraction and to closing off the profit-from-war avenues in the international economy that have been so characteristic of Liberia’s slide into anarchy.
- *Transitional justice: Truth-telling and reconciliation options.* For some parties in the Liberian civil war, fear of prosecution by an international tribunal or for post-war retribution by internal enemies may be the biggest barrier to even beginning a peace process. As with dealing with spoilers (mentioned above), the international community has a strong role to play in addressing this issue at the very outset of peace talks. When the factions in Sierra Leone’s war agreed to a blanket amnesty in the July 1999 Lomé Accord, UN mediators were put in the uncomfortable position of rejecting a peace agreement that the parties had reached through Togo’s mediation. Since the early truth commissions in Latin America, to the praised truth and reconciliation process in South Africa, and in recent experiences such as the

⁵⁸ The most up-to-date and exhaustive look at the various components of post-settlement peace-building is found in *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, edited by Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens (Lynne Rienner, 2002).

community trials in Rwanda today, the methods to address transitional justice have become more varied and sophisticated (see note 55 above).

For Liberia, a conclusion emerges of immediate relevance to international mediators. Given the failure to address the truth and reconciliation process openly in the 1996 agreements, there is even more reason now to develop specific options and explore alternative processes that fit the Liberian situation. Ignoring the brutality and human rights abuses that have so characterized the civil wars in Liberia in the present negotiations would be to repeat the mistakes of the past.

- *Assisting the next generation.* Often overlooked in the reflections on peace building are programs that address the psychological, material, social and post-trauma needs of children and youth. Because youth in the Liberian war have been both perpetrators and victims of violence, and that these youth will shape the country's future, strategic interventions to address attitudinal and social development of this population are urgent. NGO activists, anthropologists, child-development specialists, and sociologists have only recently turned their attention to evaluating sport, educational, vocational, leadership, survival skill, and other programs that are focused on youth in post-war societies.⁵⁹ Gaining commitment to the parties in conflict on a comprehensive youth rehabilitation program seem essential, as does relating planning on transitional justice to youth perceptions of translating the horrors of the past into lessons learned for the future.

⁵⁹ See Siobhan McEvoy-Levy, 'Youth, Violence and Conflict Transformation', *Peace Review* 13:1 (2001), March: 89-96.

Conclusion

Liberia's failed state and renewed civil war is seen by many observers as an intractable conflict, frozen in a cycle of depredation and violence. There appear to be few avenues for outsiders to mitigate the suffering while the war rages on and no easy options for inducing peace. Deep pessimism about the possibility of peace in Liberia is informed in by the failure of earlier international investment to broker peace in 1996-7 and the perception that all of the protagonists are culpable in the country's anarchic decline.

Yet all civil wars end, sooner or later. Comparative research on war trends shows that some are intense but brief, like in Bosnia, while others like Sudan are protracted and can continue for 25 years or more.⁶⁰ A very few, like Kashmir and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, last even longer with episodic escalation and calm. Historically most wars last, on average, about eight years. What is interestingly and importantly different about civil wars is the post-Cold War era is that when they do end, very few (about 25%) do so through a decisive military victory by one side or another. Indeed, most civil wars (about 45%) in recent years end in negotiated agreements. The end of a civil war typically occurs when the political leaders on the ground finally accept the reality that they are unable to prevail militarily, and that the war is costly and risky to their own personal interests; only then do they sue for peace.

Liberia's civil war will eventually end, and the odds are favorable that it will be settled at a negotiating table. Options exist – given the political will – for concerted engagement by a committed international community to leverage the parties to peace in Liberia. This will require choosing among those Liberians most willing and best capable to govern their society. It will require tough decisions on when and how to intervene militarily, and toward what end. And it will require very tough measures like continuing a sanctions regime that effectively stifles Liberia's economy. But with determination and a well-designed mix of reward and punishment, it may be possible for the international community to induce the warring factions in Liberia to bargain for peace sooner rather than later.

⁶⁰ See Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenberg "Armed Conflict 1989-2000," *Journal of Peace Research* 38 (5): 629-644 (2001).

Appendix: Some Measures and Benchmarks for Progress

Benchmarks for Phase 1 (Months One to Six)

Diplomatic Tasks and Goals

- ❑ Clearly define a detailed Security Council-endorsed formula with specific dates for linking cessation of hostilities with a monitoring and verification program and the deployment of monitors or observers.
- ❑ Pursue negotiations with the Contact Group on a Framework Agreement for an extended peace and reconciliation process in Liberia.
- ❑ Develop multiple channels for communication, each coordinated through the office of the UN SRSG or the head of the UNOL in Monrovia. Arrange talks about talks.
- ❑ Strengthen sanctions regime on diamond and arms trading and extend the sanctions regime to cover timber exports.
- ❑ Insist on external auditing of major government of Liberia accounts.
- ❑ Facilitate continued internal and external dialogues among key Liberian political parties; define a group of capable political leaders to negotiate the terms of an interim government to be activated in Phase 2 of the peace process.
- ❑ Use the powers of the Contact Group to legitimate – or de-legitimate – those on the Liberian scene committed or opposed to peace.

Military process

- ❑ Deploy a UN fact-finding mission to determine better the nature of the military parties on the ground, their command and control structures, linkages to political parties, and the logistical and other steps necessary for a cease-fire process and for immediately improving human rights conditions.
- ❑ Develop a plan for working within the MRU process for monitoring of cross-border flows in the region, using UNAMSIL capacities for the border with Sierra Leone and the Guinean military for the Guinea border.
- ❑ Determine terms of cease-fire conducts of conduct, registering and identification of armed forces, process for recognition, terms and conditions of immediate issues of disarmament, weapons verification, and immediate release of all child soldiers.
- ❑ Design and plan for the deployment of an international police force once the cease-fire has been verified.

Humanitarian/Civil Society Process

- ❑ Emphasize basic human security and compliance with international norms and ensure that violation of norms will be recorded; perpetrators of crimes against civilians may be prosecuted at a later date by a reconstituted Liberian judicial system.
- ❑ Put into place a detail strategy for child soldier separation, counseling, reintegration, and institutional/long-term responses to human security for this especially vulnerable population
- ❑ Train and empower local civil society to build capacity for local-level conciliation and monitoring/reporting capacities.
- ❑ Continue with national-level dialogue processes among key Liberians inside and outside the country.

Benchmarks for Phase 2 (Months Six to 18)

Diplomatic Tasks and Goals

- ❑ Further work with the Liberian opposition parties on a common agenda, platform, and a presidential candidate.
- ❑ Forge a pre-election power-sharing pact among the principal Liberian protagonists and negotiate the principles that would bind a constitution-making body. Create a governing Council of State of the principal four or five political leaders best able to work together for the common interest of all Liberians.
- ❑ Negotiate and monitor the creation of an interim administration to rule Liberia for a twelve-month window in the run-up to selections.
- ❑ Review the sanctions regime as parties cooperate in the peace process.
- ❑ Work with the Electoral Commission of Liberia to put into place measures necessary for a free and fair election. Revisit the terms of the election system.
- ❑ Expand the UNOL mandate to include election administration assistance and human rights monitoring.

Military process

- ❑ Determine terms of cease-fire conducts of conduct, registering and identification of armed forces, process for recognition, terms and conditions of immediate issues of disarmament, weapons.
- ❑ Expect spoiler violence and plan ahead for methods of responding to such violence from different sources.
- ❑ Provide direct protection to vulnerable political leaders in Monrovia.
- ❑ Conduct extensive demobilization and reintegration programs with the purpose of creating a new Liberian military and police force; separate out and indict those who may be charged with crimes of war or crimes against humanity.
- ❑ Create the core structures of a newly integrated Liberian armed forces and police, with international assistance and oversight.
- ❑ Ensure that demobilization is significantly advanced prior to proceeding or legitimizing an election process.

Humanitarian/Civil Society Process

- ❑ Create a county-based network of local peace commissions and create capacity for NGOs to be directly involved in the demobilization and reintegration process, as well as training for election monitoring.
- ❑ Design the specific processes for a truth-telling and reconciliation process in Phase 2.
- ❑ Design programs for basic community-level security.

Benchmarks for Phase 3 (Months 18 to 36)

Diplomatic Tasks and Goals

- ❑ Facilitate an extended period of power-sharing rule in post-elections Liberia.
- ❑ Continue to mediate in the Liberia political process and “nurture” peace over the long haul, especially the truth telling, reconciliation, and any process of prosecuting war criminals.

Military process

- ❑ Consolidate training for a reformed armed force and police forces and the integration of Liberian forces into broader African security arrangements.
- ❑ Build a comprehensive regional security regime for West Africa through ECOWAS and AU mechanisms.

Humanitarian/Civil Society Process

- ❑ Ensure that external development assistance is delivered in such a way as to provide tangible returns to advocates of peace and withhold assistance from elements that frustrate efforts at national reconciliation.
- ❑ Put into place significant youth and literacy projects to address the needs of this important and traumatized segment of the population.
- ❑ Develop long-term capacity for ongoing human rights, civil society, and military monitoring by Liberian NGOs.