



Towards Conflict Resolution Best Practice

Report of the 2008 Tswalu Dialogue

8 – 11 May

Hosted by Jonathan and Jennifer Oppenheimer
& organized by The Brenthurst Foundation
in conjunction with the
African Union (AU),
Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), London,
African Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS), Washington,
S. Rajaratnam School for International Studies (RSIS), NTU, Singapore,
Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies, University of Tel Aviv,
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), South Africa
and Business Leadership SA

Supported by the Government of Denmark

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1. 2008 Tswalu Dialogue Summary

The 2008 Tswalu Dialogue Summary

Terence McNamee, Greg Mills and Steve Stead*

The Tswalu Dialogue was established in 2002 as a premier African forum to discuss issues of concern to continental development and security. It is hosted by Jonathan and Jennifer Oppenheimer and was, in 2008, organised by The Brenthurst Foundation in conjunction with the Commission of the African Union (AU), the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), S Rajaratnam School for International Studies (RSIS), Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies at the University of Tel Aviv, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), and Business Leadership South Africa. It is supported by the Government of Denmark. The 2008 Dialogue examined a range of topical and relevant international case-studies in aiming to develop current best practice towards conflict resolution and management.

DAY ONE – 8 MAY 2008

After-dinner Talk: Reflections on the Namibian Independence Negotiation Process Twenty Years On

Andre Jaquet reflected on his personal involvement in the Namibian independence negotiations at the end of the 1980s, noting that against the backdrop of the unacceptably high mortality rates from disease and conflict on the African

continent, conflict resolution does on occasion succeed. He observed that certain elements must be present to facilitate success; in the case of Namibia, possibly a unique set. The international climate was conducive to a settlement and the major changes of the late 1980s forced the world to adapt – the situation was ‘ripe for change’; the senior mediator was immensely capable and knowledgeable; the establishment of a series of informal meetings facilitated a much deeper understanding of both sides’ fears and anxieties, and encouraged empathy; joint press statements locked the parties together and the announcements of fixed dates for subsequent rounds of negotiations concentrated the minds of the governments on the issue at hand; consistency in the membership of the teams generated confidence and opportunities were specially created to enable the heads of delegations to meet privately, particularly on sensitive issues; and most importantly of all, the necessity to build confidence between all parties was accepted as *sine qua non* to the process.

DAY TWO – 9 MAY 2008

Session One: What have we learnt from conflict resolution in Africa?

In his Keynote Address **Terrence Lyons**

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examined what we have learned from conflict in Africa and studies of conflict resolution. He observed at the outset that there is no 'African-type' of conflict; that is, global comparisons are always possible. Africa can, however, be set apart because of its relatively new state system, and research shows that the very process of state-building typically is violent. He went on to highlight several critical issues impacting the likely success of conflict resolution, prominent among them was the relative centrality of the ethnic dimension and inter-ethnic rivalry; the competition for resources; and the nature of third-party involvement, which done well can help overcome the security dilemma confronting many African societies, but done poorly can exacerbate existing divisions and provide succour to spoilers bent on undermining conflict resolution efforts.

Discussion

The discussion that followed alighted on one key issue – the problematic categorisation, or institutionalisation, of conflict in Africa – and how it affects internal and external conflict resolution strategies. It was suggested that the uniqueness and complexity of Africa, which derives in large part from its colonial and state-building experience, is not captured in the vocabulary used both in academia and the policymaking world. Terms like 'failed states' – the utility of which was vigorously challenged by several discussants – not only lead to erroneous comparisons with countries such as Iraq, but they also inform our approaches to conflict resolution in ways that are often inappropriate to the circumstances. In other words, the way we describe conflict determines to a great extent how we attempt to deal with it. As such, there is a prior question that we need to ask ourselves – why do we institutionalise

conflict in a certain way? There needs to be much wider recognition of the fact that our response will be driven by that institutionalisation.

A related point emerged on the need to be very modest in establishing general criteria. Conflict *resolution* is, in fact, extremely rare. In recent decades we have seen some 'big fires' in Africa brought down to 'glimmering fires', but real conflict resolution has proved largely elusive. It was asked in this regard: What is the legitimate participation of the international community in conflict resolution? In what circumstances is it likely to be most efficacious? One discussant robustly argued that only in the case of a 'big fire' is international involvement likely to produce positive results.

The problem in the past has been the entwinement of the international community in local dynamics and issues which are beyond their control and comprehension, often because it is driven to act – to simply 'do something' – by the 'CNN Factor'. But the avalanche of international assistance in this regard can have a number of pernicious impacts, significant among them is the disempowerment of local African actors. Typically there is also a bias of third parties towards the government; coups, rebellions, and the like have been *delegitimised* as a tool for change. Elections are now the *sine qua non* for change. But worryingly, people in Africa are beginning to lose faith in this mechanism as elections themselves are becoming delegitimised because of vote-rigging and lack of openness, such as in Zimbabwe. But contrary examples, such as the recent free and fair election in Sierra Leone, were also put forward.

One discussant suggested that if we look for appropriate comparisons for Africa, the

concept of 'predatory warlordism' might have more utility in devising conflict resolution strategies than those which derive from the failed state paradigm. One possible example cited was China, where the state emerged from efforts to combat predatory warlordism in various parts of the country.

One tension identified in the discussion was between the academic perspective on conflict resolution and the policy making perspective. The latter emphasises the *sui generis* and searches for a unique mix of ingredients to resolve a particular crisis or conflict. The former, however, seeks to find congruencies and common themes. How we bridge the gap is critical to devising more effective strategies.

Lastly, the well-known poverty trap elaborated by Paul Collier and others was discussed, as was the extent to which inequality, especially between ethnic groups, is a driver of conflict. One discussant suggested that Africa was stuck in various sorts of 'traps' – conflict, poverty, governance – which require renewed attention in our analyses. Of key importance is the breakdown in Africa from the state-centric norm. Going forward, drawing out the limitations of what external actors and third parties can do, and what we can glean or conclude from the categorisations we make, is a key challenge.

Session One – Part I

Shannon Field presented the case of Sudan as an example of destabilisation and marginalisation of peripheral regions. The bilateral agreement negotiated with Tigray, for example, triggered similar requirements in Darfur; government intransigence over the future of Abyei has hurt the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) and it is expected that the 2009 elections will be demographically manipulated by Khartoum. This is complicated by the international community's lack of real assistance with implementation of the CPA and the focus moving to Darfur. Resulting from shared frustrations, there are indications that Darfur will vote with the SPLM in 2009, so the government (the NCP) has instituted a programme of violence in Darfur to stop it voting as a block. She argued that UN and AU mediators are weak, with insufficient political and military capacity; local mediators are driven by their own interests, primarily Libya and Eritrea, who want to see the NCP remain in power. What is lacking is an understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the region, for example the use of the Lord's Resistance Army as a proxy force by the NCP in Darfur in concert with Chadian rebels.

Medhane Tadesse highlighted the challenges faced in the Horn of Africa, arguing for three policies: confronting the state, confronting the region's unstable power hierarchies and strategic concerns, and confronting the legacies of war. These challenges encompass transformation of an unrepresentative state; the acceptance that changes of government will not change the regional geography, such as the flow of the Nile and the borders; and the inheritance of a series of militarised political systems and cultures. To this is added the legacy of turning disputes over grazing and un-demarcated borders into conflict and the propensity of political elites to use security measures to deal with political problems. A new approach is required to introduce stability, including strong state institutions, representation, an equitable social order, emphasis on economic integration and the demilitarisation and democratisation of the

security institutions. He concluded with an application of these guidelines to Sudan, Somalia and Somaliland – providing examples of where they have led to defusing a potential conflict situation or indeed fuelling it, as in the case of Somalia, where the process of reconstruction has been driven externally, ignoring existing major cultural and historical structures.

David Zounmenou emphasised the lessons learned from the peace process that followed the civil war in Liberia. Of interest in this case was the intervention by a regional organisation – the first of its kind in Africa – to address the crisis. This intervention was based on three main objectives: to persuade Samuel Doe to step down as he had lost control of the majority of the country; to disarm the combatants; and to establish an environment for elections. The success of the mission and the transition from war to peace, from a Liberian viewpoint, could be attributed to: the commitment of the parties in conflict to end hostilities and the leading role played by the regional organisation; international capacity to enforce decisions coupled to a new security framework to secure the peace; and a generally acceptable, inclusive and transparent system of post-conflict governance. However, despite the undeniable value of international intervention, the close relationship between the internal parties to a conflict and the regional states, resulting from the ‘knock-on’ effects of the conflict, can lead to the initiative emanating from regional decision-making.

Discussion

The discussion which followed the Somalia/Horn, Sudan and Liberia case studies highlighted the role of regional groupings, in particular their marked

ineffectiveness in devising collective approaches to conflict resolution. The example of the Arab League was cited: its record in tackling conflict within two of its members, Sudan and Somalia, is woeful. Regional organisations often have opposing strategies and objectives. It was provocatively suggested that ad hoc arrangements are often more successful than those borne of regional organisations and even the UN. The successful British-led operation in Sierra Leone was noted in this regard. In the case of Darfur, it was observed that something akin to ‘negotiation fatigue’ has set in. Regional leaders are perhaps simply too overstretched with other local and regional issues to devote sufficient resources to even begin to ameliorate the crisis, let alone resolve it.

The negative incentives for foreign involvement in conflict resolution were also raised. Conflict resolution has, in many respects, become an industry. Often the amount of foreign funding up for grabs for such activities is staggering – but precious little of it ‘hits the ground’, that is reaches beyond the exorbitant consultancy fees and hotel bills paid to external ‘experts’. Indeed the case can be made that humanitarian assistance often unwittingly furthers conflict; whilst in other cases there are economic incentives for the prolongation of conflict.

Positive examples of foreign involvement were also cited, however, in particular the Mandela-Zuma peace mission to Burundi. A number of reasons for its apparent success – possible lessons for other conflict resolution efforts – were highlighted, including the fact that the mediators were unbiased, they had clout, and they were committed to the process over an extensive period of time, in this case a number of years. But that description of the Burundian

peace process was challenged by some discussants.

A key question which emerged from the discussion is how do you sequence peace processes with justice processes? At what point do you insert transitional justice issues into a fluid 'conflict management' effort? (Many discussants noted that 'conflict management' was a more accurate description and reflection of current international engagement than 'conflict resolution'). In general, it was argued, unless you link humanitarian aid and DDR (Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration) in the transition, it is doomed to failure.

Also critical to success is addressing the aspirations of the youth and the needs of war veterans, and more generally integrating with extant civil society networks. The indigenous modes of resolving conflict, local coping strategies and the repositories of local knowledge and skills to resolve conflict are too often given short shrift by foreign actors. They should instead be at the very centre of conflict resolution strategies.

Session One – Part II

The focus of **Martin Kimani's** paper was Kenya and primarily the unrest following the elections in January 2008. His approach, at one time closer to the 'give conflict a chance' school, changed with the realisation that the events in Kenya lay close to the heart and where previously he felt that conflict was innate to people and constituted a part of shaping the world, he took the opposite view and actively promoted reconciliation and resolution of violence. This highlighted the argument that experience was not only the basis of learning lessons, but that there was also a

need for cogent conceptual understanding of the ideas that lead to and out of conflict. Politics would continue to be a struggle between friends and enemies; it would not cease and would remain subject to the principle of escalation of paranoia, rumour mongering and propaganda on both sides. He offered the argument that Kenyans had moved beyond anti-colonialism and the crude assemblage of power-seekers who seek to exploit recidivist ideas to further their own interests. He noted that the mainstream wanted to distance themselves from the old politics.

Frank Rusagara drew the attention of the participants to the Tswalu Protocol and its application to peace-building in offering guidelines to assist in off-setting the inherent limitations on multilateral operations designed to address the aftermath of conflicts. In Rwanda, the parties to the conflict were forced to the negotiation table in 1993 to agree to a cease-fire which collapsed at the first signs of threat, and shortly led to the well-documented genocide. The UN's collusion in facilitating the withdrawal of the *genocidaires* into the DRC added to the level of distrust of external interference. This encouraged the decision by the Rwandan Government to take full responsibility for the peace-building efforts in the country. In summing up, he focused on the lessons derived from the Rwandan experience. Primarily, a major effort ensured that there were neither victors nor vanquished and that peacebuilding can be a positive-sum game; the plan cannot be assembled elsewhere, it must reflect the desires of the local parties; and the importance of building local capacity, especially in security and defence, should not be taken lightly.

Michael Holman asked why the West had been taken by surprise at the events in

Zimbabwe and Kenya. He argued that it was the culmination of a number of factors, including the decline in the quality of reporting on Africa, the intrusion of wishful thinking on analysis, the lack of experience of correspondents, an unhealthy mutual support relationship between the media and NGOs and a reticence to criticise or question the motives of the host country. Given the West's poor record of involvement in Africa, it came as no surprise that African leaders tend to treat any advice with caution. He further argued that aid was no alternative to foreign policy and that the basis for establishing a stable foundation on which to formulate such policy rested on knowing and understanding the region and the people. Local solutions were far more likely to succeed, recognising the local and regional interests, ensuring that more experienced people were appointed to provide information on national and regional developments. Advances in technology were a mixed blessing – particularly in the media.

Thomas Nziratimana began his presentation by drawing a comparison between twentieth-century levels of conflict in Africa and Europe, concluding that the latter inflicted levels of violence and destruction unmatched in Africa. The influence of international organisations like the United Nations, in defusing situations of confrontation, only became felt after the cessation of the worst European conflicts. The aim of his paper was to investigate the means available to end African conflict, based on his experience of the DRC. In spite of the climate of international pessimism following the savage civil war that raged from 1996 to 2002, the DRC, primarily through the efforts of its internal actors, established the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) which led to a cessation of hostilities and opened the way to future nationhood

and co-operation. He maintained that dialogue continues as the primary tool of conflict resolution as it provides a means for people to engage without the dangers of confrontation inherent in debate, but retains the ability to expose the causal issues and investigate their solution. What emerged from the ICD, and can be applied generally to conflict situations, was the realisation that common interests exist and that much of the conflict was in pursuance of very similar objectives; that international and regional support would follow an agreement, contributing to an improvement in quality of life; and that it is always of greater benefit to identify and prevent a developing conflict than to react to it after it has begun.

In analysing Burundi, **Jan van Eck** argued that the present fragility in Burundi can be attributed to serious internal political differences, alleged human rights violations by the government and resumption in open hostilities with the Palipehutu-FNL. Why this has developed can be traced back to the 1993 massacres in Burundi followed by the 1994 genocide in Rwanda when the international community reacted with extreme urgency to forestall any re-occurrence, and forced the internal parties to the negotiating table at Arusha – before the climate was right. Attempts by the internal parties to address the problems were largely ignored; the negotiation process was not accompanied by a structured confidence-building process. Since priority was given to ending the violence, the root causes of the conflict were neglected. This amounted to an external solution being imposed with obvious potential for dissatisfaction. Complicating the issue was the internal division within the Hutu grouping leading to an increase in the complexity of the process. In 2006 the FNL were coerced into becoming signatories, creating the impression that the

organisation had been defeated – a principal error in any negotiation process. He concluded by stating that the danger exists of focusing on ending the violence and neglecting the causes, resulting in the conflict simply evolving, rather than being resolved.

Discussion

The recent crisis in Kenya and the peace processes in the DRC and Burundi featured prominently in the subsequent discussion, and gave rise to a number of ancillary issues and questions – over the role of identity, ethnicity, the media and civil society, elite personalities, and external intervention. Regarding the latter, the role of South African mediation in both the DRC and Burundi was the subject of contrasting interpretations on its relative success or failure, though there was wide agreement that ‘resolution’ of conflict in both remained elusive – and far from certain. The external response to events in Kenya was criticised for its lack of coherence and decisive diplomacy, in particular the UK’s apparent ‘flip-flop’. The media response also came in for sharp criticism.

It was observed that external intervention whilst not preferable, and best avoided if local solutions can be found, is a reality that we are often too reluctant to address forthrightly and credibly. Given the violent crises affecting parts of Africa, for the foreseeable future there must, argued one discussant, be a role for robust intervention – if we are serious about fulfilling our international commitments to a ‘responsibility to protect’.

The role of personality, both in creating conflict and in managing conflict, was highlighted as a frequently neglected but nevertheless vital factor. Indeed it is an

overarching issue. Of many examples cited, the recent crisis in Kenya, and the way the personalities of Kibaki and Odinga impacted upon it, was especially pertinent. The case of Zimbabwe was also instructive: a firm understanding of the personality and motivations of President Mugabe is central to any strategies to resolve the crisis.

Developing vibrant civil society and the necessity to establish legitimate political bases within national populations was highlighted as an issue of pressing concern in a number of societies, especially Kenya. One discussant observed that we must take care not to confuse the ‘noise’ civil societies make with vibrancy – civil society is under threat. For instance, in Kenya it was noted that the recent violence arose in part because leaders and elites have failed to police themselves and as such have no moral weight, no real legitimacy within Kenyan society. The mechanisms internally to create legitimate centres of power have broken down; there is no political base from which leaders derive legitimacy and are accountable.

Kenya, as elsewhere throughout Africa, must look to build associations and parties – a civil society which defines its interests as affecting the political realm. Institutions have a place in combating predatory politics led by elites who want to limit the power of, more often than not, the judiciary. They have a key role in facilitating a democratic or public dialogue, which examines questions of substance, such as what constitutes citizenship. A fear expressed by one discussant was that the recent bloodletting in Kenya was a catalytic event, launching the country on a dangerous path where criminal elements, gangs, who are able to accrue legitimacy much more readily than the eroding political system, continue to proliferate until legitimate politics

effectively disappears.

Ethnic strife was (and in most cases remains) central to the cases of Kenya, Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda. These are not new problems; problematic compromises were made at the founding of those states. Identity politics needs to be tackled as part of a long-term problem; it is not a 'single' event / conflict that can be finished. The depth of hatred evident in all cases has created a mindset which will take much longer to bring to an end. There are reasons behind the 'bad blood'; and people have an irresistible need to give vent to their feelings in some way. As such, it is unrealistic to expect societies to become de-ethnicised, even within a few generations – but it was observed that we cannot wait that long to bind people together in some form of common identity or national vision. So how can we best manage ethnicity in the interim? No panacea was proffered, but *government* legitimacy was cited as essential to overcoming the most insidious ethnic divisions which have affected these and other African societies.

Yet a health warning was put forward: legitimacy is not necessarily borne of elections. If they are not conducted according to accepted international standards, they can have a profoundly destabilising effect, indeed they can provoke more conflict than had they not occurred at all. The case of the 1993 election in Burundi was highlighted. Since that election people have been motivated by a sense of not having their democratic will recognised.

The last key point to emerge from the discussion was a reaffirmation of the need to bridge the gap between theoretician and practitioner, or in the case of conflict resolution efforts between the negotiators and the experts in the field. The vital

knowledge gained in the field needs to have more impact on, and better access to, the powerbrokers.

Session Two: What can we learn from conflict resolution in Asia, and Central and Latin America?

In his paper on Indonesia and the 'Aceh question', **Leonard Sebastian** examined the strategy of the Yudhoyono government in dealing with the separatist challenge posed by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The primary focus of analysis was on the changes evident in these recent developments and the contributions they made to the success of the Helsinki process. The President set the example by seeking a permanent peace through termination of the conflict and improvement in political communication with GAM. The military successes achieved by the Army placed pressure on GAM leaders to negotiate and make concessions. The intervention of nature, by way of the Boxing Day Tsunami, led to a major assistance programme. He observed that rather than stemming the tide of secessionist sentiment in Aceh, the successful military operations increased pro-independence feelings, caused in the main by the hatred of the military rather than a motivation to secede. He concluded by arguing that resolution of the Aceh conflict was greatly assisted by a head of state who understood that there was no military solution to the problem, that the core concerns of human security and equitable economic distribution had to be addressed and that only negotiation could ultimately lead to a political settlement.

In analysing the failure of the 1996 peace treaty in Guatemala, **Markus-Alexander Antonietti** emphasised that the expected peace dividend after thirty-six years of civil war did not materialise, creating frustration

and entrenching the belief that the country's elite had no interest in changing an economic structure that concentrated productive wealth in their hands. With an unchanging economic system, the social model also did not change, entrenching the disparity between the indigenous and non-indigenous sectors of the population and consequently the political model remained the same – reflecting simple representation as opposed to participation in the democratic process. The state is unable to exercise its monopoly on the legitimate use of force resulting in increased violence and lawlessness. It is unable to provide basic goods and services to a large proportion of the population and is increasingly viewed as a non-legitimate framework for the exercise of power. He concluded by arguing that peace is not the end of conflict; demobilisation is merely a component of the process. The political and economic issues must enjoy priority without ignoring social reforms. The real causes of the conflict must be addressed. Furthermore, the international community must provide a coherent contribution to the solution.

Malcolm Ferguson's analysis of the internal conflicts in Guatemala and El Salvador indicated that both conflicts lent themselves to outside engagement and assistance. Both countries suffered from polarisation within their societies stemming from social injustice, landlessness, increasing poverty and extreme disempowerment – almost exclusively of the indigenous peoples. He argued that the end of the 1980s and early 1990s saw three developments that contributed to addressing the conflicts – a change in the international order and an end to the Cold War; an acceptance by the parties to the conflict that the cost of outright victory was unaffordable; and a realisation that democratisation of the societies was inevitable. Although achieving

differing levels of success, there are certain lessons to be extracted from both peace processes. High levels of destruction and dislocation sometimes are a pre-condition for seeking a resolution. External actors fulfil the role of facilitators once local leaders have accepted that they should seek a better alternative to continuation of the war. Major changes on the international stage have an effect on states with internal conflicts. Without addressing social injustice, disparity of wealth and disenfranchisement, there is little chance of reaching accommodation and there are minimal prospects for an enduring peace.

Discussion

In the discussion which followed Session Two, the key factors which have contributed to the attenuation of violence and armed conflicts in Indonesia and Latin America were analysed. The ways in which violence has, in the past, taken on a self-perpetuating dynamic when there was a security vacuum were highlighted. In such environments violence itself becomes (or creates) an identity around which (often marginalised or repressed) males coalesce.

Among the most significant factors which compelled groups to lay down their arms was the role (in Latin America) of religious organisations, namely the Catholic Church. Comparisons were drawn with South Africa, where religious figures, most especially Archbishop Desmond Tutu, were key driving forces behind the reconciliation process. Also emphasised were regional organisations, which because of their physical proximity are often (but not always) perceived as less threatening than far-away powers, and economic growth and opportunities. In this latter respect, El Salvador was highlighted as a country which emerged from a long period of violent

conflict in part through the provision of wisely-targeted aid and economic opportunities for the country's youth; through local conflict resolution programmes; and also through far-sighted policy by the United States, who assisted enormously in the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure.

The case of Indonesia shed light on the near universal sentiment within developing countries: ultimately people want employment and opportunities, not aid. The restive Indonesian province of Aceh illustrated the efficacy of third party mediation, in this case led by Martti Ahtisaari, provided that it is 'fit for purpose' and local constituencies are signed-up to the process.

Session Three: What can we Learn from Conflict Resolution in the Middle East?

Bruce Maddy-Weizman highlighted several reasons why, despite a major commitment over much time to settle tensions in the Middle East, this has not been successful. The Oslo Accord was, he argued, flawed; the situation was not ripe for resolution (only negotiation); it was incorrectly implemented; and the end-game was undefined. It is generally agreed, moreover, that the Camp David Accord of 2000 was a mistake. There was a failure of the Palestinian state-building initiative in the 1990s when the international community was very supportive of their aspirations; Fatah became increasingly corrupt and Hamas capitalised on this, resulting in its election victory in the Palestinian Authority in 2006. A major obstacle to reaching accord is the issue of the right of return of the Palestinian people to their pre-1967 lands. There is no coherence between the Arab states to pursue a comprehensive peace

plan; and the rise of Iran is a destabilising factor. Consideration should be given to separating Israel and Palestine to permit an opportunity to pursue fresh ideas towards an agreement, away from the pressures of being under continual scrutiny – 'divorce under one roof', in other words.

Alistair Harris outlined the current challenges in still-fragile Lebanon. The internal situation remains highly complex due to the existence of eighteen religious and sectarian confessions. In addition, there are external actors who contribute to the generation of conflict. External conflict mitigation plans and resolutions are invariably based on self-interest, whilst internally the exclusive demands of confessional oligarchs block effective government and economic prosperity. These confessional fault lines have threatened, and still threaten, the cohesion of the state. A major contributor to this problem is that the nature of being 'Lebanese' is contested – there is no consensus on the question of national identity. Lebanon's consociational power-sharing formula was designed to balance interests, share resources and promote stability. Yet demographic growth, regional instability and perceptions of socioeconomic marginalization, particularly amongst the Shia, have placed this formula under huge stress, resulting in conflict. The only feasible option is an inclusive national dialogue, but this possibility appears remote with the state divided on key identity and national security questions. The absence of regional peace is considered a major contributory factor to the instability in Lebanon.

Christian Koch asserted that there is presently no internal conflict in the Gulf. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has emerged as the only successful example of a functioning Arab organisation, which has as one of its roles addressing common security

concerns. In spite of this, the organisation still has inherent weaknesses. The region faces instability and insecurity, unresolved border issues, bilateral agreements with outsiders and the lack of regional security architecture. The reliance on the US as a regional protector is not the solution and has resulted in an increased terrorist challenge – particularly to Saudi Arabia. The recent shift to internal investment is of obvious benefit to the local populations, resulting in reduced potential for tension although in the large expatriate populations, the possibility of unrest from wealth disparity remains high. The concerns for the GCC include Iran, Afghanistan, Israel and Iraq. The Iranian challenge remains the priority due to a lack of clarity regarding its intentions but an environment of ‘no trust, no talks’ exists which precludes an inclusive approach. A factor that cannot be ignored is that ‘regime security’ is the regional priority; ruling monarchies are not prepared to lessen, let alone relinquish, their power.

Discussion

Several discussants observed that the region has, in the areas of conflict resolution, much to teach Africa about what *not to do* – insofar as the roles played by local politicians and external actors. The most significant driver of discord in the region, the Israel-Palestine issue, threw up myriad examples of problematic external involvement, including the role of Washington (widely accused of favouring Israel, but which in fact seeks to maintain a ‘dual orientation’ of being close to both Israel and Arab states) and the numerous regional players who have acted as spoilers. It was stressed that to date there has not been a proper dialogue on reconciliation within the region and reforming constitutions. The Arab League came in for particularly harsh criticism from some discussants, owing to its continuing

ineffectiveness and lack of coherence. One of the touchstone issues in the Middle East is democracy: as the case of Algeria demonstrated, there remains, however, a certain reticence (in the region and even in Washington) to let the democracy genie out of the bottle because of what might result.

Options for Zimbabwe

At the end of Day Two of the Dialogue, the worsening situation in Zimbabwe following the country’s disputed first-round elections provoked an impromptu discussion on international options to help ameliorate the crisis. There was broad agreement that ordinary Zimbabweans had been grossly let down by their leadership, the principal regional organisation (SADC), the African Union and the international community – but no consensus on the most efficacious way forward. The role of South Africa and the SADC – whose future relevance was at stake over Zimbabwe, according to some discussants – was heavily scrutinised. Several alternative diplomatic and other means to effect change in Zimbabwe were proposed.

The forcible removal of a government by an international coalition has occurred several times during the past decade. But when applied to the case of Zimbabwe discussants cited myriad factors which militated against that option, not least were the complete absence of regional or international willingness to consider an invasion and the dim prospects that it could be conducted without unacceptable consequences for human life and regional stability. Instead, there was broad agreement that very soon economic factors were likely to present a tipping point – ‘even the printing press is going to

stop working at any moment now' – but there was an alarming absence of courageous regional thinking and action on how to respond when it comes. Whatever the results of the next elections – and there was considerable doubt elections could be undertaken even relatively peacefully and fairly – Zimbabwe teeters on the edge of an extremely turbulent period.

It was observed that outside the African continent, Zimbabwe fuels deep cynicism not just about the current regime but also Africa as a whole. From the UK perspective, in particular, there is a perception that African countries have shied away from uncomfortable truths in their own backyard: a regime has blatantly refused to accept the democratic will of its people, but neighbouring governments do not call for democracy to be upheld and the defeated party to go. In other words, what is understood as democracy and fairness within the African context is superficial, and that leads to increasing apathy towards what goes on in the continent. What's more, South Africa's hard-won international reputation for good governance and enlightened diplomacy has taken a battering over its government's stance on Zimbabwe. Were it not to change, the damage would be very difficult to undo, at least in Western minds. That being said, it was also recognised that there is little the West could do to usefully influence the situation in Zimbabwe. Most agreed that the only viable solution rests within the continent and in particular the region.

DAY THREE – 10 MAY 2008

Breakaway Sessions

Group One: What role should outside parties best play in conflict resolution?

Christopher Clapham made three general observations at the outset of his presentation: there are no clear guidelines on what role outsiders should play in conflict resolution in Africa; there are a staggering array of national and international actors involved in conflict resolution-type activities; and such activities will always need to be highly contextualised, that is, it is invariably dependent on local, country-specific dynamics. It is an open question, in other words, whether there are ground rules or commonalities which can be applied to other cases.

In responding to the presentation, **Michael Clarke** observed that, first and foremost, we need to recognise that the vocabulary of conflict resolution is new, but in fact the issues at stake are still largely the 'bread and butter' of traditional international relations. He then put forward a number of questions which framed the subsequent discussion.

What and who are 'outsiders'? There was general consensus that the divisions between outsiders and insiders are more fluid, and not as sharp, than is typically recognised. It was also stressed that we need to differentiate between 'outside pressure', 'outside negotiation' and 'outside intervention'. There are gradations of involvement. And in defining the outside world, it was suggested that what we are really talking about is the prevailing conscience of the international, globalised system. And that prevailing conscience is inherently difficult to read.

What are the triggers for outside involvement, and do we need outsiders at all? How valid is the provocative entreaty of the American strategic thinker Edward Luttwak that we should 'just give war a chance' and not interfere. In grappling with this issue, it was observed that external actors cannot create opportunities for conflict resolution – that doesn't work. But what the international community can do is seize the first opportunity that presents itself because of the willingness of the parties to the conflict to seek help. We therefore need to capitalise on windows of opportunity before they shut again. It was also suggested that too often external actors reflexively think in terms of force, coercion, 'when shall we go in?' Military force may be necessary but the danger is that we are driven to reach for it too quickly.

Which outsiders should become involved and why? There is a kaleidoscope of actors, often with competing agendas, involved in the myriad elements of internationally-assisted conflict resolution. Friction between them sometimes spawns further conflict. A further complication relates to time-scales: the most effective members of the response community often stay for only a short time, as little as six months, before moving onto the next crisis.

Is conflict 'resolution' setting the bar too high? There was broad consensus among the discussants that resolution in many cases is unrealistic, and more generally the international community needs to be more modest in its aims. What the myriad national and international organisations operating in places like Afghanistan and the DRC can do is mitigate conflict, they can help manage and contain it, provide the space for local actors to find solutions that work for them. Conflict resolution cannot be 'completed' by outsiders.

How can settlements be made to stick? This is a thorny and difficult question, though there was broad agreement that the prospects of success are strengthened the more 'local' the negotiation process is. Nevertheless, it was stressed that in some cases there is a vital role for major powers, for example in the process leading up to the Dayton Agreement, which ended the war in Bosnia. US involvement and strong pressure was essential to securing that agreement. On a smaller scale, the example of the independence of Zimbabwe was highlighted, and the vital role of pressure by Mozambique's then leader, Samora Machel, in the 1979 Lancaster House agreements.

Are elections the only way? This question was the source of considerable debate. In South Africa the election was a symbolic and constitutional watershed, absolutely central to the conflict resolution process in this country. But equally, it was suggested that we should not fetishise elections – there are grave dangers in doing it too quickly, in terms of legitimising divisions, but also dangers in doing it too late. What's more, the case of Zimbabwe illustrates that elections, if not done according to best international practice, can in itself be a source of further tension and conflict.

How do international actors get out? Several discussants observed that this task is made more difficult by the international obsession with an 'exit strategy'. It provides succour to spoilers bent on undermining peace and hamstringing the international response. Thus foreign partners need to think less about 'how to get out' and more about 'how to stay'. No outside involvement will be successful without a long-term commitment. The difficulty for governments, in particular, is in convincing their electorates that the commitment is

worth it, that all nations deserve a chance to resolve their conflicts themselves.

Who are the best mediators? It was emphasised that once a decision on the type of involvement is made, the right tools are required. At the local level there is no substitute for brave and decisive leadership, of the kind demonstrated by Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk in the early 1990s. Such figures can also play a vital role in catalysing peace discussions in other countries, as Mandela has done in Burundi. But the task of complex mediations and negotiations is a job for experts not grandees. Top priority should be given to more funding and better training of the international mediation teams deployed to assist local parties.

Lastly, what are the checks on foreign involvement which, if applied, should enhance the prospects for successful external engagement in conflicts? The first check involves assessing the range of options available. At one end of the spectrum is Luttwak's injunction: the circumstances of the conflict are such that if outsiders do anything other than to leave it alone they are likely to make things worse. A lot of evidence would suggest that Somalia fits in this category. Closer to the centre of the spectrum are the options to 'freeze' the conflict, as in Cyprus, where the 'hot' war had to be halted by external powers (because it threatened to break apart NATO) but there was no realistic prospect of them settling the dispute; or to actively encourage a negotiated settlement through various forms of external pressure and inducements, top-level informal negotiations – the so-called Track 1.5 processes which proved successful in Namibia – and contacts within the respective civil societies. And at the other end of the spectrum is the kind of direct involvement witnessed today in Afghanistan, where by its nature foreigners

become part of the problem but also, hopefully, its solution, too.

Group Two: How might domestic protagonists best get on with settling conflict?

Knox Chitiyo focused on the case of Zimbabwe in his presentation on how domestic protagonists might best approach the settlement of conflict. He sketched the history of internal conflict from 1896 and characterised the four selected conflicts as 'Anti-Colonial'; 'Anti-Settler'; 'Anti-Dissident' and finally the existing political conflict over national power. In each he identified causal factors and how resolution was achieved; he pointed out that two of the conflicts – the anti-colonial and the anti-dissident – were settled through domestic conflict resolution; the anti-settler war was resolved through a combination of internal and external conflict resolution. He pointed out that if the domestic protagonists have a shared history, this is often useful in helping them to overcome their political differences and resolve the conflict. Where there is no shared history, and/or a generational cleavage or personal antipathy, as is currently the case between President Mugabe and MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, then positions become more entrenched, and it is harder to resolve the conflict(s) on the basis of mutual interests and the common good. The following factors emerged from the paper, the response by **Andre du Pisani** and the ensuing discussion.

The fusion between Party, State and the Spirit of the People has to be separated. This fusion is particularly present in countries that mythologised their Wars of Liberation. Zimbabwe was the starting point and being currently in the eye of the storm, both the reference case and, the group generally

believed, the case where success or failure will have direct consequences for four other regional neighbours (South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola) and, it was suggested, also for other states such as Kenya or Ethiopia. This fusion is now forty or fifty years old. It is a product of a generation of post-colonial actors who are now ageing and beginning to leave the stage. The group believed that it was very important for this form of political narrative either to be superseded, or to be incorporated in positive ways into the post-nationalism discourse. It should not be transferred wholesale to the next political generation in, for example, Zimbabwe or South Africa. This meant that the centrality of what Knox Chitiyo terms the 'liberation theology' narrative had to be rigorously scrutinised.

How history is used is more important than the history itself. The group found a strong agreement that the multiple histories of Africans needed to be legitimated and placed alongside the "liberation theology" narratives. There was discussion of whether the nature of the liberation narratives, given their status as sacred texts, could only be altered by breaking the icon. But the group felt that it would be prudent and possible to explore ways of raising those hitherto hidden histories to visibility. There was a feeling that this issue was not academic, but of deep social and political importance; and that the matter was at present under-explored.

The pre-eminence of the 'domestic'. On this there was less consensus. One discussant noted that power was becoming more diffused between institutions and individuals. What did this mean for the belief that ideally local actors should resolve their own differences; that if this failed, the regional actors should join to help; that if

this failed then continental agency (the AU) would engage. In the Zimbabwe case, it was generally felt that local actors alone could not succeed. But what should be the forms of external assistance?

The resolution of Zimbabwe's agony was of importance for the future happiness and security of the region. What – precisely – could and should local actors now do was the subject of intense discussion but little consensus. Given the decision announced during the meeting that the MDC would agree to participate in a second round of presidential voting, should, for example, domestic actors insist on terms of engagement? Should the diaspora be enfranchised? Should the domestic voters' rolls be refreshed under regional supervision? How exactly could the safety of voters from intimidation prior to and on election day best be assured? The group felt able to recommend enhancement of SADC monitoring missions, and felt that there was more to say and to do; but it could not agree what those precise steps should be.

DAY FOUR – 11 MAY 2008

Summary Session: Towards conflict resolution best practice

In summarising themes emerging from the Dialogue, **Paul Lever** began the final session noting that the starting point of all the preceding discussions was, rightly, specificity – the unique context and detail of each case must inform our responses to conflict resolution.

Lever stressed that whilst there was consensus on the doctrine of the 'ripe orange' – that conflict resolution is best attempted when parties to a conflict have tired of fighting and are thus ready for a solution – the reality is that external attempts will be made when the time is *not*

right, that is when the situation is complex and messy. Waiting for the violence to exhaust itself is often, in practice, a highly unattractive option. He highlighted the two main types of conflict, over 'control' and over 'belonging', and the wide range of external interventions, from full-scale military solution to various forms of external mediation assistance. He also warned against the tendency to equate strong governance with a highly centralised system. There are downsides to such systems, and in some circumstances it may be preferable to have a significant degree of decentralisation. On a related point, elections, he observed that by their nature they produce 'winners' and 'losers', and as such we need to think very carefully about when 'power sharing' may be more appropriate; the priority above all should be the establishment of 'representative systems'.

Lever cautioned against expecting too much of the 'international community'. Its willingness to become involved in the continent's largely internal conflicts is minimal, and probably waning. When it does on the diplomatic level, it needs to guard against having a multiplicity of mediators and teams. There needs to be some mechanism whereby the single mediator or international grouping is decided upon. He ended his summary by highlighting three issues which did not figure in the Dialogue's discussion but which doubtless will be significant to the continent going forward: Islamic fundamentalism and the growth of Al Qa'ida networks in areas of Africa; the absence of early-warning mechanisms to spot potential conflicts in advance; and Nigeria, which possesses all the elements of a potential cataclysm in the future.

In his concluding remarks **Barry Desker** examined negotiations and highlighted the

following points vis-à-vis conflict resolution in Africa: firstly, by and large negotiations lead neither to clear resolution or cessation of conflict; secondly, negotiations invariably are initiated when violence has abated but is nevertheless still ongoing; thirdly, negotiations sometimes lead to the splintering of one side; fourthly, we have to recognise that the nature of the system, whether based on strong leadership or decentralised, will have an impact; fifth, the willingness on the part of major powers to become involved in disputes on the African continent is waning, so regional solutions and involvement will be essential; sixth, the settlements we seek cannot be absolutely clear-cut, black and white, but rather must contain a measure of ambiguity, a level of flexibility in the way they can be interpreted so neither party to the negotiations feels they have been ignored or 'lost'; and last, there needs to be much greater attention to the way control over resources will feature in future African disputes and conflicts.

In the final presentation and summation of the 2008 Tswalu Dialogue **Greg Mills** began by issuing five health warnings. First, seldom is conflict resolved. The process may better be described as conflict management or containment. Some conflicts may not be solvable, at least in the short term. Moreover, the absence of hot conflict does not imply peace; indeed, it may be the very point at which the tough peacebuilding work begins. Even those cases regarded as the gold standard of conflict resolution (such as South Africa) are works in progress and must be dealt with as such. Indeed, a failure to realise this could lead to social polarisation at best, or a resurgence of open fighting at worst. As Paul Collier reminds us, reversal to war is much more prevalent than stability: 'More than half of post-conflict states slide back into conflict within ten years of peace.'

While democracy (in the form of democratic elections) is often cited as the end-goal, in reality it is just a step on the way. There is the danger of the 'election fetish'. Just as elections should be seen as the conclusion rather than the start of a process of democratisation, there is a need to deepen the 'culture' of democracy that goes beyond the creation of formal democracies through elections. Until this forms part of the essence of politics in Africa and beyond, the potential for political reversal remains, as does the danger of continent-wide recovery programmes such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) faltering. The setting and monitoring of such governance standards and establishment of such a culture has to be a bottom-up, civil society-oriented process, rather than one that is only elite-driven and oriented. This may in turn help to explain NEPAD's lack of traction and delivery.

Second, if there is a single issue that must be addressed, it is the need to instil governance. The conditions of patrimonial politics and economics that often lie behind conflict in the first instance must be replaced. But the problem is often deeper, given that conflict often goes to the heart of questions of national identity – who, exactly, makes up the state – and statehood itself. Peace can thrive in diverse societies, but only in a context of tolerance. Tolerance depends upon members of a society knowing who they are, that they belong and the terms of engagement. *E pluribus unum* ('Out of many, one') is written on the US dollar bill for good reason.

Third, would-be peacemakers should be aware that resolution comprises a spectrum, just as conflict is part of a process of contentious politics. It is the violent resolution of such conflict that concerns

most, given the wider and human impact, but there are other profound questions at play regarding the formation and viability of the state itself.

Fourth, there is a danger in applying foreign methods, interests and templates, and not just those from outside Africa. Put differently, for peace to hold, sometimes a marriage is necessary; sometimes a divorce. South Africa's negotiation problems in Burundi illustrate the importance of understanding dynamics outside of one's own conflict paradigm. Just as the continent of Africa is today highly differentiated in terms of state size, capacity and performance, solutions have to be different and nuanced, tailored to local needs, weaknesses and strengths. No one size fits all. Beware, in other words, foreign fingerprints, interests and solutions. The record of foreign solutions sticking is very poor. Outsiders must consider their role and its likely impact before intervening. This means that local politicians have to be given the space and freedom to resolve their own issues. There is a need additionally to consider what tools – from doing nothing to intervention in its various forms – can be employed by the external community as a means of doing so. In this, the pernicious impact of apparently benign forms of intervention must be flagged: of the impact, for example, of humanitarian food aid on politics and economies alike. For good reason in Somalia there are humanitarian agencies known as 'non-Somali warlords' in that country. There is a need, too, to be aware of the self-sustaining nature of conflict resolution efforts themselves. Of course, this may have humanitarian and security costs, and may invite different forms of engagement from 'freezing' the conflict to encouraging different forms of engagement such as through civil society.

Fifth, and finally, there is an imperative to analyse and understand the comprehensive on-the-ground conflict realities, to guard against mythologies and not to rely solely on media as well as donor interpretations.

With these 'health warnings' in mind, Mills asserted that it was possible to make a number of observations about conflict resolution experience – in terms both of the overall context and mechanics. First, successful resolution of inter-communal problems fundamentally rests on the need for communities to recognise the rewards of co-operating – and, conversely, the costs of not doing so. Thus, there has to be a real basis for an internal settlement, at its core being the recognition that all parties face the same problems, that the parties should want peace rather than war and be prepared to compromise rather than continue the conflict. As Sir Jeremy Greenstock has noted in this respect, 'Political problems can only be resolved through a partnership between the willing and the able.' Spoilers must be identified and, if necessary, isolated and marginalised or co-opted. This requires legitimising one's key opponent and partner, seeking to understand what they require to deliver to their constituency while knowing what one's own constituency can tolerate. In other words: good political skills.

A second imperative is thus for the negotiating parties to realise that they can gain from peace, that peace settlements should thus not be viewed as a *zero-sum* game, even though hard choices must be made. A way has to be found by which the major conflicting parties can both achieve essential elements of what they want; though first they have to understand what they want. If the settlement merely puts off the day of reckoning, then mediation efforts are not going to progress far; nor will any agreement 'stick' for a prolonged period. In

South Africa, while the African National Congress (ANC) wanted to be in government, it recognised, too, that it required (at least initially) the co-operation of the white governmental and business establishment if it was going to succeed. At the same time, that white establishment wanted to preserve its position, but needed the involvement and support of the ANC government in order to prosper and achieve this goal. It follows that the current threat to South Africa lies in that fraction of the ANC which rejects these terms of engagement and which looks wistfully at a Mugabe-like purging of whites, albeit in a less crude, longer game.

Solutions emerging in this way are more likely to bring about a relatively peaceful transition, in which a critical mass of the skills necessary for economic transition are retained (as in South Africa) rather than scared off (as in Mozambique and Angola). There is an important link between the population and the negotiators. Civil society can play a significant role in creating this middle ground – or normative values – in which leadership can be nudged towards compromise. It can also assist the development of democratic practices and institutions, though we should always critically assess the relationship between foreign funding and civil society.

Third, there has to be a reasonably united and peaceful international *and regional* community in which different outside parties can bring pressure – military, diplomatic, humanitarian and economic – to bear *equally* on the rival domestic parties in favour of settlement. We must distinguish between external pressure, facilitation and support. Asymmetrical pressure must be recognised as a tactic, however. Such qualifications apply equally to the Middle East as they do to Africa. For a region at war

is unlikely to produce a state at peace. Apart from South Africa, the only post-Cold War cases in which a negotiated solution to an African conflict situation has worked successfully are Mozambique, Namibia in the late-1980s and perhaps (depending on how you judge success) the still-fragile Democratic Republic of Congo. In Mozambique, as in the transfer from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in 1979, the amount of leverage that the external mediators and regional allies could exert on the domestic combatants was critical; even though in the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe case it may only have postponed (and indeed, created the conditions for) the day of final reckoning.

Fourth, while elite deals are not enough, there is a need for prescient and brave leadership with a sense of purpose and timing. Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk played crucial roles in South Africa's transition, recognising the need for compromise and seizing the moment – or assessing the moment of 'ripeness'. In many other cases – including South Africa today – there are few, if any, De Klerks and Mandelas in view. Leadership is especially crucial where the state is weak and the politics divided, though this need goes beyond the political arena to include religious and other civic movements. Paradoxically, religious patronage has, at best, complicated the search for Middle Eastern peace.

Fifth, if it is to become involved at all, the external community should be willing to offer the necessary follow-up resources, notably in the peacekeeping and postconflict peace-building phases. For example, the 350 UN peacekeepers in Angola were insufficient for UNAVEM's mandate between 1991 and 1995, leading Margaret Anstee to comment, 'I have been given a 747 to fly with only enough fuel for a DC- 3', referring to UN Security Council Resolution

747 forming the mandate. A contemporary reluctance to commit sufficient resources to Africa is partly a result of a world-weariness of the continent's seemingly insoluble problems, partly a reaction to the Africans' wishes to develop their own solutions to their own problems, partly a result of perceived African mediation failures such as Zimbabwe and demanding commitments elsewhere including Iraq and Afghanistan. Success not only depends on external actors committing themselves, but the local partners creating the conditions and argument to enable them to do so. This resource question may apply equally elsewhere beyond Africa; for example, in finding a solution in the case of Israel and Palestine, in ensuring any divorce settlement enabling the creation of a Palestinian state is respected. But external agencies (like negotiators) should guard against doing harm or of doing the job of government, whether by design (Sierra Leone) or by default (Angola or the Congo or Zimbabwe). This may be through a reliance on external advisers, aid and humanitarian assistance. Aid agencies need to be kept (or put back) firmly in their boxes as contractors, not as amateur peacemakers and diplomats. Where aid has played a useful role in cementing peace, it has been carefully targeted, notably on infrastructure in the example of El Salvador.

Sixth, external mediators have to organise themselves – in terms both of their own methodologies and role, and in dealing with local communities. Their role can range from reconciling the losers to regulating the winners. But while the provision of external facilitators or mediators may sometimes be important, this should not obscure the importance of developing local talent and pursuing local solutions. Without a clearly delineated role and the necessary skills, external mediators can quickly move from

offering assistance to becoming part of the problem. There is a need also to distinguish between the use of prominent personalities as patrons of a peace process and the use of professional facilitators to actually do the job. Deadline diplomacy by foreigners can insert fatal flaws into solutions.

But *when* should outsiders become involved? There is a need to distinguish carefully between when outsiders are needed and when they are wanted. Their mandate has to be clear. Care has to be taken by outsiders not only to reactively support the weak. Their effectiveness requires all parties welcoming their involvement, since solutions cannot be imposed from outside. Outsiders should guard against creating opportunities for their own engagement. Outsider involvement can also freeze societies (such as in Cyprus) and not assist in permanently solving conflict. We may, however, have to (however reluctantly) recognise that some conflicts are not solvable, at least in the short term, and this 'fixing' of problems may be a step on the way.

Seventh, political programmes have to be accompanied by explicit plans including the reorganisation of the armed forces through demobilisation and integration and the rebuilding of the local economy to give all a real stake in peace. More attention should be paid, in the post-conflict phase, on creating jobs and getting the basics in place in terms of services, policing and local security, the rule of law and traditional economic drivers. More needs to be done beyond that initial phase. Critically, the ability to avoid a resurgence of conflict nearly always circles back to economic conditions; just as these conditions play a central part often in instigating and perpetuating conflict.

These issues can run deep. For example, in

the Congo, the challenge to create a single state with the governance attributes therein is crucial in realising the ambition of peace, unity and better governance. There, as elsewhere, this includes the judiciary and allowing space for the fourth estate, as well as dealing with difficult questions of national identity. The problems of the Congo, Sudan and Somalia, as in Lebanon, centre on state and identity crises. It is uncertain whether peace agreements will seed coherent states in these territories. They may instead undermine long-term stability by both legitimising structures without real power and authority and institutionalising a fallacy of statehood.

Eighth, there is a need to lay the foundations to enable the peace agreements to hold, for instance in knowing one's own negotiating opponent well enough to inculcate a sufficient degree of trust. In South Africa's example, the period between 1985-90, when feelers were sent out between the ANC and Pretoria, was crucial in building the personal relationships and understanding necessary to make the move to the negotiating table possible. Discreet brokerage was vital in avoiding further violence.

Ninth, there is a need to follow the broad principle of *inclusivity* in devising solutions. Hence, democracy is preferred, though this is not the only model and may have unintended (and violent) consequences, notably in the Middle East. A clear distinction is needed between the use of a government of national unity as a means to a political end, and its use as an end in itself. The latter might be taken to legitimate fraudulent elections rather than be a conduit for reconciliation. The Zimbabwe case is moot. We must recognise that there may be a tension between holding elections (where there is a winner and loser) and peace settlements (which should be win-win).

There is a need also to flag the emergent danger of 'fastlearning autocrats', where tampering with electoral processes creates a democratic façade establishing conditions for volatility and failure. But elections are vital for cementing legitimacy and demilitarising power struggles. Post-election exit strategies can be an inducement to settle.

Tenth, there is a need for careful mechanics in making peace: proper analysis is necessary to understand the causes of conflict and the possible means of resolution. Small steps are important, as are other confidence-building measures. Report-back mechanisms are crucial; as is the trust of the principals in the actions of their negotiators. Techniques such as proximity negotiations can do the trick. Finally, negotiators can create their own pressure for settlement, through covert intelligence, Track 1.5 and Track 2 discussions, the careful setting of timelines and ratcheting of pressure around them, and diplomatic manoeuvring. Local actors can also use elections to clarify their mandate and negotiating position, as in the 1993 South African referendum.

But the biggest lesson of all is, in essence, Clausewitz meets Tip O'Neill: of the primacy of (local) politics. It is not essentially that we require better negotiation methods, or more joined-up governance between development agencies and other

actors and better external methods of peace-making to make conflict resolution stick and work. It depends, fundamentally, on the recognition that not all conflicts can be solved by diplomatic negotiation and development engagement. Instead, it should be left well alone or at least the moment and method of intervention carefully chosen. We have to guard against our instincts and self-interest to 'want to do something'.

Discussion

Several issues were noted as likely to feature significantly in the short to medium term in Africa, prominent among them was the prospect of increasing transnational terrorist activity on the continent, the spread of Chinese influence, land redistribution, rising food prices, reform of states' security sectors, and the fallout from the acute crisis in Zimbabwe. The 2008 Dialogue ended with a plea for the liberation ethos, which so heavily informed the way post-independence governments in Africa have perceived the world, to adjust and transform to remain relevant to the challenges of our globalised, 21st century. Whilst the liberation ethos will for some time (and in many ways, rightly) remain constitutive of African states' identities, their governments' authority must inhere to a far greater extent than hitherto from other sources of legitimacy, such as good governance and the rule of law.

2. African Case Studies

Conflict in Africa: What Have We Learned?

Terrence Lyons

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Introduction

In much of the popular imagination, Africa and conflict are inextricably linked. The continent indeed has been the site of some of the most violent and destructive conflicts of the past fifty years. Terrible conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur, Somalia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone are just some of the more recent and most dramatic examples. At the same time, however, Africa has seen some of the most innovative peace processes, and Africans have demonstrated impressive tenacity to overcome protracted

conflicts. The transition in South Africa, the fourteen years that have passed since the transitional elections in Mozambique, the transformation of West Africa from a region in collapse to a region in which both Sierra Leone and Liberia have elected civilian leaders, and the dedication of African mediators to broker a (still fragile) deal to end the North-South civil war in Sudan represents an impressive record of accomplishment. The balance sheet therefore is mixed and there is much that we do not know on both columns of the ledger.¹

Conflict in Africa (Uppsala Conflict Data Program)²

Location	Incompatibility	Opposition Organisations In 2006	Year	Intensity in 2006
Algeria	Government	GSPC	1991-2006	Minor
Burundi	Government	Palipehutu-FNL	1994-2006	Minor
CAR	Government	UFDR	2006	Minor
Chad	Government	RDL/ FUCD, RAFD, UFDD	2005-2006	War
Ethiopia	Territory (Ogaden) Territory (Oromiya)	ONLF OLF	2004-2006 1999-2006	Minor Minor
Somalia	Government	UIC	2006	Minor
Sudan	Government	SLM/ A, NRM, SLM/ A-MM	1983-2006	War
Uganda	Government	LRA	1994-2006	Minor

¹ This paper is not designed to be comprehensive and just touches on a few exemplars of a much more diverse body of scholarship.

² Notes: Minor armed conflicts have at least twenty-five battle-related deaths in a given year and fewer than 1,000. War has at least 1,000 battle-field deaths in a year.

UCPD lists as 'unclear cases' (due to either unclear data or unclear nature of the incompatibility) Angola

War in Africa

Those who collect and analyse data sets of civil wars have noted the decline in interstate and civil wars (see, for example, the *Human Security Report*). The 2006 data lists only two 'wars,' namely the interlinked conflicts within Chad and Darfur. There are smaller scale conflicts in a further five states: Burundi, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Uganda.

It is notable that so many of these conflicts today are clustered in the Horn of Africa. The 1970s and 1980s saw significant levels of conflict across Southern Africa and the 1990s witnessed extremely violent conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The overall decline in African conflict is in part a reflection of the management or resolution of these conflicts. Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Uganda suffered through conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s as well, but these wars have been more resistant to conflict resolution initiatives.

It is also worth noting that the criteria by which these data are collected do not capture other conflicts in Africa, including economically devastating conflicts such as the violence in the Niger Delta, and protracted if low-level insurgencies such as in Senegal. Furthermore, criminal violence, land grabs, and cattle-raiding made more devastating due to the availability of small arms also cause tragic losses across the continent.

Sources of Conflict

There is no model of 'African conflict' that is distinctive from 'Asian' or 'Central American' conflict. African conflicts have

had their roots in more universal processes of power struggles over resources and political representation, made worse by problems of ethnic marginalisation and weak states. The continent suffers in particularly powerful ways from pervasive poverty but a simple deprivation model – the more deprivation, the more conflict you will see – dramatically over-predicts the amount of violent fighting. Instead, a variety of intervening variables link deprivation to wide-scale, sustained conflict, such as the nature of the regime, state capacities, and social structures that encourage or inhibit mobilisation.

The State and Ethnicity

One thing that does differentiate Africa from other parts of the world is the relative newness of its state system. State-building is no simple task and the building of modern, viable states has been fraught with enormous difficulties – and often great violence – everywhere around the world. Globalisation, new international norms of human rights, and the widespread availability of small arms have made the challenges of building states even more challenging.

In the African state system, the weakness of social organisations and the colonial legacy of divide and rule policies in some places has left the ethnic group as the primary source of identification and the most reliable source of protection and resources in times of war. The dense networks and high levels of social capital embedded within the ethnic group promote collective action and the organisation of political life along lines of identity.

(FLEC), the CAR (APRD), the DRC (Nkundwa, MRC), Nigeria (MEND), Senegal (MFCD), Sudan (Eastern Front, NMRD, SLM-KAA), and Uganda (ADF).

A number of scholars emphasise the role of ethnic division in leading to civil war. There are at least three stylised models that make this linkage. First, state collapse creates a 'security dilemma'. Drawing on international relations theory, this narrative suggests that in the absence of a state, uncertainty about the intentions of the other group leads to conflict. Since neither knows the other's intentions, each has an incentive to build-up defensive capabilities but such build-ups are perceived as aggressive to the other side, setting off a spiral of escalation leading to conflict. The second model suggests that conflict is caused by a 'commitment problem' that arises when two groups cannot credibly promise to abide by an agreement and no third party is present to provide the necessary guarantees. The third model argues that civil war is caused by ethnic secessionists wishing to carve out their own separate state by mobilising in a specific territory that has an ethnic population concentration.³ In parts of Africa weak or repressive states lead individuals to look to ethnic and kin groups for security and the resources needed to survive. Weak states generate imperatives for the mobilisation of ethnic groups and the subsequent saliency of ethnicity is a consequence, not a cause, of the conflict.

Communal conflicts on the basis of ethnic or clan identities are common. Clashes between ethnic or clan groups over scarce resources such as dry season pastures are endemic in pastoral areas. In recent years,

however, these clashes have been much more violent and difficult to manage in places like the Karamoja cluster (the border areas of northern Uganda, northwestern Kenya, southeastern Sudan, and southwestern Ethiopia) due to the prevalence of guns and the commercialisation of livestock. Historical patterns of conflict between pastoralists and settled agricultural groups in Darfur escalated to dreadful levels when political struggles in the centre led the government to support and arm one side of this struggle in the periphery. In the most dangerous cases, ethnic competition may assume the character of a zero-sum struggle, as in Rwanda and Burundi. Distrust and self-reinforcing cycles of fear can create perceptions that one group is at danger of extermination from another group and therefore must mobilise to strike preemptively in self-defence.

Poverty and Resources

Poverty is clearly one of the underlying factors driving conflict in Africa and there is an influential new literature that draws on economic models and concepts to explain civil war. Collier and his colleagues summarise their influential findings in the following way: 'In the absence of economic development neither good political institutions, nor ethnic and religious homogeneity, nor high military spending provide significant defenses against large-scale violence. Once a country has stumbled into conflict powerful forces – the conflict

³ Stathis Kalyvas, 'Civil Wars,' in Charles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 416-434. On the security dilemma and civil war see Barbara Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). On the commitment problem see David Lake and Donald Rothchild, 'Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict', *International Security* (Vol. 21, No. 2, Autumn 1996), pp. 41-75. On ethnic secession and demography see Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

trap – tend to lock it into a syndrome of further conflict.⁴ The poverty-conflict trap is particularly prevalent in Africa.

While poverty is part of the story, deprivation and grievances are ubiquitous in Africa, yet civil wars are rare. Some point to state weakness to explain which states are most likely to see civil war. State weakness and the inability of the government's security force and other institutions to reach into rural areas is a better predictor of which countries are at risk for civil war than are indicators of ethnic and religious diversity or measures of grievance such as economic inequality, lack of democracy, or state discrimination against minorities.⁵

Drawing in part from the rational actor assumptions behind the economic literature outlined above, another recent stream of work has focused on questions relating to how insurgent groups recruit supporters and how they function as institutions. An insurgency needs resources in order to remain engaged in sustained, high-level violence.⁶ Insurgent groups must use either selective incentives (such as jobs or land that benefit only those who participate) or collective incentives (national liberation that will benefit even those who do not participate) in order to overcome the collective action problem. Weinstein, for

example, uses this framework to argue that the behaviour of rebel groups is based on the groups' initial resource endowments. Those who can rely upon selective incentives due to their relative wealth (derived from illicit commerce, for example) tend to engage in more atrocities than those who must rely upon collective incentives and consequently must recruit more committed followers.⁷ This literature, it is worth noting, frames the problem of civil war as a problem linked to the development of the rebellion rather than as a problem rooted in authoritarian states.

Not all resources are equally capable of sustaining insurgent groups. So-called 'blood diamonds' are the archetype of this resource-to-conflict link but minerals such as coltan and gold in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo also have funded insurgent groups. Timber sales supported insurgent groups in Liberia. Some resources are more easily 'lootable' or vulnerable to exploitation by rebel groups.⁸ Capital intensive industries like oil and deep-shaft kimberlite diamonds (such as those found in South Africa and Botswana) require infrastructure and are concentrated in ways that make them easier for the state to protect. Off-shore oil (as in Angola) is particularly difficult for rebels to seize, while pipelines (as in the Niger Delta) are a major

⁴ Paul Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington D.C., The World Bank, 2003), p. 53-54

⁵ See for example, James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War', *American Political Science Review* (Vol. 97, No. 1, February 2003), pp. 75-90

⁶ 'As well as a political organization, a private military organization is an army and a business. Those analyzing rebel groups must always keep this triple feature – political organization, military organization, business organization – in mind.' Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap*, p. 56

⁷ Jeremy M. Weinstein. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For an important book on a non-African case see Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁸ Michael L. Ross. 'The Political Economy of the Resource Curse', *World Politics* (Vol. 51, No. 2, January 1999), pp. 297-322; Philippe Le Billion, 'Angola's Political Economy of War: The Role of Oil and Diamonds (1975-2000)', *African Affairs*, (Vol. 100, No. 398, January 2001), pp. 55-80

point of vulnerability.

Finally, there is a literature that suggests that some 'new wars' in the post Cold War era are conducted according to economic rather than political agendas. The point of the violence is to gain and retain access to resources and war becomes an alternative system for profit, power, and protection. Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Angola have been used to illustrate these patterns, as has the manipulation of humanitarian resources in Sudan and the Horn of Africa more generally. War serves to legitimate criminal activities, and neo-liberal economic policies and globalisation allow for durable disorder and protracted conflicts.⁹

Much of the literature on the economic agendas in civil wars concentrates on insurgencies and other non-state actors. In some cases, however, the recognised state has become distorted to the extent that its predatory behaviour is shaped by economic motives. These 'shadow states' and processes of 'criminalisation' of the state may provoke conflict as well.¹⁰

Typologies

Classic interstate conflict or border wars in Africa have been rare, although the on-going tense stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea is a potentially explosive exception. Most conflicts are characterised as civil wars

or communal conflicts at a lower level of violence. The policy-oriented scholarship on conflict in Africa has proposed that some of these conflicts may be regarded as 'collapsed' or 'failed' states. There is also a literature that emphasises the regional links among conflicts and thereby questions whether understanding many conflicts as civil wars is sufficient.

Collapsed State

The label 'collapsed' or 'failed' has been applied to a number of states in Africa. The annual 'Failed States Index' for 2007 includes eight African states in the top ten, namely Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Guinea, and the Central African Republic.¹¹ Only Iraq and Afghanistan break the continent's monopoly on the top ten most 'failed' states. Without engaging in the many arguments about methodology, at first glance there seems to be something about failed or collapsed states that is particularly powerful in Africa.

As even this list suggests, however, the concept of failed state includes countries suffering from such disparate problems that the category loses meaning. Zimbabwe's crisis and the policies needed to address it have little in common with Chad or Guinea or the DRC. While Somalia may appropriately be considered collapsed – it has lacked national level authority since 1991

⁹ Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001); David Keen, 'Incentives and Disincentives for Violence', in Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (eds.), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000); Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman (eds.), *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Lynne Rienner, 2003).

¹⁰ William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999); Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Béatrice Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

¹¹ This list is developed by the Fund for Peace and published annually in *Foreign Policy*. The index is composed of twelve indicators, including 'extensive corruption and criminal behavior, inability to collect taxes or otherwise draw on citizen support, large-scale involuntary dislocation of the population, sharp economic decline, group-based inequality, institutionalized persecution or discrimination, severe demographic pressures, brain drain, and environmental decay.'

– it is perhaps more useful to distinguish between that singular case and other states that may be ‘war-torn,’ ‘weakly institutionalised,’ ‘severely divided,’ or ‘predatory’. The problems in these cases are often lack of peace rather than lack of a state and the processes of peace-building and state-building are not identical and should not be conflated.¹²

The implication that collapsed states leave behind a vacuum (perhaps to be filled by terrorists and criminals, in Washington’s formulation) is also misguided. The collapse of a state generates and is generated by a set of alternative structures of authority, legitimacy, and power. These alternative institutions are often based on violence, fear, and predation. War creates specific incentives and opportunities that certain types of institutions can exploit to gain power and wealth. Other institutions that are ill adapted to violence or cannot operate under conditions of fear fade away or are destroyed. Institutions of war – such as the militarised organisations of the state, insurgency, the black market, humanitarian relief networks, and chauvinistic, exclusionary identity groups – develop and even thrive in the context of conflict. Rather than creating anarchy, war restructures economic, political, and social life in profound and specific ways.¹³

Regional Dimensions

In the 1990s and in the early years of this century, it has become increasingly clear that the distinction between internal or civil war and international war has eroded, in part as a consequence of the erosion of international norms relating to non-

interference in the domestic affairs of neighbours. Conflict has become regionalised in more substantial ways than before, leaving old prescriptions relating to civil wars and interstate wars less useful.

The clearest and most tragic region in collapse in the late 1990s and early year of this century has been in central Africa, where an interconnected war centred on the DRC ran from Angola and the Congo Republic (Brazzaville) in the west through the DRC, Burundi, Uganda, and Rwanda in the centre of the continent all the way to Sudan in the northeast. This constellation of conflict includes a series of civil wars and internal conflicts – in Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Sudan – and a series of cross-border military interventions by neighbours, particularly within the DRC.

West Africa in the 1990s experienced similar patterns as civil war in Liberia contributed to the conflict in Sierra Leone, actors based in Sierra Leone engaged in warfare within Liberia, and violence spread across borders into Guinea. In the Horn of Africa, conflict has long been regionalised, as Ethiopia supported insurgents in Sudan and Somalia while each of these two states responded in kind with support for Eritrean and other opposition groups in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda supported the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and Army and Sudan responded by supporting Eritrean and Ugandan opposition groups. The Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict 1998-2000 and the subsequent stalemate have led both states to engage in a proxy war in Somalia in 2006-2008. Resolving these regionalised conflicts

¹² Charles T. Call and Vanessa Hawkins Wyeth (eds.), *Building States to Build Peace* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2008).

¹³ Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars*; Keen, ‘Incentives and Disincentives for Violence.’

is hindered by the entrenched nature of each of these conflicts and the multiple agendas of intervening powers that have their own security, prestige, and often economic agendas at play.

Regionalisation of conflict and the blurring of distinctions between civil war and interstate war are made worse by a growing willingness to intervene in a neighbouring state. As indicated in the Horn of Africa, such intervention is not new on the continent and southern African states supported national liberation movements and African states intervened in the Shaba crises and in Uganda. Due to events in the 1990s, however, the norm against interference in a neighbour's internal affairs, which had limited or at least kept covert such assistance in the past, lay in tatters. By the late 1990s it was clear that the norm of non-interference had been abandoned, in practice if not rhetoric, and borders were no longer sacrosanct.

Conflict Resolution

If African conflicts, like conflicts elsewhere, are power struggles over resources and political representation, then sustainable peace-building may require negotiated political agreements that tackle the underlying sources of the conflict. This agenda, however, is extremely broad and long-term. In the more immediate term, conflict resolution (or management) entails finding ways to end the worse manifestations of violence and devising institutions that allow the conflicting parties to co-exist. Then, over time, it may be possible to take advantage of improved stability to work on the underlying sources

of the conflict and to begin the long-term work of reconciliation and peace-building.

Reaching Agreement and Third Party Roles

In internal conflicts, third party assistance has played a role in reaching an agreement in a broad range of cases. A variety of third parties (international non-governmental organisations like Sant'Egidio in Mozambique, regional organisations like the InterGovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Sudan or ECOWAS in Liberia, UN mediators such as Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah in Burundi and later Somalia) have sought to assist the parties to the conflict find a deal that both are willing to accept, at least contingently. Overall, negotiations tend to have better success in reaching an agreement than in achieving implementation, as evidenced by the dozens of peace agreements signed in Liberia or Somalia. Globally, one researcher found that parties engage in formal negotiations to end civil wars in about half of the cases but successfully implement the settlement in less than a fifth of the cases.¹⁴ Third parties have also played important roles in providing security reassurances and promoting demobilisation during the difficult period of peace implementation. In fact some argue that the recent decline in conflict has been due in part to the more active involvement of third party mediators and guarantors.

Zartman's concept of 'ripeness', developed through his study of African conflicts, suggests that parties are more likely to resolve their conflict when alternatives are blocked and the parties find themselves in an uncomfortable and costly predicament.¹⁵ This formulation suggests that a 'mutually

¹⁴ Walter, *Committing to Peace*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵ I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

hurting stalemate' creates conditions propitious for a negotiated settlement. This useful concept leaves several puzzles unanswered. First, it is not clear how to recognise ripeness in advance and so the best policy advice seems to be to keep trying. Secondly, this framework seems to work best in relatively symmetric conflicts, where stalemates are more likely. Civil wars, however, are almost always asymmetric. Stalemate is possible but generally only when the state's superior resources are met by the insurgent's superior commitment. Finally, conflicts such as those within the DRC or Darfur have multiple parties prone to factionalisation, making it difficult to identify the core parties much less determine the ripeness of the conflict.

Following the signing of an agreement, a further set of challenges emerge in order to successfully implement the deal. Spoilers who reject the agreement often use violence to undermine implementation. Peace agreements often ask warring parties to demobilise and to place their supporters at risk in a very uncertain context where their opponent's commitment to peace remains untested. In many cases, various forms of third party peacekeeping forces have been deployed with the aim of overcoming some of these dilemmas and thereby fostering the transition from war to peace. The conflict resolution literature suggests a significant potential for third parties to play constructive roles in post-settlement peace implementation but the available capacities are underdeveloped.

Peace implementation is often conceptualised as a process of building new structures and institutions according to the blueprint stipulated in the agreement. An alternative perspective sees peace implementation as a process of ongoing negotiations as the broad (and often vague if not contradictory) principles listed in the peace agreement must be made operational in a fluid context characterised by fear and distrust. Stedman has suggested that the success and failure of peace implementation is significantly shaped by the 'level of difficulty' (measured by the number of warring parties, the likelihood of spoilers, and the presence of hostile neighbouring states) and the level of international interest and commitment.¹⁶ These variables are difficult for third party actors to alter in the short run. The challenges in Sudan today are orders of magnitude more difficult than the challenges in Namibia or even Mozambique in the 1990s. Another perspective suggests that sustainable peace-building is more likely if processes are in place to demilitarise politics through the transformation of militarised institutions into organisations capable of sustaining peace.¹⁷

External powers, notably the United Nations and the United States, have been reluctant to get overcommitted in Africa. The debacle in Somalia in 1993, followed by the irresponsible inaction in Rwanda in 1994 led to a period of particular fecklessness. In the 1990s, the West remained aloof and kept UN involvement limited. This left Africans to their own devices, as in the ECOMOG intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone and

1989). For a revised treatment of the core concept see I. William Zartman, 'Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond,' in Peter Stern and Daniel Druckman (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War* (Washington D.C., National Academy Press, 2000).

¹⁶ Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens (eds.), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

¹⁷ Terrence Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics: Elections on the Uncertain Road to Peace* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

the international distance from conflicts in Somalia and the Great Lakes region. More recently, however, international peacekeeping has been resurgent on the continent. The United Nations and Africa Union are expanding missions in Darfur, Chad, the Central African Republic, and Somalia, and missions continue in the DRC, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sudan. This current expansion of missions has had some success (a significant portion of the success of Congo's 2006 election goes to MONUC), but has not served as a reliable mechanism to protect civilians. Darfur, Somalia, and eastern DRC remain some of the most violent places in the world, despite international peacekeeping operations.

There is a critical theory approach to peacekeeping that questions whose interests peacekeeping serves. Post-conflict interventions are concerned with the maintenance and reproduction of a particular neoliberal international order. The search for the right kind of post-conflict regime and the pursuit of 'peace-as-governance' makes it difficult to question the underlying neoliberal assumptions about states, democracy, and markets.¹⁸ Clapham urged us many years ago to keep in mind the perspective of those on the ground who were being 'peacekept'.

Africa has a history of seeking multilateral institutions of conflict resolution since the 1960s, when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) served as a forum for negotiations on conflict. The OAU's lack of capacity increasingly led it to rely upon sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD to play leading roles in both negotiations and peacekeeping. Recognition that protracted conflicts

continued to prevent progress on economic, social, and political development led African leaders to develop proposals such as the Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Cooperation in Africa, the New Economic Partnership for African Development, and in 2002, the Africa Union. The transformation of the OAU to the AU included clear normative statements of new regional responsibility for security and peace. Article IV of the new charter stated 'the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.' The AU felt compelled to take on some enormously difficult peace operations very early in its existence. Darfur and Somalia are among the most complicated and difficult to resolve conflicts in the world. The inability of AU forces to bring a lasting peace or to protect vulnerable civilians is more of a reflection on the intractability of these conflicts rather than a failure of the organisation.

Gaps

Research on Africa has generated a number of insights that help us understand certain aspects of conflict and conflict resolution. Poverty is clearly part of the story, perhaps through the mechanism of the poverty-conflict trap. Resources – either to fund insurgents or as the goal in certain types of conflicts – are now recognised as important. The question of the state and how state weakness may lead to security dilemmas is another part of the dynamics of conflict. The role played by ethnicity as a cause, and as an outcome of, rising tensions is part of the framework for conflict analysis as well. Categories such as civil war and interstate

¹⁸ Alex J. Bellamy and Paul Williams (eds.), *Peace Operations and Global Order* (London: Routledge, 2005).

war are challenged on a continent where conflict so often spills across borders and where neighbouring states have proclivities toward intervention by proxy. There is increased recognition that third parties can play important roles in overcoming some of the commitment problems and promote better communications among parties polarised by fear and distrust. Third parties have played essential roles in negotiated peace settlements and in some instances promoting successful implementation. The international community has struggled to find a form of involvement that meets its sense of its limited interests with the scale and complexity of the tasks associated with peacebuilding.

There are several puzzles, however, that are less well explained. Many of these models of resources, state capacity, and ethnicity are relatively static while conflict onset and escalation are dynamic. Resources, weak states, ethnic diversity and other structural variables do not change rapidly and therefore cannot explain why war or peace breaks out in one year and not the next.

Some of these models are further limited by measuring either 'war' or 'peace' rather than a broader set of contentious political processes. The years leading up to a civil war generally are not characterised by peace but rather repression and resistance: severe human rights violations, strikes and demonstrations that are put down violently, coup attempts, stolen elections, and so forth. By the same measure, immediately following a civil war states are rarely wholly at peace. Civil war should be analysed as part of a spectrum of contentious politics rather than a category of conflict by itself.

We know more about causes of conflict and the challenges of getting a peace

agreement signed than we do about peace implementation and sustainable peacebuilding. There is a fairly extensive literature on the civil war in Mozambique and the peace process but far less on how Mozambique has remained peaceful for fourteen years.

The literature on conflict resolution in symmetrical conflicts is more developed than research and theory-building on asymmetrical conflicts. Furthermore, many models of reaching an agreement assume two main parties while a significant number of ongoing conflicts in Africa have multiple parties with new factions rising and falling continuously.

In hindsight it seems possible to understand why the peace agreement in Mozambique ushered in a period of sustained peacebuilding and why the peace agreement in Angola collapsed into a period of even more violent conflict. These outcomes, however, are far harder to predict in advance. When asking what factors make sustained peace more or less likely in Southern Sudan, for example, we are left with a long list of possible variables but less clarity on which are primary and which secondary.

It is not surprising that no overarching grand theory of conflict has been found. The inherent complexity of deeply rooted and protracted social conflicts is not susceptible to these kinds of unified explanations. Scholarship on conflict in Africa, however, has developed beyond the case study and lessons learned and some broader comparisons are now possible. There have been some developments at mid-level theory, however, that provide us with elements of a framework to understand and hopefully to respond to conflicts in ways that reduce the continent's suffering.

What Role Should Outside Parties Best Play in Conflict Resolution?

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Introduction

The purpose of this brief paper is not to come up with any code of best practice for the engagement of outside parties in conflict resolution in Africa. My purpose is simply to raise a small number of basic questions, in the hope that these will prompt practitioners to reflect on their own experiences, and in the process help to develop the kinds of answers that we are looking for.

Why should outside parties become involved at all?

It has in practice become accepted in modern global politics that whenever any conflict arises in any part of the world, global actors of all descriptions are entitled to engage in attempts to deal with it. This assumption rests on the belief that conflicts around the world are now so interrelated, or globalised, that they are everyone's business, because everyone is liable, in some way or other, to become affected by them. Even conflicts which are ostensibly confined to a single state may plausibly be regarded as having broader ramifications, either because of their direct effects (as for example promoting a mass exodus of refugees), or because they raise basic moral issues that are of legitimate concern to the world as a whole (as in the extreme case of genocide).

Are there nonetheless cases in which we can say that external engagement is likely to be

counter-productive, and that the domestic parties should be left to sort out their problems as best they can? The key point here, it seems to me, is to shift the discussion away from the 'right' of any external actor to become involved, and to ask instead what benefit outside engagement is likely to provide. At a minimum here, we may wish to lay down that the responsibility lies on the outside party to demonstrate how their presence is likely to help. In the absence of any demonstrable benefit, 'best practice' is to keep out.

Who should become involved, and in what capacity?

External involvement in conflict resolution is no longer restricted to a small number of actors, notably states and intergovernmental organisations, as was once the case. Myriad actors demand participation, including a significant number of non-governmental organisations or private charitable enterprises. Very often their efforts may overlap or even conflict with one another. They may approach conflict resolution from very different perspectives, which in turn may favour or disfavour particular domestic parties to the conflict. One major requirement in determining 'best practice' is to develop some structure which will help to ensure that outside parties work in collaboration with one another, rather than at cross-purposes, and in such a way as to promote a workable solution to the conflict.

One possible way to achieve this might be

to designate a single 'lead agency' as having the co-ordinating role in helping to manage conflicts. This would normally be the representative of the senior international organisation involved – the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations (SRSG), in cases with UN engagement, or the representative of the AU, the South African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) or whichever is the appropriate agency in other cases. To a large extent, indeed very visibly so in Liberia, this is already the case.

Whether the SRSG or equivalent 'lead agency' should be entitled to ban other organisations from becoming involved at all is a sensitive issue, but in some cases there have been so many would-be mediators and conflict resolvers tripping over one another that some form of control by the international community over its own members seems to be called for. On occasion, the designation of a mission to some particular troublespot appears largely to be a means by which the organisation in question demonstrates its 'concern', without giving much thought to what useful role, if any, such a mission will be able to perform. Given that different international organisations tend to approach conflict situations with the attitudes and assumptions derived from their own organisation and its member states, it is not surprising that domestic parties to the conflict establish relations with whichever would-be mediator is most favourable to their own interests. On the other hand, it is likewise possible that the 'lead agency' may have a conception of the nature of the conflict and the appropriate solution to it that is either unrealistic, or evidently biased towards one of the contending parties.

Alternative approaches to conflict resolution

The range of conflicts with which any code of best practice for conflict resolution must be concerned is so great that no such code could conceivably lay down any approved method for dealing with them all. Indeed, the key to successful resolution, so far as I can judge, is to approach each conflict in its own terms, and to acquire as great an understanding as possible of its intricacies and complexities, rather than coming armed with some general toolbox of conflict resolution techniques. Far too often, a particular model that has worked in one situation is then exported to other cases, to which it may well be entirely inappropriate. While it is certainly important that would-be mediators should have a broad general understanding of different modes of approaching conflict resolution, and the characteristic advantages and problems attached to each, it is equally vital – perhaps more so – that they should be able to draw on highly specific expertise related to the conflict in question. There is a general presumption here that, although particular mediators may become so discredited that they have to be withdrawn and replaced, individuals should be kept in place for long enough to enable them both to acquire the requisite understanding of the conflict in question, and to provide continuity in the policies being followed by the international community in attempting to resolve it. Nothing subverts the attempt to negotiate a way out of often extremely sensitive conflict situations than the knowledge that the lead negotiator's 'tour of duty' is coming to an end, and that a new appointee may take a different attitude, and implicitly favour parties to the conflict who feel aggrieved at the stance taken by the present one.

However, a general distinction may be made between those conflicts to which it is

possible to work out some broadly acceptable compromise solution, and those to which it is not. The essential requirement here is for mediators to start from a rigorously hard-headed analysis of what can, and cannot, be made to work within a specific conflict environment. The expectation is far too often placed on mediators, especially when these represent major international organisations, to come up with some solution that is acceptable to all of the parties involved, even if these have bitter rivalries and mutually conflicting goals. The history of attempted conflict resolution, not least in Africa, is littered with examples of the disastrous consequences of attempting to construct compromise solutions which could never work in practice, and which key 'spoilers' – individuals or groups with vested interests that ran sharply contrary to any viable peace settlement – could use in order to strengthen their own position. The settlements in Liberia and in Sierra Leone, for example, that rested on bringing Charles Taylor in one case, Foday Sankoh in the other, into some negotiated constitutional order were simply doomed from the very start.

All too often, and both of the cases cited above may serve as examples, an optimal approach may simply be denied by the lack of the resources required. Outside actors have to operate within the constraints permitted by their own mandate – a requirement that may be extended to include not only the formal mandate, laid down by a resolution of the UN Security Council or some other authorising body, but also the 'political mandate', or in other words, the set of political attitudes and assumptions that effectively determine what they can or cannot do. To take a famous example, the political mandate underpinning the US intervention in Somalia after 1992 was effectively destroyed by the deaths of just eighteen American soldiers, a collapse which in turn undermined the

capacity of the United States to take an active role in subsequent crises, notably in Rwanda. Engagement by the AU, and other African organisations, continues to be affected by the continuing (though evidently weakening) predisposition of African diplomacy to respect national sovereignty, which in turn fortifies incumbent governments in any conflict scenario. It is at this point especially that any code of 'best practice' needs to be tied in with both the enabling diplomatic environment and the various programmes for training and equipping effective peacekeeping forces.

When to leave?

Successful conflict resolution defines its own end point. It creates a situation in which outside actors can withdraw, because they are no longer required. Conversely, when they find themselves being sucked in to ongoing conflicts, this provides a telling indicator that they have failed to develop a coherent and practicable strategy of conflict management, adapted to the particular circumstances and to the resources at their disposal.

Even so, the rehabilitation of conflict-shattered societies is likely to prove an extremely protracted process, in which the danger of reversion to conflict remains a very serious one for at least several years afterwards. There is a depressing statistic that alerts us that most peace settlements fail, and that societies that have emerged from conflict are likely to go back to it again. This in turn means that any 'best practice' for external engagement in conflict management must remain at least in some degree open-ended, and retain some guarantee – not merely in terms of formal agreements but on the ground – that outside actors will continue to ensure that the settlements that they have helped to implement will continue to be respected.

Towards a Framework of Conflict Resolution Best Practice in the Horn of Africa

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This paper is a brief analysis of the peace processes in the Horn of Africa, with particular focus on Sudan, Somalia and Somaliland. In doing this it attempts to provide some general dos and don'ts for conflict resolution in the sub-region.

I. Key Issues

1. Confronting the state

Any serious conflict resolution initiative needs to confront the nature of the African state, which is the major locus of political and socio-economic crisis, for several reasons. Most states in the Horn don't represent the interest and character of all components of their population. The state, its institutions and rules and regulations are highly contested. A state, which is a contested terrain in this sense, suffers from political instability and institutional disarray and poses real challenges for reform and democratic transition. The fight over the state in the past decade and a half has been at once violent and so disabling that state institutions are weak and their legitimacy is highly contested. Governments run by small elite groups with partisan agendas and militarised conceptions of security are sources of turmoil and less suitable for conflict resolution. Most of these states have yet to create inclusive, representative and legitimate political processes and systems. Transforming the nature and identity of the state will greatly advance the cause of peace

and democracy, hence facilitate conflict resolution. Might it be better to deal with the nature of the state, settling it first? If so the focus should be on creating representative, legitimate, credible political processes, a major prerequisite to form strong and well governed states. It might then be much easier to avert and resolve most of the conflicts in the sub-region.

2. Confronting the region's unstable power hierarchy

Home to ancient civilisations, great religions and adjacent to the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa sub-region is a prisoner of history and geography. Age-old strategic concerns such as control over the Nile and access to ports are still relevant to Egypt and Ethiopia respectively, as they were causes of major wars many years ago. The Christian and Muslim wars, which have been raging for many hundred years, are still a major feature, only now they are being fought in different forms and with alternative techniques. It is also a function of the internal religious, ethnic and cultural divides combined with shared trans-boundary resources. Borders count. Most of the borders are arbitrary and disputed. Internal conflicts invariably draw in neighbouring states, creating undeclared regional wars. The lack of a clearly defined power nexus has contributed to the absence of a stable regional peace and security order. The Horn's susceptibility to conflict is most

likely aggravated by the internal power structure of the sub-region, lacking an internal hegemon but standing adjacent to Egypt.

3. Confronting the legacies of recent wars

Northeast Africa is a heavily militarised area. The countries of the region maintain substantial armed forces and security organisations, and many of them have themselves emerged from a background of the army or liberation fronts. The most obvious legacy of former or nearby conflicts is weaponry, the availability of which is more than a fact of logistics. The complexity of this problem is compounded by the militarisation of whole communities, mainly along national borders of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries.¹ Throughout the Horn, from Darfur to Somalia, certain ethnic groups have literally become tribes in arms, their social structure and even sense of identity closely bound to their military organisation and the AK 47. It has also resulted in a political culture of militarism, evolving a culture, which gives precedence to martial values and short shift to compromises, mercantilism, and civic values. Militarised political culture is not only the dominant feature of states and organised ethnicity, throughout Northeast Africa societies are accustomed to a certain level of violence, ranging from organised armed clashes to inter-communal raids and disputes.

Northeast African governance is characterised by left-wing liberation movements that have gained power through armed struggle. Although they espouse progressive agendas, it is in the nature of liberation movements to operate covertly,

maintain high levels of secrecy, be pre-occupied with internal and external security, place great emphasis on organisation, hold dogmatic military and political philosophies, and give respect to authority and hierarchy. Equally intrinsic to liberation movements is a concern with force, both outwardly directed at the enemy (which is all to frequently defined as any organised group which does not give it support) and as the ultimate means to maintain the discipline of its members. Martial values, and in particular strength, fighting ability and bravery, are highly esteemed. Security systems are at the heart of political power and this is particularly visible in the Horn of Africa. At the heart of most states are small elites of security officers and military commanders who hold the reins of power and make the most important decisions without reference to legislatures or even civilian colleagues in government. It is fair to say that for most of these individuals there is no distinction between regime security and broader national security issues. Indeed, an enduring factor that contributes to conflict is the unpredictability of the state. Legacies of war combined with militarised cultures have the tendency to turn minor disputes (such as over grazing land and water) into unmanageable, violent conflicts. Conflicts in the Horn of African have the capacity to spawn further conflicts. Any progress towards conflict resolution will largely depend on a new push for demilitarisation, security sector reform and the design and formulation of national security strategies.

II. Revisiting Peace Processes and Agreements in the Horn

Why do some peace processes succeed while

¹ Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Eritrea.

others fail. Briefly, I will try to look at comparative lessons learned in the Sudan, Somalia, and Somaliland. Without a strategic framework most of the negotiation processes in the Horn (excluding probably Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement) have remained ad hoc, ramshackle and incoherent, and therefore unlikely to achieve a sustainable agreement. What we have learned from the flawed peace processes in Sudan and Somalia is that it is essential, prior to engagement in a peace process, to undertake a serious analysis of the nature, character and specifics of a conflict. Particularly, the shortcomings of the approach of the international community in the Sudan emanates from a serious misunderstanding of the problem. The most fundamental mistake was to believe that Sudan's conflicts were of a regional character (south, west, and east) instead of being a product of a failed state, namely the centre. As a result, the resolution of the Sudan's problems didn't lie in the country's many peripheries, but in the centre. By facilitating the signing of stand-alone peace agreements between the National Congress Party (NCP) and regional political/armed groups, peacemakers only helped to legitimise and reinforce the centre, which is the cause of the crisis in the first place. Not to mention that most of the agreements fail to address the root causes of the conflict. As a result, the peace process in Sudan legitimises and sustains the bad guys, ultimately aggravating the crisis.

It is not surprising that almost all peace agreements have sanctioned majority power to an Islamist cabal in Khartoum that has little support, divides and weakens the opposition, and were in a state of collapse within days of them being signed. This has also created a fatal discrepancy among the different agreements, further complicating the search for durable peace. Another problem is evident: proliferation of

peace initiatives. Unless the choices are narrowed down, this approach leads to a perpetual quest for forum shopping by the actors of conflict. Eventually, it leads to splintering, factionalism and progressive fragmentation of the political landscape, as is the case in Darfur, making the search for peace extremely difficult. Equally problematic is the tendency to impose rigid deadlines on peace processes. Peace processes in the Horn, notably Sudan and Somalia need to be viewed as part of long-term political processes of nation-building, and deadlines are neither realistic nor helpful. A major lesson to be taken from the Sudanese peace processes is that peacemakers should avoid deadlines. This was not the only problem of the Sudanese peace processes, Darfur must also feature highly on any list of problems. Against enormous evidence of changes on the ground, mainly in the power and legitimacy of some of the actors, the peace process was based on the assumption that the previously legitimate actors remain relevant and influential. Hence, representation and inclusivity of peace processes need to be based on timely, regular and comprehensive analysis of the conflict actors and dynamics.

Another problem is evident too: inadequate attention given to the security aspects of peace agreements (again here the CPA is an exception, which explains why it fares better than the Darfuri Peace Agreement – DPA – or the Somali peace process which created the Transitional Federal Government – TFG). Peace processes and mediation are a major subject of their own which require specialised studies, expertise and resources. In this regard strong preparation and relevant external technical assistance can be a key factor in assisting the parties (mainly rebel groups) to effectively address security arrangements. Often rebel groups regret what they have signed, because they were

poorly prepared for the task.² Most peace processes also lack strategic, long-term and sustainable approaches to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR). Security arrangements that lend serious consideration to incorporating DDR and SSR packages seem to have better chances of success than those without.

Most of the problems listed above are also relevant to the peace processes in Somalia (in this case southern Somalia). This partly explains why the situation of Somaliland is remarkably different. The difference between the two can be explained in generality and through specific pathways. Peace has remained as elusive as ever in Somalia, while the Republic of Somaliland has achieved peace and democratic transition. Somaliland is not only stable, but prides itself, quite correctly, on experiencing multi-party democracy, a vibrant civil society, credible media, and legitimate political institutions created by interfacing modern and traditional mechanisms. The political process in Somaliland resembles a marriage between Western ministerial values and the Somali traditional leadership, a highly innovative political solution probably unique to Africa.³ Unlike the process in the rest of Somalia, which depends on foreign aid and military coercion, the process in Somaliland relies on home-grown institutions, processes and interest groups. While the political elite of south Somalia,

with the expectation that the sovereign rights of the would-be established state will be able to bestow economic benefits, rushed to get external recognition, Somalilanders focused on internal legitimacy. Unlike in the south, the process in Somaliland capitalised on a mutually beneficial relationship between the state and the productive sectors of society⁴ (the rise of the Islamic Courts Union being the exception).

While mediators in Somalia tried to achieve power-sharing first, as a prelude to setting up a national government that would in turn address the basic economic and social questions facing the country, Somaliland dealt with them head-on. Unlike Somalia, which followed top-down approaches of state and peacebuilding, Somaliland followed bottom-up approaches. Central to the peace process in Somaliland are traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, incorporating the role of traditional leadership, which is largely disregarded in Somalia. Unlike Somalia, the peace process in Somaliland was rooted in an inter-clan consensus on demilitarisation and clan-led DDR processes. The processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Somaliland have followed a markedly different trajectory from that of Sudan and southern Somalia and the results are glaringly evident. However, the approach of the international community to date indicates just how little has been learned about the region in the intervening years.

² The AU Darfur Abuja negotiations found the parties, particularly the rebels, very poorly prepared to address security issues and this problem was never effectively addressed, contributing to the confusion and lack of clarity which plagued and compromised the whole process.

³ There are two houses in Somaliland. One is the House of Representatives made up of elected officials (currently the opposition have the majority in parliament while the ruling party controls the executive branch of government) and the Guurti, House of Elders.

⁴ Some rightly call the system in Somaliland a profit-sharing arrangement between the capitalist class i.e Berbera-based livestock traders and the political elite.

Lessons Learned from the Burundian Peace Process

Jan van Eck

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In spite of the substantial progress made over the past decade, Burundi today unfortunately remains fragile and unstable, as highlighted by the recent decision of the United Nations to increase the security rating for Burundi.

This fragility is demonstrated by:

- Serious internal political confrontation and conflict between the governing party, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) and the opposition, in spite of the fact that they are all part of the new unity government which was created in November last year. This has created institutional paralysis, with Parliament unable to pass laws.
- Allegations of serious human rights violations being committed by agents of the government of Burundi (GoB) against real and perceived opponents.
- A recent resumption of hostilities between the GoB and the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People – National Forces of Liberation (Palipehutu-FNL) since mid-April, in spite of a ceasefire signed between them in 2006. This violence has resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians.

With studies showing that countries emerging from conflict, especially poor

ones, stand a 40 per cent chance of returning to conflict, the present situation in Burundi should be of serious concern to those who hope for a peaceful future for the country.

The nature of the Burundian peace process.

The assassination of Burundi's first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye (a Hutu) in 1993, triggered the Burundian crisis. Large-scale retaliatory massacres of both ethnic Tutsis and Hutus ensued, with the Tutsi-dominated army heavily involved in the ethnic violence.

This crisis was largely ignored outside Burundi. Yet, one year later the Rwandan genocide of about one million mainly Tutsis took place. The international community, fearing a similar disaster in Burundi, and spurred on by a feeling of guilt that it had not done enough in Rwanda, placed the situation in Burundi high on its agenda .

In line with this sense of extreme urgency and panic, the then US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright even proposed the deployment of an international intervention force, to be based in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), across Lake Tanganyika from Burundi. However, the deployment never took place.

This sense of urgency felt by the

international community determined the methodology which would be applied to the official peace-making process, which was launched in the Tanzanian town of Arusha towards the end of 1996.

The flaws of the methodology employed are numerous:

- In spite of the unwillingness of parties to engage in inclusive formal face-to-face negotiations, at that stage, they were forced to join the Arusha process.
- As a result, all existing attempts being made, by the main Hutu and Tutsi protagonists within the government, to deal with the crisis internally were ignored or put aside by the external interveners.

(Amongst these jettisoned internal initiatives were: negotiations between the internal Burundian parties, which resulted in a new power-sharing 'Internal Partnership Government' being negotiated in 1996; face-to-face talks between the GoB and the exiled CNDD-FDD armed movement in Rome, and an internal dialogue aimed at confidence-building between the protagonists).

- Despite the depth of distrust and hatred which existed between the parties, the formal Arusha negotiations was neither preceded, nor accompanied, by any structured confidence-building process. As a result, when they were forced to sign the Arusha Accord in 2000, they remained enemies, instead of partners in peace. This continued afterwards.
- Since priority was given to ending the violence and preventing a repeat of the Rwandan genocide, addressing and resolving the serious root causes of the

conflict were neglected.

Due to the virtually complete unwillingness of the parties represented in Arusha to negotiate, the process had 'little choice' but to adopt a methodology of imposing solutions on them. As a result, an extremely fragile and contested Arusha Accord was signed under strong international pressure in 2000.

The fact that not a single one of the five peace agreements negotiated during the lengthy Burundian peace process, was signed voluntarily, explains the lack of common vision and disunity amongst Burundian parties today.

The main objective of the Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi, comprising the Heads of State of regional countries, was to make the Arusha process fully inclusive – contrary to internal initiatives. They aimed to include the two armed political/military movements, the CNDD-FDD and the Palipehutu-FNL, both of which were waging war against the government. Unfortunately they did not succeed in realising this objective.

The Arusha Accord to a large extent accommodated the wishes of the Tutsi parties, giving them a quota of 40 per cent of political representation, and of 50 per cent in the Burundian Army (something reluctantly accepted by the Hutu parties). As a result of these concessions to Tutsis, the Burundian conflict began to move from a purely political Hutu/Tutsi conflict, towards a new phase of increased competition and conflict between the Hutu parties. This was primarily between the Hutu parties represented in Arusha and the armed Hutu movements which were excluded.

These armed Hutu movements

immediately claimed that the Hutu parties at Arusha had 'sold out the main Hutu objective' of restoring the massive election victory which was stolen from them by the Tutsi in 1993.

Therefore, when the CNDD-FDD, the larger of the two armed movements, eventually entered negotiations with the then Transitional Government (TG), it was their declared objective to obtain more concessions than the Hutu parties had obtained in Arusha. Amongst these were reducing the ethnic quota allocated to the Tutsi parties.

Although they did obtain more concessions during these negotiations, which ended in 2003, they were still forced to accept compromises on the ethnic issue. They reluctantly signed, having been threatened that, should they refuse, they would be declared a terrorist organisation.

Their reluctance resurfaced when, after having become part of the Transitional Government, they pushed for the creation of a new democratic constitution. The draft which eventually appeared, after negotiations between the parties, was basically a CNDD-FDD draft, which reversed some of the key compromises contained in the Arusha Accord. When the Tutsi political parties, which had been part of Arusha, rejected this draft constitution, the then facilitator, South Africa's Jacob Zuma, on instructions from the Regional Initiative for Burundi, imposed the draft on them. After the new constitution was confirmed by a referendum, the process moved towards the holding of new democratic elections, which were won by the CNDD-FDD.

The exclusion of Palipehutu-FNL (FNL), the oldest armed Hutu movement, from key

events, including: the negotiations between the CNDD-FDD and the transitional government in 2003; the drafting of the new constitution; and the democratic elections, would hamper efforts by the new government to bring durable stability to Burundi. This past exclusion of one of the key proponents of conflict accounts for the continued presence of the peace process today.

Due to their exclusion, the FNL accused the predominantly Hutu CNDD-FDD of having 'sold out' the political Hutu cause, after it came to power in 2005. They claim that CNDD-FDD: retained Tutsi domination within the newly-integrated Army – especially at the highest levels; maintained ethnic quotas in the political and military spheres; allowed the culture of impunity to continue by failing to put in place a 'Truth, Reconciliation and Forgiveness' process; and, used the army and its security services to persecute and kill fellow Hutus.

When in May 2006 the GoB reluctantly agreed to negotiations with the FNL in Dar-es-Salaam, it was clear that the FNL was trying to achieve concessions greater than those secured by the Hutu parties in Arusha in 2000, and the CNDD in 2003. Due to the fact that the CNDD-FDD was now the ruling party in a sovereign and democratically-elected government, it refused to negotiate any matters which had already been dealt with in previous accords and the new constitution. It demanded that the FNL lay down their arms and then to be integrated into state institutions.

With the GoB consistently sticking to this position, hardly any of the divisive issues raised by the FNL were discussed or negotiated. In spite of the FNL's unwillingness to sign, they were eventually forced to sign the Comprehensive Ceasefire

Accord on 7 September 2006 – under threat of sanctions being taken against them.

As a result, the FNL claimed that they had been defeated and had left the negotiating table ‘with empty hands’. This lay the foundation for the problems experienced in the subsequent attempts to implement the 2006 accord.

While the FNL joined the Joint Verification and Monitoring Commission (JVMM), they made it clear that the accords could not be implemented in their present form, and had to be made ‘implementable’ through further talks, dialogue or negotiations over ‘unresolved issues’. With the GoB refusing to do so, the ceasefire process has remained deadlocked since September 2006.

This situation has been worsened by the conflictual relationship between the South African facilitation team and the FNL, which accuses the South African facilitators of supporting the GoB. Unless present attempts at resurrecting this peace process succeed, Burundi runs the risk sliding further into instability.

Are traditional principles of good peace-making still valid?

Over many decades, peace practitioners, academics and others have developed a set

of clear, universally acceptable principles of conflict resolution and peace-making. Among these are: willingness on the part of parties to negotiate; inclusivity; consensus; compromise; ownership of the process and solutions proposed by the parties themselves (home-grown solutions); non-partisan mediation; addressing the root causes of the conflict; and, reconciliation. These principles were also confirmed as being ‘African principles of conflict resolution’, at a UN conference in Addis Ababa in 1999.

It is clear, however, that generally speaking these principles are not being adhered to in many peace processes – including the Burundian one. Focusing primarily on ending, or preventing, violence (which is after all merely a symptom of an existing conflict), while neglecting the root causes of the conflict, frequently results in countries in conflict moving from violent to non-violent phases.

With so many peace agreements either remaining extremely fragile or failing, it is critically important that we assess whether these principles of good peace-making are still considered valid in today’s circumstances. If they are not, how should they be amended? And, if they are indeed still valid, why are they not being applied?

Resolving armed conflicts in West Africa: Lessons from Liberia

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For more than a decade, Liberia was the theatre for one of the deadliest wars in Africa. Launched from the neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire by a small group of dissidents trained and armed by Libya with the assistance of Burkina Faso, the war in Liberia left the country with painful memories of destruction, unprecedented protracted violence, killings and above all, the deliquescence of state structures. After many peace initiatives, including the election of a notorious warlord as president, it was finally the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)¹ signed by Liberian Government and rebel groups in Accra that defined a framework for peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction in Liberia. The successful transition towards the democratisation of the political system created a platform for November 2005 general elections that brought to power the first female president in Africa, creating an exceptional phenomenon in the male-dominated political circle.

There hardly is any doubt that the peace process in Liberia, despite the numerous challenges and difficulties, has made and continues to record considerable progress. The achievements in recent years and particularly the current situation in the country provide us with the opportunity to appreciate various actors' role and efforts in

bringing about peace and to draw some lessons for future peace missions and conflict resolution in Africa. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the peace process in Liberia. It analyses the various initiatives and challenges associated with Liberian War and post-war experience, taking into account domestic factors as well as the regional and international environments. The imperative of restoring peace in Liberia has called for the restoration of state authority, security sector reform, economic recovery and national reconciliation plans, among others.

The paper begins with the exploration of the war's legacies in Liberia. Then, attention is turned to the discussion of the peace process itself. How far has Liberia gone? What has the country achieved? Are there lessons to be learnt in terms of managing complex emergency situations in West Africa and in Africa? Finally, the paper works out a number of recommendations for Liberian authorities and development partners to restore a lasting peace in Liberia.

War and its Legacy in Liberia

In 1847, when freed slaves left the United States of America to found the first black-ruled republic on African soil, they were thought to have brought back the ideals of freedom and respect for principles that

¹ 'Comprehensive Peace Agreement Between the Government of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and Political Parties', Accra, 18 August 2003

promote human dignity. Liberia was to be a 'happy home' to thousands of black Africans who were once victims of oppression. However, instead of promoting good governance, what was inaugurated was a system of oppression and abuse that simply transformed Liberia into the ineffective and corrupt system so widespread in post-colonial Africa.²

For one and a half centuries, Liberia experienced the most pernicious form of 'colonisation' with perhaps the nuance that this time around, it was the Liberians themselves who subjected their fellow countrymen to a repressive system of exclusion and exploitation. Pretending to fulfil the same civilising mission as the European missionaries did, Liberian settlers, also called Americo-Liberians (only 5 per cent of the population), subjected their countrymen to cruelty and abuse whose impact is still felt in contemporary Liberian life. For example, indigenous African communities in Liberia were denied the right to vote until 1946, when it was extended to a selected few.³ And as in many African countries victims of colonisation and cruelty of the indigenous post-colonial political elite, political exclusion and repression, economic mismanagement and social deprivation defined the fate of the majority of Liberians until the deadly war broke out in 1989.

With access to a better education and resources, the settlers dominated the political landscape with the creation of an abominable political machine, the True Whig Party (TWP). Various leaders from that minority party systematically held hostage what should have been a self-sufficient and cohesive nation; a country with immense potential and the resources to become one of the most prosperous countries in post-colonial Africa. As Pham indicated, if Liberia had been left unmolested to go on its natural and spontaneous growth, had its movement been left free from the paralysing intrigues of jealous ambitions and unscrupulous avarice, it would have thrown open a wider and yet wider door for thousands who are now looking with an anxious eye for some land of rest.⁴

The violent military coup that took place in the 1980s ended the 'Americo-Liberian' hegemony. Though the coup was welcomed by indigenous Liberians, it did very little to transform the political system in any meaningful way. The coup leader, Samuel Doe from the indigenous Krahn ethnic group and a master sergeant in the army, was expected to fill the vacuum of good governance. The military leader did not undertake any reforms aimed to address the governance crisis. Rather, his actions further complicated the socio-economic and political contradictions that marred the post-

² M Oquaye, 'The Liberian Crisis: Lessons for Intra-State Conflict Management and Prevention in Africa', Working Papers No. 19 (Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University); Lansana Gberie, 'Liberia War and Peace Process: A Historical Overview' in Festus Aboagye and Alhaji M S Bah, *A Tortuous Road to Peace: Humanitarian Interventions in Liberia* (Pretoria: ISS: 2005).

³ Paul Richards et al, 'Community Cohesion in Liberia: A Post-War Rapid Social Assessment', Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction No. 21 (January 2005), <[www.humanitarianinfo.org/liberia/mediacentre/press/doc/Liberia Rapid Social Assessment.pdf](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/liberia/mediacentre/press/doc/Liberia%20Rapid%20Social%20Assessment.pdf)>, accessed 29 August 2007.

⁴ J Peter Pham, 'Securing US Interests and Promoting a Continent's Development: A Framework for US Strategic Engagement in Africa', Report (Virginia: Institute for Infrastructure and Information Assurance, 2006)

colonial political environment in most African states.⁵

In essence, President Samuel Doe committed numerous atrocities and hideous human rights abuses in his bid to hang on to power, and to promote narrow ethnic interests under the protective umbrella of the Cold War regime. Indeed, the support of US leaders, who saw in Samuel Doe an ally in the East-West rivalry, helped him consolidate his dictatorship to the detriment of good governance and economic stability in Liberia.

What is left of Samuel Doe's legacy to Liberians today is more a legacy of betrayal and a waste of an opportunity to consolidate the emergence of an effective state based on the respect for the rule of law and coherent national development projects that had been compromised by a century-long Americo-Liberian minority's domination. It has become evident that the military junta led by an indigenous leader did not signal any mobilisation around clearly defined political and economic policies that addressed the inequalities and poor living conditions of Liberians.⁶ In fact, Samuel Doe's regime and the atrocities that accompanied his rule laid the foundation for the outbreak of the war in which the youth was manipulated and abused.

In that sense, the war in Liberia is a result of not only the one party dictatorship, the misery of the majority of Liberians and the legacy of the militarisation of national

politics. It is also as a result of the difficulty to define a consensus between a 'settler state and various groups from the interior' over a cohesive socio-political entity in Liberia.⁷

The incursion of a group of armed men under the banners of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor in December 1989 quickly became a protracted armed conflict with dire consequences for peace and stability in West Africa. Illegal extraction of natural resources and a multiplicity of war factions sustained warlords' bloody campaigns for access to state power or resources. The point of the war in Liberia and Sierra Leone was not necessarily to win it, but to engage in profitable crimes under warfare. Diamonds, timber and other minerals have been the driving force behind the war that destabilised the social structures, stole national patrimony and compromised the future of an entire generation of children.⁸

Subsequent defections from the NPFL and the emergence of new war factions created a number of new actors who made the peace process lengthy and very complex. For instance, by 1990, Prince Yormie Johnson (a former ally of Charles Taylor) broke away to form the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) due to disagreements with Charles Taylor over the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) military intervention. The emergence of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) formed in June 1991 by supporters

⁵ Ebo Adedeji, 'The Challenges and Opportunities of Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Liberia', Occasional Paper No. 9 (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005).

⁶ Gberie, op. cit. in note 2.

⁷ Adebajo Adekeye and Rashid Ismail, *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2004); Richards et al, op. cit. in note 2; Gberie, op. cit. in note 2.

⁸ Gberie, op. cit. in note 2; Mohamedu F Jones, 'Liberia: Pathways from War to Peace', *The Perspective*, 8 August 2003.

of the late President Samuel Doe and former Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) fighters who had taken refuge in Guinea and Sierra Leone made the situation critical and the peace process extremely complex.

An Overview of the Liberian Peace Process

Though the United Nations' role has been significant in the peace process in Liberia, it is only fair to acknowledge the primary role and involvement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) when the international community was still indecisive about the nature and scope of the Liberian crisis. It is noteworthy that despite the absence of readiness and experience in undertaking peace missions in dangerous areas, the intervention of the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) played a crucial role in momentarily curbing the NPFL's violent assault against the ill-equipped, poorly paid and unmotivated Liberian Armed Forces, which had been confined to the capital city of Monrovia.

According to the former Field Commander of ECOMOG, Brigadier-General Adetunyi Idowu Olurin, the Liberian situation and ECOMOG deployment was a test case in regional peacekeeping efforts in that it proved that nations within a region are often familiar with the political situation of the neighbouring states, conflict issues and key personalities involved.⁹ The initial ECOMOG agenda had three main components: first, to persuade Samuel Doe

to step down as the president of Liberia, since he had effectively lost control of the greater portion of the country, second, to disarm the combatants and third, to establish a congenial playing ground for elections to be conducted. Though ECOMOG did not enjoy an outright success, the initiative could be credited for a number of steps taken that created the framework and prepared the ground for the UN intervention.

Through ECOMOG's peace mission efforts, the first of its genre in Africa, the Interim Government under Amos Sawyer was able to organise elections which brought Charles Taylor to power in 1997.¹⁰ Yet, the argument that voting warlords into power, often endorsed in various peace agreements in Africa, had proven very problematic in the case of Liberia: fundamental questions related to the nature of the governance system, socio-economic recovery planning and human security imperatives were not adequately attended to. Charles Taylor was soon faced with an intensified armed opposition from various rebel groups including the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). His involvement in the instability that characterised West Africa through the destabilisation of Sierra Leone, and to some extent Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, became a great concern for the region's leaders.

It was also under the auspices of ECOWAS that a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed on 18 August 2003 by

⁹ M Oquaye, op. cit. in note 2.

¹⁰ Amadu Sesay, 'ECOMOG and Subregional Security in West Africa' (1999), <www.accord.org.za/ct2_1999_pg27-29.pdf>, accessed 2 December 2007; Festus B Agboagye and Martin R Rupiya, 'Enhancing Post-Conflict Democratic Governance through Effective Security Sector Reform in Liberia' in Festus Aboagye and Alhaji M S Bah, *A Tortuous Road to Peace: Humanitarian Interventions in Liberia* (Pretoria: ISS, 2005).

various warring factions before the United Nations Security Council established the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) with Security Council Resolution 1509 the following month. In addition to protecting the United Nations staff, facilities and civilians, the peace operation was mandated to provide assistance in four key areas:

- Implementation of the 17 June 2003 ceasefire agreement
- Humanitarian and human rights assistance
- Security and justice sector reform
- Implementation of the peace process.

UNMIL was later mandated to apprehend former president Charles Taylor. Therefore, his forced exit from the political scene in Liberia and his exile to Nigeria in 2003 contributed to a successful transition from war to a fragile peace through a relatively acceptable democratic process which is currently unfolding. In essence, the UN model puts emphasis on a series of initiatives that range from the deployment of peacekeepers, demobilisation, demilitarisation, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) of ex-combatants, security sector reform (SSR) and the restoration of a democratic polity to socio-economic recovery. At the heart of this approach is the cessation of hostilities and the return to a normal socio-political environment.

But there have been many shortcomings, including a lack of sustainable attention to

socio-economic recovery, consolidated domestic capacity and ownership in the UN approach. The major problem generally associated with the UN approach is the weak local control and ownership of the peace-building process. The overall process is currently monitored by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) which many Liberians called 'the second government of Liberia'.¹¹

With the 2005 elections, and with the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in January 2006, UNMIL moved into a peace consolidation phase. On 30 March 2007, through Resolution 1750, the Security Council extended the mission's mandate until 30 September 2008 and requested plans for a drawdown. On the ground, considerable progress is being made in the various components of the UN mission. Since the November 2005 elections, Liberians have entered into a new social contract based on the commitment of the main political actors and the population to establish a political order based on good governance and the promotion of socio-economic recovery. The DDRR process is completed and substantial progress has made in security sector reform. In addition, the government has adopted ambitious economic reform plans, the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP) and the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (IPRS) to uplift the life of the people and whose impact is evident in the annual economic growth of 7 to 9 per cent recorded over the past two years.¹²

But the combined effects of war and

¹¹ H Scanlon and T Murithi, 'The United Nations and Africa: Peace, Development and Human Security', Policy Seminar Report (Cape Town: CCR, 2006).

¹² Government of Liberia, Governance and Economic Assistance Management Programme (2006), <www.gemapliberia.org/>, accessed 23 August 2007.

international embargos on natural resources and corruption meant that Liberia was left with depleted economic infrastructure, 85 per cent of its population affected by unemployment, illiteracy, and with an external debt estimated at about US\$4 billion. Therefore, political and economic stability requires co-ordinated efforts on the part of the new administration and development partners. While these policies define a number of government strategies toward national economic recovery and good governance, and involve a variety of stakeholders including government, donors, and civil society organisations (CSOs), it is the short-term response to deprivation that remains the major challenge to the new administration. By focusing on democratic consolidation, economic reform, the improvement of infrastructure, the fight against corruption and an effective management of national resources, these programmes are, in the long run, to lay foundations for sustainable peace and an improvement of the living standards of Liberians.¹³

Lessons from Liberian Peace process

From Liberia's experience, some of the essential elements of transition from war to peace are:

- Political commitment of the various conflicting factions to abide by the agreements to end hostilities
- Commitment of regional organisations and neighbouring countries to help end the conflict

- International capacity and support to enforce peace
- Defining a new security framework to sustain the peace process
- Elaborating a generally acceptable, inclusive and transparent system of post-conflict governance
- Designing and implementing a wide range of post-conflict recovery measures: economic, social, political, infrastructure, societal. These elements complement each other and are organically inter-related.

Despite the undeniable value of external intervention in managing some conflicts, the Liberian case taught us that the impetus for peace must come from within the region. The role of ECOWAS in creating a regional peacekeeping and enforcement mechanism, is a case in point. The establishment of ECOMOG, regardless of the parochial interests and dissensions that were vested in it, reflected a unique courageous peace initiative, and independence from the region's traditionally jaded leadership.¹⁴ Supported mainly by Nigeria, ECOMOG made genuine (though chequered) efforts to arrest the spiralling violence in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire and more recently in Guinea-Conakry. Learning from the limitations and failures of the ECOMOG missions, and recognising the need for clear principles, policies and guidelines, West African leaders subsequently adopted the ECOWAS protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention,

¹³ Government of Liberia, 'Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper', <www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2007/cr0760.pdf>, accessed 23 August 2007.

¹⁴ Adekeye and Ismail, op. cit. in note 7.

Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security in Lomé in December 1999.¹⁵ The presence of a leading country within the region that commits its resources appeared to be essential in the peace process in Liberia. Today, West Africa appears the most advanced region in Africa in terms of establishing a coherent and an effective conflict monitoring, prevention (ECOWARN) and management system. The region has also made significant progress toward its contribution to the African Standby Force (ASF).

Liberian experience also reveals that elections alone are insufficient in bringing about sustainable peace in a war-torn country. Charles Taylor's election as president dismally failed to create an environment conducive to peace consolidation. The right question is: Why is it so? Indeed, it is generally argued that good governance through the establishment of credible institutions is indispensable for an effective peace-building process. Not only that state structures need to be put in place in the aftermath of the armed conflict, but they also need to be infused with democratic norms that cater for representation, accountability and rule of law.¹⁶ But this in itself is not a panacea for as we witness in the case of Rwanda, vigorous economic reform seems to create an environment of prosperity that in return could help ease social tensions and alleviate poverty.

Therefore, while the legitimate extension or the re-establishment of state authority in a post-conflict society such as Liberia appears to be a crucial element in the reconstruction

process as well as for achieving a sustainable peace in the country, one of the major concerns is how to achieve that. The dependence of Liberia on external resources in the implementation of its reconstruction programme put additional pressure on the government. As often happens, there may be a lack of convergence in government's priorities vis-à-vis the population and donors' interests, which could cause the deterioration of the citizens' confidence in the national authorities. While external assistance is vital, it should not affect government's ability to define priorities that are in line with its people's needs. And the willingness of the donor community will be put to the test when it comes to find sustainable solutions to Liberia's debt crisis.

Because of the heavy debt burden, widespread shortage of professional skills and deep-rooted corruption, the Liberian government finds it increasingly difficult to focus on the numerous development challenges. The announcement made in November 2007 by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to cancel US\$842 million debt arrears for Liberia may have constituted a major initiative toward the total debt relief or opening the way for highly indebted and war-torn Liberia to qualify for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Following the IMF initiative, Nigerian President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua wrote to the Senate of his country, seeking approval to write off US\$13 million of Liberia's US\$48 million debt. While the decision to wipe out Liberia's arrears paves the way to have access to loans, it does not clear all its debts owed to the development partners such as the World

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ T Debiel and Ulf Terlinden 'Promoting Good Governance in Post-Conflict Societies', Discussion Paper (Berlin: GTZ, 2004).

Bank, Paris Club and other G-8 commercial banks.¹⁷

Even with the IMF's US\$842 million clearing of Liberia's debt and if the Nigerian Senate eventually forgives Liberia of US\$13 million, the country's debt burden will still be more than 75 per cent of the current \$4.3 billion it owes. Prior to the country's fifteen-year civil war, its external debt stood at a little over a billion dollars. By inference, less than the country's pre-war debt (which is less than 25 per cent of what is currently owed externally) is being forgiven. This implies that Liberia is still deeply mired in debt, which would undermine its ability to source funds for rapid recovery.¹⁸

Also closely linked to the restoration of governance and state authority is security sector reform. It is obvious that the most urgent security challenge in Liberia, as in West Africa as a whole, is to silence the guns, stop the killing and end the violence. Without peace and stability, meaningful development and integration are impossible.¹⁹ In the words of Adekeye and Rashid, as regional and extra-regional actors continue to tackle the thorny problems of Liberia and other war-affected countries in West Africa, they must bear in mind a number of important considerations:

- Each conflict has its own specific sets of triggers, actors and dynamics and the resolution of conflicts therefore requires nuanced approaches and a profound understanding of the idiosyncrasies of each case. Lessons learned from previous experiences are not necessarily useful for managing regional conflicts
- The overall strategy must be national, regional and external in conception and implementation, and therefore pull together the diverse experiences and resources of a variety of multilateral and national institutions
- Regional peacekeeping mechanisms such as ECOMOG in Liberia or elsewhere must be provided firstly by member states, then by the international community at large with sufficient training, resources and logistical support to be able to contribute effectively to conflict management and the establishment of stability in West Africa
- The crafting and implementation of peace agreements must involve all contending factions and neighbouring countries, as well as all external actors with stake in the outcome of the conflict and effective means found to ensure the implementation of the deals signed
- Peace processes and agreements must have some kind of mass support within local communities in order for them to be effectively implemented. The role of civil society, which can draw on a wide range of popular experiences, energies, and networks, is crucial to these efforts
- The international donor community must recognise that conflict resolution and peace-building can never be done cheaply, quickly and haphazardly. As clearly demonstrated by the cases of Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Liberia among others, sufficient resources must be provided in a timely manner at a crucial

¹⁷ Lesley Wroughton, 'Liberia Clears World Bank Debt Arrears', *Washington Post*, 5 December 2007; T Q Harris, 'Debt Relief Puts the Cart Before the Horse' *The Analyst* (Monrovia), December 2007.

¹⁸ *Businessday*, 'Suing for Debt Relief for Liberia', 4 December 2007.

¹⁹ Adekeye and Ismail, op. cit. in note 7.

point in the peace process

- Finally, the price that peacemakers are prepared to pay to achieve peace by appeasing powerful warlords in places like Liberia and Sierra Leone has often been too high and sometimes counterproductive. Blanket amnesties, which have often fostered a culture of impunity, must not be extended to faction leaders and fighters who have committed egregious human rights violations and crimes against humanity.

Concluding Remarks

Since the 2003 CPA, Liberia is progressively restoring peace and stability after fifteen years of war. The painful history of the country should inform current actions and decisions in the post-conflict reconstruction process. Liberian authorities have a unique opportunity to transform the country into a peaceful and stable nation by laying foundations for sustainable development through an articulated response to the basic socio-economic needs of the majority of the citizens.

Two years after the elections of Sirleaf-Johnson as the country's president, Liberia has become a relatively stable country and its relations with neighbouring states are improving. In addition, there are some interesting developments in the peace process in the West African region that can positively influence the course of life in Liberia. Sierra Leone's 2007 elections, organised without UN peacekeeping forces, offered many lessons that could inspire

Liberian leaders. It also shows that failure to deliver on socio-economic issues could expose leaders to popular discontent expressed through election results. The commitment to democratic principles assisted Sierra Leone in producing a new leadership (from the opposition) to consolidate the post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building initiatives. Peace initiatives in Côte d'Ivoire represent some encouraging signs of hope for Liberia since the March 2007 Ouagadougou Peace Agreement and the symbolic reunification of the country.

Meanwhile, Liberia remains vulnerable due to tremendous domestic difficulties. The post-war institutions have not yet been able to deliver on the high expectations of the population. There are still sporadic incidents of violent crimes and fear of the weapons that have not been returned. Liberia has few resources available, both domestic and external, to tackle some of the crucial problems affecting the life of its citizens. However, the possibility for the country to export its diamonds and timber should provide for additional resources needed to implement the reconstruction programme. But the contribution these resources will make to post-conflict development programmes will depend greatly on the ability of the government to manage the revenues effectively. Therefore, good, transparent and accountable governance is necessary for the success of post-conflict reconstruction in Liberia.

3. International Lessons

Road to Helsinki: The Aceh Conflict and the Indonesian Approach to Conflict Resolution

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The paper examines the strategy of the Indonesian government led by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to deal with the separatist challenge posed by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*). Though the paper looks at the history and evolution of GAM since 1976, the primary focus of analysis is on the most recent developments since early 2004, particularly a critical ten-month period starting from September 2004 when a new momentum for peace was embarked upon by the newly elected Yudhoyono administration. The paper argues that the success of the Helsinki process was due to several factors: the renewed commitment of the new government to promote a permanent peace by 'terminating the conflict'; improved political communication between the government of President Yudhoyono and the GAM leaders; the success of military operations which created political incentives for GAM to negotiate and make principled political concessions; and the tsunami disaster on 26 December 2004 which created political, logistics and psychological barriers making it more willing to negotiate with the Indonesian government. The paper concludes by emphasising that rather than stem the tide of secessionist sentiment in Aceh, the Indonesian government's military campaigns, ironically, caused the direct opposite and increased pro-independence sentiment. Widespread pro-independence sentiment in Aceh is a relatively recent

phenomenon if one takes a longer view of the history of the Republic of Indonesia, and was primarily caused by the hatred of the Indonesian military rather than a motivation to secede. The resolution of the Aceh conflict was possible with a president who understood that the Aceh problem cannot be resolved through military means but through negotiation and ultimately a political settlement plus the recognition that addressing core concerns of human security and economic distribution can help alleviate the situation.

II Background: Evolution of the Conflict

Aceh has a long record of conflict and grievances in the history of Indonesia. One of the most conservative Muslim societies in Indonesia, the Acehnese are reputed to have been ferocious fighters against the Dutch and are a proud people who are protective of their identity. In efforts to safeguard this identity, they have often resisted the authority of the central government in Jakarta and sought a special status in Indonesia.

The memory of a precursor state is a characteristic that Aceh shares with two other Southeast Asian regions with separatist movements, namely the Patani of Southern Thailand and the Moro in the Philippines' region of Mindanao. In the

seventeenth century the sultanate was a major player in the spice trade and was a late edition to the Netherlands East Indies. The Dutch invasion, beginning in 1873, met the bitterest resistance the Netherlands had ever faced in the region and the conflict was to last into the early 1900s. Resistance heroes like Teuku Umar, Cut Nya Dhien and Teungku Chik di Tiro emerged as significant figures during this resistance. As the aristocracy was compromised by its policies of accommodation with the Dutch, traditional secular elites steadily lost power to religious leaders during the conflict with the Netherlands and gradually took control of the resistance struggle.

The Acehese conflict had its roots in the complex political environment of Indonesia in the 1950s as the country embarked on a period of liberal democracy (1950-58). Acute problems brought about by centre-periphery rivalries were the result of insufficient guarantees over the rights of the provinces to maintain their cultural identities and resource base plus the rivalries inherent in a competitive, primordially-based Jakarta political scene which made for ineffectual government. This potent combination of factors gave rise to significant disenchantment in the provinces over the political direction of the Republic and dissatisfaction over the unwillingness of the centre to recognise the unique identity of regions led to a succession of regional rebellions. Foremost was the Acehese rebellion led by Tengku Daud Beureueh. The Acehese conflict became more complicated after Beureueh agreed to co-operate with S M Kartosuwirjo thereby drawing Aceh into the Darul Islam rebellion, which was an armed revolt that encompassed West and Central Java with the explicit aim of forming an Indonesian Islamic state.

With the peaceful settlement of the

Acehese conflict in 1959, Jakarta agreed to grant the province special status where the unique culture and identity of the Acehese could be accommodated and guaranteed within a *daerah istimewa* or 'special region' framework. In reality, the provisions of autonomy were never realised and coupled with grievances associated with Suharto's New Order government's exploitation of Acehese resources led to a new conflict in 1976, with different actors but generally the same separatist objective. The rebellion led by Tengku Hasan di Tiro – a descendent of Chik di Tiro – and a few hundred supporters formed GAM and set as its objective the creation of a sovereign Acehese state. However, as opposed to the revolt of the 1950s which sought to establish an Islamic state, the movement in the 1970s was brought about by an intense desire to separate Aceh from Indonesia based on perceived political, economic and social injustices as a result of central government policy towards Aceh. He derided Indonesia as a 'neo-colony' and a vehicle for Javanese nationalism. His publications and speeches were a combination of dependency theory and a glorification of Acehese history (and his family's role therein), though a majority of observers conclude that he was driven to declare independence because he missed out on valuable gas extraction contracts from the Indonesian government. Initially di Tiro's call to separation did not find fertile ground in 1976, but eventually the secessionist movement would become widespread and peak around 1999. What caused Acehese opinion to fluctuate?

The Indonesian government responded to Hasan di Tiro's movement with massive repression. Notably a period of martial law (dubbed by Indonesia's *Tempo* magazine as the 'Dirty War' referring to the Argentine government's campaign of repression from

1976 to 1983 against alleged dissidents and subversives) in the late 1980s, which lasted a decade, resulted in a deepening of Acehese animosity towards Jakarta, especially when the province was unofficially designated as a Military Operations Region (DOM, *Daerah Operasi Militer*).

Military operations were designed to inflict systematic violence not only against GAM cadre, but suspected supporters and surrounding communities. According to government and NGO investigations of the martial law period, homes were burned, Acehese civilians were often harassed, sometimes physically beaten and occasionally killed, and women suspected of connection to GAM cadre were frequently sexually assaulted. According to this logic, if the Acehese were going to be 'disloyal' to the Republic they would be forcibly brought back into the fold – something Suharto himself called shock therapy. Even after the fall of the Suharto regime, extra-judicial killings and other acts of violence did not go before the courts, with the exception of only a handful of highly publicised cases. Justice in Aceh would always serve the interests of Indonesian security and such perceptions were by the 1990s deeply rooted in Acehese society.

Socio-economic issues were also a critical determinant. Aceh produces a third of Indonesia's gas exports and 10 per cent of its oil, making it an important region for Indonesia's mineral resource extraction (allowing GAM to point to Aceh's viability as a state). Only a very small proportion of the returns have stayed in Aceh, a province that was ranked as the seventh poorest in Indonesia during the 1990s (out of twenty-seven at the time). It was commonly perceived in Aceh that this situation amounted to economic exploitation by the Jakarta elite – something GAM was able to

use for propaganda purposes. Special autonomy for Aceh has in large part revolved around rectifying this sense of inequity. In addition the military's commercial imperatives in Aceh conflicted with the wider goal of winning hearts and minds. The military (TNI, *Tentara Nasional Indonesia*) established control over a number of commodities and charged 'informal taxes' on businesses and individuals. The large number of (underpaid) soldiers in the province put incredible financial stress on an already poor province (GAM, too, charged 'informal taxes' or *pajak nanggroe* – taxes on the local population to fund the movement – adding to the burden).

Ethnic and religious identity differences needed to be understood within the Acehese context. Aceh may have a reputation as Indonesia's most conservative Muslim province but popular understanding about the role of religion in this conflict needs to be addressed. Media stories had loosely tried to imply that the conflict was one where 'rebels were fighting to establish an Islamic state'. Such a view is incorrect. GAM has never articulated this goal; its leaders by and large are secular in their orientation and their movement articulated separatist rather than Islamic goals. A clear indication was its inability to cohere with radical Muslim groups in Indonesia like the *Lasykar Jihad* or the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI, *Front Pembela Islam*) which have tried to establish themselves in Aceh as self-appointed guardians of Islam.

Also well established was that clerical authorities in Aceh who have campaigned for greater space for *Sharia* law within Aceh – and have had some successes on issues such as promoting Muslim attire and the banning of alcohol – are pro-government ulama (theologically trained figures). Identity differences in the Aceh conflict have

tended to revolve around race and language – although Acehnese do generally regard their particular understanding of Islam to be at the core of Acehnese identity.

III Analysis of Conflict Management/Military strategies pursued by the Government of Indonesia (2000-2003)

a. Political Approaches

When the Suharto regime collapsed in 1998, expectations in Aceh were great that the general situation there would be addressed, but little changed in the aftermath. Conflict, in fact, grew worse despite some serious attempts at establishing a ceasefire through the facilitation of the Henri Dunant Centre. On 12 May 2000, representatives of the Indonesian government and GAM, meeting in Geneva, signed a document entitled the 'Joint Understanding for Humanitarian Pause for Aceh'. The stated objective of the text was to allow the free flow of humanitarian aid to a population in dire need of it. The Indonesian government tried to appease GAM's demands for independence by unilaterally passing special autonomy legislation. The Special Autonomy law provided for the introduction of certain elements of Sharia law in local courts. It would also give Aceh's provincial government increased powers over local affairs, such as to hold direct elections for the province's governor and district heads in 2004, and allow the province to keep 70 per cent of revenue generated from Aceh's natural resources.

Since the Humanitarian Pause was only a temporary termination of armed conflict and not a political settlement, dialogue was compromised due to complications on the ground which led to frequent insurrections. Its implementation lacked commitment

from both sides and collapsed in July 2001. While the Indonesian government saw this dialogue as an alternative to its previous reliance on the military approach, GAM saw it as yet another tool in its struggle for independence and served as a means to internationalise their conflict with Jakarta. Without having to contend with the pressure of Indonesian military operations, GAM was able to exploit the ceasefire to recruit more cadres in order to move on to the next stage of their struggle. The Wahid government did not have the political means or the commitment to push such indirect strategies very far.

President Megawati, who replaced President Wahid after a long drawn out constitutional crisis, continued the policy of promoting the Humanitarian Pause in Aceh. After several phases of dialogue, on 9 December 2002, the Government of Indonesia and GAM signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in Geneva, again facilitated by the Henry Dunant Centre. It called on both parties to safeguard demilitarisation, by controlling their respective armed forces on the ground. A monitoring team, called the Joint Security Committee (JSC), was established to supervise both parties and undertake full investigation of any security violation. CoHA also established 'peace zones' – in which both GAM and the TNI would refrain from operations, movements, activities or any provocative acts that could lead to contact or confrontation. It also called for an 'all inclusive dialogue' of all elements of Acehnese society as a way forward.

Initially, the implementation of CoHA was greeted by the Acehnese with enthusiasm and relief. Within two months of the confidence-building phase – the level of hostility dropped drastically and several peace zones were established. But despite

the initial enthusiasm, the vagueness of most of the terms of agreement soon became an obstacle to implementation. The two sides had a different understanding of what was meant by terms such as 'placement' of arms by GAM, 'relocation' of the TNI and whether 'review' of the Special Autonomy law could involve discussion about the principles of autonomy or independence. The fact that both the Indonesian government and GAM had very different interpretations of what these terms meant, once again generated the collapse of the peace process in Aceh. Invariably, by April 2003, armed clashes began to escalate again, with each side blaming the other for violations of the ceasefire. Since the beginning, a majority of the TNI's generals had opposed the government's decision to accede to a ceasefire and viewed the CoHA, in similar terms to the previous armistice – as no more than an early step along the road to international legitimacy and recognition for GAM and ultimately a repetition of the disaster and humiliation of the loss of East Timor in 1999, which thousands of soldiers had shed their blood to defend.

Last minute peace talks between representatives of the Indonesian government and GAM on 19 May 2003 aimed at rescuing CoHA in Tokyo proved fruitless. In the final analysis, both the Humanitarian Pause and CoHA initiatives collapsed due to the absence of provisions beyond mere ceasefires; the lack of effective dispute resolution mechanisms; and the Indonesian military's deep-rooted distrust of GAM. Furthermore, the exiled GAM leaders in Sweden were not able to make their field commanders comply with the agreements they made in Geneva. Some members of GAM had given half-hearted support to the agreements while splinter groups persisted in attacking government troops, killing civilians and collecting the informal taxes,

which altogether undermined the peace process.

b. Military Approaches

Due to GAM's dependence on guerrilla warfare, military operations became an important countermeasure employed by the government to effectively nullify the influence of GAM in the rural and urban areas in an effort to separate GAM from the population and corral them within remote areas where counter-insurgency operations could be effectively prosecuted minimising collateral damage to the civilian population. The military employed a combination of intelligence, combat and territorial operations. In this regard, the TNI utilised both organic (local/territorial) and non-organic troops for these purposes.

With the collapse of CoHA on 20 May 2003, the Indonesian Government imposed martial law and launched its largest military offensive operation since the 1990s called *Operasi Terpadu* (the Integrated Operation). While the focus was on large-scale counter-insurgency operations, simultaneous measures were undertaken both in political, economic, social and humanitarian affairs with the aim of repelling GAM while winning the hearts and minds of the Acehnese. At the same time GAM also increased their guerrilla activities, recruited more cadres and obtained more weapons from abroad.

Operasi Terpadu was successful in flushing out GAM forces from the villages, forcing them to break up into small guerrilla bands and into remote areas, isolating them from the population. While on the one hand, the military operations did reduce GAM's strength by 55 per cent, creating a favourable security situation; on the other hand, these military successes were no

substitute for a final political solution, as GAM's political infrastructure was not disrupted and their desire for independence still strong. What concerned policy-makers was that the objective of long-term security remained an illusion so long as GAM remained militarily operational and its leadership was still intact abroad. Though it was undeniable that the Indonesian government was winning militarily, it had yet to win the peace. What was needed was a way to capitalise on these military successes to advance a renewed push for political dialogue towards a permanent peaceful conflict resolution situation in Aceh. This was the challenge faced by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono when he came to office in October 2004.

IV The Helsinki Process

Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, while he was still in the Megawati government, had tried unsuccessfully to interest a few GAM leaders in a trade-off of economic concessions for peace. In early 2004, he had tasked his deputy Farid Husein at the Coordinating Ministry for People's Welfare, to search for possibilities to bring about the end of the conflict. Farid got in touch with an old friend, a Finnish businessman called Juha Christensen who had spent five years doing research in Makassar, South Sulawesi. Coincidentally, Christensen knew the GAM leaders in Sweden and often mentioned them to Farid. With Kalla's instructions, Farid flew to Helsinki in February 2004. Through this connection, former Finnish president Maartti Ahtisaari and his Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) were brought in to broker the peace initiative.¹

It was former Aceh Governor Abdullah Puteh who had once remarked to Kalla that any resolution had to be characterised by dignity, security, and justice. Puteh had suggested that Kalla think of the relationship between Aceh and the rest of Indonesia as a couple planning to get married. If the bride price (*mas kawin* – the 'wedding gold') was right, the marriage would last. The trick was to get the right *seulangke* (go-between) who could work out the sensitive price. Initially, that man was Rusli Bintang who through his links with GAM commander Muzakkir Manaf brokered, on 31 October 2004, a meeting between Kalla's representatives and Muzakhir's men in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting led to nine 'Points of Agreement between the Negotiators of the Government and GAM' covering: the Special Autonomy law; provisions for land redistribution to ex-combatants; financial compensation; plantation land to be set aside for 150 *dayah* or religious schools; the provision of free electricity for mosques; two Boeing 737-700 jet airplanes (to transport Acehnese pilgrims to Mecca) plus ten fifteen-seater planes to enable Aceh to become a transportation hub. In turn, GAM would turn in 900 weapons in exchange for full amnesty.² While the deal was eventually scuppered by the GAM leadership in Sweden, common ground had been established. In future, Ahtisaari would build on that foundation and function as a credible go-between when required.

President Yudhoyono's first move on taking office in October 2004 was to signal to GAM that he was open to negotiations. He visited Aceh in November 2004 where he prayed at

¹ International Crisis Group, *Aceh: A New Chance for Peace*, Asia Briefing No. 40 (Jakarta/Brussels: ICG, 15 August 2005): p. 2.

² Ibid.

the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh, made a public appeal to GAM to renew the dialogue, end hostilities and to accept special autonomy. No positive response was heard from GAM, and in fact comments from GAM spokesperson Sofyan Dawood indicated that they were not interested.

However, on 26 December 2004, a new unforeseen circumstance emerged powerful enough to change the course of the conflict in Aceh. The tsunami tragedy, the worst natural disaster in Indonesia's history, devastated Aceh. A few days after the tsunami, from the seaside town of Meulaboh, a badly shaken President Yudhoyono not only called for global solidarity to help tsunami victims but renewed his call to GAM to reunite, end the conflict and enter into reconciliation within the context of special autonomy.

To lure the GAM leadership abroad back into negotiations, he employed the good offices of CMI though he sought a more direct negotiating format feeling that a third-party mediator would not help a great deal. Hence, the Indonesian government officials and the GAM leadership negotiated directly without intermediation by the CMI, although Ahtisaari was known to play a strong role in the background pushing GAM to go in a realistic direction.

V Ending of the Conflict and signing of the MoU

The first meeting in January 2005 ended in acrimony, with both groups trading insults. Reportedly, by the third meeting, GAM was persuaded to drop its independence bid and accept special autonomy status. By the fourth and fifth meetings, the two parties engaged in intense discussions on the

practical features of special autonomy making substantive progress on sensitive issues, such as decommissioning of arms, formation of local political parties, amnesties and so forth. By July, after five meetings, they were able to produce a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which would serve as a political settlement to the conflict. The MoU signed in Helsinki on 15 August 2005 was a comprehensive political settlement covering issues of: governance; political participation; economy; rule of law; human rights; amnesty and re-integration; security arrangements; monitoring; and dispute resolution – more comprehensive than the Humanitarian Pause and CoHA. Under the terms of the MoU, GAM explicitly recognised that Aceh was part of Indonesia and 'bound by the Indonesian Constitution' and agreed to accept special autonomy for Aceh.

The Indonesian government made some concessions and under a new Law on Governing Aceh allowed the province to:

exercise authority in all sectors of public affairs, which would be administered in conjunction with its civil and judicial administration, except in the fields of foreign affairs, external defence, national security, monetary and fiscal affairs, justice and freedom of religion, the policies of which belong to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in conformity with the Constitution.

VI Implementation of the Peace Process

GAM agreed to hand over their weapons and have them destroyed in exchange for full political, economic and cultural participation in an autonomous Aceh. Under the provision of security arrangements, 'GAM undertook to demobilise all of its 3,000 military troops

and the decommissioning of all arms (840 of its total inventory), including ammunition and explosives'. For its part, the Indonesian government would withdraw all elements of non-organic military personnel from Iskandar Muda Military Area Command. Those left in situ would be responsible only for external defence along with 9,100 provincial police who would be in charge of law and order. These processes would be executed in four stages between 15 September and 31 December 2005.

The Indonesian government would, to use the language of the MoU, 'immediately grant amnesty to all GAM members and supporters, and would unconditionally release all political prisoners and detainees'. Similarly, 'as citizens of the Republic of Indonesia, all persons having been granted amnesty or released from prison or detention would have all political, economic, and social rights'. To enable the smooth 'process of re-integration of the former combatants into civil society, the Indonesian government would provide a number of economic assistances'. With respect to the economic aspects, the settlement equated with terms of the previous special autonomy package: 70 per cent of the revenues from all natural resources would remain in Aceh. As part of confidence-building the Indonesian government would assign outside auditors to verify all activities *vis-à-vis* the collection and the allocation of these revenues. However, the most crucial part of the MoU was the provision of political participation in which 'the Indonesian government has agreed to create, within eighteen months from the signing of the MoU, the political and legal conditions for the establishment of local Aceh-based political parties in consultation with the Parliament'.

To sustain confidence during the execution

of the MoU, both the Indonesian Government and GAM agreed on the presence of an Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) made up of a coalition of European Union and five ASEAN states. The tasks of the AMM include: 'monitoring the demobilisation of GAM and the destruction of its armaments; monitoring the relocation of non-organic Indonesian military and police forces; monitoring the re-integration of active GAM members; monitoring the human rights situation and providing assistance in this field; monitoring the process of legislative change; ruling on complaints and alleged violations of the settlement that will inevitably arise'. The objective of the MoU, if executed to completion, would be the termination of the conflict.

VII Conclusion

Why did the Indonesian government's non-military strategy prevail? What lessons can we learn from the Aceh conflict and more importantly, what is the relevance of such 'indirect strategies' to conflict resolution particularly to similar cases in other parts of the world where intra-state conflict has become an acute problem.

- The role of high-ranking political leaders, in the Indonesian case President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, is critical. He made campaign promises that the resolution of the Aceh crisis would be a top priority. GAM had a better perception of President Yudhoyono compared to his predecessors. President Yudhoyono went out of his way to signal that he was taking personal interest and control of the Aceh conflict and avoided making contentious statements towards GAM. Earlier attempts to end the conflict by previous presidents only concentrated on securing an armistice and did not offer political

solutions. Contact took place regularly, mostly by telephone, and were instrumental in raising trust and confidence between the Indonesian government and GAM.

- Effective military operations in 2003 were a factor in pushing the GAM elite to the negotiating table since they had crippled GAM's military capability. Supply lines and communications were seriously disrupted with almost 2,000 suspected rebels killed, 2,000 arrested and 1,300 surrendering including several top and mid-level leaders. The size of territory controlled by the TNI also grew exponentially. Indonesian negotiators were able to call GAM's bluff. Despite their tough talk at the negotiating table, the Indonesian negotiators could use such knowledge to extract greater concessions.
- The tsunami was the most significant factor. More than 150,000 people were killed and more than 600,000 made homeless, both groups included many thousands of military and police personnel. With the provincial capital Banda Aceh destroyed and many provincial government officials swept away by the tsunami, local administration effectively collapsed. GAM would have been similarly devastated and their morale crushed since many tsunami-destroyed areas were also GAM strongholds. This much we can surmise, though there is no data on GAM losses. Moreover, pressures from international donors, whose promised large-scale reconstruction aid for Aceh could not be effectively delivered in the absence of security and safety; required GAM to engage in peace talks with the Indonesian government.
- Military measures may have given the Indonesian government better negotiating

advantages but certainly a lesson learned is that military means did not eliminate GAM. A military solution therefore is useful as a factor that can help push the outcome towards a final permanent peaceful political solution, but not the ultimate solution. Furthermore a peace deal would have a transformative effect on GAM, from a group that seeks separatist goals into a group that would take part in Aceh's new political life.

- A combination of factors – military, political, social and environmental – transpired to allow the peace process to go forward and enabled breakthroughs. The election of President Yudhoyono, the military success, the support of the international community for Aceh's autonomy, growing estrangement of GAM, and of course the tsunami all combined to provide new direction for the peace process. Even failures of the Humanitarian Pause and CoHA were relevant in that they helped negotiators understand what worked and what did not. These conditions were mutually reinforcing and created a political and psychological atmosphere conducive to the talks.
- A key factor in the success of the peace deal was patience and flexibility in the negotiation process. The Indonesian negotiators went into the talks with only one non-negotiable: the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. But, beyond this, they were willing to examine options. The negotiators were mentally prepared not with a strict list of 'nos' but a flexible list full of 'maybe' and 'yes'. There was a strong spirit of give and take that would lead to compromises, which in the end led to the signing of the Helsinki MoU.
- Peace deals need to be socialised well and

supported by a wide range of actors outside of government: these include the parliament, the military and the public in general. Such groups must understand and support the peace process and be part of the implementation of the agreement. In Indonesia, there were some voices of opposition from elements of the military, former president Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) and political elites like Amien Rais and former president Wahid; but theirs were voices in the wilderness, as the public widely supported the peace agreement.

- Finally, the role of leadership is critical in securing the peace deal. The Aceh peace demonstrates what can be achieved if the nation's leader – in this case President Yudhoyono – is prepared to invest his political capital in the resolution of such issues. Past peace negotiations were compromised by presidents who did not lend their full political support and did not pay attention to the intricate details that needed to be addressed in the negotiation

phase. Negotiators were often lost without direction from the top, and could not improvise in resolving emerging issues which are bound to come up during talks. Negotiators are unwilling to take political risks and would prefer that this be done by the leadership. President Yudhoyono was willing to take the political risks involved in renewing negotiations with GAM, gave the negotiators backing, and was involved in the details and critical decisions of the peace talks. On key issues where the negotiators did not have authority to decide, they would communicate with President Yudhoyono in Jakarta by telephone or SMS. This was a tremendous psychological boost to the Indonesian negotiators, and also sent the message to GAM that the Indonesian government was serious about concluding a peace deal with them. This active, close personal engagement by the top leadership is part of the reason why this very difficult conflict was resolved in only five meetings in the course of seven months.

Lessons from Conflict Resolution in the Gulf Region

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When looking at conflict resolution mechanisms in the Gulf region, one starting point would be the regional institutional make-up that contributes to the lessening of tensions and the formation of a Gulf security architecture. In this context, the pillars to be considered include the regional powers of Iran, Iraq and the member states¹ of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) as well as the role played by the United States as the pre-eminent external power influencing regional security. Given that a lasting security structure needs to be based on an inclusive rather than an exclusive platform of involvement and participation, the GCC forms the basis of an emerging conflict resolution mechanism.

The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) was established in May of 1981 with the aim of 'co-ordination, integration, and co-operation among the member-states in all fields.' Coming on the heels of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980, it quickly became apparent that security would be a major component of the organisation's outlook. As a result, the GCC, from the outset, had to consider finding credible and effective means to deal with the challenge these two events posed for the region at large. There was also a feeling that the longer the six states waited on moving

forward with some form of integration, the more pressure and influence Iran and Iraq would exert to restrain them from putting forth a common position or to force each of them to support the position of one *vis-à-vis* the other. In that context, security issues became instrumental with the GCC states clearly aware also of the danger of inaction.

Although none of the initial committees set up as part of the GCC dealt exclusively with security as such, the final communiqué issued after the first summit meeting affirmed the will and the intention of the signatories to defend their security and independence and to keep the region free of international conflicts. The basic objectives of the GCC as defined in Article 4 did not spell out a clear mandate for greater security co-operation nor did it define the existing security environment as being a predominant concern of the time. Instead, it referred to:

- Achieving co-operation among the member states in all fields as a prelude to unity
- Strengthening the links of co-operation among the peoples of the member states in different fields
- Establishing similar systems among the

¹ The GCC comprises the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait. Yemen is currently a candidate country.

member states in the fields of economics and finance, commerce, customs and communications; education and culture; social welfare and health; information and tourism; and legislation and administration

- Stimulating scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry, mineralogy, agriculture and marine and animal resources as well as to encourage co-operation of the private sector for the common good of the people of the member states.

Within those outlined fields, since its establishment the GCC has emerged as the only successful example of a functioning regional Arab organisation. Moreover, despite some of its shortcomings, the GCC has not only been maintained but also matured as an institution, with the result that today it has become an accepted fact. In most recent times, the GCC has effectively engaged in a mediation role in a number of conflict resolution efforts. Examples include Saudi Arabia's role with regard to intra-Palestinian issues in 2006 and 2007, and the Doha compromise on Lebanon spearheaded by Qatar in May 2008.

As part of its development, increased interaction among the involved parties has led to a strengthening and deepening of the institutions of the GCC. From the outset, for example, the defence ministers and chiefs of staff of the GCC states met on numerous occasions to decide on the improvement of their military co-operation and the creation of joint command and air defence mechanisms. While progress was initially slow and integration efforts have been subject to a lot of criticism, a review of the achievements of the GCC's first twenty-five years does reveal that it was possible to gradually agree on a number of

significant, even if at times only symbolic, steps. This includes the conclusion of a GCC Defence Pact, the establishment of the Peninsula Shield forces, as well as the GCC Counter-Terrorism Agreement of 5 May 2005 signed by all the GCC interior ministers. The launching of the 'Hizam al-Taawun' or 'Belt of Co-operation', an integrated radar and telecommunications network, completed in 2002 proved to be another important milestone allowing for the implementation of a region-wide early warning system.

Such steps towards closer co-operation have been limited to the GCC states and, at this stage, have not included the other two key components of a Gulf security system, namely Iran and Iraq. This is due to the fact that much of the movement of the GCC states towards greater security co-ordination is the result of the fragile security environment in the region, which has been unable to resolve its numerous inherent dichotomies. Watershed events such as Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the subsequent US-led liberation of Kuwait in January 1991 exposed the failure of the region to develop a more stable indigenous regional security system. Furthermore, these events marked a dramatic increase in the presence of US military forces in the region and directly led to the conclusion of numerous bilateral security arrangements between the United States and individual GCC states. This, however, can also be viewed as a direct consequence of the negative role that both Iran and Iraq have played in terms of regional security. During the past two decades neither state has engaged the GCC states in a process of confidence-building nor have attempts been made to overcome historical animosities. Given those circumstances, it has proved impossible to lay the foundation for a new expanded

security system in the Gulf.

The reliance on the United States as the primary protective actor has not proven to be the ultimate solution. On the regional level, the dual containment policy instituted by the US to isolate both Iran and Iraq during the 1990s did not bring about a new paradigm for Gulf security, but instead led to renewed competition and a continuation of the balance of power approach. Overall, the GCC states have found themselves in a difficult quandary. Given the unsettled and unstable regional environment, the reliance on a strong and effective military power such as the US was seen as an essential element of the GCC states to safeguard their own security and national existence. At the same time, US policies in the region, as well as the broader Middle East, have proven highly problematic as they have not necessarily corresponded to the stated interests of the GCC states and have at times even stood in contradiction to those interests. Thus, the evolution of the US from a distinct military force to one assuming the role of ensuring regional security and acting as a regional hegemon did not resolve the Gulf's security dilemmas and it did not find exclusive acceptance at both the popular and the governmental level.

At the same time, the parameters for better security co-operation have witnessed an improvement. Within the GCC, progress towards the resolution of border issues has been achieved with, for example: the UAE-Oman boundary agreement signed and ratified in 2003; the Bahrain-Qatar Hawar islands dispute settled by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2001; and with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia finalising their maritime borders demarcation agreement in 2000. There has also been progress on intelligence co-operation both on the GCC

regional level as a whole and between individual states. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for example co-ordinated intelligence following the January 2005 attacks inside Kuwait.

Meanwhile on the broader regional level, the Gulf region continues to be plagued by instability and insecurity as a result of both regional and international factors. On the one hand, there are still outstanding issues that will need to be handled as the GCC as an institution enters its second quarter century. In addition to remaining border issues still to be resolved and internal rivalries that continue to cast a shadow, there is also the issue of the weakness of the institution of the GCC where the dichotomy of the individual vs. the collective level continues to be prevalent. Individual GCC member states, for example, have security arrangements/defence pacts with external states that at times have stood in contrast to the overall need for the Gulf region to develop co-operative security networks and to engage in a larger process of confidence-building. Here, the overall role of foreign military forces as a means of providing security still needs to be clarified.

On the other hand, there continues to be a lack of any kind of regional security architecture through which the regional and external powers can channel or manage their individual security concerns. Instead, the past twenty-five years has seen a continuous sequence of violent conflicts that have impacted the regional security environment beginning with the 1979 Iranian Revolution specifically in regard to the so-called 'export of the revolution' and spawning the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the already mentioned US dual containment policy in the 1990s and culminating in the 2003 US-

led invasion of Iraq which led to the removal of Saddam Hussein, but which so far has not resulted in a more stable and secure Iraq. In all these instances, what one sees is that regional security is primarily defined through a military paradigm constructed on mutual antagonisms and a win-or-lose balance of power approach. Thus, it is the US vs. Iran, Iran vs. Iraq, the GCC states vs. Iran, the US vs. Iraq and the GCC vs. Iraq.

The important dimension that is receiving increased attention is the realisation and recognition that security in the Gulf is not a one-dimensional phenomenon. What makes the subject so complex is that the GCC states face threats and challenges from many different directions including: terrorism and issues of internal political instability; the repercussions from the current situation in Iraq; the dangerous environment in reference to the Iranian nuclear program; and the various degrees of external international involvement with its

competing and differing interests.

To overcome this dilemma, it has to be one of the objectives of the Gulf states to begin taking ownership of the regional security process. There is a need to establish an agenda based on modest yet concrete forms of co-operation formulated around common security perceptions, such as the long-term economic development of the region and stability in the flow and price of oil. The bottom line is that security should not be determined solely by external factors. In addition, it has to be clearly understood by everyone that there can be no Gulf security system without the comprehensive involvement of all parties including the GCC states alongside Iraq, Iran and Yemen. Any future architecture of the Gulf must be based on inclusion rather than exclusion. If this can be achieved in the coming years, the GCC will indeed have proven invaluable to the peoples and states in the region.

Personal Reflections on Conflict Resolution in Central America

Malcolm Ferguson

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Introduction

I have restricted myself to a short analysis of the internal conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala for reasons related particularly to the fact that both of these conflicts lent themselves to outside engagement and assistance to bring the conflicts to an end.

While the manner in which these conflicts came to an end differed, there are certainly lessons to be learned from both the impact of permissive conditions prevailing at the time, which contributed dramatically to the success of the processes of peace making in the region, and the highly negative impact that the conflicts had on both societies, which also played a role in the process of conflict resolution.

During the past two decades, simmering internal conflicts in the neighbouring Central American states of Honduras and Nicaragua also came to an end. In my view, this was less due to external conditions and more to the positive impact internal election processes had on the domestic politics of both countries. Therefore, there is probably less to be learned from these two examples than from the impact of external efforts on the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The Origins of the Conflicts

Both conflicts had their roots in circumstances which led to polarisation of all segments of the respective societies.

These reflected deeply rooted economic, social, and political problems which had been present since the time of Spanish colonial conquest and most certainly since the establishment of the Central American states in the 1820s and 1830s.

Each society had well entrenched and small post colonial elites (including the Roman Catholic Church) which controlled virtually all economic resources – be that land, agricultural outputs or nascent industry. This led to economic and social stratification of the societies, establishing the roots of the conflicts. Extreme social injustice manifested itself in extensive and abiding landlessness, growing poverty, and the disempowerment of increasingly large numbers of people. Indigenous peoples were most severely affected by these problems.

The civil conflicts which developed out of these circumstances, were thus focussed on addressing the extremes of social injustice which were so prevalent in the political and economic order of these societies.

Permissive Conditions for Peace Making

During the 1980s and early 1990s, there were three developments which contributed in large measure to efforts to end the internal conflicts in these societies.

The first of these was a dramatic change in

the international order – notably, the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union – contributed dramatically to a changed sense of the balance of power internationally, which was unfavourable to the continuation of these conflicts.

The Soviet leadership's programme of Glasnost, its rapprochement with the NATO alliance and the United States, and the associated dissolution of the Warsaw Pact – a major supporter of the guerrilla movements worldwide – added dramatically to circumstances favouring the peaceful settlement of conflicts on a global scale, not least in the southern African region. These developments likewise had a major impact on the local parties to the Central American civil conflicts who perceived the world as changing and thus less permissive of continued conflict. Most significantly, it contributed to a sense that the external basis of support for all sides in these conflicts had changed.

The second factor was a growing acceptance by regional protagonists in the internal conflicts that not only was the cost of outright victory too high, in terms of its human and infrastructural and economic cost, but there was a sense that no party could deliver the 'knock out' blow to ensure victory. This was particularly the case in both El Salvador and Guatemala, where both the government forces and the respective guerrilla movements came to accept that victory could not be assured without creating a wasteland in their societies. Recognition of this fact contributed noticeably to a growing willingness to be amenable to outside efforts to achieve an end to these conflicts and to establish an effective internal peace process.

The third important development, was the growing acceptance that democratisation of

these societies was an unstoppable trend. Globally, a similar development was taking place which contributed to the resolution of conflicts elsewhere in the world. The corollary of this was a realisation by the political elites of these societies that resolution had to be predicated on a political commitment to a more open and socially responsive form of government, an increasing focus on the achievement of social justice and inclusion, as well as sustainable economic growth to ensure the stability of the resolutions.

The Internal Conditions : Destructive Impact of Conflict

The internal conflicts in Guatemala (a thirty-six year civil war) and El Salvador (a twelve year civil war) had a major harmful impact across a broad spectrum on both societies.

Both conflicts were protracted and contributed to a persistent process of widespread economic decay, much damage to assets and infrastructure, and the severely reduced capacity of all sectors of society to function effectively. This combined to retard the economic development processes of both societies and also eroded the developmental capacity of both societies dramatically.

In addition to the huge loss of life (in Guatemala a conservative estimate was 200,000 and in El Salvador at least 75,000 dead) both conflicts led to extensive material losses – such as destruction of crops and roads – extensive damage to economic and social infrastructure, a massive decline in the transportation and communication systems, as well as a serious deterioration in the public health care systems, education, and agriculture – the mainstay of employment in both economies.

The economic stress caused by the internal conflict lessened production capacity and limited the investment attractiveness of both societies massively. Another serious repercussion of both conflicts was a persistent diversion of scarce resources from the existing social and economic infrastructure towards military purposes. Additionally, the extensive economic impact of both conflicts led to a severe decline in overall trade, a concomitant decline in the banking infrastructure and a constant increase in levels of national debt to alarming proportions.

The civil conflicts in both societies also led to increasing emigration and internal displacement of the general population, to such an extent that this contributed to a sizable decline in the domestic work force of the rural agricultural sector in particular, which was the main source of wealth for the small political elite of both societies. The damage this caused to this key sector of both economies was significant, and it led not only to a dramatic growth in rural poverty but also resultantly to a growth of urban indigence as well, due to massive internal migrations of war refugees. The direct result of this was a growth in illiteracy (due to seriously declining school numbers), malnutrition, and inadequate access to sanitation facilities, with a resultant widespread increase in serious illnesses.

As a result there was a growing negative impact on the quotidian life of both societies with a resultant growth in gang-related violence – which sadly still thrives in both societies. The consequence of this increase in gang violence was increasing social disorder in both societies due to widespread internecine violence, quite unassociated with the prosecution of the civil war.

Accordingly, the ensuing peace processes in

both societies had to focus not only to address the issues of extreme social injustice which prompted the civil conflicts in the first place, but also to solving or ameliorating all the above social ills as well.

Hard Choices

In many respects, the increasing descent of both societies into the destructive consequences of the conflicts, was a key factor in facilitating the role and impact of outside players such as President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica and the Roman Catholic Church. It also induced the leaders' sobering realisation that they were involved in a so-called 'zero sum game' and that perpetuation of the conflict would create such extremes of destruction and hardship, that the end result would never be worth the price to be paid by both societies.

These hard choices, made under circumstances where alternatives in favour of perpetuating the conflict simply did not seem to be viable, led to virtually duplicated situations where the peace agreements signed in January 1992 (between leaders in El Salvador) and December 1996 (in the case of Guatemalan leaders) were the only sensible and obvious outcomes for both war-weary societies.

Some Lessons

The obvious lessons flowing from the peacemaking processes in both conflicts are, sadly, that

- the levels of destruction and dislocation caused by seemingly unwinnable civil conflicts are in and of themselves a pre-condition for the ultimate logic of peacemaking
- external actors are only able to play a key

role in facilitating a peace process once the leaders of both sides to a conflict 'have stared into the abyss' and together reached the conclusion that peacemaking offers better alternatives than a continuation of violence

- exogenous factors, such as the changed strategic balance between leading NATO and Warsaw Pact players, can have a major impact on regional conflicts
- peacemaking has to involve a process of

establishing a clear agenda for the amelioration of the circumstances of social injustice and disenfranchisement which led to the conflict's development in the first place. In this regard, circumstances have to be created for greater political and economic participation in order to lead to a sense of broad social, economic and political justice within society.

Consociational Models and Peace-building: The Case of Lebanon

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Introduction

At first glance Lebanon is a bewildering tapestry of religious groups and confessions, with Shia, Sunni and Christians further subdivided into Ismailis, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Maronites, Druze, Anglican and many more. The state was formed in 1943 with a grand bargain between the Christian Maronite and Sunni elites. The agreed model of governance was to be a consociational democracy, a delicate balancing act between religious communities known as confessionalism or sectarianism.¹ Consociational democracy is in essence a confederation of protected identity groups. This sectarian proportionality aims to ensure equitable ethno-sectarian participation. The consequences of not achieving such a balance can be seen from Iraq to Somalia. This paper will analyze Lebanon's experience with consociational democracy and ask whether there are lessons that can be identified for conflict prevention and proactive peacemaking in Africa. If conflicts are caused by a struggle over resources and power, as well as a lack of a unifying national identity, this article will argue that the consociational model in Lebanon is fundamentally flawed as the lack of

agreement over national identity will continue to militate against successful peacemaking.

The Characteristics of Consociationalism

A consociational model of governance appears to offer significant conflict mitigation potential. It is characterised by proportional representation and government by grand coalition where mutual veto and personal status freedoms guarantee the vital interests of each community. Before Lebanon's Civil War in 1975, such a model resulted in a limited democracy and the maintenance of civil order in a deeply divided society situated in a turbulent neighbourhood. Yet the near civil war of 1958, when pro-Nasserite forces confronted Lebanese parties who rejected participation in the wider Arab union, was a foretaste of similar pressures that would unravel Lebanon as a state after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1975. Why was the consociational model unable to prevent conflict and what lessons can be drawn from other power-sharing agreements, such as Nigeria's consociational model?

Fundamentally Lebanon's political system is

¹ For more on consociational models of governance, see Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977)

not a democracy, but rather a deal struck between powerful elites or *zuama*. Perhaps the clearest example of this is that for almost four decades Lebanon's Prime Minister belonged to only one of four families. Having agreed a power-sharing model in 1943, the system has proven unable to adapt to either demographic changes or ideological challenges, as posed by Nasserite pan-Arabism in 1958 or the question of support for the Palestinian armed struggle in the 1970s. Many of the same tensions are evident in Lebanon today. The traditionally disempowered and politically disenfranchised Shia want to renegotiate the terms of the bargain, as had happened at the end of the Civil War under the 1989 Ta'if Agreement or Charter of National Reconciliation. This Agreement sought to address some of the root causes of the Civil War by reducing the power of the Christian President and increasing the power of both the Sunni Prime Minister and to a lesser extent the Shia Speaker of Parliament. In addition, the allocation of parliamentary seats was adjusted from 6:5 Christian to Muslim to ensure parity at 5:5. As recent internal fighting confirmed, if the consociational bargain cannot be renegotiated peacefully, conflict will erupt.

The system of governance in Lebanon impedes an inclusive political process and the healthy functioning of civil society. The elites seek to propagate the status quo for personal interest, repackaging stasis as the national interest. Patron-client relationships are perpetuated as individuals come to believe their access to resources depends on these very elites. People become disaffected by politics and either disavow the responsibility to effect change or leave the country. Demands for reform are redirected to inter-sectarian resource battles allowing corruption and nepotism to flourish. Public life atrophies and tax revenue dries up, as

evidenced by the ballooning national debt. Economic disparities and a sharp rural/urban divide have exacerbated the tensions between the marginalised Shia of the South, the Bekaa Valley and Beirut's southern suburbs and their wealthier compatriots. As the rural poor struggle, a Ferrari dealership opens in the downtown area. This is the epitome of what former Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss called Lebanon's 'discriminatory regime'. As such, the consociational system results in conflict over resources and power, whilst simultaneously undermining attempts to forge a consensual national identity. Unable to renegotiate these relationships, conflict becomes inevitable, a cyclical phenomenon. Lebanon's democracy is deeply flawed. It is perhaps better described as an oligarchy or a conspiracy of the elite, not much different from patrimonial or corporatist models found elsewhere in the Middle East.

State and Nation Building

The Doha Accord of 23 May was the latest in a series of internationally-brokered agreements to try and forge a consensual, exclusively non-violent political way forward for Lebanon. Like many things in Lebanon, from the election of President Suleiman to Spain winning the Euro 2008 soccer championship, the event was marked by a mixture of fireworks and automatic weapons fire. But almost before the ink was dry, fighting had re-ignited in Lebanon, with the intensity of street fighting in the North of the country matched in intensity by the political bickering over the make-up of the new cabinet. What lessons can be identified for peacebuilding practitioners elsewhere? If we return to our original premise that conflicts are caused by conflicts over power and resources and/or a contested identity and sense of belonging, then Lebanon's often painful political adolescence offers

several more generic points that may have relevance in other contexts. In the absence of a unifying narrative of national identity and without an effective mechanism for stimulating political change, the chance of conflict dramatically increases. In a society of minorities, communities will look to powerful external actors for support. These actors, whilst able to offer conflict management tools, are unlikely to be able to prevent conflict or address root causes, which must be addressed internally, with people empowered politically to initiate non-violent change. The consociational model is extremely circumscribed, and as the Lebanon case study indicates is unable to respond effectively to change, reflecting as it does the composition of the political establishment, not the electorate. Lebanon also clearly demonstrates that external peace is a precondition for internal order. The regional dimension is frequently ignored and it is hard to believe meaningful and sustainable peace in Lebanon is possible whilst the Arab-Israeli conflict persists and Lebanon fails to enjoy diplomatic relations with its Syrian neighbour.

Conflict Resolution vs. Conflict Management

Political reform and removal of the confessionalism that underpins Lebanon's

consociational model has been a national goal since 1989. That it has not happened and that government and opposition forces continue to contest Lebanon's political space reaffirms that no state-building project can proceed in the absence of nation-building. Given that no accurate census has been undertaken for seventy years in Lebanon, it follows that in order to build a nation, it is vital to have an accurate picture of its constituent parts.

Lebanon attests to the fact that our lofty goals of conflict resolution may not always be attainable. The first step in peace-building must be the management and if possible prevention of conflict. In order to achieve this, peace needs to be incentivised. Such an approach must address both inequities of power and resource allocation, as well as the fundamental question of a consensual national identity, an answer to the question of who we are, the nature of our fundamental rights and needs and how we agree to be governed.

Impervious to a Solution? The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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The post-Second World War Middle East can reasonably be classified as a zone of conflict. On the domestic level, full-scale civil strife, rife with bloodshed, has occurred at various, and sometimes multiple occasions in Algeria, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq; conflict in the latter three have also entailed foreign intervention at different points. The Jordanian-PLO fighting of 'Black September' 1970, which included brief Syrian intervention, was also a type of civil conflict. Lower, but significant, levels of domestic violence between regimes and opposition groups occurred at different points in Syria and Egypt. Inter-state conflicts, whether between regional states or between regional states and outside powers, have also been numerous. The eight-year Iran-Iraq war resulted in an estimated one million casualties. One may also mention the 1991 Gulf War (both its international and inter-Arab aspects); the Soviet entanglement in Afghanistan in the 1980s; the US-led war against Iraq in 2003; the three-week war in 1963 between Morocco and Algeria; the fighting in Western Sahara between 1976-1990; and of course, the six Arab-Israeli inter-state wars (1948; 1956, which includes the British-French dimension; 1967; the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition in 1968-70; 1973; and the Syrian-Israeli portion of the 1982 war in Lebanon); the Israeli-Iraqi military exchanges (the 1981 bombing of the Iraqi reactor, and the Iraqi SCUD missile strikes in 1991). Arab states have also supported non-state actors – Palestinian

groups and Hizbullah – in their ongoing battles with Israel.

The causes of these conflicts were almost as varied as their geographic scope and time range. But one defining feature of Middle Eastern political and social life is the ongoing importance of inter- and intra-religious tensions and competing religious ideologies, both between Islam and other faiths, and within Islam. In recent years, extremist Islam has stoked the fires, promoting virulent anti-Western, anti-Christian, anti-Jewish and, more recently anti-Shia Muslim sentiments. Their ire also falls on Muslim groups and individuals perceived as being insufficiently devoted to jihadi tenets.

Where there is conflict, there are efforts for conflict management and resolution. All have been ad hoc. Mediators, both governmental and non-governmental, have acted alone or in concert, usually supported by particular states, sometimes sponsored by regional or international organisations (the Arab League, the ICO, and the UN), or under the auspices of NGOs. Despite numerous discussions in the Arab League, particularly following the 1991 Gulf War, no institutionalised procedures for managing inter-Arab conflict were established. Grand diplomatic deals to resolve conflicts have nearly always come up short: for example, the 1989 Ta'if Agreement which ended the Lebanese civil war successfully stabilised the situation there, but was really more about

providing an agreed-upon framework for managing Lebanese tensions and divisions rather than resolving them. Similarly, an early success story of Saudi-led inter-Arab mediation over Lebanon (1976), brought an end to the first round of the civil war there and papered over Egyptian-Syrian differences regarding Arab-Israeli issues, but did not resolve the underlying issues in either area.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Phases

Within this zone of frequently intense and bloody conflicts, the Arab-Israeli conflict holds special status, in terms of durability, multiplicity of actors, and its contribution to shaping Arab and Muslim collective identities. The conflict has been characterised by a mix of inter-communal and inter-state conflicts, underpinned by competing national ideologies, which in turn possess significant (and competing) religious elements; in addition, these 'local' aspects of the conflict have been intertwined with global issues and rivalries from the outset, making the conflict more impervious to a solution. No less complicating has been the existence of multiple actors on the Arab-Muslim side of the equation, pursuing varying and often competing agendas.

A proper understanding of the particular phases of the conflict requires an examination of the relative weights of the relevant variables shaping the conflict at different points in time.

1917-1948

This period can be broadly characterised as the inter-communal phase of the conflict, conducted by the competing Jewish and Arab Palestinian national movements that were concurrently engaged in the formation

and elaboration of their collective identities and agendas. From 1936 onwards, the conflict increasingly involved outside Arab parties, as the very definition of being an Arab became bound up with fidelity to 'Palestine'. One can speak of a shift at that point towards the regionalisation of conflict, the decline in the autonomy of the Palestinian Arabs, who were also splintered internally, and competing agendas of Arab states. Britain, the ruling Mandatory power, could have imposed a solution prior to the intensification of the conflict in 1936, but didn't. Subsequently, it was unable to do so, as the evolution of the conflict, and particularly the crystallisation of a Jewish national community in Palestine, reached a critical mass. It should be emphasised that the cause of the conflict was not one of misperception, but rather a genuine irreconcilable conflict of interests as understood by the majorities of both communities.

One alternative tendered periodically during that period was a bi-national solution. This was favoured by a distinct minority of Jews, and utterly opposed by the Arab parties, who were unwilling to accept as equal the existence of an ethno-national Jewish community, and feared that giving any legitimacy to the Jewish side would be a wedge which the Jews could exploit. Ironically, some Arab and Palestinian intellectuals now talk favourably about a one-state solution, usually implying some sort of a bi-national framework. This position is utterly rejected by most Israeli Jews, for fear that it will be a cover for Arab dominance and bring about an end to the Zionist project.

1948-67

During these years, the inter-state aspects of the conflict were more central than

the inter-communal ones. Israel was, by and large, the status quo power, seeking to consolidate its independence, its borders, and its international legitimacy, while the Arab states, particularly Egypt, but also Syria, rejected the outcome of the 1948 war, hoping to roll it back. Traumatized by the 1948 war, the Palestinian Arab community would be largely in the shadows until the mid-1960s. During the initial years after 1948, one may speak of a festering of the conflict. The specific unresolved issues from the '48 war included matters dealing with borders, refugees, and water. Each party viewed time as being on its side, and the uneasy status quo was deemed better than painful concessions. The one real peace effort in 1949-50 between Jordan and Israel was carried out by a combination of domestic (Jordanian) and inter-Arab pressures, aided by a tough Israeli stand during the negotiations which precluded territorial concessions to Jordan's King Abdullah.

From the mid-Fifties onwards, the ideological aspects of the conflict sharpened, driven by the doctrine of radical 'messianic' pan-Arabism, embodied by Nasser and the Ba'ath Party. The conflict was now framed more explicitly as an existential matter for Arab states and societies, thus rendering it even more impervious to a solution. This development was partially stimulated by the 1956 Suez War, which confirmed in Arab eyes Israel's intimacy with Western imperialism. Unlike in the 1949-56 period, there were no serious third party/Great Power proposals between 1957-67 pushing Israel to make territorial concessions, and hence the 1949 Armistice Lines hardened into Israel's de facto legitimate boundaries recognised by the international community.

The years 1964-67 witnessed a renewed

escalation of tension and eventual deterioration into war. A number of factors were at work: the role of radical pan-Arabism, especially in Syria, which established the armed struggle ('people's war') with Israel as a central Arab tenet crucial to the narrow-based regime's legitimacy; the psychology of the leader, Nasser, whose lustre was fading; the Palestinian factor coming back into play, being used by different Arab states in different ways (e.g., the PLO by Egypt; Fatah by Syria); and the Soviet Union playing an exacerbating role, especially during the crisis which led to the outbreak of war.

1967-1993

The June 1967 War was a watershed in numerous ways. Its outcome created the possibility of a genuine trade-off between Israel and the Arab states. Hence, the principle of 'territories for peace' (and the legitimising and acceptance of Israel's existence) became enshrined in UNSC Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, a resolution which remains the basis for all diplomatic activity related to Arab-Israeli conflict-resolution efforts. The defeat of Arab armies, led by the radical pan-Arab hero Nasser, resulted in a precipitous decline and devaluation of pan-Arabism as a viable political framework, and increased strengthening of individual states. State interests, as defined by ruling elites, would increasingly take priority over supra-state ideologies; providing an impetus and opening to newly renewed Islamist currents and groups, all of whom sought to fill the psychological and ideological gap left by the failure of the Arab 'progressive' regimes to match their rhetoric with action.

Paradoxically, the trend in the Arab world towards *raison d'état*, and away from *raison*

de la nation, as expressed in the importance of regaining national territories lost to Israel in June 1967, plus the increased centrality of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Soviet-American rivalry, led to the intensification of Arab-Israeli inter-state armed conflict between 1968-73 (involving two wars – the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition in 1968-70, and the full-scale October 1973 War). Intensive international diplomacy, led by the US, eventually brought about an Egyptian-Israeli ceasefire in August 1970; however, in the absence of further concerted efforts, the region failed to stabilise, resulting in renewed war.

After the October 1973 War, US diplomacy moved into overdrive, leading to two Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreements, one Syrian-Israeli one, and ultimately culminating in the September 1978 Camp David Accords and March 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. In participating in these efforts, Egypt formally removed itself from the conflict and shifted its international orientation to the Western camp. Syria, by contrast, did not follow suit, neither in the diplomatic field nor with regard to its international orientation. For Jordan, the third ‘confrontation’ Arab state to lose part of its territory in 1967, the post-1973 period marked the beginning of a long process in which it would lose its *locus standi* as territorial claimant in the West Bank and Gazan Palestinian territories

The post-1967 period also marked the renewed salience of the inter-communal aspect to the conflict, as expressed by the transformation of the PLO into a genuinely representative organisation claiming legitimacy as a keeper of the Palestinian flame, while Arab armies lay prostrate. The PLO’s challenge to the Arab order was checked by Jordan in September 1970; however, it achieved an important

breakthrough in 1974, attaining Arab and international recognition. It would experience further oscillations in its relative standing and weight, but over the long term, the PLO, led by Yasser Arafat’s Fatah movement, succeeded in becoming a significant actor, the ‘sole legitimate representative’ of the fragmented Palestinian community. It is only in the last two years that this standing has come under serious threat by Hamas.

Israel’s war against the PLO and Syria in 1982, in Lebanon, delivered significant blows to both of the Arab protagonists. Diplomatically, the result was the Fez Arab summit resolutions, which constituted a significant evolution in the official collective Arab position towards the conflict. In contrast to the ‘three nos’ of the 1967 Khartoum Arab summit (no peace, no recognition, and no negotiations with Israel), the Fez resolutions supported a political solution to the conflict, involving a qualified acceptance of Israel’s existence, on the basis of the 4 June 1967 borders. Notwithstanding the caveat of insisting on the right of return for Palestinian refugees, the Fez resolutions indicated that for most Arab states, the Arab-Israeli conflict was becoming less of a priority, particularly as the Iraq-Iran War progressively consumed the interests of the Gulf Arab states, and pushed Syria, Iran’s only Arab ally, into the inter-Arab corner.

The salience of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the standing of the PLO, hit a new low at the November 1987 Amman Arab summit. But just weeks later, the first Palestinian intifada broke out, bringing the Palestinian issue back to centre stage, as well as increasing the relative weight of West Bank and Gazan Palestinians within the Palestinian firmament.

The Madrid Peace Conference in October 1991 initiated a new phase in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians entered into the Madrid process with a weak hand, owing to Arafat's cozying up to Saddam Hussein following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Arafat thus consented to remain in the background of the formal diplomatic negotiations, while West Bank and Gazan Palestinians negotiated with Israel, officially as members of the Jordanian delegation. However, Arafat maintained his standing as the ultimate source of authority for the Palestinian community, which was reconfirmed in the Oslo accords.

For Israel, the Madrid-Oslo process opened the doors to the deepening of relations with important players in the international community, including India, China, Japan, Russia and Turkey; and to the beginning of normalising with the Arab world, including Jordan, and the Maghreb and Gulf states. The promise of comprehensive peace and the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict was understood to be vital to cope with the emerging threat of Iran.

The Oslo Accords themselves sought to combine symbolic and declarative steps marking a historic Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation with interim measures over a five-year span which would establish new and more positive realities on the ground, which would then alter both Israeli-Palestinian and internal political dynamics on each side and thus enable the parties to negotiate a final solution to their conflict. The efforts at creating a positive dynamic included numerous initiatives on the multilateral level involving the international community, modeled after the Helsinki framework. However, the process was fraught with difficulties. Israeli-Palestinian dynamics were more negative than positive, particularly thanks to Hamas' employment

of suicide bombers in 1994-96. These bombings resulted in a series of Israeli counter-measures which severely weakened the Palestinian economy, while Israeli settlement expansion continued unabated. Still, the election of Ehud Barak as Israeli prime minister in 1999 generated renewed hope. However, the Camp David negotiations in July 2000 failed to achieve an Israeli-Palestinian agreement; similarly, just a few months earlier, Syrian-Israeli negotiations had failed to produce an agreement, insuring that the Lebanese/Hizbullah-Israeli front would remain problematic, even after Israel unilaterally withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000. Autumn 2000 witnessed the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada, a much more violent affair, generating harsh Israeli counter-measures, a massive suicide bombing campaign led by Hamas, and the denuding of most of the Palestinian Authority's remaining capacity to govern. The optimists of the 1990s had been proven wrong: the point of no-return in the peace process had not been reached after all, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appeared more intractable than ever.

Why has a resolution of the 'Palestinian question' been so difficult to achieve?

For the Palestinians achieving self-determination and independence in only a portion of historic Palestine, without achieving what they view as 'justice', namely the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their original residences, in what is now Israel, proved to be a deal not worth making. To be sure, Israel didn't offer the sweetest terms possible regarding the other issues on the agenda – territory, security, water rights, and especially Jerusalem, but the question of the 'right of return' remains a deal-breaker for both sides. For Israel, the matter cuts to the core of Israel's identity as

a Jewish and democratic state. It should be noted that the right of return is an indication of both the strength and weakness of Palestinian national movement: the determination to hold fast to core values, but also a highly problematic focus on the *individual's* specific holdings at the expense of national rights and needs.

Was Oslo inherently flawed or was it improperly implemented? If it couldn't result in an end-of-conflict deal, was the high level of violence inevitable?

The answer to the first question is not clear-cut. The failure to clearly spell out the details of the final settlement from the outset made both parties suspicious of each other's intentions, contributing to the negative dynamics during the 1994-2000 period. At the same time, one could argue convincingly that neither party was prepared in 1993 to make the painful concessions necessary for concluding a final settlement, if only for internal political reasons, and thus required the interim period to test the intentions of the other side and build up a domestic constituency for a final status agreement. One could certainly argue that the implementation of the interim arrangements was deeply flawed on both sides, creating a process of confidence-destroying, instead of the necessary confidence-building. One explanation is that the situation wasn't truly ripe for resolution, only for negotiation. A realist approach holds that the change in the international and regional balance of power gave the parties motivation to negotiate but not necessarily resolve the conflict, which would entail compromising on core interests. One overriding problem with this explanation is that 'ripeness' is hard to prove ahead of time.

Whether the conflict was ripe for resolution

or not, it is widely agreed that the Camp David summit in July 2000, strongly advocated by Barak and acceded to by the US, should have never been held. To be sure, the failure there wasn't the end of the negotiating road, as talks continued in subsequent months. However, Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount touched off a violent exchange which quickly spiraled out of control. The ensuing high level of violence was partly a result of past lessons inappropriately applied by each side. For Arafat, the use of violence in 1996 following the Jerusalem 'tunnel incident' paid off. It forced the Netanyahu government into negotiations with him, renewed US involvement, and led to the Hebron agreement. Conversely, Israel was determined not to let Arafat repeat his achievement, and quickly lost all remaining faith in his intentions. In the resulting dynamic of violence, Hamas saw the benefit of leading a martyrdom campaign, to be followed by others, including elements of Arafat's Fatah movement. Israel, in response re-occupied most of the West Bank. Without a doubt, better leadership would have made a difference, on both sides. Arafat was, as Yezid Sayigh has put it, 'criminally negligent' during the years of the second intifada. While Ariel Sharon, who had come to power in February 2001, systematically destroyed the Palestinian Authority's remaining capacity to govern, thus paving the way for Hamas's ascent. Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, including the dismantling of Israeli settlements there, was clearly a development with potentially historic significance, but did not inaugurate a more peaceful Israeli-Palestinian relationship.

A central aspect of the inability to bring the Oslo process to fruition was the failure of the Palestinian state-building project during

1994-2000. Admittedly, the Palestinian leadership had been dealt a weak and difficult hand. Yet, it failed to make the most of it, particularly the fact that Western powers and institutions laid out a red carpet for the Palestinians financially, while on the symbolic level, President Clinton even made a historic visit to Gaza, as well as hosting Arafat at the White House on innumerable occasions. Arafat and Fatah were the primary culprits of the failure. Arafat established a neo-patrimonial and corrupt regime, without achieving the necessary monopoly on the means of coercion. Fatah never sufficiently transformed itself from a liberation organisation to a proper political party ready to play the leading role in an emerging state. The contrast between a corrupt, power-hungry, undisciplined and sclerotic Fatah movement and an uncorrupt Hamas (whose ability to deliver social, educational and welfare services as well as confront Israel won it enormous legitimacy among the populace) was striking. Palestinian society has always suffered from a high level of factionalism and localism, and this probably underlay many of the problems in building institutions.

Furthermore, Israel also contributed significantly to the breakdown of the Oslo process. Most importantly, the Israeli side was almost always concerned with domestic political calculations, thus failing to halt settlement expansion, which for Palestinians offered daily proof of Israel's bad faith. In trying to dictate a settlement as the stronger of the two parties, the Israeli leadership demonstrated both a failure of vision and lack of understanding on the limitations of its own capabilities

In the past, the fragmented Arab system contributed to the Arab-Israeli peace process, as various Arab parties gave priority to specific interests over a collective position.

However, at the crucial moment in the summer of 2000, they failed to take an activist position in support of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement. Subsequently, the 2002 Beirut Arab summit did approve a plan for a comprehensive peace which contained many positive elements, as far as Israel is concerned. The plan was reconfirmed at the 2007 Riyadh summit. Nonetheless, the pragmatic Arab coalition, which looked so promising in the early 1990s after the Gulf War, turned out to be a weak reed. Particularly noticeable is the gap between Egypt's self-image as leader of the Arab world and first-rank regional power, and its very limited ability to shape regional events, especially in comparison to the main non-Arab regional powers – Turkey, Iran and Israel. Saudi Arabia has partially replaced Egypt in taking diplomatic initiatives, but has limited abilities to make agreements stick, as witnessed by the abortive 2007 Mecca agreement between Hamas and the PLO. Syria, for its part, consistently sought to undermine Arafat by supporting Hamas and other Palestinian rejectionist organisations. More recently, Iran has penetrated directly into the Palestinian scene, offering support of its own for Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as in Lebanon, a development which further complicates efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution. Among other things, Iran's growing power will make it much harder for Israel to countenance withdrawal from the Jordan Valley and giving up control of international crossing points, for fear of seeing a repeat of the Gaza scenario, namely the introduction of rockets capable of hitting major Israeli population centres in the West Bank.

Since the end of the October 1973 War, the US has played an indispensable role in Arab-Israeli diplomacy. Its dual orientation, aligning itself with both Israel and numerous Arab parties, gave it credibility

and leverage which contributed to Sadat's decision to make peace with Israel, as well as to the evolution of a broad Arab camp in favour of a diplomatic solution. Still, for all of the US efforts in the 1990s and its subsequent desultory initiatives, numerous errors were made. Particularly egregious was the Americans' lack of will in pressing for the implementation of commitments already made by the protagonists.

With regard to the future, according to a recent US Institute of Peace Study:

past lessons show that the US needs to be continuously engaged in a peace process; currently, its diplomacy has little credibility with anyone, because of failure to follow up. The peace process has moved beyond incrementalism and must aim for endgame solutions. This not only requires U.S. leadership to help the parties make the necessary trade-offs on core issues, but also a commitment to an expanded diplomatic approach that involves key international and regional actors.

These endgame solutions, according to the study, can be implemented over time, assisted by regional support structures, following the Madrid model. The study also said that the 'perpetuation of the conflict increasingly bedevils US ability to build alliances for other critical challenges facing the region (Iran and Iraq); fuels the instability in Lebanon; and complicates the campaign for social and political reform in Arab societies.' All of this may be valid. However, one must guard against the notion that endgame solutions are within easy reach, as well as against a facile belief that an Arab-Israeli solution holds the key to overall Middle East peace, stability and reform. The notion of linkage, implying the possibility of a grand solution to the region's problems, is beguiling, but historically a chimera.

What can be done? This question must be

answered, particularly in light of the larger, and often contradictory trends in the region, which include: the increased self-assertion of the Shia, a confident Iran, the continuing strength of Islamic opposition movements, the renewed importance of sub-national, ethnic and communal loyalties, and the myriad effects of globalisation, particularly on the youth of the region. Amongst other things which one may suggest are the following:

1. Don't ignore the Arab-Israeli issue, or it will blow up in your face.
2. Try to avoid presenting grand, utopian visions: no one in the region believes in them. On the other hand, an incremental approach to conflict resolution carries its own dangers, mainly the danger of a conflict festering and ultimately exploding, because its root causes were not addressed with sufficient vigour.
3. Leaderships should (a) build domestic constituencies for compromise solutions which will involve difficult tradeoffs; (b) reach out to the other side, with both symbolic and concrete actions; (c) talk the language of peace, spell out the consequences of war and maintain vigilance, and mobilise support from regional and global patrons and allies on behalf of a diplomatic resolution to the conflict; (d) encourage both people-to-people contacts and open up each side's media to truthfully engage the other side.

For the time being, practitioners of Arab-Israeli, and particularly Palestinian-Israeli diplomacy should think of their efforts more in terms of conflict management than conflict resolution, even while framing their actions in terms more akin to the latter. Striking the balance between the pursuit of

practical, incremental measures and keeping focussed on the end goal, something akin to the Clinton Parameters for a final settlement, will require enormous skill and energy.

Annex: Concluding section of Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, 'Palestinian and Israeli Intellectuals in the Shadow of Oslo and Intifadat al-Aqsa' (Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv University, 2002)

Ultimately, did the public discourse of Palestinian and Israeli intellectuals have any measurable effect on the course of Israeli-Palestinian relations during the Oslo era? None that can be discerned. Was the breakdown of the process somehow connected to their activities? In some small, secondary way. Was their 'conversation' on the larger themes of identity, history and vision for the future a meaningful one or a dialogue of the deaf? Perhaps a bit of both.

It is clear that the Israeli-PLO Joint Declaration of Principles (DoP) in September 1993 inaugurated a new era in Palestinian-Israeli relations, challenging intellectuals on both sides to address both immediate and longer-term issues related to the future of their respective societies and the relationship between them. It is also clear that secular left-liberal intellectuals on both sides paid considerable attention to each other. In doing so, personal friendships were sometimes formed. More importantly, their differences over what was deemed to be an acceptable final settlement narrowed substantially. Nonetheless, with regard to the 'liberal Zionist' intellectual mainstream in Israel and the secular liberal-left stream among the Palestinians, their underlying assumptions, and ultimate visions, remained far apart

It would be absurd to place the onus on one, or both sides' intellectuals for the breakdown of the peace process. Nonetheless, they did make certain 'contributions' to that end. Palestinian intellectuals were extremely timid in their discussions of the Israeli-Jewish 'other', making little or no effort to explain to a sceptical, or ignorant public the Jewish connection to the land and to holy places. This became especially apparent during the discussions on the final status of Jerusalem's 'Holy Basin', with Palestinian scholars and negotiators alike mocking Jewish historical claims of the existence of the ancient Jewish temples on that site. Their timidity, their continued de-legitimisation of anything that smacked of Jewish roots in Palestine, and their almost exclusive focus on the injustices, past and present, being perpetrated by the Israeli side meant that Palestinian intellectuals did not educate their public for peace. In addition, their analyses of the shortcomings of the Oslo process consistently ignored the negative, dynamic effects of Palestinian terror attacks on Israeli civilians.

Israeli intellectuals from the Zionist left, for their part, failed to sufficiently explain how their own side's actions on the ground, particularly the continued building of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, were feeding the conflict and eroding Palestinian belief in Oslo's viability. They ignored repeated warnings from the Palestinian side that the Oslo framework was being endangered by its non-implementation, operating, apparently, under the mistaken assumption that Israel's preponderance of power would be enough to ensure Palestinian acquiescence. Moreover, they failed to convey to the Israeli public the crucial fact that the lives of many Palestinians had materially worsened in the Oslo years.

No less problematic was that Israeli intellectuals were slow to recognise the centrality of the Palestinian refugee experience and the demand for the right of return. Instead they assumed that since it was not 'realistic' to expect Israel to concede on the issue, the matter would be solved by Palestinian acquiescence to existing power realities, aided perhaps by a bit of verbal finesse. The fact that some Palestinian liberals were thinking along these lines may have also led Israelis to overestimate the weight of their Palestinian counterparts within their society. More generally, many of them were overly enthusiastic about Oslo, and seemed to take its outcome for granted. There were of course exceptions. Emmanuel Sivan, for example, rejected in 1996 the idea that some kind of 'permanent determinism etched in stone' fixed that the Oslo process had reached the point of no-return, and warned that the road ahead would surely be twisted, with more suffering on both sides.¹

But the cautions of the likes of Sivan, Oz and Brinker were lost in the hubbub. Shimon Peres' vision of a 'New Middle East'² was a related complicating factor. To be sure, the notion was deemed by most Israeli scholars of the Middle East as mere pipedream, not to mention the fact that it added fuel to the fire of the opponents of normalisation in the Arab world. Nonetheless Israeli intellectuals, on the whole, were reluctant to directly take on Peres, the patron of Oslo, and thus failed to explain the distinction between what Oslo really was – an imperfect but vital beginning – and Peres' vision. (Ben-Ami, a strident political foe of Peres within the Labor party,

was an exception.) Consequently, Israeli intellectuals, as a whole, may have unwittingly helped to sow exaggerated initial expectations among the public that were then shattered at the first sign of difficulty, weakening not only the public backing necessary for a continuation of the peace process but their standing within Israeli society as well. Sami Michael's caustic attack on the Israeli left for being alienated from the sensibilities of the ordinary, mostly Sephardi *amcha* (roughly, 'working-class "masses"') may be relevant here, for most average Israelis quickly sensed the 'new Middle East,' which they deemed synonymous with Oslo, was an empty vessel.

Differences between the particular approaches of Palestinian and Israeli intellectuals, and the milieus in which they operate, were substantial. Israeli intellectuals were overly eager to move onto broader discussions regarding the preferred nature of the state and basis of community in the post-peace era, although their various conceptions (EU-type frameworks, a new Middle East, Mediterranean identity) were only skeletal. Even after the descent into violence, thoughtful Israeli critics of the peace process remained believers in the inevitability of eventual political compromise with the Palestinians. However, their faith in Palestinian goodwill and intentions, and belief that an agreement would bring an end to the one hundred year old conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, had eroded significantly. Liberal Zionists had gradually developed considerable empathy for the Palestinian predicament, and generally favoured a 'warm peace'. The

¹ Emmanuel Sivan, 'Assassination in Paris, Assassination in Tel Aviv', in Charles S. Liebman (ed.) *Political Murder: The Murder of Rabin and Political Murders in the Middle East* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1998), pp. 31-32.

² Shimon Peres with Arye Naor, *The New Middle East* (New York: H. Holt, 1993).

collapse of the peace process and ongoing violent confrontation since September 2000 caused much soul-searching among left-Zionist intellectuals, creating a far more sombre, pessimistic view of their neighbours, and of the available possibilities. No one articulated this in greater detail, and with the authority and passion of having been an insider whose hopes had been rudely dashed, than Ben-Ami.³

Palestinian secular intellectuals, for their part, were primarily occupied with the practical aspects of the Oslo accords, and particularly their shortcomings. The large group of 'critical supporters' of a peaceful outcome to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were also, not coincidentally, among the sharpest critics of the Palestinian Authority's heavy-handed, authoritarian ways, and strongest advocates of the building of civil society based on law and democracy. Neither supporters nor opponents of Oslo expended much effort to develop empathy with the 'other'; nor did they articulate broader visions of the future in a post-peace world. Their degree of genuine understanding of the Zionist ethos, let alone empathy with its believers, appeared to be minimal. Understanding and articulating such a perspective would require a fundamental modification of the Palestinian collective's core principles, as well as hard talk to the bulk of the refugees who would not be eligible to return to their lost lands and homes. Even where a degree of genuine, empathetic understanding of the Zionist ethos exists, expressing it in current circumstances would be an act of uncommon courage, if not foolhardy. In the

long run, most Palestinian intellectuals, whatever their attitudes to Oslo, hope to see an evolution of the Israeli state in the direction advocated by the post-Zionists.⁴ One cannot conceive, at this stage, of a comparable 'de-nationalisation' trend among Palestinian intellectuals. For the bulk of them, a return to the PLO's 'secular democratic state' in all of Palestine was a means to achieve majority status, and thus power. The Palestinian Israeli scholar Asad Ghanem was a lone voice in calling for a 'civic' solution, which, he said, represented 'the inevitable termination of the Palestinian national project.'⁵

The July 2001 declaration offers evidence that secular-liberal thinkers (and political figures) on both sides understood that an alternative to the Clinton parameters for a settlement was a collective, joint leap into the abyss. Sari Nusseibeh followed up on the declaration by calling for the return to 'logic' and 'rationality', which in his view meant a two-state solution based on the June 4, 1967 lines with Jerusalem as the capital of both states, and a Palestinian renunciation of the right of return. His call, published simultaneously in *Ha'aretz* and *al-Quds*, was a unique Palestinian voice.⁶ Ten years after his groundbreaking book with Mark Heller, Nusseibeh again stood out from his Palestinian colleagues. The fact that he had just been appointed by Arafat to the post of PLO minister in charge of Jerusalem affairs gave Nusseibeh's expression added importance, and made them especially controversial within the Palestinian community. Nonetheless, eight years after the signing of the DoP, the bulk of

³ See Ben Ami's interview in *Ha'aretz*, Weekend Magazine (*Musaf*), 14 September 2001.

⁴ See the article by Bir Zeit political scientist Ali Jarbawi, in the '2020 Vision' series jointly published in *al-Quds*, *Ha'aretz*, and other newspapers around the region.

⁵ *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 23-29 July 1998.

⁶ Sari Nusseibeh, *Ha'aretz*, *al-Quds*, 24 September 2001.

the Palestinian and Israeli intellectual communities appeared to be profoundly alienated from one another. The great challenge ahead for intellectuals on both sides would be to contribute to the terms of public discussion in ways which would help pull their societies back from the abyss of perpetual mutual brutality that they were staring into. With the achievement of a genuine historical reconciliation between

their societies a long way off, the tasks facing the secular left-liberal intellectuals on both sides – helping to advance the successful management of the conflict, humanising the ‘other’, and remaining ‘connected critics’ of their own societies – remained both formidable and worthy. The task promised to be difficult enough in Israel; in the Palestinian areas, it would be nothing short of Herculean.

ANNEX – Participants and Programme

PARTICIPANTS

1. Albrecht Conze (Dr), Ambassador to Benin, Germany
2. Alistair Harris (Mr), Pursue, Lebanon
3. André du Pisani (Dr), University of Namibia, Namibia
4. André Jaquet (Amb), former HC to Canada & Amb to Switzerland, SA
5. Barry Desker (Prof/ Amb), RSIS, Singapore
6. Bruce Maddy-Weizman (Dr), Tel Aviv University, Israel
7. Christian Koch (Dr), Gulf Research Centre, Dubai
8. Christopher Clapham (Prof), Cambridge University, UK
9. Christopher Thompson (Mr), Brenthurst Foundation, Zimbabwe
10. David Zounmenou (Mr), ISS Pretoria
11. Emmanuel Bombande (Mr), WANEP, Ghana
12. Frank Rusagara (BGen), Historian: Rwandan Defence Force, Rwanda
13. Greg Mills (Dr), The Brenthurst Foundation, SA
14. Gwyn Prins (Prof), London School of Economics, UK
15. Iqbal Jhazbhay (Ass Prof), UNISA, SA
16. Jan van Eck (Mr), Institute for Security Studies, SA
17. Knox Chitiyo (Dr), RUSI, UK
18. Leila Jack (Ms), The Brenthurst Foundation, SA
19. Leonard Sebastian (Ass Prof), RSIS, Singapore
20. Leonardo Santo Simão (Amb), Joachim Chissano Foundation, Mozambique
21. Linda Jaquet (Ms), SA
22. Louis Mendy (Prof), Amnesty International, Senegal
23. Malcolm Chalmers (Prof), RUSI, UK
24. Malcolm Ferguson (Amb), Dept of Foreign Affairs, SA
25. Markus-Alexander Antonietti (Amb), Swiss Ambassador to Ecuador, Switzerland
26. Martin Kimani (Mr), Kenya
27. Medhane Tadesse (Dr), CPRD, Ethiopia
28. Michael Clarke (Prof), Director: RUSI, UK
29. Michael Holman (Mr), Financial Times/Times Online (freelance), UK
30. Michael Spicer (Mr), Business Leadership South Africa, SA
31. Patrick Mazimhaka (HE), The African Union, Rwanda
32. Patrick Mugoya (Mr), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uganda
33. Paul Lever (Sir), Chairman RUSI, UK
34. Peter Chaveas (Amb ret), ACSS, USA
35. Peter Edopu (Mr), Director, Institute for Security Studies, Kenya
36. Shannon Field (Ms), IDT on Sudan, Presidency, SA
37. Stefan Klingebiel (Dr), German Development Institute, Rwanda
38. Steve McDonald, ACSS, US
39. Steve Stead (R Adm ret.), Brenthurst Foundation, SA
40. Tapani Vaahtoranta (Dr), Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Finland
41. Terrence Lyons (Dr), Inst for Conflict

- Analysis & Resolution, USA
42. Terry McNamee (Dr), RUSI, UK
 43. Thomas Nziratimana (Mr), Former
Deputy Governor South Kivu (RCD),
Congo
 44. Werner Böhler (Dr), Konrad Adenauer
Foundation, Germany

PROGRAMME

Thursday 8 May 2008

Departure from Johannesburg

Arrival; settling in – possible game drive

17h15 – 18h00: Drinks

18h00 – 19h30: Dinner – Welcome: Greg Mills

19h30 – 21h00: After-dinner Talk: Andre Jaquet – ‘Twenty years on: Lessons learned from the SA-Angola-Cuban-US negotiations after Cuito Cuanavale.’

Friday 9 May (Motse)

07h00 onwards: Breakfast

08h30: **Session One: What have we learnt from conflict resolution in Africa?**

(Chair: Patrick Mazimhaka)

Keynote Paper: ‘What do existing studies on conflict resolution tell us?’ Terrence Lyons

Presenters: Shannon Field (Sudan), Medhane Tadesse (Somalia/Horn), David Zounmenou (Liberia)

10h45: Tea

11h00: **Session One (cont): What have we learnt from conflict resolution in Africa?**

(Chair: Peter Chaveas)

Presenters: Martin Kimani (Kenya), Thomas Nziratimana (Congo), Jan van Eck (Burundi), Frank Rusagara (Rwanda), Michael Holman (Kenya and Zimbabwe)

13h15: Group Photo

14h30: **Session Two: What can we learn from conflict resolution in Asia, and Central and Latin America?**

(Chair: Patrick Mugoya)

Presenters: Leonard Sebastian (Indonesia), Markus-Alexander Antonietti (Guatemala/El Salvador), Malcolm Ferguson (Central America)

16h30: **Session Three: What can we learn from conflict resolution in the Middle East?**

(Chair: Stephan Klingebiel)

Presenters: Bruce Maddy-Weizman (Israel/Palestine), Alistair Harris (Lebanon), Abdulaziz Sager (Gulf perspective)

Saturday 10 May (Motse)

7h00 – onwards: Breakfast

Break-away into two groups: Session to run from 08h00 – 12h30 (with 10h30 – 11h00 tea-break)

Group One: ‘What role should outside parties best play in conflict resolution?’

(Chaired by Malcolm Chalmers (Boma))

Presenter: Christopher Clapham

Response: Michael Clarke to be followed by discussion

Group Two: ‘How might domestic protagonists best get on with settling conflict?’

(Chaired by Peter Edopu (Motse))

Presenter: Knox Chitoyo

Response: Andre du Pisani to be followed by discussion.

12h30: Reconvene for short report-back by two selected rapporteurs

13h00: Lunch

Afternoon Free/ Game Drives/ Walk or Drive to Dune for Supper

20h30: Talk on Stars by Tswalu Staff
Retire hurt to Motse for After-Dinner Drinks

Sunday 11 May (Lekgaba)

07h00 onwards: Breakfast

08h15: Depart for Lekgaba

09h30: Summary Session: Towards Conflict Resolution Best Practice?

(Chair: Michael Spicer)

Presenters: Greg Mills, Barry Desker, Paul Lever

11h00: Conclusion

11h30: Brunch at Waterhole

13h00: Depart for Johannesburg

15h00: Arrival in Johannesburg