

Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Cambodia

The combination of internal conflicts with the proliferation of light weapons has marked peace operations since 1990. This combination poses new challenges to the international community and highlights the fact that a lack of consistent strategies for the control of arms during peace processes (CAPP) reduces the effectiveness of ongoing missions and diminishes the chances of long-term national and regional stability once peace is agreed upon.

In November 1994, UNIDIR launched a project, entitled *Disarmament and Conflict Resolution: The Disarming of Warring Parties as an Integral Part of the Settlement of Conflicts* (the DCR Project), aimed at looking into the seldom-researched field of disarmament during multinational peace-keeping operations and the links among disarmament, conflict resolution and regional stability.

The DCR Project explored the predicament posed by United Nations peace operations which have focused on short-term needs rather than long-term stability. The project is based on the premise that the control and reduction of weapons during peace operations can be a tool for ensuring stability. Perhaps more than ever before, the effective control of weapons has the capacity to influence far-reaching events in national and international activities. In this light, the management and control of arms could become an important component of the settlement of conflicts, a fundamental aid to diplomacy in the prevention and deflation of conflict, and a critical element of the reconstruction process in post-conflict societies.

Dr. Wang, who teaches international politics at the University of Wisconsin, reported on the actions taken by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). He summarized the history behind the conflict in Cambodia, the road to the peace agreement, and the United Nations mission, including its aborted disarmament component. This is a report on a mission with mixed success: although the primary goal of the mission—the holding of free and fair elections in Cambodia—was accomplished, the country's warring factions were neither disarmed nor united. This volume also includes the results of the DCR project's *Practitioners' Questionnaire on Weapons Control, Disarmament, and Demobilization during Peacekeeping Operations* which was completed by twenty-five military and civilian personnel who participated in the UNTAC mission.

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