

**WAR ENDINGS AND THE BUILDING OF
SECURE POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES:
The Case of Liberia**

**Dr. Thomas Jaye
London, May 2002**

Published by the
Foundation for Security and Development in Africa
(FOSDA)
as part of its Working Paper Series of 2002

ISBN 9988 8117-2-1

The views expressed in this book solely belong to the author and
do not necessarily reflect the views of FOSDA

May 2002

THE AUTHOR

Thomas Jaye writes on African conflict and regional security issues. Some of the issues discussed in this monograph are examined in greater detail in a forthcoming book by author on war, peace and security in Africa. He is a founding member of FOSDA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In writing this booklet, I had to count on a number of people for their input and insight, without which important information on Liberia would not have been included. To this end, I am profoundly grateful to Napoleon Abdulai whose perseverance I really admire and serves as an encouragement for completing this work. During the preparation of the final manuscripts, Afi Yakubu offered very useful suggestions for which I am most thankful. Latifa Gawi also provided me with very useful comments which I have appreciated highly. Kpedee Woiwor and the entire staff of FOSDA also offered their invaluable support in proof reading and typesetting for which I am indeed gratified and thankful.

Thank you.

Thomas Jaye
May2002

Content	PAGE
THE AUTHOR	3
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
INTRODUCTION	6
DEFINING 'WAR ENDINGS' AND SECURITY	6
ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT	8
CIVIL WAR AND SECURITY PROBLEMS	10
LIBERIA: BUILDING A SECURE ENVIRONMENT AFTER THE WAR	11
Regional Dimension.....	14
AGENCIES ESTABLISHING A SECURE POST-CONFLICT LIBERIA	14
IMPLICATIONS FOR POST-CONFLICT PEACE BUILDING.....	15
NOTES.....	16

WAR ENDINGS AND THE BUILDING OF SECURE POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES: THE CASE OF LIBERIA

Abstract

Between 1989 and 1997, Liberia was engulfed by civil war which affected every facet of Liberian life and threatened regional security. Following internal and external pressures, elections were held in July 1997, which many thought, marked the effective end of the war. The task of building a secure post-war society has been fraught with difficulties, and war has erupted once more in the north of the country. This paper argues that peace building is about addressing the underlying causes of a conflict, and meeting the long-term broader security needs of the people. It points out that while elections are a necessary step in bringing a war to end, it is not a guarantee for security, peace and democracy. Finally, it argues that external actors can only facilitate the peace building process but that 'peace' can only be sustained by the will and commitment of the internal actors.

INTRODUCTION

It has been nearly five years since the National Patriotic Party (NPP) government led by Charles Taylor came to power in Liberia. Though many observers prematurely thought that the elections of 19 July 1997 marked an effective end of the violent phase of the conflict, and the beginning of the building of a secure post-conflict society, the process of peace building in that West African country has been fraught with difficulties. The view that the elections of 1997 would terminate the war and bring about peace has been proved untenable.

In Liberia today, there is neither peace nor democracy. The elections only ushered in what has been termed 'fragile peace'. The social, economic and political problems afflicting the country are receiving perfunctory attention

For example, almost five years after the elections, there is no electricity in Monrovia and drinking water remains a luxury item. As will be discussed later, the human rights record of the regime is appalling; the economy is far from recovery; broader political participation has been curtailed; and the foreign policy of the NPP is bellicose as evidenced by its active involvement in Sierra Leone. What are the implications of the Liberian experience for peace building elsewhere in Africa? What does the Liberian experience tell us about 'war endings'? These and many others are the primary focus of this paper.

DEFINING 'WAR ENDINGS' AND SECURITY

The termination of war and the establishment of durable post-conflict security involve complex processes. As the history of war termination shows, it is often very difficult to precisely define when a war is brought to an end. There is no universally agreed definition of 'war ending'. For example, Roy Licklider argues that a war is ended when the level of violence has dropped below 1,000 battle

deaths per year for at least five years. He further points out that one crucial question that links to the end of wars is how one handles the underlying issues of the conflict in order to avoid renewed civil violence on a large scale.¹ Writers like Lewis Croser assert that there is no precise termination point of social conflicts. The contenders in the conflict must reach an agreement. If such agreement is not reached during fighting, it takes place after the total destruction of at least one of the antagonists.²

On this point, perhaps, it should be pointed out that the end of civil war is never a zero-sum game because such an outcome only builds up the conditions for renewal of hostilities in the future.

Clearly, in the short term, the ending of the fighting is a defining factor. Patrick Regan asserts that containing the overt military violent phase is a necessary step towards diplomatic initiatives.³ As George Modelski writes, a conflict is settled or terminated when violence is reduced, and more importantly, when the end of the war serves as a landmark beyond which renewed violence becomes illegitimate. During this phase of war ending, the political system remains intact, and the identities of the contestants are maintained on the basis of an explicit agreement. In this light, the outcome is a compromise, partial success for both sides.⁴

The end of the armed violent phase of a conflict must necessarily provide an opportunity to address the underlying issues of the conflict. Such a condition creates the environment for sustainable peace. This involves conflict resolution, a tall order that is only achievable over a protracted period of time. However, it is very vital for pursuit of the long-term objectives of peace building because, as Fred Ikle points out, wars have the tendency to transform the future. They move boundaries, topple governments, expand or break up empires, and leave scars of death and destruction. They sharpen feelings of hostility and create fears that an opponent might again resort to violence.⁵

Peace building or the building of secure post-conflict societies is an important ingredient in making war unattractive to armed factions. In this light, peace building should be viewed as a macro-approach to conflict prevention, which will address the long-term social, economic and political needs of the war-torn country.⁶ Even the World Bank shares this view, indicating that post-conflict reconstruction should aim at facilitating the transition to sustainable peace after fighting has ended, and supporting economic and social development.⁷ Even though one is fully aware that the World Bank places emphasis on neo-liberalism and prefers market forces over the public interest. This has been the story the outcomes of the Structural Adjustment Programme which has been implemented across Africa and elsewhere at the insistence of the IMF and the Bank.

The building of secure and less threatened society is vital for post-war reconstruction because when the armed violent phase of a war ends, it does not necessarily bring about the end of structural violence, one of the major causes of the conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, we should rather be talking about promoting the broader security needs of the people, than speaking about PEACE - tranquillity and the absence of violence.

What then is security? Whose security and what kind of security? Various writers have answered these questions differently. Therefore, I do not intend to go through the contested terrain of definitions. I only wish to point out that answers to these questions are vital because of their policy relevance. Traditionally, the concept of security has focused on its military dimension and the preservation of the integrity of states. Barry Buzan broadened it to include other dimensions: societal, economic, political, and environmental in addition to military.⁸ However, Buzan's analysis is essentially centred on the state. It is Ken Booth who provides a more comprehensive understanding. According to him, though traditionally the primary referents of security have been states, they are by no means the only possible candidates as primary referents. Alternatives include

nations, ethnic and kinship groups, individual human beings, and ultimately the whole (potential) global community of humankind.⁹ States are viewed as primary referents of security because they are seen as guardians of 'their peoples' security from external and internal threats but invariably, it is regime security that dominates.¹⁰ Regimes are the primary sources of the insecurity of their peoples. Security is employed in this paper therefore in its broader sense, which encompasses both its military and non-military dimensions. Human or societal security is primary because as Caroline Thomas suggests, such a way of thinking about security has implications both for understanding the sources of threats to security and for elucidating strategies to increase security.¹¹ In what follows therefore, I strongly argue that it is the lack of security in the broader sense of the word that caused the Liberian conflict. In light of the above, in order to minimise the recurrence of armed violent conflicts, it is important to address the broader security needs of the vast majority of the people.

ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

Much has been written about the origins of the Liberian conflict but for this paper, it is vital to highlight some of its underlying causes. The relevance of this is that it enables us to properly assess whether the end of the conflict has brought about any fundamental changes in the country. Liberia was established in 1822 and declared independent on 26 July 1847. According to the Liberian academic, D. Elwood Dunn, since independence, 'Liberia has sought to experiment with democracy, but its political experience has not been a democratic one.'¹² Though a product of a complex African past, the Liberian state which emerged during the early part of the nineteenth century was more of a reflection of an American past than the convergence of two equal cultures. African and Western. Dunn also points out that, a settler representative government was established with few rights for the indigenous majority.¹³

Furthermore, as was the case with post-colonial African states, the Liberian state was characterised by personal rule, and it served as an instrument of domination by a tiny stratum of the ruling elite. Perhaps the point should be made here that as in other African countries, state power in Liberia has been the arena of privilege and status in society. It has been accessible to ambitious people of humble origin who see political activity as a way of securing capital.¹⁴ Associated with personal rule was patronage, which became the cornerstone of political control.

The successive presidents of Liberia became one after another overlord in the tripartite state structure. They were unaccountable to the governed. This system was strengthened under True Whig Party (TWP) rule because the country was a one-party state. Doe tried to establish his own version of one-party state but could not easily do so. Maybe this is why the broadening of political participation has been crucial for security and stability in Liberia.

What has been lacking is security, particularly human security as opposed to regime security. Unfortunately, the latter has been the major pre-occupation of successive Liberian regimes. As will be shown later in this paper, it is evident that Taylor has fallen into this trap. Human security, as opposed to regime security, is about the fulfilment of material needs, and it is also about achieving human dignity, which incorporates personal autonomy, control over one's life, and unhindered participation in the life of the community. It is therefore engaged with discussions of democracy.¹⁵ Therefore, to reiterate, in pre-war Liberia, the vast majority of the people were insecure in their own country because successive regimes failed to cater for the wider security needs of the population. Politically, the people were so marginalized that they never felt part of the national political system. The situation was so bad that every time you tried to talk about the wrongs in society, you were told to 'leave the people's thing alone'. To the vast majority of the people, the business of high politics

belonged only to a small group of people: members of the ruling party. But the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) and its auxiliary organisations challenged and shattered this notion of politics by bringing the latter into the home of every citizen through its political awareness programme.

In the social and economic spheres, the situation was even worse. Just as in other African countries, external economic factors played a significant role in making the vast majority of the people insecure. Liberia's unequal relationship to the global capitalist economy reduced the country to a source of cheap raw materials and cheap labour. In the 1970s, 5 out of every 7 business enterprises were foreign-owned, and the big multinational companies in Liberia carted away the resources. They left very little for development, which is inseparable from security.

The ordinary people were left at the whims of market forces. For example, in the iron ore mining sector, it was estimated that out of every dollar made, only 16 cents remained in Liberia.¹⁶ Even the little that was left, was consumed by a tiny stratum of the society- the elite. There was a disparity between the rich and poor. The disparity was so dismal that about 3.4 percent of the population was expropriating 60.4 percent of the national wealth.¹⁷

The vast majority of the people in the rural areas (approximately 70 percent of the population) lived in poverty, earning an annual income of \$70, and illiteracy stood at 80 percent. Despite unprecedented financial assistance by the US Government to the Doe regime, there was no evidence of any well-thought-out socio-economic or political programmes geared at addressing the problems afflicting the country. Between 1980 and 1985 the US government provided \$500 million dollars in aid (including \$65 million as military assistance). This figure compares with US assistance of \$400 million for the entire period from Liberia's independence in 1847 until the coup of 1980.¹⁸ The aid monies amounted to one third of Liberia's annual budget and served to strengthen the Doe regime. At the time, a top US official for African Affairs, Chester Crocker argued in favour of continuing aid to the regime because he believed that the reduction of aid to Liberia could 'provoke chaos and bloodshed.'¹⁹ This position contradicts everything the US claims to be promoting in the Third World, particularly, democracy. From this statement, it is evident that US programmes to promote democracy has less to do with the democracy and development; and more to do with maintaining the status quo and undermining the positions of those who sought alternative paths to development. In this light, US policy towards Liberia suited the geo-economic interests of the former than anything else.

Doe was obsessed with regime security; his decade of rule was characterised by intimidation, harassment, threats, repression and arbitrary arrests of perceived and real enemies. This is why Sam Amoo could be correct in saying that though these practices existed in pre-Doe Liberia, they were taken to a pathological level by Doe and his cabal.²⁰ Like in previous regimes, the pressure of economic crisis led to the further deterioration of the socio-economic problems in Liberia. The Liberian experience shows that foreign capital is also very much hostile to the welfare of the people. It promotes societal and human insecurity.

To sum up, between 1847 (when Liberia was declared independent) and 1989 (when the seven-year civil war erupted), the majority of Liberians were on the fringes of the society in social, economic and political terms. There were human rights problems and lack of broader political participation. Many of the people suffered from abject poverty. It is the net effect of all these that produced the seven-year war and added severe security problems to a country already having internal security problems. In order to resolve the underlying causes of the Liberian war, there is a need to fully address these issues or risk renewed fighting as we are seeing in Lofa County.

CIVIL WAR AND SECURITY PROBLEMS

Conflicts have the strong tendency to cause new security problems because there are always emerging issues, actors, goals and contexts that are always difficult to reconcile. As Charles King argues, wars are emotional enterprises and the move to redress past wrongs by perpetuating more heinous crimes in the present is so appealing to belligerents that they find it extremely difficult to contemplate any form of compromise with their opponents.²¹ These views are supported by the fact that in addition to the above-mentioned security problems that constitute the origins of the Liberian crisis, like conflicts elsewhere in the world, the Liberian civil war has created its own security problems. Mention of few will suffice.

Firstly, there is the issue of arms proliferation. By 10 February 1997, just four months before the elections of 19 July, about 61.1% of the reportedly estimated 60,000 fighters had been disarmed. On the basis of the revised figure of 33,000 fighters, this amounted to about,²² 332 fighters who had been disarmed. The rest remained unaccounted for. In addition, of the 9,579 weapons collected, 7,797 were serviceable and 1,782 were unserviceable. Further, about 12,183 pieces of ammunition were collected.²³ Despite the above-mentioned results, the process of disarmament was never thorough, and even up to the elections of July 1997, armed factions were still hiding arms caches. Further, the fighters were never demobilised, and therefore still retained allegiance to their former armed factions and leaders. The wave of armed robbery which engulfed the country after the elections, clearly attests to the proliferation of arms.²⁴ The proliferation of arms clearly threatens the 'fragile peace' ushered in by the elections.

Secondly, there is the problem of reintegrating ex-fighters into civil society. Like in other post-conflict societies, one of the security problems facing Liberia has to do with the reintegration of ex-fighters, particularly child soldiers. Armed factions used people as young as nine years old as fighters. For seven years these young people became more familiar with military life and its privileges during the war than anything else. Reintegrating these fighters into civil society has been a major challenge because civilian life is less attractive to them. Presently, some are serving prison sentences in various countries of West Africa theft or robbery. Others have duped business people with fake diamonds.²⁵ As far back as early 1991 when the first ceasefire was brokered, some of the young fighters were enrolled back in schools in Nimba county.

Just as they returned, so were they leaving because they were frustrated with school life. They had become used to the life of fighters.²⁶ In Mozambique, similar efforts to reintegrate child soldiers into civil society proved difficult because they had become used to 'vagabond existence'.²⁷

Another related problem is that the reaction of civil society towards them is mixed. Even families refuse to accept them for fear that they are killers, and because of negative reactions of neighbours. Those accepted by families get ridiculed and taunted. Others have had to leave their homes because their families cannot afford to feed and clothe them. Yet, others are orphans who have had to fend for themselves.²⁸ Consequently, the issue of child soldiers is complex, and it affects security at the individual, family, community and societal levels.

Resettlement of refugees and internally displaced people is also a significant issue to be addressed. The war also created a huge number of internally displaced people and refugees. Nearly 770,000 refugees fled the war but by 1998, it is reported, the UNHCR had repatriated 240,000 of them. Therefore, about 220,000 more were still living in neighbouring West African countries. According to the US Committee for Refugees, there were some Liberian refugees, particularly those from the Mandingo and Krahn ethnic groups, who had not been willing to return

for fear of reprisals. Since the end of the war there have been ethnic conflicts in Lofa (Mandingos vs Lormas) and Nimba (Gios and Manos vs Mandingos) counties. Locally, there have been efforts aimed at resolving these conflicts. These recent ethnic conflicts have been a direct result of the seven-year civil war in Liberia. Further, in early 1997 about 2,000 internally displaced persons marched through the streets of Monrovia to ask the government to resettle them.²⁹ As a result of the destruction of infrastructure, including the homes of refugees and internally displaced persons, the issue of resettlement requires serious attention

Finally, there is the problem of justice and impunity. This issue is vital to the peace building processes. Ex-fighters and people in the present regime have committed atrocities such as killing innocent people and raping women. In the Liberian case, this issue was addressed by the Cotonou Accord of July 1993. It granted general amnesty to all fighters and armed factions for crimes they committed during the war. Though this was disappointing for the relatives of victims who wanted justice to be done, any attempt to resolve this issue cannot be a simple task. This is a rather complex and difficult task, which most post-conflict societies have had to contend with. For example, in Latin American countries and South Africa Truth Commissions were set up, and in Rwanda, a war crimes tribunal was set up to deal with it. These measures are half-baked in the eyes of the relatives of victims for the simple fact that, for example, Truth Commissions do not punish those who committed crimes. In the case of the Arusha trials aimed at punishing the perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, there have been accusations that the trials have been marred by threats and lack of confidence in the judicial process.³⁰

Like in Liberia, in Angola, in order to avoid renewed fighting, the Lusaka Accord of 1994 granted general amnesty to fighters and armed factions. Contrary to expectations, this has not led to the establishment of peace in that country.

To sum up, the following problems were created by the conflict: child soldiers and other ex-fighters; ethnic and wider societal hatred and mistrust; collapse of the Liberian state; destruction and dislocation of the fragile economy; destruction of infrastructure; thousands of internally displaced people and refugees; societal dislocation, and arms proliferation. These problems constitute a challenge to the process of building a secure post-conflict Liberia. They threaten the fragile peace ushered in by the elections of 1997, and if not properly addressed, can lead to the recurrence of armed violent conflict. The fighting between rebels and government forces in northern Liberia supports this assumption, and is an indictment of the government for its failure to deal with the country's broader security problems. The fighting in the North further illustrates that wars are not necessarily ended, and peace subsequently restored after elections are held.

LIBERIA: BUILDING A SECURE ENVIRONMENT AFTER THE WAR

The problems created by the war cannot be resolved overnight. They are surmountable, but require the will and commitment of both internal and external actors. The role of the internal actors is more decisive because 'peace' and 'democracy' cannot easily be imposed from outside. Georg Sorenson's views on democracy are relevant to this point. According to him, in any case, outsiders can probably only be facilitators; they cannot on their own produce the necessary conditions for democracy and development.³¹ In the specific Liberian case, the Taylor regime lacks adequate capacity, willingness and commitment to fulfil its role in the peace building process.

The little efforts that are required of such post-conflict regimes have not been forthcoming from the National Patriotic Party led government. The necessary secure environment that would enable local and external actors to develop confidence in the regime is yet to be created. The Liberian academic, D. Elwood Dunn, shares this view. He writes that since 1997, there has been very little evidence to suggest that Liberians have been reconciled; and that rehabilitation, repatriation and reconstruction are taking place.³² Further, US State Department reports indicate that the human rights record of the regime is appalling. As before, there are already well known cases of killings and disappearances.³³ It is vital to now turn to the internal and external problems inhibiting the peace building process in Liberia since July 1997. Mention of a few incidents would suffice.

Internal Affairs

Primarily, the killing of Samuel Dokie has not helped the image of the Taylor regime. Dokie was a founding member of the NPFL who broke away from Taylor in 1994 after realising that Taylor's intransigence was stalling the peace process in Liberia. Dokie became the first victim of post-war Liberian politics when in November 1997 he was abducted from Police custody in Gbarnga and murdered along with his wife and two other family members.

All attempts to bring the culprits to justice have failed, largely because the regime has made no serious efforts in that direction.

Secondly, in September 1998, the NPP led government carried out a military assault on the residence of D. Roosevelt Johnson (of ULIMO-J) in Monrovia. The assault which was code-named "Operation Camp Johnson Road", was followed by a 17-hour gun battle in which, according to reports, about 300 people were killed. State Security forces gunned down two of Johnson's men who tried to escape into the US embassy compound. Johnson and several others, mainly people of Krahn origin, were charged with treason. Thirteen were originally sentenced to prison for treason but a few have since been released. After this event, 4,000 people (mainly of Krahn origin) were believed to have fled into neighbouring Ivory Coast because of fear for their lives.

From all indications, the regime is highly obsessed with regime security rather than human security. People in Monrovia are now referring to all kinds of security forces. There is the Special Security Unit (SSU), the infamous SWAT or 'Chuckie Brigade'³⁴ which is now renamed Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU). The latter force is not different from Doe's Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SATU), which was notorious for its ruthlessness. There are reports that the regime also relies on foreign mercenaries for its security. Further, the Taylor regime refused to comply with the terms of the Abuja Agreement, which gave ECOMOG the responsibility to train the Liberian army. After the elections Taylor, invoking Liberian sovereignty, immediately requested that ECOMOG keep its hands off the army. Therefore, the peacekeeping force left the country without discharging its training mandate. The regime recruited, selected and trained its own army largely drawn from the ranks of its former fighters. Such a situation has led to public mistrust and distrust of the military and paramilitary bodies in the country.

In the areas of rebuilding the collapsed Liberian state, economic recovery, reintegration of ex-fighters, reconstruction of infrastructure, and resettlement of internally displaced people and refugees, things are moving at a snail's pace if at all. Reports from Monrovia strongly indicate that nearly every facet of Liberian life is in shambles. For example, hospitals lack equipment and medicines; supplies of electricity and safe drinking water are lacking wages in the public sector have been in arrears over a long period of time; and the educational system has deteriorated.

Lofa War

The war in Lofa County (between Taylor and LURD forces), clearly supports the view that the peace ushered in by the elections of 1997 was very much fragile. It has shattered the once widely held view that the elections would bring the war to an end. Clearly, the elections were a critical stage for building a secure post-conflict Liberia. However, without addressing the underlying causes of the conflict, the elections have become rather meaningless. The NPFL government have done nothing to convince the Liberian people that they are capable of rebuilding Liberia.

LURD comprises former fighters of the NPFL, ULIMO (K), ULIMO (J), LPC, Lofa Defence Force (LDF) and refugees residing in the West African region. From what its members have been saying, LURD is fighting against the Taylor regime in order to build a democratic Liberia. The group originally enjoyed support from Guinea, but such support has been declining in recent times. LURD has been useful for the security of Guinea. The reason is that Guinea has come under attack by internal dissidents loyal to and led by N'Faly Kaba, former advisor to Diara Traore who was executed by President Lansana Conté after an attempted coup in 1985.³⁵ Since September 2000, Kaba and his 'Union des forces pour une Guinee nouvelle' (UGFN) have attacked several towns and cities in Guinea. There are also the 'Rassemblement de forces democratiques de Guinee' and 'Union de forces democratique de Guinee', both of whom claim to have carried out attacks against Guinea.³⁶ Conté and Taylor have accused each other of supporting dissidents hostile to their respective regimes. On the one hand, Taylor has harboured hatred for the Conte government for its involvement in ECOMOG. Thus it comes as no surprise that Kaba is believed to have resided in Liberia. On the other hand, Conte has been aware of the support rendered Guinean dissidents by the Taylor regime.

While Taylor seems to have lost the confidence of the people, LURD has not shown any signs of convincing the people that they are a credible alternative. There are a number of factors weighing heavily against LURD. Firstly, in addition to their scepticism about LURD, Liberians have become war-weary. If the people were sure that LURD represents a better alternative to the NPP government, perhaps the situation could be different. Closely linked with this is the fact that some leaders of LURD were associated with Doe's dictatorial regime and the seven years war. With the exception of a few, most of them were either associated with Doe's ten years dictatorial rule, or the brutalities of the 7-year war. This is the case with Charles Julu and George Dweh.

This has temporarily helped Taylor and his people in some ways. The key figures include Julu,³⁷ and Dweh,³⁸ Lavela Supuwood³⁹, Sekou Kone⁴⁰ Joe Wylie⁴¹, J. Hinson Williams⁴¹, and others.

Finally, the other more serious problem seems to be organisational. The frequency with which LURD's spokespersons have been changed in recent times does not augur well for its image. For example, the replacement of Charles Dent with Prince Seo as Chief of Staff is believed to have caused discontent among the fighters. There is considerable confusion over the command and control structures of the organisation. Unless this issue is sorted out, LURD will continue to face mounting problems in the conduct of its war.

Whatever the situation, there are indications that Taylor is cleverly exploiting the activities of LURD for his own interests. The regime blames nearly every killing or other act of violence on LURD. For example, when Francois Massaquoi of the defunct Lofa Defence Force (LDF) was reportedly killed in Lofa, the government claimed that LURD snipers shot him in the helicopter, and the death of Emmett Ross has also been blamed on LURD. But Joe Wylie, one of the key figures in LURD, has publicly denied these allegations in an interview with Abdulai Dukule.⁴²

Regional Dimension

Links with RUF activities in Sierra Leone.

The regime has been accused of aiding and abetting the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Such bellicose foreign policy threatens the security of the sub-region because of the potential for the spillover of the Sierra Leonean crisis into neighbouring countries including Liberia itself. Like the situation in the Great Lakes region, there is suspicion between the leaders in the Mano River area. The rebel incursions into Guinea, Sierra-Leone and Liberia have the potential of engulfing and threatening the security of the West African region. It is widely believed that even the UN sanctions against key Liberian officials have not stopped the regime in Monrovia from supporting the RUF. If the war in Sierra Leone effectively comes to an end, and the RUF remains committed to the peace process, Taylor could find himself being isolated in the region. The new government in Sierra Leone will definitely keep an eye on the activities of Monrovia, just as the Conte government in Conakry is doing. In summary, the incidents narrated above are not conducive to post-conflict peace building in Liberia. Reconciliation is one of the important ingredients of peace building, as long as people are not reconciled, there can be no peace.

Liberia's foreign relations is also directly linked with the process of building peace in the country. On the impact of the above-outlined problems on the peace building process in Liberia, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Liberia, Felix Downes-Thomas, indicated that the killing of Dokie (who had been denied a fair trial), the regime's links with the RUF, and the failure to restructure the national army to reflect the geographic balance of the country had all combined to make the country ineligible for international aid. About US\$220m aid package for reconstruction has been made conditional on the observance of human rights and therefore withheld, and the Trust Fund for Liberia is yet to receive a penny⁴³ The British government successfully blocked a £23 million aid package to Liberia from the EU.

AGENCIES ESTABLISHING A SECURE POST-CONFLICT LIBERIA

Though the NPP government has proved incapable of addressing both the short-term and long-term security needs of the country, some internal and external NGOs, multilateral agencies and individual states are providing some assistance in the areas of agriculture, education, water sanitation, small enterprises building, road and bridge repairs, training and capacity building, support to justice and peace activities, health, community development, repatriation, good governance, reconstruction of schools, peace building, reconciliation and food security. Presently, there are more than 30 NGOs working in the above areas. International and local NGOs are trying to contribute towards minimising the recurrence of violence. In the specific case of NGOs, their role is limited by the fact that their projects are donor-driven and externally funded. This weakness makes civil society either willing or unwilling disciples of the neo-liberal agenda. Civil society groups are advocating democratic changes in the country, but these are limited to human rights including freedom of the press and of speech, and do not include social reforms.

Liberians of the diaspora have a crucial role to play in this process. Individually, they are sending financial assistance to their families, relatives and friends. It would be interesting to know how much money is sent from the diaspora to Liberia on a yearly basis through money transfer agencies like Western Union and Money Gram. Others are operating small businesses including retail shops, and transportation. In a country where unemployment is rife and the socio-economic conditions are

appalling, such help from the diaspora plays a role in meeting the basic needs of people. In a way, their contributions help to reduce social tension in the country.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POST-CONFLICT PEACE BUILDING

The incidents catalogued above confirm that post-conflict elections do not necessarily lead to democratic rule. If the elections of 1997 were more of a referendum on peace than on democracy in Liberia, they have since been followed by neither peace nor democracy. This is a tragedy. Nevertheless, by themselves, the elections must be seen as a significant step in the search for stable peace and a secure Liberian society. According to Larry Garber, in conflict situations when there is no clear military victory for any one armed faction, elections provide a recognised basis for settling the question of who governs, a significant element of the peace process.⁴⁴ Such elections may provide the basis for addressing long-term security needs of the people. They are the institutional pillars upon which democratic politics is built. In the specific Liberian case (despite the ugly experiences narrated earlier), the elections had the potential of addressing the underlying causes of the war. This involved dealing with state-society relations, providing the atmosphere for reconciliation, economic recovery, rebuilding of the infrastructure, putting food on the table for the citizenry, giving people access to education and health care, reintegration of ex-fighters, and resettling refugees and internally displaced people. The issue of reforming the military security sector is vital. It builds confidence; and reforming this sector helps to prevent the recurrence of violence. Often it is this sector that is used by repressive regimes to oppress and suppress their own people in the name of 'national security'. This sector loyally defends the regime in power rather than protect ordinary people. This is why it constitutes a threat to ordinary people rather than a source of security.

All of the above-mentioned objectives can be achieved, depending on the willingness and commitment of the internal actors, more specifically the regime in power, to deal with the underlying causes of the conflict. They know these causes best and can resolve them if there is the desire and will to do so.

The implementation of a post-conflict peace building programme also requires the involvement of external actors. They can help to facilitate the enabling environment for the establishment of a framework for good governance and the rule of law, institution building and socio-economic reconstruction. Nevertheless, without a conducive environment, their role will remain limited. To reiterate a point made earlier, external actors cannot impose long-term solutions upon war-torn societies. They can only facilitate the peace building process by providing the needed material and financial resources for national reconstruction.

One reason why some of these processes become fragile is that external actors tend to impose ready-made recipes for national renewal after wars

The Liberian experience also proves that in conflict resolution, the holding of elections or the end of the armed violent phase of the conflict should never be confused with the establishment of democratic governance or sustainable peace. The short-term security outcomes of the intervention of third parties should necessarily feed into the long-term outcomes.

NOTES

- ¹ Roy Licklider "How Civil Wars End: Questions and Methods" in Roy Licklider (ed) Stopping the Killing. How Civil Wars End (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993) pp.11-17
- ² Lewis A. Croser "The Termination of Conflict" Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 5 No. 4 1961 p. 347
- ³ Patrick M. Regan "Conditions of Successful Third Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflicts" The Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 40 No. 2 June 1996 p.317
- ⁴ George Modelski "International Settlement of Internal War" in James Rosenau (ed) International Aspects of Civil Strife (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964) P. 149
- ⁵ Fred Charles Ikle Every War Must End Revised Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) pp. vii and 107
- ⁶ See James S. Sutterlin The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Security. A Challenge to be Met (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger Publishers, 1995) p. 71
- ⁷ World Bank, Post-Conflict Reconstruction. The Role of the World Bank (Washington D.C: IBRD, 1998) p. 4
- ⁸ See Barry Buzan People, States and Fear (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Harvester, 1983)
- ⁹ Ken Booth "A Security Regime in Southern Africa: Theoretical Considerations" Paper presented at the Conference on Security, Development and Cooperation in Southern Africa, organised by the Foundation for Development and Peace (Bonn) and the Centre for Southern African Studies (Cape Town) at Midgard, Namibia, 23-27 May 1993 p.6
- ¹⁰ Ibid
- ¹¹ Caroline Thomas 'Introduction' in C. Thomas and Peter Wilkin (eds) Globalization, Human Security and the African Experience (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999) p. 1
- ¹² D. Elwood Dunn "Liberia's Internal Responses to ECOMOG's Interventionist Efforts" in Karl p. Magyar and Earl Conteh-Morgan (eds) Peacekeeping in Africa. ECOMOG in Liberia (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998) p. 78
- ¹³ Ibid
- ¹⁴ Robert H. Jackson and Carl Roseberge Personal Rule in Black Africa (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1982) p. 14
- ¹⁵ Caroline Thomas "Introduction" 1993, p. 3
- ¹⁶ Dew Tuan-Wleh Mayson "Rice and Rights: The Struggle for Economic Development and Political Freedom in Liberia" in Eckhard Hinzen and Robert Kappel (eds) Dependence, Underdevelopment and Persistent Conflict - On the Political Economy of Liberia (Bremen: Bremen Africa Archives, 1980) p. 385
- ¹⁷ Ibid, p. 387
- ¹⁸ Ernst Harsch "Liberia: Living Dangerously" Africa Report Vol. 34 No. 2 March - April 1989 p. 60
- ¹⁹ Cited in Africa Research Bulletin Vol. 23 No. 1 February 1986 p. 7942
- ²⁰ Sam G. Amoo "ECOWAS in Liberia: The Challenges and Prospects For African Peacekeeping" Prepared for presentation at a conference of the Defence Intelligence College at Alconbury Royal Air Force Base, Cambridge, England, on 6-7 May 1993 p. 7
- ²¹ Charles King Ending Civil Wars Adelphi Paper 302 IISS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 25
- ²² For the above figures, see Report on Disarmament to Chiefs of Staff of ECOWAS Countries, 10 February 1997 by Major General Sikandar Shami, Chief Military Observer, UNOMIL pp. 5-7 and Annexes A and B

-
- ²³ For the above figures, see Report on Disarmament to Chiefs of Staff of ECOWAS Countries, 10 February 1997 by Major General Sikandar Shami, Chief Military Observer, UNOMIL pp. 5-7 and Annexes A and B
- ²⁴ See US Department of State Liberia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998 Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 26 February 1999 p. 3
- ²⁵ Discussion with Liberian Refugees, Buduburam Refugee Camp, Accra, Ghana August 1997
- ²⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Easy Prey. Child Soldiers in Liberia* (London and Washington: Human Rights Watch, 1994) p. 45
- ²⁷ Oliver Furley *Child Soldiers and Youths in African Conflicts. International Reactions*, African Studies Centre Occasional Paper Series No. 1 Coventry University, 1995 p. 27
- ²⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Easy Prey. Child Soldiers in Liberia* (London and Washington: Human Rights Watch, 1994) p. 44
- ²⁹ UN IRIN-West Africa Daily Update 20:04 25/03/98
- ³⁰ See Kumar Rupesinghe *Civil Wars, Civil Peace. An Introduction to Conflict Resolution* (London, Sterling and Virginia: Pluto Press, 1998) pp.146-47
- ³¹ Georg Sorenson "The Impasse of the Third World Democratization: Africa Revisited" in Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi (eds) *American Democracy Promotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 307
- ³² D. Elwood Dunn *The Challenge of our National Purpose & Agenda for National Self-Fulfilment Remarks to the Liberian Association of Metropolitan Atlanta on the Occasion of the 153rd Anniversary of the Independence of Liberia*, Atlanta, GA July 29, 2000
- ³³ See US State Department Country Report , 1998.
- ³⁴ Taylor's son reportedly runs this group.
- ³⁵ See UN Sanctions Report on Liberia, p. 27
- ³⁶ Ibid
- ³⁷ Julu is known in Liberia for his ruthlessness. He served as a henchman of Doe and was involved in an attempted coup to remove IGNU (headed by Prof. Amos Sawyer) from power.
- ³⁸ Dweh was a staunch member of the Liberia Peace Council (LPC) and like Julu, he is known for his ruthlessness
- ³⁹ Supuwood is a lawyer by profession and was a member of the NPFL until he and his colleagues broke away in 1994 to form the Central Revolutionary Council (CRC) which joined IGNU. His close associate Samuel Dokie was killed under strange circumstances in 1997 after the elections that brought Taylor to power. As a former associate of Taylor, Lavela has had to flee for his life.
- ⁴⁰ Not much is known about Kone but according to the UN sanctions report, he is believed to be liasing with the Guinean authorities.
- ⁴¹ Joe has a good political pedigree after having served the national student movement and the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) as an activist. He was best known in the 1970s for his radical poetry and has been linked with three armed incidents: first in 1985 when he was part of the group led by T. Quiwonkpa which invaded Liberia to overthrow the doe regime; then in 1998 when he was among those flushed out of Camp Johnson road when Taylor's forces tried to arrest D. Roosevelt Johnson of ULIMO (J) and others; and now he is part of LURD.
- ⁴² See The Perspectives of the two weeks of February 2002.

⁴³ “Why is Liberia No Receiving Help? UN Representative Outlines 3 Reasons” The Inquirer Newspaper Wednesday 6 September 2000. See Jim Gray (grayjk@vt.edu) and Friends of Liberia News (Liberia@fol.org) News (1) From Monrovia Papers 2000-09-06

⁴⁴ See Terrence Lyons Voting for Peace. Postconflict Elections in Liberia (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 1999)