

HOW DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS COULD HAVE FACILITATED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LONG-TERM CONFLICT PREVENTION IN POST- CONFLICT CAMBODIA

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Since the mid-1990s, the international community, members of Cambodian civil society, and the Cambodian Ministry of Defense have stressed the importance of reducing the number of soldiers in the Cambodian army.² According to data collected by the London-based International Institute for Security Studies, in 2014 Cambodia had a civil-military balance of 8.2 active military personnel per 1000 capita, a surprisingly high number that can hardly be justified by the geopolitical situation

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2 Counts of Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) personnel often conflict. A Cambodian Ministry of Defence White Paper published in 2006 states that there were approximately 165,000 personnel in the RCAF before 1999. However, in 2002, the Co-Minister of Defence said that the total military strength of the army stood around 112,000 persons, which would imply that 53,000 personnel were demobilized from the army between 2000 and 2002, while the official objective (which was not achieved) was to demobilize 43,000 soldiers during that period. An August 2001 World Bank report presenting the Demobilization and Reintegration project describes the problem: "The number of military personnel has been a subject of constant debate. The situation has been made more difficult by the integration of soldiers belonging to different political factions into the army. There have been recurrent reports on the existence of ghost soldiers who contribute to an artificially high military bill." World Bank, Cambodia-Demobilization and Reintegration Project (Aug. 2001) at 2, at www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/05/12/000094946_0104270727447/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf.

in the country. In comparison, neighboring countries Thailand and Vietnam respectively have 5.3 and 5.2 active military personnel per 1000 capita, while in the UK and the US the balances are 2.6 and 4.7 per 1000 capita.³ Keeping such a large number of active military personnel not only suggests unjustified expenditures, but also may threaten the implementation of long-term conflict prevention in a country recently plagued by thirty years of civil war. Efforts to implement a proper Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program in Cambodia have faced challenges for twenty years, starting with the Paris Agreements in 1991. These attempts are the subject of this study.

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3 Calculated by the author from the numbers provided in International Institute for Security Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance: The Annual Assessment of Global Military Capabilities and Defence Economics* (Feb. 2014) (breaking down the military power of 171 countries worldwide).

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the first Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) operation in Central America in 1989, a large number of United Nations (UN) operations have contained DDR programs, including those in El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Tajikistan, and Burundi. DDR is now considered part of the toolbox of multidimensional peacekeeping operations, allowing the international community to disarm and demilitarize the parties of both civil and international conflicts. Demobilization is intended to relieve transitional states from the burden and threat posed by the existence of a large army. Reintegration helps ex-combatants find their place in civilian society after giving up their weapons. Successfully implemented, it lowers the chances of a return to combat.

DDR is not always implemented within multidimensional operations⁴ under the supervision of the UN. In post-conflict Cambodia, for example, DDR programs were successively implemented within a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, and then by a governmental council with the financial support of the international community.

Using Cambodia’s experience as a case study, this paper will attempt to determine whether DDR programs should be an internationally or a nationally driven project. This consideration arises from the fact that DDR programs can have two

4 The United Nations identifies the implementation of three inter-related programs among the tasks necessary for successful peace-building operations: (1) disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); (2) security sector reform (SSR); and (3) support for electoral processes. See UN Peacebuilding Support Office, www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbun.shtml.

purposes: the promotion of peace building, and the facilitation of public sector reforms in the context of administrative and financial post-conflict reconstruction. In order to answer this question, this paper will compare Cambodia's UN-led DDR, which was considered a peace-building tool, with its government-led DDR, which was implemented after peace was achieved. It will also examine alternatives to DDR programs.

Finally, this paper will address the larger issue of whether there is a link between DDR and long-term conflict prevention: Does DDR build security (through disarmament, demobilization and the neutralization of armed factions) and promote reconciliation (through reintegration and the reconstruction of social fabric), contributing to a long-term conflict prevention that goes beyond the absence of violence? This paper concludes that DDR can indeed offer a satisfactory prospect of long-lasting peace in a post-conflict setting. However, as exemplified by the Cambodian experience, DDR programs cannot build peace from the ground up.

2. DEFINITIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

2.2. Disarmament

Disarmament is at the center of a demobilization process. It consists of controlling, registering, gathering and destroying the weapons of soon-to-be-demobilized combatants and also any weapons retained by civilians. The overall objective is to reduce the number of small weapons in order to promote the non-violent resolution of conflicts within the society.⁵ This stage is supposed to build confidence and increase stability in post-conflict settings.

2.3. Demobilization

Best practices define demobilization as the act of officially registering, counting, and controlling combatants in advance of preparing them to return to civilian life. Demobilization should thus be understood as a process composed of various steps. Demobilization can include a "cantonment" phase during which soldiers are stationed in a specific military station to allow registration and medical treatment, if needed. In order to protect the soldiers and to allow a proper, unbiased and time-effective registration, the process of demobilization should be realized within a precise legal frame and be answerable to an official timetable. The objective can be either to downsize the army or military group, or to dissolve

5 Yvan Conoir & Gérard Verna, *DDR, Désarmer, Démobiliser et Réintégrer* (Nov. 2006) at 43-44.

it entirely.⁶

2.4. Reintegration

In the context of DDR programs, the reintegration of ex-combatants means the transition from being military personnel to earning a living by other means within the civilian population. It addresses a larger scope of issues than the notion of social reintegration, which often has more to do with the process of national reconciliation, including the perception that civilians have of ex-combatants.

The reintegration of ex-combatants, just like the reintegration of displaced people, is a major challenge in post-conflict societies. It is socio-economical process, limited neither in space nor in time. According to best practices, it should be implemented at two levels: the ex-combatant level, and the civil-society level.⁷

3. UNTAC: DDR IN THE DIRECT AFTERMATH OF THE CONFLICT (1991-1993)

3.1. Context

The infamous Democratic Kampuchea era ended in 1979, when Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia and overthrew the Khmer Rouge government and installed a new regime: the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). The Khmer Rouge armed forces reconstituted themselves at the Thai border in the north of Cambodia. At the same time, a former prime minister, Son Sann, created an armed faction called the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) to fight against the PRK forces, including the occupying Vietnamese army. In 1980-1981, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, former king and head of state of Cambodia, created his own resistance front against the Vietnamese-backed PRK called FUNCINPEC (the Nationalist United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia). These four factions were the parties to a proxy war between China and Vietnam—the PRK being supported by Vietnam and the other three receiving backing from China.

In 1982, the three PRK resistance groups—the Khmer Rouge, the FUNCINPEC and the KPNLF—created a tripartite movement: the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. When Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia in 1989, Prime Minister Hun Sen proclaimed the State of Cambodia (SoC), and the war continued. In October 1991, the four factions signed a cease-fire and peace agreement in Paris to end the fighting and pave the way for general

6 *Id.* at 113-14.

7 *Id.* at 253.

elections. UN-supervised elections were held in 1993 without the participation of the Khmer Rouge faction, resulting in a flawed power sharing agreement between Hun Sen, leader of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and Prince Sihanouk's son Norodom Ranariddh, leader of the new FUNCINPEC party. The new regime nevertheless fought actively against Khmer Rouge, which maintained a "low-level war."⁸ A political crisis broke out in 1996-1997, and the coalition fell. In 1999, the last pockets of Khmer Rouge finally surrendered.

The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was established to implement the Paris Peace Agreements, and became the first body in Cambodia to implement a DDR program. The UNTAC mandate included all the elements of a comprehensive peace settlement, which resulted in a hybrid operation composed of peace-making, peace-building and peacekeeping tools. It included supervising the withdrawal of foreign troops from Cambodia, repatriation of refugees, maintenance of law and order, demilitarization and cantonment of all the military factions, creation of a unique military structure, assistance with mine-clearance, creation of a neutral political environment, organization of elections, and the rehabilitation of infrastructure essential for economic reconstruction—all in a very short timeframe of three years.⁹

In the end, the effort was a failure due to the lack of cooperation from the combatants. Cantonment, disarmament and demobilization efforts were undertaken; however, there was no reintegration phase. In hindsight we know that, at the time of UNTAC intervention, the war was far from over despite the ceasefire and the peace agreement, suggesting that the DDR program was bound to fail.

3.1.1. Political Neutrality: a Goal or a Precondition for DDR?

In 1993, journalist and movie director John Pilger interviewed Lieutenant General John Sanderson, the UN Force Commander for UNTAC. In answer to the question: "How will you create a neutral political environment?" Lieutenant General Sanderson answered: "The principal step was to create a neutral security environment by cantoning and disarming all the factions, and then demobilizing 70% of them[.]"¹⁰ This statement suggests a demobilization program can be used to promote a neutral political environment by bringing security and neutralizing armed factions. However, the premise that disarming factions leads to a neutralization of the political scene is highly debatable.

8 Peter Bartu & Neil Wilford, *Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Cambodia*, International Center for Transitional Justice (June 2009), at 6, available at www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-DDR-Cambodia-CaseStudy-2009-English.pdf.

9 TREVOR FINDLAY, *CAMBODIA: THE LEGACY AND LESSONS OF UNTAC 15* (1995). The UN resolution is available at: www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/untacmandate.html.

10 *CAMBODIA: RETURN TO YEAR ZERO* (ITV 1993) at 07:00.

Officially, the Khmer Rouge faction refused to cooperate because the Supreme National Council (SNC), a quadripartite body set up to represent Cambodia's sovereignty and promote reconciliation, was not neutral. According to a 1992 interview with Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan, the KR demanded "the implementation of the Paris Agreements in regard to the SNC[.]" According to Khieu:

If the SNC remains without power and means, then UNTAC—either consciously or unconsciously—is cooperating with the Phnom Penh regime and the elections will certainly be held within the framework of the regime set up by the Vietnamese.¹¹

This criticism highlights the difficulty of disarming and demobilizing during a political transition. It also illustrates why the creation of a neutral political environment—including the existence of a legitimate and popular political body to set the framework for elections—may be a precondition to a demobilization program, rather than its end. If disarmament was the "principal step" towards the "neutral political environment," perhaps the neutralization of the SNC should have been the first step.

However, it is also possible that the Khmer Rouge, who signed the Paris Agreements in large part due to international pressure,¹² never intended to disarm and used unattainable demands to justify their disengagement from the process. Indeed, the Khmer Rouge were politically empowered when the international community pushed to include them in the negotiations of the Paris Agreements, putting them in a position to make demands. With a better assessment of the situation on the ground and of the agenda of the various factions, the UN and the international actors might have foreseen the unwillingness of the factions to disarm and adapted the mandate.

3.2. Practices

3.2.1. *Cantonment and Disarmament.*

The UNTAC-led DDR program was actually a cantonment, disarmament and demobilization program.¹³ It encompassed regrouping soldiers from all fac-

11 Nate Thayer, *An Interview with Khmer Rouge Leader Khieu Samphan*, PHNOM PENH POST, Aug. 27, 1992.

12 FINDLAY, *supra* note 9, at 17.

13 The actual cantonment phase is often called "Phase II" in reference to the various phases described in the Paris Agreements regarding the military mandate of the UNTAC. "Phase I" consisted of finding an agreement on cantonment sites within the four first weeks after the arrival of UNTAC military component.

tions, as well as their weapons and equipment. Despite the non-participation of the Khmer Rouge faction, the UNTAC succeeded to an extent. By September 1992, UNTAC had officially disarmed 52,292 soldiers from the three factions participating in the program, out of 200,000 soldiers estimated to be cantoned.¹⁴ This accounted for about 50% of the FUNCINPEC military capacity, the total of the KPNLF forces, and 25% of the SoC regular forces.¹⁵

Regarding disarmament, part of the UNTAC disarmament mandate was landmine clearance. The Paris Agreements state that the military mandate includes: "Assisting with clearing mines and undertaking training programs in mine clearance and mine awareness program among the Cambodian people."¹⁶ However, Lieutenant General John Sanderson clarified:

First of all, the UN did not provide mine clearers per se, except in the limited sense of having people to clear areas of operation for UNTAC activities [...]. Very early, we acknowledged the fact that the solution to the Cambodian mine problem was to train as many Cambodian mine clearers as we possibly could and create an environment in which they could sustain this activity.¹⁷

In 1992, Sergeant Major Joost Van Den Nouwland from the UNTAC mine clearing unit reported that no mine clearing had yet taken place in the province where he was based: "We do destroy mines, but right from the storehouse, not from the field. It is the only thing which has been done in this province."¹⁸ By the end of the UNTAC mandate, approximately 2,000 Cambodians had been trained for demining within the newly created Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC),¹⁹ 300,000 square meters of land had been cleared, 11,000 landmines had been deactivated and 12,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance (UXO) had been removed.²⁰ According to the opening statement made on behalf of the King at the International Landmine Conference held in June 1995 in Phnom Penh, 3,400 million

14 *Second Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia*, at 5, U.N. Doc. S/24578 (Sept. 21, 1992).

15 FINDLAY, *supra* note 9, at 39.

16 United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict: Paris, Oct. 23, 1991 (DPI/1180-9277-Jan. 1992-10M)* (hereinafter *Paris Agreements*).

17 Interviewed in *CAMBODIA: RETURN TO YEAR ZERO (ITV 1993)*. Notably, this documentary is very critical on the work of the UNTAC, and only selected parts of the interviews are shown in the video.

18 *Id.*

19 See Raoul M Jenner, *UNTAC: "International Triumph" in Cambodia?*, 25:2 *SECURITY DIALOGUE* 145, 146 (1994).

20 FINDLAY, *supra* note 9, at 74.

square meters of land had yet to be cleared.²¹

By many accounts, the UNTAC effort was a “failed disarmament.”²² This can be explained by a misrepresentation of the number of munitions by UN officials and by an overwhelming mandate. An article in *The Phnom Penh Post* at that time confirms the availability of weapons such as AK-47s or assault rifles at very low prices (roughly \$40) at markets everywhere in the country.²³ When the UNTAC personnel understood that the Khmer Rouge faction, the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK), would not cooperate in the demilitarization process, making the other factions reluctant to disarm, they re-centered all their efforts on the election process.

3.2.2. Demobilization.

The UNTAC mandate called for the demobilization of only 70% of the military troops of all factions.²⁴ This limit, the result of an agreement signed by the four factions in Pattaya, Thailand, a few months before the Paris Agreements, increased dramatically the costs of UNTAC. As pointed out by former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, if the mandate had called for demobilization of 100% of the armed factions, the need for UN military personnel for security purposes would have been greatly reduced. However, total demilitarization was unacceptable to the factions.²⁵ This contributed to the UNTAC being the most costly peacekeeping operation to date, with a final budget of a little less than US\$2 billion.²⁶ This extra cost has to be considered when analyzing the design of the UNTAC demobilization program, since budget issues are frequently highlighted as one of the reasons for the negative outcome of the UNTAC mission in terms of peace building and implementation of DDR.

The UN estimated that roughly 150,000 soldiers needed to be demobilized. By the end of its mission, it had demobilized only 36,000.²⁷ Two of the four fac-

21 Chea Sim, High representative of his Majesty the King, Address at the International Landmines Conference on the Human and Socio-Economic Impact of Landmines (June 2, 1995).

22 See, e.g., JIANWEI WANG, DISARMAMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROJECT—MANAGING ARMS IN PEACE PROCESSES: CAMBODIA 65 (1996).

23 Kevin Barrington, *Gun Control on Target*, PHNOM PENH POST, Mar. 26-Apr. 8, 1993.

24 See Cambodia UNTAC Background (under “military component”), at www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/untacbackgr2.html (“The Secretary-General recommended that the military component be fully deployed by the end of May 1992 and that the regrouping and cantonment process, as well as demobilization of at least 70 per cent of the cantoned forces, be achieved by the end of September 1992.”).

25 FINDLAY, *supra* note 9, at II 4.

26 DAVID CHANDLER, A HISTORY OF CAMBODIA 240 (2000).

27 *Cambodia, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Country Briefings*, Escola de Cultura de Pau (2007).

tions were almost entirely neutralized. However, the SoC military wing had only slightly been reduced and the Khmer Rouge faction's military capacity remained the same. Facing the failure of the cantonment and disarmament phase, UNTAC called a halt to the entire process. Hence, the demobilization plan was never fully implemented, even though a good number of cantoned soldiers were sent home to farm rice "on agricultural leave," which represented a de facto demobilization and disarmament since they were released from their military duty and turned in their weapons.²⁸ In fact, a portion of the soldiers quartered in the military camps for cantonment were demobilized de facto when they were released and decided not to go back to their army faction, despite not benefiting from any reintegration program, while others returned to their faction of origin.

3.3.3. *Reintegration.*

It is difficult to assess why the UNTAC left aside the reintegration program. The Paris Agreements stated: "UNTAC will assist, as required, with the reintegration into civilian life of the force demobilized prior to the elections."²⁹ This indicates that there had been a plan for a reintegration phase that was aborted when the demobilization process fell apart. Nevertheless, it appears that the UN would not have been able to implement a reintegration program within the time frame of its mandate, as the cantonment, disarmament and demobilization efforts already required more time than anticipated by the three-year mandate. In the view of Asia Watch:

Even had the deployment of the UN in Cambodia begun on day one of the Paris accords, such a schedule would have been extremely optimistic for a country with minimal communications and electricity whose dilapidated roads are barely passable for motor vehicles in the dry season, and impassable for the five months of monsoon rains each year.³⁰

In conclusion, if the success of DDR programs can in theory be demonstrated by the reintegration of former combatants to a peaceful way of life, their failure can be shown by a return to a state of chaos.³¹ As scholar Craig Etcheson has noted, "The 1991-1993 United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cambodia marked the end of the Third Indochina War, but the fighting in Cambodia

28 FINDLAY, *supra* note 9, at 39.

29 Paris Agreements, *supra* note 16, annex 2, art. V.

30 FINDLAY, *supra* note 9, at 120.

31 Yvan Conoir & Gérard Verne, *DDR, Désarmer, Démobiliser et Réintégrer* (Nov. 2006), at 373.

continued for nearly another decade afterward.”³² The fact that fighting continued after 1993 may thus be, in itself, a proof of the failure of the UNTAC-led DDR program.

4. ALTERNATIVES TO EXTERNALLY-IMPLEMENTED DDR PROGRAMS

4.1. Military Integration

Military integration is a post-conflict strategy used when a conflict ends with a peace agreement that does not clearly identify a dominant group. All the fighting factions are integrated in a new military structure created after the signature of peace agreements. It is also called the “I+I=3 formula.”³³ As DDR consultant Mark Knight explained in 2009: “Success is achieved when no single structure or culture dominates the merged force; instead, a “third force” results from the integration process: hence the I+I=3.”³⁴

Military integration was envisaged in the mid-1990s as a means to address the Cambodian political stalemate since the UNTAC elections. The creation of a new united military structure would theoretically prevent any of the pre-existing armed groups from dominating the coalition. The Paris Agreements discussed military integration as an alternative if demobilization was unmanageable:

Should total demobilisation of all of the residual forces before or shortly after the elections not be possible, the Parties hereby undertake to make available all of their forces remaining in cantonments to the newly elected government that emerges in accordance with Article 12 of this Agreement, for consideration for incorporation into a new national army. They further agree that any such forces which are not incorporated into the new national army will be demobilized forthwith according to a plan to be prepared by the Special Representative.³⁵

In 1993, facing the failure of the UNTAC to demobilize the soldiers from the various factions, the coalition government decided to create a united army, the

32 CRAIG ETCHESON, *AFTER THE KILLING FIELDS, LESSONS FROM THE CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE* 4 (2006).

33 Mark Knight, *Security Sector Reform: Post-Conflict Integration*, Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (Aug. 2009), at 4, at www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5064~v~Security_Sector_Reform__Post-Conflict_Integration.pdf.

34 *Id.* at 8.

35 Paris Agreements, *supra* note 16, annex 2, art. V(2)(b).

Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), into which all the armed factions would be integrated. As it is often the case with military integration policies, this policy was inspired by a power-sharing agreement: the political coalition between the FUNCINPEC and the CPP.³⁶ However, the factions had unequal manpower, necessarily creating disparities inside the new structure. Moreover, because the integration policy was implemented by a coalition of only two of four factions, it was clear from the beginning that there would be two main providers of soldiers for the new army. According to a White Paper published in 2000 by the Ministry of National Defence (MINADEF), at its creation the RCAF was composed of 60% of soldiers from the SoC army, 30% from the military wing of the FUNCINPEC, and 10% coming from the military wing of the KPNLF.³⁷

Following the structure of the power-sharing agreement, which provided for two co-heads of each government ministry, the army remained divided between the CPP supporters and FUNCINPEC supporters, who were still under the orders of their former superiors. Military integration was therefore superficial because the military wings of both factions were not dismantled. The two factions remained, and remained dramatically opposed. The only difference was that they both officially had the “RCAF” label.³⁸ This division remained until the collapse of the government power-sharing agreement and the coalition, after which the CPP remained the only ruling party. Nevertheless, because of the military integration policy, the RCAF soon counted about 155,000 personnel,³⁹ or a ratio of 14 military personnel per 1000 capita.

4.2. Self-Demobilization and Self-Reintegration

Self-demobilization is a phenomenon in which combatants demobilize and return to their region of origin by themselves, and their armed group is consequently dismantled without any external intervention or planning.⁴⁰ This process, rarely documented in the literature on DDR, can be commonly found in divided post-conflict societies, in particular among groups such as women or isolated sol-

36 Knight, *supra* note 33, at 12.

37 Defending the Kingdom of Cambodia, Security and Development, Defence White Paper, Cambodian Ministry of National Defence (2000) [hereafter Defence White Paper] at 6, at <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/files/library/ARF%20Defense%20White%20Papers/Cambodia-2000.pdf>.

38 According to Jean-Michel Filippi, anthropologist and linguist specializing in Cambodian minorities, and author of various books about the contemporary history of Cambodia. Interview with author, Phnom Penh, July 3, 2013.

39 KAO KIM HOURN, MILITARY REFORM, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION IN CAMBODIA: MEASURES FOR IMPROVING MILITARY REFORM AND DEMOBILISATION IN CAMBODIA I (2002).

40 See generally Macartan Humphreys & Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Demobilisation and Reintegration*, 51:4 J. CONFLICT RES. 531 (2007) (introducing the concept after finding no clear evidence that the internationally-funded DDR program in Sierra Leone facilitated demobilization and reintegration).

diers in remote areas who were not targeted by DDR programs.

Another independent phenomenon is also widespread: the process of self-reintegration. It appears in particular when reintegration initiatives are insufficient or not adapted to the targeted population. In Cambodia between 1993 and 2000, and even at the times DDR programs were implemented, self-reintegration was common. This was less due to the structure of DDR in Cambodia than to the structure of the armed factions themselves. Reintegration programs, at least in the form they took in Cambodia, were targeted for a professional army, with soldiers living in army compounds and being integrated as soldiers. However, in Cambodia most soldiers on the army payroll were not professional soldiers but farmers. While receiving a small amount pay from the army, most of them stayed home, and went to the army compound only on registration and census days. Demobilization did not change their daily habits or way of life; they continued to farm and live on their own property.

The post-demobilization transition in Cambodia could thus be classified as self-reintegration. Alternatively, it could be said that there was no reintegration because there was no separation of soldiers from the civilian society in the first place.

5. IMPLEMENTING DDR WITHIN A PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM PROGRAM

5.1. Context

In 1996 Ieng Sary, a Khmer Rouge senior leader and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, defected from the Party of Democratic Kampuchea and joined the government in Phnom Penh, which facilitated a royal amnesty.⁴¹ Following this episode hundreds of Khmer Rouge soldiers defected and were absorbed in the national RCAF army.⁴² The same year, the Cambodian government drafted a Cambodian Veterans Assistance Program (CVAP) to demobilize soldiers from the RCAF, since there had not been a successful demobilization by the UNTAC and the defection of former Khmer Rouge soldiers had swelled the army ranks. However, this program, which the World Bank intended to support, was never imple-

41 Despite this “amnesty,” Ieng Sary was arrested in 2007 and put into trial under the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), dedicated to prosecuting former Khmer Rouge cadre. Ieng Sary died in March 2013, before the end of trial proceedings.

42 CHANDLER, *supra* note 26, at 242.

mented due to the political crisis of July 1997.⁴³

Between 1998 and 1999, a number of “registration exercises” were organized with the support of the World Bank to establish the number of soldiers in the RCAF. The problem of “ghost soldiers” made demobilization and reintegration programs extremely difficult to set up. The results of the registration exercise showed that the RCAF counted 140,693 soldiers. On top of this, 15,551 soldiers who did not exist were registered on the payroll.⁴⁴ Ministry of Defense statistics point to a higher number, saying there were “approximately 165,000 personnel serving before 1999.”⁴⁵

The unfinished DDR process begun by UNTAC was resumed only in 1999, after another election and the surrender of the last pockets of Khmer Rouge soldiers. In January 1999, the government announced the demobilization of 55,000 soldiers from the RCAF over a three-year period, part of a wider program to reform the public sector. The government-led DDR was supervised by the newly created Council for the Demobilization of Armed Forces (CDAF).⁴⁶ The objective of the demobilization program was to reduce expenditures for the military, in order to re-allocate the funds to Cambodia’s reconstruction and economic development.⁴⁷ It benefited from sponsorship by the World Bank, and aid from various donor countries, including The Netherlands, Sweden, and Japan.

Despite the program’s domestic orientation, its official rhetoric still referred to an overall peace-building objective. In January 2002, the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) issued a policy paper presenting the link between peacekeeping and DDR:

Throughout the 1970s, 1980s and into the early 1990s, Cambodia was plagued by the existence of fractionalized partisan military formations that aggravated the political rivalries, and by soldiers who tried to seize political power. Recognizing the danger that an unreformed, swollen army poses to maintaining peace and stability, the current coalition government with help from

43 The Kingdom of Cambodia: From Reconstruction to Sustainable Development, Country Study for Japan’s Official Development Assistance to the Kingdom of Cambodia, JICA Research Institute (Mar. 2002) [hereafter JICA Report], at 273, at http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/IFIC_and_JBICI-Studies/english/publications/reports/study/country/cambodia.html.

44 *Id.* at 274 (table 6-12).

45 Defence White Paper, *supra* note 37, at 9.

46 It involved the Ministry of Woman and Veterans Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban planning and Construction, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, as well as provincial authorities.

47 According to a 1991 World Bank estimate, the country could have saved up to US \$10.3 million per year in military spending if a DDR program had been properly implemented. JICA Report, *supra* note 43, at 273-74.

international donors has begun a process of demobilisation.⁴⁸

The DDR program was thus not only considered to be a financial and economic necessity in the context of the public sector reform, but also a measure that would reduce the risk of returning to war associated with a bloated army.

5.2. Council for the Demobilization of Armed Forces (CDAF) Practice

5.2.1. *Disarmament.*

The government-led demobilization program was set up in a fairly peaceful context and did not originally include a disarmament program. Nevertheless, in 1998 the government officially acknowledged that the availability of large numbers of illegal light weapons was a threat to the country's stability. Lacking the resources and technical experience to address the problem, the government turned to the international community for help.

A small-arms disarmament program was set up in 2000, called the European Assistance on curbing Small Arms and light weapons in Cambodia, or EU-ASAC. It was intended to provide financial and technical assistance to the government for the collection and confiscation of weapons, as well as the destruction of surplus military weapons. In 2006, 45 weapon storage depots were constructed, 12,775 weapons were officially collected, and 142,871 weapons were destroyed under auspices of the EU-ASAC program.⁴⁹ This program, along with other governmental and non-governmental initiatives,⁵⁰ resulted in a significant reduction of the number of small arms circulating among civilians. Estimated around 400,000 in 1991, the number of arms went down to approximately 207,000 in 2007.⁵¹

5.2.2. *Demobilization.*

In 1999, the government announced an official timetable for demobilization: 11,500 RCAF soldiers would be demobilized in 2000, 11,000 in 2001, 20,500 in 2002, and finally 12,000 in 2003. However this plan was never implemented due to a lack of funding and political consensus.

48 Kao Kim Hourn, *Civil-Military Relations in Cambodia: Measures for Improving Civil-Military Relations in Cambodia*, CICP Policy Paper No 4, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, 1 (2002).

49 Adrian Wilkinson & Anya Hart-Dyke, *Evaluation of the EU Small Arms and Light Weapons Assistance to the Kingdom of Cambodia (EU-ASAC)*, South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (2nd ed., July 2006), at www.seesac.org/res/files/publication/533.pdf.

50 The most famous example of these initiatives would be a destruction program led by the Japan Assistance Team for Small Arms Management in Cambodia (JSAC) in 2003.

51 AARON KARP, *THE POLITICS OF DESTROYING SURPLUS SMALL ARMS* 128 (2010).

In 2000, a pilot demobilization program was set up with the sponsorship of the World Bank, leading eventually to the demobilization of 1,500 soldiers. Following this, the CDAF planned the demobilization of 30,000 soldiers from the RCAF within a two-year timeframe.

TABLE 5.2.2.

	Number of soldiers (total)	Timeframe
UNTAC target in 1991 (cantonment/demobilization)	203,821 soldiers	2-4 weeks for the cantonment. Approx. 1 year for the demobilization.
Government target in 1999 (demobilization)	55,000 soldiers	4 years (four phases)
Government target after the pilot in 2000 (demobilization)	31,500 soldiers	2 years (two phases)

Table 5.2.2. sets forth the differences between the Cambodian DDR programs and their objectives. As it shows, the UNTAC-led and government-led DDR programs had very different goals for demobilization. One possible reason for the large variance is that UNTAC personnel did not have a sufficient knowledge of the realities on the ground, resulting in a false assumption that they could demilitarize 70 to 100% of the factions.

However, the variance also suggests that after 2000 the government did not have any intention to effectively downsize the army, and that the DDR was not meant to have a nationwide impact, at least not within civilian society. In fact, since 2000, the demobilization process was run at the same time as a conscription program named “selective compulsory military service.” The first phase of the CDAF program—and the only that was implemented—concerned the demobilization of a majority of “category II soldiers,” meaning soldiers either above retirement age, disabled or chronically ill. It certainly permitted a change in the structure of the army, which would count less Category II soldiers on the payroll, but nothing was apparently done to downsize. Consequently, there would not be any savings that could benefit the civilian population by being reallocated to reconstruction and development. It indicates that the government implemented the DDR program primarily to please the international donor community, which was pressing for demobilization and the downsizing of the RCAF.

5.2.3. Reintegration.

For the DDR program led by the CDAF in 2000, a “safety net” was set up to help ex-combatants reintegrate into civilian life. The use of reintegration packages is widespread in the context of DDR programs.⁵² The Cambodian package included money, a motorcycle, a sewing machine, some rice and fish sauce, and some gardening or construction tools. Some demobilized soldiers were also provided with a piece of land⁵³; however, no training was provided.

During interviews conducted by the author in Pursat and Battambang provinces with families who received the DDR package, it was striking that in most instances no one knew how to use the sewing machine. This observation suggests the necessity of a better assessment of the needs and skills of demobilized soldiers when designing reintegration packages. Indeed, a successful reintegration not only implies the ability to earn a living outside the army, but also takes into account the skills of the demobilized soldiers to ensure he or she does not need nor want to return to violence or turn to crime.⁵⁴

According to best practices, the provision of reintegration packages should be a first step by the implementing body to facilitate access to employment. Often the next step is an agricultural program or a program for reconstruction or rehabilitation of local infrastructure including jobs for former soldiers such as rebuilding roads, bridges, and houses. Former soldiers thereby receive professional training and eventually subventions once they are reinstalled, in particular if they are farmers or small producers. Best practices also call for a follow-up by local organizations and civil society to give support (including psychological) to ex-combatants over the long-term reintegration process. None of this was done in Cambodia.

6. DDR AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

As noted by Brandon Hamber, known for his scientific articles on reconciliation:

Disarmament and demobilisation are finite tasks, their success is relatively easy to assess in terms of cessation of hostilities or weapons decommissioned. Reintegration is more ephemeral with its success deeply entwined in socio-economic and political

52 Conoir & Verna, *supra* note 31, at 272.

53 According to the primary data and to interviews conducted by the author with former soldiers demobilized in 2001.

54 Conoir & Verna, *supra* note 31, at 253.

reality, whilst also being about psychological rehabilitation. On top of this, the reintegration needs of combatants are dramatically variable.⁵⁵

As a consequence, it is necessary to distinguish between various types of reintegration—economic, political and social—and acknowledge that the social reintegration of ex-combatants must be closely linked to a reconciliation process to ensure long-term conflict prevention in post-conflict societies. In light of the apparent failure of both the UNTAC-led and CDAF-led programs to implement reintegration projects, we may ask who are the best actors to implement such projects: the international community, the government, or civil society? Discussion of this question in the following section will be considered within the framework of definitions of reconciliation and social reintegration of ex-combatants.

6.I. The Concept of “Reconciliation”

The literature gives various definitions of reconciliation, often by linking it to other concepts such as forgiveness. To date there is no agreed definition. A 2003 paper published by the Swedish Institute Development Agency “Reconciliation – Theory and Practice for Development Cooperation” provides a good overview of the various definitions developed in the literature. Here are three of the most famous definitions given by leading scholars in the field:

- According to John Paul Lederach, reconciliation should aim at building new and better relationships between former enemies, but should also represent “a space, a place or location of encounter, where parties to a conflict meet.”⁵⁶
- According to Priscilla Hayner, “reconciliation implies building or re-building relationships today that are not haunted by the conflicts and hatreds of yesterday.”⁵⁷
- According to Daniel Bar-Tal, reconciliation is defined by “a psychological process for the formation of lasting peace.”⁵⁸

Reconciliation theories are difficult to apply to civil conflicts primarily be-

55 Brandon Hamber, *Putting the 'R' Back into DDR*, KOFF Center for Peacebuilding Newsletter, Nov. 1, 2007, at 4.

56 JOHN PAUL LEDERACH, *BUILDING PEACE: SUSTAINABLE RECONCILIATION IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES* 30 (1998).

57 PRISCILLA HAYNER, *UNSPEAKABLE TRUTHS: CONFRONTING STATE TERROR AND ATROCITY* 161 (2002).

58 Quoted in Karen Brounéus, *Reconciliation—Theory and Practice for Development Cooperation*, Sida (Sept. 2003), at 15.

cause they fail to recognize that there are not always two separate groups dividing society: combatants and civilians. As in Cambodia, civil conflicts often involve the entire population, blurring the line between who fought and who did not. Similarly, there is not always a clear line between the victims and the perpetrators. This is particularly true in Cambodia where, after the Democratic Kampuchea era, the Khmer Rouge continued to fight from 1979 and 1991 alongside other factions in an anti-Vietnamese coalition. During this period, the “Khmer Rouge” label progressively lost its stigma for an important part of the rural population of Cambodia.⁵⁹

In their testimony, ex-combatants often present themselves as victims and say they had “no choice.” For example, most soldiers who fought with the Khmer Rouge view themselves as victims who were “forced” to kill to survive, and who must live with a burden of being considered as killers. This is particularly true in countries such as Cambodia where there were a high number of child-soldiers. Notably, a population-based survey conducted in 2009 by scholars from the University of California, Berkeley, reported that 93% of respondents who lived under the Khmer Rouge regime considered themselves to be victims.⁶⁰

6.2. Trust As a Prerequisite for Implementation of DDR Programs

Disarmament and demobilization are commonly identified as factors facilitating confidence building in divided post-conflict societies. A premise of the Paris Agreements was that the demobilization of “at least 70 percent of the military forces [of all Parties]” will “reinforce the objectives of a comprehensive political settlement, minimize the risks of a return to warfare, stabilize the security situation and build confidence among the Parties to the conflict.”⁶¹ However, can disarmament and demobilization be implemented without prior confidence within society? There is in fact a higher risk of failure when there is no trust among the various parties.⁶²

A July 1992 article in *The Phnom Penh Post* highlights the difficulty of implementing disarmament when one of the factions refuses to demilitarize. It discusses how soldiers from the three factions participating in the UNTAC disarmament and cantonment were willing to give up their weapons but were afraid of becoming an easy target for still-armed Khmer Rouge soldiers and did not feel safe, even

59 Author interview with Jean-Michel Filippi, *supra* note 38. Observations by the author during the 8 weeks fieldtrip in Cambodia tend to support this hypothesis.

60 Phuong Pham, Patrick Vinck, et al., *So We Will Never Forget, a Population Based Survey on Attitudes about Social Reconstruction and the ECCC*, Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley (2009) at 2.

61 Paris Agreements, *supra* note 16, annex 2, art. V.

62 Conoir & Verna, *supra* note 31, at 57-58.

within the supervised barracks where the cantonment was taking place: “Private Keo Sophal turned in his AK-47 assault rifle and reported to UN-supervised barracks to comply with the peace accord, but he feels anything but secure with Khmer Rouge guerrillas roaming about outside.”⁶³ If trust is not established, people will be tempted to hide and keep weapons for their own security.

Without a secured ceasefire and an engaged and solid peace process involving all the warring parties, DDR programs are bound to fail and cannot lead to long-lasting conflict prevention. The example of the UNTAC-led DDR program illustrates how a lack of trust undermines implementation. In Cambodia, this lack of trust was double: the Khmer Rouge did not trust the Supreme National Council or UNTAC, and the other factions did not trust the Khmer Rouge or the ability of the UN personnel to protect them from the Khmer Rouge. The political unrest of the years 1993-1999 also blocked the process of demobilization, which explains why it only was resumed ten years after the first (failed) attempt to implementing a DDR program in Cambodia.

This is a key observation when studying the link between DDR programs and peace building. According to Eric Y. Shibuya, “the rise of an armed forces is only a symptom of a much deeper issue—the deep insecurity and lack of faith the population has in the State apparatus.”⁶⁴ In other words, even if armed forces no longer exist, or are neutralized through a DDR program, a long-lasting peace will not be secured until the “deeper issues” are faced.

If the positive definition of peace goes further than the simple absence of violence to include addressing the root causes of the conflict and violence, then DDR is obviously not sufficient to promote peace. However, it can help bring security and contribute to the reconstruction of the social fabric. By promoting security and reconciliation, can DDR programs be a comprehensive peace-building tool? The Cambodian case suggests that DDR cannot build peace from the ground up, and that some components of a peace process must be engaged prior to DDR implementation — including trust in an authority and its institutions. Building trust prior to implementation eliminates the uncertainty that often makes soldiers reluctant to demobilize and disarm. To accept demobilization, soldiers (in particular former child-soldiers) must have faith in the future.⁶⁵

The authors of a study on the Demobilization and Reintegration Programs (DRP) in Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda go further:

As reinsertion and reintegration proceed, the needs of ex-com-

63 Peter Eng, *Soldiers Disarmed under Peace Accords Fear K.R. Attack*, PHNOM PENH POST, July 10, 1992.

64 ERIC Y. SHIBUYA, *DEMobilizing Irregular Forces 9* (2012).

65 *Id.* at 14.

batants change and call for different support activities. To rebuild community social fabric and engender the understanding necessary to rebuild trust, measures of national reconciliation should form part and parcel of a DRP.⁶⁶

This suggests that the confidence-building phase of post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building should be neither a precondition nor an objective of DDR but instead an integral part of the program. Without this component, DDR may produce only a shift from organized violence between warring parties to disorganized violence.⁶⁷

6.3. The Relationship Between Social Reintegration and National Reconciliation

Arguably, political and economic reintegration can be achieved without reconciliation. However, reconciliation is necessary for a successful social reintegration of ex-combatants because social reintegration is only possible if there is a society in which to reintegrate. From this perspective, reconciliation must be initiated before the social reintegration of ex-combatants is possible. It may be addressed previously or simultaneously, but it is counterproductive to imagine that social reconstruction can start after the social reintegration of former soldiers.

The link between social reconciliation and DDR starts with demobilization. At that point the peacekeeping component of DDR changes from ending violence to reconciling and reconstructing the social fabric.⁶⁸ Directly after the demobilization ceremony, when soldiers hand-in their uniform, insignia, and weapons, they are effectively demobilized and suddenly belong to civilian society. There is no transition period, which is why demobilization, reintegration, and reconciliation should not be considered independent, but parts of a whole process.

Going a step further, some scholars suggest that DDR programs should be “designed or implemented with an eye to their relationship with transitional justice measures such as prosecutions, truth-telling efforts, reparations for victims and vetting or other forms of institutional reform.”⁶⁹ From this perspective, the processes of DDR and transitional justice have implications for each other and failing to recognize these implications can undermine the success of both.⁷⁰ This school

66 NAT J. COLLETTA, MARKUS KOSTNER & INGO WIEDERHOFER, CASE STUDIES IN WAR-TO-PEACE TRANSITION (1996), at Abstract. DRP programs do not include a disarmament step.

67 SHIBUYA, *supra* note 64, at I0.

68 *Id.* at I3.

69 Roger Duthie, Transitional Justice and Social Reintegration, Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration (SIDDR) (Apr. 2005), at I.

70 *Id.* at I-2.

of thought is based on the idea that both societal reintegration and justice must be central to a peace process because they promote reconciliation, dialogue and trust among divided societal groups.

When violence ends without programs for reintegration and reconciliation, post civil-conflict societies will often welcome ex-combatants from one of the warring parties and reject combatants from another. In some cases, a country might stay de facto divided because of a geographical partition of the supporters of the various parties. Former soldiers will then choose to demobilize in the location where their social reintegration will be the easiest, even if it sometimes means relocating to a different part of the country far from their place of origin. This happened with former Khmer Rouge soldiers who stayed at the Thai-Cambodian border and did not return to their home provinces. If the reconciliation process had been initiated prior to reintegration, the chances for a successful reintegration might have been more equal among ex-combatants. Although a return to war appears unlikely in Cambodia, in other cases a similar geographical division of a country on political or ethnic lines may facilitate the continuation of the cycle of violence.

6.4. A Role for Civil Society in Promoting Social Reintegration and Reconciliation?

Eric Y. Shibuya writes: “Reintegration is undoubtedly the key aspect of the DDR process. Effective disarmament and demobilization are only symptoms or evidence of movement towards communal reconciliation.”⁷¹ The reintegration and reconciliation process cannot be imposed upon a society but must be generated from within — though there are tools that the international communities or local governments can use to promote and facilitate the process.

Most notably, the involvement of civil society appears necessary after demobilization to encourage the reintegration of ex-combatants. As reported in the Phnom Penh Post: “A two-day conference on the lessons learned from the army demobilization and reintegration program heard that the role of civil society was vital to ensure the process succeeded and that former soldiers were able to maintain a decent standard of living.”⁷² According to the journalist, the officials of the CDAF deliberately turned their backs on civil society, while civil society groups pointed out the need to “undertake research on the specific difficulties and needs of demobilized soldiers, providing them cash and materials, develop their local communities, find markets for their produce, and encourage local authorities to

71 SHIBUYA, *supra* note 64, at 14.

72 Bou Sarouen, *Demobilisation Needs More Help from Civil Society*, PHNOM PENH POST, June 21-July 4, 2002.

assist wherever possible.”⁷³ They also recommended offering training rather than goods. According to Huot Ratanak, Executive Director of the Open Forum of Cambodia, “we should provide them with fish hooks rather than just give them a fish.”⁷⁴ In a previous article, the Phnom Penh Post journalist had already reported on the desire for more contact between the military and civil society, namely to provide workshops and trainings. Quoting the Executive Director of the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, Kim Hourn, he pointed out that only civil society could be efficient in establishing trust between former soldiers and civilians, hence preventing future social conflicts.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, it is challenging to make training attractive to demobilized soldiers. Most of the Cambodian soldiers demobilized in the 2000s were “category II soldiers,” which means that they were very often aged and/or disabled. Most of the ex-combatants interviewed by the author could hardly work and viewed themselves as farmers, not former soldiers. Most said that if a program of training had been offered, they would have turned it down because they knew how to work and refused to learn from younger trainers. This also means that the training need to be adapted to soldiers’ specific needs and skills, which might be difficult to set up within civil society’s limited financial means. Moreover, most Cambodians who were demobilized and became farmers faced a situation of poverty that would not allow them to take a few days or weeks off work to be trained without payment. Because of the thirty years of war that plagued the country, Cambodians who lived during that time tend to not consider the long-term future,⁷⁶ making the long-term benefits of training difficult to sell. This is likely true in any society that has suffered decades of conflict.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has raised two major questions: who is best positioned to implement DDR, and should DDR be considered a peace-building tool?

7.1. Who Is Best Positioned to Implement DDR?

Determining the best actor to implement DDR is a question of who is best able to establish security and trust, and who has the best knowledge of local challenges. International implementing agencies such as the UN have the advantage of

73 *Id.*

74 *Id.*

75 Bou Sarouen, *Civil Society Needed in Military Reform*, PHNOM PENH POST, Jan. 18, 2002.

76 This observation comes from participant-observation during the eight weeks spent by the author on the ground in June-July 2013, and was confirmed by author interviews.

being able to ensure a certain degree of security allowing a disarmament process to begin. The link between security and DDR is extremely important and should not be undermined at any time during the process. In fact, it is arguable whether disarmament can be achieved without security. Compared with government-led programs, DDR included within multidimensional peace-building operations will also have more financial means and thus can target broader objectives, especially in terms of number of soldiers to be demobilized.

However, the Cambodian case shows that the failure of the national authorities to implement DDR programs may not necessarily be due to a lack of funding. Political agendas are also often an obstacle to DDR implementation by governmental bodies. Moreover, although local institutions would appear to have a better understanding of local needs and habits, the experience of Cambodia show that the domestic implementation does not always mean that programs will be well adapted to the situation on the ground. Government officials often live far from the reality of ex-combatants and fail to tailor projects to the needs and existing skills of the soldiers to be demobilized. This observation indicates a need for civil society involvement in reintegration programs.

DDR should be adapted to the specific situation of the country, of the civilian society, and of the ex-combatants, so that the reintegration of ex-combatants can be included in post-conflict states' programs for reconstruction and rehabilitation. This requires a careful audit of the situation on the ground before selecting the modalities of the program, whether it is to be implemented by a governmental body or by an implementation agency. The question of whether DDR programs should be implemented by outsiders or insiders is complex, but the key point is that whoever does it must respect the cultural norms of the affected group.

7.2. Should DDR Be Considered a Peace-Building Tool?

As to whether DDR can be a peace-building tool, this study highlights the difficulty of implementing a DDR program directly after the signature of a peace agreement. The peace being still fragile, a lack of trust jeopardizes the process of disarmament. So long as all the factions formerly at war are not simultaneously involved in a disarmament program, none of the factions will agree to demilitarize, as they will still feel the need to protect themselves. What has been seen in Cambodia is common in cases of DDR implemented during the peace-building phase: the DDR fails because of a lack of cooperation of one or more of the actors. This illustrates not only the fragility and the complexity of such programs, but also the difficulty of finding the right time to demobilize soldiers. It appears that DDR programs should only be implemented when the full cooperation of all the warring

factions, and a strict respect for a ceasefire, are achieved. Nevertheless, if a DDR program is expected to consolidate the peace and prevent the various factions return to combat, implementation must come early enough in the peace process to have an impact. The failure of the UNTAC-led DDR program can thus be linked to the failure of the Paris peace-process. Indeed, the Paris Agreements were extremely fragile for two major reasons: (1) because of the decades of civil war that divided Cambodian society and aroused animosity between the warring parties; and (2) because the Agreements were a product of the international community rather than a “coming to terms” between Cambodians,⁷⁷ leading the factions to progressively disengage from the peace-process.

The Cambodian experience suggests that the implementation of successful DDR programs requires a successful peace agreement, meaning that respect for ceasefire should be a precondition rather than an objective of such programs. A distinction must be made between short-term security, defined as the absence of direct threat and use of weapons, and long-term security, defined as the absence of risk that the combatants will return to violence. The first should be achieved before DDR implementation, and the second should be the objective of DDR programs. Therefore, DDR programs should not be considered a tool for reestablishing law and order—as DDR was during UNTAC. Rather, they should be looked to as an instrument for securing a long-lasting absence of violence. Indeed, disarmament should not be instrumental in implementing ceasefires but in reducing the quantity of weapons that will circulate in the post conflict years during reconstruction.

Thus, DDR should be implemented after the complete cessation of violence, when a comprehensive peace still needs to be built and secured. This finding highlights the difference between the end of fighting, which would correspond to the negative definition of peace, and a more comprehensive positive definition of peace that includes social, economical and political rehabilitation. To achieve the latter, and secure a future in which there is little risk of a return to violence, processes like DDR are necessary for establishing security and working toward reconstruction of the social fabric. The cycle of violence is not broken when soldiers stop using their weapons for organized violence, but when irregular forces are demilitarized and the state controls a singular and appropriately sized army, with demobilized soldiers well integrated economically, politically, and socially into civilian society.

7.3. Did DDR Promote Peace-building and Reconciliation in Cambodia?

The absence of a link between national reconciliation and DDR is a fascinating feature of the post-conflict situation in Cambodia. Politically, reconciliation

77 FINDLAY, *supra* note 9, at 30.

was touted by Prime Minister Hun Sen, who created the National Reconciliation Council with Sihanouk as president as part of a transition program announced during the Paris Agreement.⁷⁸ Among civil society, reconciliation efforts were mostly taken over by victim-oriented NGOs. Nevertheless, although DDR is often identified as a tool for promoting and facilitating reconciliation,⁷⁹ this purpose was never clearly referenced in Cambodia, where DDR programs were instead considered a component of security sector reform.

Despite reform efforts, today the Cambodian military has an unexpectedly high number of soldiers and an army “top-heavy with senior officers,”⁸⁰ while the government keeps promoting officials to the rank of four-star general. These promotions, which have been denounced as politically motivated,⁸¹ are a symptom of the politicization of the army over the past decade that found its latest expression in the repression of the political unrest following the July 2013 elections, and in the use of military units by powerful families in land disputes. In an article published in 2012 in the Phnom Penh Post, Cambodian human rights activist Ou Virak writes:

The government needs to focus on reforming the security sector: far too many police, military police and full military officials are involved in land evictions and other incidents that serve to stain Cambodia’s name, promoting the impression that our nation is still on an internal-war footing—an image that is at least 15 years out of date. . . . People need to trust, rather than fear, the Kingdom’s security forces.⁸²

While a return to armed conflict in Cambodia appears extremely unlikely, the society could have benefited from a better social reconstruction, a more comprehensive care program for veterans after the end of the civil war, and an immediate restructure of the military forces and security sector, especially after the military integration program. It seems that Cambodia has achieved a negative definition of peace—the absence of organized armed violence, in the sense that there is no more armed conflict or militias per se. However, a positive definition of

78 MICHAEL HAAS, *GENOCIDE BY PROXY: CAMBODIAN PAWN ON A SUPERPOWER CHESSBOARD* 130 (1991).

79 Duthie, *supra* note 69, at 3.

80 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance* (2014), ch. 6: Asia, at 229.

81 Meas Sokchea, *Promotions “Tsunami” Political, Says Analyst*, PHNOM PENH POST, Feb. 20, 2014 (quoting local political analyst Kem Ley).

82 Ou Virak, President of the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights, *Letter: Cambodian People’s Party Must Not Fear Reform*, PHNOM PENH POST, Aug. 23, 2012.

comprehensive peace remains elusive. Indeed, we are witnessing the apparitions of old social conflicts and unrest—for example the existence of programs supporting ethnic minorities working in the area of land governance. This observation verifies the argument that peace, according to its negative definition, can be achieved without DDR, but lasting communal harmony and deep reconstruction of the post-conflict society is unlikely if DDR programs are not properly implemented. At the crossroads between peace-building and state-building, DDR programs should be used to secure long-term conflict prevention through the strengthening of social cohesion, trust, safety and security.

HUN SEN'S CAMBODIA

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Hun Sen's Cambodia

To many in the West, the name Cambodia still conjures up indelible images of destruction and death, the legacy of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime and the terror it inflicted in its attempt to create a communist utopia in the 1970s. In *Hun Sen's Cambodia*, Sebastian Strangio, a journalist based in the capital city of Phnom Penh, now offers an eye-opening appraisal of modern-day Cambodia in the years following its emergence from bitter conflict and bloody upheaval.

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About the Author

SEBASTIAN STRANGIO is a former reporter and editor at the *Phnom Penh Post*, Cambodia's oldest English-language newspaper. Since leaving the Post at the start of 2011, he has worked as a freelance correspondent, covering news and events across the Asia-Pacific, in countries such as Burma, Thailand, South Korea, India, Bangladesh and Far East Russia. His writing from the region has appeared in numerous publications including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Republic*, *Foreign Policy*, *Slate*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The South China Morning Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*. He is currently a freelance correspondent covering news and events across the Asia-Pacific. Strangio lives in Phnom Penh.

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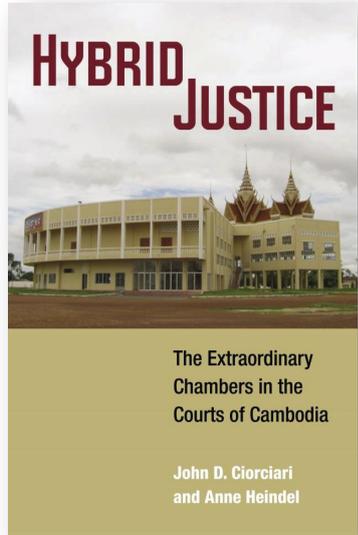
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