

COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY-SECTOR REFORM: MAKING LIBERIA SAFE

David C. Gompert and Brooke Stearns*

Security-sector reform is critical for establishing stability in post-conflict African countries. From its first day in office, the Johnson-Sirleaf government made security-sector reform a high priority in Liberia, and the United Nations, the United States, and other supporters are helping Liberia build new police and armed forces. Yet Liberia and its partners need an overarching security-sector architecture and strategy. This article's analysis and recommendations toward that end may help not only Liberia but also other countries struggling to create effective, legitimate, coherent, and affordable security sectors.

The Need for a Clean Break with the Past

Liberia has become a poster child for the failure and rescue of an African country. Although a relatively peaceful, one-party state for most of its early history, Liberia has been marked by varying levels of civil unrest, persistent poverty, and corruption for nearly half a century. With the recent end of Liberia's protracted conflict and the pursuant democratic elections, Liberia is at a critical juncture with an opportunity to develop a stable, peaceful society. This article offers an architecture and strategy to develop a security sector with institutions that are effective against dangers, are legitimate in the eyes of Liberia's people

* David C. Gompert is a Senior Fellow at RAND with more than thirty years of experience in international security. In addition to having held a number of positions at the State Department, Mr. Gompert has served as a Senior Advisor for the National Security and Defense, Coalition Provisional Authority, Iraq; President of RAND Europe; Special Assistant to President George H. W. Bush; and Senior Director for Europe and Eurasia on the National Security Council staff. Mr. Gompert holds a bachelor of science degree in engineering from the United States Naval Academy and a master of public affairs degree from the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University.

Brooke Stearns is a RAND Doctoral Fellow in policy analysis. Ms. Stearns has more than five years of experience in international development and post-conflict reconstruction, including fieldwork in Liberia, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, and Bangladesh. Ms. Stearns has worked with several U.S. and African nongovernmental organizations and served as an international development researcher on USAID's Development Information Services project, where she focused on sub-Saharan Africa. Ms. Stearns holds a bachelor of art degree in international relations from Willamette University and a master's in international development and conflict resolution from Sciences Po in Paris, France.

and neighbors, fit and work together coherently, and are worth the cost. These reforms are crucial in facilitating Liberia's clean break with the past.

In the 1980s, Liberia was led by Samuel Doe, a young Krahn (one of Liberia's ethnic groups) with limited education whose military regime was incompetent, repressive, corrupt, and ethnically divisive. His system of patronage, primarily benefiting his fellow Krahn, led to large government pay raises, significant increases in the number of Liberians on government payrolls, and rising international debt. In December 1989, Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) invaded Liberia. With backing from Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, Taylor and his group of fewer than two hundred recruits from unemployed, lowly educated, and dissatisfied Liberians in Nimba County, which is in northern Liberia, started a civil war that eventually resulted in approximately two hundred thousand deaths and the displacement of one million Liberians (International Crisis Group 2004).

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) established the Economic Community's Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) as a peacekeeping mission, with support from Guinea, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Although ECOMOG initially succeeded in preventing Taylor from seizing Monrovia in 1990, its long-term effectiveness was limited. Taylor expanded the war into Sierra Leone territory and took over the Monrovia suburb of Paynesville. Taylor's NPFL cut off the water and electrical supplies to the capital. Guinea and Sierra Leone responded by supporting Doe. The NPFL began to divide, and one well-known member, Prince Johnson, broke off and formed his own rebel movement, the

Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). Despite ECOMOG's presence, Prince Johnson and INPFL captured and killed Doe in 1990.

A battle to seize Monrovia ensued, and a large number of refugees fled the country. New rebel groups, such as the United Liberian Movement for Democracy, formed and joined in the conflict. The United Liberian Movement for Democracy and ECOMOG succeeded in reducing the amount of territory under Taylor's control. Taylor responded by shifting from conventional assaults to surprise attacks on ECOMOG, which essentially "bombed" Taylor to the negotiating table.

In 1997, after several years of strife, Taylor was elected president of Liberia in a contest that was marred by some irregularities and conducted in a climate not entirely free from fear of renewed violence. His regime's unprecedented levels of brutality, corruption, incompetence, intrigue, and foreign adventures completely broke the already fragile Liberian spirit and economy. Taylor privatized the state's rural resources (such as the timber, diamond, and mining industries) with large gains among a select few and no investment in the state or social services for the Liberian people (Sesay 1999). To maintain control over the country and the various security forces, Taylor replaced Krahn Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) members with troops loyal to him and created new security forces reporting directly to him.

Armed rebel groups, particularly Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) opposed Taylor in a civil war that lasted several years. By the end of May 2003, LURD and MODEL had gained

control of more than 60 percent of Liberia's national territory (Pham 2004). Under mounting international, and particularly U.S., pressure, Taylor resigned in August 2003 and a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed. The CPA installed a National Transitional Government, chaired by Gyude Bryant, and the United Nations (UN) Security Council authorized a UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) that is 15,000 people strong.¹

Out of greed and paranoia, Taylor turned Liberians against one another and destabilized the Mano River Basin — invading Guinea, fomenting a horrific civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone, and exacerbating unrest in Côte d'Ivoire. The primary instrument of Taylor's strategy of death was Liberia's state army, police, and intelligence services.

After Taylor's ouster under U.S. pressure, Liberia experienced the deployment of UNMIL, demobilization of fighters, and transitional rule by a corrupt collection of hacks and warlords. The new democratically elected government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf faces monumental challenges of building a new Liberia on the political, physical, and moral rubble of the old. Along with the need for roads, schools, clean water, power, and health care, President Johnson-Sirleaf must also face the task of creating a new security sector. Thanks to the presence of UNMIL and support pledged by the United States, she has some time and resources to get it right. If not, chances are Liberia will descend back into turmoil.

President Johnson-Sirleaf has reached out for advice on how to proceed. The authors were members of a team from the RAND Corporation that has advised the Liberian government and its U.S. and UN partners on security-sector transformation.² This article

summarizes RAND's analysis and recommendations, which were presented to the Liberian president and her government in May 2006.³ While no two cases of security-sector reform are the same, the plan for Liberia may offer lessons for other troubled African states. In any case, it is important that Liberians, other Africans, and the international community as a whole understand what must be done to enable Liberia to provide for its national security and the safety of its people.

The institutions, forces, and practices of any nation's security sector should be measured against four criteria: coherence, legitimacy, effectiveness, and affordability. Taylor's security sector failed to meet any of those criteria. His security apparatus was meant to serve the regime, not the nation, and was designed, controlled, and used — rather, misused — by him, mainly against Liberia's people and neighbors. Even under new, able, and decent leadership, Liberia's old structures and ways are unworkable, wasteful, and confused; they enjoy neither the trust nor the cooperation of the Liberian people at this critical juncture. It follows that Liberia must make a clean break, adopting a new security architecture,⁴ forces, management structure, and law.

From its first day in office, the Johnson-Sirleaf government made security-sector transformation a high priority, and the United Nations, the United States, and others are helping Liberia build new police and armed forces. The current plan is to build a 3,500 member police force and a 2,000 member armed force. Under current plans, it is anticipated that all armed forces soldiers will have completed basic training by the end of 2008, and all police officers will have completed training in 2007.

What has been done so far to transform the Liberian security apparatus is valid and important. At the same time, Liberia and its partners need an overarching security architecture, accompanied by a strategy to create it. Otherwise, setting priorities will become increasingly difficult; gaps, redundancies, confusion, and political squabbling over responsibilities are likely. The sections that follow offer an architecture and strategy to give Liberians the security sector, and the peace, they need and deserve.

Security Threats

Our starting point is an integrated analysis of Liberia's security environment, which is complex, fluid, and fraught with risk. Although Liberia's internal security environment has been improved by the presence of UNMIL and the demobilization of Liberian fighting forces, this internal environment contains more certain and immediate dangers than the external one because of the serious potential for ex-combatants being organized by one or another faction or warlord in opposition to the new state. Taylor's legacy is a country still perilously close to the abyss of lawlessness — lawlessness that domestic enemies of democratic Liberia could be quick to exploit. Lawlessness undermines public confidence in democratic government. It can lead to an erosion of general respect for law and to larger internal security problems, insofar as armed groups believe they can exploit a void with little risk. Failure to provide basic public safety can spawn new gangs and militias. In addition, lawlessness deters investment, which is vital for the country's economic revival and ultimately for its stability and security. In sum, primary law enforcement must be a major and immediate concern of security-sector reform — one that the Liberian state itself must provide and must be seen as providing successfully.

The raw material for lawlessness in Liberia is its large pool of young men and boys whose only experience is fighting. Forty percent of the ex-combatant population consisted of males under the age of sixteen who have never attended school (MPRI 2004). If the rule of law and public safety are not established and maintained, odds are all too good that more severe domestic threats will arise. Political opportunists, warlords, or criminal figures may lure and organize ex-fighters into armed groups beyond the reach of, and ultimately endangering, the state. Because this could happen quickly, capabilities that strengthen dissuasion and preemption of internal threats are at a premium. Liberia's internal security environment will grow violent and chaotic if effective Liberian institutions and forces are not built and in operation by the time UNMIL begins to withdraw.

In turn, to the extent that internal security is not maintained, turmoil in Liberia is almost sure to aggravate regional security conditions, either by spilling over into Liberia's neighbors or by causing foreign actors to see opportunity in renewed Liberian violence. At the same time, one reason for cautious hope of a less violent regional environment is that Charles Taylor's Liberia was a major source of insecurity, unrest, and violence in the region. A democratic, effective, and responsible Liberia removes a major cause of regional instability. At the state level, neighbors should have no legitimate reason either to fear or to menace Liberia. If antagonism and conflict do arise, it is more likely to be because of difficulty in controlling border regions, some of which are rich in resources, against non-state enemies. However, as has often been the case in the past, Liberian territory could be used by rebel groups, possibly including Taylor loyalists, preparing to attack neighboring countries. Similarly, actors plotting against the Liberian state could easily operate in

neighboring countries. Liberia has porous borders with Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire. It is infeasible for Liberia to gain complete control of its borders, territory, coastline, and air space. The flow of people and goods across its borders and from the sea pose a serious security challenge, and monitoring the borders and coasts are crucial for both Liberia's security and its economic development.

Security Requirements

Liberia needs a national security concept to guide the formation and use of new forces and of new institutions to manage those forces based on the perceived threats, namely:

- Concentrating on known challenges of law enforcement and public safety
- Dissuading, deterring, and, if need be, defeating any organized internal threats that may arise
- Preparing to defend against external aggression by states or, more likely, non-state actors

Each element affects the others. Maintaining public safety will make it easier to prevent internal threats from coalescing. In turn, internal security will make external threats less likely. Preparing to defeat outside threats will limit the potential for internal dangers to exceed Liberia's security capabilities.

From this concept, specific core security functions can be derived, including:

- Regular policing
- Protecting transportation links, infrastructure, and natural resources

- Executive protection
- Preventing and responding to civil unrest
- Preventing and defeating organized armed internal opposition, up to and including full-blown insurgency
- Improving border and coastal security
- Responding to outright aggression
- Developing appropriate and mutually beneficial relationships with neighbors and other interested parties
- Collecting and analyzing intelligence to support these functions

Liberia's challenge, then, is to perform these core security functions in an effective, affordable, coherent, and legitimate way, which depends on cost-effective forces and sound government oversight.

New Security Forces

The building blocks of Liberia's new security sector are the forces that enforce laws, provide for public safety, and protect the nation. The criteria of coherence, legitimacy, effectiveness, and affordability cannot be met unless these building blocks are each well designed and fit together. The sizes, capabilities, roles, and relationships of these forces must be linked to the assessment of Liberia's security environment, and their adequacy must be tested against the integrated security concept and core security functions.

The largest and most crucial components of Liberia's security sector are the Liberian National Police (LNP) and the AFL. The former should be the country's main internal security force; the latter should embody the country's main capabilities for military combat. The size and capabilities of the LNP and the AFL largely determine the effectiveness, cost, and thus cost-effectiveness of Liberia's security sector. Their roles and missions and the relationship between them will largely determine how the new state provides security. Lack of clarity on missions risks duplication or gaps in capabilities, political contention, and operational failure.

The primary missions of the LNP should be (a) to prevent and fight crime and (b) to maintain public safety. These missions call for a light, but sizable, community-friendly police force as they require relatively high levels of manpower, but not extensive equipment. It is critical that the forces earn the confidence and cooperation of the Liberian people. Anticipating occasional civil disorder, the LNP should also have a branch capable of riot control (e.g., a police support unit).

The primary missions of the AFL are (a) to safeguard the country against possible external threats and (b) to support civil security forces in defeating any insurgency or other internal threat for which Liberia's civil security forces prove inadequate on their own. At present, non-state external and internal threats are more likely than threats from neighboring states. The size of the AFL is less important than that it be superior in quality and capable of foreseeing threats.

In view of Liberia's security demands, especially the danger of armed internal opposition, this force structure can be enhanced by including in the LNP a small, mobile, high-performance police unit capable of (a) helping regular police meet heightened internal dangers, (b) challenging armed groups that form in defiance of the state's authority, and (c) "swinging" to support the AFL, if need be, to meet major internal or external threats. This quick-response police unit (QRPU) should be oriented toward law enforcement but also prepared for light combat operations. Because the rules of engagement of police work and military operations are so different, the QRPU will have to be carefully selected, trained, and led. At the same time, this unit must not be or be seen as an elite force disconnected from the country's regular security services. Its personnel should be drawn from the rest of the LNP, and its commander should report to the chief of the LNP. Rotation of LNP personnel through the QRPU would facilitate interoperability, which is essential because the QRPU is likely to be called in to aid regular police.

This architecture should provide flexibility, speed, and capabilities superior to any foreseeable threat. The QRPU would permit the regular LNP to be lightly armed and community-oriented, and it would reduce the state's reliance on AFL intervention to quell domestic threats. Liberia's core security functions also indicate a need for a modest coast guard, in addition to the customs and immigration services and the Special Security Service (SSS) to protect national leaders.

The coast guard needs to be sized so that it is affordable, as well as functional. The force envisioned here consists of eight vessels: four thirty-two-foot and four twenty-eight-foot craft.⁵ It would employ 350 personnel. Such a force would be able to patrol significant

lengths of the coast on a daily basis. It would not, however, be able to adequately patrol Liberia's two-hundred mile economic zone nor defend the country from a naval threat of any significance. Given that the coast guard's primary function is law enforcement, it should be incorporated into the LNP.

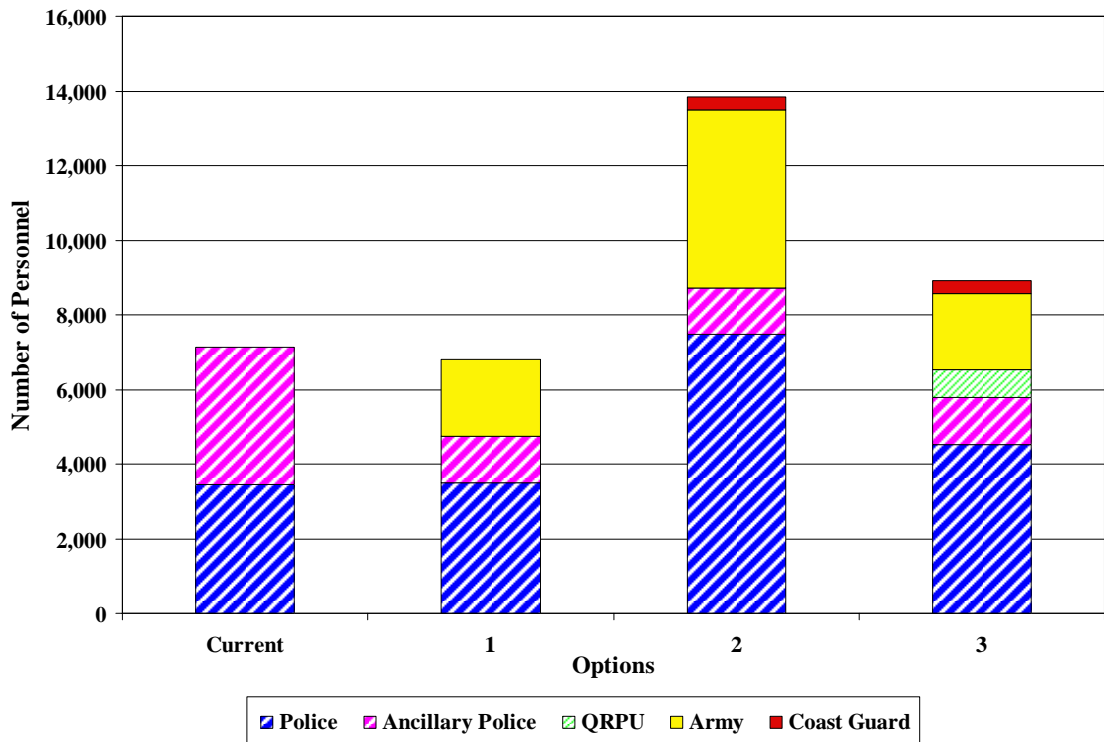
The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) is responsible for controlling the entry of individuals into Liberia. BIN needs arrest and detention authority so that unauthorized individuals, vehicles, or vessels can be stopped at the border. In contrast, the primary function of customs is to collect import and export duties, not to provide security. In the pursuit of its duties, customs needs the authority to inspect individuals, vehicles, and vessels, to seize and hold contraband, and potentially to detain individuals suspected of smuggling, unless other law enforcement personnel are readily available to carry out that task.

The Special Security Service, whose duty it is to protect the president and those designated by him or her for special protection, has a function that includes law enforcement but is primarily focused on personal protection — a very different mission. An effort to reform and restructure the SSS is under way, and should continue, with the support and help of international donors.

With these as the elements, three force-structure options are worth examining (as seen in Table 1):

1. Liberian–UN–U.S. plans to build a small LNP and small AFL, while sensible, may not be adequate to meet Liberia’s needs, especially for maintaining basic public safety, preventing armed internal opposition, and providing coastal security.
2. The alternative of expanding — say, doubling — the planned size of the LNP and the AFL and adding a coast guard would add roughly \$20 million⁶⁷ in annual operating costs, but could still fall short of providing adequate security against armed internal opposition, without excessive reliance on domestic intervention by the AFL.
3. Incorporating a QRPU and a coast guard in the LNP would better meet Liberia’s security challenges, especially armed internal opposition, at a \$6 million increase in annual operating costs above the current plan.

Table 1: Force Size Options



The capital cost of this third option would be about \$35 million more than the current plan (option 1) because of the addition of a QRPU and coast guard. This seems like a wise investment for Liberia and its supporters, yielding effective security on an economical operating basis. By opting for small but capable forces, Liberia would be able to concentrate on their quality, which can enable the state to overmatch irregular militias and warlord armies that typify threats to Liberian security. In sum, this force structure would cover the full spectrum of internal and external dangers, including those of armed gangs and insurgency, and it would maintain a high threshold for domestic use of the army.

Taking over from the UN

UNMIL is vital for Liberia's security and will remain so for some years to come. It will take about five years before the main Liberian forces have been fully built, equipped, trained, and deployed.⁸ During that period it should be possible to scale back significantly the numbers of UNMIL peacekeepers and correspondingly reduce UNMIL costs, provided certain critical UNMIL capabilities are preserved, especially police advisors, UNMIL's own quick-response force, and helicopter transport and surveillance. During this transition, command and control arrangements between UNMIL and Liberian security forces must be delineated and coordinated with great care.

While it is unclear if the UN will be prepared to maintain any presence beyond the time Liberian forces reach full strength, a residual presence consisting of high-leverage capabilities, numbering at most a few thousand personnel, would be needed for one or two years thereafter, given stable conditions, to ensure that conflict and chaos do not return.

Such a plan would permit the costs of UNMIL — currently running at an eye-watering \$760 million or so per year⁹ — to be slashed. The reason for this is that the costs of UN peacekeeping are principally a function of the number of personnel; in the case of UNMIL, numbers can be reduced without diminishing capabilities proportionately. After UNMIL leaves, a small but critical need will remain for international, perhaps commercial, capabilities to complement Liberian forces, including advisors and helicopter transport and surveillance.

Because Liberia's security environment is dynamic and unpredictable, force plans and the force structure itself must be adaptable. This goes not only for the mix of capabilities of Liberian security forces — for example, the size of the regular police, the relative importance of the QRPU, the size and firepower of the army — but also the rate at which UNMIL can be drawn down. This demands tight planning links between the Liberian government, the U.S. government, and the UN. Moreover, Liberia must develop its own ability to plan its needs for forces and other security capabilities based upon informed, objective, and realistic analysis, neither underestimating the security difficulties it faces nor overestimating its ability to maintain capabilities. Creating a civilian and military capability to assess, plan, and align resources with needs should become part of the assistance Liberia receives from its international partners in the years to come.

Governance of Security

As important as Liberia's forces are, its security institutions — the management structures, responsibilities, authorities, processes, and rules — are what will ensure coherent, legitimate, effective, and affordable direction to, control of, and support for those security

forces. These institutions are needed not only for Liberia’s long-term security but also to guide security-sector transformation starting now.

President Johnson-Sirleaf inherited a security sector characterized by redundancy, inadequate control, and incoherence. The most obvious concern is the sheer number of structures that exist in Liberia; no fewer than 15 separate agencies and structures are tasked with a variety of security functions (see Table 2).

Table 2: Current Security Organizations

Defense	Executive Protection	Intelligence	Policing	
Ministry of Defense		Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN)		
		Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)		
	Special Security Service (SSS)		Customs — Financial Security Monitoring Division (FSD)	
		Ministry of National Security (MNS)	Forest Development Authority Police (FP)	
		Liberia National Police (LNP)		
		National Security Agency (NSA)	Liberia Petroleum Refining Company Security Force (LPRC)	
			Liberia Seaport Police (LSP)	
			Liberia Telecommunications Corporation Plant Protection Force	
			Monrovia City Police (MCP) also known as Department of Traffic and Public Safety	
		National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)		

			Roberts International Airport Base Safety (RIA)
--	--	--	--

It is not simply the number of agencies that is cause for concern but also the redundancy and ambiguity concerning their functions and roles. All of these agencies, with the exception of the Ministry of Defense, have the authority to arrest and detain individuals. The National Security Agency (NSA), the Ministry of National Security (MNS), the Liberian National Police, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Ministry of Defense, and the Special Secret Service all collect intelligence, including criminal intelligence, political intelligence, and in the case of the MNS and NSA, foreign and national security intelligence.

The current system facilitates corruption, is an inefficient use of state resources, and, if retained, could undermine the success of Liberian democracy. A small number of organizations with clear mandates and minimal overlap are needed.

Starting at the top, Liberia needs a National Security Council (NSC) for policy making, resource allocation, and crisis management. It should be chaired by the president and include the ministers of justice, defense, finance, and foreign affairs (with others included on an ad hoc basis). The NSC should receive objective analysis and advice from the head of national intelligence, the most senior officers of the LNP and AFL, and the Liberian National Security Advisor (LNSA). This cabinet-level NSC should in turn serve as a template for, and should insist upon, interministerial information sharing and coordination at lower levels — a bureaucratic challenge for any government, but essential for Liberia.

Multilevel, interministerial cooperation will take time to effect, which is all the more reason to encourage it now.

The LNSA should have several duties, including:

- Orchestrating the NSC system at and below the cabinet level
- Ensuring that the president and NSC receive objective analysis, options, and all points of view
- Fostering direct ties among key ministries and agencies
- Monitoring the progress of security-sector transformation
- Monitoring the quality of operational cooperation among the various security services

The LNSA should not be involved in regular ministry affairs or come between ministers and the president.

The chain of command over the AFL, the country's strongest force, should run from the president, as commander-in-chief, through the minister of defense to the senior military commander, with the understanding that decisions to use military force should be reached by NSC deliberation and, for any domestic or external intervention by the AFL, in consultation with the legislature.

All ancillary police functions should be incorporated into the LNP, with the exception of certain specialized services: Special Security Service for executive protection, immigration and naturalization, customs, and the coast guard. As other police agencies are

eliminated, their personnel should be screened individually for possible service in the LNP. The LNP should report to the Justice Ministry — in practice, not just on paper as it did under Taylor — while leaving operational control within the LNP, with an independent board to maintain professional standards and public trust.

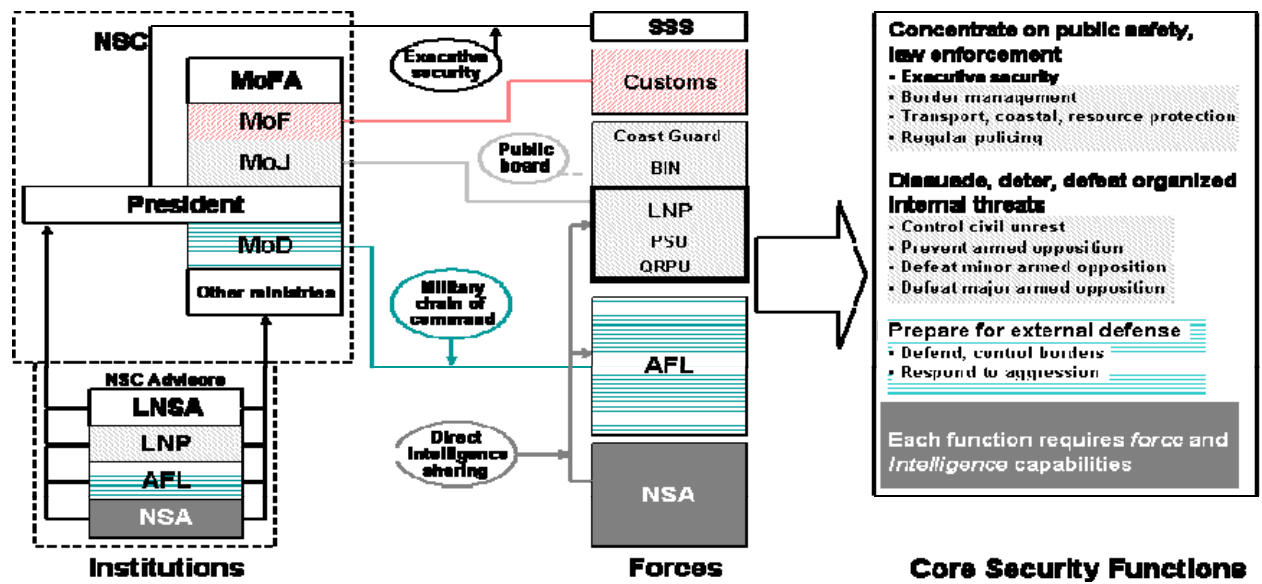
Intelligence capabilities are an essential complement to the various armed services and must be held to the same standards of effectiveness, affordability, legitimacy, and coherence. Responsibility and capability to collect intelligence should be concentrated in an NSA that (a) reports to the president; (b) provides analysis to the entire NSC; and (c) furnishes information directly and continuously to the LNP and AFL. The NSA should be authorized to arrest and briefly detain only persons who pose clear national security threats. Nothing could undermine the Liberian people's trust in its government more than routine arrests by ubiquitous plain-clothes intelligence personnel. Thus, the intelligence service is a *support* organization for the rest of the security sector and not an enforcement arm. Recognizing that the police will be able to collect much of the information needed to investigate and fight crime, the NSA should focus on high-threat concerns and can be of modest size.

An Integrated Picture

Taking this analysis of force structure and institutions into account, it is possible to assemble a complete architecture, as shown in Figure 1, in which:

- The NSC, chaired by the president as commander-in-chief, has final authority over all security forces.

- Forces report through ministries rather than directly to the president.
- Forces are balanced between the Justice and Defense ministries.
- Lines of authority are clear.
- Control over the military is from the president via the defense minister.
- The number of distinct security forces and services is manageably small, while still allowing for specialization.
- No security force lacks an important core security function.
- No core security function lacks a force that is mainly responsible for it, and there is no confusion or duplication in the assignment of forces to functions.
- The QRPU can support other police units or support the AFL.
- The intelligence service (NSA) reports to the president, serves the NSC as a whole, and provides direct support to the LNP and AFL.



AFL — Armed Forces of Liberia	MoJ — Ministry of Justice
BIN — Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization	NSA — National Security Agency
LNP — Liberian National Police	NSC — National Security Council
LNSA — Liberian National Security Advisor	PSU — Police Support Unit
MoD — Ministry of Defense	QPRU — Quick-Response Police Unit
MoF — Ministry of Finance	SSS — Special Security Service
MoFA — Ministry of Foreign Affairs	

Figure 1: Integrated Architecture and Core Functions

This architecture should be presented and codified in a clear way that secures broad political support, earns public understanding and trust, and signals the government’s clarity of purpose and resolve, including toward potential adversaries. A new omnibus national security law, though a political challenge to enact, is a better way to meet these needs than revising each law now on the books or instituting a new system by presidential decree. It will not be easy for President Johnson-Sirleaf to secure the agreement of the Liberian

Congress to such a law, given the strength of political opponents in that branch. Yet, it is better to try than to set up the new system by edict, which would smack of presidential abuse in a country that has known all too much of it.

Special Issues

In enacting a legal framework for such a system, several specific issues need attention:

- Security personnel should stay out of politics, except for the right to vote.
- To avoid discontinuity and political manipulation, senior sub-cabinet security officials (except for the LNSA) and uniformed officers should be nominated by the president and confirmed by the legislature for fixed terms, not changed with a government transition.
- Personnel of the former police force and other security forces who are not to be trained and integrated into the new force should be retired immediately, lest they infect new police with bad habits.
- Current systems for paying security personnel must be upgraded and made immune to corruption.
- Authority to arrest and detain Liberian citizens should be confined to the LNP, with very limited and clearly specified exceptions when other services may detain people and quickly turn them over to the police.

Another deficiency in Liberia's security sector is the appalling condition of Liberia's justice system.¹⁰ Qualified judges are a rarity; prosecution avenues are neither predictable nor fair; adequate detention facilities do not exist. When suspects are apprehended, the

police face a choice between releasing them and locking them up in inhumane conditions without due process. Justice, courts, and corrections systems must be built quickly or law enforcement will be neither effective nor legitimate. This effort is now woefully under-resourced by Liberia and its international partners.

Liberia must not and need not be left to face its dangers alone. Even as Liberian forces gradually take over from UNMIL and as new security institutions are built, those with a stake in Liberia's security — the UN, the African Union, ECOWAS, the United States, and other countries and international organizations — should continue to help. Liberia should forge cooperative ties with its neighbors in the Mano River Basin, including coordination against common non-state threats. The UN Security Council should make clear through continuing resolutions that its concern for Liberia does not fade with the gradual reduction of UNMIL. The United States must be steadfast in its support for Liberia, making it a model of how a failed state can be made secure and viable. As others offer to help Liberian security-sector development, their efforts should conform to Liberia's chosen principles, architecture, and standards.

Next Steps

Implementation should begin with the following priorities:

- Consistent use of the NSC to guide security policy, planning, resource allocation, and, at this crucial juncture, transformation
- Development and coordination of detailed, integrated (UNMIL-Liberian) force plans with the United States and the UN

- Public education, political consensus-building, and preparation of a national security law
- Regular, joint LNP-CIVPOL¹¹ patrols to solidify the rule of law, provide evidence of deterrence, and show that the state is making progress
- Design and plans for a small LNP QRPU and small coast guard
- Consolidation and subsequent recruiting, vetting, and training of separate ancillary police forces, customs, and intelligence personnel
- Attention to building court and corrections-system capacity
- Training (e.g., at the U.S. Africa Center for Strategic Studies or the U.S. Institute of Peace) of officials and officers in the precepts and practicalities of Liberia's security sector

To conclude, the presence of UNMIL, the commitment of the United States, and a somewhat less hostile external security environment — albeit one that may change rapidly — provide Liberia with valuable time to create security institutions and forces that are effective against dangers, are legitimate in the eyes of Liberia's people and neighbors, fit and work together coherently, and are worth the cost. The recommendations summarized here are meant to help Liberia and its supporters use that time well. For the United States, notwithstanding the severe security challenges it faces around the world, Liberia is a test case that must not be failed.

Assuming Liberia and its supporters proceed with common purpose and adequate resources down such a path, others in Africa and elsewhere may usefully draw ideas, principles, and lessons from the experience, including:

- The criteria of effectiveness, affordability, coherence, and legitimacy
- A national security concept from which specific functions can be derived
- A preference for small but high-quality force, with mobility
- Adequate capabilities within police forces to meet internal threats without routine domestic use of the military
- A workable, accountable, top-level mechanism for setting priorities, shaping policy, and managing crises
- Clear authorities, via ministries, for overseeing and using security forces
- Involvement in regional security cooperation

Unfortunately, Liberia will not be the last country — and not the last in Africa — to go through the trauma of civil war and collapse, with state security forces being part of the problem rather than the solution. Africans and their friends must learn from their failures, their successes, and each other.

References

International Crisis Group. 2004. Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding failed states. Africa Report, Number 87, 8 December. Available online at www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3156&l=1 (as of 27 November 2006).

MPRI. 2004. MPRI Assessment for the U.S. Department of Defense.

Pham, J. Peter. 2004. *Liberia: Portrait of a failed state*. New York: Reed Press.

Sesay, Max. 1999. Security and state-society crises in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In *Globalization, human security and African experience*. Edited by Caroline Thomas and Peter Wilkin. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 145-161.

United Nations Security Council. 2006. September 2006 Liberia. Security Council Report. Available online at www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.2043747/k.1C5E/September_2006BRLiberia.htm (as of 26 October 2006).

For Further Reading

Davies, Victor A.B. 2004. Liberia and Sierra Leone: Interwoven civil wars. In *Post-conflict economies in Africa*. Edited by Augustin Kwasi Fosu and Paul Collier. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ellis, Stephen. 2005. How to rebuild Africa. *Foreign Affairs* 84(5): 135-148.

Ero, Comfort. 2000. Dilemmas of accommodation and reconstruction: Liberia. Edited by Michael Pugh. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Human Rights Watch. 2005. Youth, poverty and blood: The lethal legacy of West Africa's regional warriors. *Human Rights Watch Report* 17(5), March. Available online at <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/westafrica0405> (as of 26 October 2006).

International Crisis Group. 2005. Liberia's elections: Necessary but not sufficient. Africa Report No. 98, 7 September. Available online at www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3646&l=1 (as of 26 October 2006).

International Crisis Group. 2006a. Conflict history: Liberia. Available online at www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=conflict_search&l=1&t=1&c_country=64 (as of 26 October 2006).

International Crisis Group. 2006b. Liberia: Resurrecting the justice system. Africa Report Number 107, 6 April. Available online at www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/africa/west_africa/107_liberia_resurrecting_the_justice_system.pdf (as of 26 October 2006).

International Crisis Group. 2006c. Liberia: Staying focused. Africa Briefing No. 36, 13 January. Available online at www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3872 (as of 26 October 2006).

International Institute of Strategic Studies. 2004. *The military balance, 2004-2005*. London: Oxford University Press.

Pham, J. Peter. 2005a. Hesitant home repair or successful restoration? Foreign policymaking in the George W. Bush administration, the conflict in Liberia, and the case for humanitarian non-intervention. Edited by Glenn P. Hastedt and Anthony J. Esterowicz. New York: Nova Science.

Pham, J. Peter. 2005b. U.S. national interests and Africa's strategic significance. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol. 26.

Pham, J. Peter. 2006. Reinventing Liberia: Civil society, governance, and a nation's post-war recovery. *The International Journal of Not-For-Profit Law* 8(2), January. Available online at www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol8iss2/art_2.htm (as of 26 April 2006).

United Nations. 2004. Financing of the United Nations mission in Liberia — Performance report on the budget of the United Nations mission in Liberia for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004. Report of the Secretary-General A/59/624, December 20.

Twadell, William. 1996. Testimony by William H. Twaddell, acting assistant secretary of state for African affairs, hearing on Liberia before the House International Relations Committee, 26 June. Available online at <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/afr/960626Twaddell.html> (as of 26 October 2006).

¹ Current at the time of this writing.

² The authors wish to recognize the work of their RAND colleagues — Olga Olikier, Keith Crane, Jack Riley, and Lesley Warner — and the cooperation of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, US Embassy Monrovia, and the government of Liberia, without which the study on which this article is based could not have succeeded.

³ While RAND worked closely with both the U.S. and Liberian governments in performing the study, the views expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and not to be taken as the views of either government or the RAND Corporation.

⁴ A security architecture describes how all components of the security sector fit together to satisfy the security requirements.

⁵ Drawn from prior analysis by MPRI.

⁶ RAND estimated both operating costs and capital costs for the different options presented in this article. Operating costs were split between wage and nonwage support costs. Wage costs were calculated based on the current pay of \$90 per month for enlisted men and women and for police officers. Nonwage support costs were based on detailed cost components provided in the spreadsheets and annexes supporting the study, "Sustainment Budget: New Armed Forces of Liberia," by MPRI for the U.S. Department of Defense in 2004. Capital costs were calculated from the same source.

⁷ All monetary amounts in this article are in US dollars.

⁸ This assumes a benign environment and significant continued and new assistance. The time frame is therefore somewhat notional.

⁹ This figure is based on the UNMIL budget for June 2005-June 2006 (see United Nations Security Council 2006).

¹⁰ Judicial reform in Liberia is a key area for future research.

¹¹ CIVPOL (Civilian Police Force) is the international police force under UNMIL.