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more than others. "The war in the Balkans is a greater danger to international security than civil wars in Somalia, Liberia or Sudan because it may overwhelm Europe's political stability and economic productivity, prerequisites for Third World development."

Likewise, the goals of any intervention still must be clearly defined. "Only a combination of coherent strategy, sufficient leverage, and a keen sense of timing will allow a third party to bring peace. Most civil wars become amenable to settlement only after they have played themselves out with ferocity." A short-term emphasis on ceasefires, or the provision of humanitarian aid, may sometimes only prolong the bloody conflict rather than end it. Many civil wars, in Stedman's view, may just have to be allowed to run their tragic course.

## *It Can't Happen Here?*

**"The Origins of the American Military Coup of 2012"** by Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., in *Parameters* (Winter 1992-93), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pa. 17013-5050.

*The year is 2012 and the White House is abruptly taken over by General Thomas E. T. Brutus, heretofore merely the uniformed chief of the unified armed forces. Upon the president's death and the vice president's not entirely voluntary retirement, Brutus declares martial law, postpones elections, and names himself permanent Military Plenipotentiary. The coup is ratified in a national referendum.*

This scenario may seem like a fanciful Hollywood film treatment, but Dunlap, an Air Force lieutenant colonel, is afraid that it is becoming all too possible.

Casting his argument in the form of a letter from a senior officer imprisoned for resisting the imagined coup of 2012, Dunlap notes that high public confidence in the military after the Persian Gulf War and disillusionment with most other arms of government made it tempting, with the Cold War over, to give the armed forces major responsibilities for dealing with crime, environmental hazards, natural disasters, and other civilian problems. Other institutions did not seem to be up to the job. Even before then, in 1981, Congress had expanded

the military's role in combating drug-smuggling. "By 1991 the Department of Defense was spending \$1.2 billion on counter-narcotics crusades. Air Force surveillance aircraft were sent to track airborne smugglers; Navy ships patrolled the Caribbean looking for drug-laden vessels; and National Guardsmen were searching for marijuana caches near the borders." Proposals were made to have the military rebuild bridges and roads, rehabilitate public housing, and even help out urban hospitals. U.S. troops were given humanitarian missions overseas, in such countries as Iraq, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Somalia. When several African governments collapsed around the turn of the century, according to Dunlap's imaginary account, U.S. troops were called upon to provide basic services—and never left. At home, the armed forces had gotten involved in many vital areas of American life, and 21st-century legislators called for even greater involvement.

By taking on civilian tasks, Dunlap contends, the military is diverted from its main mission—waging war and preparing to wage war—and "the very ethos of military service" is eroded. Instead of considering themselves warriors, people in the military come to think of themselves as "policemen, relief workers, educators, builders, health care providers, politicians—everything but warfighters."

"With so much responsibility for virtually everything government was expected to do," his imaginary prisoner recalls, "the military increasingly demanded a larger role in policymaking." Well-intentioned officers, accustomed to the military hierarchy of command, "became impatient with the delays and inefficiencies inherent in the democratic process," and increasingly sought to circumvent it. General Brutus's coup was nothing more than the next logical step.

## *Rambo Retires*

**"War Without Killing"** by Harvey M. Sapolsky and Sharon K. Weiner, in *Breakthroughs* (Winter 1992-93), Defense and Arms Control Studies Program, MIT, 292 Main St. (E38-603), Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The American military has always gone to great lengths to minimize deaths in wartime. Now, however, it may be going too far.

It is one thing to keep U.S. soldiers and civilians,