INTERIM STABILIZATION MEASURES IN DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION

INTRODUCTION

As the GOC prepares for possible disarmament and demobilization of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) after a potential peace agreement, it is important to examine a range of models to facilitate the dismantling of the illegal armed group. One such model, the "holding pattern", falls into the category of "interim stabilization (IS) measures" which have been used in various contexts. Interim stabilization has been defined as:
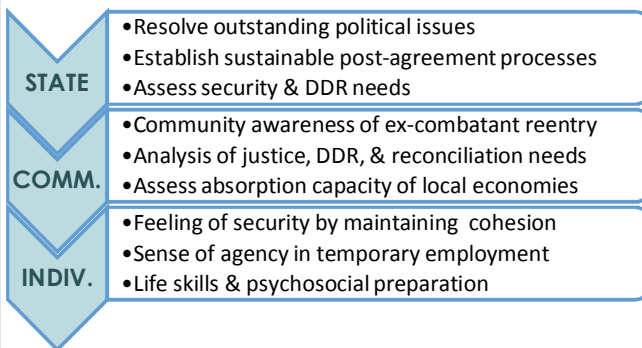
"Stabilization measures…used to keep former combatants' cohesiveness intact within a military or civilian structure, creating space and buying time for a political dialogue and the formation of an environment conducive to social and economic reintegration."[i]

This spotlight examines operational aspects of the holding pattern model and international cases of its use.

INTERIM STABILIZATION (IS) MEASURES

The main objective of IS is to consolidate an end to the violence and reduce the risk that it will resume. This is done by keeping ex-combatants in formal and contained structures instead of allowing them to dissemble and possibly regroup informally. These structures also provide a sense of security and social support, with the end goal of 'buying time' for other peacebuilding activities.[ii]

IS measures create conditions for effective long-term ex-combatant reintegration by providing time for peace preparations at state, community, and individual levels.[iii]

STATE	•Resolve outstanding political issues •Establish sustainable post-agreement processes •Assess security & DDR needs
COMM.	•Community awareness of ex-combatant reentry •Analysis of justice, DDR, & reconciliation needs •Assess absorption capacity of local economies
INDIV.	•Feeling of security by maintaining cohesion •Sense of agency in temporary employment •Life skills & psychosocial preparation

The holding pattern is usually used in conditions in which conventional DDR models such as extended encampment are inadequate due to concerns like potential security vacuums, weak local governance, and limited economic absorption capacity. Holding patterns occur prior to disarmament and often have a military or civilian security component in which ex-combatants stay in the structures to which they are accustomed, while the structures become legal and thereby socially legitimate.[iv] The psychological impact on individuals is less, as they do not

disarm or leave the cohesion of the armed structure, but the structure itself goes through a non-traditional type of demobilization that accustoms the individuals to interaction with the State.[v]

Berns, Colletta, and Schjørlien identify five broad, non-exclusive categories of holding pattern that combine military, civilian, and civil-military programs:[vi]

Civilian service corps	•Armed groups become transitional civilian orgs. •Tackles employment needs and potential spoilers •Eases individuals into civilian life
Military integration	•Integrates rebels into the national armed forces •Used in one third of peace processes since 1990
Transitional security forces	•Armed groups redeployed as temporary forces •Addresses transitional needs such as security, employment, & cohesion
Other transitional autonomy	•Allows some sort of transitional autonomy to armed groups in order to maintain cohesion and fulfill timing and other goals
Awareness programs/ halfway houses	•Ex-combatants gather in camps or halfway houses for dialogue, trust-building, and other preparatory activities

KOSOVO PROTECTION CORPS

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) illegal armed group possessed significant military and political power when the conflict officially ended in June 1999. Disarmament and demobilization of the KLA was designed to take place by means of a civilian service corps called the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). The KPC was not meant to be a legitimization of the KLA but to be a civilian entity to protect citizens and support reconstruction. It was also open to membership by all Kosovo ethnic groups. However, in practice the KPC preserved the KLA military structure, which was one of the conditions upon which the KLA accepted the terms of their demobilization.[vii]

Challenges & lessons of the KPC model

Visually, the KPC looked like the KLA, with similar uniforms and logo. In addition, individuals who were present in communities when they were part of the KLA continued to operate in the same communities in the KPC. This caused distrust between the KPC and communities, and mistrust in the impartiality of the UN mission in Kosovo and the NATO Kosovo Force, both of which had been driving forces in the creation of the KPC. In addition, the fact that the KLA had fought for the independence of Kosovo meant that many saw the KPC as the future army of independent Kosovo. This ambiguity caused tension with Serbs and the

international community. However, the goal of providing employment for KLA members and transitioning them to civilian duties was fulfilled, with the added benefit of giving them a role in reconstruction.[viii]

AFGHAN MILITIA FORCES

While the Bonn Agreement was negotiated in 2001 to establish transitional government authorities, the Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) was formed of various anti-Taliban factions under one legitimate command, utilizing the transitional security force model above. The Ministry of Defense (MOD) paid AMF salaries until combatants were ready to reintegrate and the communities were ready to receive them. In addition to employing ex-combatants, the AMF aimed to stop the combatants from organizing an insurgency in the post-Taliban power vacuum. The AMF units were disarmed one by one, in a process by which the Ministry of Defense identified a unit for disarmament, and the UNDP took over verification of that unit.[ix]

Challenges & lessons of the AMF model

Although the AMF provided additional time to formulate DDR programs, it only included commanders and warlords. Local unaffiliated groups were able to continue activity and were unwilling to disarm and demobilize, highlighting the importance of including all stakeholders and potential spoilers in the IS model. In addition, the MOD paid AMF wages through commanders, giving them incentive to keep troops mobilized and inflate the numbers of combatants, leading to reporting issues. Eventually, sanctions were used to drive commanders to demobilize. Additional criticism focuses on commanders' use of their positions in the AMF to build influence in their regions and strengthen their role in opium trafficking.[x]

COLOMBIAN PROGRAMS

One example of a holding pattern in Colombia was when the EPL guerrilla group of 2,100 combatants demobilized in 1991. Six "peace camps" were created around the country, for ex-combatants to receive benefits such as health and education over the course of a year, while the GOC negotiated with the EPL. During this time, they were partially armed and went through a registry process to gradually turn in weapons, alleviating psychological impact of disarming. Some EPL groups located in areas without camps did not demobilize as the commanders rejected changing location. More dissent occurred as commanders became dissatisfied with the camps, making commander buy-in an important lesson learned from this case.[xi]

During the paramilitary demobilizations (2003-2006), a "soft" policing model was introduced, as collectively and individually demobilized ex-combatants from both paramilitary and guerrilla groups were made civilian security aides under police supervision as part of the IOM-supported 'Salvavías' road safety initiative in towns, cities, and highways. The Salvavías model had four components:

1) Reparations – aides trained civilians in road accident prevention; 2) Responsibility – aides were supported in becoming accustomed to working within a new type of hierarchy and work schedule; 3) Education – aides received training that could be used in future employment; 4) Economic – aides received a monthly salary of approximately $200. This transitional security measure ensured employment, security, increased trust in the State, as well as being publicized as a service to the community and form of reparation. It was eventually terminated due to a lack of institutional clarity about the numbers of demobilized people who could enter the program, and whether the program could be expanded.[xii]

Challenges & lessons of the Colombian model

Colombia offers small-scale examples of projects that could be replicated at the national level and allow the GOC flexibility and time to establish the institutional framework for a long-term reintegration program. For example, soft policing was beneficial in increasing legitimacy and trust in the State, and could be a model for military integration (per the above categories) after a peace accord. The continuation of command structures in the EPL initiatives and similar efforts has been controversial, as some emphasize that group cohesion without strong employment projects to compete with salaries offered in illegal economies has prevented the reintegration of some combatants and facilitated the transformation of some armed structures into new illegal armed groups. Others argue that this was a necessary transitional trade-off that allowed the time necessary to create sustainable reintegration options.[xiii]

CONCLUSION

IS measures, and specifically holding patterns, are important alternative DDR models for contexts such as Colombia that could be affected by potential security vacuums, weak local governance, and limited economic absorption capacity. As these international and national cases demonstrate, holding patterns have a range of advantages and disadvantages but can form a crucial part of early efforts to establish and implement DDR.

[i] Pp. 23, Berns, H., Colletta, N., & Samuelsson Schjørlien, J. (2008) "Interim Stabilization" Folke Bernadotte Academy. Stockholm, Sweden. http://goo.gl/kFPzG5
[ii] Pp. 24, Ibid.
[iii] Pp. 24-25, Ibid.
[iv] Pp. 25-26, Stockholm Initiative on DDR: Final report. Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Stockholm, Sweden: 2008. http://goo.gl/mXaC1m
[v] Colletta, N. (2008) "Interim Stabilization Measures & Rehabilitation Options" Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. http://goo.gl/5867eu
[vi] Pp. 29-30, Berns, H., Colletta, N., & Samuelsson Schjørlien, J. (2008) Op. Cit.
[vii] Pp. 34, Ibid.
[viii] Pp. 35-36, Ibid.
[ix] Pp. 45-46, Ibid.
[x] Pp. 46-48, Ibid.
[xi] Pp. 52 "Pacificar la Paz" Comisión de Superación de la Violencia. Bogotá, 1992.
[xii] IOM report: "Informe Final para Fondo de Prevención Vial y OIM" and "Procesos De Paz Y Experiencias De DDR En Los Años 90 En Colombia", Alvaro Villaraga, July 2013.
[xiii] Pp. 68-69, "Pacificar la Paz" Comisión de Superación de la Violencia. Bogotá, 1992.