

Recurring Dilemmas in a Recurring Conflict: Evaluating the UN Mission in Liberia (2003–2006)

Jeremy Farrall*

*Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy
Hedley Bull Centre (Building #130), ANU College of Asia and the Pacific
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200 AUSTRALIA
jeremy.farrall@anu.edu.au*

Abstract

This article applies Diehl & Druckman's peace operation evaluation framework to the activities of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) during the Liberian transitional peace process (2003–2006). It finds that in general UNMIL performed strongly during the transitional period, particularly in relation to the core mission goals of violence abatement, conflict containment, conflict settlement and organizational effectiveness. UNMIL's achievements were less clear and less pronounced in relation to the more complex areas of non-traditional and peacebuilding mission goals. The article also provides critical reflections on the framework for evaluating peace operations, arguing that it is difficult to escape the politics that influence the activities of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Keywords

United Nations; peace operations; UN Mission in Liberia; post-conflict peacebuilding; peacekeeping; elections; rule of law; human rights; local security

*) Jeremy Farrall is a Fellow at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Australian National University, and an Australian Research Council Linkage Industry Fellow at the Australian Civil-Military Centre and the ANU Centre for International Governance and Justice. His major publications include *United Nations Sanctions and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and *The Role of International Law in Rebuilding Societies After Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009; co-edited with Brett Bowden and Hilary Charlesworth). Jeremy is indebted to fellow contributors to this special issue for their feedback, and in particular to Jeni Whalan for her written review comments.

Introduction

The country of Liberia provides a rich case study for Diehl & Druckman's evaluation framework.¹ Liberia has played host to multiple peace operations (ECOMOG, UNOMIL, ECOMIL and UNMIL) deployed by different multilateral actors (ECOWAS and the UN) for various purposes (ranging from traditional cease-fire monitoring conservatism to contemporary, multidimensional state-building and peacebuilding innovation). Liberia has experienced both peacekeeping's dizzy heights and its chilly depths. Among the heights are putting an end to more than two decades of Civil War and facilitating the elections that brought to power Africa's first democratically-elected female President, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The depths include standing idly by while a sitting Head of State was assassinated when visiting supposedly secure premises to negotiate with his adversary; facilitating the elections that brought the notorious war criminal Charles Taylor to power; and having to deploy a second round of peace operations barely six years after their predecessors had supposedly returned democracy to Liberia.

The task of evaluating all peacekeeping activity in Liberia would fill a book-length study. In this Article I have chosen to focus on a particular, albeit particularly significant, piece of the Liberian peacekeeping puzzle—namely the performance of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in shepherding Liberia through its transitional peace period between September 2003 and January 2006. The Article finds that in general UNMIL performed strongly during the transitional period, particularly in relation to Diehl & Druckman's core goals of violence abatement, conflict containment, conflict settlement and organizational effectiveness. While there is evidence that UNMIL's mere presence in Liberia bolstered the general security experienced by average Liberians,² the Mission's proactive approach to monitoring and preventing potential threats ensured that there were very few destabilising incidents of the scope and gravity to derail the Liberian peace during the

¹ Paul F. Diehl and Daniel Druckman, *Evaluating Peace Operations* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010).

² Ninety-four per cent of respondents to a 2006 Liberian public opinion survey reported that their security situation had improved since UNMIL's deployment: see Jean D. Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey of UNMIL's Work in Liberia* (New York: UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, January 2006), pp. 5-11.

transitional period. When such incidents did occur – such as in December 2003 when the initial attempt at disarmament and demobilisation faltered, in November 2004 when a property dispute flared into deadly inter-ethnic rioting resulting in nineteen deaths and widespread property destruction, and in March 2005, when the Speaker of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA) threatened to storm the Assembly after being suspended on corruption charges – UNMIL's timely intervention ensured that these threats did not escalate into lasting violent conflict.

UNMIL's performance was also solid in relation to the 'non-traditional' mission goals of elections, democratization, humanitarian assistance, DDR(R) and human rights protection. The high-water mark within these mission goals was the area of elections, where UNMIL's extensive logistical, planning and operational support ensured smooth, free and fair elections in October and November 2005. The low water-mark came in the area of human rights protection, where the failure of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) to establish a national human rights commission, despite the fact that the August 2003 Liberian Comprehensive Peace Agreement mandated its creation, symbolized a low level of commitment among Liberia's transitional authorities to promoting and protecting human rights. The area where UNMIL's achievements were least impressive was in relation to the 'peace-building' mission goals of local security, rule of law, local governance and restoration.

Analysis in this Article proceeds in five sections. Section 1 discusses the strengths and limitations of Diehl and Druckman's evaluation framework, as well as the methodology employed in this Article. Section 2 provides a brief history of the Liberian conflict. Section 3 introduces UNMIL's mandate in terms of Diehl and Druckman's three categories of 'mission goals'. It also describes UNMIL's makeup, outlining the Mission's key characteristics and surveying its key stakeholders. Section 4 examines the influences *on* UNMIL. Section 5 turns to the influences of UNMIL, which are approached as an opportunity to evaluate overall progress towards UNMIL's mission goals.

1. Reflections on the Endeavour of Evaluating Peacekeeping

Before turning to an evaluation of UNMIL's efforts during the Liberian transitional peace process, it is worthwhile reflecting on the strengths and limitations of both Diehl & Druckman's evaluation framework and the methodology employed here.

1.1. Diehl & Druckman's Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework articulated in Diehl & Druckman's book *Evaluating Peace Operations* represents a sincere attempt by two of the world's best-equipped peace and conflict scholars to provide a best-practice blueprint for monitoring and evaluating peacekeeping. The particular contribution of Diehl & Druckman's book is to provide enormously helpful guidance for the novice evaluator in the form of tables a series of questions to be asked, and reference points to be used, in pursuing the answers to those difficult questions.³

Yet even the most serious and sincere attempt to evaluate peace operations can raise almost as many questions as it provides answers.⁴ What sources of data should be used to evaluate peacekeeping and how reliable or complete must they be? What value judgments, assumptions or prejudices are built in to the very choice and articulation of indicators? How does the use of indicators itself shape or govern the activities of those who are measured, as well as those who do the measuring?⁵ How can evaluators ensure that they are measuring 'outcomes' and not simply 'outputs'?⁶ Can peacekeeping evaluations usefully be conducted in real-time or are they better suited to ex post facto historical studies? To what extent are general lessons from past peacebuilding experiments applicable to new peacebuilding situations? Can peacebuilding be reduced to a matter of mere engineering 'technique' or is it a more complex political undertaking?⁷

Defining Peace Operations

The limitations of any evaluation framework can often be traced to the unstated (and perhaps unintended) assumptions that underpin even the most

³ For the table on 'core' mission goals, see Diehl & Druckman, *Evaluating Peace Operations*, figure 3.1, pp 54-62. For the table on 'non-traditional' mission goals, see figure 4.1, pp. 84-92. For the table on 'post-conflict peacebuilding' goals, see figure 5.1, pp. 116-132.

⁴ Indeed, Diehl & Druckman devote considerable space to reflections on some of these questions: see Diehl and Druckman, *Evaluating Peace Operations*, pp. 5-9.

⁵ For a study of how the use of indicators can affect the processes of standard setting, decision-making and contestation in global governance, see Kevin E. Davis, Benedict Kingsbury and Sally Engle Merry, 'Indicators as a Technology of Global Governance', *Law & Society Review*, vol. 46, 2012, pp. 71-104.

⁶ See Whalan in this special issue.

⁷ For a critical perspective on the portrayal of statebuilding/peacebuilding as matters of technique, see Nehal Bhuta, 'Democratisation, State-building and Politics as Technology' in Brett Bowden, Hilary Charlesworth and Jeremy Farrall (eds.), *The Role of International Law in Rebuilding Societies After Conflict: Great Expectations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 38-63.

diligent attempt to facilitate objective and impartial analysis. A starting-point is how evaluators define the object of evaluation. The Diehl & Druckman evaluation framework defines peace operations as:

‘the range of peace missions (traditional peacekeeping, robust peacekeeping, peacebuilding, peace observation) performed by troops in operations organized by international organizations, regional organizations, or multinational groupings’.⁸

In my view this definitional net is both too broad and too narrow to serve as an ideal foundation for analysing contemporary peace operations. The definition is too broad because it appears to admit the possibility of characterising as a peace operation any ‘peace mission’ carried out by multinational groupings. This could potentially encompass any self-proclaimed ‘peace mission’ cobbled together by two or more states, regardless of the degree of support they receive from both internal and external actors or the extent to which they genuinely seek to bring sustainable peace as opposed to pursuing other strategic objectives. Here it might be preferable to narrow the field of analysis to particular types of operations within this broad category. One way of doing so would be to confine the scope to operations organized by international or regional organizations.

Yet the chosen definition is also too narrow, in that it explicitly states that the peace missions under analysis are performed *by troops*. With the expansion of peace operation mandates into new areas of governance and public administration, the decision to restrict analysis to the activities of troops surely leaves too many interesting peace operation tasks beyond one’s focus. Contemporary UN peace operations have growing civilian components, whose participation is essential to the types of new mission goals that Diehl & Druckman trace. Indeed, it would be difficult to characterise most of the tasks that form part of the ‘non-traditional’ and ‘peacebuilding’ mission goals as falling within the exclusive domain of troops.

Creating Hierarchies of Peace Operation Goals

Diehl & Druckman’s division of peace operation ‘mission goals’ into ‘core’, ‘non-traditional’ and ‘peacebuilding’ provides a more obvious illustration of how evaluation frameworks enshrine judgement preferences. The decision to differentiate mission goals as ‘core’, ‘non-traditional’ and ‘peacebuilding’ appears to be a simple matter of description, but it risks creating a hierarchy

⁸⁾ Diehl and Druckman, *Evaluating Peace Operations*, pp. 1-2.

of peace operation goals and tasks, in which certain goals are seen as more pressing or important than others. Sometimes the choices behind the categorisation also appear somewhat arbitrary. Why is human rights protection considered a non-traditional goal when rule of law is a peacebuilding goal? It could be argued that the two are so closely related as to be part of each other. Similarly, it could be argued that both DDR and security sector reform are an integral component of violence abatement and conflict containment. So why should we treat DDR as a non-traditional goal and SSR as a peacebuilding goal?

Sequencing

A connected issue is the matter of sequencing. Diehl & Druckman discuss sequencing in their concluding analysis of peacebuilding mission goals.⁹ Yet there is a hot debate among scholars and practitioners over how and when to sequence almost all of the tasks that feature across each of Diehl & Druckman's three categories. Some argue that elections must come first. Others argue that security sector reform is most important. Others argue that constitution-building is the essential task ... or transitional justice ... or strengthening the rule of law ... or DDR. This debate and the choices that flow from it play out differently in each new post-conflict forum.

1.2. Methodology Employed in the UNMIL Evaluation

The general approach employed here was to seek to answer the lists of questions helpfully provided by Diehl and Druckman in *Evaluating Peace Operations* to UNMIL's activities during Liberia's transitional peace process.¹⁰ I encountered several challenges in doing so, including identifying appropriate sources of data, distinguishing UNMIL's influence from other causative factors, and settling on an appropriate time frame for analysis.

Sources of Data

The first methodological challenge for any evaluation is obtaining reliable information upon which to base the evaluation. In Liberia, and indeed in most conflict or post-conflict situations, there are few ready sources of reliable pre- and post-conflict documentation that can be used to measure the range of indicators of interest to the evaluator. The main sources drawn upon for this study include: the UN Secretary-General's quarterly reports to the UN

⁹⁾ Diehl and Druckman, *Evaluating Peace Operations*, pp. 198-201.

¹⁰⁾ See note 3, above.

Security Council on UNMIL's activities;¹¹ reports by engaged intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental actors;¹² and where available Liberian population perception surveys.¹³ I also drew on my own experience and expertise derived from working as a Political Affairs Officer for UNMIL from 2004–6.

The major drawback of relying on these sources of information is that they are not always dispassionate or neutral. They tend to be compiled with implicit, and sometimes explicit, political agendas, assumptions and goals in mind. Put another way, they may *have objectives* rather than *being objective*. For example, one clear unstated goal of the reports by the UN Secretary-General is to portray UNMIL's activities in a positive light, emphasizing achievements rather than shortcomings. Yet at the same time these reports contain a treasure trove of information about the full range UNMIL's efforts to implement its mandates and of its interactions with domestic and international actors. The reports are compiled on the basis of information gathered by all UNMIL's elements, whether military, police or civilian, spread across all sectors of the Mission's deployment. Indeed, no other actor at the time could match the depth and breadth of UNMIL's reach, nor the sophistication of its information gathering and transmitting apparatus.

Moreover, a close reading of the Secretary-General's progress reports can provide valuable information on both the positive and negative influences of UNMIL on its environment. This is because one goal for the drafters of peacekeeping progress reports is to remind the UN Security Council, which bestows, modifies and terminates peace operation mandates, that whilst a peace operation may currently be doing a good job of implementing its mandate, any Council attempt to contract the human or financial resources at the

¹¹ The first progress report on UNMIL was issued in December 2003: United Nations, '*First progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*', S/2003/1175, 15 December 2003. Progress reports were issued quarterly throughout the period of analysis.

¹² For examples of these reports, see: European Union, *Final Report of the EU Election Observation Mission* (Brussels: European Union, February 2006); International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Resurrecting the Justice System* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, April 2006); Ezekiel Pajibo, *Traditional Justice Mechanisms: the Liberian Case* (Stockholm: International Institute for Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2008).

¹³ Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey*, above note 2; Eric Mvukiyeye and Cyrus Samii, 'Quantitative Impact Evaluation of the United Nations Mission in Liberia: Final Report' (February 9, 2010), available at: https://files.nyu.edu/cds2083/public/docs/lib/unmil_final100209.pdf; Patrick Vinck, Phuong Pham & Tino Kreutzer, *Talking Peace: A Population-based Survey on Attitudes about Security, Dispute Resolution and Post-conflict Reconstruction in Liberia* (Berkeley: Human Rights Center, 2011).

operation's disposal might prove calamitous. Secretary-General's progress reports thus tend to tread a fascinating tightrope between conveying the primary message that everything is under control, along with the caveat that catastrophe still lurks around every corner. Valuable information about an operation's weaknesses or blind spots can therefore be gleaned from these veiled references to pending disaster.

Causation: Distinguishing UNMIL's Influence from Other Factors

One of the most difficult tasks in this evaluation has been to distinguish the outcomes that are the direct result of, and solely attributable to, UNMIL's acts and omissions as opposed to other possible contributing actors or factors. For instance, to what extent can we say that UNMIL's presence alone caused the absence of further conflict? There is anecdotal evidence that this was the case, but to what extent can we isolate UNMIL's influence from other possible contributing factors? Moreover, it is impossible to say with complete certainty what might have happened in the counterfactual scenario, under which UNMIL would never have been deployed.

Impact of Employing a Shorter Rather Than Longer Evaluation Time Frame

The main advantage of confining this evaluation to UNMIL's activities between 2003-6 during Liberia's transitional peace process is that it enables greater depth of analysis of activities within the space constraints of an Article-length study. One consequence of this decision, however, is that the mission priorities during this period are more likely to focus on short-term objectives such as maintaining peace and security than on the medium- to long-term objectives inherent in most peacebuilding activities. The choice to focus on a particular part of the Liberian peacekeeping puzzle also deprives both the evaluator and the reader the opportunity to consider, compare and contrast the different impacts of different peacekeeping interventions at different times. But as articulated in the introduction, a book-length study would be a more appropriate forum for such a broad study.

2. Overview of the Liberian Conflict

Liberia began its existence as a constitution in search of a country.¹⁴ In the early nineteenth century a group called the American Colonial Society (ACS)

¹⁴ For detailed histories of Liberia, see: J. McPherson, *A History of Liberia* (Monrovia: Developing Press, 2007); John-Peter Pham, *Liberia: Portrait of a Failed State* (New York: Reed Press, 2004).

sent a boatload of idealistic freed slaves off in the direction of Africa.¹⁵ These intrepid explorers were under instructions to find a suitable stretch of West African coastland on which to create a new homeland without slavery for liberated slaves originating from Africa. They carried with them a state-of-the-art template constitution, drafted by the best minds at the Harvard Law School, containing the ‘best practice’ constitutional rights and freedoms of the era. All that was missing was the name of the new country and the place and date of endorsement.¹⁶

2.1. *Liberia’s Early Years*

The new country of Liberia was ultimately established in 1821 and it operated as an ACS colony until 1847, when Liberian leaders signed a declaration of independence for the Republic of Liberia and adopted the country’s first independent Constitution.¹⁷ The 1847 Constitution continued to proudly proclaim that there would be no slavery in Liberia. But the language of equality was already beginning to ring hollow, given that the same Constitution tied the right of suffrage to property ownership and distinguished between ‘Negroes’, who were naturally entitled to the rights of citizenship, and ‘Aborigines’.¹⁸

For multiple generations Liberia’s political landscape was characterised by stability and longevity. Although regular periodic elections were held, the country effectively operated as a one-party state between 1880 and 1973, with successive presidents in that period hailing from the True Whig Party. Yet, despite general political stability, the average Liberian did not enjoy the free and full exercise of human rights and democratic entitlements. Although Liberia contained fifteen distinct indigenous ethnic groups, none of these groups was permitted to play a significant role in the governance of the country. In fact, the country was dominated largely by the privileged descendants of the initial founders of the country, who came to be known as ‘Americo-Liberians’. Despite their African origins, Americo-Liberians went about the

¹⁵ For discussion of the American Colonial Society and its initial activities in relation to the creation of Liberia, see Charles Henry Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia* (New York: Central Book Company, 1947 (2 vols)), vol 1, pp. 23–68.

¹⁶ This template constitution is reproduced in Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, vol. 1, pp. 146–148. It is also available on line at: http://www.onliberia.org/con_1820.htm.

¹⁷ For the text of the 1847 Constitution, see: http://www.onliberia.org/con_1847.htm.

¹⁸ John-Peter Pham, *Liberia: Portrait of a Failed State* (New York: Reed Press, 2004), p. 20.

business of governing the country in much the same way as other colonial/imperial governments of the era.¹⁹ A low-point for the country in terms of realising its lofty foundational ideals came in 1930, when a League of Nations fact-finding mission dispatched to Liberia concluded that labour conditions prevailing in Liberian plantations, particularly in the Fernando Po Islands, amounted to indentured labour.²⁰

2.2. Samuel Doe's Coup

The domination of Liberian government by Americo-Liberians and the country's longstanding political stability were brought to an end in 1980, when a group of seventeen junior army officers, led by Master-Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, launched a violent coup. In their brutal takeover, these officers assassinated President Tolbert in his bedroom and killed twenty-four members of his security staff. They also made a public show of stringing up and shooting, on a beach in the Liberian capital of Monrovia, thirteen prominent members of the Tolbert regime, including the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and four cabinet members.²¹ Despite the murderous means by which Doe and his henchmen gained power, they attracted substantial popular support by positioning themselves as the representatives of the long-oppressed indigenous Liberians. But ultimately Doe also employed policies that oppressed not just Americo-Liberians, but also the majority of indigenous Liberians for whom he proclaimed to be governing. He and his government consciously favoured kinspeople from Doe's own Krahn ethnicity, giving them the best appointments in the Liberian government and civil service. Although the Krahn made up less than five percent of Liberia's total population, at one point during the Doe regime Krahn appointments made up one-third of all positions in central government, as well as several prominent posts in the military and security services.²²

¹⁹ Akpan refers to the governance of Liberia under the True Whig Party as 'Black imperialism': see Monday B. Akpan, 'Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule over the African Peoples of Liberia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1973, pp. 217-236; Gershoni Yekutieli, *Black Colonialism: The Americo-Liberian Scramble for the Hinterland* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985).

²⁰ League of Nations, *Report of the Liberian Commission of Inquiry*, C.658.M.272, 1930, VI.

²¹ Pham, *Portrait of a Failed State*, p. 81.

²² Pham, *Portrait of a Failed State*, p. 83.

2.3. *Liberia's Civil War Begins and So Do Peace Operations*

After a decade in power, Doe's government itself was unseated by military rebellion. In late 1989 a group called the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, launched a rebellion against the Doe government from neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire. The rebel group was initially small – numbering just 168 lightly armed men – but within six months its ranks had swollen to ten thousand and it had captured a substantial amount of Liberian territory, including strategic locations such as the country's second largest city and port, Buchanan. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sought to broker a peace deal. By late July 1990, Doe reluctantly accepted an ECOWAS proposal that provided for a ceasefire, deployment of a peacekeeping force (the ECOWAS Monitoring Group in Liberia (ECOMOG)), as well as the formation of a government of national unity.²³ On 11 September 1990, Doe himself was brutally murdered at the premises occupied by ECOMOG. Doe had been invited there to a meeting with Prince Yormie Johnson, who had been one of Taylor's close collaborators in the NPFL, but had subsequently formed his own splinter rebel group called the INPFL. Doe's murder was unwittingly facilitated by ECOMOG, which forced Doe's contingent to disarm upon entering the ECOMOG compound. Yet Johnson's contingent had not been forced to disarm. The subsequent torture and murder of Doe by Johnson and his henchmen were captured on a macabre video, grainy copies of which can still be purchased on the streets of Monrovia.

The following thirteen years were characterised by attempts to broker peace, followed by a return to conflict. Charles Taylor was the critical player throughout this period. He maintained military control of the vast majority of Liberian territory, even when temporary governments of national unity were theoretically installed in Monrovia. His de facto control of Liberia was eventually legitimised through elections facilitated by the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in July 1997. Indeed, the UN Secretary-General declared free and fair the vote that resulted in Taylor's election as President.²⁴ Yet before Taylor's regime had been in office long, the country was again embroiled in civil war. This time the conflict was between the Taylor government and two new rebel groups, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia

²³ For discussion, see Ikechi, Mgbeoji, *Collective Insecurity: The Liberian Crisis, Unilateralism, and Global Order* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), p. 19–26.

²⁴ United Nations, S/1997/581, 24 July 1997.

(MODEL). These groups slowly gained territory over the next six years, until Taylor and his forces were restricted to Monrovia.

2.4. The End of Civil War and the Second Coming of Peace Operations

In early to mid-2003, the rebels gained control of the main port areas and held Monrovia under siege. A game of diplomatic catch-22 ensued. The rebels declared their siege would last until Taylor left office. Taylor said he would leave Liberia once an international peacekeeping force arrived to maintain stability in Liberia. US President Bush said that he was prepared to support the deployment of UN peacekeepers, but only after Taylor had left Liberia. Once again, ECOWAS stepped into the breach. A deal was struck in which an ECOWAS force – the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) – would be deployed immediately. Taylor would then go into exile in the ECOWAS powerhouse of Nigeria, and within three months ECOMIL would be succeeded by a UN peacekeeping operation.

On 18 August 2003 the three major parties to the Liberian conflict, namely the government of Liberia, LURD and MODEL, signed the ‘Comprehensive Peace Agreement’ (CPA) in Accra, Ghana.²⁵ The CPA provided for a two and a half year transitional period in which the affairs of state would be carried out by a power-sharing transitional government. The transitional period was to culminate in the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections in October and November 2005, with the new government assuming office in January 2006.

The early provisions of the CPA addressed critical questions of security. Thus the Agreement formalised a cease-fire that had held since June 2003, when peace negotiations had first begun, and called for the intervention of a Chapter VII United Nations peacekeeping force to monitor the cease-fire and support the implementation of the peace process as a whole – a role which was to be played by UNMIL.²⁶ These early CPA provisions also provided for: the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation of all former fighting factions;²⁷ the reform of the security sector;²⁸ and the

²⁵ United Nations, annex: *Peace Agreement between the Government of Liberia, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and the Political Parties*, S/2003/850, 29 August 2003, (hereafter ‘CPA’).

²⁶ CPA, Part II (Arts II-V).

²⁷ CPA, Part III (Art VI).

²⁸ CPA, Part IV (Arts VII-VIII).

release of prisoners and abductees.²⁹ Subsequent provisions of the Agreement addressed human rights,³⁰ additional humanitarian questions,³¹ and political issues.³² The annexes also contained detailed information concerning the implementation of the peace process, such as the implementation timetable for the peace process and the allocation of the most important positions in cabinet and public corporations and agencies.³³

Shortly after the signing of the CPA the UN Security Council formally created the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).³⁴ UNMIL was established as a multidimensional peacekeeping operation with a mandate to provide security and stability in Liberia, as well as wide-ranging support to the Liberian peace process and the efforts of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) to consolidate peace.

3. UNMIL's Mission Goals and Make-Up

This section uses Diehl & Druckman's framework to describe UNMIL's mission goals, key characteristics and stakeholders.

3.1. UNMIL's Core, Non-Traditional and Peacebuilding Mission Goals

UNMIL was conceived as a multidimensional peace operation whose primary goal was to provide the security and stability necessary to enable the full implementation of the CPA. Yet both the CPA and the UN Security Council envisaged quite an expansive role for UNMIL, falling between the extremes of modestly monitoring a ceasefire and ambitiously assuming the full responsibilities of government. In fact, UNMIL's mandate included a blend of tasks associated with each of the 'core', 'non-traditional' and 'post-conflict peacebuilding' goals identified by Diehl and Druckman.³⁵ This section describes the elements of UNMIL's mandate that explicitly targeted these goals.

²⁹ CPA, Part V (Arts IX–XI).

³⁰ CPA, Parts VI (Arts XII–XIII).

³¹ CPA, Parts VII ('Humanitarian Issues', Arts XIV–XV) and IX ('Post-conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction', Arts XXIX–XXXI).

³² CPA, Part VIII (Arts XIV–XXVIII).

³³ CPA, Annexes III & IV.

³⁴ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, 19 September 2003, para. 1. The key elements of UNMIL's mandate were outlined in para. 3.

³⁵ For a complete list of UNMIL's responsibilities, see United Nations, SC Res. 1509, 19 September 2003, and in particular para. 3.

Core Goals: Violence Abatement, Conflict Containment, Conflict Settlement and Organizational Effectiveness

As UNMIL's creation and deployment were requested by the CPA, which itself had been signed by all major parties to the conflict, in theory at least the goals of violence abatement, conflict containment and conflict settlement had already been fulfilled. Yet while there was a peace for UNMIL to keep, its fragility meant that UNMIL had a number of responsibilities relating to peace maintenance. The following tasks could therefore be interpreted as connected to conflict containment: monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire;³⁶ liaising with the field headquarters of all the parties' military forces;³⁷ supporting the CPA's Joint Monitoring Committee;³⁸ and providing security at key government installations.³⁹ UNMIL's mandate also contained a responsibility relating to organizational effectiveness, namely to ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel and to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.⁴⁰

Non-Traditional Goals: Elections, Democratization, Humanitarian Assistance, DDR(R) and Human Rights Protection

UNMIL's mandate contained explicit responsibilities relating to elections, humanitarian assistance, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) and human rights protection. The Mission was thus to support Liberia's transitional authorities to prepare for national elections no later than 2005;⁴¹ facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance;⁴² develop and implement a DDRR program;⁴³ and carry out human rights promotion, protection, and monitoring.⁴⁴ Democratization is the only one of Diehl & Druckman's 'non-traditional' goals that was not explicitly mentioned in UNMIL's mandate.

³⁶ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(a).

³⁷ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(b).

³⁸ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, paras. 3(e), 3(h).

³⁹ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(i).

⁴⁰ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(j).

⁴¹ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(s).

⁴² United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(k).

⁴³ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, 19 September 2003, para. 3(f).

⁴⁴ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, paras. 3(l)-(m).

Peacebuilding Goals: Local Security, Rule of Law, Local Governance, and Restoration

UNMIL's initial mandate contained responsibilities connected with all of Diehl & Druckman's peacebuilding goals. In terms of local security, UNMIL was to: provide security at key government installations, in particular ports, airports, and other vital infrastructure;⁴⁵ and assist the NTGL in the formation of a new and restructured Liberian military.⁴⁶ In relation to the rule of law, UNMIL was to assist the NTGL in: monitoring and restructuring the police force of Liberia and in developing and delivering a civilian police training programme;⁴⁷ and developing a strategy to consolidate governmental institutions, including a national legal framework and judicial and correctional institutions.⁴⁸ In terms of local governance, UNMIL was to assist the NTGL: in re-establishing national authority throughout the country, including the establishment of a functioning administrative structure at both the national and local levels;⁴⁹ and in restoring proper administration of natural resources.⁵⁰

In terms of restoration, reconciliation and transformation, UNMIL monitored and supported NTGL efforts to pursue transitional justice, particularly through the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). UNMIL was also mandated to make a contribution to redressing past crimes when Security Council resolution 1638 (2005) required the Mission to apprehend and detain former President Charles Taylor in the event of his return to Liberia and to transfer him to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.⁵¹ Resolution 1626 (2005) also required UNMIL to provide security protection to the Special Court for Sierra Leone after the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.⁵² UNMIL's mandate also encouraged it to support the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons. In the context of its human rights responsibilities, UNMIL was also to pay 'particular attention to vulnerable groups including refugees, returning refugees and internally displaced persons, women, children, and demobilized child soldiers'.⁵³

⁴⁵ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(i).

⁴⁶ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(o).

⁴⁷ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(n).

⁴⁸ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(q).

⁴⁹ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(p).

⁵⁰ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, para. 3(r).

⁵¹ United Nations, SC Res. 1638, 11 November 2005, para. 1.

⁵² United Nations, SC Res. 1626, 19 September 2005, para. 5.

⁵³ United Nations, SC Res. 1509, 19 September 2003, para. 3(l).

3.2. UNMIL's Key Characteristics: Size of Force, Locations, Spread and Depth

UNMIL achieved a significant level of depth, spread and locations throughout Liberia during the transitional period. At one point UNMIL was the largest UN peace operation deployed anywhere in the world, with more than 15,000 uniformed military personnel (including troops and military observers), more than 1,000 civilian police, more than 700 international civilian staff, more than 800 local staff and more than 300 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs). This substantial peace operation was deployed in a country which, with 111,369 square kilometres (43,000 sq. miles), is roughly the same size as Honduras or Cuba. One reason for such an extensive deployment in a relatively small country lay in Liberia's complex geography and weak national infrastructure. It is a densely forested country subject to a large annual rainfall of approximately 240 inches per year. Liberia's hilly, forested and frequently wet terrain makes it difficult to build and maintain effective road and transport networks. Nevertheless, UNMIL managed to establish some form of military presence in all Liberian provinces from a relatively early stage. While the Mission's civilian activities pivoted around the major population centres, and in particular the capital Monrovia, there was nevertheless at least some UNMIL civilian presence in every location where uniformed military personnel were deployed.

3.3. UNMIL's Key Stakeholders

UNMIL's stakeholders included a blend of national actors, the Liberian diaspora, international organisations, major powers, international non-government organisations, neighbouring countries and troop-contributing countries.

National Stakeholders

After decades of violent conflict, the general Liberian population had a strong interest in the return and maintenance of peace and stability. Actors with a particular stake in the peace included the former fighting factions, namely the ex-Government of Liberia, LURD and MODEL, all of which submitted to an extensive disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation exercise. The direct political interests of these parties were engaged and addressed by allocating a substantial slice of the transitional government pie to each, in

the form of a proportion of the seats in the transitional legislature.⁵⁴ The NTGL as a whole also had a major interest in UNMIL's success. Although from time to time members of the NTGL were critical of UNMIL and other international actors (see, e.g., discussion in Part IV on the influences *on* UNMIL), on the whole relations between UNMIL and the transitional authorities were positive. Other representative stakeholders included business umbrella groups and civil society organisations.

Major Powers

The United States and Nigeria represented two powers with a strong interest in the situation in Liberia. As the discussion in Section 2 illustrates, the US connection goes back to the founding of Liberia, and throughout the country's existence US corporations and governments have invested in and profited from Liberian commerce. Liberia's flag is strikingly reminiscent of the US stars and stripes, except that it has one 'Lone Star' rather than 50. Indeed, Liberia has even been referred to as 'America's fifty-first state'.⁵⁵ Nigeria's connection is also clear. As the major power belonging to ECOWAS, a strong ECOMIL and UNMIL troop-contributing country, a fellow Anglophone nation and a strong trading partner, Nigeria had a very direct interest in restoring stability and prosperity to Liberia.

Neighbouring Countries

Other countries with a particular interest in UNMIL's performance included Liberia's neighbours, the similarly Anglophone Sierra Leone to the north and two other francophone neighbours, Guinea to the north-east and Côte d'Ivoire to the west. All of these neighbours also belonged to ECOWAS and all had experienced destabilising conflict of some degree or another that was not unrelated to the situation in Liberia. Charles Taylor had notoriously sponsored conflict in Sierra Leone, strongman and there was a risk that conflict would soon erupt and the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire has been particularly unstable, with frequent reports of mercenary fighters plying their on either side of the boundary as opportunities for conflict waxed and waned.

⁵⁴ CPA, above note 25, annex 2 (allocating seats in the National Transitional Legislative Assembly) and annex 4 (allocating the most important positions in cabinet and public corporations and agencies).

⁵⁵ See the film *Liberia: An Uncivil War* (Directed by Jonathan Stack & James Brabazon, Gabriel Films, 2004).

Troop-Contributing Countries (TCCs)

TCCs also possessed a clear interest in UNMIL. Through the period of analysis UNMIL's TCCs included Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ireland, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sweden, and Ukraine. China and Jordan also made non-troop contributions to UNMIL's military presence, taking the form of an engineering and medical company, respectively.

International and Regional Organisations

The most direct international organisation stakeholders were the UN Security Council, UN Secretariat and other UN programs and agencies with activities relating to Liberia. Beyond these UN entities, ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) also had a particular interest and presence in Liberia. ECOWAS had stepped into the breach to deploy an initial peacekeeping force, ECOMIL, between Charles Taylor's departure into exile in Nigeria and the eventual deployment of UNMIL itself. Moreover, ECOWAS appointed and supported a mediator for the Liberian peace process initiated by the CPA. At various critical moments during the transitional peace process the Office of the ECOWAS Mediator was called upon to step in and engage in conflict resolution. The AU's role was less central, but it maintained a close watching brief on events in Liberia and it deployed elections monitors for the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections. The European Union (EU) also maintained a presence in Monrovia that centred on donor issues.

International Non-Governmental Organisations

A range of humanitarian INGOs were present in Liberia during the transitional peace process, including the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) and Medical Experts on the Frontline (Merlin). A number of other INGOs, including the International Crisis Group (ICG), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), frequently deployed staff to Liberia to undertake fact-finding and contribute to developments in their fields of interest. For instance, the ICTJ consulted closely with relevant authorities concerning the statute and operations of the Liberian TRC.

The Liberian Diaspora

The Liberian diaspora was an important stakeholder group with strong national and international connections. Its population numbered approximately 1 million people during the transitional peace period, which was

significant as the total population in Liberia was approximately 3 million. The most influential elements of the Liberian Diaspora were located in the US, numbering approximately 500,000. The Diaspora pursued various initiatives designed to improve the situation in Liberia, including floating a new constitutional process – something that was mooted but did not materialise during the transitional period due to fears that it might destabilise rather than catalyse, the transitional peace process.⁵⁶

4. Influences on UNMIL

This section surveys various influences *on* UNMIL, including national support, the importance of maintaining Liberian sovereignty, previous UN peacekeeping history in Liberia and United States support for effective action in Liberia, as well as the intensity of conflict.

4.1. National Support

During the final months of the Liberian civil war there were frequent calls both from within and beyond Liberia for the deployment of a UN peace operation to halt the bloodshed. A scene from the film *Liberia: An Uncivil War*, shot during early-2003 as rebel groups advanced on and laid siege to Monrovia, graphically illustrates the extent to which average Liberians were eager for peacekeepers to arrive. In early-2003 there was a strange game of ‘chicken’ between then US President George W. Bush and then Liberian President Charles Taylor. Bush stated firmly that peacekeepers would only be deployed once Taylor had left Liberia. Taylor, for his part, equally firmly refused to depart Liberia until peacekeepers had arrived on Liberian soil. During this period rumours circulated that agreement had been reached and the film captures a sizeable group of Liberians dancing and singing on the streets, rejoicing in the false knowledge that peacekeepers were on their way.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ An All Liberian Conference was held from 14-16 April 2005 in Baltimore by the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA). The conference brochure listed the following key conference objective: ‘to discuss national reconciliation, peace, reform, and also to set the stage for the formulation of a national consensus for major reforms leading to the building of a sustainable peace, democracy, and national economic development, and post elections governance for Liberia’.

⁵⁷ See: *Liberia: An Uncivil War*.

4.2. The Importance of Maintaining Liberian Sovereignty

These calls for UN peacekeepers were formalised in the CPA, which requested the deployment of a UN peace operation to help implement its provisions.⁵⁸ Yet despite the clear desire for a peace operation, there were limits to the type of deployment Liberians would accept. Despite its troubled past, Liberia was proud of its heritage both as the oldest Republic in Africa and as a country that had never been subject to white European colonial domination. Thus it would have been unthinkable to suspend the country's sovereignty and place it, however temporarily, in the hands of a UN peace operation. UNMIL was therefore less ambitious than the transitional administrations deployed by the Security Council just a few years previously in Kosovo and Timor Leste, which had temporarily assumed practically all of the tasks of government. Its mandate focused on maintaining peace and stability and supporting Liberian authorities to re-establish government administration, rather than on assuming full executive responsibility for such administration.

4.3. Previous UN Peacekeeping History in Liberia and United States Support

Although the scope of UNMIL's activities was less ambitious than those of UN transitional administrations such as UNMIK and UNTAET, its mandate was nevertheless quite broad, representing the peacekeeping cutting-edge at the time in terms of multidimensional, integrated peace operations. At one point UNMIL's authorised troop-level of 15,000 made it the largest UN peace operation anywhere in the world. The scale of troops and breadth of responsibilities directly reflected two strong influences. First, there was the fact that the UN had previously deployed a peace operation to Liberia. As noted in Section 2, UNOMIL had overseen elections in the mid-1990s, yet its intervention had manifestly failed to prevent the return of conflict. There is little doubt that this fact weighed heavily on the minds of those crafting the mandate for a new operation in Liberia. The second, and perhaps more important, influence on UNMIL's size and scope was the strong historical relationship between Liberia and the United States. This relationship guaranteed critical support of the most powerful permanent member of the UN Security Council for a sizeable troop level and a complex, multidimensional peacekeeping mandate.

⁵⁸) CPA, above note 25, Art. IV(1) (requesting the UN to 'deploy a United Nations Chapter VII force in the Republic of Liberia to support the transitional government and to assist in the implementation of [the CPA]').

4.4. *The Intensity of the Conflict*

Although Liberia represented a situation where there was a genuine peace to keep, UNMIL's size and the scope of its mandate reflected the high intensity of past conflict, the strong potential for conflict to recur, and the scale of the challenges facing post-conflict Liberia. The potential sources of conflict were both internal and external. Internal threats came from those who had lost the most in the transition to peace, including the thousands of demobilised fighters who no longer had a clear purpose nor a steady flow of income, as well as former members of Charles Taylor's administration who had not received a slice of the CPA pie. Externally, Liberia's three direct neighbours were each in various states of instability. Sierra Leone, to Liberia's north, had itself recently emerged from a gruesome civil war and while it had travelled further along the post-conflict peacebuilding road, its peacetime gains remained fragile. Guinea, to Liberia's northeast, had experienced a substantial period of stability under the same President, but he was ageing and his death or departure from the presidency would likely trigger widespread civil conflict. Meanwhile Côte d'Ivoire, to Liberia's east, was in the midst of its own civil war, which threatened to destabilise its neighbours. UNMIL's parameters were also influenced by the scale of the challenges facing Liberia as a direct consequence of the scale of the conflict's intensity. Almost all of the country's infrastructure had been destroyed during the civil war, meaning that basic roads and services had to be rebuilt from scratch.

5. **The Influences of UNMIL: Pursuing Mission Goals**

In February 2006 a UN inter-departmental assessment mission visited Liberia to initiate planning for what the Secretary-General termed UNMIL's 'peace consolidation phase'.⁵⁹ The assessment mission concluded that UNMIL had 'completed many aspects of its initial mandate'. These 'completed' objectives are broadly speaking those that fall within Diehl & Druckman's core mission goals and they form the focus of evaluation in sub-section 5.1. At the same time, however, the assessment mission warned that the security situation in Liberia and its neighbouring countries remained 'fragile' and various tasks

⁵⁹ For discussion of the mission and its findings, see: United Nations, *Tenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2006/159, March 2006 in particular, paras. 15–55.

remained to be completed in order to ensure sustainable peace and stability.⁶⁰ The vast majority of this unfinished business related to Diehl & Druckman's non-traditional and peacebuilding mission goals, which are evaluated in subsections 5.2 and 5.3, respectively.

5.1. Pursuit of Core Mission Goals: Violence Abatement, Conflict Containment, Conflict Settlement and Organizational Effectiveness

As UNMIL was deployed into a post-conflict environment and in response to a request from all parties formalised in the CPA, there was no need to settle an ongoing conflict. UNMIL's focus thus lay on managing threats to the peace rather than halting or containing existing conflict. In terms of the core mission goals of violence abatement and conflict containment, there was clearly an improvement in general security during the transitional period, as compared with the situation prior to the conclusion of the CPA and the deployment of UNMIL. A Liberian public opinion survey, conducted in Liberia and published in January 2006, showed that 94% of respondents considered that the Liberian security situation had improved under UNMIL's deployment.⁶¹ Moreover, a total of 91% rated the work of UN peacekeepers as good (41.3%) or very good (49.9%) in terms of making them feel safer.⁶² In terms of its explicitly mandated 'core' mission tasks, UNMIL successfully monitored the implementation of the ceasefire; liaised with the field headquarters of all the parties' military forces; supported the CPA's Joint Monitoring Committee; and provided security at key government installations.⁶³

In terms of the remaining core goal of organizational effectiveness, UNMIL ensured the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel and acted swiftly to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. UNMIL maintained a Quick Reaction Force (QRF), provided alternately by Sweden and Ireland, which took urgent and timely action on several occasions to defuse rising tensions. In December 2003, when the first attempt to demobilise former fighters encountered difficulties, UNMIL forces swiftly stepped in with a show of strength to ensure that the situation did not get out of hand.

⁶⁰ United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 20.

⁶¹ Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey*, above note 2, 5, 11.

⁶² Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey*, above note 5, 12.

⁶³ See United Nations, *Tenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, above note 59, paras. 15–55.

In October 2004 a property dispute between neighbours of different ethnic backgrounds quickly escalated into violent, ethnically based riots, pitting Christians against predominantly Muslim Mandingos. The riots left nineteen dead, two hundred injured and caused the destruction of several Monrovia churches, mosques and residential and commercial properties.⁶⁴ Yet despite this substantial loss of life and property the conflict would have escalated further and caused greater destruction if UNMIL's QRF and other troops had not stepped in to take robust action to restore order.⁶⁵

The UN Security Council also took additional action designed to maintain stability, applying a regime of targeted sanctions measures against both Liberia and individuals considered to pose a threat to the transitional peace. These measures included an arms embargo (upon the sale of arms to Liberia) and diamond and timber sanctions (against the purchase of diamonds and timber from Liberia), as well as a travel ban and assets freeze against individuals considered to pose a threat to peace and security in Liberia.⁶⁶

Table 1. Core Mission Goals in Liberia (2003–6)

Goal	Measures of Progress	Assessment
Violence abatement	General support of all actors for transitional peace process	Success
	Swift response to incidents of civil unrest	Success
Conflict containment	Management of external (cross-border) threats to the peace	Success
	Management of internal (Liberian) threats to the peace	Success
Conflict settlement	N/A	Peace agreement already achieved
Organizational effectiveness	Strong protection of UN staff	Success

⁶⁴ United Nations, *Fifth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2004/972, 17 December 2004, paras. 2–5.

⁶⁵ United Nations, S/2004/972, para. 4.

⁶⁶ For the arms embargo, travel ban and timber and diamond sanctions, see: SC Res. 1521 (2003). For the assets freeze, see SC Res. 1532 (2003). For analysis of the Security Council's use of sanctions against Liberia, see Jeremy Matam Farrall, *United Nations Sanctions and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Appendix 2.

5.2. Pursuit of Non-Traditional Goals: Elections, Democratization, Humanitarian Assistance, DDR(R) and Human Rights Protection

Election Support

The history books will record the Liberian transitional peace period as ending remarkably successfully. The major objectives of the CPA, namely the implementation of a peaceful transitional period culminating in the holding of democratic elections, with a smooth transfer of power to a democratically-elected President, were all achieved. On 16 January 2006 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was sworn in as President, amidst joyful celebrations. Liberians are justifiably proud of the fact that they provided Africa's very first democratically-elected female President. Indeed, this achievement is not just impressive in African terms, as many western countries are yet to elect female leaders.

The successful conduct of elections and smooth transfer of power are strong indications that the transitional peace process was a success. 94% of respondents to the 2006 public opinion survey rated UNMIL's work in assisting the 2005 elections as good (22%) or very good (72.3%).⁶⁷ They also reflect important milestones along the road to building democracy. Yet the 2005 electoral process withstood some hairy moments.⁶⁸ The logistical challenges of organising elections were formidable. Much of Liberia was inaccessible by road and where roads did exist, they tended to be unsealed and poorly maintained. In addition to this, Liberia's average annual rainfall is more than 200 inches, yet both the 1984 Liberian Constitution and the CPA stipulated that elections must be held in October, which lies in the wet season. Moreover, Liberia's voting register had to be compiled from scratch and the political landscape was changing fast, rendering the registration of candidates and parties a difficult task too. Given these logistical challenges, it is an impressive achievement that elections took place at all.

Yet on the whole each of these challenges was met. Between 25 April and 21 May 2005, 1.3 million Liberians were registered to vote in a countrywide voter registration exercise.⁶⁹ This was approximately twice the number that had registered to vote in the previous elections in 1997.⁷⁰ The political party

⁶⁷ Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey*, above note 2, 6, 17.

⁶⁸ For an excellent overall assessment of the 2005 Liberian electoral process, see: European Union, *Final Report of the EU Election Observation Mission* (Brussels: European Union, February 2006).

⁶⁹ United Nations, *Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2005/391, 16 June 2005, para. 38.

⁷⁰ *Final Report of the EU Election Observation Mission*, above note 68, 6.

registration process ultimately led to the registration of twenty-two political parties, with an additional eight parties contesting under the umbrella of two alliances and one coalition.⁷¹ On 12 August 762 candidates were approved to stand for election, including 22 contenders for president, 22 for vice president, 206 for the 30 Senate seats and 512 for the 64 House of Representatives seats.⁷²

The final threat to the smooth running of elections lay in the potential for candidates who did not achieve the results they anticipated to reject the outcome and call on their supporters to undertake action to subvert efforts to effect a peaceful transition to the new administration. The UN Secretary-General reported that voting in the first-round presidential and parliamentary elections, held on 11 October, was ‘orderly and peaceful’.⁷³ Voter turnout was 74.9% and no serious security incidents were reported. The election was closely monitored, by 436 international electoral observers, 35,000 representatives of Liberian political parties and independent candidates and 3,600 representatives of 46 Liberian civilian society groups. The reports issued by all observer groups characterised the elections as ‘free, fair, transparent and well-administered’.⁷⁴ As none of the presidential candidates achieved more than 50% in the first-round, a run-off election was scheduled for 8 November, to be contested by the two candidates who had received the highest proportion of votes: Mr. George Weah, of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), the international soccer star and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, and Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, formerly a Senior Official at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) who had even more recently served as the Chairperson of the Governance Reform Commission created by the CPA. In the first-round, Mr. Weah received 28.3% and Mrs Sirleaf 19.8%.⁷⁵

Campaigning for the 8 November run-off election was largely peaceful, although Weah followers created tension by circulating rumours that their candidate had in fact won over 60% of the vote in the first round.⁷⁶ The election itself was observed by 302 international electoral observers, as well as

⁷¹ United Nations, *Eighth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2005/560, 1 September 2005, para. 3.

⁷² *Final Report of the EU Election Observation Mission*, above note 68, pp. 6-7.

⁷³ For a summary of events on the first-round and run-off election days, see: United Nations, *Ninth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2005/764, 7 December 2005, paras. 5-13.

⁷⁴ United Nations, S/2005/764, para. 5.

⁷⁵ United Nations, S/2005/764, para. 8.

⁷⁶ United Nations, S/2005/764, para. 9.

3,583 national observers. The preliminary assessments of these observers described the run-off election as generally free, fair and transparent.⁷⁷ However, as the NEC began to release the results on 9 November, the CDC alleged that it had evidence of “massive and systematic” fraud during the run-off election.⁷⁸ On 10 November, the party submitted its complaints to the NEC and filed a petition with the Supreme Court seeking the suspension of the ballot counting.⁷⁹ The NEC heard the complaints in open session, but the CDC’s allegations were not substantiated.⁸⁰ Thus on 23 November the NEC announced the final results, namely that Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf had obtained 59.4 % of the vote, compared to Mr. Weah’s 40.6%. Voter turnout was lower than for the first-round, with 61 % of registered voters participating.⁸¹

Some other strange events also transpired, such as the election to parliament of a number of people who were subject to UN Security Council sanctions in the form of an assets freeze and travel ban, such as Mr. Edwin Snowe. To add insult to injury, the newly constituted House of Representatives also elected Mr. Snowe its President Pro Tempore.⁸² But perhaps the most bizarre outcome of the elections was successful return to the Liberian political scene of Prince Yormie Johnson, the very same Prince Johnson who had murdered the sitting President Samuel Doe fifteen years earlier. Johnson had spent the intervening years in Ghana, where he had trained and practiced as a religious minister, before returning to Liberia to stand for election to the Senate. He was ultimately elected as a Senator for Nimba County.

Democratization

While UNMIL had a clear mandate to support elections, it did not have an explicit mandate to promote democratization more broadly. Nevertheless, UNMIL could be criticised for some actions and omissions relating the manner in which democracy promotion was pursued in Liberia. At a basic level, it is interesting that there was little serious effort to reconsider, and if necessary

⁷⁷ United Nations, S/2005/764, para. 10.

⁷⁸ This perspective was captured by the 2006 public opinion survey. While 90% of respondents were positive about the manner in which UNMIL assisted the 2005 elections, one of the negative responses captured was that ‘October elections were very free and fair. November elections had signs of fraudulence’: Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey*, above note 2, 23.

⁷⁹ United Nations, S/2005/764, above note 73, para. 10.

⁸⁰ United Nations, S/2005/764, para. 12.

⁸¹ United Nations, S/2005/764, para. 13.

⁸² United Nations, *Tenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2006/159, 14 March 2006, para. 3.

revamp, the Liberian Constitution. As noted above, efforts were undertaken by members of the Liberian Diaspora, particularly in the United States, to trigger meaningful reflection on the need for a new constitution. But the NTGL and UNMIL were lukewarm on the idea. One fear was that opening up a discussion on constitutional reform could be time-consuming and might lead to efforts to delay the date for holding elections. The upshot was that even after the return of a democratically-elected government, the country continued to be governed in accordance with a constitutive document that was drafted in 1984 – during Samuel Doe’s administration.⁸³ While that Constitution might be perceived to have greater legitimacy than its predecessors, it manifestly failed to prevent the emergence of prolonged civil war. Thus it is intriguing that the task of crafting a new document more in harmony with the contemporary aspirations of Liberian society was not considered more pressing.

It is also worth noting the complex impact of international engagement upon Liberian civil society. On the one hand, Liberian civil society benefited from a substantial injection of external funding, training and resources. On the other hand, however, the influx of powerful external actors such as UNMIL, other UN agencies and international non-government organisations created a high demand for experienced and well-educated national Liberian staff. Many talented members of Liberian civil society were thus actively recruited by these international actors, which could offer higher salaries and better working conditions. There was thus no small irony in the spectacle of actors such as UNMIL and UNDP working on programs to strengthen civil society when their recruitment processes had effectively decimated the ranks of Liberian civil society. Nevertheless, despite some of these negative, largely unintended consequences of the international intervention during the transitional peace process, the overall result was a positive one for democracy in Liberia. This outcome could not have been achieved without the enormous military and logistical support provided by a substantial peacekeeping operation.

Humanitarian Assistance

In terms of humanitarian assistance, UNMIL became one of the early ‘integrated’ UN peace operations. In practical terms this meant that the positions of UN Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator were brought

⁸³ For the text of the 1984 Constitution, see: http://www.onliberia.org/con_1984_1.htm#DetailedIndex.

within the UNMIL tent, along with many humanitarian actors who would traditionally have remained independent of the peace operation. The imposition of an integrated model was not uncontroversial. Some humanitarian actors felt that a consequence of being forced to move under the UNMIL umbrella, with its substantial military component and presence, would be compromised impartiality and an inability to provide humanitarian assistance without fear or favour might be compromised by becoming part of a UN operation. Yet on the whole the integrated model seemed to work relatively smoothly.

DDRR

UNMIL's DDRR program was ultimately successful, despite a rocky beginning. In December 2003 the first attempt to conduct a disarmament and demobilisation exercise almost backfired, when more than 12,000 former combatants presented themselves for disarmament.⁸⁴ A misunderstanding over the amount of benefits to be provided led disgruntled elements to cause disturbances for a number of days both at the disarmament site and throughout Monrovia. Eventually UNMIL brokered a deal that provided all the initial 12,000 ex-combatants with a small stipend, but the fledgling disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) program was suspended for five months.⁸⁵ Once it resumed the program, UNMIL disarmed and demobilized 101,495 combatants and collected and destroyed some 28,000 weapons, 34,000 unexploded ordnance and 6.5 million rounds of small arms ammunition.⁸⁶ By June 2006, 66,000 of the demobilized ex-combatants had completed or were participating in training and education programmes funded through the UNDP-managed Trust Fund and through bilateral arrangements.⁸⁷

Human Rights Protection

The Liberian transitional process was characterised more by symbolism than concrete progress in the protection and promotion of human rights. The clear example of a failure to achieve concrete progress in promoting and protecting

⁸⁴ United Nations, *Second Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2004/229, 22 March 2004, para. 19.

⁸⁵ United Nations, S/2004/229.

⁸⁶ United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 21.

⁸⁷ United Nations, *Eleventh progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2006/376, 9 June 2006, para. 16.

human rights was the misadventure with the Independent National Human Rights Commission (INHRC). Although the INHRC had been envisaged by the CPA and formally established in theory, its operations were plagued by disagreements over appointments and undermined by a lack of financial and human resources.⁸⁸ Hence it was not functioning as planned by the end of the transitional peace period.

A prominent illustration of human rights symbolism was the swift signing of, ratification of, or accession to, multiple international human rights treaties. In December 2004 the Secretary-General reported that on 22 September 2004 alone, the Chairman of the NTGL had signed, ratified or acceded to eighteen international treaties, including the ICCPR, the ICESCR and the Rome Statue of the ICC, as well as optional Protocols to the ICCPR, CEDAW, the CRC, the CAT.⁸⁹

From one perspective, this sweeping, sign-us-up-fast approach suggested a commitment to becoming a good international citizen and at least an awareness of the important role that meaningful human rights obligations can play in opening new directions for post-conflict Liberia. But from another perspective, doubts might be raised about the sincerity of such a commitment to human rights or indeed about the NTGL's capacity to meaningfully implement the new obligations it had just assumed.⁹⁰ Rather, the action could be interpreted as an attempt to pay mere lip service to, or engage in meaningless ritualism concerning, the idea of human rights. From this perspective, the proof of the genuine commitment of Liberian authorities to human rights would come in the form of real action to protect and promote human rights. Thus the failure of the NTGL to create a functional INHRC during the transitional peace process undermines any human rights kudos gained from signing, ratifying and acceding to a raft of human rights treaties. Furthermore, valid questions might be raised about the appropriateness of a transitional government committing a future, legitimate and democratically-elected government to such international treaty obligations.

⁸⁸ United Nations, *Fourteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL*, S/2007/151, 15 March 2007, paras. 38-39.

⁸⁹ United Nations, S/2004/972, para. 46 and Annex II (containing a full list of all eighteen instruments).

⁹⁰ See Helen Durham, 'From Paper to Practice: The Role of Treaty Ratification Post-conflict' in Brett Bowden, Hilary Charlesworth and Jeremy Farrall (eds.), *The Role of International Law in Rebuilding Societies after Conflict: Great Expectations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 177-197, 189.

Table 2. Non-Traditional Mission Goals in Liberia (2003–2006)

Goal	Measures of Progress	Assessment
Election support	Voter registration (1.3 million)	Success (2x1997)
	Voter turnout (74.9%)	Success
	Manageable size of polling place (<600)	Success
	Effective third-party monitoring:	Success
	International: 436	
	Liberian political parties: 35,000 people Liberian NGOs: 3,600 people from 46 NGOs	
Democratization	Legitimate elections	Success
	New, multi-party political system First periodic elections due	
HA	Delivery	Qualified success
	Reaching most vulnerable	
DDRR	Quality of life	
	Demilitarization	Success
HRP	Reintegration	Qualified success
	Widespread ratifications (103; 18 on one day – 22 Sept 2004)	Success in name
	Creation of INHRC	Failure
	Creation of TRC	Failure

5.3. Pursuit of Peacebuilding Goals: Local Security, Rule of Law, Local Governance and Restoration

Local Security

UNMIL unquestionably made an effective contribution to peace and stability in Liberia by virtue of its sheer troop size. A critical question in Liberia during and following the transitional period was therefore what type of armed forces would be necessary to maintain security within Liberia upon the eventual withdrawal of UNMIL. Both the CPA and UNMIL's mandate envisaged the demobilization and restructuring of the former Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Demobilization of the AFL was completed in November 2005 and the process of recruiting and restructuring the new armed forces began on 18 January 2006.⁹¹ It was carried out by the United States upon the request of

⁹¹ United Nations, S/2006/159, paras. 25-26.

the new Johnson Sirleaf government and the program proposed an overall strength of 2,000 Liberian military personnel.⁹² Writing in March 2006 the UN Secretary-General observed that ‘a number of factors will need to be carefully balanced in determining its eventual size, including the ability of the Government to financially sustain a professional and well-equipped army, the national requirements of the country and potential external threats’.⁹³

Rule of Law

The plight of the rule of law prior to the transitional peace process was starkly portrayed by the UN Secretary-General in his September 2003 report proposing the establishment of UNMIL.⁹⁴ There the Secretary-General noted that Liberian judicial institutions had suffered ‘an almost complete breakdown as a result of years of conflict and the disregard of the Taylor Government for the rule of law’.⁹⁵ The Liberian police force had functioned as ‘an instrument of repression’, with corruption endemic.⁹⁶ The judiciary had also suffered from corruption and political interference and had lost public confidence; courts were not functioning as court infrastructure had been destroyed or looted; and prisons throughout the country were empty and/or dilapidated.⁹⁷ The armed conflict in Liberia had also resulted in serious violations of human rights, including deliberate and arbitrary killings, disappearances, torture, widespread rape and sexual violence against women, girls and boys, arbitrary arrests and detention, and the use of child soldiers.⁹⁸

By late 2006, almost a year after the inauguration of the Sirleaf presidency, the UN Secretary-General was reporting that there had been substantial progress in restructuring the Liberian police force. UNMIL had helped to train more than 2,500 new Liberian police recruits and assisted with planning for the full restructuring of the Liberian police.⁹⁹ With respect to the judicial system, UNMIL had supported reform of the vetting and appointment process for judges, assisted the Liberian Government to draft and enact laws relating to rape, juries and judicial independence, and conducted comprehensive legal

⁹²) United Nations, S/2006/159.

⁹³) United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 26.

⁹⁴) United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia, S/2003/875, 11 September 2003.

⁹⁵) United Nations, S/2003/875, para. 24.

⁹⁶) United Nations, S/2003/875.

⁹⁷) United Nations, S/2003/875.

⁹⁸) United Nations, S/2003/875, para. 26.

⁹⁹) United Nations, S/2007/151, para. 17.

training for members of the legal and judicial system.¹⁰⁰ The Mission had also supported efforts to develop a Law Reform Commission.¹⁰¹ In the corrections sector, UNMIL facilitated the opening of eight prisons and the recruitment and training of dozens of corrections officers.¹⁰² In the field of human rights, major achievements included the establishment of the TRC and the Independent National Human Rights Commission.¹⁰³

Yet despite these achievements, Liberia's rule of law institutions and mechanisms remained 'fragile and underdeveloped'.¹⁰⁴ Despite progress in training new police recruits, the overall restructuring program was delayed due to difficulties in demobilising and reintegrating members of the old Liberian police force. The deployment of police outside the capital was being hampered by a lack of basic infrastructure and equipment.¹⁰⁵ There were still few prisons across Liberia and a dearth of qualified and well-trained corrections officers, resulting in prolonged pre-trial detention periods in overcrowded, substandard prisons.¹⁰⁶ It was also proving difficult to retain trained corrections officers, who could earn higher salaries in the police and armed forces.¹⁰⁷

In terms of the legal system, there was still a severe shortage throughout the country of court facilities and trained judges and magistrates.¹⁰⁸ As a result, traditional forms of justice, including both state-sponsored and non-state-sponsored varieties, tended to predominate outside the capital.¹⁰⁹ External rule of law interventions had tended either to be ignorant of or to pay little attention to these customary forms of justice.¹¹⁰ Although the customary justice systems themselves were susceptible to corrupt and inequitable practices, they had provided a viable short-term mechanism through which to resolve conflict in remote areas.¹¹¹ Low-level judicial corruption and inefficiency were

¹⁰⁰) United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 29.

¹⁰¹) United Nations, S/2006/958, para. 39.

¹⁰²) United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 29.

¹⁰³) United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 28.

¹⁰⁴) United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 30.

¹⁰⁵) United Nations, S/2007/151, para. 21.

¹⁰⁶) United Nations, S/2006/958, para. 28.

¹⁰⁷) United Nations, S/2006/958, para. 42.

¹⁰⁸) United Nations, S/2006/958, para. 36.

¹⁰⁹) International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Resurrecting the Justice System* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, April 2006), pp. 6-10; Ezekiel Pajibo, *Traditional Justice Mechanisms: the Liberian Case* (Stockholm: International Institute for Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2008).

¹¹⁰) Pajibo, *Traditional Justice Mechanisms*, p. 6.

¹¹¹) Pajibo, *Traditional Justice Mechanisms*, p. 10.

also undermining the delivery of the formal justice system,¹¹² and these shortcomings were in turn undermining the enjoyment of human rights.¹¹³

Local Governance

Two areas of local governance bear emphasis, namely the extension of state authority throughout the country and countering corruption. In terms of the extension of state authority, during the transitional period UNMIL facilitated the return of over 2,200 Government officials to the Liberian counties.¹¹⁴ However, the actual capacity and authority of the Government remained limited in most parts of the country. Moreover, the pace of return of state administration beyond Monrovia was hampered by the dilapidated condition of Government structures, the absence of basic services and irregular payment of civil servant salaries. In an attempt to address this, UNMIL's quick impact projects had supported the construction of three branches of the Central Bank in Tubmanburg, Zwedru and Voinjama, which allowed civil servant salaries to be paid in some counties.

In terms of the problem of corruption, the tenure of the NTLA during the transitional period was punctuated by various allegations of serious corruption. The most prominent instance occurred in March 2005, when four influential NTLA members were suspended after being implicated in a corruption inquiry.¹¹⁵ These members included the Speaker, Mr. George Dweh, a former LURD power-broker, who threatened to storm the NTLA if he was not reinstated. Yet corruption was not confined to members of the NTLA. In 2005 there was a series of revelations of corruption by government officials, causing the substantial loss of revenue and limiting the amount of government funds that were available to spend on recovery, reconstruction and essential services. In July 2005 the NTGL Chairman suspended the Commissioner of the Bureau of Maritime Affairs and dismissed the representative of Liberia to the International Maritime Organisation, who were alleged to have misappropriated more than \$4 million.¹¹⁶ At the same time, audits undertaken separately by both ECOWAS and the EU also revealed serious irregularities in the management of Liberian revenue.¹¹⁷ These findings led to the creation of the

¹¹² United Nations, S/2007/151, para. 33.

¹¹³ United Nations, S/2007/151.

¹¹⁴ United Nations, S/2006/159, para. 27.

¹¹⁵ United Nations, S/2005/391, para. 10.

¹¹⁶ United Nations, S/2005/560, para. 4.

¹¹⁷ United Nations, S/2005/560, para. 5.

Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP), which sought to improve the governance and monitoring of five key state-owned enterprises in control of substantial amounts of state revenue – the National Port Authority, the Roberts International Airport, the Liberia Petroleum Refining Corporation, the Forestry Development Agency and the Bureau of Maritime Affairs.¹¹⁸

Restoration

The first aspect of restoration, reconciliation and transformation addressed here is that of transitional justice, or as Diehl and Druckman characterise it, redressing past crimes. The most dramatic incident in this respect was the March 2006 apprehension of former President Charles Taylor in Nigeria, and his subsequent transfer to Monrovia, where he was detained by UNMIL and then transferred on to the Special Court for Sierra Leone of former President Charles Taylor, to face charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law in Sierra Leone.¹¹⁹ However, efforts to address past crimes through transitional justice institutions stalled during the transitional period. Although the TRC had been formally established in theory, in practice its operations were plagued by disagreements over appointments and undermined by a lack of financial and human resources.¹²⁰

The second aspect of restoration covered here is UNMIL's support for the return to their homes of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). By the end of the transitional period UNHCR had assisted 51,159 refugees to return, while 182,146 registered refugees remained in various countries in

¹¹⁸ See: *Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program* (9 September 2005, signed between the NTGL, represented by the Chairman and the Ministers of Justice and Economic Planning and Development, and the International Contact Group for Liberia, represented by its then two Co-Chairmen), pp. 2-3. For further discussion and analysis of the GEMAP, see Renata Dwan and Laura Bailey, *Liberia's Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program* (New York, United Nations Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, 2006); Jolyon Ford and Kyla Tienhaara, *Too Little, Too Late? International Oversight of Contract Negotiations in Post-conflict Liberia* (Issues Paper No. 12/2009, ANU Centre for International Governance and Justice, Canberra, 2009), especially pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁹ United Nations, S/2006/376, para. 2.

¹²⁰ United Nations, S/2007/151, paras. 38-39. The TRC did eventually commence operations some time after the transitional period and it was quite industrious. Its final report, outlining substantial findings and making far-reaching recommendations, was published in 2009. It is available at: <https://www.trcofliberia.org/reports/final>.

West Africa.¹²¹ To that point 299,486 IDPs had also received return assistance, while a further 24,336 were awaiting return packages.¹²²

Summary Table 3. Peace-Building Mission Goals in Liberia (2003–2006)

Goal	Measures of Progress	Assessment
Local security	Local protection	Partial
	Freedom of movement	Partial
	Violent crime	Partial
Rule of law	Legal framework	Mixed
	Judicial operation	Mixed
	Public acceptance	Mixed
	Prison system	Mixed
Local governance	Control of military	Mixed
	Government capacity	Mixed
	Corruption	Mixed
Reconciliation	Redressing past crimes	Failure
	Refugees and IDPs	Partial

Conclusion

The exercise of applying Diehl & Druckman's evaluation framework to UNMIL's activities during Liberia's transitional peace period yields several interesting findings. During the transitional period UNMIL was most effective at pursuing and achieving its core mission goals, including in particular maintaining security and preventing the escalation of major threats to peace and stability. It also performed quite well in terms of organizational effectiveness, enabling security and freedom of movement of UN personnel, and acting swiftly at key moments to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

UNMIL's success-rate in terms of non-traditional goals was also quite strong, particularly in the areas of elections support and democratization. UNMIL's efforts to undertake humanitarian assistance and implement DDRR were largely successful, although they encountered genuine challenges along

¹²¹) United Nations, *S/2006/151*, para. 11.

¹²²) United Nations, *S/2006/151*.

the way and additional work remained to be done at the end of the transitional period to bring these processes to a completely satisfactory close. There was less progress, however, in the area of human rights protection, where progress tended to be symbolic rather than substantive. A major shortcoming in this area, which in fairness was the primary responsibility of the transitional government rather than UNMIL itself, was the failure to establish the National Independent Human Rights Commission that had been mandated by the CPA.

The area where the most remained to be achieved by the end of the transitional period was the third and final category of mission goals, namely peacebuilding. This is not overly surprising, given that most of these goals are by their very nature long-term projects neither intended for nor suited to completion within a brief 3-year transitional window. In terms of local security, substantial progress had been achieved towards the restructuring and retraining of the Liberian Police, but the process of restructuring and retraining the Liberian armed forces was less advanced. Moreover, it was unclear to what extent these restructured police and military forces would be able to provide widespread security upon UNMIL's withdrawal. In relation to the rule of law, UNMIL's efforts focused on rebuilding rule of law institutions, such as the legal system, prisons and police. However, it is questionable to what extent UNMIL was able to succeed in promoting or fostering a broader culture of commitment to the rule of law. In the area of local governance, UNMIL facilitated some extension of state authority beyond Monrovia, yet the infrastructure and capacity of government in remote areas remained weak.

In terms of restoration, UNMIL helped facilitate the repatriation and return of a sizeable proportion of refugees and IDPs, yet the quality of life experienced by and opportunities available to those who had returned was variable. In the area of transitional justice, the failure to ensure that the Liberian TRC was operational and effective again symbolized a lack of commitment on the part of Liberian authorities to take meaningful steps to address past injustice.

So where does this evaluation of selective segments of the Liberian peacekeeping experience leave us in terms of the broader peacekeeping tapestry in Liberia and beyond? The picture painted here is of a largely successful peace operation. A basic lesson to be drawn from UNMIL's experience is that a large deployment in a small country is likely to be more successful than a modest deployment in a big country. Second, success is also more likely where there is deployment into an environment where the parties to conflict are genuinely committed to, and involved in implementation and governance of,

a comprehensive peace agreement. Third, the direct involvement of regional actors, at the bilateral, TCC and regional (or sub-regional) organisation levels, can be enormously helpful in consolidating the legitimacy and effectiveness of UN peace operations. These are all simple lessons that have been learned many times before, but it doesn't hurt to re-emphasize their importance.

A number of lessons can also be drawn from the experience of applying Diehl & Druckman's evaluation framework. The final shape and conclusions of peace operation evaluations will be determined to some extent by the prevalence and quality of data against which to measure the indicators of peace operation success, as well as the methodology employed to ensure that an evaluation is as robust and scientific as possible. Yet the task of quantifying and evaluating the success of peace operations is neither simple nor neutral. Ultimately even the most diligent attempts to produce evaluations that are as 'objective' and 'scientific' as possible cannot escape the politics inherent in the practice of conceiving, deploying and administering peace operations.

The most interesting questions, the toughest challenges, the most important activities for the purposes of sustaining long-term peace, often tend to defy quantification. How do we foster a genuine and lasting commitment to democracy and democratic principles that goes beyond the number of voters registered, the rush to elections, or the welcome declaration that elections were 'free and fair'? How do we encourage human rights promotion that leads to genuine protection of real people in the actual world, rather than merely adding lofty sounding words to dusty treaty annals or creating new institutions with insufficient resources and political buy-in to engage in meaningful human rights protection? How do we support the emergence of a commitment to and cultures of the rule of law that will ensure that long after we leave and our fragile western rule of law institutions have imploded, there remain some effective home-grown mechanisms of dispute resolution and principles of governance that promote lasting peace and prosperity?