Inside-Out: The Sierra Leone Experience with Postconflict State Restoration

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Participants' names have been eliminated from the report below in order to encourage a free flowing discussion.

Introduction of the Paper by Ambassador James O. C. Jonah

Ambassador Jonah begins the workshop by describing his experiences during Sierra Leone's experience of state restoration and his motivations for writing this paper. Particular attention is paid to the concept of local ownership and the interaction between local and international actors. In the paper, he seeks to approach his experience with both the reflection of a participant and as a scholar, who "must give his analysis without concern about political consequences." Jonah describes his first hand experiences as a diplomat encountering important political actors, including those he views as responsible for instigating the war in Sierra Leone.

Jonah details the responsibility of Charles Taylor and Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi for supporting Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh, and thus fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone. In Jonah's eyes, the civil war was primarily a result of this outside involvement and had little support from the Sierra Leonean populace. While the All People's Congress (APC) government was unpopular and corrupt, providing the "combustible material" for conflict, the "will to fight" came from outside the country. Jonah highlights the importance of this analysis, because "if you make the wrong analysis, you will make the wrong solution." Thus one mistake of international actors was to accord too much legitimacy to the RUF and to overestimate its power when the RUF was dependent on outside support and forced conscription.

Jonah returned to Sierra Leone after spending 40 years abroad, primarily in the service of the UN. His experience gave him an excellent background to serve as a connection between the new Sierra Leonean government and international actors. The return of expatriates generally benefited the new government. According to Jonah, expatriates were more removed from the corruption that had plagued previous governments, had a wealth of skills gained abroad, had a knowledge of the outside world rather than a distrust, and were able to take a more rational approach to governance given their distance from the history of Sierra Leonean politics. This distance is reinforced by outside actors such as the European Union (EU), Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank providing salaries for the Ministries of Finance, Security and Budgeting, thus reducing incentives for corruption. This approach has also been undertaken in other African countries such as Nigeria. Perhaps ironically, public trust for returnees is greater than for locals with ties to previous governments. Unfortunately, most returnees have again left following the return of violence, and one problem is how to bring them back to the country.

On security sector reform, Jonah addresses the difficulties of the relationship between the military and civilian leaders. The devastating January 6, 1999 attack on Freetown was partly a result of under-funding the security sector and the attempt to abolish the army. Moving resources away from the military was motivated by a distrust of the military and a decision to concentrate on other priorities. Popular anger fueled calls for abolishing the military entirely. However, without security, economic, education, and social welfare gains were destroyed by the January 6th attack. Moreover, ECOMOG[1] failed to prevent the attack, raising the possibility of complicity between its troops and RUF rebels and the disbanded military. The Lomé Peace Accord followed the January 6th attack. Rather than a military response to end the violence, the international community pushed for a power sharing that brought Sankoh and the RUF into government. Jonah again pointed to the overestimation of the RUF as a reason for the flaws of the Lomé Peace Accord. One result was that former military elements (the West Side Boys), who fought the RUF were dissatisfied and again took up arms against the government. Here

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[1] ECOMOG is the Economic Community of West African States' (Ecowas) armed Monitoring Group.

the British played an important role by intervening. The British military presence provided important security that UNAMSIL and ECOMOG had been unable to provide. Moreover, they played a key role in training and developing a new Sierra Leonean army that was professional and had fewer ties to political movements. The hope is that through security sector reform, a professional army can provide a break with Sierra Leone's history of violence, as instigated by external and internal actors.

To summarize, Jonah sees the stabilization of Sierra Leone as the result of actions by both external and internal actors. The population of Sierra Leone has shown a willingness to support the democratic government of President Kabbah. External actors have played a key role by establishing more security and supporting reforms to combat corruption, most importantly in the army and financial sectors. However, they also exerted pressure for including the RUF in the government, which Jonah reads as a counter productive move, as the RUF and Sankoh were never appeased by concessions. Finally, a transformation of the regional security situation with the defeat of Charles Taylor by Guinean forces has enhanced Sierra Leone's prospects of moving towards peace and development.

Responses to the Paper

Participant A's first critique of Jonah's argument is on the point that the RUF had almost no popular support. Others view the initial period of the RUF revolt as an outgrowth of student politics and "student vanguardism." Dissatisfaction with the APC government gave rise to the rebel movement. Students may have received training in Libya and Ghana, but their motivation to fight was sparked by domestic factors. Moreover, it was not greed that inspired the revolt, but grievances against the APC one-party state. From this point of view, Jonah and Paul Collier's characterization of the civil war in Sierra Leone as a resource war is an oversimplification that neglects political grievances.

There was popular support for the RUF by opponents to the regime who were dispossessed and disenfranchised. The RUF did not start out by kidnapping its soldiers, as it could draw on popular support. Sierra Leone's domestic politics should be seen as a cause of the war, rather than placing the blame Charles Taylor or other outside actors. "Bad government caused the war," and conflict over resources was sparked by the mismanagement of natural resources. Workshop participants took issue with Jonah's argument that if bad governance were to blame for the war, "all of Africa would be ablaze" to make the point that many conflicts in Africa have been caused by bad government and prevented by good governance. Specifically, bad government is characterized by predatory elites who seek to accumulate resources. Thus it is a mischaracterization to say greed drives revolt; rather it is legitimate grievances about the mismanagement of resources.

However, with the removal of the APC regime, all agree that the RUF lost popular support. Accordingly, there were two distinct periods of the revolution. At first, the RUF had popular support. Then in the second period following the fall of the APC, alliances shifted. Some APC members joined the RUF, and students were eliminated from the RUF.   At this point, the RUF became a criminal regime that relied on brutality and force, rather than popular support.

Participant A also critiqued Jonah's paper's characterization of the brief rule of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) as "effective but unwise" and eventually "unbearable." An alternative view is that the NPRC rule was arbitrary, marked by executions without trial, and it failed to reverse the collapse of the Sierra Leonean state. The NPRC squandered opportunities to end the war, and worked primarily to accumulate resources.

Participant A is also more pessimistic than Jonah about Sierra Leone's current prospects. Many of the same elites continue to serve in the current Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) government, promulgating a predatory, spoils-based regime. "This same political class is busy stoking the fires of the next conflagration, even before the embers of the last one have been put out." The current government is "recycling politicians" from previous governments, who are "sycophants and supplicants who join whoever is in power." The corruption commission has been compromised by the dismissal of its head and the fact that most cases are never prosecuted. Despite changes in the specific parties who have held power, some see them as one continuous regime that preys on the population. Here regime is understood as the norms and principles of the political system. Thus, the state in Sierra Leone does not need to be restored to its previous form but needs to be better connected with the population. Otherwise, corruption, youth unemployment, and mass poverty will continue, and the country will constantly be at risk of returning to the problems of the 1990s.

On the question of whether Sierra Leone was a "failed" or "collapsed" state at various points, this can be viewed as more of a continuum. Thus states are "failing" or "collapsing" as they are progressively unable to fulfill their core functions of protecting citizens or extracting resources. Another point is that there is a difference between the conditions that allow for the emergence of democracy and those that provide for its consolidation. Mass poverty and corruption still inhibit the consolidation of democracy in Sierra Leone.

In general, Participant A finds the paper valuable primarily in that it provides an inside view on events during a troubling time.

Participant B reinforces Participant A's argument that bad government was a root cause of the conflict. "I think the rest of Africa is on fire" as a result of bad governance. Thus the quality of government should be considered as an important cause of the conflict rather than as an external or secondary factor. Charles Taylor catalyzed a context already ripe for violent conflict. On the greed and grievance issue, governance is the mechanism that can manage conflicts arising from greed or grievance, which are to some degree irreducible sources of political conflict. Bad government fails to manage them, which provides an opening for violent conflict. The issue is then social and economic exclusion of regional groups and the youth. Even where the center (capital) is strong, conflict can develop in outlying regions. Generally, one country cannot be divorced from the others in West Africa. A regional approach to security problems is needed. Here, it is important to realize that failures within the Nigerian government inhibited the actions of ECOMOG, and that the regional problem of weak states inhibited peacekeeping missions.

Generally, Participant B critiques the paper for failing to mention the legislature as an important institution during the conflict and in its aftermath. Also, Participant B asks for a clearer statement of Jonah's position on the UN's role, which Jonah seems to shy away from.

Participant C asks if it really took eight years for the international community to understand the role of Charles Taylor, or if there was instead a deliberate decision to keep Sierra Leone and Liberia as separate issues and not deal with Sierra Leone. The paper could address better why a UN or international community response to the war was so long in coming.

Participant C also asks if the UN has learned from the experience of Sierra Leone. Is the UN better equipped to deal with a crisis now than it was at the outbreak of the conflict? What are the prospects for the new Peacebuilding Commission? Or will there still be resistance to meaningful reconstruction?

Participant D raises the conceptual problem that the paper does not give a definition of the state beyond a critique of Kaplan, and thus cannot really address the question of what is a failed state. Throughout the paper, definitions seem to shift. Sierra Leone is at times considered a failed state and at other times not. As for Jonah's critique of Kaplan, he sees it as needing more ideas, or as a distraction. His recommendation is that Jonah instead focus on the transformation of Sierra Leone and the concept of ownership with which the paper begins. The clear thesis is that despite all the problems, people take ownership of the process of reconstruction, with help from outside. The emphasis should thus be on how Sierra Leoneans succeed in gaining ownership, and specifically the role Jonah and others played in this process. Here, there is an opportunity for unique and important insights.

Participant E also agrees that Jonah too lightly dismisses the root causes of bad government. In his eyes, the state had already failed, as there were no openings for political discourse, a denial of democracy and social justice, and a bankrupt economy. The conflict in Liberia was simply "the occasion" for the outbreak of violent conflict in Sierra Leone, but there was already a state of war prior to 1994. A meaningful treatment of the history of the conflict requires a return to this period prior to 1994.

On judicial reform, Participant E makes the point that the speed with which cases come to trial is not unique to Sierra Leone, but also a problem in the developed world. Also, prisons should be considered in the context of security sector reform.

In Participant E's assessment, the UN did know of the role of Taylor, but was unable to take action.

In general, Participant E sees the paper as lacking an in-depth consideration of issues relating to international partners for reconstruction, and more should be included on the role of the UN.

Participant F asks how the Sierra Leone experience reflects upon the question of centralization versus decentralization of the state. Can the problems of exclusion be addressed by a program of state-building that focuses on local governance? If so, the paper needs to move further beyond the issues of executive policy to the local level.

Participant G argues for a more complex analysis of the development of the war in Sierra Leone, lest the paper rely on lazy characterizations of the entire conflict as a "spillover" from Liberia, or as driven solely by greed or grievance. He also sees the need to separate the dynamic of the war from the crisis of governance. While the war may have been a brutal response to the crisis, did it actually change the nature of the regime or political practices?

Generally, Participant G finds the paper successful in its treatment of top level institutions, but finds that it is incomplete in addressing the fundamental social problems of Sierra Leone. If attention is focused here, the engagement of the international community is less significant. Moreover, with the collapse of a post-colonial state, the local level, were society carries on, becomes all the more important. Ownership thus needs to be considered in a broader context, not just as a factor in reestablishing the institutions of the central government.

Participant H draws on experience with donor organizations in Sierra Leone to ask what happened to the successful community development programs (like outstanding programs on women's health) that had been established prior to the conflict? Unfortunately, with the conflict, they seem to have dissipated rapidly. In post-conflict peacebuilding, there exists a need to incorporate the voices of scholars and

local actors. Otherwise, development can be neglected for the sake of an emphasis on security. More study is needed on the positive and negative roles played by NGOs in the Sierra Leonean peace process.

Participant I characterizes the problem of ownership as primarily the responsibility of the government (as opposed to civil society actors), and also emphasizes the role of diamonds in fueling the war, with most of the wealth going into the private sector. The government ultimately received only 4 million of 119 million dollars annual earnings.

Participant J views ownership as taking place at multiple levels within society. Attention should be given both to how the government can take ownership of the state-building process and to how people can be mobilized to support or own the process. Jonah is well positioned to understand the interaction between these levels, and the paper should provide more on the role of civil society in the peace process. Elections should not be opposed to peace negotiations. Instead, they should be viewed as solutions to two different problems. The first problem is how to stop the fighting, which then leads to the problem of reconstituting order with mass participation. Crucial here is an effort towards a greater deconcentration of power, as there is "no better way to get accountable government than by getting participation at all levels." To do this, constitutional reform needs to be undertaken to "break the mold" of the highly centralized West African state. While Jonah wants to maintain the existing Sierra Leone constitution, Participant J recommends considering its reform.

A more general recommendation for the paper is to incorporate more scholarship to better compare the Sierra Leone case with others in West Africa. Such an approach may point to a broader regional solution that addresses West Africa's many violent flash points. Elite classes may understand conflict in terms of states and nations, but for the populace, war creates one region (here the Manu basin). Thus a conceptualization of conflicts needs to address this reality by taking a perspective that transcends the boundaries of nation states.

Participant K reinforces the point that civil society has played a vital role throughout the conflict. Communities prevented a total collapse of institutions and even blocked Sankoh's rise to power in 1994. Participant K sees Jonah's account of the NPRC as overly romanticized at points. If the NPRC caused the disintegration of the army, and why did the army disintegrate as it did?

Another problem is that of "brain drain" or the exit of professionals from the country. It would be helpful if the paper could propose ways to encourage the return of professionals, and include concrete statistics on the problem.

Participant K agrees that Sankoh's argument for the legitimacy of the RUF rebellion is hypocritical, given its plundering of the country's resources. While agreeing with Participant A's point that corruption remains a problem, the anti-corruption commission has made gains with the help of the British.

On democratization Participant K asks "how do we cultivate democratic culture if no one acts responsibly?" How can international actors support democratic culture?
Participant J responds by asking what was driving Taylor beyond a demonizing view of him as an evil man. A possible characterization is that Taylor was seeking to recapture the glory of previous West African empires, and Sankoh acted as a business partner and protégé for this project. Following Taylor's election, other states also took an interest in his plan for a "Pax Liberiana." His alliance with

Qaddafi was strategic and driven by his own purposes rather than by a common ideological agenda. At any rate, there needs to be a multicausal explanation for the conflict, as any monocausal reading is likely to fall short.

Participant L recommends that the paper seek more clarity on ownership. It would be helpful to lay out what state functions are essential for the state to have legitimacy. If security and judicial functions are carried out effectively, will the state then work? Or are there other factors?

In his view, the three roles that Jonah occupies are not compatible, and Jonah needs to choose one for his analysis. To be a scholarly work, the paper could focus on the critique of Kaplan and the history of the conflict. But the better approach maybe to take a policy analysis approach that isn't necessarily historical. However, this requires that Jonah be explicit about his unique perspective, both as an insider and as an outsider expatriate who has worked as a UN official. Returning expatriates often have a different perspective that is contested by locals. Anthropology deals with these problems through the method of participant observation, which entails some skepticism towards insider accounts. In providing an insider account, it is vital to include the factors that shape the perspective of the insider. Participant L's final statement is that it is a rich paper, but it leaves some open questions.

Participant M expresses her appreciation of the stimulating debate with clear disagreements. Too often, the tendency of such meetings is to reaffirm received wisdom, with "a subliminal wish to hold Sierra Leone as a model." For the paper, she recommends more delineation of the relative roles of outsiders and Sierra Leoneans. Were policy suggestions primarily from external or internal actors? How were models adapted from the proposals of NGOs?

Also important is the question of justice and holding actors such as Taylor responsible. Taylor should be prosecuted as an architect of the conflict, and there has not been enough effort by other states to prosecute him.

Participant N has done research on the conflict involving interviews with rebels that specifically addressed the greed/grievance issue. From this research, he finds that grievances are often based on very local issues and that rebels themselves had limited contact with Liberia or diamond exports. Paul Richards has argued that the RUF emerged from strong communities that had grievances linked to a lack of access to resources.

There are two possible routes to combating corruption-- community reform that links local communities to the central government and using international influence to fight corruption. Local reform may provide an avenue for addressing the grievances that spur violent conflict. These grievances can be distinguished in three groups: peasants, students, and unemployed youth.

The argument was also raised that African societies do not need a limited state. The historical development of states shows that all have a history of intervening for social welfare. For instance, the US government is often very effective, and this effectiveness is characterized by its ability to apply and enforce the law on both civil society and itself.

Focusing on the final section on state institutions, Participant O says that the breadth of this section results in too much going unsaid on specific initiatives. He considers this section vital, because Sierra Leone continues to be looked at as an example for other post-conflict reconstruction missions. Specifically, the model of the 1997 government-in-exile is invoked. With the aid of international actors,

the 1997 government put together an "amazingly broad agenda" for its first 90 days in government. But what was actually implemented from this plan? Participant O finds that the planning was successful in the areas of police, local government and the finance ministry, but weak in the areas of anti-corruption, the audit commission, the judiciary process and media reform. The international community played a key role in some areas, while others were neglected. In his reading, the 2000 crisis blocked further reform, and made the army dependent upon international guarantees.

Participant S says that Jonah's critical insights as an insider could be helpful in translating the lessons from the Sierra Leone case to other missions, such as the mission in the DRC. On the greed and grievance debate, she reinforces the point that greed should be considered less as a cause of violent conflict and more as a factor that sustains conflicts. The comparison to the DRC highlights the importance of considering "civil wars" as part of a regional problem of instability. Another issue faced in most post-conflict state-building contexts is the tension between including groups in order to establish peace and seeking justice for crimes committed during the conflict

Jonah's Response

Jonah admits that the paper has some difficulties due to his multiple perspectives as a scholar, a bureaucrat and a minister. Often academic studies miss the constraints upon policy-makers, but he is well aware of these constraints as they can inhibit what can and cannot be said.

He sees some need to theorize the initial dissent that fueled the conflict, although he thinks Participant A overemphasizes student grievance. War needs a spark, and as Sierra Leoneans "don't like to fight," he sees that spark as coming from outside the country. Emphasis on grievance is often too ideological in his view, and it led many too believe that the RUF was a genuine liberation movement. The skeptical view of the RUF has been proven right by events. He wants to sharpen his argument that the war was part of a grand design by Taylor for the West African region and was driven by a desire to exploit diamond wealth, while still keeping a balance with issues of grievances against the government.

On the UN, Jonah characterizes its role between 1993-5 as minimal, in part because it was divided by Liberian influences. Jonah himself was responsible for the UN being involved at all. While Jonah is careful with his criticism of the UN because "I am a UN person and I don't like to be critical," he does see the initial UNAMSIL mission as useless and hamstrung by limits on engagement. If an international force goes into a conflict area saying it will not fire its weapons, it is very difficult for it to have any effect.

Discussion of local governance

While Participant O is familiar with Participant A's criticism that all reform has accomplished is the reestablishment of corrupt elites, there has been successful innovation on the level of district councils. The outcome of policy implementation thus cannot be condemned out of hand; rather it is "an interesting mosaic of complex currents."

However, with district councils, there is also the question of whether they will provide a point of competition with traditional elites, or be captured by them, thus reducing new opportunities for inclusion. Here the international community can have only a limited role in determining how

institutions are used. International actors can enable elections, but not determine office holders. Local chiefs may retain power, but this may not necessarily be detrimental for inclusion, as they traditionally provide a point of access to state resources. Here Participant A raises the problem of the British colonial use of "ruling houses" as a check on the power of chiefs, which is a practice that may be resuscitated.

Chiefs have also been used as a mechanism for the corrupt extraction of resources, but citizens are not necessarily opposed to the chiefs themselves. This dynamic raises the issue of how much change in human behavior is possible. "Change is not an event but a process," and for new institutions to work education and the example of leadership is needed.

Chiefs gained legitimacy in that they sought to protect the population from the RUF, but there is also a history of grievances against chiefs. There is thus a need to remake the institution of chieftaincy as chiefs still play an important role in the network of power and the development of political parties. The challenge is to reconstitute this power as politically contestable.

Tribal Chiefs can play an important role filling the need to reestablish order, but there is a need for "fundamental redesign of the institution" to make it more inclusive. An example of more participatory local governance can be found in Ghana, where civil society groups and district councils participate in setting budget priorities. With more involvement by locals, there is a greater willingness to push for better tax collection.

The moderator asks how greater participation should be encouraged. Given the nature of the conflicts, should there be a period where participatory governance is put on hold, perhaps for the first two years? Or should participation/ownership happen right away? How should international actors approach this dilemma?

Participant H argues that one important immediate step is to include more women and girls, who are often neglected. Such inclusion can provide momentum that can move the peace process from stabilization to consolidation.

Participant N agrees, but sees the problem that leaders often benefit from current power structures and are thus unwilling or unable to reform the system. Thus external influence remains an important impetus for change. Moreover, external donors will still seek to affect the political process, in spite of limitations to their influence.

Participant J sees donor influence as limited primarily to conditionality. By setting conditions on the use of funding, donors can encourage the involvement of civil society in decision-making and development. By encouraging participation rather than requiring a specific agenda for action, donors can avoid operating under the notion that "Africans don't know what they are doing." The first step is to figure out what are the various tasks of government are, and then have different international actors work on different areas.

Participant N responds that there are problems with this model. First, the structure of agencies and the relationship of external actors to locals are such that there is a lack of communication between groups. Often, the decisions of international actors are not shared with the population. Also, there is a fear that introducing competing institutions from without will undermine local ones.

Participant O adds that for conditionality to work, there must be strong local leadership. Part of the problem in post-conflict situations is reestablishing such leadership.

Participant G argues that reform has been limited by the crisis thinking of international actors, who focus too much on the established networks of power. Even as parties mobilize voters for elections, they are not working for political change.

Participant P argues that there is a fundamental difference between international actors taking control of the process in a kind of trusteeship and supporting the actions of local actors. Thus, there needs to be a clear choice as to which path is chosen, trusteeship or local control. Ultimate authority needs to be located at one level or the other. The paper needs to be clear on this issue as well. Also, it is difficult to move between the two paths, and careful attention needs to be paid to the move from trusteeship to local ownership. Part of this transition is the management of expectations as to what the state should be and can do. If too much is expected, grievances are likely.

Participant Q argues that there is a two step process to statebuilding. First, security and macroeconomic stability need to be established. Then attention can be given to longer-term institution building. Without security, policies in other areas cannot be successfully implemented.

The point is also made that part of the power of civil society groups comes from their position external to the government. Too much integration of civil actors can compromise their more critical role.

Discussion of the UN Role

The problem of ownership is now particularly germane to Sierra Leone as UN Security Council members seek to find an end for the mission. Also, UNDPKO members were unable to attend the workshop, which limits our understanding of how the process is working on the ground.

Participant K raises the problem of coordination between international actors. Specifically, the DPA works separately from other commissions. While the Integrated Office should address coordination problems, there is always the issue of bureaucratic turf battles. A danger of integration is also that specific competencies can be lost when one office controls the process. For instance, will the Integrated Office be able to give useful military advice?

Problems can also arise from too great an ambition to change local conditions. For instance, UNAMSIL started a radio station that replaced what had been an effective local one. In all areas, there is a need to involve local actors and use local resources. However, others point out that the UNAMSIL station has also had enormous success in educating the public.

Participant R raises the issue that international actors, such as the WHO, often seek to avoid politics, but in post-conflict situations the politics of the situation must be addressed before policies can be effectively implemented. Thus there needs to be careful integration of all elements of the international presence.

Participant E argues that the UN's most important role is in building institutions quickly, in the time that they are in the country.

Participant B describes the general problem of a lack of UN intellectual leadership. For instance in Liberia, the UN lets the US do military training without any involvement. How is the UN then to coordinate such actions? Thus it is vital for the UN to more clearly articulate its role in all missions.

Reflecting on this paper, Jonah should not be circumspect in his critique of the UN, as it is precisely at this moment of reform that his insights could make the UN better.

Corruption, Conditionality, Legitimacy and State-building

Participant A argues strongly that by inviting armed groups into government, mass murderers are legitimated. While amnesties may be supported to win peace, inclusion goes too far. The false assumption is that because groups can martial violence, they command popular support and control territory. By including such groups, violence is rewarded and other groups have an incentive for using violence to gain concessions. This was the explicit motivation of the West Side Boys violence, as they sought rewards similar to those accorded to the RUF and NPRC. The international community becomes a party to injustice when they demand power sharing or when they use scholarships as an incentive for soldiers to relinquish arms.

State-building is essentially the building of the rule of law. Rewarding violent revolt undermines the rule of law. The history of the Sierra Leone conflict shows that peace at any price can ultimately lead to even worse conditions. State-building needs to be a reconfiguring of the state in a manner that both increases the capacity and legitimacy of the state, which in turn influences the effectiveness of the state.

Participant R responds that if you don't reward murderers through peace agreements, somebody has to defeat them. This creates a real dilemma as often the resources (and political will) are not available.

Participant A was then asked, "What would have been a better response in Sierra Leone?"

Participant A responds that part of the problem was that the RUF and other groups are consistently overestimated. The fighting forces were mostly children. The response of the state should have been to encourage and arm civil defense forces from a willing and desperate populace. However, the government feared increasing civilian power, but it would be possible for the state to work more closely in training civilian militias for emergency situations. While arming civilians may seem a desperate solution, it is still a better choice than bringing the RUF into government. Also, civilian defense forces were eventually formed through the ad hoc spread of weapons. Wouldn't it be better to have this be a controlled response? There were successful cases of civilian defense, such as that of the *kamajors*, who were supported by the Guinean government. The core problem is that the government has to have the support of the people in order to be willing to arm them. Thus bad governance again inhibits an effective response.

Jonah cites some instances of the government working with civilian groups, for instance through rice distribution, but here too problems of corruption arose.

Participant B says that it is still important to consider even the limited constituencies of armed groups. 44% of peace agreements unravel, primarily because groups are not included. It may be possible to not necessarily include the leadership of rebel groups, but it is still vital to find leadership that constituencies do find to be representative.

Participant G makes the point that support for civilian defense did occur in the period between 1996-8, but the attempt to anchor power in the civilian defense instead of the military directly contributed to the collapse of the regime. Moreover, disarmament is always very difficult. Political possibilities are also opened up through conflict, which can potentially transform the state. The current state is much better

off than that which existed from 1992-2001. It has been a huge accomplishment to involve more people in government, and the media has contributed to the opening of the political arena to multiple voices. However, the political elite remains unresponsive to this critical opening, and government still doesn't function well enough to attain a solid legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Participant T asks how the corruption of political elites can be addressed. Does the solution really depend on non-elites? International actors often take the approach of working with the "bottom" rather than the "top" in order to avoid dealing with corruption. This is in part due to concerns of sovereignty, which inhibits using political conditionality. Also, international actors are cautious because conditionality can be interpreted as serving their own interests rather than local, popular interests. One question then is how political parties and other organizations are funded-- Can they be representative?

Jonah says that leaders who exploit conditionality can push for reforms that are important, but not popular at first. Thus he was able to establish a monetary policy that wasn't inflationary, despite political opposition.

Participant O describes DFID as using conditionality in its long-term financing packages in the form of a "memorandum of understanding." Thus pressure can be exerted, but it relies on a responsive local leadership. But if leadership calls the bluff of the international community, what can be done? Generally ongoing dialogue is chosen over disengagement.

Participant K sees the influx of international resources as limiting the possibilities for local ownership of policy and governance. Moving beyond dependence on the international community requires the mobilization of internal resources. Civilian defense forces are a creative solution to the need for security resources. Jonah's paper can benefit from more consideration of how local resources were used to end the conflict.

Participant U introduces the argument that the IMF is often considered to have a negative effect by introducing conditionality, which can limit government spending to the point of undermining its capacity for action or create misguided priorities. One example is the criticism of Jonah's spending on schools. However, spending on schools and infrastructure can also be seen as contributing to stability. The IMF has increasingly given priority to security in post-conflict situations, placing it even above the importance of macroeconomic stability.

Jonah considers it to be the easy route to attack conditionality, but from his experience it helped to establish his anti-inflationary policies, which have since been neglected to the detriment of Sierra Leone's economy. If conditionality is to be opposed, there needs to be a coherent counter-program that considers available resources, which often is not the case.

Participant O also considers the relationship of the IMF to Sierra Leone in 1999 to have been a success, because it enabled the prioritization of security concerns and offered flexibility. As Jonah, says advice was carefully considered before it was implemented.

Participant B asks if this spending on security is sustainable without outside funding. The budget for security goes beyond direct spending, including indirect costs such as barracks, food, etc.

Participant E describes corruption as an ongoing threat to security, which is also conditioned by a lack of resources. The core problem is that salaries for public employees remain so low that public employees

seek to supplement them by taking bribes. But the dilemma is that raising salaries requires greater resources, or alternatively retrenchment.

Participant A also argues that security and corruption are linked. The solution he proposes is enhancing the legitimacy of the state. He also points out that external actors were involved in creating the war in Sierra Leone by supporting the military of the Doe regime in Liberia and by funding Sierra Leone's military.

One way to gain ownership and give the government legitimacy is by empowering the parliament to allocate resources and debate priorities, rather than quickly approving budgets.

Participant Q closes the discussion with a reminder that the core problem is a need to "close the domestic resource gap," which can only be achieved by bringing in more resources. However, improving tax collection takes time and is difficult to improve. In the mean time, IMF conditionality still enables some flexibility as they focus on the bottom lines but not on each and every individual expenditure.

Jonah's Conclusion

Jonah concludes the workshop by stating some of what he plans to include in the paper.
1. Considerations on the role of the parliament.
2. Considerations of his personal role
3. The multiple levels of ownership
4. Doubts about grievance as a cause of war