Roy Licklider

MERGING COMPETING MILITARIES AFTER CIVIL WARS

Roy Licklider is professor of political science at Rutgers University, and research scholar at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University. His research focuses on the question of how people who have been killing one another with considerable enthusiasm and success can sometimes form working political communities. He is currently studying how competing military groups can be integrated into a single military force after civil wars. His books include *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End,* and (with Mia Bloom) *Living Together After Ethnic Killing: Exploring the Chaim Kaufmann Argument*.

Until the end of the Cold War it was conventional wisdom that civil wars necessarily ended in military victories. Nonetheless, over twenty negotiated settlements of civil wars have been reached since 1989 in places as disparate as El Salvador and South Africa. Some of these compromise settlements have ended civil wars and resulted in postwar regimes that are substantially more democratic than their predecessors.

These settlements have often involved power sharing among the former contestants and other sectors of society. Many of these agreements have, as a central component, provisions to merge competing armed groups in a single national army. But how can people who have been killing one another with considerable skill and enthusiasm be merged into a single military force?

Other than a few scattered case studies and some contradictory aggregate data analyses, we have very little information about the process of military integration. Why has it been used? What strategies have been most effective? Does integration help prevent renewed civil war? Following up on earlier pioneering analyses (Simonsen 2007; Glassmyer and Sambanis 2008; Hoddie and Hartzell 2003; Hartzell and Hoddie 2008; Burgess 2008; Jarstad and Nilsson 2008; Gaub 2007 and 2011), this project attempts to answer these questions.

Why has military integration suddenly become the new normal? Many (although not all) examples of military integration are linked to negotiated settlements of civil wars. Such settlements, in turn, have become more common because military victories are increasingly difficult to achieve for several reasons. (1) The issues in dispute now tend to involve identity rather than ideology, making it more difficult for the vanquished to "convert" to the victor's position. (2) Genocide and ethnic cleansing have become increasingly difficult to implement, making military stalemate increasingly likely. (3) The end of the Cold War reduced external support for many Third World states, making them less able to win quick victories. (4) The peace industry, the new complex of international and nongovernmental organizations dedicated to encouraging the end of mass violence, has also contributed to this development.

Military integration is often seen as a response to three common problems of negotiated settlements. (1) The first is the issue of security. It is generally agreed that ending a civil war involves disarmament, but how do you persuade people to put themselves and their families at the mercy of untried security institutions controlled in part by people who have been their deadly enemies? Barbara Walter (2002, 103–105) notes that security issues consume the vast majority of time and attention in negotiating settlements. Security is, of course, the central problem of any state, but the issue is particularly important

after civil wars when the combatants must live side by side indefinitely in states with weak institutions to protect them from one another; very few civil wars have ended in partition.

(2) Merging armies is one way to reduce the number of former fighters who have to be disarmed and integrated into the society. Most settlements include provisions for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of fighters into civil life (DDR), but at best this is a lengthy and expensive process, usually taking place in countries that cannot easily afford it. Taking some of these people into the military could presumably improve the situation. However, in practice relatively few people are usually involved, since a country usually needs to reduce the overall size of its military after a civil war, and indeed the necessity for armed forces often comes into serious question.

(3) The longer-term problem of negotiated settlement is how to create a nation out of competing groups. Creating a working state, a governmental apparatus that can collect taxes and deliver public goods to society, is hard enough after civil war; creating a nation, a group of people who feel that they are part of a common loyalty group, is more difficult by an order of magnitude. We know that it is not impossible; most of the major states in the current international system have had to do this at one point or another, although usually after victorious wars—Britain after its civil war and then in integrating Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; France after the French Revolution; Germany after the wars of German unification; the Soviet Union and China after their respective revolutions; etc. The United States has done it twice, after its revolution and its civil war. There is a tradition that the military can be used to create a feeling of national unity, although recent scholarship has generally been critical of this argument (Krebs 2004, 2005, 2006 and Dietz, Elkin, and Roumani 1991).

At least three questions seem worth exploring: (1) When is military integration more or less likely to succeed? (2) What particular strategies seem to work better under what circumstances? (3) Has successful integration made the resumption of civil war less likely? Each of these questions is more complicated than it first appears.

We first need to establish what we are talking about. It is certainly possible for the victorious side of a civil war to allow substantial numbers of its former enemies into its military over time, but they are usually not restored to their prior ranks. *Integration means that individuals are brought into the new military in positions similar to the ones they occupied in prior organizations.* It is not impossible for such integration to take place after a military victory, but most of the recent examples come from negotiated settlements to civil wars after the Cold War.

Answering the question "When is military integration more or less likely to succeed?" involves first

defining success. In fact, the literature suggests several different dimensions. (1) Military *efficacy* is simply the extent to which the new military can perform tasks. It may, for example, be able to continue to exist, primarily as a symbol of national unity, but not be reliable in combat. It may be able to wage war against foreign adversaries at a level appropriate to its resources; it may be able to put down domestic disturbances involving members of the groups most strongly represented in the military; it may be able to do both or neither. Moreover, different countries have different needs, so success may mean different things at different times and in different places. South Africa, for example, does not need a strong military capable of facing a serious external military threat; on the other hand, several neighboring states threaten to exert control over parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(2) With regard to which strategies are most effective, much of the recent literature on security sector reform (SSR) suggests that the key issue is whether or not the new military is subject to *civilian* control. Given the tendency for military coups to occur in countries in conflict, the desire for civilian control is understandable, although it may be worthwhile to ask which civilians we are talking about.

(3) From the point of view of policymakers and theorists interested in the resolution of civil wars, the critical question is whether military integration makes *the resumption of large-scale violence* more or less likely. We developed several different ways in which an integrated military might prevent a resumption of civil war in the short term. (a) Participants are at risk from outbidding from within their own group and from violations by enemies; the decision to participate shows a commitment to peace which is likely to persuade adversaries they are serious. (b) The involvement of individuals from different factions makes the new military less threatening to each of them while allowing a strong enough force to maintain security. (c) It may employ some of the many demobilized fighters on all sides of the conflict who might otherwise be available to carry on renewed hostilities. (d) The ability of the military to exist as an integrated institution in a divided country becomes a symbol of national unity. The existence of the military is important; its actual capabilities are irrelevant. (e) The process of successful negotiation may increase trust among elites so that they can move on to other issues with some confidence that agreement can be reached, making renewed civil war less likely. The actual existence of the military is irrelevant. Indeed the agreement may be to have no military at all (the Costa Rican solution). Case authors were asked which, if any, of these mechanisms applied to their country.

Two important cross-national studies on the relationship between military integration and renewed civil war reached somewhat different conclusions. Matthew Hoddie and Caroline Hartzell (2003) found that the implementation of military integration made the resumption of civil war ended by negotiated settlement

less likely. Katherine Glassmyer and Nicholas Sambanis (2008) found that military integration did not make renewed civil war less likely once other factors such as power-sharing agreements were controlled for, although they acknowledged they could not demonstrate that competent integration did not have some positive effects. Given these results, the logical next step seemed to be to get deeper into some of the cases in a series of comparative country case studies to try to sort out the conditions that make it likely that military integration will be attempted and will succeed.

Given that this was an attempt to develop ideas for future research, I decided to focus on countries that had actually tried to implement military integration. Recent cases were excluded because we needed some idea of the outcome of a process in order to evaluate it; thus a number of really interesting current cases like Iraq and Nepal were not included. A list of 22 possible cases was prepared, based on lists from the research of Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie (2003) and Stephen Burgess (2008); the list is Appendix A.

It was not obvious how to select cases from this list for the study. Random sampling isn't useful on such a small population, and the preparation of any kind of stratified sample would have required a knowledge of which variables were important that we didn't have. Another constraint was that for each country the number of people competent to write detailed analyses of military integration in English is distinctly limited, and the number of those I could identify and who would be willing to undertake this project was smaller still. I therefore circulated the list fairly widely, advertised for authors, and selected cases based on who was willing to do the work. When the South African specialist had to drop out of the project, I decided to do that chapter myself.

I ended up with highly qualified people for 11 country case studies, which I divided roughly into three categories:

EARLY ADAPTERS
Sudan 1972 (Matthew LeRiche, London School of Economics & Politics)
Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe (Paul Jackson, University of Birmingham)
Lebanon (Florence Gaub, NATO Defence College)

AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT
Rwanda (Stephen Burgess, U.S. Air War College)
Philippines (Rosalie Arcala Hall, University of the Philippines Visayas)

South Africa (Roy Licklider, Rutgers University)

INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Democratic Republic of the Congo (Judith Verweijen, Uttrecht University)

Mozambique (Andrea Bartoli, George Mason University and Martha Mutisi)

Bosnia-Herzegovina (Rohan Maxwell, NATO HQ,Sarajevo)

Sierra Leone (Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, Uppsala University)

Burundi (Cyrus Samii, New York University)

The case selection influenced my definition of success. All of these cases involved the actual creation of an integrated military force and under civilian control so these criteria would not differentiate among them. The main point of the project was to explore whether military integration would reduce the probability of renewed civil war, but we have no persuasive empirical criteria to demonstrate this relationship. I therefore defined success as military efficacy, in particular ability to: be a symbol of national unity; wage war against foreign adversaries at a level appropriate to its resources; and put down domestic disturbances involving members of the groups most strongly represented in the military. The issue then becomes whether successful military integration, defined this way, makes renewed civil war less likely, and case authors were asked to make judgments on this.

In order to make the cases comparative, I prepared a fairly elaborate set of questions for the authors. Initial drafts were presented at a conference August 31 to September 1, 2010 at the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute at the Army War College (PKSOI). In order to facilitate cross-case comparisons, several senior scholars (Caroline Hartzell, Ronald Krebs, David Laitin, and Bruce Russett) were invited to participate in the conference and to submit comparative chapters for the book. Extensive revisions were made, and the book manuscript is now under review at two different publishers.

Probably the most surprising case study was Rwanda. It was originally listed as a case because Arusha Accords of 1993, designed to end the civil war between the Tutsi rebels and the Hutu government, called for military integration. This provision seems to have been one important factor in the rejection of the accords following the assassination of the president which led to renewed civil war, the Rwandan genocide, and the eventual victory of the rebels. It seemed a dubious case because there was never any effort to implement the agreement, but it was significant because it showed that the mere threat of military integration might cause rather than end civil war.

But in fact the really interesting part of the chapter turned out to be the later successful integration into the victorious army of roughly 50,000 former enemy soldiers and individuals involved in the genocide to produce "a disciplined patriotic army that punches above its weight—the Israel of Africa" Gettelman 2012, 7). A central element of this was *ingando*, a reeducation/indoctrination experience where veterans from both sides engaged in problem-solving workshops and discussed the past intensively in order to develop a common Rwandan identity. It seemed more useful to focus on this case than the Arusha agreement which in fact was never anything more than a disputed agreement.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to successfully integrate competing militaries after civil wars under a wide variety of conditions. It happened after civil war victories as well as negotiated settlements. Aside from the Rwandan case, in Sierra Leone the British intervention had essentially defeated the opposition, and in the Philippines, the MNLF had essentially been defeated by the combination of the government army and defections to the MILF. The other eight cases are the result of negotiated settlements of various types.

Military integration happened in cases with intensive international support (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sierra Leone) and with little or no involvement (South Africa and Sudan). It happened when local political leaders supported it (South Africa and Mozambique) and when they opposed it (Bosnia-Herzegovina and DRC). Zirker, Danopoulos and Simpson (2008) argue that militaries in developing countries may develop an identity so strong that it is equivalent to a separate ethnicity; something like this seems to have happened in some of these cases.

However, *political leaders can wreck even a successful military integration*. To be more precise, all of our cases succeeded in producing integrated military forces. But political leaders broke the peace agreements in Sudan, causing civil war; reversed the integration and turned the military into a domestic political instrument in Zimbabwe; and deliberately destroyed it in the Democratic Republic of the Congo because they did not want a strong central military. Political concerns also severely limited the capabilities of the new militaries in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon. This certainly proves Burgess' argument (2008) that lack of political will can make military integration unworkable, but it is at least possible that political will is a variable which may be favorably influenced by the integration process itself.

Why do some states use military integration after civil wars and others do not? Our cases could not answer this question so Caroline Hartzell did an independent study of 128 civil wars between 1945 and

2006. Her sophisticated statistical study found that *the single most important factor in predicting military integration was outside involvement*. This raises important ethical issues which are discussed later.

Former adversaries were integrated as individuals rather than units in nine of the eleven cases. Successfully mixing the groups at the lowest level seems likely to ultimately improve cohesion (Gaub 2011), so it is encouraging that this rather risky strategy seems to have worked fairly well.. The two cases which used segregated units were Sudan, which ended in renewed civil war after eleven years, and Bosnia-Herzegovina which remains under outside control.

Intuitively, bringing together people who have been killing one another and giving them guns seems a bad idea. But in fact *there was little or no violence during training that mixed former adversaries* in any of our cases. This is undoubtedly due in part to the fact that people had volunteered for the new force and knew that getting along with former enemies was necessary. Several cases report that fighters generally avoided talking about the previous war, sometimes with a sense that it was a terrible mistake. Rwanda is an interesting exception since the *ingando* process required new personnel to participate in an intensive discussion of the past which seems to have overcome deep divisions.

Very little adaptation in normal military training techniques was involved. The changes in training that took place generally reflected the different backgrounds and skill sets of the different groups. South Africa had a particular challenge in integrating eight military forces, ranging from a modern government military to rebel forces which had been trained and organized for guerilla warfare. There was not even a common language. Basically they got the standard training; officers were sent to the usual military courses (shortened to get them through quickly), and enlisted personnel were trained conventionally. Not surprisingly this caused considerable tension, and a fair number of trainers had to be replaced, but it was eventually successful. In the Philippines the military changed policies to meet the needs of Moslem men and women from the MNLF. In Burundi the rebels were in some ways more sophisticated militarily than the government forces.

Outside support was helpful but did not guarantee success in preventing renewed civil war and was not always necessary to do so. It was helpful in South Africa (although the overall plans and control were local, which is why I categorize it as autonomous development), which was a success and Zimbabwe which was a political failure. It was dominant in Democratic Republic of the Congo (a total failure), Sierra Leone (a success), and Bosnia-Herzegovina (still under outside control). It was non-existent in Rwanda (a major success) and Sudan (a failure but only after eleven years) and Lebanon (limited success).

Actually this record doesn't tell us much about the actual impact of outside support. It seems likely that outsiders will be called in only for hard cases, making their record fairly weak. What is clear is that the amount of outside resources doesn't seem to have much to do with success, and the success of Rwanda, done almost entirely without outside support, is a case in favor of autonomous development.

Human rights violators were often not excluded from the new armies. It sounds plausible to recommend that each individual be vetted, but this is actually quite difficult and expensive. Moreover, negotiated settlements to civil war often involve some sort of amnesty, formal or informal. Interestingly, even forces whose members were not screened often did fairly well in terms of human rights violations (Sierra Leone is a particularly striking example); training and environment may be more important than past behavior.

Quotas were often used and were generally quite successful. Simple formulas (50-50 in cases with two groups, such as Burundi; 33-33-33 with three groups, as for senior appointments in Bosnia-Herzegovina) often were more useful, even if less obviously fair, than ratios based on population or other figures that might be unclear and disputed (Samii 2010).

Several of the new armies were able to successfully fight members of ethnic groups that had been integrated, one of the most demanding criterion for success. The Rwandan army has not only battled Hutu guerilla groups for years both inside and outside of Rwanda; indeed at one point it almost conquered the capital of the DRC (a tribute to its military prowess independent of the judgment of its political goals). In the Philippines the MNLF fighters were seen as very useful by the Filipino army in fighting the MILF, and in Burundi the new army defeated the remnants of the opposition. Several other new militaries have been fortunate enough to escape this issue—South Africa, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Zimbabwe among them. The most conspicuous failure involved the integrated units of the army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo which simply collapsed because of lack of support from their government.

The new armies were almost always less effective militarily than their predecessors, but they were also under civilian control and usually committed many fewer human rights violations. Examples of this pattern are South Africa, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Zimbabwe and DRC are exceptions.

The case study authors were asked how, if at all, the new militaries made renewed civil war less likely. Most of them felt that t*he symbolic role of the new force is often more important than its coercive capacity*. The military is often the most integrated institution in the country. People who have been killing one another show that they can work and live together peacefully become powerful symbols in deeply

divided countries. Thus even a weak military can become important in shaping the national image (Lebanon is an interesting example). However, as Ronald Krebs points out, this conclusion is based on opinion rather than hard evidence.

The final conclusion is that *military integration is not a technological substitute for politics*. By itself it cannot prevent a renewed civil war, but if completed successfully it can be one element in this process. However, its use has consequences and potential costs which should be explored.

POST-INTEGRATION ISSUES:

There often doesn't seem to be real need for a strong military after a civil war since often there is little real outside threat. Military integration often occurs at the same time as the total force is being reduced. Many of the new militaries search for a mission to justify expenditures which loom large in relatively poor countries. Peacekeeping is one popular choice; it employs soldiers, gains some prestige for the country, and can be self-supporting.

This in turn raises the question of *what sort of military the country really needs*. Obviously it varies from case to case—South Africa has no obvious outside enemies, for example, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo literally cannot control its own territory in part because of encroachments by its neighbors. Outsiders are sometimes accused of forcing other countries to adopt their own military models, not without some reason. But South Africa is an interesting example—a relatively advanced country with no obvious external foes and no foreign involvement in its decision-making whose military wants to sustain an expensive mechanized, land-based force even though its major tasks seem likely to be counterinsurgency and peacekeeping on land and monitoring of coastal waters. At a minimum it seems plausible that *locals should decide on the kind of military that is required* since they will pay the penalty for any errors in the consequential decision. But *internationals should try to avoid creating a military which is not financially and politically viable after the war* and work with locals to develop plans for a military that is sustainable in the long run.

But there is a more fundamental question—should we really be doing all this? It may not be a good idea to strengthen the military in post–civil war countries. It is much easier to create a reasonable military from the outside than, for example, to reform the police force and the judiciary, which are deeply embedded in the local power structures of everyday life, much less create a new political culture which will control these powerful instruments. *A strong security apparatus inside a weak and ineffective government creates a temptation for military domination or coup*. The impact of such change may go beyond the

individual state; recent research on *interstate* war suggests that autocratic government controlled by civilian elites are no more likely to initiate violence than democracies but that military autocracies and personalist regimes are significantly more likely to do so (Weeks 2012).

Zimbabwe is a powerful example of an alliance between some civilian politicians and military leaders to eliminate democracy (and military integration) in favor of authoritarian rule. Similar tendencies can be seen in Rwanda and Uganda. It is perhaps no coincidence that all of them have been involved in military action within the neighboring DRC. I tend to favor policies that will produce short-term peace, even at the possible risk of longer-term problems, such as amnesty, power-sharing governments, and military integration; my preference is to save as many lives as we can now and worry about the consequences later (Licklider 2008). But ignoring the risks involved is not simply oversight; it is negligence.

This is particularly true when it comes to outsiders pressuring people to follow certain policies in their own countries. If these policies backfire, the locals will pay the price while the outsiders go home. In this situation outsiders have multiple ethical obligations: to learn more about whether military integration works to help keep the peace; to learn more about the "best" way to go about integrating militaries under different sets of circumstances; to give more thought to the implications of all of this beyond outcomes such as keeping the peace (e.g., effects on democracy, human rights, etc.); and to be as candid as we can with the locals about these costs and benefits, not withholding our own inevitable uncertainties, even if we are concerned that some of the locals will use this information for ends that we would deplore (Hartzell 2012).

APPENDIX A: CASES OF MILITARY INTEGRATION AGREEMENTS TAKEN FROM HARZELL AND

HODDIE (2007) AND BURGESS (2008)—I ADDED SUDAN AND RWANDA 1994

*Cases used in this analysis

*Sudan, 1971

Angola 1975

*Zimbabwe 1980

Namibia 1988

*Lebanon 1989

Angola 1991

Cambodia 1991

Georgia/South Ossetia 1992

*Mozambique 1992

Rwanda 1993

*Rwanda 1994

Angola 1994

Djibouti 1994

Mali 1994

Chad 1996

*Bosnia 1995

*Philippines 1996

Sierra Leone 1996

*South Africa 1997

*Sierra Leone 2000

*Dem. Rep. of Congo, 2003

*Burundi 2004

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