

Encouraging Disarmament: The use of individual and collective incentives in VWCP

Intro

The proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in developing countries presents a particular problem for development projects. Every year SALW are used to kill an estimated 500,000 people.¹ The widespread availability and misuse of SALW has both direct and indirect effects on human security in developing countries. The *Small Arms Survey 2002* lists the following negative impacts of SALW proliferation:

- Fatal and non-fatal shootings
- Forced displacement
- Declining access to basic needs
- Costs to society for rehabilitation and care of injured²

In reaction to this growing problem, the United Nations and increasingly development agencies (i.e. UNDP) are leading efforts to reduce both the supply of, and demand for SALW. Today one of the most commonly prescribed tools to address the problems of SALW proliferation, is a voluntary weapons collection program (VWCP). Weapons collection programs have been implemented in many countries using different methods to encourage civilian populations to voluntarily surrender their weapons. These methods may include:³

- Buyback programs
- Amnesty periods
- Weapons in Exchange for Development
- Lottery prizes
- Cash (above/below black market value)
- Vouchers for food and other goods
- Educational scholarships
- Computers, radios, etc.
- Tools for trades or agriculture
- Housing and construction material
- Infrastructure projects
- Public health services

Due to the intricacies of each country, culture and varying political situations, no one method for encouraging disarmament fits all countries and regions. But, whether or not an incentive should be included and what sort of incentive are crucial questions that will influence the outcome of the VWCP.

Efforts at microdisarmament in the countries of South Eastern Europe provide an excellent comparative case study for the use of incentives in voluntary weapons collection programs. Following the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and the 1997 collapse of the rule of law in Albania, voluntary weapons collection programs have been implemented to varying degrees of success using different methods of collection.

¹ *Small Arms Survey 2001*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 2001, Chapter 6.

² *Small Arms Survey 2002*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 2002, Chapter 4.

³ BICC & SAND. "A practical guide for Collection and Destruction." Feb. 2000.

Furthermore, depending on the case, differing actors including the United Nations, NATO forces, and national governments, have implemented weapons collection programs. A comparative analysis of the methods, actors, and corresponding results of these programs will provide useful data to better plan future voluntary weapons collection programs. Such analysis and data can help policymakers design better programs to match the differing situations found in developing countries. By providing better information on past efforts, policy makers may then use this tool to address the situations in ways resulting in more successful programs.

Of course, voluntary weapons collection programs are just one policy tool used to address the oversupply of weapons found among many civilian populations in developing countries. The caveat must always be stated that disarmament does not happen in a vacuum and unless accompanied by other reforms to improve the overall human security, weapons collection programs will have little impact on the situation.

With the above caveat in mind, we can focus our discussion on the use of incentives in voluntary weapons collection programs, as an effective policy tool to address the supply of SALW among civilians. There are various types of weapons collections that can be used in varying situations. In particular this paper will focus on the use of incentives to encourage individuals to surrender weapons in VWCPs. The author will address the following primary research questions: What impact have incentives had on the outcomes of VWCPs? How effective are individual and collective incentives for voluntary weapons collection programs? Under what circumstances can the appropriate incentives be used in order to make voluntary weapons collection programs more effective at reducing the supply of SALW? By looking at various VWCPs in Southeastern Europe, the evidence will show that, when used appropriately, in careful consideration of the situation, and under the right conditions, incentives can be effective at increasing the effectiveness of a VWCP.

This research paper will begin by defining the type of weapons collection and in which contexts the paper will focus on, that is voluntary weapons collection programs in the contexts of post-conflict security building and crime prevention. The direct aim of such weapons collection programs is to reduce the supply of weapons among civilian populations in developing countries. Indirectly weapons collection also have important outcomes, such as confidence building among communities or increasing public awareness of the dangers associated with the misuse of firearms. The particular aim of this research paper is the use of individual and collective incentives within such VWCPs. Different methods (listed above) have been used to encourage civilians to surrender weapons. The paper will also then examine different methods used to evaluate weapons collection programs.

With the framework of the discussion established, the paper will then compare the circumstances, methods and results of voluntary weapons collection programs conducted in Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. The methods used in these case studies have meet with various results depending on the particular circumstances of the collection. The research will focus on the impact of incentives on the results of voluntary weapons collection programs. The evidence presented in the case studies will show that incentives can be effective at increasing the quantitative results of a VWCP. By matching the most appropriate incentive for a VWCP to fit the situation found in country, the

VWCP can be an effective supply-side initiative to address the supply of SALW in a country.

The conclusions drawn in this paper will allow policymakers to better apply this policy tool to the various circumstances of each situation. A better understanding of the particular situations found in developing countries, along with a good evaluation of past programs, should enable policymakers to apply and design better voluntary weapons collection programs in the future.

Framing the discussion:

In general, weapons collections take place within one of two contexts: post-conflict peace building and crime prevention. For example, a weapons collection may be part of the disarmament process following a conflict. In such a case the weapons collection occurs under the context of post-conflict peace building. But a weapons collection can also occur in a situation absent of a major conflict. In this case, the weapons collection is an element of a crime prevention strategy designed to enhance overall public safety. Weapons collection may take place in a situation dominated by one of these two contexts, depending on whether or not the society has suffered a conflict. But the majority of the case studies presented in this paper are a mix of the two contexts, occurring after the demobilization of combatants in post-conflict societies and aiming to increase public safety through crime prevention. If the weapons collection does occur in a conflict situation, at what stage of the conflict the weapons collection will occur, is also relevant when considering the context of the situation and what type of weapons collection to consider. Our discussion of weapons collections will further elaborate on the distinction between these two contexts.

In Managing the Remnants of War, Sami Faltas, an expert in disarmament studies, identifies two general types of weapons collection programs: ‘disarmament by command’ and ‘voluntary weapons collection programs’. This paper is primarily concerned with the use of incentives in voluntary weapons collection programs. So, what exactly is a voluntary weapons collection and how does it differ from other models of weapons collection? By first defining ‘disarmament by command’ we can better understand how this type differs from a ‘voluntary weapons collection’.⁴

Most often disarmament by command takes place in the context of post-conflict peace building. The objective of the weapons collection program is usually to establish political stability and may serve as a confidence building measure. Such programs are usually collective in scale with a very public visibility. The weapons collection is targeted at a particular organized group of individuals such as a militia. Wartime command structures are often utilized to organize the disarmament of the unit. The order to disarm often comes from a superior military force or a group’s own political or military leaders. In such a case the incentive to disarm is usually either punishment or individual reward. These weapons collection often form the ‘disarmament’ component of a broader disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program.

In “Weapons collection in Central America,” the authors, Laurance and Godnick, make a useful distinction between ‘Phase I’ and ‘Phase II’ weapons collections in post-

⁴ Faltas, Sami and Di Chiaro, Joseph. (editors) Managing the Remnants of War. Bonn International Centre for Conversion / Nomos Publishing: Baden-Baden, 2001. pp.211-214.

conflict situations. Disarmament by command fits into the phase I weapons collection and takes place immediately following the general cessation of conflict and as part of a peace process. Phase II weapons collection programs occur later and attempt to collect the arms still circulating in general society following a conflict.⁵

A classic example of disarmament by command is the United Nations Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) experience in 1996. Under UN Security Council resolution 1037 (1996), UNTAES became the sole military authority in the ethnically Serbian dominated region of Eastern Slavonia in Croatia. As part of its mandate as the transitional authority, UNTAES was required to supervise and facilitate the demilitarization and disarmament of the local Serbian militia known as the Army of the Republic of Serbian Krajina (ARSK – *Armija na Republika Srpska Krajina*). The Basic agreement established that the region was to be demilitarized and all military organizations should be disarmed and demobilized no later than 30 days after the deployment of UNTAES international forces. UNTAES arrived on 20 May 1996 and supervised the removal of 93 tanks, 11 Armored Personal Carriers, 35 anti-tank systems, 107 artillery pieces, 123 mortars, 42 anti-aircraft guns. By June 27, 1996 UNTAES was able to certify that it was the sole military force in the territory. All heavy weapons of ARSK had been either withdrawn from the territory or surrendered to UNTAES for disposal.⁶

The second general type of weapons collection is the voluntary weapons collection. A VWCP occurs under the context of crime prevention in either a post-conflict situation or in a situation completely absent of a major conflict. In a post-conflict situation a voluntary weapons collection would occur as a 'phase II' weapons collection program, meaning the weapons collection occurs at a period after the end of a conflict when the majority of combatants have already been demobilized and society is in the process of normalization. Regardless of whether the voluntary weapons collection occurs in a post-conflict situation or in a situation absent of major conflict, the stated goal of the organizers of the weapons collection is often that of crime prevention. The weapons collection is designed to diminish the possibility of future firearms related crimes by decreasing the supply of SALW among the general population, thereby increasing public safety by preventing the misuse of firearms. VWCP should also be included in a broader framework of security sector reform in situations where civilians possess firearms due to a lack of trust or faith in the police or government to provide security.

A voluntary collection distinguishes itself from 'disarmament by command' because it is often on an individual scale, targeting individuals from general society. The visibility of the program is usually private, assuring those who surrender weapons of anonymity and amnesty. More than in disarmament by command, voluntary weapons collection programs use inducements to encourage individuals to surrender their weapons. Such inducements may be individual or collective rewards. The major actors involved in the planning and implementation of a VWCP can be a combination of

⁵ Laurance, Edward J. and Godnick, William H. "Weapons collection in Central America: El Salvador and Guatemala." Chapter 1 of *Managing the Remnants of War*. Edited by Sami Faltas and Joseph Di Chiaro III, Bonn International Centre for Conversion / Nomos Publishing: Baden-Baden, 2001, pp. 15-48.

⁶ UNTAES website, <www.un.org/depts/DPKO/dpko/co_mission/untaes.htm> accessed Nov. 19, 2002; also see Boothby, Derek, Chapter 5: "The UNTAES Experience." in *Managing the Remnants of War*. Edited by Faltas, Sami and Di Charro III, Joseph. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2001, pp136-139.

international organizations, local government, and or political organizations. Unlike in disarmament by command where there is usually a military or political hierarchy to negotiate with, in a VWCP individuals from society, not an organized armed group, are encouraged to surrender their weapons. In order to inform and encourage the general society to participate in the program a VWCP needs to be preceded by a well-designed and implemented public awareness campaign. Voluntary Weapons Collection Programs will be the focus of the remainder of the paper and examples of VWCP will be provided. In summary, we can distinguish between the two models as follows:

Variables	Disarmament by Command	Voluntary Weapons Collection
Context	Post conflict Peace-building	Crime Prevention
Timing	Phase I	Phase II
Objective	Establish political stability	maintain political stability
Inducements	Command, penalty, rewards	Rewards, penalty
Scale	Collective	Individual
Visibility	Public	Private
Framework	Element of a DD&R program	Element of a Security, Sector Reform program
Actors	Local & International Govt., wartime command structures	Local & International Govt., civil society, and political organizations.

In some cases there seems to be a mix of the two general types of weapons collection leading to some confusion. One example is the case of Operation Essential Harvest, which was conducted by NATO forces following the end of the 2001 crisis in Macedonia. With the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the military leaders of the National Liberation Army agreed to surrender their arms to NATO forces. NATO forces established collection points where members of the National Liberation Army could come and surrender their weaponry. Between 26 August and 16 September 2001, NATO forces collected more than 3,500 pieces of weaponry and more than 350,000 items of ammunition, explosives and mines.⁷ NATO announced that Operation Essential Harvest was a ‘voluntary’ weapons collection program because the NLA was voluntarily surrendering their weapons to NATO forces in order to show their willingness to abide by and support the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Following the end of Operation Essential Harvest, the military leaders of the NLA announced the organization officially demobilized.

Although NATO officially named OEH a voluntary weapons collection program designed to build confidence in the Macedonian peace process, OEH actually had more in common and shared more characteristics of a phase I, disarmament by command collection effort. For example, although the NLA was voluntarily surrendering its weapons, the wartime structures and hierarchy of the NLA was utilized to organize individual uniformed soldiers of the NLA, under command from their military leaders, to surrender their weapons. The timing of the Operation was immediately following the end of hostility and was followed by the complete demobilization of the NLA. Therefore I

⁷ NATO website, Operation Essential Harvest, <www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/skopje/harvest.htm>

would argue that Operation Essential Harvest was not a ‘voluntary’ weapons collection according to the models outlined above, but rather a phase I disarmament program that set the stage for a later phase II voluntary weapons collection program after the demobilization of most combatants. For these reasons, Operation Essential Harvest and other similar weapons collection programs will not be further analyzed in this paper.

Evaluating Voluntary Weapons Collection Programs:

As with any program, a crucial step in determining the success of a weapons collection program is program evaluation. There are several different methods of measuring the effectiveness of a weapons collection based on what the intended goal of the program is. Unfortunately there is no single universally accepted method for determining success.

In “The concept of Micro-Disarmament programs in post-conflict environment,” Adrian Wilkinson describes several methods of program evaluation.⁸ The first method is a performance indicator of weapon recovery statistics. This is the most straightforward and common method of evaluating the quantitative results of a program. Simply put, it is the quantity of weapons recovered measured against the estimated quantity of weapons in the community.

Weapons recovered % = (Quantity of weapons recovered / est. weapons in community) x 100

The second performance indicator Wilkinson describes, uses crime statistics from the community to measure the impact of the weapons collection program. This method takes the post-program crime statistics and measures them against the pre-program crime statistics to produce a percentage showing the change in crime statistics after the weapons collection.

Percentage change % = [1 - (post crime statistic/pre crime statistic)] x 100

The third method of program evaluation is to use a performance indicator of economic statistics. This performance indicator measures the effectiveness of the weapons collection program by measuring the percentage change in the price of a weapon from before the program and after.

Percentage change % = [1 - (post program street price/pre program street price)] x 100

A fourth performance indicator is that of financial statistics. This method measures how effective the program was, given the amount of money invested in the program. In order to determine this, the total number of weapons recovered is divided by the total cost of the weapons collection program. The cost of recovering a single weapon is thus determined and can then be compared to the street price of the weapon.

Cost per recovered weapon (\$) = (Total cost of the Program in \$ / Total weapons recovered)

⁸ Wilkinson, Adrian. “The Concept of Micro-disarmament Programmes in Post-conflict environments.” Thesis Paper: University of Kent, 2002.

The final and most complicated method that Wilkinson uses for measuring the effectiveness of a weapons collection program is the risk rating performance indicator. This method uses three steps to determine a weapons risk rating, the number of potential lives saved by the program, and finally the cost to save each potential life. The first step is to determine the risk rating of a type of weapon. The risk rating of a type of weapon can be determined based on fatalities or injuries in which the weapon was used, thereby yielding a risk rating for either fatalities or injuries. The risk rating of a weapon equals the total number of fatalities or injuries divided by the number of weapons used in the attacks.

Risk rating (fatalities or injuries) = (Total # of fatalities or injuries / Total # of weapons used in attacks)

Once the risk rating of a weapon has been calculated the potential lives saved by a weapons collection program can be calculated by multiplying the weapon's risk rating by the total weapons recovered in the weapons collection program.

Potential lives saved = (weapon's risk rating X total number of weapons recovered)

The potential lives saved may also be a useful means of evaluating a weapons collection program and might be especially useful for a post-weapons collection public awareness campaign. But with the third and final step this method can also determine cost of each potential life saved. This is determined by dividing the total cost of the weapons collection program by the total potential lives saved.

Cost per life saved = (total cost of weapons collection program / total potential lives saved)

A final method was used to evaluate the human impact of a gun buy back program conducted in Seattle during the autumn of 1992. In the evaluation of the weapons collection program, the authors compared the number of firearms related events (specifically firearms related crimes, injuries and fatalities) from both 12 and 6 months before the weapons collection program. Those statistics were then compared with the firearms related events 6 months after the weapons collection program to determine the impact of the weapons collection on public safety.⁹

% change = [1-(firearms related events after program / related events before program)] x 100

The various methods above can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of weapons collection programs. This list is not exhaustive and, as stated earlier, there is no uniform method for evaluating programs. Weapons collection programs may also impact a situation creating less tangible results than quantitative numbers of weapons collected. Such intangible results, like an increased awareness of the population to the dangers of misusing firearms, are much harder to measure. Changing attitudes of the population towards firearm possession and use may be a central aim of a weapons collection program but is possibly only best measured by public opinion polls. In any case, the point

⁹ Callahan, Charles M. and Rivara, Frederick P. "Money for Guns: Evaluation of the Seattle Gun Buy-Back Program." Public Health Records: Seattle, July 1994.

is clear that in order to evaluate programs properly, pre-assessment of the area in which the weapons collection program will be conducted is vital.

Unfortunately weapons collection programs are often times conducted without the proper pre-assessment useful to properly plan, and necessary for evaluating the program. All too often in developing countries or areas coming out of a recent conflict, data on crime statistics, firearms related injuries and fatalities, and population statistics are not available or unreliable. In order to conduct evaluations of weapons collection programs such as those listed above, such statistics are absolutely vital. In “Tackling Small Arms and Light Weapons: A Practical Guide for Collection and Destruction,” a joint publication by two research organizations focusing on disarmament and small arms proliferation, fourteen components of a voluntary weapons collection program are listed and the first is an environmental assessment of the situation. The Guide states that a proper environmental assessment should analyze the following basic and factors:

Basic Factors:

- Community demographics
- Current status of human security (physical, food, water etc.)
- Economic factors (employment, inflation, currency value)
- Community cohesiveness
- Levels of crime and violence
- Gang activity
- Structure and quality of police force
- Quality of judicial system
- Status of Border and seaports¹⁰

Such basic research is necessary for comparisons of the situation before and after the weapons collection, in order to judge its impact on the situation. Unfortunately, as all too often happens, pre-assessment of the situation was not always conducted before some of our examples of voluntary weapons collection programs were implemented. This makes it difficult to properly evaluate the success of the program using the methods stated above. Given the lack of data, the ultimate evaluation of the weapons collection programs success or failure will be the author’s opinion based on the comparison of the regional programs. The results of weapons collection efforts are often highly political and varying opinions do exist.

Case Study I: Croatia

Following the disarmament and demobilization of the Serbian militias at the end of June 1996, UNTAES and the Croatian government decided the situation was ready for a phase II, voluntary weapons collection program. Between October 1996 and August 1997, UNTAES and the Croatian government began a weapons buy-back program. After the end of the UNTAES mandate in January 1998, the Croatian government decided to continue the program under the authority of the Ministry of Interior until December 2002.

The Croatian government funded the buy-back program, while the personnel of UNTAES controlled and monitored the collection points and procedures. Croatian

¹⁰ BICC and SAND “Tackling Small Arms and Light Weapons: a practical guide to collection and destruction.”

experts assessed the condition and value of the weapons to determine the amount of cash paid on the spot to the individual who surrendered the weapon. Those surrendering weapons were granted anonymity and amnesty from prosecution for illegal weapons charges. Old weapons or those in bad shape were destroyed, while weapons in good condition were stored at the UNTAES protected sites until they were turned over to the Croatian government at the end of the UNTAES mandate. Ultimately the Croatian government paid approximately 1.6 million US dollars for the recovered weapons.¹¹

The numerical results of the program totaled the following:¹²

- Rifles (including automatic and semi-automatic)	9,146
- Rocket launchers and anti-tank weapons	6,375
- Grenades (hand, rifle, anti-tank)	14,521
- Mortars, detonators, and explosives	more than 100
- Ammunition	more than 1,900,000

The characteristics of the Buy-back Program can be summarized as follows:

- Type: Voluntary Weapons Collection
- Context: Post-Conflict Peace Building / Crime Prevention
- Scale: Individual
- Duration: 11 months
- Incentive: individual cash rewards, anonymity, amnesty
- Actors: Croatian government, UNTAES, Ministry of Interior

According to Derek Boothby, the Croatian Buy-back Program faced domestic criticism for ‘rewarding’ individual Serbs for illegal weapons possession. This is a common criticism, that by using cash payments to individuals, the program is ‘rewarding’ individuals for illegal actions. Such criticism is even stronger in post-conflict societies such as Croatia, where part of the community used armed rebellion as a means of attempting to secede from the authority of the ruling government. It was also noted that the continued return of certain individuals to the collection points made it obvious that individuals were acting as brokers or middle-men, collecting weapons from others and selling them at the collection points. Likewise the Croatian government claimed that the appearance of automobiles with Serbian license plates, indicated that individuals from outside the community were bringing weapons into the region in order to profit from buy-back program.

Boothby also offers a general evaluation of the program in Croatia. Based on the mandate of UNTAES to peacefully incorporate the region into Croatia and transition back to Croatian authority, Boothby believes the program “was an undoubted success”

¹¹ This estimate was given by the Croatian Ambassador to the UN, Ambassador Ivan Simonovic, in a prepared statement to the UN Security Council during open debate on post-conflict peace building: New York, March 23, 2000. Available at <www.un.int/croatia/statement/statem_all/stat_sc/sc/ssc_032300> In “The UNTAES Experience,” Derek Boothby states that the Croatian government never made public the full cost of the possibly due to domestic criticism of the program for “paying Serbs money for their weapons.” Boothby, Derek. “The UNTAES Experience: Western Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium” Chapter 5 in *Managing the Remnants of War*, edited by Sami Faltas and Joseph Di Charro III, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2001, pp150-151.

¹² Boothby, Derek. “The UNTAES Experience: Western Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium” Chapter 5 in *Managing the Remnants of War*, edited by Sami Faltas and Joseph Di Charro III, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2001, P150.

and claims the general feeling of UNTAES personnel involved in the program was that it was also successful.¹³

Generally speaking the number of weapons recovered during the eleven-month program was impressive. Boothby also claims the program worked well as a confidence building measure in a post-conflict situation. One criticism of the program was its expense. Using the performance indicator model stated above, with the 30,042 weapons recovered compared with the 1.6million dollars paid out for weapons, the average cost per weapon was roughly \$53 per weapon. But this does not include the total cost to the Croatian government and International Community, which was undoubtedly higher than just the 1.6million USD paid for the weapons. In any case, another sign of its general success was the decision of the Croatian government to continue the program after the end of the UNTAES mandate.

Case Study II: Bosnia

NATO peacekeeping forces in Bosnia are tasked with providing a safe and secure environment. In a step to fulfilling that goal, NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) has initiated an ongoing voluntary weapons collection program. The program began in 1998 with the intention of removing illegal weapons from the community. Various collection sites were established across the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. An amnesty law provided the incentives, assuring those that surrender their weapons will receive anonymity and amnesty from prosecution for illegal weapons possession. All weapons recovered in the program are destroyed by SFOR.

The continuing success of the program has lead to its extension over the years. As the program has continued, SFOR has aimed to involve the local authorities and local Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today, soldiers from SFOR's three multi-national divisions and members of the International Police Task Force monitor the collection points to assure the public of the anonymity and amnesty. SFOR's support of the Operation Harvest includes conducting information campaign in the local area to inform the public of the collection points. Over the years SFOR and local authorities have learned valuable lessons. One lesson in particular was to put engineers on standby to respond to requests to remove unstable or unexploded ordinance, rather than endangering everyone involved by having individuals transport aging and unstable ordinance to collection points.¹⁴

Results of the Operation Harvest from January 1 to December 31, 2000:¹⁵

- Small Arms (rifles and pistols)	5,081
- Hand Grenades	22,799
- Landmines	2,642
- Explosives (in kg)	4,633.9
- Ammunition less than 20mm	2,765,140

¹³ Ibid, p154.

¹⁴ SFOR Fact Sheet. "Project Harvest." November, 2001. Available online at <www.nato.int/sfor/factsheet/opharv/t001116f.htm>

¹⁵ SFOR Informer Online. "Project Harvest 2000 results." Accessed on November 10, 2002. Available online at <www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/104/s104p02b/t0101102b.htm>; SFOR Informer Online. "Operation Harvest Makes progress theatre-wide." Accessed on November 10, 2002. Available online at <www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/116/p13a/b01121a.htm>.

- Ammunition between 20mm and 76mm	43,365
- Ammunition greater than 76mm	927
- Mortars, mortar rounds, rifle grenades, misc.	18,498

Characteristics of the Operation Harvest Collection can be summarized as follows:

- Type: Voluntary weapon collection
- Context: Post-conflict peace building / crime prevention
- Scale: Individual
- Incentive: Amnesty and Anonymity
- Duration: Ongoing (results shown above 12month period)
- Actors: SFOR international troops, local Armed Forces of BiH, and local authorities

The volume of weapons and ordinance recovered in the collection periods would definitely indicate a successful program. The continued volume of weapons and ordinance being handed in has led to the program's extension over the years, also a credit to its success. Despite the fact that individuals are not 'rewarded' for the weapons they surrender, the program has still recovered a large number of weapons, enough to be considered a success. The only incentive for individuals to surrender is the assurance that they will not be prosecuted for illegal weapons possession. Only recently, in order to increase the success of the program, have small lottery prizes been included. Individuals surrendering weapons or ordinance will receive a lottery ticket. Prizes in the lottery include free dinners at local restaurants or vouchers for food and other small prizes.

Case Study III: Kosovo

In a similar case as that of Bosnia, under UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) the NATO's Kosovo Forces (KFOR) are tasked with providing a safe and secure environment in Kosovo. As a means toward that goal, KFOR and the local authorities have conducted several weapons collection programs in an attempt to collect surplus weaponry, in particular military weapons, from the civilian population. In similar campaigns to those of Bosnia, the KFOR troops have conducted voluntary weapons collection programs. Essentially, the public was informed of the amnesty period through a public awareness campaign and encouraged to surrender illegal weapons at collection points operated by NATO troops. During the Amnesty period, those surrendering illegal weapons would be granted amnesty and assured anonymity. All weapons collected during the period were destroyed.

Characteristics of the Kosovo Weapons Amnesty:

- Type: Voluntary weapons collection program
- Context: Post-conflict peace building
- Scale: Individual
- Incentive: Amnesty and anonymity
- Duration: 1 month
- Actors: KFOR and local authorities

The results of the Weapons Amnesty were comparably smaller than those of Operation Harvest in Bosnia, even when accounting for the shorter duration. According to a recent Small Arms Survey study, it is estimated that there are between 280,000 to 460,000 weapons among the civilian population of Kosovo and an estimated 65% of

households in Kosovo possess at least one firearm.¹⁶ Despite this large number of weapons among the relatively small population of Kosovo, efforts at disarmament have had limited success.

Results of the Kosovo Weapons Amnesty conducted from 15 March – 15 April 2002:¹⁷

- Rifles	427
- Pistols	75
- Machine guns	24
- Mortar	1
- Anti-tank	45
- Rockets/missiles	9
- Mines	94
- Hand grenades	726
- Ammunition	more than 59,000
- Misc. items	more than 890

In an ongoing effort at disarmament in Kosovo, the UNDP decided to implement a voluntary weapons collection program in 2003, adding the incentive of development projects to the communities that handed in the most weapons. This model of weapons collection was modeled after successful programs offering development aid to communities in Albania. The UNDP hoped to recover a larger number of weapons from the community with the added incentive. The UNDP offered 675,000 USD worth of development projects to three chosen districts of Kosovo. The local government decided what projects were most needed for their communities, and in return the community needed to surrender above a certain number of weapons. Unfortunately, at the end of the month long campaign, no development projects were awarded because none of the three districts achieved the necessary number of recovered weapons. In all, only 155 weapons were surrendered along with other dangerous illicit materials.¹⁸

Characteristics of the UNDP weapons collection:

- Type: Voluntary weapons collection program
- Context: Post-conflict peace building / crime prevention
- Scale: collective
- Incentives: Development aid, amnesty
- Duration: 1 month (Sept. 1- Oct. 1, 2003)
- Actors: UNDP, local municipalities, police

Unfortunately for Kosovo, when compared to other weapons collection programs conducted in South Eastern Europe, all similar programs implemented in Kosovo have met limited success or failure. Even with the inclusion of incentives, programs modeled after successful programs in Albania, have failed in Kosovo. Reasons for this could be many and will be further analyzed in the conclusion.

¹⁶ Small Arms Survey. "Kosovo and the Gun: a baseline assessment of small arms and light weapons in Kosovo." Geneva: April 2003.

¹⁷ Results of the Weapons Amnesty supplied by KFOR HQ by personal correspondence to author, June 19, 2002. Also available at KFOR Press Release: "Final Results of the Weapons Amnesty." #26-04, Pristina, 19 April 2002 available at <www.nato.int/kfor/press/pr/pr/2002/04/26-04.htm> and for a more detailed accounting of the results see: Small Arms Survey. "Kosovo and the Gun: a baseline assessment of small arms and light weapons in Kosovo." Geneva: April 2003.

¹⁸ UNDP-Kosovo website; Mustafa and Xharra. "Kosovo Gun Amnesty Setback." *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, Prishtina: October 16, 2003.

Case Study IV: Albania

Following the collapse of a pyramid investment scam in Albania in 1997, the people took to the streets and raided government armories in an attempt to recover some of the money they lost. In the ensuing chaos of the 1997 Crisis, it is estimated that 1,300 army stores, police stations and other National Intelligence Service sites were raided. An estimated 550,000 small arms and light weapons, 900million rounds of ammunition and six million explosives were stolen.¹⁹

The human impact of the 1997 Crisis and SALW proliferation was easily seen as Albania descended into lawlessness that took many years to recover from. According to statistics of the UNDP in 1997 alone there were 5,000 criminal acts and between 1997-2001 there were 1,500 murders.²⁰ Albania also became a major source of illegal arms as the individuals attempted to recover their losses by selling their weapons. Although it is impossible to know the exact figure, unconfirmed estimates claim that 150,000 and 200,000 weapons may have been trafficked out of Albania to Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece.²¹ The Crisis and its aftermath made development work impossible until order was restored.

Weapons collection was a high priority for the Albanian government after the crisis. In an attempt to recover some of the looted weaponry, the government declared an amnesty for anyone who returned the looted weapons. This program had limited success and the Albanian government had no funding for larger projects. On February 27, 1998, the Government of Albania asked the Secretary General of the United Nations for assistance with the arms collection efforts.

A UN mission to Albania in June 1998 made a preliminary assessment of the situation. Originally, it was suggested that the UN initiate a buy-back program similar to the Croatian example. The UN mission concluded that “such a program was not feasible for economic reasons” since it would be “highly inflationary” to the local economy. Also the members of the UN mission believed that “offering individual cash incentives would be tantamount to rewarding unauthorized weapons ownership.” The UN Mission, therefore recommended “linking weapons collection programs to development incentives that benefit communities as a whole.”²²

The result was a series of innovative voluntary weapons collection programs aimed at collective incentives to benefit communities and not just individuals. The first program was the Gramsh Pilot Project (GPP) conducted between December 1998 and January 2000. This initial pilot project was conducted in one single district. The follow-up to the pilot project was the Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) project

¹⁹ Statistics provided by officials of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project – UNDP, Tirana, Albania, March 24, 2003.

²⁰ UNDP, Tirana, March 24, 2003.

²¹ Henny J. van der Graaf and Sami Faltas. “Weapons in Exchange for Development: An innovative approach to Collection of Weapons in Albania.” Chapter 7 in *Managing the Remnants of War*, edited by Sami Faltas and Joseph Di Charro III, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2001, P164; Also statistics provided by UNDP, Tirana, March 23, 2003.

²² Henny J. van der Graaf and Sami Faltas. “Weapons in Exchange for Development.” Chapter 7 in *Managing the Remnants of War*. Edited by Sami Faltas and Joseph di Charro III, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2001, P165.

from June 2000 to January 2002. This project was the same concept as the GPP but implemented on a larger scale in two Districts of Albania, Elbasan and Diber. The UNDP's Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project (SALWC) conducted the most recent program over a much larger area but with fewer funds for development projects. The SALWC project was to operate in fifteen of Albania's 36 districts, but due to the fewer available funds, it used a new approach, the Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD). In this model communities would compete for small-scale infrastructure projects by surrendering small arms and light weapons. Communities that attained a certain goal would be awarded the infrastructure project.

Generally speaking the characteristics to these new approaches at weapons collection can be summarized as follows:

- Type: Voluntary Weapons Collection
- Context: Crime Prevention / Public Safety
- Scale: Collective
- Incentives: Development aid (both WED and WCD models), amnesty
- Actors: UNDP; local police, military and government

Results of the separate programs:

Gramsh Pilot Project- GPP

- 7,000 weapons collected
- 10,000,000 rounds of ammunition
- 12 development projects awarded in one district
- Cost of development projects = \$812,160 USD

Weapons in Exchange for Development – WED

- 6,000 weapons collected
- 3,000,000 rounds of ammunition
- 23 development projects awarded in two districts
- Cost of development projects = \$1,800,000 USD

Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project – SALWC (as of April 2002)

- 11, 864 weapons collected from all 15 participating districts
- 42 development projects awarded to 5 participating districts
- Cost of development projects = \$962,000 USD

The voluntary weapons collection programs in Albania have been controversial because of their new approach and expensive. But their success has led to their continued implementation and is now a model program advocated to other regions. The Bonn International Center for Conversion conducted an independent evaluation of the most recent and controversial program in Albania and also announced the SALWC project and WCD model as a success. The evaluation believed that the SALWC project had met its stated goals of, first, removing illegal and dangerous weapons and explosives from the civilian population. Second, making the population more aware of the dangers of illegal weapons possession and third, enhancing the ability of the local authorities to control the private possession of arms and ammunition.

Regarding the WCD model of collection, the authors of the evaluation believe the competitive model would only work under certain conditions, which were present in the Albanian competition. First, the WCD model would only work "if the possessors consider the SALW to be unnecessary and unlikely to fetch a good price." Second, "it

will only work if the possessors to some degree regard the SALW as common property and, once the decision is made to surrender SALW, discourage people from opting out.”²³

Case Study V: Macedonia

NATO’s Operation Essential Harvest and the demobilization of the rebel National Liberation Army, prepared Macedonia for a phase II, voluntary weapons collection program. The need was evident as violent crime and the misuse of firearms increased after the end of the 2001 Crisis. Indeed, trust in government’s ability to provide public safety seemed to diminish and there was increased demand for firearms. One official from the Ministry of Interior claimed that in 2001 and 2002 the Ministry had ten times the number of individuals applying for a permit to possess a firearm, then the had the year before the crisis.²⁴ But only after the election of a new government in September 2002, did a voluntary weapons collection program become realistic.

In spring of 2003, the newly elected government began consultations with the UNDP to implement a voluntary weapons collection program. A Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD) model was originally proposed, but funds and time were lacking and, in the author’s own opinion, a competition in a post-conflict society where tensions between ethnic communities remained high, had little chance of success. A nation wide survey conducted by the Institute for Solidarity, Democracy and Civil Society asked the question ‘how likely would people be to surrender their weapons in exchange for community development projects in their municipality?’ The largest part of the respondents, 32.8% answered ‘very unlikely.’²⁵

In May 2003, the Macedonian parliament approved two new laws, providing the legal authority to implement a weapons collection. The Parliament established a National Coordinating Body to plan and implement the weapons collection program. With the assistance of the UNDP and civil society, the Macedonian government began a nationwide public awareness campaign in order to alert the citizens to the upcoming weapons collection program and the dangers associated with the misuse and illegal possession of firearms. The weapons collection program would begin on November 1, 2003 and ran for 45 days. Each municipality of Macedonia would have several collection points to be run by representatives of the national and local governments. The UNDP provided international observers to monitor the collection points. As an incentive to encourage people to surrender their weapons, the UNDP initiated a lottery. Each individual surrendering a weapon would receive a lottery ticket. Numbers were drawn at random for prizes such as a new car, televisions, household goods, textbooks and scholarships.

Also, the weapons collection program included a legalization element to allow citizens to license an illegally obtained weapon. Those submitting an application for legalization would be granted amnesty from prosecution and would submit the item for legalization to a collection point. If the item and application was approved, the owner

²³ Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). “‘You have removed the devil from our door’ An assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project in Albania.” SEESAC APD #20, Belgrade, October 30, 2003. Pii.

²⁴ Interview with Mire Markoski, Ministry of Interior, Skopje, 5 August 2002.

²⁵ Institute for Solidarity, Democracy and Civil Society. *Nationwide Household Survey Report*, Skopje, 18-25 June 2003.

could then later pick up the weapon from the local police station with a license for possession of the weapon. In the case where a weapon application was not approved, the weapon would be retained by the authorities and destroyed with all the other recovered weapons within 90 days from the end of the amnesty period.

Characteristics of the Macedonian Case study:

- Type: Voluntary Weapons Collection
- Context: public safety
- Scale: Individual
- Incentive: Lottery tickets, amnesty, anonymity
- Duration: 45 days
- Actors: National and local government, local police, civil society and UNDP

Initially, published results of the program succeeded in collecting 3,590 rifles and 2,749 handguns, as well as more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition.²⁶ A more detailed list of recovered weapons was obtained from correspondence with UNDP officials in Skopje.²⁷

- Rifles	3,589
- Revolvers	458
- Pistols	2,336
- Machine guns	27
- Mortars	2
- Rocket launchers	55
- Mines	247
- Rockets/missiles	60
- Hand grenades	797
- Items of ammunition	100,219
- Detonators	1,151
- Explosives	165 kg
- Detonation cable/fuse	497.65 meters
- Misc.	1,207

Unfortunately the list above also includes items that were surrendered temporarily as part of the application for legalization. Therefore, the list is unclear, exactly how many weapons will be returned to their owners upon approval of legalization. As of 15 December 2003, the authorities received a total of 4,387 requests for legalization, out of which 73 had been refused and 796 granted, with the rest still being processed.²⁸

Overall, local and international authorities have applauded the results of the Macedonian weapons amnesty. Certainly the number of weapons recovered is significant, including the military nature of some of the weapons, and the legalization process has allowed the local authorities to better control civilian possession of firearms.

One critic of the program claimed many of the surrendered weapons were obsolete, including World War II era rifles. Furthermore he claimed that most of the

²⁶ Website of the National Coordinating Body <www.smallarms.org.mk> 18.December 2003.

²⁷ These statistics will be published in a forthcoming joint publication from the Small Arms Survey and Bonn International Center for Conversion. "The SALW Problem in Macedonia." Expected publication in February 2004.

²⁸ Correspondence from UNDP official Skopje. To be published in a forthcoming joint publication from the Small Arms Survey and Bonn International Center for Conversion. "The SALW Problem in Macedonia." Expected publication in February 2004.

weapons surrendered came from urban, middle-class areas and not from the rural areas of the former conflict area, where the majority of illegal weapons in Macedonia are believed to be held.²⁹

Conclusion: Best practices for encouraging disarmament

The above five case studies have provided us with examples of various approaches to voluntary weapons collection programs. The characteristics and general evaluations of the programs have been summarized in the chart found in Annex 1. We will now review lessons-learned from our case studies.

NATO's two examples of voluntary weapons collection in Bosnia and Kosovo represent the most basic model of a voluntary weapons collection program. These programs are basic weapons amnesty periods offering the individual the incentive to surrender his illegal weapons without fear of prosecution for illegal weapons possession. The only other incentive in these cases may be the threat of increased criminal penalties after the conclusion of the amnesty period. This would only work best as a one-time offer, since continuously implemented weapons amnesty periods obviously decreases the urgency felt by the individual to surrender their weapon during the weapons amnesty period. In terms of cost-effectiveness, a basic weapons amnesty can be considered the cheapest option. In the case of Bosnia, Operation Harvest can be considered a success. Similarly, NATO's weapons amnesty in Kosovo did recover some weapons but not enough to truly consider the program a success, but we will return to the case of Kosovo later.

The Croatian case study presents the buy-back model as a voluntary weapons collection program. While more expensive than the basic amnesty model, the cash-back offer does encourage individuals to surrender their weapons. But this model is most often the focus of criticism for rewarding individuals for unlawful behavior and is most likely to raise resentment from other individuals. As Faltas and Paes summarize, this can lead to resentment against the program or the implementing agency, "People who have not broken the law, and people who were threatened, harassed, robbed or injured at gunpoint will not be pleased to see the holders of illegal weapons being rewarded for disarming."³⁰ None the less, the Croatian buy-back program is considered a success.

The WED model implemented in Albania was an attempt to offer collective incentives to avoid the problems and criticism directed at buy-back programs. As a model for disarmament, it is generally perceived as the best method for encouraging disarmament. The problem associated with this model is the expense of the program. The Gramsh Pilot Program was very successful, but was only implemented in a small district of Albania. The larger the scale of the program, the more expensive the program will be. Although it is clear from past practice that such a program also increases the additional benefits of a weapons collection program. As the programs in Albania indicate, the civil

²⁹ Wood, Nicolas. "Swap Guns for Prizes? Few Comply in Macedonia". *The New York Times*. 14 December 2003.

³⁰ Faltas and Paes. (BICC). "You have removed the devil from our door' An assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project in Albania." SEESAC APD #20, Belgrade, October 30, 2003, P3.

society and community involvement in the programs, are most effective at building communities changing attitudes towards weapons.

The WCD model also proved to be a successful program, enabling the collective incentives to go further on a smaller program. The BICC evaluation also points out that the program did not raise resentment among those who did not win development projects, since the communities still benefited from the decrease in the supply of weapons in those communities.

Unfortunately, the WED and WCD models only seem applicable in certain cases. In the Macedonian weapons amnesty and legalization, the cost and the time needed for a WED or WCD did not fit the resources available. Working with the UNDP and civil society, the authorities in Macedonia attempted to do the best they could with what they had. The idea of lottery prizes as an incentive seemed to work. The legalization aspect of the program furthermore, gave the Macedonian government the chance to take stock of previously unaccounted weapons and enhance control over such weapons.

In this paper, the voluntary weapons collection programs in Kosovo present the only case of failure. As stated earlier, KFOR's weapons amnesty produced only limited success when compared to NATO's similar operation conducted in Bosnia. The UNDP hoped to have better results, by using the WCD model in Kosovo. Unfortunately this program likewise failed and no disarmament projects were awarded. In evaluating these programs the question must be asked, why a model with collective incentives implemented successfully in one area, failed in another area?

There are several reasons why the WCD model may have failed in Kosovo. In the BICC evaluation of the SALWC program in Albania, the authors claim rightfully that the WCD model will only work under certain conditions. One such condition is that the weapons need to be regarded, in some way as collective property. The authors point out that the Kosovo program conducted in Autumn 2003, may have failed because the weapons in Kosovo were not considered collective property, but individual property.³¹ Other reasons for the program's failure could be due to the other condition, that the individuals need to feel that they have no more need for the weapon or cannot fetch a fair price. In an article on the subject, two Kosovar journalists indicate that people in Kosovo have several reasons to retain their weapons. The journalists claim that, "A combination of continuing uncertainty over the final status of Kosovo, distrust of the security forces, suspicion of corruption among local officials and growing culture of violence appears to have led to the failure of the amnesty."³²

In conclusion, the failure of the Kosovo weapons amnesty is exemplary in showing the limit of incentives to encourage disarmament. This paper has focused on the use of incentives to encourage disarmament in the course of voluntary weapons collection programs. The case studies presented in this paper show that incentives are effective at encouraging disarmament under certain conditions. It is now worth repeating the caveat stated in the introduction of this paper. Disarmament does not happen in a vacuum and

³¹ Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). "You have removed the devil from our door' An assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project in Albania." SEESAC APD #20, Belgrade, October 30, 2003, pp. ii and 4.

³² Mustafa, Artan; Xharra, Jeta. "Kosovo Gun Amnesty Setback." *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, Balkan Crisis Report No. 464, Prishtina, October 16, 2003.

unless accompanied by other reforms to improve the overall human security, weapons collection programs will have little impact on the situation.

Weapons collection programs and incentives alone cannot encourage people to disarm. Individuals may have many reasons for possessing a firearm and are often directly related to their perceptions of security and the security providers in their community. But, weapons collection programs alone are not the solution. Unless embedded in either a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process or a security sector reform (SSR) process, weapons collection programs stand little chance of success. A weapons collection program may directly address the supply of SALW in a community, but it usually cannot address the fundamental reasons why an individual feels he needs a weapon.

Above all, a VWCP is a means to address the oversupply of weapons in a community, thereby enhancing security and stability in the community. But, the success of a weapons collection program should never be measured exclusively by the amount of weapons recovered. As illustrated in this paper, weapons collection programs and the public awareness campaigns that proceed them have many additional benefits that should be considered regarding the projects overall success. With careful planning and consideration, a well-implemented voluntary weapons collection program with matching incentives can be a powerful policy tool and a step towards an overall improvement in the security situation, thereby paving the way for development aid and, hopefully peace and prosperity.

Annex 1

Cases	Context	Type	Scale	Incentive	Duration	Actors	Results
Croatia	Crime Prevention / Maintain peace and stability	VWC / Phase II	Individual	Amnesty, anonymity, Cash	+ 3 years	Int'l Community, local and national govt.	Successful
Bosnia	Crime Prevention / Maintain peace and stability	VWC / Phase II	Individual	Amnesty, anonymity	Ongoing (one year)	Int'l Community, local and national govt.	Successful
Kosovo I	Crime Prevention / Maintain peace and stability	VWC / Phase II	Individual	Amnesty, anonymity	1 month	International community	Limited success
Kosovo II	Crime Prevention / Maintain peace and stability	VWC / Phase II	Collective	Amnesty, anonymity, WCD	30 days	International community and local govt.	Unsuccessful
Albania I	Crime Prevention / Maintain peace and stability	VWC / Phase II	Collective	Amnesty, anonymity, WED	13 months	Int'l community, local and national govt.	Successful
Albania II	Crime Prevention / Maintain peace and stability	VWC / Phase II	Collective	Amnesty, anonymity, WCD	8 months	Int'l Community, local and national govt.	Successful
Macedonia II	Crime Prevention / Maintain peace and stability	VWC / Phase II	Individual	Amnesty, anonymity, lottery prizes	45 days	National govt. with support of local govt. and IC	Successful

Bibliography:

BICC and SAND “Tackling Small Arms and Light Weapons: a practical guide to collection and destruction.” February 2000.

Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). “‘You have removed the devil from our door’ An assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project in Albania.” SEESAC APD #20, Belgrade, October 30, 2003.

Callahan, Charles M. and Rivara, Frederick P. “Money for Guns: Evaluation of the Seattle Gun Buy-Back Program.” Public Health Records: Seattle, July 1994.

Faltas, Sami and Di Charro III, Joseph (editors). Managing the Remnants of War. Bonn International Centre for Conversion / Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2001.

Institute for Solidarity, Democracy and Civil Society. *Nationwide Household Survey Report*, Skopje, 18-25 June 2003.

Mustafa, Artan; Xharra, Jeta. “Kosovo Gun Amnesty Setback.” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, Balkan Crisis Report No. 464, Prishtina, October 16, 2003.

Small Arms Survey. “Kosovo and the Gun: a baseline assessment of small arms and light weapons in Kosovo.” Geneva: April 2003.

Small Arms Survey. Small Arms Survey 2001. Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 2001.

Small Arms Survey. Small Arms Survey 2002. Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 2002.

Wilkinson, Adrian. “The Concept of Micro-disarmament Programmes in Post-conflict environments.” Thesis Paper: University of Kent, 2002.

Wood. Nicolas. “Swap Guns for Prizes? Few Comply in Macedonia”. *The New York Times*. 14 December 2003.