

DILEMMAS OF MILITARY DISENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA

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1 INTRODUCTION¹

'The impending demise of Nigeria's forthcoming Third Republic' was the title of an article by a Nigerian scholar published a year or two before the military government was due to hand over to an elected civilian administration (Agbese 1990). Seldom have a social scientist's predictions been so rapidly fulfilled, General Babangida aborting the Third Republic before it began by declaring the 1993 Presidential elections invalid. For in Nigeria, as in most other African countries, the military establishment and other repressive apparatuses of the state continue to be the single most important obstacle to transition to democracy. Even in retreat, they are formidably equipped to block political reform; to re-intervene to reverse it, as in Nigeria; to dictate the terms and conditions under which the return to constitutional government takes place; or (where the military itself falls apart as in Somalia or Liberia) to swamp democratization in a tide of armed conflict between warring factions.

This article focuses on some of the political and policy problems associated with efforts to bring the military under democratic control. It starts with an appraisal of the democratic transitions now occurring in Africa: how widespread are they, how likely are they to take root and what different historical routes have they taken? It argues that in a number of states, perhaps the majority, the door to democracy was opened, not by donor pressures or by the policy choices of military and political élites, but through 'demilitarization by default', i.e. military reductions forced by economic decline and the withdrawal of foreign military support after the end of the Cold War; which weakened the resolve and capacity of authoritarian regimes to stay in power when faced by popular resistance. This in turn raises a series of policy dilemmas for supporters of democracy in Africa and among donors endeavouring to tame military establishments and ensure their respect for the rules of the democratic political game, examined in the final section of the article.

2 INCOMPLETE DEMOCRATIZATION

At the outset of the 1990s it seemed that the wave of democratization that had swept across other parts of the developing world had begun to break over Africa. Contested multi-party elections either had been held or were soon to take place in more than half the countries of the continent, and there were stirrings of political change in many others. At last, it appeared, authoritarian governance and military dominance in politics might be on the way out. The optimism that prevailed has to an extent been justified, as can be seen in Table 1. In addition to three already established democracies in Botswana, Mauritius and Senegal (a fourth, in Gambia was overthrown by a military coup in 1994), a dozen others can now be considered fledgling democracies, with varying prospects of consolidation; and there are at least eight or so more where real advances toward political liberalization are afoot.

Yet more careful analysis permits only qualified optimism. To start with, major doubts surround the extent and prospects of democracy in the countries considered to have made a transition. Zambia, for instance, remains ebulliently, almost chaotically, democratic; but can hardly be considered stable whilst it is passing through the traumas of economic adjustment. Niger, Mali and the Congo continue to be plagued by military indiscipline, civil unrest and economic recession. Their classification as partly consolidated 'democracies', rather than countries where democratic initiatives are coopted or blocked, is still a matter for history to decide. For the imposition of fairly arbitrary political categories (as in Table 1) on fluid and uncertain political situations, though broadly defensible, still leaves plenty of room for dispute about whether individual African states belong to one group rather than another, or more than one at a time²

Moreover, in several more countries democratic reform processes have been coopted by existing ruling élites; one can at best talk of 'facade' democracy

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² For instance, Ghana's 1992 constitution and elections are regarded by some as originating a transition to democracy, but by others as merely providing cosmetic 'democratic' legitimation to the existing PNDC (now NDC) regime.

TABLE 1. THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA AS OF LATE 1994

DEMOCRACIES IN PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATION

(i) Established but Limited Democracies

Botswana Senegal
Mauritius

(ii) More Recently Instituted Democracies

Civilian Since Independence

Cape Verde S.Tomé and Príncipe
Malawi South Africa
Namibia Zambia

Previously Military-Ruled

Benin (*) Madagascar
Central African Republic (*) Mali
Congo Niger

COUNTRIES ENJOYING 'DEMOCRACY IN PARTS'

(i) Still Making Advances Toward Democracy

Civilian Since Independence

Eritrea Tanzania
Mozambique Zimbabwe
Seychelles

Previously Military-Ruled

Ethiopia Lesotho(*)
Ghana (*) Uganda (*)

(ii) 'Democratic' Institutions Coopted by Existing Ruling Elite

Civilian Since Independence

Cameroon Guinea-Bissau
Comoros Kenya
Côte d'Ivoire Morocco
Djibouti Swaziland
Gabon Tunisia

Previously Military-Ruled

Egypt
Guinea
Mauritania

COUNTRIES WHERE DEMOCRATIZATION HAS BEEN STALLED OR REVERSED

(i) Stalled or Reversed by Existing Authoritarian Regime

Civilian Since Independence

Algeria (2) Chad (*) (2)
Burkina Faso (*) Equatorial Guinea
Burundi (2) Gambia

Formerly or at Present Military-Ruled

Libya Sudan (*) (2)
Nigeria (*) Togo
Sierra Leone (*) (2) Zaire

(ii) Stalled or Reversed by War/Armed Conflict

Civilian Since Independence

Angola
W. Sahara (1)

Formerly or at Present Military Ruled

Liberia Somalia
Rwanda

Notes:

(*) Countries where previous returns to constitutional or democratic government have been thwarted.

(1) Not yet independent.

(2) In Algeria, Chad, Sierra Leone and Sudan democracy is blocked **both** by military regimes and by armed conflict; in Burundi by conflict and a political stalemate between an elected regime and the armed forces.

Source: The starting point for the categorizations in the Table is the democracy scores given African political systems by the African Governance Program of the Carter Centre (CC) (**Africa Demos** (1994): 27), updated and extended by the author. '**Democracies in Process of Consolidation**' include all the African politics considered by the CC to be 'Democratic' (democracy scores of 6 or more). **Countries Enjoying Democracy in Parts** include both the countries the CC considers 'Directed Democracies' (Cameroon, Egypt, Morocco) and transitional regimes with a 'Moderate' commitment to democracy (democracy scores 4-5) '**Countries Where Democratization has been Stalled or Reversed**' include both the countries considered by the CC as 'Ambiguous' in their commitment to democracy (democracy scores 2-4) or where there is 'Contested Sovereignty' (i.e. civil war). The distinctions within each of these broad headings (e.g. between countries where there are established or more recently instituted democracies; or between those that do and do not have experience of military government) are the author's own.

in countries like Cameroon, the Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea or Kenya. In others, moves toward democracy have been deliberately subverted, as in Togo or Zaire, or they have been nipped in the bud by authoritarian regimes unable or unwilling to transfer power to elected civilians, as in Algeria or Nigeria. Finally, there are the countries in which not only democratization, but the very existence of a functioning national state is imperilled by war or civil conflict, as in Somalia, Liberia or Rwanda; an increasingly common condition as government armies have begun to lose their monopolies of violence in the context of a generalised retreat from the state.

A glance at Table 1 permits three further observations. First, more than half the countries making progress toward democratic rule were previously ruled by **civilian** autocracies. For in Africa unlike some other parts of the South, authoritarian government has not been coextensive solely with **military** government. Second, before the present wave of democratizations a number of countries had made earlier transitions from military to constitutional rule; but in almost all cases the military had re-intervened³. Third, the great majority of states where democratization has been stalled or reversed, are now or were in the past ruled by military regimes; but this may in part be because civilian autocrats have been more adept at concealing the substance of power under the capacious cloak of formally 'democratic' institutions.

3 DIFFERENT ROUTES TO DEMOCRACY

Behind the apparently uniform trend of democratization, African states have been following greatly varying routes to democracy, shaped by their individual historical circumstances. Broadly speaking, one may distinguish six main scenarios, each with its own distinctive implications for military roles in the transition.

1 Reform by modifying previous constitutional arrangements, so as to create the conditions under which freely contested multi-party elections can be held. The majority of the regimes initiating this kind of transition have been civilian autocracies. So far the cases in which it has produced actual changes in government, as in Zambia and Malawi, have been relatively rare. More often the polity has been liberalized under the existing leadership, as in

Senegal; or regime-led reform has led to massaged elections and reinstitutionalization of autocracy in a democratic shell (i.e. *democradura* or façade democracy) in countries like Kenya, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire or Gabon. Military and security establishments have seldom been directly involved in these transitions; but their willingness to back them has been crucial for their success.

2 Planned or pacted military extrication from power, often over long periods, by authoritarian regimes negotiating new constitutional dispensations with chosen civilian interlocutors. Normally such pacts have been designed to protect outgoing power-holders from retribution for abuses of power, to preserve military interests, and to shape the political character of the transitions. In Africa, they have most often been negotiated by governments of military origin in English-speaking countries, like Ghana, Nigeria and (during earlier efforts to introduce democracy) Sudan.

The main drawback of pacted military withdrawal, is that constitutional prohibitions cannot stop military re-intervention, of the kind that reversed earlier transitions in all three of the above countries, and aborted Nigeria's latest attempt after the annulled 1993 presidential elections. Military re-intervention has in effect become institutionalized, alternating with 'returns to civilian rule' as the prevailing method of regime change; and the armed forces have become *de facto* political parties (Rouquié 1981). A more recent trend, however, has been for regimes of military origin to pact transitions in such a way as to reinvent their own rule in a 'democratic' form, in theory competing with civilian politicians, rather than departing from the political scene as in earlier transitions: the returns to constitutional democracy in Ghana and Guinea are recent examples, in both cases raising serious questions about whether a genuine transition has occurred (being in this respect little different from the *democraduras* of civilian origin).

3 Seizure of the political initiative by political and social forces acting outside the state, mobilizing civil society, forcing out the military and producing new constitutional dispensations (as through 'National Conferences' in Francophone countries like Benin, Congo, etc.). The major difficulty associated with this route has been its tendency to weaken

³ Before the 1992 coup, Sierra Leone was the sole exception; however, the displaced civilian government was not a democracy.

already weak states, making it difficult for the democratic successor regimes to govern effectively or respect democratic rights (in both Niger and Mali, for example conflicts with minorities have greatly complicated the task of consolidating democracy). Moreover in other countries, existing regimes have profited from opposition divisions to block popular initiatives, subvert the constitution, stay in power and perpetuate repressive governance, with scarcely any concessions to democracy, as in Togo, Chad or Zaire.

4 Collapse of authoritarian regimes and their supporting military structures from within, often after coups by middle-ranking or junior officers or indeed men in the ranks, ushering in speedy transfers of power to elected politicians, as in Mali (though triggered by civilian mobilization against a repressive military regime) or in the past, Sudan, Ghana or Sierra Leone. However, such collapse of military and authoritarian structures has not always brought about transitions to democracy. During the 1970s and early 1980s it was just as likely to be associated with the advent of 'revolutionary' military regimes like those of Mengistu in Ethiopia, Rawlings in Ghana or Sankara in Burkina Faso (Hutchful 1986). Because of the increasing atrophy and decay of many African states, a rather different danger has arisen in the 1990s: namely that military revolts could tear down entire polities not just regimes, ushering in civil war and political anarchy, as in Somalia and Liberia.

5 Military or political defeat of the regime⁴ though revolutionary wars or insurrections directed by political/military mass movements which may or may not open the way to democracy. The first generation of revolutionary wars in Algeria, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique, installed one-party states instead. More recent transitions, however, have introduced political dispensations based on democracy either in its liberal form (as in Ethiopia, Namibia and South Africa), or in some more controlled variant (as in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Eritrea).

6 Democracy negotiated as part of the settlement of long-standing armed conflicts, (e.g. in Angola, Mozambique or Chad). Many of these conflicts have

seen the rise of warlords, or military entrepreneurs with a considerable stake in their accumulated investments (in combatants and *materiel*) and in continued conflict, except when it can be terminated on terms that yield a profit on their investments. Hence peace settlements have often involved highly Faustian bargains with political groups like Renamo in Mozambique or Unita in Angola, not previously noted for their respect for human rights and the niceties of democratic behaviour. In these circumstances is all too easy for democracy – and peace – to become the casualty of disagreements between the warring parties over the distribution of power and benefits under the new dispensation. Yet at the same time no settlement, still less transition to democracy is possible unless the rival military forces can be integrated and brought under some form of government control.

These scenarios are little more than useful ways of summarizing complex historical changes. They are not policy agendas that can be pursued by state élites or democracy-promoters in circumstances of their own choosing. Nevertheless they have often required difficult policy choices; e.g. by incumbent regimes to hold free elections that could result in their loss of power (scenario 1); by military leaders to 'pact' their own political withdrawal (scenario 2); by governments to negotiate truces with armed opponents, so as to permit them to share power or take part in elections (scenario 6); and by the supporters of democracy to agree to less than complete transitions, in order to neutralize opposition from the military or other groups associated with incumbent regimes.

4 DEMILITARIZATION BY DEFAULT

Are these moves in the direction of democracy – by whichever of the above routes – sustainable, or will they meet the same fate as earlier attempts to democratize African political systems? A realistic assessment requires an understanding of the factors that sustained **non-democratic** governance in the past, and still to a significant degree sustain it in the 1990s. Among the most crucial of the support structures of oppression have been Africa's military establishments, police forces, gendarmeries, secret services, paramilitary units and 'special units' of

⁴ Relatively few revolutionary wars have culminated with the actual defeat of the regime (as in Uganda and Ethiopia). More frequently the regime has been forced into negotiations by a costly military stalemate: in effect a political victory for the revolution-

ary forces, as in the former Portuguese states, Zimbabwe or South Africa (Namibia is a slightly different case because the negotiations were also linked to the settlement of the conflict in Angola).

TABLE 2: GROWTH OR DECLINE IN AFRICAN MILITARY SPENDING, NUMBERS IN ARMED FORCES AND ARMS IMPORTS (percentage annual changes)

	Africa		All Developing Countries	
	1981-91	1987-91	1981-91	1987-91
Military spending	-1.1	-3.1	0.1	2.5
Armed forces	1.8	-1.3	0.6	-1.0
Arms imports	-18.4	-39.1	-7.2	-21.9

Note: Figures are average annual growth rates in constant (1991) prices for military spending and arms imports, and for numbers of men in armed forces.

Source: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, **World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1991-1992**, Washington DC 1994: 2-8.

various descriptions. Not only have they cushioned authoritarian regimes, be they civilian or military, from the discontent of their citizens; in the more than half of the countries that have at some time been military ruled, they have emerged as political actors in their own right.

This pre-eminence of the military was partly the **consequence** of the political failures of post-colonial African governments: their deficiencies in economic management (made worse by external economic conditions) their corruption and their democratic deficits (i.e. neglect of the concerns and interests of the great mass of their citizens). However, the complex process of militarization that gathered momentum between the 1960s and the early 1980s – comprising increase of military influence in politics, military spending, arms imports and armed conflict, though these different aspects of militarization were not automatically correlated – acquired a dynamic of its own (Luckham 1985 and 1994). During the Cold War it was reinforced by Africa's extensive military ties with foreign powers, from both the Western and the Communist military blocs. African governments built up a capacity to coerce through their arms purchases and through foreign military aid, credits and training, that bore little relationship to their capacity to govern, and relieved them of the need to win the consent of their citizens.

Foreign powers did not necessarily set out deliberately to strengthen authoritarian regimes; but the latter were at least in some measure a product of

their Cold War rivalries, and of aid policies that turned a blind eye to how aid and arms buttressed rapacious and repressive ruling élites. However, it is now beside the point whether the original sources of Africa's militarization were 'external' and driven by a global arms economy and Cold War rivalries, or whether they followed the 'internal' logic of African states and their conflicts, as post-Cold War analyses have tended to argue (Somerville 1993). The reality is that military influence, repressive governance and conflict became so deeply **internalized** in African states and societies, that they are now far more difficult to eradicate, with or without outside help, than they were in the years immediately following independence.

During the past decade this foreign support has largely evaporated. To all appearances the militarization that it supported has also been thrown into reverse (Table 2). Arms imports by African states have declined to a small fraction of their peak in the early 1980s, from an estimated \$7.8 bn in 1981 to \$2.1 bn in 1990 and \$0.9 bn in 1991 (these are current price figures, the constant price decline has been even greater). Military spending has also fallen⁵, though by no means as dramatically, with the cuts distributed very unevenly between individual states (Tables 3 and 4). The numbers of men serving in Africa's armed forces only began to decline during the latter part of the decade (though this decline was offset by the proliferation of irregular military formations outside the control of the state). This has resulted in what (following Ball 1992: 20) one

⁵ Though probably no more than all forms of government spending; with some variation from state to state.

TABLE 3: RELATIVE BURDEN OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN AFRICAN STATES, 1991

Share of Military Expenditure to GNP (%)	Low-Income Countries (GNP per capita under \$500)	Middle-Income Countries (GNP per capita over \$500)
6% and over	Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda	Cape Verde, Angola, Libya, Sudan
4-5.9%	Chad, Liberia, Tanzania, Morocco, Lesotho	Zimbabwe, Botswana,
2-3.9%	9 countries including e.g. Burkina Faso, Togo, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia	6 countries including e.g. South Africa, Gabon, Egypt
Less than 2%	13 countries including e.g. Zaire, Somalia, Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia	6 countries including e.g. Senegal, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius

Notes: Countries listed within each category are listed in order of shares of military expenditure in GNP.

Source: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1994 **World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers; 1991-1992** Washington DC, pp 24 and 39.

may call a 'hollowing' of military structures: such that roughly the same number of men are maintained under arms, but much less is spent to equip, maintain and pay them.

In the preponderance of cases, this demilitarization was not the product of deliberate policy choices by African governments (Nigeria's rationalization of its armed forces in the late 1970s and Uganda's current demobilization have been among the rare exceptions). It began **before** the process of democratization got under way, though continuing in parallel with it. And whilst in some countries it has been associated with termination of armed conflict, in others it has not. Instead, there have been two principle reasons for the decline. First, the large-scale withdrawal of foreign military support following the end of the Cold War, having an especially heavy impact on countries formerly assisted by the Soviet Union and its allies. Second, the fiscal and balance of payments difficulties faced by many African states during the 1980s and 1990s. Put bluntly, many of them no longer disposed of the tax revenues, foreign earnings and foreign credits that would sustain their previous outlays on weapons and military wages. Yet those that continued to spend heavily were not necessarily those that could

afford it: mostly they were countries still embroiled in armed conflict like Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Sudan (see Tables 3 and 4); which not only bankrupted their economies, but also contributed to the collapse or near collapse of their military structures and states.

Thus military cuts were often part of a broader picture of development failure and state weakening. Governments facing protests against their failure to deliver development, or against structural adjustment programmes, no longer disposed of the resources required to pay off their supporters or buy military and police protection. Their 'hollowed' military and security establishments tended to be immobilized by equipment shortages and falling real wages (indeed sometimes, as in Zaire, by failure to pay soldiers wages at all); by the collapse of systems of command and control; by their involvement in corruption and banditry; and in the more extreme cases such as Chad, Somalia or Liberia, by the fragmentation of the armed forces into warring factions. They were often unable to provide minimum levels of stability and public order; or even to defeat the irregular forces confronting them in countries such as Angola, Ethiopia or Mozambique. In sum, the myth of military power was

comprehensively undermined, along with that of a centralized, effective state, though with little as yet to replace them.

This demilitarization by default at the very least rendered authoritarian regimes more vulnerable to pressures to democratize; most directly where military governments were compromised by failure, but also under repressive civilian governments. In some cases it prepared the ground for the complete collapse of dictatorships, as (in different ways) in Somalia, Ethiopia or Mali. Yet it does not necessarily bode well for the consolidation of democracy. For most of the new democratic regimes face exactly the same problems of structurally adjusting weak economies as their authoritarian predecessors. They also need to regain control over the politicized, demoralized and faction-ridden military establishments bequeathed to them by authoritarian governance.

In doing so, they must reverse the enduring institutional legacies of Africa's military decades, including; (i) the continued determination of many regimes (probably the majority) and their military backers to resist efforts to oblige them to cede power to democratically-elected governments, (ii) the still present danger of military reintervention after

transitions to democratic rule, or where (as in Nigeria) they were about to take place, (iii) the tendency of military and security establishments to cling to their political and professional privileges, even under formally democratic governance, (iv) the widespread survival of habits and practices of power inherited from authoritarian governance (e.g. restrictions on liberties and disregard of human rights; continued deployment of the armed forces to preserve domestic law and order; undiminished surveillance by secret services and security bureaucracies), (v) organizationally weak and politically divided military structures, whose possible collapse could imperil the very existence of the state, (vi) spreading civil unrest and armed conflict, including a virtual privatization of violence in the hands of armed groups beyond the control of the state.

The first four of these legacies relate to over-powerful states and military establishments, and might therefore seem very different from the fifth and sixth, which are associated with their collapse. In reality, however, they are different facets of the same dilemma: that regimes utilizing military force to crush opposition have ended up demonstrating the weakness of the repressive structures on which they depend; all the more when they have failed to

TABLE 4: SHARE OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE IN AFRICAN STATES, 1991

More than 20%

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1. Sudan | 6. Angola |
| 2. Ethiopia | 7. Benin |
| 3. Mozambique | 8. Somalia |
| 4. Rwanda | 9. Uganda |
| 5. Burkina Faso | 10. Libya |

10% to 19.9%

17 States, including e.g. Zaire, Chad, Zimbabwe, Togo, Tanzania, South Africa

5% to 9.9%

13 States, including e.g. Botswana, Kenya, Cameroon, Senegal, Algeria

Less than 5%

8 States, including e.g. Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Mauritius

Source: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1994) **World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers; 1991-1992** Washington DC, pp 24 and 39; countries listed in order of ranking in share of military expenditure in CGE.

generate the economic growth required to pay and equip them adequately. Political reformers thus find themselves charting an increasingly narrow course between the Scylla of seeking further reductions in military power and the Charybdis of so weakening military and security establishments that they cannot provide the basic physical security on which the continuing survival of the state depends.

5 DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OVER MILITARY AND SECURITY ESTABLISHMENTS: PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL AND POLICY CHOICE

Clearly there can be no transition to, still less consolidation of, democracy through any of the routes described earlier, unless military and security establishments are brought under some kind of democratic control. Democratic rather than merely civilian control is emphasized because in Africa as in Latin America 'without doubt it is easier to demilitarize the government than the real centres of power' (Rouquié 1988: 133). As already argued, some of the civilian-based autocracies now being urged along the path of democratic reform have been as repressive and as dependent for survival on their military and security establishments, as 'military' regimes. Nor is it just a question of controlling the armed forces, since the state's other security bureaucracies – such as paramilitary or adjunct forces, the police, intelligence services etc., – are equally much part of the apparatus of state coercion and just as badly in need of democratic restraint. Bringing these military and security establishments under democratic control requires the solution of ten interlinked sets of policy or political problems (in such a political minefield the two cannot be separated), each of these varying in salience in each type of transition and national context:

1 The disengagement problem: i.e. how to persuade military and security establishments to accept military retreat from power on a long-term and unconditional basis. This problem is not as intractable as it might seem at first, since neither military regimes nor the armed forces are as monolithic as they first appear, especially where they have been weakened by developmental failure or political crises. In particular, the military as an institution does not always support continuation of the military as regime: there was, for instance, a strong military constituency in favour of Nigeria's 1979

transition to civilian rule and retired officers remain prominent in its pro-democracy movement; military dissent was crucial in securing the displacement of military governments in Mali and the Congo; and in Malawi the armed forces played an important role in 1994 in blocking efforts by the paramilitaries of the former Banda regime to destabilize the democratization process. However, in those cases where the military leadership swings its weight behind a regime that opposes political change, or aborts such change because of its own fundamental mistrust of civilian politicians, as in Nigeria, the ensuing struggle for democracy will be certainly far more difficult and protracted.

2 The classic problem of 'civilian control': i.e. how to prevent military intervention or reintervention against established democratic institutions. The standard solution in advanced democracies is 'professionalism' including the doctrine of military subservience to the civil power as still taught by Western instructors in African military training courses. However, not all forms of professionalism, especially those focusing (as in the most African armies) on internal security and intra-state conflict, are equally non-political. Moreover, military establishments may want to assert their professional 'autonomy' in order to resist efforts to make them more democratically accountable; but at the same time hand be reluctant to relinquish habits of power acquired during many years of involvement in politics.

It is arguable that there are useful lessons to be learnt from the more than a third of African countries where civilian (if not always democratic) governments have controlled their armies and been able to prevent military intervention (Baynham 1992; Decalo 1991). Yet some of their methods – like incorporating military elites in government patronage networks, ethnic manipulation or penetration of the armed forces by state intelligence services – have damaged the professional competence of the armed forces. Nor have they necessarily been conducive to democratic control, especially in the hands of civilian autocracies in countries like Kenya, Gabon or Cameroon. In other words there is no substitute for a revitalized democratic process that can delegitimize intervention and raise its costs. But even then, military adventurism remains a real risk. Hence despite the reservations just expressed, both reprofessionalization of the armed forces (see 6 below) and dialogue with them about political

and military reform must be amongst the first priorities of any new democratic government.

However, there is insufficient recognition of the problems of controlling the armed forces through the professional model. A case in point is Tanzania, where the Commission on Multiparty Democracy recommended the depoliticization of the Tanzanian Peoples' Defence Force (TPDF) – controlled and mobilized for development purposes through a close integration into the party and state machines since President Nyerere's defence reorganizations in the 1960s - by banning military personnel from party membership and public office. Reconstitution of the TPDF as a more politically autonomous entity will be hard to avoid under multi-party democracy. Yet it will not necessarily increase its military competence, and could store up political problems for the future. Not only may Western-style military professionalism not satisfy military élites in Tanzania (and elsewhere) who still believe they have an important national political and developmental role. In a continent where professional interests have motivated military intervention as frequently as they have restrained it, professionalism is at best a shaky foundation for civilian, let alone democratic, control of the armed forces.

3 The 'democradura' (or 'hard democracy') problem: i.e. how to discourage the reinstitutionalization of authoritarian rule within existing democratic forms. This depends above all on the capacity of groups in civil and political society to put continuing and effective pressure on elected governments. However it also necessitates curbs on the activities of the state security bureaucracies and intelligence services, whose covert activities tend to remain relatively intact after transitions, thus tempting new and insecure governments to use them to monitor and suppress dissent.

4 The transparency problem: i.e. how to assure the accountability of the military and security services and of the elected politicians responsible for them; such that neither can conceal abuses of power beneath the cloak of 'national security'. Secrecy in military and security matters is endemic even in advanced democracies. All the more so in the majority of African states, where it is hard to obtain even the most basic information, e.g. on military

budgets; where defence and security matters are scarcely ever debated in the press and parliament; and where the baneful influence of the security services on access to information is paramount. A double-sided approach is needed. On the one hand governments and military establishments must be persuaded that excessive secrecy is not necessary for national security and may even damage it (the more professional elements in the armed forces may actually welcome public debate).⁶ On the other hand legislators, journalists and members of the public must be weaned from their mistrust of all things military; and be persuaded to take a more informed and active interest in defence and security matters (e.g. through the establishment of legislative committees or independent think-tanks and research bodies).

5 The amnesty for autocrats and warlords dilemma: i.e. how to persuade tyrants and their torturers, enforcers, kleptocrats and placemen to cede power, whilst satisfying those they have oppressed that justice is being done, and that the same injustices will not recur under a new political dispensation. Both their desire to preserve accumulated power and wealth, and their fear of retribution strongly motivate autocrats either to frustrate moves toward democracy, or to coopt them, or at the very least to pact constitutional dispensations (like the Transitional Provisions of Ghana's 1992 Constitution) which protect them from the sort of retribution being meted out at the time of writing to former President Banda and his supporters in Malawi. The best that can be hoped for, at least where autocrats cannot be directly forced from power, is some kind of framework to investigate and examine the lessons of past abuses (the Rettig Commission on Truth and Reconciliation in Chile could be a model; such a commission is now proposed in South Africa) together with strong constitutional protection of rights and curbs on the security bureaucracies to prevent their recurrence.

Comparable dilemmas arise in the aftermath of major armed conflicts, where warlords on one or both sides have been responsible for large-scale human, physical and social destruction, as in Angola, Mozambique or Rwanda. Even if it is not always feasible to punish the perpetrators, a strong case can be made for recovering the memory of

⁶ As became clear in the author's interviews with senior Ghanaian officers in 1994, who were not only surprisingly open themselves, but argued for more public debate as a way of gaining

public support for military budgets and defence policy and in order to distance military as an institution from the government of the day.

what they have done, so as to assist the process of healing and reconciliation. To be sure, there might also be a case to be made for forgetting, especially where large numbers of the civilian population have been directly involved in atrocities as in Rwanda, or where it is politically expedient to persuade former warlords (like the Renamo leadership in Mozambique) to engage in democratic politics. Yet without any framework of accountability for past abuses, it will be difficult to formulate and enforce standards of political conduct that will discourage their repetition in future.

6 The Hobbesian or command and control problem: i.e. how to restore discipline in divided, demoralized military and security bureaucracies, such that they are capable of maintaining public order (rather than themselves creating disorder) and of providing a credible external defence. As noted earlier, a major legacy of Africa's military decades has been the deprofessionalization and in some cases disintegration of the armed forces. Yet there is also a rather less well publicised history of reprofessionalization, in most cases so far under non-democratic leadership⁷; the reorganization of the Nigerian armed forces after the 1966 coups and Civil War, and the restructuring of the Ghanaian and Ugandan armed forces during the 1980s and early 1990s being among the more notable examples. Reprofessionalization has also been the key to mergers between government and former guerrilla forces after colonial wars (as in Zimbabwe, Namibia and now South Africa, in all three cases with the aid of British Military Advisory Training Teams) and after post-colonial civil war as in Angola, Chad or Mozambique, where the experience so far has been rather more mixed.

Military restructuring is not easy however. Not only must it overcome deep-rooted political antagonisms, sometimes between former opponents on the battlefield. It will usually require a comprehensive review of the armed forces' role and mission, doctrine, institutional structures, equipment and force levels: both to restore their military efficiency; and because their functions (especially regarding internal security) are unlikely to be the same under democratic as authoritarian governance. This will

not necessarily come cheap, so that any potential 'democracy dividend' in the form of military retrenchment may be counterbalanced by the need to improve the wages, equipment and training of the troops that remain. It could well require increased external assistance (see 10 below), and, if it requires large-scale demobilization of military personnel, give rise to difficult problems of political, economic and social adjustment for the demobilized combatants.

7 The demobilization problem: i.e. how to reintegrate and cut back swollen, divided and undisciplined military and paramilitary forces, including the growing number of irregular formations. Virtually all the policy discussion of demobilization has taken place in the aftermath of major armed conflicts (i.e. scenarios 5 and 6 above); but very little thought has been given to it in the context of other forms of democratic transition, or of military expenditure cuts undertaken as part of structural adjustment. Demobilization after armed conflict is usually as much a political as a technical exercise. Other things being equal, it is far simpler when one side or the other has won a clear military or political victory as in Uganda, Ethiopia or Eritrea, than when the terms and conditions of demobilization have become part of an ongoing struggle to protect militarily entrenched positions of power and influence, as in Angola, Mozambique, Somalia or Liberia. (Somewhere in between are the cases where there is military stalemate, but one side concedes political defeat as in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa; or where the defeated side has been able to regroup and rearm outside the country, as in Rwanda).

This being said, a great deal depends on how the problems of timing, logistics, finance, disarmament and resettlement of former combatants in civilian employment are resolved (see the comprehensive discussion paper on the 'Demobilization and reintegration of military personnel in Africa' by the World Bank (1993), the only systematic study of these problems). For instance, the comprehensive breakdown of the peace process in Angola in 1992, despite (relatively speaking) fairly contested elections, resulted not just from failures of political

⁷ Though some of the countries that have been most successful in maintaining relatively professional and effective armed forces e.g. Senegal and Botswana - have been democracies or quasi-democracies.

⁸ The UNAVEM II operation in Angola was assigned only 450 personnel and a budget of \$163 million, a ratio of 1:333 UN

observers to combatants, and a ratio of financial resources of less than \$1,100 per combatant; by comparison in Namibia (a country with a much smaller population) UNTAG was allocated 8,000 persons and almost \$400 million, a ratio of 1:6 observers to combatants and nearly \$7,400 per combatant (World Bank 1993: 41).

will on the part of UNITA and other parties to the process, but also from underfunding of the UN operation,⁸ incomplete and poorly planned monitoring, encampment and disarmament of the rival military forces; and failure to complete the latter **before** the elections took place, so that the losers had a strong incentive to take up arms to reverse their electoral defeat. In contrast, the UN and other actors in the Mozambique peace process appear to have learnt from the Angola fiasco, so as to ensure the (relative) success of both demobilisation exercise and the 1994 elections. In principle, demobilization should bring substantial long-term economic benefits relative to its relatively low direct costs⁹; in practice the overall peace dividend may be relatively limited (in financial terms). For instance, Zimbabwe's absorption of at least 55 per cent of the 79,000 former combatants into military and public service employment helped contain the unrest that might have arisen had they been put on the street, but inflated military and public service expenditures for several years after independence.

8 The trade off between military spending and development: i.e. how to find the resources for reintegration and reprofessionalization within the fiscal and balance of payments constraints imposed by economic adjustment, donor conditionality and the need to fund development. The issue is both whether one may look forward to a substantial democracy or peace dividend from less repressive governance and/or termination of armed conflict; and whether increasing donor pressures for military cuts in the context of African SAPs can be satisfied (see Ball 1992 for an excellent review of problems of 'military conditionality'). A major obstacle to accurate assessment of the scope for cuts is the notorious difficulty of estimating military and security spending (Ball 1994). Furthermore in many African countries the scope for reductions is in practice limited by the cuts already forced by fiscal shrinkage and balance of payment difficulties. In some of them, as we have seen, the problem is the reverse, i.e. how to rebuild their armed forces whilst minimizing the additional costs.

There is most scope for cuts in states where military spending has been inflated by war (the majority in the upper part of Tables 3 and 4), provided the conflicts are in fact terminated. Yet, the problems

of transforming war-time into peace-time economies are enormously complex, and may not be easy to reconcile with pressures for economic liberalization. Nor will they necessarily permit rapid reductions in military personnel and expenditure. The current demobilization of 30,000 soldiers in Uganda, for instance, began in 1992, six years after the end of the civil war. It is almost unique in being planned after a public expenditure review, in association with the country's SAP, following a degree of donor pressure for military cuts. It also helps that donors have been prepared to come up with compensatory finance for demobilized soldiers, and that the military establishment itself favours a smaller, more effective, better trained and equipped force (though military pressures for re-equipment could limit the financial impact of downsizing). A comparable exercise carried out in Chad during 1992/3 after French and IMF/World Bank pressure for military retrenchment, merely resulted in demobilized soldiers decamping with their weapons to join the numerous independent militias, due to poor organization and the Déby government's lack of serious commitment to either economic or political reform.

9 The regional security problem: i.e. how to create a regional framework for peace-keeping, to support efforts to bring national military and security establishments under democratic control, and at the same time prevent conflicts from spreading across national boundaries and attracting external and regional intervention. There is a long history of involvement both by foreign powers and by regional neighbours in armed conflicts within African states, dating back to the Congo crisis in the early 1960s. Often such conflicts have served to entrench authoritarian regimes, such as the military government in the Sudan and former military government of Ethiopia, reinforced in their unwillingness to resolve conflicts peacefully by their access to external military support. (Rebel groups, too, have often received sustenance from neighbouring states or international supporters). In principle it is best for African conflicts to be resolved at a regional level, and African governments have a long history of participation in conflict-resolution and peace-keeping efforts, both under the UN and through the OAU and sub-regional bodies like ECOWAS. But in practice these efforts, such as the ECOMOG

⁹ The World Bank (1993) finds that in all the African cases it studied, these were relatively modest, and no more than a small proportion of official ODA.

force in Liberia have run into many of the same difficulties as the growing number of international 'humanitarian' interventions. At the nub of these difficulties and of the solutions to them is the question of democracy: how to install governments (preferably through free elections held in conjunction with a conflict – resolution process) that command the broad assent of previously alienated and disenfranchised citizens; whilst recognizing the fears and aspirations of minorities which have often been at the root of conflict; and at the same time forcing warlords and military entrepreneurs into submission, or offering them adequate incentives to desist (not easy because it is precisely through warfare and their control of men and weapons that they survive and accumulate power and profit).

10 The dependency (or external accountability) dilemma: i.e. how the international community and foreign powers can assist democratization and demilitarization without further undermining African states, e.g. through heavy handed economic and political conditionality, partisan military intervention (even if it is under 'humanitarian' auspices as in Somalia or Rwanda) or imposition of inappropriate models of democracy or military professionalism. The donors are already deeply and irreversibly involved: indirectly through the political impact of economic reforms (including SAPs); directly through political (and military) conditionality under which aid is linked to progress on political reforms and military cuts; more directly still through their participation in peace-keeping, support for military demobilization, and assistance in the monitoring of elections etc.

The specific issue for consideration here is how far it is desirable or indeed feasible for them to push for

military cuts, of the kind both IFIs and bilateral donors like Germany, Canada, the Nordic countries and Japan now build into their discussions with African governments¹⁰. There is clearly a powerful case for military conditionality in regard to the more obvious military over-spenders like the Sudan; but such countries are often highly resistant to external political pressures for military reform. The states where external pressures are most likely to bring tangible results are those where the regime is already interested in reform for its own reasons, like the Museveni government Uganda. Donors can also target the political conditions sustaining militarization, for instance refusing aid or credits to governments not making progress with the resolution of armed conflict, failing to curb human rights abuses, reversing transitions to democracy, or coming to power through coups; yet so far there has been little agreement among donors about when sanctions are appropriate, or when they are counter-productive (hence the lack of a consistent, sustained and effective donor responses to the cancellation of Nigeria's 1993 presidential elections, or to the 1994 coup in the Gambia).

There are also more positive steps donors can take to promote military reform, for instance by sponsoring conflict resolution, funding military demobilisation, or helping retrain and reorganize military and security establishments. Even here, however, they need to identify and avoid forms of support which aggravate the underlying political conflicts; burden African states with high military costs, inappropriate professional models and powerful, unaccountable security bureaucracies; and make them so dependent on foreign advice and support that it becomes difficult for a genuinely self-sufficient democratic process to take root and survive.

¹⁰ The IMF and World Bank first broached the question of excessive military spending in 1989; the former gave its staff a mandate to include military expenditure in their Article IV consultations with donors in 1981; some bilateral donors have gone much further in proposing specific targets for military expenditure reduction (Ball 1992).

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