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Can the Coalition Transform the Iraqi Security Sector before it's Too Late?

by Johanna Mendelson Forman

Six months after Coalition forces entered Baghdad and declared victory over the forces of Saddam Hussein, Iraq remains an insecure and unstable country. The window for winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people is closing, as the high expectations that followed the US occupation have not been realized. Lack of basic services—from electricity and water to basic security—and limited progress toward Iraqi self-government have heightened the sense of frustration and opened the possibility for failure. Rebuilding Iraq is an enormous task and the next twelve months will be decisive. To succeed, the US-led coalition will have to move quickly with its allies to prevent the current post-war chaos from deteriorating into a full-blown civil war.

Among the most vexing questions that arise from discussions about security in post-conflict Iraq is why there was no effort to design a program to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate the former members of the Iraqi Army into a new security force. Many of those leading the post-war effort accepted the notion that the Iraqi Army had 'self-demobilized'. Though it is true that resistance to US and Coalition forces was minimal in this quick and lethal war, it is also true that many fighters simply fled with their weapons. Today elements of the old regime continue to wage a campaign of sabotage and ongoing resistance.

For anyone who knows about the importance of demobilization in post-war environments, the failure of the Coalition to make a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program a priority remains one of the most singular mistakes of the post-conflict period. And particularly in Iraq, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the former security sector should have been the priority post-war mission. The current insecurity underscores the absence of any plan that

would have made disarmament and reduction of forces central to the broader post-war reconstruction strategy.

On May 23, 2003 L. Paul Bremer, head of the Coalition provisional administration issued a decree to disband the Iraqi army. The ensuing protests and threats of violence by former Iraqi soldiers ultimately caused a change of heart. Not only did this action run contrary to lessons learned from dealing with former fighters in other post-conflict countries, but it also raised the security threat in post-war Iraq. In late June, with an embarrassing reversal of policy, the Coalition Provisional Authority started paying stipends to the former soldiers, ranging from US \$50 to US \$150 per month, depending on their rank. The payments could apply to as many as 250,000 ex-soldiers. Conscripts were to be sent home with a one-time severance payment. What is unusual in the Iraqi case is that the only requirement for those receiving the stipend was a promise to renounce Baathism and violence. No other programming has been planned.

“...the Iraqis must take ownership of their own internal and external security as quickly as possible...”

While the civilian administration was deciding about whether or not to start a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program, the US military has taken a more pragmatic approach, especially in areas outside of Baghdad. For example, in the North, in Mosul and in the Kurdish *governantes*, military commanders started their own *ad hoc* demobilization and reintegration programs. Some have organized interim Iraqi police units, and have also had former soldiers work together with the Coalition forces.

The New Iraqi Army that is in the process of being planned will undoubtedly absorb many former soldiers from the pre-war period. Recruitment, which began in July, has been brisk as jobless young men gather to collect application forms from US authorities. Vetting of the potential recruits will be a challenge because so many of the records of the state were destroyed in the looting that took place in Baghdad. A US contractor will train an estimated 12,000 troops during this first year. The goal is to create a force of men and women aged 18 to 40 that can defend Iraqi territory and that will incorporate all ethnic groups with regional and religious representation.

What is important, however, is that the Iraqis must take ownership of their own internal and external security as quickly as possible if the transition from Saddam to some form of open society is to take place. In spite of the need to have a new Iraqi army 'ready yesterday', the reality will be that, even in view of the accelerated training efforts for the new police recruits that is scheduled to take place in Eastern Europe (28,000 are planned to be trained abroad), two years would be a minimum to have on the ground capable and reliable forces that would respect human rights and be trusted by Iraqi citizens.

We cannot fail in Iraq, but success is not guaranteed. What is certain, however, is that, unless the new security sector emerges with police and military organizations that are transparent and responsive to citizen needs, the deaths of so many people—soldiers and citizens alike—will have been in vain. The history of retraining former security forces from other conflicts indicates that such efforts take a long time. Whether the window will remain open to buy such a time frame is often a question of international politics, and specifically whether Iraq remains a unilateral effort of the US or whether it becomes part of a larger allied coalition that supports the Iraqis in their pursuit of peace and freedom. A continued occupation is not an option, but neither is abandoning a country whose strategic role may be pivotal not only in paving the way to peace in the Middle East, but also in charting a vital role for the United Nations as an interlocutor for the Iraqi people in pursuit of self-governance and sovereignty in the years to come.

Dr Johanna Mendelson Forman is Senior Program Officer for Peace, Security and Human Rights at the United Nations Foundation in Washington. In June and July she was a member of an assessment team that was asked by the US Secretary of Defense to assess the progress of Post-Conflict Reconstruction. A copy of its full report is available on the UN Foundation Website, www.unfoundation.org.

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The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and facilitating the processes whereby people, skills, technology, equipment, and financial and economic resources can be shifted away from the defense sector and applied to alternative civilian uses.

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Staff Spotlight:



**Marc von
Boemcken**

Having completed a two-month internship at BICC, Marc started working in the research department in April 2003. He is currently completing two case studies that seek to evaluate the potential effectiveness of international arms embargoes. Furthermore, he helped to organize the workshop "Training Programmes for Lesser Developed Countries—Building Capacity for Small Arms Control" which took place at the United Nations Secretariat in New York in July 2003. The bulk of his research concerns African issues, especially the possible role of regional organizations in resolving African conflicts.

Between 1996 and 1998, Marc was trained as a reserve officer in the German Armed Forces where he was involved in the training program of the German SFOR soldiers to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having developed a keen interest in questions of security policy and peacekeeping, he studied politics and international relations at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom from 1998 to 2002. First he completed a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with a particular focus on peace studies and political theory. His final dissertation attempted a critical analysis of "international terrorism". Marc then went on to postgraduate study and was eventually awarded a Masters degree in December 2002. Among other things, the multidisciplinary MA program examined questions of globalization and information technology, thereby incorporating such diverse fields of study as international law, economics, sociology and security. Apart from more abstract theoretical adventures, he was especially interested in the military appropriation of civilian technology—the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs"—as well as the problems presented by a continually increasing privatization of security.

Before joining BICC, Marc worked with InWent Capacity Building International as a project assistant in the training course for African diplomats and NGO workers "International and Regional Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management".

Outside of work, he enjoys travelling, reading contemporary literature and struggling with French philosophy.

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International Actors in African Resource Conflicts

During the last decade, a number of studies have shown the importance of natural resources for the financing of civil wars throughout the developing world. In the absence of foreign funding from sympathetic governments abroad, economic activities such as logging, mining and the control of local markets have emerged as the most important source of revenue for many 'guerilla-entrepreneurs'. In this context, the linkages between the domestic 'markets of violence' and the international economy are of critical importance, as the (semi-)industrialized countries provide Africa's warlords both with the markets for their loot and with the necessary provisions to continue their struggle.

This research project, which was started at BICC in May 2003 with the generous support of the German Peace Research Foundation, aims to fill a gap in the existing literature on economies of violence which exists between quantitative multi-country studies and predominantly qualitative case studies focusing on individual conflicts. By taking a sectoral approach and concentrating on the role of external economic actors, such as foreign mining companies, financial institutions and arms traders, the project aims to generate new knowledge, as well as policy-relevant insights on how to control external actors more effectively. Furthermore the project aims to test the effectiveness of existing control and sanctions regimes, such as the Kimberley Process on conflict diamonds, in the framework of war economies. Research will focus on a number of African conflicts, including the civil wars in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan.

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Restructuring of the German Defense Market

Unlike many other countries, the German government does not have sufficient legal provisions to prevent unwanted foreign takeovers of German defense companies. After the American takeover of the German shipyard HDW—worldwide the leader in the development and construction of conventional submarines—the federal government is considering an amendment of § 7 AWG (Foreign Trade Law) which would require permission to be granted if any foreign investor wishes to acquire 25 percent or more of a company's shares. This plan has been heftily debated and is opposed by the official association of industry. However the trade union IG Metall is in favor of such

an amendment, fearing that a European restructuring of the nationally fragmented defense markets will not take place if the 'pearls' have already been sold to the US defense giants. Further problems relate to technology transfer on the one hand and employment at the German location on the other. BICC is looking into these issues in a two-year project "*Neustrukturierung des deutschen Rüstungsmarktes als industriepolitische Aufgabe*" (*Restructuring of the German defense market as an industrial policy task*). The crucial issue in this context is whether Germany should follow other countries and define its national interests, regard its defense industry as strategic, have a strategic concept for its future military role and, finally, apply a specific industrial policy in order to shape both its own and Europe's future.

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Demobilization & Reintegration in Bosnia and Herzegovina

From April to June 2003, Andreas Heinemann-Grüder and Tobias Pietz prepared a report (BICC *brief 27*) on lessons learned from the downsizing of the armed forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the wake of the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA). There have been four waves of demobilization in Bosnia and Herzegovina since late 1995: an immediate postwar stage in 1995/96; intermediate downsizing and professionalization of military services from 1997 to 1998; and two externally financed—and partially overlapping—rounds of demobilization, in 1999/2001 and 2002/03 respectively.

Peter Croll and Tobias Pietz went to Sarajevo on 12 September 2003 to launch *brief 27 "Turning Soldiers into a Work Force—Demobilization and Reintegration in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina"*, a joint publication of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and BICC. The launch of the BICC brief was introduced by Ambassador Beecroft of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The report was highly acclaimed not only by the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also by security experts from the Western Balkan countries.

DCAF and BICC intend to follow up on this project with further studies on demobilization and reintegration in the Western Balkans, also within the wider frame-work of Security Sector Reform. In addition, BICC will be contributing to the newly established DCAF working group on "Demobilization & Retraining" that includes officials from Western Balkan Ministries of Defense as well as researchers and practitioners.

For further information, please contact
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BICC Publications

In addition to its annual *conversion survey*, the BICC publishes *reports, briefs, and papers*. These series analyze the international conversion process, report on conversion projects and experience gained, and offer scientific as well as practical know-how. Further details can be obtained at www.bicc.de/publications/.

Brief 27

Andreas Heinemann-Grüder and Tobias Pietz with Shay Duffy, *Turning Soldiers into a Work Force: Demobilization and Reintegration in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina*, September 2003

Brief 28

Mark Sedra (ed.), *Confronting Afghanistan's Security Dilemma: Reforming the Security Sector*, September 2003

Paper 31

Jocelyn Mawdsley, *The European Union and Defense Industrial Policy*, July 2003

Paper 32

Hartmut Küchle, *Globalisierung in der Rüstungsindustrie: Formen und Auswirkungen auf den deutschen Standort und die Arbeitsplätze*, August 2003

Paper 33

Jocelyn Mawdsley and Gerrard Quille, *Equipping the Rapid Reaction Force: Options for and Constraints on a European Defence Equipment Strategy*, September 2003

Forthcoming:

Jörn Brömmelhörster and Wolf-Christian Paes, eds.: *The Military as an Economic Actor: Soldiers in Business*, Palgrave 2003

BICC Notes

The staff of BICC would like to welcome several new arrivals: In late July, **James Njuguna** joined BICC for an internship on the relationship between the outbreak of diseases and biological weapons. **Jürgen Altmann** joined BICC in August to work on the Convergence of Nano-, Bio-, Information and Cognitive Science and Technology and its relation to security. Also in August, **Vera Chrobok** took over the job of information officer at the Helpdesk for Practical Disarmament. In September, **Scott Lewis** from the Ploughshares' project "Young Professionals International (YPI) Project on Peace and Security 2003-2004" joined BICC for a half-year internship. **Volker Böge**, an expert on Natural Resources and Conflicts joined BICC on 1 October and will be helping to set up the research area 'Security and the Environment' at BICC.

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During the winter semester 2003/04, Rafael Biermann (Center for European Integration (ZEI)) and BICC's Wolf-Christian Paes will be teaching an **undergraduate course** at the department of political science in Bonn University on the *Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe*.

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In August and September 2003, Sami Faltas and Wolf-Christian Paes conducted an **evaluation of UNDP's Small Arms and Light Weapons Collection (SALWC) program** on behalf of the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC).

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Wolf-Christian Paes at paes@bicc.de

On 8/9 September 2003, Peter Croll participated in the workshop "**Capacity Development for Reporting to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms**" in Geneva, organized by UNDDA, UNIDIR and UNDP. The results of and perspectives after the *UN Biennial Meeting of States to Review the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Combat the Illicit Trade in Small Arms* which took place in New York from 8-10 July 2003 were discussed.

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Under a UNDP training program, **disarmament and security policy experts** from the **Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea** have been visiting Europe. The fellowship program was mainly organized by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), supported by BICC. The Korean experts Mr Kim and Mr Li visited BICC from 22 to 29 September, accompanied by Prof Dr Herbert Wulf, manager of the BICC project "*Capacity Building for Disarmament Initiatives in North Korea*".

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On 22 October BICC, together with the Center for Development Studies (ZEF), will be running a **workshop on "Water and Security in Southern Africa"** with the participation of Reginald Tekateka, Chief of the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission. Two days later, on 24 October, the City of Bonn is organizing a United Nations Day dedicated to the International Year of Freshwater 2003. BICC will be participating in several activities, e.g. will have an information stand on "*Facilitating Transboundary Water Management in Southern Africa*" at the Market Place in the center of Bonn.

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BICC's newly designed Internet site

Since 1 September, BICC has been represented on the Internet in the form of its newly structured web site. Under **www.bicc.de** even more comprehensive and targeted information about BICC's work can now be accessed. Also newly structured is the site of BICC's Helpdesk for Practical Disarmament (**www.disarmament.de**).

Enjoy browsing our new web sites!