

**SIERRA LEONE:
MANAGING UNCERTAINTY**

24 October 2001



Africa Report N°35
Freetown/Brussels

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SIERRA LEONE: MANAGING UNCERTAINTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The international community is 'cautiously optimistic' about the durability of the peace it has supported in Sierra Leone. There are indeed some reasons for growing optimism. The deployment of a more robust United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the disarmament of almost one half of the combatants, and the extension of government authority to almost all territory not controlled by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group are all welcome. They are largely the result of a more robust policy by the international community, in particular military and diplomatic pressure exerted on the RUF and its sponsor, Liberian President Charles Taylor, by Britain, Guinea, Sierra Leone civil militias, and the UN Security Council.

The RUF's commitment to peace is fragile and dependent upon sustained international pressure. The situation of 'no war, no peace' at the moment is thus one of both great jeopardy and great opportunity. Sierra Leone faces its best chance for peace in years, but the pressure responsible for creating this chance must be maintained and expanded. This realisation must shape international strategy, particularly in the crucial months leading up to the elections that are scheduled for 14 May 2002.

A core component of that strategy should be to achieve 'Security First', that is durable security throughout the entire country, well before the May elections. This will require full disarmament of the RUF, of course, but also robust UNAMSIL deployment, which maximises the role of the strongest national contingents, particularly the Pakistani battalions, and restoration of

government authority throughout the country. It will also require putting together a credible, coordinated deterrent force that includes British Army, UNAMSIL and Sierra Leone Army (SLA) elements. Above all, 'Security First' requires that UNAMSIL demand a far more stringent disarmament and demobilisation process and adopt a firmer approach in its negotiations with the RUF.

A second key component of international strategy must be directed at possible spoilers in the peace process besides the RUF, particularly the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and their associated Kamajor Civil Defence Forces (CDF). The SLA, which is being trained by British specialist troops, is also still a potential source of instability. Both CDF and SLA should be reformed and transformed under pressure to become more benign institutions whose loyalty to the state is ensured.

In addition, the United Nations and the British need to urgently consider the regional dimensions of the conflict. Pressure on President Taylor and his supporters must be increased, and the UN Secretariat should broaden its focus of its work in Sierra Leone to Guinea and Liberia.

Even assuming a good faith commitment by the parties and the establishment of security by election day, much will need to be done to 'win the peace'. Lack of funding for reintegration programs threatens the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process, and a better public information job needs to be done to explain the Special Court to prevent fears of indictment from disrupting the peace

process. To ensure that the elections themselves are free and fair (and so perceived), they should be run by the UN, not the Sierra Leone government.

In short, Sierra Leone's history of stalled or collapsed peace processes may yet repeat itself if the crucial next seven months are not managed with care. The international community should proceed with more caution than optimism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ON ACHIEVING SECURITY FIRST

To UNAMSIL:

1. Change from a 'softly, softly' to a more assertive approach to peace negotiations with the RUF.
2. Apply pressure on the RUF and other armed parties to undergo a much more stringent disarmament process, including cordon and search operations led by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) with UNAMSIL's strong and visible backup, which genuinely degrades their capacity to make war.
3. Be prepared, and willing, to use force in the fulfilment of its mandate.
4. Work to develop a 'Coordinated Security Group' that includes the British and the SLA, and maximise the role of Pakistani forces within the mission, which, in close cooperation with the British 'over the horizon force', should include reserve and rapid reaction responsibilities.
5. Complete the disarmament and reintegration process before indictments are handed down by the Special Court, while simultaneously undertaking vigorous efforts to educate Sierra Leoneans about the scope and mandate of that court.

To the Security Council:

6. Maintain sanctions on Charles Taylor until well after Sierra Leone has held its

elections in May 2002, and include timber in those sanctions, to ensure that he continues to distance himself from the conflict.

7. Direct the UN Secretariat to broaden its focus to include Guinea and Liberia as well as Sierra Leone and appoint a special representative of the Secretary General to the Mano River Union peace process.

To the French Government:

8. Continue to withdraw support from the Liberian government, endorse inclusion of timber in the Security Council Sanctions, work for China's support of this provision as well, and pressure allies (and Taylor sponsors) such as Burkina Faso also to withdraw support from Liberia.

To the British Government:

9. Maintain an 'over the horizon force' capable of supporting peace enforcement and take a lead role in establishing a 'Coordinated Security Group' with UNAMSIL and the SLA.

To Donor Countries and the World Bank:

10. Immediately provide sufficient funds (Sierra Leone's request is U.S.\$32.7 million) to finance the reintegration program promised to ex-combatants, including resources that enable the government to extend significantly the time combatants spend in demobilisation camps until reintegration opportunities are available.
11. Undertake a strong civil reconstruction program to provide jobs to ex-combatants and revive the local economy, taking care to focus on areas particularly depopulated and devastated by the war.
12. Finance study opportunities abroad for potentially troublesome RUF, CDF, and SLA commanders (if possible, in countries that will co-operate if they are indicted at a later date by the Special Court).

ON THREATS TO PEACE

To Donor Countries:

13. Pressure President Kabbah to resist elements of his party less committed to the peace process, appoint a diverse multiparty cabinet (though without the RUF-P), and work harder to check government corruption, particularly regarding natural resource contracts;

To the British Government:

14. Implement, in co-operation with the government, a program to transform the CDF into a more benign organisation tied to the state, not the ruling party. The CDF should be downsized and disarmed, but retain its organizational structure as a territorial defence force, with all weapons stored centrally under a dual-key system (government and British or government and UNAMSIL).
15. Make greater effort to weed out gross human rights abusers from the SLA, particularly senior officers.

ON WINNING THE PEACE

To the Security Council:

16. Mandate the UN Secretariat to run the May 2002 elections, with advice from the government electoral commission.

To the Government of Sierra Leone:

17. Endorse a national consultative conference of civil society, political parties and armed groups to develop recommendations on the key issues in the peace process, including the type of electoral system that should be adopted.

To Donor Countries:

18. Ensure that reintegration programs do not overly favour ex-combatants over their victims or members of the communities they return to and in particular make funds available to assist women who have been

abducted by the RUF, so that they are economically independent enough to leave their 'husbands'.

19. Make major commitments of three to five years duration to Sierra Leone so that once solid order-of-magnitude estimates are developed, adequate funding is provided to assist the country in meeting the wider costs of the civil and economic reconstruction program that is needed for long term recovery.

Freetown/Brussels, 24 October 2001



SIERRA LEONE: MANAGING UNCERTAINTY

I. INTRODUCTION

ICG's 11 April 2001 report, *Time for a New Military and Political Strategy*, called for a 'radically different approach' that involved military action and a coherent political strategy to end Sierra Leone's decade long civil war.¹ Significant changes have occurred over the past six months that give the country its best chance for peace in many years.

On 2 May 2001, the RUF met with the UN and the Government of Sierra Leone in Abuja, Nigeria for a review of the Cease-fire Agreement signed on 10 November 2000 (Abuja I). The meeting (Abuja II) saw the rebel group give new life to the peace process when it dropped its demand that the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) disarm, and agreed to return to the disarmament process which had stalled with the failure of the Lomé peace process in May 2000.²

Since the signing of Abuja II, over 22,000 RUF and CDF combatants have entered the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR) process, almost one half of the estimated total of 45,000 combatants in the country. The cease-fire has also held since May, though with the notable exception of RUF-CDF skirmishes in the diamond-producing Kono district in the east.

As disarmament has progressed, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)

has extended its presence throughout the country except for the far eastern RUF stronghold of the Kailahun. Following the hostage crisis of May 2000, in which the RUF captured 500 UN peacekeepers, UNAMSIL has been significantly improved. Its concept of operations has been broadened, and the mission's mandate has been made more robust.

In the wake of UNAMSIL's deployment, the government has attempted to extend its authority. As of September 2001 there is both a SLA and Sierra Leone Police (SLP) presence in the south and west, as well as in Kabala, in the far north. Progress has been made in negotiations between the RUF and the government, with the government releasing several detained RUF leaders and allowing registration of an RUF political party. However, there has only been very limited government deployment as yet in RUF territory.³

All this serves as grounds for the 'cautious optimism' that is now expressed in the international community.⁴ These developments should, however, be viewed in context.

Progress since Abuja I has stemmed directly from the military and diplomatic pressure exerted on the RUF following the collapse of the Lomé peace process. This pressure came from several sources. The Abuja I cease-fire agreement was largely the result of the British arrival: their training and reconstitution of the armed forces, crushing defeat of the West Side Boys in a rescue

¹ ICG Africa Report No. 28, *Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy*, 11 April 2001, p. ii.

² Tenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone, 25 June 2001, S/2001/627, para. p. 2.

³ Seventy-six policemen arrived the week of 15 October in Koidu in the eastern diamond district of Kono.

⁴ Ibid, p. 11.

invasion in August 2000 at Occra Hills and 'over the horizon' strike force all had a significant psychological impact on the RUF. Through military convoys and deployments, fly-bys of RUF bases by Harrier jets and combat helicopters, and demonstrations of naval artillery power, the British waged an extraordinary campaign of intimidation.

The cease-fire agreement was also due to the disastrous results of an RUF campaign to destabilise Guinea, which resulted in a serious defeat for the rebel group by Guinean forces on the western border of Sierra Leone. The RUF felt their lack of effective leaders during this campaign due to the detention since May 2000 of Foday Sankoh and his senior commanders by the government in Freetown. However, it was not until spring 2001, with further defeats in Guinea, damaging helicopter attacks from the Guinean air force and Guinean sponsorship of the Donso militias, that intense military pressure forced the RUF to re-enter the peace process.⁵

Possibly the most effective form of pressure was the targeting of the RUF's godfather, Liberian President Charles Taylor, by the international community starting in January 2001. Following the report of a UN Panel of Experts in December 2000 and a Security Council debate on sanctions in mid-January, Taylor announced a policy of 'total disengagement' from the RUF.⁶ Perhaps most tellingly, the RUF turnaround on 2 May 2001 came five days before Security Council sanctions were due to be imposed on Taylor.

The Security Council was not the only source of pressure on Taylor. The Guinean-sponsored Liberian rebel group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), reached within 60 to 100 km. of Monrovia in May. Despite an effective counterattack, the Liberian President has been forced to deal with infighting

among his own security forces and has sacked most of his field commanders.

Leaderless, fighting on three fronts, and losing Liberian sponsorship, the RUF found itself outmanoeuvred in May 2001. Their commitment to the current process has less to do with war fatigue than with peace being the smartest game for the moment. After three failed peace agreements and several broken cease-fires since civil war began in March 1991, the current scenario is fairly consistent with the RUF's track record of using peace agreements tactically to gain military respite and advantage. That is why many in Sierra Leone remain deeply sceptical of the intentions and motivations of the rebels.

Significant progress has been made, and the opportunities should be seized. But it should be recognised that peace will come not through the goodwill of the RUF, but through its lack of other options. The gains of the last months should not be used to encourage concessions to the rebels, but rather to effectively deter them from a return to war and destroy their capability to do so. This must be the first objective of a policy of 'security first' in Sierra Leone.

Yet the international community would be mistaken to focus its deterrence efforts entirely on the RUF. The history of Sierra Leone is replete with failures to understand the interconnections of the parties to the conflict. The RUF has always thrived upon collusion and co-operation with elements of the Sierra Leone military and government. If the RUF genuinely have been forced to give up the fight, then the greatest threat to peace over the next months may be from the other two principal armed groups. The Kamajor Civil Defence Force and particularly the Sierra Leone Army are far more responsible for the atrocities of the war than many outside Sierra Leone realise, and the government's ability to control them is in doubt.

Still more urgently, it is time for the international community to scrutinise the government's motivations and commitment to peace closely, in particular the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party's (SLPP) close links with the Kamajor militias. In the tangled and self-interested politics of Sierra Leone's war, the key players are unlikely to genuinely embrace peace anytime soon. The international community must be

⁵ The Donsos were formed mainly from refugees caught in the Parrot's Beak crisis of January 2001 on the border of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This force struck deep into the heart of RUF territory in the diamond-producing region of Kono, continuing to attack the RUF well into August 2001.

⁶ Ninth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone, 14 March 2001, S/2001/228, para. 27, p. 5.

aware of, and respond to, the selfish interests of all parties if the population's desperate desire for peace and stability is to be finally met.⁷

II. 'SECURITY FIRST'?

International strategy towards Sierra Leone can be described as 'security-first', requiring the establishment of security throughout the country before next steps in the peace process, such as elections. There are three main stages, requiring first the country-wide deployment of UNAMSIL, then disarmament and demobilisation of the armed groups, and finally restoration of government authority, in the form of the SLP and SLA. Thus far, UNAMSIL has deployed to all regions except the RUF stronghold of Kailahun, on the Liberian border. Disarmament and demobilisation have taken place in one-third of the country but the RUF has allowed government security forces to start deployments in only a small part of their territory.⁸

The international strategy for achieving security first faces serious problems of both implementation and design. Problems of implementation occur particularly in the disarmament and demobilisation process. Armed groups are not being disarmed or demobilised sufficiently to affect their capacities to return to war. There have also been difficulties with the deployment of government authority. The international community's reliance upon the SLP and SLA to keep law and order in newly disarmed areas may be misconceived.

A persistent flaw in the international strategy thus far has been the failure to provide an effective deterrent force to guarantee the security of returnees and compel compliance with the peace process. The lack of such a credible deterrent force, and of willingness to use one, has affected UNAMSIL's negotiating strategy with the RUF, which has emphasised concessions and confidence building, at the cost of insisting on fulfilment by the rebels of their obligations. This approach risks encouraging further demands and foot-dragging.

⁷ This report concentrates on developments within Sierra Leone and the implications for the country if the peace process is not solidified. The wider international implications that failure to make the most of the current opportunity for peace would entail, including for the security and stability of the wider West Africa region, were discussed in the previously cited ICG report. Those considerations remain important reasons, in addition to the humanitarian issue presented by Sierra Leone's agony, why the international community should attach importance to staying the course in Sierra Leone.

⁸ These initial government deployments into RUF territory include the 76 police to Koidu (see footnote 3 above) and up to 200 police in the northern district of Kambia.

A. UNAMSIL DEPLOYMENT

UNAMSIL force strength is now approaching its full strength of 17,500, spread out in almost every region of the country. The concept of operations for 2001 has focused on gaining credibility among combatants, 'choking' the RUF's east-west supply route from Liberia, occupying their strongholds and sensitive areas, and sealing the eastern border with Liberia.⁹

The success in deploying UNAMSIL has been a key source of the international community's growing optimism. CDF attacks on the RUF in the Kono region proceeded until August, and the rebels actually saw UNAMSIL as a force that offered protection. The RUF strongholds of Makeni and Kono have been occupied, but not the RUF homeland of Kailahun, so the Liberian border has not yet been sealed.

Despite the presence of a Zambian contingent of UNAMSIL in Tongo, there has been no interruption of diamond mining by combatants. Indeed, 'mining' in these areas is more like 'farming' that involves tens of thousands of persons and is virtually impossible to control. Since diamonds were discovered in the 1930s the area has never been fully regulated. It remains literally the only source of income for large parts of the country. The joint declarations by the UN, RUF and government of a ban on all diamond mining are fanciful and cannot be honoured.

B. DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILISATION

On the surface, significant strides appear to have been made in the disarmament process. About 22,000 combatants have disarmed since the DDR program resumed in May 2001, over a third of the estimated total. A particular victory was the completion of disarmament in the strategic diamond-producing region of Kono, where many observers predicted the RUF would resist. At least 3,623 RUF fighters and 2,011 CDF militiamen reportedly turned in their weapons to UN peacekeepers, and UNAMSIL declared Kono

disarmed on 17 August. Much more remains to be done, however, especially in the volatile RUF strongholds of Kailahun and Makeni, but there is still time to move the process forward before the government's latest deadline for completion in December 2001.

Yet successes have been more than matched by the deep flaws in a process more cosmetic than substantive. Most 'hard core' RUF and CDF combatants are said to have refused to disarm, or been denied permission to do so by their commanders.¹⁰ The weapons submitted have ranged widely in quality. Many are at best low grade. In some areas, combatants have only turned in a grenade, in others, 'group disarmament' has produced far fewer weapons than combatants. There are reports from both civil society groups and UNAMSIL that some combatants are training civilians to pose as fighters, providing them a weapon to turn in, in exchange for benefits such as access to vocational training.¹¹

The National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) has closed camps in certain areas despite a flood of applicants, in recognition that most were not true combatants.¹² RUF insistence on 'group disarmament' has allowed commanders to choose participants and the weapons/combatant ratio, resulting in many selecting family members and friends (whether combatants or not) while carefully controlling the weapons submitted.

Of course, no disarmament process can expect to get all the weapons, but the process in Sierra Leone has been particularly poor, and few observers doubt that RUF commanders are holding back caches. The rebels are reported to have withdrawn all their heavy weaponry (some captured from UNAMSIL last year) to Liberia.

The record of success in demobilisation of combatants is even poorer. In most areas the RUF has retained its command and control structures,

⁹ For an outline of the concept of operations, see Ninth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone, 14 March 2001, S/2001/228, paras. 58-67, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰ Confidential ICG interview, August 2001.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² NCDDR is the government agency responsible for DDR. It is tasked with laying down the guidelines for DDR while UNAMSIL focuses on the disarmament phase of the program.

and there has been no effort to disrupt this. Since most fighters fear returning home to different parts of the country, they usually choose not to use the travel allowance and stay where they are disarmed. Yet since there are often no training programs or reintegration opportunities there, and no community to speak of other than combatants, fighters naturally stay together, making remobilization easy.

In early September 2001 RUF spokesman Gibril Massaquoi blocked a UN-escorted convoy of unarmed SLA passing through RUF territory. He claimed that Kono, the region the UN declared disarmed on 17 August, could be rearmed 'in 20 minutes'.¹³ More disturbing, there is little indication that the hoped-for dispersion and scattering of the RUF to homes located mainly in the South, is ever likely. A sizeable proportion of rebels intend to come to Freetown, but most plan to stay with their 'bush wives' and children in ex-combatant communities in the North. This could deeply complicate the politics and security of these communities and create long-standing tensions.

While there has been little progress in the disarmament and demobilisation of the RUF, there has been even less among the CDF. This is partly because there remains a fundamental ambiguity in the government about whether particularly the largest southern CDF group, the Kamajors, should be fully disarmed and demobilised at all.

The official guidelines for DDR exempt shotguns and hunting rifles, the CDF weapons of choice. DDR had also been discouraged by government promises to convert the CDF into a Territorial Defence Force (TDF), and in any case is virtually impossible since CDF forces are usually village or chiefdom-based militias who live in their communities. Major factions within the CDF include the Kamajors in the South, the Gbethis in the centre, the Donzos in the East, the Kapras in the West, and the Tamaboros in the North. Most make no effort to coordinate and resist the central control that Deputy Defence Minister Sam Hinga-Norman attempts to exert.

The blame for inadequate RUF disarmament lies principally, of course, with the rebels' lack of good faith. An important contributing factor, however, is UNAMSIL's preference to accept a substandard process rather than openly challenge the parties. UNAMSIL officials feel that because the process is voluntary, pressure would be inappropriate. Some even consider DDR a confidence-building measure, rather than a process to degrade the capacity to return to war. As a result, officials involved privately report that UNAMSIL will declare an area disarmed when only one-third of genuine combatants have given up one-third of the group's weapons.¹⁴

The longer this flawed approach is maintained, the more dangerous. UNAMSIL and even many British officials believe that it is not their role to use 'cordon and search' tactics to locate weapons caches. Some support such a change but prefer to wait until after elections.¹⁵ However, refraining from a more assertive approach conflicts directly with the 'security first' strategy. As in Angola and Somalia, failure to disarm the parties properly could prove fatal.

The persistence of armed groups will contribute to instability at each stage of the peace process, particularly in the run up to, and aftermath of, elections. As a matter of urgency, therefore, UNAMSIL should coordinate with the SLP and SLA and provide strong and visible backup assistance to carefully prepared cordon and search operations for weapons, led by the police.¹⁶ There must also be greater effort to have the SLA monitor the Liberian border vigorously, with UNAMSIL support, to prevent the return of weapons. It will not be possible to achieve a weapons-free environment, but at the very least major caches should be minimised well before the May 2002 election.

Meeting the challenges of demobilisation may require return to the drawing board. Original planning for DDR in 1999 included a 60 to 90

¹³ Confidential ICG interview, September 2001.

¹⁴ Confidential ICG interview, August 2001.

¹⁵ Confidential ICG interviews in August, September and October 2001.

¹⁶ This does not require a change in the UNAMSIL mandate; cordon and search operations can be headed by the SLP with UNAMSIL providing security and the bulk of the manpower, as well as taking the political responsibility in contacts with the RUF.

day demobilisation process during which combatants stayed within special camps, separated from their commanders and exposed to programs designed to change their mindset and prepare them for peace. This was scrapped on the objection of the UN Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, and the current plan effectively skips from disarmament to reintegration. This is not viable given the lack of reintegration opportunities. Every effort must be made to provide those opportunities, but in the meantime the NCDDDR must extend the time that combatants are allowed to spend in demobilisation camps, and donor countries must provide the necessary funding.

C. DEPLOYMENT OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

The third strand of the security first strategy has been extension of government authority into rebel and CDF territory. With the recent still small exceptions in Kambia and Koidu noted above, this has not yet happened in RUF-controlled areas. The capacity of the police to maintain security in an area not properly disarmed is questionable, and the antipathy and mistrust with which virtually all in Sierra Leone view the SLA compromises its credibility. Recognition of the demerits of the SLA has resulted in an emphasis on the army providing only border security.

The SLP also faces serious challenges. Many police have served since the APC regime ten years ago, when the force was universally reviled. One-eighth of the SLP was killed by the RUF during the war, which has left few officers who have lived in the communities into which they are to deploy. Both the SLA and SLP also have serious human and physical resource constraints. They cannot, therefore, substitute for an international deterrent force.

D. A CREDIBLE DETERRENT FORCE: SEARCHING FOR CANDIDATES

The security challenge is brought into stark relief when return of refugees and internally displaced persons is considered. Reconstruction of communities cannot begin until these people return to their homes in the North and East. But

these many thousands of families left in terror, having suffered brutal treatment from the RUF and SLA. Now they are being compelled to return by deteriorating conditions in camps in Freetown and Guinea. The sad fact, however, is that the approach of the international community to security, outlined above, cannot provide any guarantee that the horrors will not recur.

UNAMSIL has a fairly flexible mandate, allowing it to use force to protect both itself and civilians in immediate danger. Commanders have freedom to interpret this mandate broadly. The problem is one of capability. UNAMSIL may be militarily capable, with British help, of defending itself, but UN commanders admit they would not be able to prevent the parties from attacking civilians if they so chose.

Developing a viable force to provide security has been the focus of much of the British intervention, including SLA retraining under the security-sector program. With British officers and backup, both SLA and UNAMSIL are greatly strengthened. Most of the British presence is engaged in training the SLA (codename 'Operation Silkman') but there are also eighteen British UN military observers and four senior British staff within the UNAMSIL command (codename 'Operation Turner').

The gradual reduction of British forces under Operation Silkman from 550 to 360 is cause for concern. Of those to remain, about 110 will serve under the longer-term international military advisory training team (IMATT). The outcry in several newspapers that accompanied Britain's announcement of its planned restructuring were signs that Sierra Leoneans remain sceptical about their British-trained army.¹⁷ But this reduction mainly responds to the end of the short-term SLA training program. It also comes as British forces are stretched to meet commitments to Macedonia.

IMATT will pick up where the British short-term training team left off and is to stay for three years. It consists mainly of British and other Commonwealth country military officers, and is

¹⁷ For example, see 'British Troops Are Leaving!' *PEEP*, 31 August 2001 and 'British troops out of Salone next month', *Independent Observer*, 31 August 2001. These concerns are discussed further below.

devoted strictly to training and advisory activities under the Military Reintegration Program (MRP). The longer these officers 'advise' the SLA, and the more de facto control they have over its command structure and operations, the better are the chances the army can redeem its troubled past and play a positive role. But for the next year at least, the SLA will not be prepared or trustworthy enough to provide a credible force to underpin the peace process.

Finding a candidate that can reliably provide security has in some ways been the problem at the centre of Sierra Leone's war. The SLA is untrustworthy, the CDF inappropriate, UNAMSIL unable, and Nigeria reluctant. The British have been responsible for much of the progress to date, but it appears that their military commitment does not extend much beyond Freetown. One controversial answer to this recurring difficulty is the use of private security companies. This option is unlikely to be accepted by any of the stakeholders to the conflict, however, given issues of accountability and transparency involved with private military companies.¹⁸ A more feasible alternative would be establishment of a 'Coordinated Security Group' drawing on the strengths of UNAMSIL, the British and the SLA to present a deterrent force that would be credible to potential spoilers of the peace process.

Given its numbers, UNAMSIL would have to take a lead operational role in such a group. Many argue that it is a poorly trained and equipped conglomeration of uncoordinated national contingents that lack the spirit to fight and are unlikely to assist one another. But UNAMSIL has some capability for robust action. The arrival of the Pakistani contingent in July and August 2001 has provided a core that is well trained, well equipped and highly coordinated. It has insisted (against UN wishes) on deploying together in a single region and operating as a national unit.

The Pakistanis have formidable combat helicopters and artillery, as well as effective military intelligence. In securing the highly volatile Kono region, they acquired a reputation for a no-nonsense approach. UNAMSIL could create a national reserve force of one Pakistani battalion able to rapidly deploy to any trouble spot, thus ensuring that the strongest part of UNAMSIL (and therefore its air support) would immediately become involved in any threatened outbreak of hostilities.

The British must publicly commit to maintain their 'over the horizon force' and openly coordinate that force with UNAMSIL. The principal British contribution might be air support – combat helicopters, which completely dominate the flat scrub terrain of most of the country – as well as careful assessment of the situations in which the SLA can contribute. Even the CDF, as a militia whose rearmament could be jointly controlled by the UN and the government, might play a role in this framework.

E. UNWILLINGNESS TO USE FORCE

Unfortunately, the events of the last months suggest that even if a credible deterrent force could be established, the UN might be unwilling to use it in a 'carrot and stick' strategy to drive the peace process. The UN's organisational culture is notoriously unaccustomed to coercive diplomacy. The catch phrase of UN staff in describing their current approach is 'softly, softly'.¹⁹

Feeling that a political process based on encouragement and engagement is the only way to secure the peace process, UNAMSIL has become extremely close to the rebels. Its highest officials enjoy close relationships with rebel leaders and defend the RUF's cause in taking up arms and their level of support among the population in a way that suggests they view the rebels as equal in legitimacy to the government. This closeness has resulted in bitter criticism

¹⁸ While they can make immediate impact as witnessed when Executive Outcomes entered Sierra Leone in 1995, private security companies are also widely seen as profiteers of war, who provide little possibility for public scrutiny.

¹⁹ Confidential ICG interview, October 2001.

from CDF leaders that the UN is actually biased in favour of the RUF.²⁰

The release of the three most senior RUF leaders in detention aside from Foday Sankoh – Paolo Bangura, Secretary-General of the RUF late in August and Brigadier Mike Lamin, second in command after Sankoh, and Colonel Eldred Collins, a spokesman, on 5 September 2001 – was a major coup for the RUF. The releases have greatly strengthened the RUF and threatened to shift the balance of power within the group from moderates to hardliners. The release of Lamin and Collins was followed by a stall in the peace process that has lasted a month. This move by the government was the direct result of pressure and advocacy from senior UNAMSIL officials.

The UN defends its stance towards the RUF by arguing that the political process must drive the military process. RUF voluntary consent must be obtained at each stage. Yet this approach fails to understand that the RUF's political commitment to the peace process proceeds not only from incentives but also from the consequences of non-compliance. It has in fact been mainly the military process which has driven the political. The unwillingness of the UN to engage in any confrontation means that the RUF holds a trump card in negotiations. It is the UN, not the RUF, that cannot afford a return to hostilities. At each stage of contention the UN yields to RUF demands, or persuades the government to do so.

In May 2000, the Lomé peace agreement granted the rebels incentives that included a full amnesty, legalised control of diamond resources and senior positions in the government, yet the RUF killed several peacekeepers and marched towards Freetown because some minor demands had not been met. One year of suffering later, the rebels are still being offered the Lomé provisions, including amnesty for virtually all combatants, a DDR package that most citizens could only dream of, and assistance to win power through the ballot box. The lesson cannot have been lost on the rebels that even the most heinous of violations of their commitments will be met with further UN olive branches. The lesson appears

confirmed by current events as the RUF delays and fails to honour its full disarmament promise while the UN pressures the government to meet demands.

If it truly wishes to drive a process that will produce sustainable peace, the international community must not only possess the capability to respond in a robust manner to renewed hostilities. It must also be willing to use this capability on the battlefield, if necessary to protect civilians and returnees, but more importantly at the negotiating table, to extract concessions that ensure that no battles need be fought.

²⁰ The deputy minister of defence and official head of the CDF, Chief Sam Hinga-Norman, made this accusation against UNAMSIL in late July 2001.

III. THREATS TO THE PEACE: POTENTIAL SPOILERS

A. THE RUF: PLAYING THE SAME OLD GAME?

Events since May 2001 have bolstered the RUF's reputation as enigmatic and unpredictable. Observers remain deeply divided over basic questions such as the coherence of the organisation and its aims and objectives. Some see the rebels as angry, uncoordinated youths who have taken up arms to fight corruption and hopelessness in their country. Others see them as a highly organised armed group, bent solely on its own enrichment and power, that has skilfully walked the line between war and peace, and kept the international community guessing, for ten years.

Amidst the uncertainty, four clear risks present themselves. First, reduction of military pressure on the RUF could embolden the rebels to flex their muscles again if their demands are not met. Such a reduction has already come in part through the deployment of UNAMSIL, for whose authority the rebels have shown little respect, and whom the RUF welcomed as a force to protect them from the CDF. It has also come as a result of the cessation of Guinean and CDF attacks and the withdrawal of some British forces.

For the moment, the RUF is eager to play the public relations game. But the deployment of UNAMSIL has given the rebels a respite, which they could be using to stockpile diamonds (UNAMSIL deployment has not affected RUF diamond mining in the Tongo Fields) and build up weaponry. This would be consistent with the rebels' track record of using peace agreements tactically to gain strategic advantage.

The RUF's key demands have been for release of their leaders and registration of the RUF political party, the RUF-P. With the recent freeing of senior figures like Lamin, Collins and Bangura, and the registration and provision of real estate for the RUF-P, most of those demands have been met. The key outstanding issues are the detention of RUF leader Foday Sankoh, the timetable for disarmament of the rest of the country, and the

government's intentions to hold elections in May 2002.

A second factor that could threaten the RUF's commitment to the peace process is the outcome of its leadership struggles. General Issa Sesay, appointed leader in Sankoh's absence, is the best hope for peace, but many RUF elements are uncomfortable with him. Sesay has advocated greater RUF distance from Charles Taylor, and his rich pickings during the conflict have also left him comfortable - it is understood that his desire to retire (along with a few other wealthy RUF commanders) is a driving factor in the peace process.²¹

Unfortunately, the government's decision (at the strong request of UNAMSIL) to release Lamin and Collins has undermined Sesay, who is junior to both. Mike Lamin has said that he will respect Sesay's leadership but in practice appears to be taking over at least on the political side. Such struggles could destabilise the peace process in two ways. There is vigorous internal debate within the RUF about the merits of that process. Hard-line military commanders like Colonel Gbao and Kallon are sceptical of peace, while moderates like Sesay are in favour. Gibril Massaquoi, the spokesman, is said to be closer to the hardliners. Sesay has until now relied on executing rivals to keep power, but the release of Lamin and Collins could upset the balance.²² So far, Lamin has convinced UNAMSIL that he has not sided with the hardliners, but uncertainty remains. The further danger is of a split and open fighting between factions, particularly between the northern Makeni command, where the hardliners are based, and Sesay's Eastern Kailahun command.

A third threat to peace from the RUF comes from the rebels' desire to enter politics as a legitimate party. The danger is of an organisation that while willing to forge alliances with other political actors is also prepared to use military muscle to achieve common objectives.

²¹ Confidential ICG Interview, June 2001.

²² Sesay was rumoured to be behind the execution of Dennis 'Superman' Mingo, a senior leader of the RUF who had challenged the interim leader. It is still not clear when Mingo died. Sources are divided between July and August 2001.

The first demonstration of this occurred in September 2001, when the RUF, opposed to the six-month extension of the SLPP government, joined with many opposition parties and some civil society groups in demanding an interim government of national unity which would include those parties and the RUF. The RUF stalled the disarmament process for a month to force the government to grant its demands and those of its political allies. In a conflict that has been sustained by illicit alliances and double-dealing on all sides, the possibility of the RUF finding political sponsors in Freetown is disturbing.

A final major risk proceeds from a change in the regional situation. A victory by Charles Taylor over the Guinean-backed LURD in Lofa County would enable Taylor to refocus his patronage and attention on the RUF. Any reduction of international pressure could give the Liberian president room to once again destabilise Sierra Leone and reap economic benefits. This risk is discussed below.

The international strategy towards the RUF can be regarded as three-pronged. The first, as discussed, might be called appeasement, and emphasises meeting RUF demands in the peace process as quickly as possible. The second, which might be called a defection strategy, focuses on drawing individual combatants and commanders away from the organisation. Rank and file combatants are promised vocational training and schooling, middle level commanders are offered positions in the SLA, and high-level commanders are to be offered scholarships to study abroad. The third seeks transformation of the RUF from a military organisation into a political party.

A main deficiency in the international strategy lies in failure to implement the defection strategy for high level commanders, and to use this as a tool for affecting internal debates between moderates and extremists. Such an approach could assist in transformation of the rebels into a peaceful political party. Consistent trouble-makers like Colonel Gbao and General Kallon should be offered take-it-or-leave-it scholarships in countries that will cooperate if they are indicted by the Special Court, to remove their

influence from the peace process as soon as possible.²³

B. THE GOVERNMENT AND CDF MILITIAS

The heinous activities of the RUF provided the international community with a conflict in which legitimacy was believed to rest clearly with the democratically elected government. This convenient view must be qualified, however, by candid recognition of the government's potential to be the real spoiler in the difficult months ahead. Of particular concern are the government's capacity, integrity and partiality in handling the peace process.

The Kabbah government is widely criticised for weak leadership. It provides few services in the country, almost none outside Freetown, and most of its own operating budget is foreign-funded. Yet in a country whose economy and security come almost entirely from the international community, the government has been put in the driving seat of the peace process. Government organs, such as the agency tasked with restoration of civil authority and resettlement of displaced persons, the National Committee for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (NCRRR), are severely short of competent staff.

More importantly, critics and supporters of President Kabbah share a common concern that he has been unable to provide a clear vision of where the country is headed.²⁴ Many who opposed another six-month extension of his government did so on the grounds that little was likely to be accomplished in that time.

The weakness of Kabbah's leadership may have much to do with the party with which he is

²³ Both Gbao and Kallon are hardliners who have been responsible for disturbances in the peace process. Gbao organized an ambush of a police contingent that was due to deploy in Makeni, and Kallon murdered another RUF commander in a feud in August which threatened to destabilize the RUF leadership. Gbao frequently threatens to restart the war if RUF demands are not met. See *Sierra Leone News*, 21 August 2001 at www.sierra-leone.org.

²⁴ Confidential ICG interviews, July and August 2001. Even the *Concord Times* and *Standard Times*, largely seen as independent Freetown newspapers, are critical of Kabbah for lack of vision.

associated, and the cabinet he has been compelled to choose. The SLPP and its senior members are widely accused of corruption. At least four senior members of the government are reportedly engaged in illicit diamond mining – just one example of a conflict of interest with the objectives of the peace process.²⁵ Recent closed-door decisions to grant large and long-term diamond and oil concessions to foreign companies are emblematic of how continued lack of transparency and accountability may be fuelling the war the government claims to be working to end.²⁶ In a conflict justified by the RUF as a fight against public corruption, the lack of integrity of the government is a significant obstacle to peace.

The best efforts of the British and UNAMSIL to assist the Kabbah government have foundered on corruption and patronage. For example, UNAMSIL's attempt to develop accountable local governance structures, in the form of elected District Councils, was undermined by appointment of Freetown-based government cronies.

Finally and most disturbing are the government's links to the Kamajor-CDF militias, who control most of the south of the country and belong to the Mende tribe. Precise chains of command are unclear, but their most significant commander, Chief Sam Hinga-Norman, is the deputy minister of defence. To the extent that the Kamajors are loyal to any central authority, it is to the Mende-based SLPP, and not the state.

Many outside the country see the Kamajors as a civilian hunter-militia, organised to defend southern communities from brutal RUF attacks. Their resistance during the 1997 military coup, and their subsequent battle against the RUF have prompted some to credit the Kamajors with winning the war and saving democracy. A closer look reveals a group that is composed in some part of former RUF, who left the rebels when the SLPP government won power in 1996. It is

unclear whether the Kamajor-CDF has played any major role in exerting military pressure on the RUF over the last year. RUF and Kamajor-CDF elements actually co-operate in many areas, particularly in the diamond-rich Tongo Fields.

It was the Guinean-backed Donzo-CDF that have been the RUF's real opponents over the last months. Most Sierra Leoneans argue that the Kamajors and other CDF forces have committed some atrocities, though not to the same extent as the RUF.

The ruling party's relationship with the Kamajor has made it more difficult to ensure the compliance of those militias with the peace process. The weapons most commonly carried by Kamajor militias (shotguns and hunting rifles) have been exempted from the list of weapons accepted by UNAMSIL for disarmament. The government has publicly suggested that the CDF be turned into a Territorial Defence Force (TDF) – a policy included in the British military restructuring program – and allowed to retain their weapons and command structure.

This lack of commitment to the disarmament of one side, coupled with the refusal of the RUF's long-standing demand to disarm the Sierra Leone Army, makes it little wonder that UNAMSIL has been unable to cajole the RUF, or the CDF, into genuine disarmament.

The issue of government militias clouds the prospects for free and fair elections. The SLPP is already under suspicion after having benefited from irregularities in the last election. Many northerners ask to what lengths the Kamajor-CDF might go to ensure that their party wins the next vote, or even worse, how they might react to a loss.

The CDF should be retired in a way that creates as little ill feeling as possible, with an effort at ceremony and official recognition of the militia's role in defending the country and their communities. But the potential threat from the CDF must be met by an effective disarmament process, coupled with the transformation of the militia into a territorial defence force firmly under the control of the state. All arms for a downsized version of the militia should be registered and stored securely at a central location. Any subsequent decision to rearm the

²⁵ Confidential ICG interview, August 2001.

²⁶ Claims that oil concession deals were being secretly made have been well documented by Freetown's independent satirical news magazine, *PEEP*. See, 'Big Oil Rip-Off', 15 and 29 June 2001, 'MP's to block Kabbah's Oil deal', 3 August 2001 and 'A Government of Seasoned Liars', 17 August 2001.

CDF should operate on a dual key system, with both UNAMSIL and the Government having to agree.

C. THE SIERRA LEONE ARMY

Without doubt, British training, equipment and supply efforts have greatly improved the fighting capability and morale of the Sierra Leone Army, especially as all soldiers now receive regular pay of about \$50 per month. Senior British officers working within the Ministry of Defence and the SLA itself have kept a solid lid on corruption and ensure the improvement of the force. But several pressing questions remain about the SLA's ability to provide security.

First, most Sierra Leoneans ask what has happened to the soldiers who committed the horrors of the 6 January 1999 invasion of Freetown. The international community has often lumped together the RUF and the soldiers who joined them after 1995. According to Freetown residents, it was ex-SLA (the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, AFRC) and not the RUF that committed the vast majority of mutilations in that invasion of Freetown nearly three years ago.

Officially the British-supported SLA have a screening and interview process to weed out those who committed atrocities, but the effort is token, and virtually no one has been turned away on human rights grounds. The British privately argue that the safest place for many known abusers is 'in the tent' of the army where they can monitor them.²⁷ This may be a necessary tactic, but it makes the SLA a poor candidate to give CDF and RUF fighters confidence about disarmament.

Secondly, attitude within the ranks is still a major issue. Although evidence of the SLA's questionable loyalty is purely anecdotal, the Kabbah government is understood to be highly unpopular, and Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the former military junta, wildly popular, among both average soldiers and junior officers.²⁸ The government is likely to be concerned about the increasing robustness of an SLA, which it cannot

completely trust. Moreover, since the SLA is not required to disarm, the government is unlikely to push for full disarmament of CDF militias. Yet with weapons still in the hands of both the SLA and the CDF, the RUF is in turn unlikely to give up all its weapons.

The problem in achieving security first is, therefore, partly due the SLA's untrustworthiness. The British need to address this sooner rather than later. To their credit, the British have resolved to maintain a strong military 'advisory' presence in the SLA for three years. But they should use their influence to ensure that the army is reformed as fast as possible, not just through training but also through the accelerated weeding out of notoriously brutal commanders and their followers.

D. CHARLES TAYLOR

Such RUF compliance with the peace process as there has been has largely come in response to increasing international pressure aimed at removing Charles Taylor's economic interest in Sierra Leone's conflict. Compliance with the Abuja cease-fire followed Security Council investigations of Taylor's sponsorship, and the agreement to renew disarmament was reached just days before sanctions were to be imposed on Liberia. In June 2001, Omrie Golley, the Chairman of the RUF's Peace Council, claimed that until two weeks prior, Taylor had been in complete control of the rebels.

Despite the welcome attention to Taylor's sponsorship, the international community does not always appear to appreciate fully the regional nature of Sierra Leone's war. In many ways, the events of this year have seen the front-line shift from within striking distance of Freetown and Conakry to within striking distance of Monrovia. Taylor's war has been brought to his doorstep. The line-up of combatants in Lofa is not dissimilar from those in Kono: Donso militias sponsored by Guinea have battled the RUF on both sides of the border, though Liberian dissidents (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) and security forces play the central role.

²⁷ Confidential ICG interview, August 2001.

²⁸ Ibid.

History has come full circle with troops from Sierra Leone and Guinea joining in the unfinished Liberian war that led to much of the regional destabilisation in the first place.²⁹ There is finally greater recognition within the Security Council about the regional dimension of Sierra Leone's conflicts. Acknowledging the interlocking conflicts between three Mano River Union countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, a UN inter-agency mission led by Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Ibrahim Fall, 6-27 March 2001, recommended the appointment of a Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for West Africa.³⁰ This has largely met with Security Council approval.

Nevertheless, UNAMSIL remains almost exclusively focused upon its host country. The recommendations made by the inter-agency mission need to be properly addressed, with specific attention by the UN Secretariat in New York to assisting the Mano River Union peace process between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, in particular by appointing a special representative of the Secretary General.³¹

The difficulties of the sub-region compound the uncertainties ahead of Sierra Leone. Following a brief lull for the rains, the hostilities in Liberia's northwestern Lofa County have started again, and the LURD has retaken much of the area. Taylor

has sacked most of his senior front line commanders in response. Hundreds of the most seasoned RUF fighters who crossed into Liberia, including the cadre of the former RUF commander Sam Bockarie ('Mosquito'), do not seem to have been able to save their Liberian godfather.

Even more threatening is the potential for a new invasion along the coast from Sierra Leone. The Kamajor-CDF, who sit just a short drive from Monrovia, has so far stayed out of the Lofa war. But persistent rumours of dissident recruitment along the Liberian border suggest at least the threat of a push for the Liberian capital.

Little wonder, then, that Taylor appears open to a negotiated settlement in the ongoing Mano River Union peace process. Yet much like the RUF, his profession of a desire for peace should not result in concessions from the international community, such as a relaxation of sanctions. The Liberian President's supporters in ECOWAS, and his less open but more influential French supporters, are likely to push for this following improvements in the Sierra Leone peace process. Yet Liberia and those same ECOWAS supporters continue to violate Security Council sanctions through the import of arms and the export of diamonds.³²

These sanctions were weakened by the failure to include timber, Taylor's main source of foreign currency, principally due to the opposition of the French, who are a prime importer. The attitude of China, another importer, is also significant. Sanctions should be extended to timber and remain in place at least until after Sierra Leone holds its elections in 2002, by which time Taylor will have had ample opportunity to demonstrate whether he has had a real change of heart.

²⁹ Liberia's civil war, which began in 1989, was considered formally to have ended with the election of Charles Taylor as president in 1997.

³⁰ Report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa, "Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Durable and Sustainable Solutions to Priority Needs and Challenges in West Africa", UN Security Council document, 2 May 2001, S/2001/434. Also see J. Hirsch, 'War in Sierra Leone', *Survival*, vol. 43, no. 3, Autumn 2001, p. 155.

³¹ The Mano River Union was established in October 1973 under the Mano River Declaration – initially between Liberia and Sierra Leone, with Guinea joining in 1977. The aim was to increase co-operation on economic affairs, develop a customs union, and harmonise trade links. Several attempts have been made to revitalise the Union, but ten years of fighting and accusations by all sides that they were harbouring and supporting the others' dissidents have undermined co-operation. Representatives of the three countries have been meeting since August 2001, however, and have made some progress on a framework for withdrawal of forces. If negotiations proceed, a summit meeting of heads of state may be scheduled.

³² For an assessment of Charles Taylor's economic activities since sanctions were imposed on 7 May 2001, see *Taylor-made: The Pivotal Role of Liberia's Forests in Regional Conflict*, A Report by Global Witness, September 2001.

IV. WINNING THE PEACE

A. REINTEGRATION OF EX-COMBATANTS

One key peace building strategy of the international community has been to focus on the individual combatant, who is offered an alternative livelihood to war and a decent chance at reintegrating back into a productive life in society. Yet while this approach is sound and laudable in theory, a range of key challenges has arisen in practice.

Perhaps the most worrisome developments in the DDR process have occurred in the demobilisation camps in Lunsar and Port Loko, where there were riots, demonstrations and beatings of NCDDR staff during July and August 2001.³³ Disarmed combatants are meant to have ten days or more in these camps to undergo education and sensitisation briefings and workshops before they are released into vocational training or schooling programs. In practice, however, there is no effective 'hearts and minds' operation in the camps to de-militarise the mindset of combatants, help them come to terms with their past, and encourage their psychological commitment to peace, democracy and human rights.

In addition, many ex-combatants leaving the demobilisation camps are discharged into the community without the promised vocational training or schooling. While donor countries have pledged funding, disbursement has been slow. The resulting limbo comes at a critical time for the ex-combatant. Many hang around their former camps, begging for food and shelter. They form a volatile mass of men whose expectations have been greatly disappointed.

Some of these difficulties have been the result of particular circumstances and may be temporary. The DDR process was designed three years ago for a 'drip-feed' trickle of combatants and was caught unawares by the flood of disarmament, for example in Kono in August 2001. Another circumstantial difficulty has been to provide

reintegration programs in areas, such as Kono, which are depopulated, where government authority has not yet been established, and there is no economy capable of supporting the ex-combatants.

But the problem of finding immediate activities for demobilised combatants bespeaks a larger flaw in the approach to DDR adopted by UNAMSIL and the government agency, NCDDR. The rank and file combatant has effectively been promised an alternative livelihood in return for embracing peace. Conflict is traded for development. The vast majority are interested in skilled work such as carpentry, hairdressing, or welding. But even if money is found for training (the total DDR budget is just US\$36 million), most Sierra Leoneans are out of work, and the vast majority barely get by on petty trading and other low-income tasks.

The only sector that might be able to absorb such a large inflow of labour is agriculture, but few combatants want to go back to farming. Their high expectations of acquiring skills, a job and a livelihood threaten to precipitate a crisis of expectations as they discover a country which is more destitute and lacking in opportunity than before they went to war. These hard realities are likely to set in at a critical time, during the run-up to elections next year.

Compounding the problem, the more the government tries to do for ex-combatants, the more enmity could be created among the rest of the population, particularly victims of war crimes, who resent the special treatment. In just one example of the perverse effects of bribing combatants to end their war, many of the thousands of women who were abducted and forced to marry and bear the children of RUF fighters have been compelled by economic necessity to remain with their former captors. The international community makes no provision for the women, but gives a great deal, in Sierra Leone terms, to their 'husbands' for entering the DDR process.

In a war that has largely been about the desire of those with guns to exploit the civilian population, the international community has promised combatants what they were after all along – a livelihood. The precedent that is set for other conflicts in Africa and around the world – that if

³³ Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), Humanitarian Situation Report, 11 July - 8 August 2001. Also described in a confidential ICG interview with a NCDDR staff member, August 2001.

combatants can use sufficient brutality to draw the attention of the international community, they will have their demands met by donor money in return for peace - is disturbing. But as long as the international community is not serious enough about providing a powerful international force to deter continued hostilities, this type of compensation will be the only way to coax combatants away from violence.

In sum, a crisis of expectations among combatants is likely to worsen, possibly destabilising the peace process. The international community needs to meet this threat in three ways.

First, more funding must be provided immediately to meet those expectations, which the international community itself has created, particularly the provision of reintegration and vocational training packages. NCDDR began paying reinsertion benefits worth 300,000 Leones to each ex-combatant in five locations around the country on 10 October 2001³⁴. However, the donors' pledge to give U.S.\$13.9 million to the Multi-donor Trust Fund falls considerably short of the U.S.\$32.7 million the government plausibly estimates is needed to close the overall funding gap. Secondly, an effective sensitisation program to reduce combatants' expectations should be implemented, warning of a difficult road that may not bring a lucrative job, but at least will bring peace and an end to life in the bush. Thirdly, innovative reintegration programs should be supported, which help communities to accept combatants back or promote collectivised agriculture as a way for young people to gain employment.³⁵

Finally the international community must see the reintegration of ex-combatants and the recovery of the economy as two sides of the same coin. The war in Sierra Leone will resume if peace brings few economic opportunities. The World Bank and IMF have approved a three-year loan for over U.S.\$169 million. The EU is in the process of approving even larger aid. These are enormous sums for a country of four million

people. The challenge will be to ensure that they benefit ordinary people and stimulate small business, rather than crowd out the latter and get siphoned off by the cartels and monopolies that have dominated the country's economy for decades.

B. THE SPECIAL COURT

In August 2000, Security Council Resolution 1315 established an international tribunal to try perpetrators of crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone. The 'Special Court' will be an experiment in international justice, jointly established and staffed by the UN and the Sierra Leone government. The deputy-prosecutor and three of the eight judges will be appointed by the government.

The Special Court is hotly debated by Sierra Leoneans, with the greatest question being whether it will hinder the peace process. There are three ways in which this could happen. First, information dissemination among illiterate combatants scattered across hundreds of villages is a formidable task, and the rumours surrounding the Special Court have proven to be almost more dangerous than the truth. RUF Spokesman Gibril Massaquoi has complained of confusion about the scope and mandate of the court, and its relationship to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).³⁶

Arrivals in DDR camps come expecting Lomé agreement and TRC provisions. For many, news of the Court is a rude awakening. Almost all demobilising combatants who know about the court believe that it could realistically prosecute

³⁴ On 24 October 2001 300,000 Leones were equal to U.S.\$162.16.

³⁵ This last suggestion was raised in a confidential ICG interview, August 2001.

³⁶ Massaquoi made these statements many times in BBC Radio interviews throughout August 2001. The TRC was established under Article XXVI of the Lomé Peace Agreement. It is intended to ascertain the truth about what happened in the ten-year war, provide an historical record of violations of human rights in that conflict, address the problem of impunity of offenders, respond to the needs of the victims, and promote healing and reconciliation. An unanswered question is whether victims will get reparations under the Special Fund for War Victims as discussed in Lomé and the TRC Act passed by the Sierra Leone parliament in February 2000. For an outline of the TRC, see the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act 2000 available at www.sierra-leone.org.

all perpetrators of war crimes. Most RUF ex-combatants view the Special Court as a political tool requested by the Kabbah government to launch a witch-hunt.³⁷ Many Sierra Leoneans worry that such fears could seriously impact the pace of disarmament.

The second negative impact of the Court cited by its critics is its potential to undermine the TRC. The relationship between the Court and the TRC has yet to be clarified. Sierra Leoneans, unaccustomed to a system of impartial justice, see the TRC as the real reconciliation and accountability mechanism, and worry that no one will participate in it if the spectre of the Special Court hangs over the process.

Finally, many informed commentators question whether it is wise to set in motion a process to prosecute the leaders of an armed group which has not yet disarmed or fully demobilised. Will those leaders who expect prosecution not try to derail the peace process?

These concerns can be dealt with in two ways. First, more effective public information work needs to be done, particularly among combatants and demobilising ex-combatants. The NCDDR has not helped by actively shielding demobilising combatants from facts about the Court. The mandate of the Court is to try those 'bearing the greatest responsibility' for crimes committed, which is assumed to mean the leaders of the armed groups. Limited resources will ensure that the number of persons to be tried stays under 25.

The Court has a tight budget of U.S.\$58 million over three years, one-sixth of what is annually allocated for the Rwanda Tribunal, and one-seventh of the budget for the Hague Tribunal for the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. Demobilising combatants need to know that the Court poses no threat to them and will be aimed exclusively at their most senior leaders. With a fully independent special prosecutor, the Court will also be free of political bias, and is likely to prosecute leaders from all sides. The UN also needs to do effective work to convince RUF ex-combatants that the court will be impartial.

The second way of dealing with concerns to delay implementation until the peace process, or at least the DDR segment, is completed. Yet concerns over timing are also partly a problem of information, since the logistical difficulties in setting up the court (a new courthouse is to be built and a prison refurbished, for example) mean that it is unlikely to be operational at least until February 2002.³⁸ Indictments are not anticipated until well into next year. In the meantime, the court is required to consider obstruction of the peace process as an additional factor in choosing whom to indict. This provides some positive leverage for peace.

A total freeze on all preparations for the Court until the peace process is secure would likely delay the Court's proceedings until 2003. That would risk losing the political momentum, both domestic and international, behind the Court. It is unclear whether the future government of Sierra Leone will be as willing to co-operate, and donors will be as willing to fund the Court, two years from now. One solution is for the Special Prosecutor, who is to be appointed by November 2001, to make a public announcement which clarifies that the Court will not begin prosecutions for many months, until the DDR process is completed and the peace more secure.

A less considered impact of the Special Court is upon members of the government itself. In addition to RUF leaders such as Foday Sankoh, 'those who bear the greatest responsibility' will likely include members of the current government and some very popular figures, including the head of the Kamajor-CDF Chief Sam Hinga-Norman, and former Army junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma. Neither the CDF militias nor the army can be expected to react well to the sentencing of these men to long prison terms, and even their indictment may prompt lack of co-operation with the court, as has been seen in Rwanda and Bosnia.

Another little-considered implication of the court is that it has the power to try any citizen of any country for responsibility for war crimes committed in Sierra Leone after 1996. Possible candidates include President Taylor of Liberia and senior Nigerian commanders. To the extent

³⁷ Confidential ICG interviews with NCDDR staff and RUF combatants and ex-combatants, August 2001.

³⁸ Confidential ICG interview, July 2001.

that it welcomes the Special Court, the RUF does so because it hopes its international reputation will improve, relatively, with exposure of the crimes of all sides. Foday Sankoh's claim to be 'number eight' on the list of senior RUF supporters, and his claim that the first seven were members of the SLPP government, is just one example of the possibly damaging material that a vigorous investigation by the Special Court could unearth in a conflict which has seen collusion and double dealing on all sides.³⁹

Concerns that the Special Court could undermine the TRC are largely misplaced, however. Since the Court will prosecute only a very small number of leaders, the vast majority of those that come before the TRC should not be concerned about being held accountable for their crimes. The Sierra Leone TRC is not like the South African process. Amnesty is given to all combatants in advance and is not conditional upon the full disclosure of their crimes.

An additional concern pertains to the court's jurisdiction, which goes back only to 1996, although the war began in 1991. The main advantage is lower costs and less time for the court to complete research. The disadvantages include denying consideration of crimes in regions that only saw war before 1996. In addition, the case against Foday Sankoh may also be undermined if limited to after 1996, since Sankoh spent most of that period in jail. The Security Council has considered the issue twice, and at United States urging, has decided not to extend jurisdiction to 1991. The decision is an example of how the international community is sacrificing the quality and sustainability of its work in Sierra Leone to expense and expediency.

Debates over the Special Court obscure the fact that with the exception of the very few leaders it will try, the blanket amnesty that was one of the most questionable elements of the Lomé Agreement will be honoured. To a large extent, justice has again been traded for peace. The international community should note that the Special Court is a step towards ending a culture

of impunity for senior leaders of armed groups, but a step away from ending impunity for followers. It would be a terrible irony if the peace process were disrupted because the main beneficiaries of this trade of justice for peace, rank and file combatants, had not been made aware of it.

C. ELECTIONS: A CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISM?

The international community is banking on the elections scheduled for May 2002 to resolve the conflict, re-establish normalcy, and give UNAMSIL its cue to go, with a feather for the UN's cap.

1. Fears Surrounding Elections

Although the plan to channel the grievances of the war into voting booths is sound, electoral politics could derail the peace process if not properly managed. The government body appointed to run the vote, the National Electoral Commission (NEC), lists the use of elections as a conflict resolution mechanism as one of its strategic objectives. But elections court three major risks, which threaten to exacerbate the conflict. First, in Sierra Leone they have always been violent. The 1996 elections were marred by RUF and SLA attacks on civilians, and there is much fear this time of thuggery by ex-combatants to promote their favoured political party.⁴⁰

Secondly, there is widespread scepticism that the NEC will conduct the polling freely and fairly. The 1996 result was marred by massive fraud favouring the SLPP. Election Commissioner James Jonah, who had been chosen partly by presidential candidate Kabbah,⁴¹ certified the result and soon was appointed by Kabbah to be Ambassador to the UN and later Minister of Finance, appointments which violated the constitutional prohibition on political appointment of election commissioners. Given

³⁹ A list of senior government supporters of the RUF was reportedly found in Sankoh's house at the time of his arrest in May 2000 but has not been seen since it was turned over to a government minister soon after.

⁴⁰ See ICG report, *Sierra Leone: A Brief Overview*, April 1996, p. 7 and ICG report, *Sierra Leone: report commissioned by the Japanese Foreign Ministry*, May 1996, p. 28.

⁴¹ Kabbah had served as senior advisor to the previous NPRC military junta and thus had a key role in choosing James Jonah as electoral commissioner.

this history, it is not surprising that many northerners worry that the Kabbah government (with its power base in the south) will attempt to manipulate the result.

A final and perhaps most critical concern is that the losers will not accept the result. Concerns about fairness and recognition that the disarmament process is not depriving rebels and militias of the power to fight, make Sierra Leoneans fear a UNITA-style return to war by the losing party.⁴² If the SLPP wins again there is a good chance that it will be accused of rigging the election and be challenged by the RUF militarily. It is also difficult to see the Kamajor-CDF militias peacefully accepting an SLPP defeat. Many warn that the Kamajors could become the new rebels in such a situation.

2. The Responsibilities of the UN

At the minimum, the response of the UN to these concerns should be to provide comprehensive security for the elections as well as a vigorous monitoring effort and assurance that the process will be as transparent and participatory as possible. Security Council Resolution 1370 of 18 September 2001 gave promising indications that the UN will seek to fulfil this role. But to meet concerns regarding fairness fully and ensure that elections do not unravel the gains of the peace process, it must go much further. In the volatility and suspicion that characterises Sierra Leone's politics, perceptions matter more than reality. Even the slightest rumour of election fraud is likely to be believed by half the country.

In this environment, the UN must take the lead role and be in a position to guarantee a fair result. The Security Council should, therefore, mandate as soon as possible a UN mission to run the elections. This should not be seen as a no-confidence vote in the NEC. The mission should work as much as possible with the NEC, with the relationship shifting from partnership to a mere advisory role for the NEC as the UN officials acquire capacity and local knowledge. It is important that the UN be clearly seen as driving the process by election day.

⁴² The Union for the Total Independence of Angola, the Angolan rebel movement, returned to war in 1993 after denouncing flawed presidential elections.

3. The Interim Government Debate

As a result of the fears surrounding elections, many Sierra Leoneans do not want them to be held anytime soon.⁴³ Many civil society organisations that led the call for elections before peace in 1996 now want peace before elections.⁴⁴ They joined the RUF in vigorously opposing the six-month extension of the Kabbah government's term in office which took effect on 26 September 2001. This extension set the date for presidential and parliamentary elections as 14 May 2002.

RUF objections were expressed in a letter written on 27 August by their spokesman, Gibril Massaquoi, to the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji. It stated that the RUF 'in collaboration with other political parties including the civil populace are looking forward to an establishment of a caretaker government that would complete disarmament and create a platform for elections. This type of government would erase the mistrust among the parties involved in the conflict... This is the only way forward'.⁴⁵

Opponents within civil society argued for a two-year interim government of national unity to consolidate the peace and hold elections in a truly disarmed and free and fair environment. But Kabbah and the British are uneasy at the prospect of renewed RUF involvement in government, and the idea is virtually impossible under the current constitution.

The 14 May 2002 date will require rapid progress in the peace process over the winter months but any further delay would necessitate yet another extension of the government's mandate, a move which would be likely to seriously inflame the conflict. The international community must, therefore, work against the clock to be ready for elections on that date.

The 26 September extension of the Kabbah Government has increased the volatility of the

⁴³ Most editorials of local newspapers favour a two-year 'transitional government' before elections are held.

⁴⁴ Confidential ICG interviews with various civil society groups, August 2001.

⁴⁵ RUF Letter on Interim Government, 27 August 2001, www.sierra-leone.org.

situation, however.⁴⁶ Some parties harbour and will exploit doubts about the government's legitimacy. The international community must consequently play a dual role: supporting the government to promote stability, while pressuring it to reform and meet genuine concerns of the opposition parties and the RUF.

The donors that provide over half the government's operating budget, principally Britain, should lean heavily on President Kabbah to appoint a cabinet which is a genuine attempt at a government of national unity. With an SLPP leadership conference three months before elections, he will be reluctant to challenge party stalwarts by denying them patronage appointments. Yet, his position in the party is secure enough to justify the risk of appointing a diverse cabinet, which, nonetheless, should exclude the RUF.

Most importantly, donors should persuade Kabbah to grant the key demand of opposition parties, civil society groups and the RUF for a national consultative conference to develop recommendations on central peace process issues. Sierra Leone has a history of resolving its most painful questions in this open, deliberative manner, and such a participatory forum is needed to provide the vision that the President has been unable to give the country on the way forward. The government might limit its scope by insisting that the May date be accepted, but participants could develop a program for what needs to be done in advance to make elections acceptable, and a broader concept of where they should take the country.

Sierra Leone's war has had much to do with foreign meddling, leader cults and power-lust, and control of diamonds, but also with deep domestic dissatisfaction, particularly among the younger generation, about the corrupt, aged and indifferent nature of its government. The seeming return to 'business as usual' in politics is deeply dismaying to many. If the young and

underprivileged are to value peace, they must be given an alternative concept and hope. The government has proven it cannot do this. It should let a national consultative conference try.

4. Election Prospects

The SLPP is likely to win the election if the political spectrum remains as it is. A 'grand alliance' of the All People's Congress (APC) and other northern-based opposition parties is attempting to organise but faces leadership struggles. If it does present a united front, it could well topple the SLPP by winning both the North and West. The RUF has launched a charm offensive in Freetown and forged significant links with both the opposition parties and civil society. Its party, the RUF-P, could well be a part of an opposition 'grand alliance' come May. It is already playing a significant political role in Freetown, courting support of both government and opposition parties.

With 21 registered political parties and counting, however, a wild card is the strong potential for a new party or coalition to appeal to the 'disenfranchised', who blame the political establishment for both their poverty and the war. Many are unhappy with the continued predominance of the same two parties that have monopolised politics for 40 years.

The RUF currently has little popular support, but if it is the only credible alternative to the SLPP and APC, Sierra Leone's most neglected and underprivileged citizens may vote RUF-P. Certainly, the RUF is on firm ground when it complains that ten years of war have failed to seriously alter the corrupt and incestuous politics of a Freetown elite whose lack of a sense of responsibility can be seen as a root cause of the conflict. Key civil society leaders may be attempting to organise a political alternative, the success of which would be the most promising scenario.

⁴⁶ The extension was actually for slightly longer than the six months advertised since it foresees that the government will remain in office under the new authority until the 14 May elections are held, or a maximum of nine months. According to the Constitution, the government is obliged to hold the elections within three months after the end of the extension period.

V. CONCLUSION

If peace has come to Sierra Leone, it has not been through any RUF change of heart but because the rebels had concluded by May 2001 that the British commitment to defend Freetown denied them a chance to win the war, and peace was their only alternative to military defeat by Guinea, the CDF and, eventually, the SLA. As it tries to move the peace process forward, the international community needs to keep this basic insight in mind.

ICG warned in April 2001 that “negotiated peace settlements with the RUF, unless they provide for its complete demobilisation and disarmament, are extremely suspect.”⁴⁷ The Abuja II Agreement provides for complete disarmament, but that has thus far not translated into disarmament in practice. In return for a limited and somewhat cosmetic disarmament in which individual combatants have been granted amnesty and a reintegration package that most Sierra Leoneans could only dream of, the RUF has achieved the release from jail of almost all of its senior leadership and been allowed to set up a political party in Freetown.

History seems to be repeating itself as, under military pressure, the RUF plays the peace card and deftly manipulates the international community, particularly the UN, into greatly improving its strategic and political position.

There are profound dangers in the UN method of ‘softly softly’ coaxing the RUF into the peace process while pushing for confidence-building concessions from the government and international community. This approach misperceives the nature of the rebel group. The RUF is not an uncoordinated group of angry youths who need to be encouraged and engaged. It is an organisation of instinctively manipulative young men who have walked the line between war and peace and kept their country and the international community guessing for most of their adult lives.

At peace negotiations the rebels are consistently better prepared and coordinated than the government. Any UN unwillingness to expose and confront the rebels when they fail to fulfil their commitments will only leave Sierra Leone more vulnerable to renewed hostilities. Even more necessary, the rebels must not be permitted to use the threat of resumed war as a trump card at the negotiating table. UNAMSIL must develop the ability, in concert with the British and the SLA, to act as a deterring force, and use that ability to ensure that the RUF understand that this peace process is a last chance, a train that is leaving the station.

Many in the international community believe that if the political process fails and the RUF returns to war, little can be done about it. This resignation must be replaced by a firm sentiment of ‘never again’. The British commitment to safeguard Freetown has fundamentally changed the war. An extension of that commitment to the whole country by an international deterrent force would be an enormous contribution to rendering the peace process irreversible.

Yet while UNAMSIL has taken too soft a line on the RUF, other countries, including Britain, have trusted too much in the good will of the SLPP government and the CDF. These must also be deterred from misusing the peace process, by both UNAMSIL and strong British and international diplomatic pressure. The CDF needs to be disarmed and transformed into a benign militia, and the SLPP government should be pressed to clean up corruption, promote the CDF's transformation, and cede authority over the election process to the UN. The SLA, in turn, must continue to be tightly controlled and rapidly reformed by its British officers if the government is to be persuaded to disarm the CDF militias. Unless these things are done, it will be difficult to push the RUF into irreversible commitment to peace.

In sum, each of the parties to Sierra Leone's war must be pressured simultaneously to make genuine commitments to reform and the peace process. The bad faith and lack of co-operation of a single party will be enough to unravel the process, as the others seek to hedge their bets.

Where that process is aimed must also be addressed. The challenges in making elections

⁴⁷ ICG Africa Report, *Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy*, op. cit., p. 13.

the final mechanism for resolution of the conflict are daunting, including at a minimum restoration of security throughout the country, and they must be met by May 2002. The international community will be working against the clock but must avoid the temptation, already demonstrated in the deficiencies of the disarmament process, to accept the appearance of progress at the expense of reality. The key challenge will be to ensure free and fair elections. The UN must take the lead role but civil society should also be empowered by donors to play a strong confidence building, voter education and monitoring role in the run up to election day.

Finally, the international community must take great care to assure the sustainability of the peace that has been so expensively achieved. Key donors need to join the British in making a three to five-year commitment to the country. This need not imply prolongation of the high costs of the current peacekeeping mission. UNAMSIL's mandate should remain robust, but its role should allow it to downsize and rationalise.

As Sierra Leone shifts from relief assistance to recovery, donors should make a firm commitment to provide the necessary support not only for the reintegration portion of the DDR program, as discussed in detail above, but also for the Special Court, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and most of the civil and economic reconstruction program that is needed for long term recovery. The three-year financial commitment of U.S.\$169 million by the World Bank and IMF is a welcome start, but further pledges will be required when solid order-of-magnitude projections have been developed for the full range of needs, in particular to fund reintegration programs mentioned above.

Achieving 'security first', paying attention to spoilers, winning the peace, and laying the groundwork for free and fair elections are demanding objectives that the international community must meet if Sierra Leone is finally to have a sustainable peace. The country's long history of failed peace agreements must not be allowed, this time, to repeat itself.

Freetown/Brussels, 24 October 2001

APPENDIX A

MAP OF SIERRA LEONE



General Staff Map Section, GSGS 11187 (CAD), Edition 3-GSGS, August 1998 672/98

Produced by Military Survey, MOD UK 1998

Users should note that this map has been designed for briefing purposes only and it should not be used for determining the precise location of places or features. This map should not be considered an authority on the delimitation of international boundaries nor on the spelling of place and feature names. Maps produced by Military Survey (UK) are not to be taken as necessarily representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status. © Crown copyright 1998

APPENDIX B

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is a private, multinational organisation committed to strengthening the capacity of the international community to anticipate, understand and act to prevent and contain conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts, based on the ground in countries at risk of conflict, gather information from a wide range of sources, assess local conditions and produce regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers.

ICG's reports are distributed widely to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's Internet site, www.crisisweb.org. ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analysis and to generate support for its policy prescriptions. The ICG Board - which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media - is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans has been President and Chief Executive since January 2000.

ICG's international headquarters are at Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York and Paris. The organisation currently operates field projects in nineteen crisis-affected countries and regions across four continents: Algeria, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic

Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zimbabwe in Africa; Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in Asia; Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in Europe; and Colombia in Latin America.

ICG also undertakes and publishes original research on general issues related to conflict prevention and management. After the attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001, ICG launched a major new project on global terrorism, designed both to bring together ICG's work in existing program areas and establish a new geographical focus on the Middle East (with a regional field office planned for Amman) and Pakistan/Afghanistan (with a field office planned for Islamabad).

ICG raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. The following governments currently provide funding: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Foundation and private sector donors include the Ansary Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Ploughshares Fund and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

October 2001

APPENDIX C

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APPENDIX D

ICG BOARD MEMBERS

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Commerce

Eugene Chien

Deputy Secretary General to the President, Taiwan

Wesley Clark

Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Jacques Delors

Former President of the European Commission

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen

Former Foreign Minister of Denmark

Gernot Erler

Vice-President, Social Democratic Party, German Bundestag

Mark Eyskens

Former Prime Minister of Belgium

Yoichi Funabashi

Journalist and author

Bronislaw Geremek

Former Foreign Minister of Poland

I.K.Gujral

Former Prime Minister of India

Han Sung-Joo

Former Foreign Minister of Korea

El Hassan bin Talal

Chairman, Arab Thought Forum

Marianne Heiberg

Senior Researcher, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

Elliott F Kulick

Chairman, Pegasus International

Joanne Leedom-Ackerman

Novelist and journalist

Todung Mulya Lubis

Human rights lawyer and author

Allan J MacEachen

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada

Barbara McDougall

Former Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada

Matthew McHugh

Counsellor to the President, The World Bank

Mo Mowlam

Former British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Christine Ockrent

Journalist

Timothy Ong

Chairman, Asia Inc magazine

Wayne Owens

President, Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Co-operation

Cyril Ramaphosa

Former Secretary-General, African National Congress; Chairman, New Africa Investments Ltd

Fidel Ramos

Former President of the Philippines

Michel Rocard

Member of the European Parliament; former Prime Minister of France

Volker Ruhe

Vice-President, Christian Democrats, German Bundestag; former German Defence Minister

Mohamed Sahnoun

Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General

William Shawcross

Journalist and author

Michael Sohlman

Executive Director of the Nobel Foundation

George Soros

Chairman, Open Society Institute

Eduardo Stein

Former Foreign Minister of Guatemala

Pär Stenbäck

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Finland

Thorvald Stoltenberg

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway

William O Taylor

Chairman Emeritus, The Boston Globe

Ed van Thijn

Former Minister of Interior, The Netherlands; former Mayor of Amsterdam

Simone Veil

Former Member of the European Parliament; former Minister for Health, France

Shirley Williams

Former British Secretary of State for Education and Science; Member House of Lords

Grigory Yavlinsky

Member of the Russian Duma

Mortimer Zuckerman

Chairman and Editor-in-Chief, US News and World Report