

PREFACE

This edited volume of articles on demobilisation and social reintegration in Africa is published at a time when South Africa is involved in such a process for the third time this century and a similar much larger programme is gathering momentum in Angola. The circumstances of the previous two South African situations, that following the First and the Second World War, was very different to the demobilisation of forces that follows the negotiated settlement in South Africa in the mid-nineties. The process of first integrating, then demobilising and eventually rationalising the swollen South African National Defence Force (SANDF) follows the negotiated settlement which led to the elections in April 1994 and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President. In Angola a much more ambitious task awaits that country with the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. Whereas former combatants to be demobilised in South Africa potentially number some twenty thousand, those in Angola are at least three times that many.

The purpose of this book is to inform academics, leaders and persons involved in demobilisation about the challenges and complexities of such a programme, and about the lessons that can be learnt from situations elsewhere in Africa. It does not consist entirely of new, unpublished material, in fact a number of the chapters have previously been published by various organisations. The involvement of the Institute for Defence Policy (IDP) in demobilisation and social reintegration in South Africa soon indicated, however, the lack of readily available comparative perspectives. I hope that this book will, in part, fill this gap.

Demobilisation and the social reintegration of former combatants should be seen as an integral part of post-conflict peace-making and peace-building. The assembly, disarmament, demobilisation and integration of combatants into either civilian society or a single military or police force, inevitably forms a part of peace negotiations, whether the conflict is fought in Bosnia, Cambodia or Angola. It cannot, therefore, occur in isolation, but forms part of a wider peace settlement.

In the longer term, demobilisation and the successful reintegration into a civilian way of life are vital to stability and a prerequisite for economic investment and growth. It is, therefore, not surprising that the linkage between development and stability has become most pronounced in the sphere of demobilisation in recent years. Increasingly, international donor agencies, the non-government organisation (NGO) community and governments are willing to invest resources into areas such as de-mining, weapons control, social reintegration, skills training for former combatants, and the like. The most notable step in this direction recently occurred in Uganda where the World Bank, amongst others, involved itself in supporting the demobilisation programme in that country. Today, more than ever before, the United Nations, the Organisation for African Unity, the Southern African Development Community, donor agencies and foreign governments are encouraging African

countries to build multilateral institutions to enhance peace, stability and security. In fact, 'security first' has become the dictum. In the process there is increased support for the diversion of small portions of aid money from development programmes to initiatives aimed at enhancing safety, security and therefore stability.

Disarming and the control of weapons is often the first and most symbolic step in the transformation from a military to a civilian life. It is also often the first step in demobilisation. Yet there have recently been a number of spectacular failures in disarmament. South Africa is presently paying a heavy price for the failure of the UN disarmament programmes in Mozambique during UNOMOZ, with literally hundreds of thousands of small arms still available in that country, often being bartered for goods or sold for the furtherance of criminal or political conflict in this country. Alarming, the prospect for effective disarmament during UNAVEM III in Angola appears remote, with inadequate preparation and funding being available to ensure that effective control of small arms will be implemented.

Demobilisation is the process through which armed forces of a government and opposition parties shed themselves of excess personnel after a period of conflict. Typically, demobilisation programmes include the provision of some short term social reintegration assistance. Demobilisation therefore involves the assembly, disarmament, administration and then the discharge of former combatants, with some type of compensation package and/or assistance programme in place. In many instances, demobilisation is accompanied or followed by a programme of restructuring and re-orientation of the military, to provide legitimacy, effectiveness and affordability. The exact cut-off between where demobilisation ends and social reintegration begins differs from country to country and tends to lead to a degree of confusion. Generally the military would include, as part of their demobilisation package and preparations, some settling-in package which would include clothing, building materials, some initial counselling, agricultural tools and seed, school fees for children, medical provision for a specified period and transport to the home community. In other words, short term social reintegration assistance often forms part of the demobilisation package, often managed, administered, planned and executed by the military, normally in co-operation with either the donor community, the larger international community or development agencies and non-government organisations.

Longer term social reintegration programmes for former combatants must follow demobilisation. This is typically a civilian activity and attempts to wean the combatant from the military. It therefore implies primarily the involvement of the wider society, other government departments, the private sector, non-government organisations and often the international community and donors. In the longer term, social reintegration implies ongoing supportive programmes often lasting several years, of training, support, counselling and select intervention. The purpose of social integration is to assist with the integration of former combatants into productive civilian life. This is pursued through various training, employment and credit related schemes. Although there is often a link, social reintegration is not social welfare and

must have a cut-off point. There must, at some stage, be a difference between providing ongoing social welfare support and reintegration support, despite the political risks and obligations involved. If not, the government simply becomes yet a larger employment agency. Former combatants and their dependants then exist at the expense of the taxpayer with little or no incentive to become self-supporting. There must therefore be a feedback loop - an independent mechanism through which government (and donors) can monitor and adjudicate the progress of the social reintegration of former combatants, through which the operations can be improved, and which can analyse the impact of the programme on the retrenched soldiers, their families and the communities within which they will settle.

Throughout the case studies presented in this book, with the exception of South Africa, governments and the international donor countries particularly emphasised social research to quantify and qualify the exact scope of the problem, wants and needs.

The first chapter reprints the summary of a large research programme conducted by the World Bank and describes the experience with demobilisation and reintegration from seven country case studies which were conducted up to October 1993. These countries are Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Uganda, Chad and Nicaragua, although the results are presented in an integrated manner. The purpose of the study was to develop a tentative framework for understanding the many issues raised in demobilisation and reintegration programmes. With the background provided in this comprehensive and comparative review of experiences by many different countries, subsequent chapters provide a different, often more personal account of the relevant experience in these countries.

The following two chapters discuss events in Zimbabwe. The chapter by Martin Rupiah is less about social reintegration than an overview of the military amalgamation and demobilisation process which occurred in that country from 1980 to 1987. In the first section Rupiah sketches the political backdrop to the military integration process between the armed forces of the former Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, those of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). He ascribes the success of this process to essentially three reasons: The first is the political leadership provided by the new government of Robert Mugabe, the second, the enlightened guerrilla leadership, and the final, the influx of apolitical job-seekers into the military. This is followed by a brief discussion of the demobilisation programme and the challenges faced by the Mugabe Government in dealing with the exodus of soldiers of the former Rhodesian military, the military management of the demobilisation programme, the ensuing conflict between ZANLA and ZIPRA and the establishment of the notorious Fifth Brigade which was trained by the North Koreans.

The subsequent article on Zimbabwe, by Musemwa focuses much more specifically on the demobilisation and social reintegration problems which, he argues, stand in sharp contrast to the success of the integration programme. He describes the ill-fated Operation Seed, a programme to establish combatants as peasant farmers which, in

Musemwa's words, eventually '... just fizzled out.' Eventually more than 25 000 former combatants were unemployed. The demobilisation package of Zim\$185 per month for two years barely allowed combatants to survive and feed their families against a background of massive unemployment, a hostile private sector and low formal educational standards amongst the former combatants. Even the concept of co-operatives ran into severe problems when the devastating drought between 1982 and 1984 wiped out the steady gains of many black farmers. An interesting section in this chapter, and one that is often neglected by researchers, presents the problems and constraints which were faced by female ex-combatants. Eventually government neglect would lead to the establishment of the Zimbabwe War Veterans Association, so that the former combatants could manage their own affairs. By 1992, some twelve years after the end of the war, the Government passed the War Veterans Act. The veterans problem had not gone away. In fact, it had by then become a political problem.

Collectively, the Zimbabwean experience, in a country with considerable resources and an established infrastructure, is probably the closest to that faced by South Africa, although the international and domestic context within which the two events occur, are very different.

The chapter on neighbouring Mozambique by Michael Stephen presents an up to date overview of the challenge to demobilise several tens of thousands of combatants from the Mozambican Defence Force (FADM). Following the criticism that the United Nations had to endure after UNAVEM I in Angola, and the debacle that led to the resumption of armed conflict thereafter, the UN wanted to ensure that UNOMOZ did not run into similar problems and devoted substantially more resources to the process in that country. But the peace process in Mozambique soon ran into a number of delays, not least the tactical brinkmanship associated with the political manoeuvring in the transformation and democratisation process. Eventually, elections were held in October 1994. This was compounded by mutual suspicion and distrust engendered over more than fifteen years of armed hostilities. Although the Peace Accord only specified a six month demobilisation timetable (including some short term social reintegration elements), the Consolidated Programme acknowledged that social and economic reintegration of demobilised soldiers is a long term activity. The subsequent implementation of the demobilisation programme in Mozambique illustrated the difficulties associated with such programmes in the absence of reliable data for planning. Eventually some 82 000 ex-combatants were assembled and registered for demobilisation and 39 000 were credited as either already demobilised or having entered into the new armed forces. Large numbers of former combatants simply left the concentration points and returned home on their own accord. Those that joined the military engaged in violent protest against the alleged preferential treatment of the persons being demobilised as opposed to being integrated into the military.

Mozambique has clearly not yet completed the challenge of demobilisation and the chances that the country could revert to a situation of increased violence and lawlessness are great. It is difficult to reintegrate a former combatant into a society

where the portion of persons living below the poverty level is estimated at 60%. Even prior to the Peace Agreement there was already compelling evidence to suggest the beginning of the disintegration of government forces. Other areas highlighted are the problems of child soldiers, the ready availability of small arms throughout the country and the massive challenge of de-mining. In short, the process of peace building is still uncompleted in Mozambique and potentially imperils the wider region. In part, this lack of consolidation reflects on the limited scope, resources and time afforded the social reintegration process. It may yet become evident that the failures in the UNOMOZ disarmament programmes were crucial in the remaining high levels of instability remaining in that country.

Events in Mozambique cast a shadow over Angola. Not only are there a number of similarities in the political situations between Mozambique and Angola, but the challenges faced with regard to demobilisation, disarmament and de-mining, are very similar.

The very short chapter by the Manager of the Development Brigade Corporation in Namibia, Simon Shikangalah, underlines many of the lessons learnt elsewhere, in Zimbabwe in particular. In effect, Shikangalah reiterates the fact that inadequate planning and preparations have forced the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) Government to revisit their social reintegration programmes a number of times and that very limited success was obtained with the productive social reintegration of former combatants into society. In fact, similar to Zimbabwe, the dividing line between social welfare and a social reintegration programme has become blurred.

The following three chapters all relate the experiences in the Horn of Africa and Uganda. The first of these chapters, reprinted from the NGO Networking Service Inter Africa Group, deals with demobilisation and reintegration in Somalia, the Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The chapter places demobilisation and social reintegration within the context of post-war reconstruction and the potential economic benefits and burdens that these programmes may bring. Central to the demobilisation challenge was the allocation of land and finances, training and the controversial issue of civic or democracy education to prepare the combatant for his or her return to civilian life. A particularly interesting feature of social reintegration in Ethiopia is the attempt to move a group of former combatants into civilian life as a single community. This is an innovative approach to a problem which, in contemporary African history, has accepted that reintegration should be effected back into the communities from which the combatants originally came. The chapter concludes with a section on the role of NGO's.

The second chapter in this section is by Emilio Mondo and relates Uganda's experience in the management of demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers from the National Resistance Army since late 1992. During 1992 that Government established the Uganda Veterans Assistance Programme under which demobilisation was to be

implemented. For this purpose a civilian, parastatal organisation, the Uganda Veterans Assistance Board was established. The programme in Uganda is often held up as a successful example of demobilisation and the lessons to be learnt from it are, therefore, particularly instructive. The Ugandan case has been unique in the sense that it is the first country where the World Bank became involved in providing financial assistance and expertise for demobilisation and social reintegration, areas traditionally outside the Bank's scope of operation. The Bank had by then largely completed the extensive research programme upon which chapter one in this book is based. It had, therefore, built up a considerable pool of expertise and knowledge. This chapter relies heavily on the results of a formal evaluation report, carried out by a Uganda-based firm during late 1994/early 1995 and is written at the practical level in outlining the administrative and technical requirements of such a programme, the details of the pay-out schemes, and the like.

By March 1995 two out of three phases of the demobilisation programme had been completed in Uganda, affecting a total of some 32 000 soldiers. An explicit purpose of the programme was to realise the often elusive peace dividend and cut defence expenditure by half. Exactly how elusive this peace dividend is, is illustrated by the fact that President Museveni recently announced a 40% rise in military spending to counter the threat from a rebel group in the north at the same time as thousands of soldiers prepare to hand in their guns and uniforms as part of demobilisation. But it is the preparatory social research phase, administrative infrastructure, the programme evaluation system and the social impact that returning former combatants had on the communities that is the most interesting.

The penultimate chapter, that by Paul Collier, is an edited version of a chapter from a much wider World Bank study on the economic consequences of the transition from civil war to peace. It investigates the hypothesis that demobilisation constitutes a potential threat to security both at the individual and state level and asks the question whether demobilisation does make wider economic sense. In doing so, Collier investigates the relationship between demobilisation and crime rates in both countries. Common wisdom would have us believe that there is a direct causal link between the two, i.e. the demobilisation of former combatants into a society with already high levels of crime and unemployment should increase crime. Not surprisingly, Collier finds that the real situation is somewhat more complex. Although there is a clear relationship between demobilisation and crime, the stabilising effect of the demobilisation of a much larger component of former combatants with access to land in Uganda initially outweighed the destabilising effect of the demobilisation of a much smaller component of former combatants without access to land. The nett result was less disruptive than hitherto believed although his data only reflects the situation within one year after demobilisation and is, therefore, not indicative of a longer term trend. He argues that *"... what appears to have happened is that the landless, after some initial desperation, settled into their communities, while the landed majority rapidly lost the military attributes which had provided a deterrence to crime in their localities."*

Colliers' findings regarding the concern that demobilisation could weaken the security of the State is less conclusive, although he believes it to be a significant consideration. In general, this chapter underlines the importance of carefully crafting demobilisation and social reintegration support to assist those persons who are most needy and destitute, be they the landless or the disabled, both of whom rapidly become an additional burden on the community they have to serve. Collier finds that it is not the amount of resources spent on demobilisation which is the crucial factor, but rather the careful targeting of such resources to the needy and the importance of avoiding relationships of dependency. In both Uganda and Ethiopia access to land was a crucial consideration, given the agrarian nature of the societies from which former combatants had originally come.

The final chapter in this book is by Tsepe Motumi and Andrew Hudson and reflects upon the progress with demobilisation and social reintegration of former combatants in South Africa.

South Africa's experiences differ from many of the countries which are examined in this book. The vast majority of the former combatants do not come from a rural but rather from an urban environment. With the possible exception of the former Eastern Cape, it is from Soweto, the townships of the East Rand, the Vaal Triangle and, to a lesser extent, the townships in and around Cape Town that the majority of former combatants come. Whilst there is general and massive land hunger in South Africa it is therefore doubtful if resettlement and land programmes would be appropriate for this country. A much more important requirement in the South African context is appropriate skills in training for employment and preparation for survival in the informal sector. But little progress is apparent in this regard.

South Africa is also fortunate in not having faced the extent of war and armed conflict of many other African countries. The majority of members of both MK and APLA joined those organisations in recent years. Most did not leave the country for external training but remained in their communities, and few were socialised into the rural guerrilla armies as was the situation in countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Uganda. As a result, social reintegration is a much lesser challenge for this country than is the case elsewhere in Africa. But, exactly because of the developed nature of the South African economy, social reintegration is also much more complex and demanding. Subsistence farming does not present a viable alternative to integration into the military. In fact, in recognition of these factors, the cash value of the demobilisation gratuities that have been paid out in South Africa is grossly in excess of that paid anywhere else. But, the irony is that the South African Department of Defence, which stubbornly clings to the belief that demobilisation and social reintegration should be planned and executed by the National Defence Force, flying in the face of all other experience, has done little planning or social research for social reintegration. This is, at best, a calculated risk, since it relies on the ingenuity of the individual and the belief that the relatively small number of persons involved do not present a sufficiently large political problem, neither to the Government of National Unity, in particular, nor to the country at large.

Obviously the content and nature of demobilisation is very different between countries such as South Africa and Uganda, where it is carried out in peace-time with a clearly established government in power, and in situations such as Mozambique, Angola and Nicaragua, in the context of a transition from war to peace. Easy comparisons and ready conclusions regarding the application of situations from one country to another should therefore be done with a degree of caution. Yet, with two processes of demobilisation and social reintegration now imminent in the region, some comparative lessons could be instructive.

I trust that this book will contribute to an informed debate on demobilisation and social reintegration in South Africa.

JAKKIE CILLIERS

Malta

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