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Building Better Foundations: Security in Postconflict Reconstruction

On any given day, tens of thousands of U.S. and international military personnel are engaged in operations that mean the difference between life and death for hundreds of thousands of people. The 1990s saw an expansion of what alternately have been called peace support, peacekeeping, or peace-enforcement operations. Whatever the term, the absence of human security in certain countries and parts of the world emerging from conflict has been a significant and continuing issue that has confronted the United States and the international community. Where U.S. military personnel have been involved in these operations, significant initial progress has been made. People stop killing, and many more stop dying. Although the U.S. military's history is mixed, the record shows that successes outweigh failures, from the significant successes at the end of World War II and the Korean conflict in the 1950s to more modest gains made in Latin America, the Balkans, Haiti, and East Timor. Clearly, the history of Afghanistan and the current situation there illustrate the pressing need to establish the security component of the postconflict equation quickly and permanently. The inability of the international community to create a capable Afghanistan in the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal has had direct and tragic consequences for international and U.S. security.[1]

Postconflict situations, by definition, have at their core a significant security vacuum that is often the proximate cause for external intervention. Indigenous security institutions are either unable to provide security or are operating outside generally accepted norms (i.e., corruption, as in the case

of Panama; abuse of power, as in the Balkans; or threats to regional security based on internal instability, as in Africa's Great Lakes region and in Afghanistan). This absence of physical human security differentiates postconflict interventions from interventions conducted solely for humanitarian reasons (e.g., natural disasters), although postconflict situations always have a large humanitarian component.

Undeniably, the four pillars of postconflict reconstruction—security, social and economic well-being, justice and reconciliation, and governance and participation—are all inextricably linked, and a positive outcome in each area depends on successful integration and interaction across them. Yet, security, which encompasses the provision of collective and individual security to the citizenry and to the assistors, is the foundation on which progress in the other issue areas rests. The following definition of security covers the broad nature of those tasks that must be executed and the services that must be delivered, hopefully and eventually, by indigenous actors on behalf of the country itself, but in the interim by outside agencies.

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Security as a concept addresses all aspects of public safety, particularly the establishment of a safe and secure environment and the development of legitimate and stable security institutions. Security encompasses the provision of collective and individual security to the citizenry and to the assistors. In the most pressing sense, it concerns securing the lives of citizens from immediate and large-scale violence and restoring the state's ability to maintain territorial integrity.[2] These security tasks may be grouped into the following clusters: control of belligerents; territorial security; protection of the populace; protection of key individuals, infrastructure, and institutions; reform of indigenous security institutions; and regional security.

The role of the external security provider naturally depends on specific circumstances. Indigenous institutions may be able to handle some tasks, so that the international assisting agencies need only support that capacity. In other cases, a country's domestic security apparatus may be unable to perform effectively, forcing outside entities to assume more responsibilities. The goal of the assisting agencies—whether other nations, a coalition, or a mixed government/private partnership—is therefore to execute immediate security tasks that the host nation cannot while reconstructing or strengthening the self-sufficiency of indigenous institutions.

The Security Issue

Just as the absence of conflict is not peace, the imposition of order is not the provision of security. During the last decade, only half of the attempts to stabilize a postconflict situation and prevent a return to large-scale violence have been successful.[3] The potential for a return to violence is so strong that, once international military forces have intervened to improve or stabilize a security situation, they are extremely difficult to extract. Transition to less extraordinary, more traditional forms of long-term developmental assistance, conducted by government agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank as well as by civilian engagement by NGOs and private enterprise, often stalls, leading to a two-dimensional problem from both a U.S. and an international standpoint. As conditions improve, international military forces find themselves executing tasks for which their comparative advantage is eroding, yet they are unable to transfer responsibility to either more appropriate international agencies or local actors. They thus end up in open-ended commitments, reducing their strategic flexibility. International soldiers in the Balkans, whose original responsibilities were controlling belligerent groups and countering their actions, are now escorting children to school and conducting drug awareness and prevention training. Although military forces are well suited to coercion, deterrence, and the imposition of order, building a stable security environment in postconflict reconstruction situations has proven costly in terms of both time and money. Much of that difficulty can be traced to an inability to develop, access, organize, and focus U.S. and international capabilities that can contribute to security under these changing conditions.

The basic security question is two-dimensional: who and what must be protected, and from whom?[4] Among the elements to be protected are the general populace (especially the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children); selected key individuals; infrastructure; institutions; humanitarian aid workers; and the intervening security force itself. This focus on protection must couple with a persistent offensive effort to remove the capacity for groups and individuals to engage in illegitimate violence. To control belligerents, any cease-fire must be enforced (either in the context of a larger political agreement or as a confidence-building measure that supports progress to such an agreement). Additionally, comprehensive efforts must be made to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate combatants either into their hometown communities or into reconstituted or rebuilt military and non-military security forces and organizations (border patrols, customs, territorial reserves, etc.). Territory must be secured through a combination of

border/boundary, movement, and point-of-entry controls. Finally, this entire effort must be pursued in the context of regional security initiatives to gain cooperation and prevent unhelpful interference from regional actors. Clearly, this universe of security tasks encompasses much more than a narrowly conceived military role.

Addressing Key U.S. Gaps and Shortfalls

A return to any sense of normalcy depends on the provision of security. Refugees and internally displaced persons will wait until they feel safe to go home; former combatants will wait until they feel safe to lay down their arms and reintegrate into civilian life or a legitimate, restructured military organization; farmers and merchants will wait until they feel that fields, roads, and markets are safe before engaging in food production and business activity; and parents will wait until they feel safe to send their children to school, tend to their families, and seek economic opportunities.

How the intervening force provides this security is of secondary significance, if at all, to the affected population.[5] What is essential is whether this force retains control of the security situation while facilitating a more peaceful and orderly environment and limiting the influence of opponents of the peace process. The question for U.S. policymakers should not be "Do we need robust policemen or constrained military forces?" but rather "How can security be best achieved?"

When a situation is perceived as generally static (accords have been reached) and only slightly more unstable than normal, operations will emphasize efficiency. They will strive to maximize benefits rationally while minimizing risks and costs (including to the security forces themselves) and will consist of a small deployment of minimally armed and constrained forces—so as not to inflame the situation and to present as little affront as possible to the sovereignty of the host nation. In order to meet minimum expected requirements, the intervening forces will need only to "dial up," or add, capabilities to an observer/monitor force. Rwanda in the aftermath of the Arusha Accords in 1993–1994,[6] the Balkans in 1994–1995, and Kosovo in 1998–1999 exemplify this approach.

Alternatively, when the primary criterion is effectiveness and the situation is dynamic and only slightly less violent than during war, intervening forces will use a different approach. Notably in the Balkans in 1995 and 1996, in Sierra Leone in 1999, and in the later stages of operations in Kosovo, ground forces were deployed with the clear capacity to make war and intimidate violent groups. Rules of engagement, not physical capacity, constrained the forces. The security forces thus had the ability both to re-

spond and preempt. Yet, even these extraordinary military efforts, largely successful at the outset, were oriented around belligerent forces and organizations, leaving many of the individual components of the security situation unaddressed, thereby creating long-term security problems. Central actors in the conflict were not held immediately accountable, and members of belligerent organizations reverted to crime as well as corrupt economic and political activities to the detriment of final settlements. Subsequently, rebuilding legitimate indigenous security institutions as part of a minimally capable state did not progress as quickly as possible.

Five key areas offer opportunities to develop, access, organize, and focus capability better to meet pressing security needs:

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- unity of effort;
- integrated security forces;
- demobilization, demilitarization, and reintegration (DDR);
- regional security and reconstruction of security institutions; and
- information and intelligence.

UNITY OF SECURITY EFFORT

Dozens of U.S. agencies play a vital role in providing security in postconflict situations. At the national level, the National Security Council (NSC), the Departments of State and Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are often the lead actors. USAID, the Departments of Justice and the Treasury, and other government agencies are also involved. Although the U.S. ambassador, as a representative of the president, retains overall responsibility for U.S. activity within a given country, the Defense Department has the most robust structure for planning and execution regionally and within a given country. Other agencies in the region may have quite specific responsibilities, rather than broad authorities.

These layers of hierarchy, "stovepipes," and lack of infrastructure create an environment that is not conducive to clear direction and effective and efficient action. Reforms are needed to redress the fragmentation in guidance, planning, and execution of security efforts at the national and regional levels and to provide necessary staffing to the responsible leadership on the ground.

Some headway is being made in this effort. Today, a staff member from Interaction (the umbrella NGO organization) is stationed with Central Command to liaise between military and NGO efforts in Afghanistan. Au-

thorization for this slot will expire, however, in the summer of 2002, and although a single liaison improves information exchange, truly integrated effort requires staff input at the regional command and the operational level for both planning and execution. The U.S. government has integrated staffing between agencies to address specific needs such as those of the counter-drug Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATFs) established during the 1990s. JIATFs have adapted to integrate staff not only from different domestic agencies, but also staff, equipment, and leadership from the international community. These organizations are based in the United States and are not deployable.

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The latest Defense Planning Guidance directs the creation of standing JIATFs within each of the regional combatant commands to assist with planning and the operational control of forces assigned in a crisis or to accomplish a mission in a distant theater of operations. The U.S. Joint Forces Command is crafting the design and operational concepts for these new regional organizations and for a Joint Interagency Coordinating Group (JIACG) located at the regional command headquarters, improving on the model established in the counter-drug JIATF. The new staffs at headquarters and in the field will significantly improve coordination between government agencies and should integrate staff from NGOs that are operating within a region. Establishing an experienced, practiced, and integrated civil-military staff that can conduct assessments, develop operational plans, and provide supervision and centralized guidance to on-the-ground operational organizations will be a major step forward.

Unity of effort also suffers from a lack of consistency in regional responsibilities. The areas of responsibility of different positions within the State and Defense Departments and regional commands do not coincide. For example, while the State and Defense Departments have regional deputy assistant secretaries solely assigned to Africa, the military commander responsible for Africa is also responsible for Europe, parts of Central Asia, and Russia. The military commander (CENTCOM) for the Middle East is also responsible for part of the Horn of Africa. Agencies must therefore plan, operate, and coordinate not only among their own different levels of staff, but also with multiple leaders at each level of other agencies.

To remedy key U.S. gaps and shortfalls, the United States should:

- Provide each regional combatant command's new permanent JIATF with staff to integrate other government agencies, international partners, and

the NGO community into its planning and operational functions. The Defense Department should accommodate expanded NGO and interagency staffing at the combatant commander level.

- Integrate USAID's concepts of humanitarian assessment teams and disaster-assistance response teams to include the broader interagency and NGO communities. These assessment and assistance response teams should provide comprehensive assessments of the in-country situation to the NSC, combatant commanders, and the JIACG/JIATF.
- Align the areas of responsibility within the Defense and State Departments, the Joint Staff, and the regional combatant commands.
- Continue to expand military unit training and mission rehearsals and offer participation opportunities to government agencies and NGOs involved in postconflict reconstruction.

INTEGRATED SECURITY FORCES

As conditions change, the overall security situation no longer warrants the large presence of military forces prepared to engage in high-intensity combat with belligerents. This achievement, however, often occurs well before legitimate indigenous security institutions are organized, trained, and equipped to assume security responsibilities. The strains within the intervening military forces as they adapt their roles and force levels to the changing security situation, coupled with the inability of the indigenous security forces to assume increased responsibility, creates a security gap.[7]

To address this gap effectively, organizations that can interact with international agencies and regional state entities must conduct a combination of integrated defensive and offensive measures. The security situation also calls for diverse capabilities—including border patrol; customs support; weapons collection; large-scale (belligerent groups) and targeted (indicted persons) apprehension conducted in coordination with police; and DDR— that do not fall directly within the purview of a military force focused on high-intensity conventional combat.[8]

Conventional wisdom holds that extended peace-support missions degrade a military's combat capability. With combat skills as the core competency of military forces, many have viewed peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations as "lesser-included cases" ("Soldiers can make peace, but peacekeepers can't fight wars.").[9] This thinking has begun to shift. Some have called for reestablishing not only medium-weight forces that can more rapidly respond while carrying significant combat capability, but also for forces to bridge the capabilities gap between lightly armed and relatively incapable forces that cannot achieve escalation dominance and modernized forces that are tailored for high-intensity combat.[10]

Some countries, instead of trying to emulate the United States in combat capability, have sought to carve out niche functions with a comparative advantage in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement capabilities. The Canadians have gone so far as to shift the central rationale and training focus of their conventional ground forces to preparing for and executing peacekeeping and peace-support operations. Other countries with a tradition of national police organizations that possess paramilitary skills (notably Germany, France, and Italy) offer manpower and training capacity. European countries have had some success with the Baltic Battalion and the Nordic Brigade—multinational forces organized under a broad mission statement that encompasses postconflict peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

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A security force with the requisite staffing, organization, and equipment to execute the broad range of integrated security tasks necessary to fill the security gap described above could conduct preemptive measures; support DDR; conduct border surveillance and patrol; engage in crowd control; pursue and engage belligerent groups; and support police apprehensions. Such a force could more effectively accomplish the transition tasks that so often plague postconflict reconstruction efforts, while relieving international military units of many of the operational deployments that allegedly drain combat effectiveness.[11]

To integrate security forces, the United States should mandate the establishment of a bipartisan commission reporting to Congress and supported by the Defense, State, and Justice Departments to examine the feasibility of organizing a U.S. or international integrated security force for use in postconflict reconstruction. The commission should issue recommendations on the structure and integration of this force and the nature of U.S. contributions to its establishment, organization, employment, and sustainment.

DEMOBILIZATION, DISARMAMENT, AND REINTEGRATION (DDR)

Dealing with combatants, whether they are organized in formal national security forces, paramilitary units, or private militias, is one of the most pressing and recurring challenges of any postconflict situation. Failure to respond to this problem adequately and to promote combatants' incorporation into a legitimate security organization, or more frequently a return to civilian life, leads to long-term difficulties across all areas of reconstruction. Although DDR is not a clean three-step process, a viable and seamless strategy must dismantle command and control structures; relocate soldiers to communi-

ties; limit the circulation and individual possession of weapons and small arms; and provide employment, educational opportunities, and community reintegration programs. U.S. responsibility and capacity for DDR currently stretches across various government agencies.[12]

To coordinate strategy and promote a more holistic response, the United States should create an office to handle matters concerning DDR. Located within USAID, this unit would possess lead responsibility for developing a coherent strategy for DDR, coordinating it, and managing it financially. The office would include staff from relevant agencies from the State and Defense Departments in order to strengthen planning capacity and the ability to respond to urgent DDR needs.

REGIONAL SECURITY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

The regional context in which reconstruction efforts are undertaken offers both opportunities and obstacles. Although interested regional parties often wield considerable local influence, possess substantial infrastructure, offer proximity, and can act as a source of intelligence and information, they also may be interested in seeing a particular faction represent an important security, cultural, or economic interest that could skew reconstruction efforts. In regions where postconflict reconstruction efforts occur, the mechanisms to channel regional interests into productive and supportive relationships are often limited. The existence of regional security arrangements can help curtail the detrimental influence of those who wish to continue violence or to bend the reconstruction efforts to their own advantage.

Two benefits accrue from enhancing regional security. First, this capacity will provide additional leadership potential when postconflict reconstruction occurs. Put simply, more nations will have the ability to adopt the lead role and intervene to stop or alleviate the conflict at an early stage. Regional interaction gives the United States more confidence in and access to military and government leaders and national facilities. Also, professional security forces that are inculcated with the rule of law and higher standards of conduct reduce the potential for conflict. Beyond bilateral programs, regional organizations can disseminate ethics and skills and build cross-national confidence in tense regions. Successful examples of bilateral and multilateral organizations and training for peacekeeping and peace enforcement include those conducted under NATO's Partnership for Peace initiative, the Multinational Peace Force Southeastern Europe (MPFSEE), and the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI).

In a related area, established professional norms and related training institutions ensure that progress within countries and regions is sustainable, thereby reducing the need for continued extraordinary external assistance

and oversight. Current programs and procedures for the reconstitution or reform of indigenous security forces, however, are fragmented and unfocused. Education and training programs for indigenous military and security forces tend to be organizationally, rather than functionally, focused. They lack integrated goals, instructional materials, and methodology. Training, education, and information exchange programs for indigenous security forces are spread between various departments and are separated by statutory and regulatory restrictions that inhibit comprehensive, integrated, and responsive engagement. Recent trends in using private military companies (PMCs) to provide training and expertise have further complicated the issue.[13] Formal education and reconstitution programs focus on the uniformed military rather than conducting a comprehensive reconstitution and reform of all government agencies that possess coercive capability. The result is a patchwork effort on the ground and an ineffective method of transferring expertise and a system of professional ethics to the country's security institutions.

To encourage regional security and the reconstruction of indigenous security institutions, the United States should:

• Support and strengthen regional efforts to provide forces that can respond to postconflict reconstruction requirements, such as ACRI and MPFSEE. The United States should seek other venues within established regional organizations to support the development of similar regional security capabilities.
• Revise and rationalize all aspects of training transfer to improve the ability to provide progressive and sustainable institutional training to host-nation militaries. The State, Defense, and Justice Departments should form an interagency task force to rationalize and integrate security force training. International military exchanges must be focused, with individual training and assignments complementing unit training and combined exercises. Assessment methods should be devised to determine, in conjunction with the host country, the needs and the plans for institutionalizing the training of indigenous security forces.
• Review the use of PMCs to provide training and education where appropriate and successful, thus allowing government organizations to focus on the direct provision of security.

INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE

A relative lack of information and intelligence has also hampered security forces engaged in postconflict reconstruction, with considerable negative impact at both the strategic and operational levels. In the Great Lakes Re-

gion of Africa, for example, one U.S. defense attaché oversaw multiple countries in the 1990s. The situation was similar in the Balkans in the 1990s when the U.S. attaché in Austria was accredited to multiple countries in the region.

Fragmented information- and intelligence-sharing systems compound the problem. NGOs frequently possess valuable information but are reluctant to share intelligence with security forces for fear of reducing their rapport with the supported population and increasing their own risk by appearing partial. For their part, security organizations loathe sharing information with NGOs because sharing information risks compromising operations and sources.

Additionally, some information resources that the U.S. government specifically denies itself could be useful. Currently, returning Peace Corps volunteers are prohibited from work as linguists or analysts with any U.S. agency that gathers intelligence. The practice of separating Peace Corps members from intelligence gathering activities while they are on assignment in a country has historic, legitimate reasons, but

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safeguards could be established to allow returning volunteers with knowledge of a country to impart their analytical and language skills to agencies here in the United States. Several other agencies also currently honor the Memorandum of Agreement between the CIA and the Peace Corps, which prohibits returning volunteers from working for the agency.

Some current initiatives to remedy these information and intelligence gaps are promising, but they are not yet adequate to the task. Commanders may form humanitarian-assistance survey teams, for example, that can provide initial, up-to-date information on military operations, threat assessments, mapping support, and contact lists, thus sharpening military support for humanitarian assistance. These teams, however, fall short of providing a comprehensive liaison with NGOs. Civil Military Operations Centers (CMOCs) that bring civilian agencies and organizations into military planning, coordination, and execution activities at an appropriate level have been successfully used at the operational and tactical level to exchange information. NGO participation is voluntary, however, and threats to cut military support have at times been used to coerce attendance. Additionally, the CMOC is focused on the operational and tactical requirements of horizontal integration and has no parallel at the strategic or national level.

Technical efforts to manage and disseminate information with the Disaster Assistance Logistics Information System (DALIS) have progressed. This

system integrates and tracks logistics requirements and support operations but does not provide "one-stop shopping," a comprehensive picture of the situation on the ground, to NGOs and military and civilian agencies. The United States can improve the sharing of general information without compromising sources or the standings of NGOs.

To increase information and intelligence, the United States should:

- Increase staffing for defense attaché positions and foreign-area officers. Relevant agencies should review their prohibition on employing returned Peace Corps volunteers as analysts and linguists. Using the skills possessed by returning volunteers could protect the status of in-country volunteers and still maintain the impartiality and objective nature of the Peace Corps.
- Give the director of central intelligence the lead in creating a system for sharing information in postconflict reconstruction operations at the national level and between government agencies and the NGO community. The DALIS and other similar systems can serve as models, with the ultimate goal of providing a general information system to selected users on the Internet.

Conclusion

The international community, including the United States, possesses enormous capability to have a positive influence on the security situation in states and regions emerging from conflict. Indigenous populations and agencies remain ultimately responsible for improving and sustaining their situation, and returning the execution of security tasks to the host country must be the paramount objective. In the foreseeable future, calls for U.S. leadership and international participation in postconflict reconstruction will continue. If the United States is to continue to lead the international community and secure its global interests without scattering its military around the globe in long-term deployments in which it does not have comparative advantage, then it must develop and focus military and civilian talent and capabilities to accelerate the transition from external security assistance to sustainable indigenous capacity.

Notes

1. See David Bentley and Robert Oakley, "Peace Operations: A Comparison of Somalia and Haiti," Strategic Forum, INSS, National Defense University, no. 30, May 1995; Steven Metz, "The American Army in the Balkans: Strategic Alternatives

and Implications," Strategic Studies Institute, USAWC, January 2001; "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/docs/part3.htm (accessed April 25, 2002) (hereinafter Brahimi Report).

2. Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework* (CSIS and Association of the U.S. Army, May 2002), http://www.pcrproject.org (accessed July 16, 2002).

3. Jean-Paul Azam, Paul Collier, and Anke Hoeffler, "International Policies on Civil Conflict: An Economic Perspective," December 14, 2001, p. 2, http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ball0144/azam_coll_hoe.pdf (accessed July 17, 2002).

4. For a discussion of how security concepts have changed with the dynamics of state and nonstate actors, see James Rosenau, "Strategic Links in an Emergent Epoch: From People to Collectivities and Back Again" (conference paper, May 2000); Lloyd Axworthy, "Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World," April 1999.

5. World Bank, *Voices of the Poor* (1999), p. 186.

6. See Scott Feil, "Preventing Genocide: How the Early Use of Force Might Have Succeeded in Rwanda" (Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1998).

7. William Durch, *Security and Peace Support in Afghanistan: Analysis and Short- to Medium-Term Options* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, June 2002).

8. Although the Brahimi report did not recommend a UN force, it did make recommendations on staffing, integrated planning, and rapid deployment. See also Thomas Ricks, "The Price of Power—Ground Zero: Military Must Change for 21st Century," *Wall Street Journal*, November 12, 1999, p. A1; Elaine Sciolino, "Bush Aide Hints Police Are Better Peacekeepers than Military," *New York Times*, November 17, 2000; U.S. General Accounting Office, *European Security: U.S. and European Contributions to Foster Stability and Security in Europe*, GAO-02-174 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), November 2001; Ann Scott Tyson, "Wider Mission Stretches Military," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 2, 2002, p. 1.

9. T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War* (New York: Bantam, 1991). See also Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, eds., *America's First Battles: 1776–1965* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas, 1986).

10. See the Army Transformation Web site, http://www.army.mil/vision/transformationinfo.htm (accessed July 16, 2002). See also Col. Doug MacGregor, *Breaking the Phalanx: A New Design for Landpower in the 21st Century* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997); Carl Conetta and Charles Knight, *The Logic of Peace Operations: Implications for Force Design*, Project on Defense Alternatives, http://www.comw.org/pda/webun.htm (accessed April 15, 2002).

11. David Jablonsky and James S. McCallum, "Peace Implementation and the Concept of Induced Consent in Peace Operations," *Parameters* (spring 1999): 54–70.

12. See Office of African Affairs, International Security Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Policy Options Paper: Improving United States Support to Demobilization, Demilitarization, and Reintegration in Sub-Saharan Africa," May 2002.

13. See Tony Vaux et al., "Humanitarian Action and Private Security Companies: Opening the Debate," *International Alert*.