

It is not clear, however, whether a more robust form of peacekeeping is more effective in instilling trust than a non-threatening one. In Somalia, the more assertive approach of both Australian and UNITAF forces contrasted sharply with the subsequent UN operation which was severely tested by local factions. In Zimbabwe, on the other hand, temptations to adopt an explicit show of force were resisted in favour of a deliberately nonthreatening and even friendly presence. As with other CBMs, the peacekeepers' willingness to take risks was meant to reassure potential aggressors. The reasoning was that Zimbabwean guerrillas were more likely to risk committing themselves to the peace process if the monitors themselves were vulnerable. It was also hoped that the PF was unlikely to attack monitors with which they had formed personal relationships.<sup>81</sup>

## ISSUES IN BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Two other more controversial issues in confidence building in African conflict situations require further discussion. These issues include: 1) the centrality of disarmament in confidence building, and 2) the extent to which the international community needs to be involved for successful confidence building efforts.

### Is Disarmament a Necessary Priority in the Process of Building Confidence?

There are obvious risks in allowing hostile groups to maintain weapons in peace processes. Discussions of the mistakes made in Angola inevitably dwell on the failure to disarm UNITA rebels prior to the 1992 elections. Similarly, in other regions, a failure to disarm Serbian troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1994 is regarded as having allowed an "open season" for the shelling of civilians in Sarajevo. In Northern Ireland, the Good Friday peace agreement was held up for months because Unionists could no longer tolerate an armed Irish Republican Army. The reasoning in each case is obvious; confidence comes from knowing that one's adversary does not have the capacity to inflict harm. Disarmament is essential if ordinary citizens are to feel secure and have their lives return to normalcy.

It is not clear, however, that disarmament is always a viable option or that it should always be the priority. The UN's unhappy experience in Angola was reflected in a much more aggressive subsequent effort to disarm clan factions in Somalia – which had equally disastrous consequences. Indeed, there are compelling reasons for *not* pursuing disarmament or at least establishing confidence *prior* to disarmament.

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<sup>81</sup> There were, however, limits to the extent canted guerrillas were willing to trust peace monitors. Although personal relations were good, guerrilla fighters were advised by their commanders not to confide in the British. The suspicion was that the British were befriending them as a means of extricating information from them. See Ginifer, p. 33. The experience in Rwanda in 1994, however, in which thirteen Belgian peacekeepers were killed by Hutu extremists, suggests that creating vulnerabilities for the peacekeepers can have tragic consequences.