

The Price of War and Peace: A Critical Assessment of the Disarmament Component of United Nations Operations in Southern Africa

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“Perhaps more than ever before, the effective control of weapons has the capacity to influence far-reaching events in national and international activities. In this light, the management and control of arms could become an important component for the settlement of conflicts, a fundamental aid to diplomacy in the prevention and deflation of conflict, and a critical component of the reconstruction process in post-conflict societies.”¹

Introduction

Southern Africa is adjusting to the process of transition to democracy. In South Africa the transition is still incomplete, both at the state level and at that of civil society. Elsewhere, Angola is haltingly emerging from its long-standing civil war, Mozambique is coming to terms with the devastation wrought by almost a quarter of a century of war, while in Malawi and Zambia the transition from a *de facto* system of life presidency to elected parliamentary rule is still incomplete. In Lesotho there is a security threat to the elected government. There is, therefore, no common, institutionalised political value system in Southern Africa. While Southern Africa is becoming increasingly interdependent economically, this does not yet hold true for matters of security and defence.

During the Cold War, proxies of the superpowers in the African continent were flooded with weapons meant to defend the interests of their allies in Europe and elsewhere. The largest concentration of these weapons is in sub-Saharan Africa and more especially in Southern Africa, which was an important area of Cold War confrontation. Following the end of the Cold War and, with it, the end of most conflicts in the area, the abundance of these weapons and their proliferation have become a major threat to stability.

The end of the Cold War has served neither to diffuse conflict nor to eliminate threats to security in this sub-continent. The last four decades have seen thirty-five major conflicts and almost ten million deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. In Rwanda alone, the intensity and speed of genocide and epidemics have claimed nearly a million lives. The end of the Cold War did, however, manage to reduce ideologically motivated conflict, although conflicts over democratisation, ethnicity and disparity concerning the access to economic empowerment have often led to the outbreak of civil wars, lawlessness, anarchy and misery and contributed to plunging the sub-continent into unprecedented instability and conflict, in which it is neither motivated by a quest for independence nor by the end of colonial rule.

The aspiration to democratisation and economic empowerment was an internally driven process, usually supported by external forces, such as former powers, donor agencies and international financial institutions. Ethnic confrontations, on the other hand, are attributable to a number of factors which may vary from country to country as a result of historical settings, as well as varying geopolitical constellations. In summary, transition to democracy, ethnicity and the lack of sustainable development are the major factors precipitating conflict and instability in the sub-continent today.

Light Weapons Proliferation in Southern Africa and Ineffective Disarmament During UN Peace Support Operations

Since conflict remains a problem ever-present in Africa, it is important to look at the instruments of violence employed in such conflict. Light weapons, because of their inherent characteristics, are the weapons of choice in the Southern African environment. Regional imperatives, together with the high demand and the more than sufficient supply create the massive circulation presently referred to as the ‘proliferation of light weapons’. This chapter will concentrate on weapons availability in Southern Africa and one of the major reasons for this never-ending supply: the unsatisfactory completion of international peace support operations.

First, to understand light weapons availability in Southern Africa at present one must focus on five different issues: the massive inflow of weapons

resulting from the arming of countries in sub-Saharan Africa by external powers during the Cold War and the linkage of these arms policies to ongoing national struggles for political determination; the establishment of indigenous arms industries in the region; a second inflow of weapons (most of them light weapons) which characterised legal and illegal trading of weapons in the lax environment following the end of both the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union; the circulation of weapons throughout the region, from conflict to conflict; and the re-introduction of these weapons into the post-conflict society, due to the impact of UN brokered peace settlements in Angola, Namibia, and Mozambique where peace rather than disarmament was a priority.

Secondly, to understand the movement of existing stocks throughout the region, we must concentrate on the last of the elements mentioned: the liberation of weapons from conflict areas by ineffective international peace support operations. To analyse the deficiencies of the peace support operations in Southern Africa, which failed in the sensible disarmament of belligerents and therefore in the disarmament of the region as a whole, one has to analyse the disarmament component of each relevant operation in some detail. These three are the second UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), and the third UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

All three missions had something in common: they represented the ‘second generation’ of UN peacekeeping carried out by multi-function peace support operations in that they pushed the bounds of classical peacekeeping, both operationally and conceptually, by being given primarily non-military mandates.² Before we can explain the details involved in these three cases, we must refer to the changes suffered by the UN as a result of the end of the Cold War. Many of the mistakes in dealing with the Angola and Mozambique peace processes were a direct result of this changed status.

From 1988 the international community, through the UN, became involved in twenty-six peace support operations world-wide.³ This constitutes an increase of almost 45 per cent in the past nine years. Only fifteen operations had been established in the previous forty years,⁴ since 1948. International violence today occurs primarily at sub-state or intra-state level, as is illustrated by the fact that twenty-two of the peace operations after 1988

were to support peace efforts in intra-state wars.⁵ Of all the peace support operations, only seventeen were the result of wars between states. Of these, five operations have continued from the Cold War era into the present day (including the first two operations of the UN, UNTSO established in the Middle-East in 1948 and UNMOGIP established in India/Pakistan in 1949).⁶ The Cold War politics that for so long succeeded in crippling the Security Council have shaped the UN's response to these conflicts ever since. It gave birth to the concept of 'non-violent use of military force' or peacekeeping, a concept fundamentally different from the enforcement action described in the UN Charter.⁷ The political manoeuvring, consent-seeking and consensus politics that sometimes paralysed the UN Security Council⁸ has in recent times impacted on operations in the field. Every belligerent party to a conflict is treated on equal footing and elevated to the same degree of status, irrespective of its representation or past.⁹ The consensus of each is required for every action undertaken by the international community, but none is under any obligation to seek consensus from the UN for any actions it undertakes. The use of force is out of the question, except in self defence, and the principle of impartiality is stretched until it borders on pretence.

The role of the classic peacekeeper, to monitor the implementation of an honourable agreement between two or more parties to a conflict, to do so usually unarmed, and to man a distinctly marked observation post or patrol a de-militarised cease-fire line, has become the exception rather than the rule. New operational environments are seriously confronting the traditional principles of peacekeeping. The impartiality of peace forces is never recognised by all parties to a conflict. The extent to which consent, as an absolute requirement, can be assumed and adhered to becomes increasingly problematic.¹⁰ Freedom of movement, traditionally seen as a key principle for effective peacekeeping, is constantly denied to peace forces and/or military observers. Cease-fire agreements are violated as soon as they are agreed upon. No distinct frontlines exist. In the worst-case scenarios no accountable or legitimate political authority exists in operational areas. And last, but not least, forces serving under the UN flag have become the target of warring factions, which has increased their physical risks. The changes that occurred in the operational environment have added an array of new and challenging tasks to the mission of any peace operation, current and future. These include:¹¹

- ensuring uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance to isolated populations;
- guaranteeing the safety and security of civilian and administrative personnel, national aid workers and NGO (non-governmental organisation) personnel;
- protecting the local population;
- undertaking de-mining operations;
- human rights monitoring;
- disarming, cantoning and demobilising armed factions;
- executing police functions;
- undertaking preventive deployment;
- monitoring elections and providing security of election points and workers.

Acting like an automaton, however, the UN continues to base its activities, despite these changes, on traditional concepts of peacekeeping operations. Normally the *modus operandi* developed on the basis of a Security Council resolution evolves into an operational concept that is static in nature: a network of positions is used to be able to observe, report and react. The idea of exploring the possibilities and advantages of a more mobile approach never arises. Consequently, self-imposed operational restraints which characterise UN peacekeeping are now seriously undermining the ability of peace forces to carry out their assigned missions. These restraints include:¹²

- unclear and/or insufficient mandates;
- the absence of one integrated strategy for the different components of a mission, and the inability to work toward one common goal;
- the complete absence of planning, or insufficient planning prior to deployment;
- restrictions on information gathering and intelligence operations;
- restrictions on the use of coercive measures and force within the rules of engagement;
- the absence of a universal doctrine for UN peace operations;
- the absence of a universal training curriculum for UN operations;
- the reluctance to subject contributed manpower to adequate screening mechanisms before acceptance;
- a difficult and slow-moving logistical support system;
- the effects of geographical spread of military contingents and administrative personnel.

All these restraints, some not new to the historical experience of peacekeeping, point to weaknesses which have become accentuated by the necessity for operating in the context of a changed operational environment. Civil wars fuelled by deep-rooted hatred and involving countless armed factions, each pursuing its own agenda, as well as the abundance and availability of weapons and ammunition, have also impacted on the post-conflict reconstruction process. Regions awash with weapons, not collected during peace processes, or, if collected, never destroyed, struggle to regain the stability so necessary to successful reconstruction and development. This is particularly true in both Angola and Mozambique.

Whatever the reasons for the unwillingness and/or timidity with which the UN considers disarmament components in 'second generation' peacekeeping operations, the results of leaving weapons unchecked and soldiers not properly demobilised are clear: the countries themselves totter on the brink of civil war for longer periods of time, jeopardising the consolidation of peace and post-conflict reconstruction, as is the case with Angola; or, by contributing to the flood of weapons pouring into neighbouring countries, they become a source of regional instability, as is the case with Mozambique. All this is reason enough for dedicating some time to the analysis of the (failed) disarmament operations in UNAVEM II and UNAVEM III and in ONUMOZ.

UNAVEM II: Angola — 1991-1995

At the time of Angola's being granted independence from Portugal, the guerrilla war of independence had gone on for almost fifteen years. In January 1975 the Portuguese military government (which had overthrown the previous government in a *coup d'état* in April 1974) sought to establish a programme for transition to independence in talks with the three Angolan Liberation movements: UNITA, MPLA and the FNLA. The agreement reached in Alvor, Portugal soon disintegrated and the three groups fought one another with the support of various countries, including the United States of America, South Africa, the Soviet Union and Cuba. Portugal transferred sovereignty to 'the people of Angola'¹³ and promptly withdrew from the process. The resultant vacuum was seized by the MPLA, who established the People's Republic of Angola on 11 November 1975. The FNLA dwindled away, but UNITA, with the backing of the US and South

Africa, embarked on a civil war that would engulf Angola until the late 1990s.

In April 1990, the MPLA and UNITA began a series of talks, negotiated by Portugal (which had by then been re-stabilised). The negotiations resulted in the '*Acordos de Paz para Angola*' or Bicesse Accords. The Bicesse Accords, which were signed in Portugal in May 1991 between the MPLA government and UNITA, provided the basis for the mandate of UNAVEM II, which was contained in UN Security Council Resolution 696 of 1991.¹⁴ The Bicesse Accords contained an explicit disarmament component which included the following measures:

- a cease-fire between both parties;
- the end of supplies of all lethal weapons by any government;¹⁵
- the separation, demobilisation and disarmament of all forces;
- the disbanding of the MPLA and UNITA standing armies;
- the collection and disposal of weapons;
- the formation of a new Angolan armed force of 50 000 before the elections.

The Disarmament Component¹⁶

As the decisive element of the cease-fire agreement, the disarmament component of the Angolan peace accords demanded three main activities:

- *Cantonment And Demobilisation of Forces:* All MPLA and UNITA troops were to be gathered at designated assembly areas, about fifty in all, to ensure effective cessation of hostilities and an orderly demobilisation process. They would be counted regularly in order to monitor the extent of the parties' compliance.
- *Disarming the Parties and Weapons Control/Storage:* Soldiers on both sides would be disarmed at the assembly areas and each party would, in addition, surrender all categories of weapons it had acquired during the war years. The weapons were to be given up voluntarily. Further, under an arms embargo, they were forbidden to purchase or receive new weapons from external sources. All collected weapons and ammunition were to be sent to regional headquarters and subsequently transported to a central storage area. Regular counting of weapons at the storage centre was to take place so as to ensure effective control over the inventory.

- *Integration of the Armed Forces:* An equal number of selected troops from the MPLA's army, FAPLA, and UNITA's guerrilla force, FALL, were to be integrated to form a 50 000 strong national Angolan army, the *Forces Armadas Angolans* (FAA). The integration was to be facilitated by a satisfactory execution of the preceding three stages of the disarmament component of the programme and had to be completed before the two dates of the September 1992 elections at the latest.

Guarding the Sentries

The implementation of all the activities involved in the disarmament process was primarily the responsibility of the Joint Verification Military Commission (JVMC) and its monitoring groups, under the overall management of the Joint Political Military Commission (JPMC). Both these Commissions consisted of MPLA and UNITA political and military officials. UNAVEM II observers were only mandated to monitor the Angolan monitors, assisting and co-operating with them where necessary. According to one of the observers, “*we fulfilled the passive role of verification*”.¹⁷ The weakness of their mandate, however, was that it failed to state or imply what they could do to get the process back in line should they notice the Angolan monitors not fulfilling their obligations effectively: what they were dealing with was simply a ‘do nothing’ mandate.¹⁸

Reflecting the structure of the JVMC, UNAVEM II deployed its military observers to six regions, Luanda, Huambo, Lubango, Saurimo, Luena and Mavinga.¹⁹ As regional headquarters, each of these stations established a number of subordinate stations close to the assembly areas in that part of the country. The monitoring groups of the JVMC were deployed at eighty-two locations. Among these were fifty troop assembly areas and some thirty-two ‘critical points’, including airports, sea ports and border posts, from where the parties’ compliance with the arms embargo was to be monitored. UNAVEM II was only able to establish a permanent presence at sixty-two of the eighty-two locations, where it deployed teams of military observers, ranging from two to five persons.²⁰ This deployment was not completed on time, especially in many UNITA areas. The delay was caused by UNITA’s noted refusal to allow the mission’s inspection of its facilities early enough. The organisation made things even more difficult by relocating some of its troop assembly areas after UNAVEM’s inspections.²¹ It was clear from the beginning that UNAVEM was never totally sure of the situation in UNITA

locations. When UNAVEM II became operational, the *de facto* cease-fire had been on for two weeks, but had failed to halt sporadic fighting due to the existence of armed supporters on both sides, sometimes in the same area. UNAVEM II military observers monitored the cease-fire, made efforts to investigate reported cases of violation and also helped to resolve problems within the Angolan monitoring groups. Mediating between the parties was a discretionary role which was technically beyond the specifics of their mandate, but was to become the central calling of the mission when the peace process collapsed. Until then, the monitoring and verification task of UNAVEM II observers concentrated more on the assembly areas where they were supposed to observe and report on the number, condition and morale of assembled troops, and on the storage arrangements for weapons.

The cantonment of forces began with only a trickling of soldiers to the assembly areas. Commanders on both sides were unwilling to allow their units to be the first to assemble and be disarmed, due to mutual suspicion and lack of faith in the peace process. According to one of the leading officials of UNAVEM II, “*both sides wanted to delay demobilisation to watch events first*”.²² For this reason, the Angolan monitoring groups were reluctant to do their job at the assembly areas, especially with regard to the regular counting of troops. The chief military observer and the regional commanders had to over-step the mission’s mandate to set the date for counting, which was subsequently done on a weekly basis, with the active participation of UNAVEM II observers. Reports on the operation were regularly sent to UN headquarters in New York to keep it informed of progress or the lack of it.

The government’s soldiers were roughly estimated to number 150 491, while UNITA’s FALL was perceived to number about 50 000 troops. Six days before the elections, only 60 per cent of government troops and a mere 23 per cent of UNITA’s had been cantoned in the assembly areas. The discrepancy between these figures and the total estimate of the armies derived partially from excessive exaggeration of the strength of both sides. But, mainly, it confirmed that the parties had failed to assemble a substantial number of their troops. The government’s excuse was that many of its troops had deserted, while UNITA argued that truck loads of its own guerrillas had switched to become staff members of the new political party. UNAVEM observers were unable to verify these claims as “*there were just*

a few demobilisation teams working ...”.²³ It was obvious, none the less, that UNITA, in particular, never intended fully to demobilise its soldiers. It found every excuse to delay the operation, and in spring 1992, postponed indefinitely the demobilisation of any more troops, citing reasons ranging from the lack of guaranteed employment to the lack of civilian clothing. Even the minority of UNITA troops that did go through the demobilisation procedure were still found by UNAVEM observers waiting for further orders after they had been technically discharged.

Collection and Storage of Weapons

The complete failure concerning the cantonment of forces and the process of demobilisation were mirrored in the collection and storage of weapons. As had been the case with the strength of the armies, neither of the opposing sides nor UNAVEM II could ascertain the quality and quantity of weapons in each party's inventory. The figures that were used during the weapons collection operation were provided by the parties and could never have been accurate, taking into account their dishonesty with regard to the cantonment and demobilisation process, the inaccurate figures provided and the substantial number of fighting men kept in arms. The weapons, as noted, were to be voluntarily surrendered in accordance with regulations or terms determined by the Angolan parties themselves. UNAVEM II observers supervised the collection and sorting of arms, offered transportation support and assisted with security arrangements at storage sites. In addition, they monitored the verification procedure for the weekly counting of collected weapons, investigated alleged violations of the operation, and through their patrols, reported on the disposition of the parties' armed personnel. The observers were ideally mandated to cover all the weapons collection points, mainly situated in the troop assembly areas. But, in the twenty or so places where the mission could not establish a permanent presence, the monitoring and verification by UNAVEM II mobile observers was hardly effective. The overall efficiency of the observers was jeopardised, because the mission did not develop any specific force structure tailored to support the disarmament process. Additional problems were no doubt caused by the ineptitude of some of the individual members of the monitoring teams, a fact that was hardly surprising, since the majority of UNAVEM II observers were not exposed to any prior specialist training for the various disarmament-related duties they were to perform. Essentially that limited their expertise and technical preparedness to undertake their duties. The Angolan parties were

allowed to keep minimum weapons for security and it seemed that each side arbitrarily defined its own requirements in that respect. In addition to designated government and UNITA officials, the national police, the Angolan monitoring groups and UNAVEM II military observers participated in the collection of arms. Opposite party liaison officers also accompanied UNAVEM's military observers during their own monitoring duties. There were no special incentives to encourage the belligerents to give up their arms nor were there penal provisions to deter them from refusal to disarm. It became clear that neither side was complying with the disarmament component of the Peace Accords, as the bulk of what was surrendered was either old or of very poor quality and hardly serviceable. These were definitely not the arms with which they had prosecuted the bitter civil war, especially in the five years or so preceding the peace accords. UNAVEM II observers strongly suspected that both sides had arms caches in which the good weapons were hidden, but could not prove it. They lacked effective verification facilities, such as sensor mechanisms — radars, acoustic devices, infra-red and photographic applications among others. Consequently, “... *no real verification took place to ensure that the parties complied with the peace agreements,*”²⁴ especially as regards the various areas rendered inaccessible by land mines.

Contrary to earlier expectations that collected weapons would be stored elsewhere, they remained in the troop assembly areas within easy reach of the warring parties, due to the previously noted inadequacy of transportation facilities required to remove them. This made it hard for either of them, or UNAVEM II observers, to effect proper control over the storage points. The collection and control of arms were further undermined by the fact that the belligerents continued to have access to weapons from external channels, despite the arms embargo which was later annulled by the MPLA government on 23 April 1993. UNAVEM observers were unable to monitor and control these channels as the mission lacked adequate manpower and the requisite logistical means.

Any possibility of creating a unified national army as envisaged by the peace accords was eliminated by a state of affairs in which the preceding stages of the disarmament component had been to no avail. Nation-wide elections on the 29-30 September 1992 had been contingent upon the prior formation of FAA. For that reason, a symbolic FAA creation took place on

27 September, when less than half of the sixteen designated installations of the new army had been refitted, and only partially. The pseudo FAA had integrated only 8 800 MPLA and UNITA soldiers, 17,6 per cent of the projected combined figure of 50 000. The rest, yet to be integrated, were still heavily armed when the elections took place. Besides the key factor of lack of co-operation between the MPLA and UNITA, the integration operation suffered a further setback because of competition between Portugal, Britain and France, over the contract for training and equipping the FAA. According to one analyst, “each country was pushing for a significant role in the process and this led to a string of delays”.²⁵ Senior MPLA and UNITA officials decided, as a result, that the international community was more interested in making profit out of the envisioned FAA than in the successful implementation of the accords. By the time of elections, on 29 and 30 September 1992, UNAVEM II could only field 400 electoral observers. On their shoulders rested the monitoring and verification of 6 000 election points in 164 municipalities,²⁶ in a country with almost no infrastructure. Yet the Special Representative of the Secretary-General declared unequivocally that the elections were free and fair. Leaving enough room for UNITA to dispute the 8 per cent win of the MPLA, it immediately withdrew the handful of forces it had so far integrated into the FAA, as well as those remaining in the assembly areas, and returned to war. That marked the final collapse of the disarmament component.

The resumption of full-scale fighting rendered the original UNAVEM II mandate obsolete, as the mission became preoccupied with mediation and good offices in the bid to negotiate a new cease-fire. On 5 November 1992, the Secretary-General sent Mr Marrack Goulding, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to assist in the mission’s efforts of mediation and to explore its future role. Following consultations with the belligerents, Mr Goulding reported that the gulf between them was as deep as ever and that the principal common ground between them was the desire for a greater UN involvement. This was confirmed during the Abdijan talks, when they called for an enlargement of UNAVEM II’s mandate and the establishment of a UN intervention force. In May 1993, the mission’s mediation in the post-election crisis deepened with the resignation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). The Secretary-General’s first choice for her replacement, Brazilian-born Sergio Viera De Mello, was rejected by UNITA, based on Brazil’s close relations with the

Angolan government. After one month’s search for an acceptable successor, Malian foreign minister, Alioune Beye, was appointed as the new Special Representative. Under his leadership, UNAVEM II continued to seek an end to the fighting, backed all the way by the Security Council. But, by then, the mounting danger confronting the mission’s personnel in the field had caused the evacuation of forty-five of its sixty-seven stations.

As the situation deteriorated, more stations were closed and the strength of the mission’s staff successively reduced. At its lowest level, in June 1994, UNAVEM II comprised only fifty military observers, eighteen police observers, eleven military paramedics, forty-nine international civilian personnel and seventy-five locally recruited staff whose deployment was limited to Luanda and four other regions. At the same time, the Security Council maintained its readiness to expand the strength of the mission’s staff in the event of a break-through in the peace talks and detailed the Secretary-General to draw up contingency plans towards that event. Having originally commissioned UNAVEM II with a mandate of ‘non-involvement’, the most remarkable aspect of this disposition of the Security Council was that, once the peace accords had disintegrated beyond repair, it did not pull out of the mission entirely. On the contrary, it consistently encouraged the peace-making efforts of the team on the ground, even as it reduced the number of those involved. On the whole, UNAVEM II’s mandate was extended ten times between 30 October 1992 and 30 June 1994. This left no doubt about the importance attached by the Security Council to the restoration of the peace process. Unfortunately, the same level of concern was not evident in the original conception of UNAVEM II in terms of helping Angolans find peace in 1991-92.

Analysis

From the outset, UNAVEM II was given a mandate to observe the cantonment of armies in certain areas and to verify the surrender of weapons by both armies. They were not responsible for searching out hidden weapons caches or for penalising parties for non-compliance.²⁷ The importance of disarmament to the overall success of UNAVEM II was unequivocal. It is widely accepted that disarmament did not take place prior to the elections, due primarily to the lack of trust on the part of UNITA and the MPLA. UNITA kept approximately 30 000 troops out of the disarmament process, and the MPLA approximately 10 000. Existing

problems were compounded by time delays of up to two months before any collection of weapons could take place. Personnel on the ground felt that they had not been briefed adequately on the UNAVEM II mandate and that a timetable according to which UNAVEM II could monitor progress was lacking. To secure funding for a major UN peacekeeping operation was impossible. Consequently, when mistrust between the two sides surfaced, the disarmament process broke down and control of weapons stocks in the assembly areas was taken over by UNITA and the MPLA.

The ramifications for UNAVEM II and for the Angolan state could not have been worse. Observers claim that preparations to restart the war had begun well before the elections. In Angola, the level of mutual mistrust was such that a successful election could not have been possible while both sides remained in control of their weapons.

This is a good example of how the maintenance of weapons, lack of disarmament, and ineffective demobilisation during an international peace process can perpetuate internal conflict and even war. It was one of the principal reasons for the resumption of war in Angola.

ONUMOZ: Mozambique — 1993-1995

Mozambique obtained its independence from Portugal in June 1975, after a protracted war of liberation led by the *Frente da Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO). In 1977, FRELIMO declared itself to be a Marxist-Leninist Party and the government signed aid agreements and treaties with the Soviet Union and Cuba. South Africa and a group of western countries immediately channelled increasing and substantial support to the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO), a pro-Western resistance movement under the leadership of Andre Matsangaiza, and later Afonso Dhlakama. RENAMO launched an intensive guerrilla war against the FRELIMO government, quickly disrupting the transport infrastructure of the country. In an effort to secure its interest in the Beira harbour, Zimbabwe deployed 10 000 troops inside Mozambique during November 1982. At the height of the war, in the late eighties, close to a million Mozambicans had died because of the fighting and due to widespread hunger and disease. Almost 3,2 million people had been

displaced, and 1,5 million had fled to South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. After the death of Mr Samora Machel, the government had undertaken far-reaching economic reforms, institutionalising political liberalisation and promulgating a new constitution. Catholic Church intermediaries and some African countries, including Botswana, Malawi, South Africa and Kenya, started in 1989 to mediate a settlement between the two parties. They were later joined by the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy and Portugal. On 4 October 1992, Mr Dhlakama and President Chissano signed a General Peace Agreement establishing the modalities for the achievement of peace in Mozambique.

The General Peace Agreement (GPA) that was signed by FRELIMO and RENAMO in Rome, in October 1992, provided the basis for ONUMOZ's mandate, as contained in Security Council Resolution 797 of 1992. ONUMOZ's mandate contained a comprehensive disarmament component derived from the provisions of the GPA which made provision for ONUMOZ to supervise, monitor and verify the following measures:

- the cease-fire which came into effect on 15 October 1992;
- the complete withdrawal of foreign forces;
- the separation and containment of forces to bases;
- the demobilisation and disarmament of combatants;
- the collection, storage and destruction of weapons;
- the disbanding of private and irregular armed forces.

In terms of Security Council Resolution 850 of July 1993, ONUMOZ's mandate was enlarged, ONUMOZ being appointed chair of the *Comissão Conjunta Das Forças Armadas do Moçambique* (CCFADM), the Joint Commission for the Formation of the Mozambican Defence Force, which was charged with supervising the formation of the new Mozambican Defence Force, *Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique* (FADM).

The Disarmament Component

According to the GPA, the parties would abide by a cease-fire that was to enter into force on the day on which the Assembly of the Republic adopted the General Peace Agreement, thus incorporating the agreement into Mozambican law. This would be known as 'E-Day'. The respective armed forces of the two parties would separate in an effort to reduce potential conflict and report to locations to be agreed upon between themselves and

with the concurrence of the UN. The separation of the two forces was to commence on E-Day and conclude within six days, by E-Day+5.²⁸ The issue of the locations was to be settled no later than seven days after the signing of the GPA.²⁹ The list detailing these locations was to specify the name and site of the twenty-nine government assembly areas and the twenty RENAMO assembly areas,³⁰ as well as the main military facilities of the two parties such as military hospitals, logistical units and training facilities.³¹ Soldiers serving with the FAM or RENAMO would register with the UN either at assembly areas or, as an exception, at non-assembly areas. Those not joining the newly integrated national army of Mozambique, the FADM, were to be demobilised and re-enter civilian life. The Cease-fire Commission (*Comissão de Cessar Fogo*, CCF) would be established on E-Day and would have thirty days for defining which troops were to be demobilised and to develop the various administrative and physical structures to initiate the process. These structures would have to accommodate and account for the following processes and tasks:

- planning and organisation;
- regulation and procedures;
- direction and supervision;
- registration of troops to be demobilised and issue of the respective identity cards;
- collection, registration and custody of weapons, ammunition, explosives, equipment, uniforms and documentation;
- destruction or determination of further disposition of weapons, ammunition, explosives, equipment, uniforms and documentation, as agreed by the parties;
- medical examinations; [and]
- issuance of demobilisation certificates.³²

The first 20 per cent of the soldiers to be demobilised were to begin the process on E-Day+30, completing it within thirty days, at which point the second 20 per cent would begin, concluding the proceedings under the same conditions. This process would culminate on E-Day+180, when the fifth and final 20 per cent would have been demobilised or have joined the FADM.³³

The UN was responsible for establishing guidelines to select and construct assembly areas and for ensuring that these requirements were satisfied. For

example, all assembly areas were to be easily accessible by road, near a potable water source, far away from a swamp or mines, and were to possess at least a rudimentary infrastructure. However, whereas health, safety, and logistical considerations influenced the UN in establishing its criteria, military considerations were the overriding factor in guiding the parties in their selections. Whenever possible the UN would endeavour to help make the proposed assembly areas acceptable. In many instances, however, when these guidelines went unheeded, the UN was forced to reject the site outright.

The first reconnaissance of an assembly area occurred in January 1993, with the last being approved in February 1994.³⁴ In June ONUMOZ had approved six assembly areas (comprising one RENAMO and one government site in each of the three ‘regions’³⁵) and declared them open. However, no one came. (Unlike other peacekeeping operations, such as the one in Cambodia, in which UN blue helmets escorted combatants to the cantonment sites, in ONUMOZ the parties were responsible for reporting to the assembly areas on their own.) The actual assembly of the first troops did not commence until five months later, in December. Initial delays in the opening of the assembly areas resulted partly from the time-consuming and complex processes described above. Military and political considerations, however, were primarily responsible. Neither Dhlakama and RENAMO, nor the FAM (with the support of hard-liners in the government) were prepared to forego the military option. The second phase of the mission, which began after the Secretary-General’s departure, is characterised by RENAMO’s refraining from its previous practices, while the government sought at every conceivable opportunity to delay the demobilisation process. During the first year of the operation, when RENAMO was constantly creating problems, the government could feign a strong commitment to playing by the rules, ‘if only’ RENAMO were prepared to do so. After October 1993, however, this policy was no longer viable. There were those in the government who sought to hold the election without UN participation, believing that they would benefit as a result of diminished — or non-existent — UN and international involvement and supervision.

The existence of foreign forces on Mozambican soil after the agreed-upon deadline of 15 November 1992 was another reason for non-compliance.³⁶ The UN had reached and exceeded deployment of 65 per cent of the

authorised mission strength in May 1993 and had confirmed the departure of the last foreign forces from Mozambique on 9 June 1993.³⁷ (There was no explicit link in the GPA between the deployment of UN troops or the withdrawal of foreign forces and the relative commitment that parties were to make toward cantoning and demobilising their troops.) Yet, as stated above, neither RENAMO nor the government troops began to report to assembly areas until December.

Initially, there were discrepancies between the number of soldiers reporting to the camps and the number being officially declared as having registered. This created some tension between the parties and the UN. The parties' overwhelming preoccupation with simultaneous proportionality in the matter of demobilisation made the one extremely unwilling to adhere to its commitments without being assured that the other was following suit.

The questionnaire issued to each soldier that he was required to fill out as part of the registration process read: 'Do you want to join FADM?' Less than 10 per cent of the respondents ticked the corresponding box marked 'yes'.³⁸ The FADM was to be composed of 30 000 soldiers (24 000 army, 4 000 air force and 2 000 navy), of which each party to the GPA was to provide exactly half of each category. Fearful of being unable to supply the permitted number of troops — and that their side would thus appear weaker or less committed than the other — each party withheld its lists detailing which soldiers registered at the assembly areas would demobilise and which would join the FADM. Without these lists, the UN could not issue the demobilisation certificates or begin transporting ex-combatants to destinations where they could establish their new lives as civilians. Thus, although it was not the drafters' intention, in effect they created a situation whereby the parties could, in a manner of speaking, hold the UN hostage. The 'simultaneous' process was contingent upon receipt of the lists detailing which units would report to the FADM and which would not. Without these, the process could not go forward.

*Control and Destruction of Weapons*³⁹

ONUMOZ fully understood that the parties were even less enthusiastic about disarming than they were about demobilising. As was envisaged, not every soldier registering arrived with a weapon. The number of arms collected from paramilitary troops was also below expectation.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the munitions that were submitted were thought to be

generally of poor quality. It was felt that those of better quality were being held in reserve.⁴¹ Moreover, there were several instances when the parties denied ONUMOZ permission to collect and disable weapons at non-assembly areas.⁴² Even though the GPA stipulated that "... *all collective and individual weapons ... should be stored in warehouses under United Nations control*,"⁴³ both parties at first objected to any such measures. However, in light of the deteriorating security environment at many assembly areas, the parties did eventually allow ONUMOZ to transport all military equipment in excess of 200 arms from each assembly area for safe-keeping.⁴⁴ For this purpose, the UN established three regional arms depots.⁴⁵ Responsibility for guarding these depots rested with ONUMOZ armed infantry battalions, which would oversee the transfers of weapons as well. The first transfer took place on 15 March 1994. Subsequent transfers proceeded on a regular basis,⁴⁶ the military equipment being transferred to the regional arms depots without incident.⁴⁷ ONUMOZ knew that the weapons registered represented only a small percentage of those in the parties' possession. As initially planned, this 'verification process' was to take place after demobilisation and before the October elections, and was to last three months.⁴⁸ But because of the parties' delays in demobilising, the verification phase did not commence until 30 August.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the parties were reluctant initially to participate fully in the process.⁵⁰

Very few of the arms and little of the ammunition recovered and registered were destroyed. Only a very small percentage of munitions, which had been considered too dangerous to move, was destroyed *in situ*.⁵¹ Weapons and equipment stored at the regional arms depots were classified into three major categories: operational, repairable and beyond repair. Working through the CCFADM, the CCF channelled to the FADM equipment thought essential to the training of the new army; material considered to be 'beyond repair' was to be destroyed.⁵² However, a UN study on how best to dispose of the material that fell under this category concluded that it was not economically viable to arrange disposal at any of the metal foundries⁵³ and, in the end, all equipment at the regional arms depots was transferred to the FADM.⁵⁴

Disarmament, which at first had been the prerequisite for the holding of elections, eventually became little more than an afterthought. The operation's great failing lies in the fact that it too did not make disarmament a priority. Granted, it was a Chapter VI operation. Granted, the government

was a member state of the UN in good standing and did possess a sovereign right to have weapons. Granted, too, there may have been more pressing issues. However, while creative responses were developed and the money found to support reintegration programmes, additional food for the assembly areas and a separate trust fund for RENAMO to keep the process on track, the disarmament train still was allowed to derail. The decision advanced by the CCF to invent a ‘verification phase’ was laudable but, though it recorded substantial additional military equipment, its implementation was more noteworthy for highlighting what could have been, rather than what was. The FADM is now only a shadow of its former separate entities and less than half of its authorised strength. The weapons and ammunition that ONUMOZ recorded and returned were enough to arm the FADM many times over. Moreover, what ONUMOZ recorded is known to represent only a small portion of what the UN and the average Mozambican know exist in barracks and warehouses and in caches hidden under the ground.

Analysis

The extent of the ONUMOZ success, or failure, depends largely upon the proportion of weapons which the mission managed to secure on a permanent basis. Temporary collection and storage at assembly areas could only be a part of the process, given the UNs agreed-upon departure date soon after the election. But the proportion of weapons that was permanently secured is difficult to determine, since the total number of weapons in the country at the time remains in question. The Secretary-General’s report claims that marginally fewer than 190 000 weapons were collected and that the majority were of Soviet origin. By contrast, the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) reports that some 1,5 million AK-47s were distributed to the civilian population throughout the civil war.⁵⁵ Current estimates — heresy — suggest that the Soviet Union shipped between 0,5 and 1 million AK-47s. No documentation is available, however, to confirm or deny either of these figures. However, when juxtaposed with those cited by the Secretary-General, they demonstrate the burden of weapons that the region of sub-Saharan Africa must now carry. They also serve to throw into sharper focus the proliferation of small arms in Southern Africa.

Mozambique is a good case in point for demonstrating the second of the premises stated at the beginning of this section: that ineffective or non-

existent disarmament components to UN peace support operations fuel the proliferation of small arms at regional level and assist in the rise of crime, instability and political violence. It is this ‘legacy of peace operations with little or no disarmament’ that must now be referred to in some detail.

UNAVEM III: ANGOLA — 1995- to Present

After the election results in Angola were announced, UNITA launched a nation-wide operation to occupy major towns by force and remove the MPLA government’s local structures. On 31 October 1992 heavy fighting broke out between UNITA and MPLA forces in Luanda and several other cities. Large numbers of Angolans were killed. The UN Secretary-General, in a concerted effort to get the peace process back on track, sent the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Mr Marrack Goulding, to Angola to enter into talks with the leaders of the two warring parties. As a result of these talks, Mr Savimbi confirmed in writing, on 16 November 1992, that UNITA accepted the results of the “*recognizedly fraudulent and irregular*”⁵⁶ elections in order to advance the peace process. The Secretary-General reported to the Security Council on 25 November 1992 that a root cause of the deteriorating situation in Angola had been the incomplete fulfilment of key provisions of the Peace Accords. In particular, he pointed to the less than effective demobilisation and disarmament, the delay in forming the new defence force, the delay in establishing successful administration in large parts of the country and the failure to set up a neutral police force.⁵⁷ On 29 November 1992, UNITA took the capital of the Uige province, as well as an important air force base nearby. Efforts to restore dialogue between the warring parties failed, and Angola slipped deeper into civil war.

By late September 1993 the MPLA forces, with the help of subcontracted foreign private security companies, had re-established control over important rural areas. Numerous and tireless efforts by the UN, and the governments of Portugal, the United States and the Russian Federation resulted in exploratory peace talks in Lusaka on 25 October 1993. UNITA agreed to withdraw its troops from areas it had occupied since the 1992 election and to send them back to UN quartering areas. However, fighting between the two parties continued and the Lusaka Protocol was not to be initialled by both before 31 October 1994. The UN Security Council authorised the establishment of UNAVEM III by means of Resolution 976

(1995) of 8 February 1995. This mission, again, included demobilisation and disarmament components, in which provision was made for UNAVEM III to carry out the following tasks:

- to supervise, control and monitor the cease-fire planning and organisation;
- to verify information received from both the government and UNITA regarding their forces, and monitor all troop movements;
- to help establish quartering areas and verify and monitor the withdrawal, quartering and demobilisation of UNITA forces;
- to supervise the collection and storage of UNITA armaments;
- to verify the movement of the government army to barracks; to verify the completion of the formation of FAA;
- to verify the free movement of people and goods;
- to verify the disarming of civilians — a task allotted to the Civilian Police component.

Demobilisation

Fourteen quartering areas and eight main weapons storage locations were created throughout the country. About 7 800 military and police personnel were made available to the force commander for this task, and the operation was to last twelve months. Five months into the operation it became clear that the operational plan for UNAVEM III was, once again, too ambitious, seriously constrained by time and out of touch with reality on the ground. By July 1995 the mandate had been extended for another six months, and by January 1996 until May 1996. And these extensions have continued well into 1997, as the warring parties hold the UN hostage to their lack of political will to establish lasting peace in their own country.

But there is another dimension to this lack of progress. If ever there was a case, in modern times, that evokes sharply the tale of *The Emperor's New Clothes*, the demobilisation and disarmament components of UNAVEM III must be it. All the evidence is there that UNITA is not adhering to the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol and yet no one is prepared to acknowledge it. At the time of writing, skirmishes between UNITA troops and government troops have continued sporadically. Armed banditry and unauthorised control of movement continues in the rural areas. Quartering and demobilisation of UNITA soldiers and police have thus far not produced the desired results, nor made up the desired figures. Yet the

pretence that everything is under control continues, a pretence on the part of the international community that will cost the Angolan population dear in the foreseeable future. Almost two years into the process 70 872 police and soldiers have reported for quartering. Of this figure, 19 309 have subsequently deserted the quartering areas; a total of 6 105 have gone absent without leave (probably deserted) and 210 have died.⁵⁸ A large number of the 'soldiers' sent to the quartering areas by UNITA are reported to be rural farmers rather than fighting men.⁵⁹ When the number of soldiers quartered without weapons (29 381), is compared with the total quartered, this statement is probably not far from the truth. A substantial number of quartered troops were child soldiers (8 528) and war-disabled (2 538).⁶⁰ Evidence suggests that UNITA is still keeping a substantial number of its prime fighting men under arms and out of the quartering process. Whatever the reasons, and there could be many, they confirm the suggestion that the peace process is barely managing to cover the divide between the two warring parties.

Demobilisation of UNITA Soldiers and Police as of 12 March 1997⁶¹

CATEGORY	TROOPS	POLICE	TOTAL
Quartered			
With Weapons	39 222	2 269	41 491
Without Weapons	26 745	2 636	29 381
Total	65 967	4 905	70 872
Profile			
Under-aged	8 122	406	8 528
War Disabled	2 446	92	2 538
Able	55 399	4 407	59 806
Total	65 967	4 905	70 872
Demobilised			
Under-aged	2 028	0	2 028
War Disabled	0	0	0
Able	0	0	0
Total	2 028	0	2 028
Integrated			
Integrated into FAA	7 046	0	7 046
Integrated into Police	0	0	0
Total	7 046	0	7 046
Losses			
Deserted	18 453	856	19 309
Absent without leave	5 617	488	6 105
Died	207	3	210
Total	24 277	1 347	25 624
Family Members in Quartering Areas			
All dependants	113 080	5 709	118 789

The demobilisation of FAA soldiers is not on track either. The government created the *Servigos de Seguranc a Militar* (SSM) to re-train demobilised soldiers (both FAA and UNITA) and oversee their reintegration into civil society. Although the SSM has an important role to play in fostering stability in Angola, there are no targets set for demobilisation. The SSM expects that small groups of demobilised soldiers, who have received training will be tasked to use their newly acquired skills in the reconstruction of the country. Very real problems face both the SSM and the demobilised soldiers, however, and before a meaningful contribution can be made to society, the following issues will have to be addressed:

- most of the soldiers, UNITA and MPLA, do not have basic literacy skills;
- opportunities for employment are limited;
- disparity exists in the remuneration system (trainees are paid according to their standard test results);
- the demobilisation plan is dependent on foreign donors, since the MPLA government is facing overwhelming financial difficulties.

These difficulties are not likely to be addressed, either by the Angolan government or the UN in the foreseeable future. UN Development Programme officials are unable to work in the provinces due to the lack of a secure environment, and the development programmes for Angola are losing precious time.

In the short-term, Angola does not have the capacity to absorb demobilised soldiers into its economy. The most obvious economic opportunities for demobilised soldiers lie in crime and illicit activities — ivory, diamond and weapons smuggling. Banditry, robbery, assault and other types of violent crime are on the increase. In rural areas this has taken the form of ambushes and armed gang operations. The Angolan police have indicated that this is directly linked to the failure of the demobilisation process, as well as the inability of the armed forces to account for weapons issued to soldiers. One demobilised major (FAA) confessed: “[W]e walked out of there [the military base in Luanda] with full uniform and with all our weapons. They only gave us money and asked us to go home.”⁶²

Disarmament Component

Once again in the matter of disarmament there is an echo of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. UNITA pretends to be handing in their weapons, and the international community pretends to believe them. Distrust for the peace process, stemming largely from the experience of 1992, has resulted in large-scale withholding of weapons and ammunition by UNITA and the population. Of the 70 872 police and soldiers quartered up to 12 March 1997, only 41 491 were quartered with weapons. Since UNAVEM III has to date collected only 34 425 weapons, 7 066 soldiers must have been quartered with crew-served weapons. Considering that all the people quartered were soldiers, obviously they are hiding their weapons somewhere else, for later use. If they were not all soldiers — as the evidence would suggest — this means that UNITA is not demobilising or disarming its fighting men. According to UNAVEM III personnel, roughly between 30 per cent and 40 per cent⁶³ of the weapons collected are old and/or unserviceable. In real terms this means that UNITA was fighting a war with only enough serviceable weapons for 10 327 out of its declared 62 500 troops, a highly unlikely situation. Only 8 596 kg of ammunition has been collected, which amounts to less than one ten ton military truck load — not convincing at all, given the widespread and intense military campaign fought by UNITA up to the signing of the Lusaka Protocol. Another legacy of the 1992 flare-up is the 600 000 -700 000 weapons distributed amongst civilians by the MPLA government, in the Luanda region, to defend the capital. Civilians tell how “*weapons were just given out freely to everybody by the government. We could just go down and collect them [without having to give personal details]. They do not know who has guns.*”⁶⁴

Although the UN Civilian Police is responsible for overseeing the disarmament of the population, the actual task must be executed by the Angolan National Police. It is not progressing at all, however, and, as with UNAVEM II, there is nothing the UN can do to force the National Police to perform. Most of the weapons are still being held by civilians out of fear and a “*general distrust of each other*”.⁶⁵ Given this fear and the tendency of the military to hang on to the only tool they know how to use, disarmament of the Angolan society does not seem likely in the short term.

Weapons and Ammunition Collected from UNITA Troops and Police, by 12 March 1997⁶⁶

Serial	Category	Total
1	Personal Weapons	29 859
2	Light Crew Served Weapons	3 559
3	Medium Crew Served Weapons	960
4	Air Defence Weapons	37
5	Artillery	10
6	Armoured Fighting Vehicles	0
8	TOTAL Weapons Collected	34 425
7	Ammunition collected in kg	8 596

Analysis

Certain of the root causes of the failure of UNAVEM II, cited by the Secretary-General in November 1992, are being repeated in UNAVEM III: demobilisation and disarmament are less than effective; effective administration has not been established; and a neutral police force remains a pipe dream. The MPLA government has neither political nor functional control over all of its territory. In fact, UNITA has control over quite a large part of the country, including the bulk of land borders. This means that neither the armed forces, nor the national police can do much to remove illegal weapons from the society, or prevent their movement in and out of the country.⁶⁷ Nor is the UN able to achieve much, under its current mandate, to force UNITA to comply with the Lusaka Protocol and, in so doing, to remove the weapons of war from the society. One can expect then that the disarmament process in Angola, as in Mozambique, will leave hundreds of thousands of weapons in the hands of the population and spread throughout the region. The effect of this availability of weapons on an impoverished, unskilled and unemployed population, in regions like Southern and Central Africa, could be devastating *vis-à-vis* their prospects for development and stability.

Legacy of War and Peace

The peace processes throughout the region have been accompanied neither by comprehensive disarmament nor the adequate control of weapons by the

appropriate authorities. Consequently, millions of weapons, no longer required by parties to the civil wars nor controlled by them, are now relatively free to change hands. In most cases these weapons have been used to reinitiate intra-state conflicts (as in the case of Angola), or have found their way into the illegal arms market in neighbouring countries (as in the case of Mozambique), thereby contributing to the problem of arms proliferation throughout the region.⁶⁸ In turn, ineffectual demobilisation and reintegration programmes have resulted in renewed conflict and in increased armed banditry amongst unemployed and dissatisfied ex-combatants. This increase is inextricably linked to alternative employment opportunities (or the lack of real employment) for ex-combatants and to the availability of weapons, which, again, are the consequence of ineffective arms control and disarmament during peace support operations.

The countries of Southern Africa are currently ‘awash’ with weapons, particularly small arms. Many reasons can be cited for this excess. What remains a sorry fact, however, is that the lack of effective arms control and disarmament during peace support operations in the region has denied the international community a historic opportunity for disarming the region. Consequently, peace can be regarded as one of the major causes for the proliferation of small arms in Southern Africa.

What Price Peace?

Mozambique and Angola in a Regional Context

Within the region, new arms flows have developed, primarily from within Mozambique and Angola. Many of the arms which have evaded the disarmament process in Angola have ended up flowing into other countries in the region, such as Namibia and South Africa,⁶⁹ and anecdotal evidence suggests that large numbers of weapons from the Angolan conflict have ended up in neighbouring countries.⁷⁰ The proliferation of weapons, particularly small arms, has become a significant problem in post-settlement Mozambique, while during 1995 large numbers of arms caches were discovered by the Zimbabwean mine-clearing teams.⁷¹ The proliferation of weapons in Mozambique is not only linked to ineffective arms control and disarmament during the ONUMOZ operation. Many members of the new armed forces have deserted the FADM since December 1994, taking their weapons with them. Some senior members of the armed forces have also been implicated in illegal arms deals involving weapons

from state armouries, because of low salaries in the new armed forces, inadequate discipline, low levels of morale and a ready market for weapons in South Africa and other neighbouring countries.

These developments have certainly contributed to the proliferation of weapons in Mozambique and in neighbouring countries, like South Africa and Malawi. Mozambique constitutes the largest single source of supply of small arms for the South African domestic market. The dramatic increase in armed criminal violence in countries such as Zambia and South Africa has been directly linked to the flow of illegal weapons from neighbouring countries which have recently experienced peace support operations.⁷² The main destination for light weapons is now South Africa, where demand from political and criminal groups is considerable. Armed banditry, coupled with rising levels of crime and violence, is becoming a common feature of many countries in Southern Africa.⁷³ The phenomenon is not only exacerbated by the availability of small arms, but is inextricably linked to the failure to implement a well-planned and well funded-demobilisation and reintegration programme for ex-combatants during a multilateral peace support operation. During the various peace support operations in Southern Africa, programmes for the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants were implemented with varying degrees of success and, in some cases, Angola, for example, aborted.

During the 1990s, Southern Africa has witnessed profound political change. The Mozambique civil war has ended and a democratic process begun, following national elections in October 1994, the first in the country's history. At the time of writing, the peace process in Angola is holding tenuously and down-scaling plans for UNAVEM III are well-advanced. Of greatest significance perhaps is that the democratic process in South Africa proceeds apace. Yet, despite the resolution of many of Southern Africa's historical conflicts, many of the countries in the region are still experiencing some form of intrastate conflict which can take numerous different forms:⁷⁴

- conflict associated with termination of hostilities and reconciliation — which includes Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and, to a lesser extent, Namibia;
- conflict over distribution of resources — which includes Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe;

- conflict over political participation, in which groups and individuals are demanding political rights; the institutionalisation of multi-party democracy; an end to one-party states — which includes Zimbabwe, Tanzania — and anachronistic forms of government — Swaziland; and more accountability from leaders;
- conflicts over political identity — in countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe various ethnic, racial and religious groups have mobilised to fight for, or demand, political change.

The causes of these various forms of intra-state conflicts are complex and in many cases interrelated. Despite the explosive potential of these conflicts, the prospect for political stability and economic growth in Southern Africa is considered excellent.⁷⁵ Interest in the preservation of democracy is higher than anywhere else in the world, even including the trend elsewhere towards programmes of 'good governance'. However, present and future efforts to achieve stability and security in the region, as well as in the individual countries concerned, have been seriously compromised by failures to achieve disarmament and demobilisation objectives in the region, within the setting of the peace-making processes themselves.

The problem of armed banditry also has its origins in the execution of peace support operations, particularly the absence of adequately planned and funded demobilisation and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants. Thus, in many instances, disaffected ex-combatants, who have spent most of their lives as soldiers and still have access to weapons — which were not collected during the peace support operation — have been tempted to use these in order to resolve their economic, social and/or political conflicts. In many cases criminal violence and armed banditry have become 'politicised' and thus have taken on the dimensions of intra-state conflict.⁷⁶ In some cases the problem of armed banditry, which is usually an internal matter, has 'spilled over' into neighbouring countries and bears the potential to create interstate conflicts. For example, it is alleged that disaffected dissidents in Mozambique are supporting the activities of ex-Young Pioneers in post-Banda Malawi, and Zimbabwean opposition groups in Zimbabwe.⁷⁷

Lack of statistics in most Southern African countries makes it imperative that we turn our attention now to South Africa, which can furnish statistics that make these considerations appear in their true light.

The Effects of Weapons Proliferation in South Africa

One of the most important aspects of the transition to democracy in South Africa has been the relatively successful, or bloodless, integration of the armed forces. This has provided a platform for internal security and a relatively secure environment, unparalleled in the rest of the region. Consequently, when change did come, it did not create a power vacuum or incapacitate the security organs of the state. Within this framework of relative security, South Africa had, in theory, the opportunity to ring-fence itself as a relatively gun-free society, despite the widespread possession of licensed firearms. If immediately after the 1994 elections, political leaders had seized the opportunity of ridding their society of the possession of illegal weapons, the spread could have been contained. But this did not happen. And efforts to control the spread of legal and illegal firearms continue to fail with a rapidity that may yet have profound implications for the future stability of the Republic. A major reason for this failure is the influx of weaponry from Mozambique and increasingly from Angola, to satisfy political and criminal demands. Weaponry is available at low prices and in abundant quantities, primarily because UNAVEM II, UNAVEM III and ONUMOZ have failed so palpably to fulfil their mandates to disarm the warring parties.

The South African security forces have been quick to address this growing problem, despite considerable institutional rancour between the police and the army. It is the South African Police Service (SAPS) which is responsible for firearms trafficking control, and successful links have been made with the Mozambican police and the Swazi security forces. So far, joint operations have worked reasonably well, especially with regard to intelligence networks, which are seen by the SAPS as the most effective way of combatting arms-trafficking. Arms seizures have risen significantly in recent months. Between 1991 and 1996, seizures of light weapons increased significantly. While the news from the Mozambique-Swazi-South African borders is somewhat encouraging, joint operations have had a negative impact elsewhere in the region, especially in Namibia. Since these operations have been able to infiltrate arms-smuggling networks working out of Mozambique, several of the networks have transferred their operations to Namibia. In recent months, the Namibian police have reported a significant surge in arms smuggling, the source of the weapons

being Angola, where impoverished soldiers, mainly from UNITA, are offering weapons for sale in Rundu, a small town just inside Namibia. The prices of these weapons are able to compete with those offered in Mozambique: an AK-47 retails for RSA R50,00 on either side of the Angolan-Namibian border, but can be as high as RSA R250,00. At present there is no formal programme of co-operation between Namibia and South Africa. An informal working group which is involved in joint operations and intelligence sharing is in place. However, the size of Namibia and the extremely limited resources available to the Namibian police will continue to restrict success in preventing the increased flow of weapons from Angola to the south.

There are two basic sources of demand for light weapons, including small arms, in South Africa. The first of these is political; the second criminal. Increasingly, the division between the two is becoming blurred. The unbanning of the ANC in February 1990 signalled the end of the apartheid system and a new era for South Africa. Contrary to expectations, the process of political transformation led to a marked increase in political violence: a total of 1 591 people died as a result of political violence in 1990, as opposed to 1 403 in the previous year, during the height of the tension between the UDF and the IFP.⁷⁸ In addition, political groups began to stockpile weapons on the understanding that political violence would increase in the future. The violence in South Africa between the unbanning of the ANC and the election in 1994 centred upon southern Natal, the Natal Midlands and the Gauteng area (including Pretoria, Johannesburg, Soweto and various highly industrialised areas). The conflict was, and still is, rooted in the rivalry between the ANC and the IFP. There is strong evidence, however, that, at the very least, individuals within the state provided weapons to the IFP to encourage the conflict and to weaken the ANC politically.⁷⁹

The second source of demand for light weapons has been from criminals. Levels of crime, especially violent crime, have increased dramatically in recent years. In addition, it is becoming more difficult to establish where political violence ends and criminal violence begins. A far higher proportion of crime in South Africa now involves the threat or use of a firearm.

Use of Firearms in Violent Crime⁸⁰

Year	Murder	Attempted Murder	Robbery
1991	3 803	NA	17 821
1992	6 122	13 276	26 665
1993	7 764	16 023	33 189
1994	7 803	17 744	43 279
1995	7 169	7 245	45 216

The impact upon civil society has been considerable. First, South Africa is in the midst of an internal arms race which the security forces are almost powerless to prevent or stop: either legally or illegally, more South Africans are armed than ever before. Criminals now have access to an array of relatively sophisticated, and unquestionably powerful, automatic firearms. Consequently, an ever-increasing number of citizens are acquiring gun licenses: in 1994, 253 961 applications for licenses were received by the SAPS and 218 950 were issued; in 1995, 170 535 applications were received and 145 932 issued. This brought the total number of licensed weapons to the astounding figure of 4 100 015.⁸¹ At the same time, criminals believe that if they are going to commit a crime, sophisticated weapons are required to counter those owned by their wealthy, potential victims. Fear of the one party feeds upon fear of the other. In South Africa a debate is under way over stronger measures to stem the tide of illegal arms smuggling. Already a muted dialogue is taking place, over whether to extend the electric fence, which currently runs along the eastern and northern border of South Africa, and whether to return the voltage to a lethal level. Currently, the South African Firearms Act is under scrutiny. The reformulation of this Act could greatly improve its obvious weaknesses, amongst which are: the right of a citizen to own up to thirteen firearms; the lack of control over re-loading of ammunition; the provision that legal owners can relinquish control of their weapons to unlicensed persons by a mere letter; the leniency of the law towards offenders with weapons, and various others. Little imagination is required to follow the logic of such moves to their ultimate conclusion. It may well be that the new South Africa will have to compromise certain civil liberties, or even forego them, to ensure long term, internal security at this level.

Another factor that might be added to these considerations is that the growing availability of weapons is influencing the criminalisation of politics. In the wake of attacks upon ANC members by Inkatha and other vigilante groups, which began in 1990, the ANC permitted the establishment of Self-Defence Units in the townships. These units grew out of the township structures set up in the 1980s to protect the people inside the townships from attack and harassment by the security forces and vigilante groups. From mid-1993, as violence in the East Rand townships increased between Inkatha-supporting hostel residents and township inhabitants, Inkatha called for the creation of Self-Protection Units to counter the Self-Defence Units. Increasingly, however, these organisations are being infiltrated by criminals or experiencing the criminalisation of their own membership. It has become increasingly difficult too for the ANC to control the Self-Defence Units and prevent the resort to crime and banditry.⁸² Some areas, such as Phola Park, near Johannesburg, have become 'no-go areas' for the security forces, especially at night. There groups are known to commit armed robberies and to demand protection money, while car racketeering and arms smuggling are also common.⁸³ A large number of convicted arms smugglers, involved in arms-trafficking from the Angolan-Namibian border, come from that area.⁸⁴ In Natal too a discernible blurring of the differences between organised crime and political activity has taken place.

Conclusion

The destabilising effect of light weapons on countries and regions engaged in post-conflict reconstruction processes has reached a stage where the international community will have to face the reality that peace and stability are unquestionably linked to disarmament during conflict resolution processes.

Two measures could be recommended for redressing this problem: the first must refer to the improvement of peace operations themselves, so that past mistakes will not be repeated in the future. Considering the present state of affairs in Africa, this is a matter of some urgency: UNAVEM III, for example, has repeated the mistakes of UNAVEM II and, consequently, a further operation in Angola might have to be considered. Likewise, considering the internal situation in Central Africa, and, further south, in

Zambia, there is room for speculation that international peace support operations might have to be mandated in the near future in these countries. The second recommendation refers not so much to what an international peace support operation might do to contribute to long-lasting peace, as to what existing regional mechanisms and structures might do to control and reduce the damage already set in motion by the increased availability of light weapons across borders.

First, since failure to adapt to changing circumstances, inability to find fresh solutions for new problems and the taking on of more complex roles with scripts that are outdated is seriously hampering the effectiveness of UN peace support operations, the organisation should reassess its current commitments in terms of its past failures in three specific areas: diplomatic processes; planning errors; and execution.

Diplomatic Processes: The roots of the success or failure of a disarmament operation, during a peace support operation, are vested in the peace agreement. Failure is often the result of the following conditions:

- Peace agreements are not specific enough on disarmament matters, leaving too much to interpretation on issues such as collection, control and destruction of weapons;
- After completion of peace support operations, weapons permitted to be retained by states far exceed their requirements;
- Time-tables laid down by every peace agreement to date have become unmanageable. When these are drawn up the current realities in the countries involved are simply not taken into account;
- Peace agreements do not provide for the security needs of the belligerents, and therefore fail to secure their commitment to the process;
- Peace agreements elect to avoid the issues of penalties and rewards for non-compliance.

Operational Planning: Enough evidence exists to suggest that disarmament is not properly considered during mission planning and that certain elements are neglected:

- Time-tables for disarmament are totally out of touch with reality;
- Insufficient resources, manpower and funding, are allocated to disarmament tasks;

- Inadequate storage facilities leave weapons either in the hands of combatants or poorly secured;
- Arms embargoes are never effectively monitored, and resources for doing so are not built into the operation;
- Mission plans do not provide for measures to guarantee the security of demobilised combatants;
- Mission plans focus more on political (elections) and relief issues and therefore make it almost impossible to execute the disarmament components;
- Dates and schedules for deployment in the mission plan rarely reflect realistically achievable deployments on the ground.

Execution: What can be executed on the ground is directly linked to what has been agreed upon in the peace agreement and made provision for during the mission planning cycle. However, the following problems continue to hamper these tasks:

- Inconsistency in application of disarmament measures by different contingents within the same mission occur regularly;
- Inadequate training and direction on the details of the disarmament process exist in almost every mission;
- Inability and/or unwillingness to enforce disarmament measures occurs;
- Flexibility required to implement disarmament measures is lacking in most force structures.

Overcoming these problems is, arguably, one of the foremost tasks for those who negotiate peacekeeping mandates, for those who control former combatants, as well as for the peacekeepers in the field. To overcome these problems, the disarmament process within the peacekeeping operation must be better understood and more clearly defined and negotiated.

- First, there should be a clear understanding of what disarmament means as distinct from demobilisation, for a particular operation. The ONUMOZ mandate, for example, was unclear in this respect. Weapons collected within the assembly areas must be either destroyed at some point or removed to a place where leakage cannot occur, either during or after the peacekeeping operation. This may mean that the UN itself should keep tighter control, perhaps beyond the duration of the operation. It may also mean that weapons should be stored outside the country.

- Second, there should be a clear and unequivocal position on the destruction of weapons. In the case of light weapons, this would not be a costly procedure. The desirability of voluntary or enforced disarmament should be considered primarily on the basis of the future security of the region, not on the basis of its short-term effect upon the peacekeeping operation.
- Third, peacekeeping operations thus far have not received the financial resources to cover the cost of effective disarmament. In the interests of medium- and long-term security, this is a situation that must change. The building or strengthening of civil society, which must follow in the wake of conflict resolution if the concept of peace is to have any positive meaning, will not be able to occur, or will be made considerably more difficult, if weapons have been allowed to proliferate amongst sub-state actors.
- Fourth, the present linkage of disarmament to demobilisation is clearly inadequate. Peacekeeping forces must address the existence of weapons caches; the 'one man-one weapon' principle, currently defining disarmament within peacekeeping, must be broadened to include weapons at the disposal of the warring parties. It is at this juncture that weapons can slip out of control, providing opportunities for arms trafficking.

The second measure to consider in examining the ineffectiveness of UN peace support operations is the organisation's need to reassess what it is doing at the regional level. It is important to note that the problem of small arms proliferation requires a well co-ordinated regional approach, which focuses on both the demand and supply sides and utilises bilateral and/or multilateral agreements. The tripartite agreement between South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique is an example of such a regional approach. A regional arms control mechanism which tries to impose restraint and controls on suppliers and recipients should therefore be established as part of a broader regional security arrangement, involving transparency, consultation and co-operation with regard to defence and security matters.

In addition, a regional arms register, along the lines of the UN Register of Conventional Arms, but with detailed information about production and stockpiles of weapons, could be established as a first step towards controlling the supply of weapons. However, the success of these regional

initiatives would depend on the political will of the various governments, and whether they would be willing or able adequately to fund these arms control initiatives.

The problem of armed banditry, which is essentially a domestic issue, can only be solved if it is linked to efforts to control the proliferation of small arms, in order to create a more secure environment for all citizens and to improve the economic opportunities for ex-combatants. Thus, ex-combatants need to be convinced that their economic and physical security will not be compromised by handing in their weapons and turning their backs on crime and banditry. Governments can play an important role in contributing to the creation of a more secure environment, through increased funding for the police, and in providing alternative job opportunities for ex-combatants. The international community, particularly the UN, can also play an important role by helping to fund targeted reintegration programmes for ex-combatants, and by remaining engaged in countries during post-settlement peace building.

Evidence from Mozambique testifies to the weapons caches — unknown though certainly large in number and volume — that are still in existence. That country illustrates graphically and tragically the importance of disarmament and weapons destruction, and the cost of failure. This issue could yet compromise the process of political and economic reconstruction in Mozambique, as well as the building of democracy in South Africa. Similar failures in UNAVEM III will spell problems for both South Africa and Namibia. Arguably, the future of the region and, therefore, the future of the sub-continent as a whole, depends upon redressing the mistakes made by ONUMOZ and upon making timeous provision for avoiding a repetition of the mistakes made in Angola. The mystery of *The Emperor's New Clothes* is finally solved: he does not wear any. Yet the tendency of the international community to pretend that the problem is non-existent, in the hope that it will go away, will not work with light weapons. They are not going away; they are merely moving on to the next killing field.

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