

This Summer issue of the CCTS newsletter is devoted to our third seminar on post-conflict peacebuilding. It contains the paper by Judith Large on which the seminar was based and, starting on page 13, a report of the seminar itself. We hope that you find it useful. The fourth and final seminar in the current series, 'The Role of NGOs, Local and International, in Post-War Peacebuilding', will be held in the autumn; we will let you know the details of when and where this will take place.

The Interplay of Domestic, Regional and International Forces in Peacebuilding

a discussion paper by Judith Large

"The awful experience with UN hurt me so bad. As an Indonesian I can't receive their dehuman acting. *This is my country, why (do) they think they are more super than us?* I realise that recently we have a lot of troubles and need their help but I think better we don't accept their aid if they think they can conduct us after they gave the aid."

A.R., Mediator, Jakarta, summer 2000

The above quotation is a direct one, taken from correspondence following a shared experience "on mission" in Indonesia, ostensibly to assist a particular UN agency with its strategy on peacebuilding. The target for operations was to be the troubled islands of North and South Maluku (known once as "the Spice Islands"), where clearly "domestic and regional" forces were having dynamic effects. "Forces" presumably are those agents or factors which can exert pressure, movement or change which may be destructive or creative. In this particular example such "forces" might include searing economic collapse, gangsterism, high level political manipulation, population influx due to transmigration and displacement, incitement through propaganda and misinformation, increasingly radicalised Christian and Muslim identity, religious mobilisation and military response/occupation.

International "forces" would be another question. How far do we wish to look? Diaspora politics, recent take-over and monopoly of the clove trade, mission and theology influence in Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands, electronic banking systems, arms sales from the UK, IMF policy, training for Indonesian special forces in the U.S.A., global media – all this before we even begin to consider the United Nations or international relief agencies based in the country itself.

Our topic then, is enormous, and a framework will assist in grappling with it. The very wording of this commissioned discussion paper title is intriguing. It could be taken as a theme of *linkage between levels* – as per Kenneth Waltz's (1959) time-honoured framework for understanding conflict processes:

- The individual Level
- The Societal /National Level
- The Trans-societal/International Level
- The Global Level

Then again, twenty years ago (in a book which was gloriously unremarked in this country) Ernst Czempiel (1989) postulated a model of the world as an “asymmetric broken grid of interactions” and argued that:

“It is not enough to locate the actors and to describe the interaction... We are interested in outcomes and their causes... We should be able to analyze interactions. Because today we lack the methodology to do so, we are bound to confine ourselves to the analysis of actions taken by actors. This limitation is not without danger. Actions as such are not discernible because they are always part of interactions. As we are unable to analyse them we have to accept the disadvantages stemming from the reductionism...” (p.125)

Reductionism in thought may impede effectiveness in action. It can be understandable in light of the need to make sense of complexity. For example, in attempting to understand violent conflict we do tend to think in levels as above, with an implicit *strata* or even a hierarchy extending from the domestic to international. Ordinary people are “below”, agencies and governments are “above” somehow in the natural order of things. (Historically when this thinking has been reversed and sufficient direct action is exerted the word “revolution” is used.)

This paper will attempt to provide a discussion framework on current dilemmas in local, regional and international “inter-action” for peacebuilding. It will draw on contrasting examples from central Europe and Southeast Asia, namely Bosnia and Kosovo/a, Maluku and East Timor. The original suggested title stipulates this to be “post-conflict” peacebuilding – but I have resisted this. While the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding is a familiar one since its inscription in Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s 1991 *Agenda for Peace* – we have seen repeatedly since then how the conflicts of power, interest or identity which underlie localised collective violence and war “do not disappear after the cessation of formal hostilities” (Patrick, 2000). The term is useful for naming particular administrative or policy (Moore, 2000) units, but it will not be stipulated here.

At the time of writing, a major study is being undertaken by the United Nations (as follow-up to the Brahimi Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations). Research and debate within the UN are positing the “need for change”. It is recognised that dedicated “peacekeeping” and more deployment of inter-positioning forces “alone may not build peace; it can only create a space in which peace can be built”.¹ It is timely then that similar debate be held among concerned practitioners, second or “multi-track” NGOs who strive for development, for dialogue, for the empowerment of peace constituencies, for reconciliation, and indeed local and regional representation from affected areas.

The paper will centre around propositions intended to stimulate us in our own debate and consideration, namely that:

- I. *Peacebuilding is in danger of doctrinal paralysis which is counter-productive in implementation.*
- II. *The stratified pre-occupation with imposing standardised structures impedes regeneration of relationships and the range of initiatives and recovery undertaken by locals themselves.*
- III. *A revolution of sorts is needed, from “top-down” to “sideways” thinking – both to encompass regional dimensions and to free the “lateral thinking” needed for creative transformation.*

I.) Peacebuilding is in danger of doctrinal paralysis

There is abundant literature offering conceptual frameworks and even blueprints for the building of peace after violent conflict (Ball, 1997, CIDA (2000), EPCP 2001, Kumar 1997). On close examination, much of this general approach would seem curiously familiar to anyone living in Germany or Japan after the Second World War. They experienced enforced post-war reconstruction and peacebuilding. This entailed meeting basic needs of food and shelter, providing physical

¹ See the Brahimi Report: *Report on the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, Summary of Recommendations at <http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/war/2000/08/brahimi-recommend.htm>. Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Report, 20 October 2000, A/55/502 and A/55/305, p. 1.

reconstruction, economic regeneration, development of independent media, reorganisation of police and military, the holding and monitoring of elections, and building of democratic institutions.

This seemed to work after the Second World War. In this case, victor nations imposed terms on surrendered nations. Given that this implicit modelling seems to shape current policy, it is worth considering actual investment differentials (as opposed to value-led conditionality) then and today. Apparently during the first year of the Marshall Plan (1948-1952) the USA redistributed 13% of its total budget to 16 war affected European states with additional spending on Japan. (Von Hippel, 1999) It is interesting to note that Duffield transposes this expenditure to the present and concludes that it would today mean the US spending \$208 billion in 1997 compared to the actual aid expenditure of \$18.25 billion – 208 billion compared to 18. So not only was the stance of victor nation(s) (able to dictate and impose terms) a feature after the Second World War – so was concrete funding and investment (Duffield 2000).

In practice peacebuilding missions tend to share most of the following characteristics (Bertram, 1995, p.388):

- they deal with conflicts within rather than between states,
- the host government is one of the parties to the conflict,
- their aim is to develop and/or implement a political transition following or accompanying an end to military hostilities,
- a central component is the reform or establishment of basic state institutions.

Nicole Ball cites key components of peacebuilding² to be demilitarisation, control of small arms, improved police and judicial systems, monitoring of human rights, electoral reform and economic development (Ball, 1996, p.621) She acknowledges that current two-three year planning cycles are probably insufficient.

There is thus a fixed agenda or blueprint for what will constitute a “peaceful” society and its constituent parts. Consider four totally different war situations:

- disintegration in Bosnia where three parties were brought to a U.S. sponsored negotiating table and a tripartite but U.N. protected “statelet” invented and occupied by transition authorities;
- a war of “human rights” solidarity fought with/for Kosova by NATO against the “sovereign” oppressor state FRY, then occupation with UN administration and no clear transition plan;
- East Timorese independence struggle, sponsored referendum process (resisted, with brutal fighting and dislocation) and independence status for East Timor under UN sovereignty;
- disintegration of first South, then North Maluku, influx of jihad and Christian militants, unclear role of Indonesian military sent to quell disturbances, minimal authority acceptance for Government of Indonesia, minimal or no authority acceptance for the UN.

In all these situations, with their vastly differing casualty numbers, migration patterns, languages, religions, cultures, histories, economies and socio-political problems (or strengths) the *blueprint is the same*. It is evident in UN consolidated appeals – we may ask if it is evident in a new globalised “mind set”. If so, what does this mean for the interplay between international and local levels (this being most frequently in evidence as the media presents the “international community” – including INGOs – in war zones, or presents war zones to the international community).³ It is not our task to challenge here the blueprint itself, but to examine interactions during its implementation in such varying contexts.

² It is conceptualised by Louise Diamond and others (Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy) as structural and relational peacebuilding, i.e. buildings and institutions must be built again and relationships too.

³ Students recently offered me two intriguing definitions of the international community in essays for a conflict theory course. One was simply, “a many headed monster”. Another definition offered was “the USA” (!) We are reminded of the plea in Chalmers Johnson’s book *Blowback* by Ashok Bath, executive director of the Asialink Advertising Corporation and a voice in Asian business affairs: “Is there no way to go but a generic world order in which every country is forced to have the same interpretation of democracy as the U.S.?” C. Johnson (2000), *Blowback: the Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (London: Little, Brown & Co.)

In Michael Pugh's (2000) words, the "conceptual baggage of peacebuilding has included the assumption that external actors wield the power and moral authority to bring about the peaceful change that communities have so signally failed to do":

"Indeed, for local actors, the resort to violence was certainly regarded as an essential process to secure a change in their destiny. If international diplomacy had failed to prevent the onset of conflict, then, so the presumption follows, external actors should at least make concerted efforts to pick up the pieces and regenerate societies in ways that will inhibit relapses into violence. These hubristic assumptions are not sufficient, however, to endow external actors with superior techniques for dealing with peaceful change. Nor does the evident destruction and dislocation they confront represent a tabula rasa on which external scribes can write a peaceful future..." (p.3)

Far from being a "tabula rasa", the society in question will hold not only scars but also enormous shaping influences and growth points of its own. Ian Baruma (1995) studied in depth the recovery from and memories of war, post 1945, or what he might call the ruthless imposition of liberal values. Unlike most contemporary areas where "peacebuilding" operations are currently underway, Germany and Japan (as mentioned above) were defeated nations in 1945, with victor nations imposing terms and conditions. Some of his findings are nonetheless possibly very relevant to today's former Yugoslavia or indeed Indonesia:

"Continuity is always a problem after a disastrous regime. An absolutely clean break is impossible. Zero Hour is an illusion. Cultural habits and prejudices, resulting from political propaganda, religion, or whatnot, are never easy to change, particularly when the agents of change are foreign occupiers who might not always know what they are doing. It is easier to change political institutions and hope that habits and prejudices will follow. This, however, was more easily done in Germany than in Japan. For exactly twelve years Germany was in the hands of a criminal regime, a bunch of political gangsters who had started a movement. Removing this regime was half the battle." (p.62)

Peacebuilding is nothing less than the reallocation of political power; it is not a neutral act (Bertram, 2000, p.394). The claim that there are objective standards of human rights and of democracy to which all parties may be held may be ethically compelling. But in the highly politicised context of creating or re-creating a state's institutions, it is politics and power that dictate who will interpret or impose such standards and how.

If external actors come in with genuine good intentions and "concerted efforts", some of the forces which accompany "blueprints" can include:

- the wielding of political and economic preference, or even authoritarianism;
- distortions due to the pull and influx of external funds;
- mass replication of the NGO model in order to attract income influence.

These "play in" to societies which have known total desperation, a legacy of violence and severe personal and material loss.

I.a) Many critics now argue that instead of creating a peaceful pluralistic democracy in Bosnia we have instead a firmly partitioned protectorate (Chandler 1999). Far from international peacebuilding restoring links between communities, the division between the two entities increased through differential international treatment. For example, the US re-trained and re-equipped a separate Federation army, and turned down Republika Srpska calls for military integration. There was an early trend for economic aid and reconstruction projects to be concentrated narrowly within the Federation, with the weaker Republika Srpska economy receiving less than two per cent of the reconstruction aid in 1996 and less than five per cent in 1997. (p.116)

In East Timor the "defensive brand of bureaucratic 'force protection' employed by UNTAET" (Chopra 2000, p.33) was not an effective approach to establishing a credible new government or preparing the Timorese for full independence. Chopra says that comparisons with colonial administrations are unavoidable, and affirmed by various forms of segregation between expatriates and the Timorese. Two economies emerged, just as they did in Cambodia and other peacekeeping locales with Timorese turned into the servants of foreigners in their own land, since they could apply only for menial jobs. Physically, the UN's internal world was increasingly disconnected from life on

the streets. Chopra points to floating container hotels in Dili which restricted access of Timorese, except to serve drinks and food. Salary differentials between international and local staff meant that local wages were fixed at between £3 and £4 per day. (At one point Timorese were swimming alongside the ex-pat ship hotels to collect food leftovers (garbage) thrown overboard, in order to eat this.)

L.b) The dominant “global” funding culture is to prefer concrete schemes with tight project outlines and clear time cycles. Thus groups in Bosnia contend that qualitative anti-nationalist projects were ignored by the OSCE and other funders for two years (Pugh 2000, p.115).⁴ An Indonesian team of mediators accepted by the major warring communities on Ambon Island in Maluku applied for funds to enable regular cross-community visits and upkeep for a small office which would offer information, support, transmission of messages and a safe place for reconciliation and recovery meetings. They received a letter from a high profile donor which offered application details for computers but said “We do not fund Process”.

Aid commitments generate tremendous expectations in war-torn societies, but pledged monies often arrive only after considerable delay, as experienced acutely in East Timor during the past year. Often they go for useful and appropriate expenditure on valid “targets”. Sometimes they sit in bank accounts. In January of this year a Dutch NGO successfully queried the whereabouts of US\$2 million donated through UNDP for economic recovery in South Maluku.⁵ When news of their concern went sufficiently public to reach UN headquarters in New York, internal mechanisms went in to action to remedy the problem.

L.c) Ian Smilie documented as early as 1996 the astronomical rise of local NGOs in Bosnia in his classic paper, “Service Delivery or Civil Society?”. In Maluku on Ambon Island alone in the space of one year *112 new NGOs were established*, prompting questions from the local relief committee about “the fear that many of them are only trying to make a profit from their activity”.⁶ This trend had particular nuances on Ambon, where until recently the “NGO” was considered a western and therefore Christian form of organisation. In fact social organisation in the Mosque tradition supplied relief, youth activities, oversight and care for the elderly. These took on many functions which were simply not recognised by western dominated fact finding missions – do we see only what we already know?? Thus donor attention to new NGOs is potentially divisive and was initially perceived to be on religious grounds.

Genuine socially based NGOs do not spring into being fully formed, but evolve and develop, discovering and creating mandate, rationale and means as they go along. Many are short-lived; some lose momentum and direction; some fail. “Mere applause for the multiplication of groups committed to the causes of human rights, indigenous self-determination or sustainable development fails to register the problems they face. For the proliferation of ‘new social movements’ is just one side of the story.” (Morris-Suzuki, 2000, p.81) The other side lies in the nature of their connection with old political institutions, national or local governments – as in Bosnia, or (somewhat newer) to transnational bureaucracies. Or it may be in their very “dis-connection” with previously viable collective social forms, as in the Adat or clan based structures on Ambon which had been inclusive of both Muslim and Christian faiths.

⁴ Pugh cites discussions with leaders from the Tuzla and Sarajevo Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Circle 99 in Sarajevo and concerned NGO representatives from Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka and Tuzla, 1997-1998. (p. 130)

⁵ The prospective recipients (in Tual, Kai islands) knew nothing about it. See “Dutch NGO questions delay of financial aid for Maluku”, Indonesian Observer, January 29, 2001. Here was useful “whistleblowing” interaction which we could plot or visualise on a “grid” such as Czempiel suggests – it would need our perceived horizontal levels, national governments, aid pledging conferences, UN agencies – head office and field offices, INGOs, with vertical connecting lines to localised groups, communities, and individuals.

⁶ Ambon Ekspres, 30 March 2001, p.8

II.) The stratified preoccupation with imposing standardised structures may impede regeneration of relationships and the range of initiatives and recovery undertaken by locals themselves

It can be argued that the official framework for peacebuilding is inherently correct.⁷ Our central question is whether and how it can adequately address the strains and agendas which led to violence in the first place. There would appear to be contradictions between the measures employed to execute peacebuilding mandates and the outcomes they are meant to achieve. *Vertical pressure* is exerted for implementation in difficult contexts, with banners of “compliance” and “conditionality”. Meanwhile *lateral pressure* in the form of regional forces is also brought to bear on local populations.

Roland Paris (1997) argues that the principal flaw in the current official approach to peacebuilding is that “market democracy” is prescribed as a remedy for civil conflict without adequately anticipating the side effects of this remedy: democracy and capitalism are both inherently conflictual and in themselves can destabilise fragile societies. War-shattered states are ill equipped to manage the new strains of “liberalisation”. He calls peacebuilding an enormous experiment in social engineering that involves transplanting Western models – “pacification through political and economic liberalisation”. (p.56)

II.a) Consider post-Dayton Bosnia, where all manner of international agencies operate under a peacebuilding mandate including UNHCR, other UN operatives such as the WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, IMF, military “peace-keepers”, and every imaginable NGO – international, national, local. Deacon and Stubbs (1998) refer to this as a kind of “globalism” and suggest that it co-exists with a new kind of feudalism:

“...in which the path of mini-state thinking, patron-client relations, and the increasing power of mafia-like elites is as likely to be followed as that of a gradual evolution to liberal democracy and the free market”(p.100)

They point to a “fundamental lack of clarity about where government and authority reside”, to residual structures and expectations, not to mention memory and mistrust. In light of no genuine national economic revival, regional black markets abound for would-be entrepreneurs (note 1998 travel poster seen in southern Germany: “Come to Mostar: your car is already there”). The shock waves from the NATO bombing of Kosovo/a were felt severely through the influx of refugees and the defensive reactions of politicians in Republika Srpska. The tendency for some Herzegovina members of the Federation to pull ever towards union with Croatia is now visible and contested, after years of using dinars and flying the HDZ flag in west Mostar.

Meanwhile many local people work for “civil society” and pluralism, which they once felt they had. Trainers come and go from Croatia once again. Bus loads of visitors from Croatia and Serbia come to see family and friends, telephone lines and transportation increasingly connect the region. “We need more trade with each other,” says Nenad (Sarajevo) “and maybe we need to be our own country again”. He even notes shyly that American engineers oversaw the rebuilding of a bridge over the river near his home, when he is sure that Bosnian workers were available and skilled enough to help. He feels acutely the international strata imposed on his homeland.

Dayton initially established its interlocking network of international policy-making forums as part of a one-year transition to limited Bosnian self-government. The Dayton Agreement assumed that with state and entity elections (under OSCE auspices in September 1996) the external international administration of the state would come to an end. But in December 1997, just one year into this extended consolidation period, the international administration became an open-ended commitment, with no clearly defined point at which even the limited Bosnian self-government, promised by Dayton, could be realised.

⁷ For a refreshing window on a world view which challenges the current seemingly dominant liberal “globalisation” model, see Paul Salem, ed.(1997) *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World* (American University of Beirut, Lebanon)

This extended process of international regulation has involved a 'top-down' approach to peacebuilding. Governing representatives at municipal, canton, entity and state levels have little choice but to follow international policy under the threat of being dismissed from their posts or having sanctions imposed. This level of external regulation has even extended to the international take-over of the state-run television station in Republika Srpska and the UN High Representative deciding the national flag of the new country. Some aspects of this, such as the imposition of uniform passports or car licenses have been received positively by the local population. (Chandler, 1999, p.115-116).

Chandler argues that while Bosnian politicians are fully accountable to international peacekeepers, there are no mechanisms making international policy-making accountable to the Bosnian people. He takes issue with an International Crisis Group report, which argued for:

“...at least the degree of transparency necessary for the Bosnian authorities and people to understand the basis for decisions, and the decision-making processes, that so affect them. If the point of the international encampment in Bosnia is to ‘teach’ democracy, tolerance and good governance to the Bosnians then there is no better way to start than by example.” (p.116)

To Chandler this is democratic accountability reduced to ‘transparency’. ‘Teaching democracy’ ends up being a call for international institutions to make widely known their future plans and policy goals for the region. This does not alter the fact that the Bosnian people have no active role in decision-making, and are instead reduced to the role of passive onlookers. In fact, he also makes strong argument for the extended peacebuilding approach not only failing to build support for political alternatives, but also providing *carte blanche* for international administrators to override democratic processes, on the grounds that Bosnian voters are not responsible enough to have the rights granted to citizens in Western states. The implication of this approach is the end of formal democracy, of legitimacy through accountability to the electorate. *Democracy is redefined as its opposite, adherence to outside standards, not autonomy and accountability.*

II.b) Consider East Timor. On 22 October 1999, on the eve of East Timorese independence, Nobel peace laureate, Jose Ramos-Horta (long exiled independence movement leader) spoke movingly at the Catholic Institute for International Affairs in London. He pointedly remarked that here was an opportunity for the United Nations to do things differently, to be inclusive, to recognise that there was a government in waiting, to take the lead from locals for transition initiatives. How sorely disappointed he must be now.

Jarat Chopra resigned as head of the UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) on March 6 2000. He spares no words in depicting the imposition of stratified rule in that country:

“With its transitional administration in East Timor, the UN is exercising sovereign authority within a fledgling nation for the first time in its history. This development is consistent with the trend towards increasing social and territorial control in interventions to remedy the breakdown of failed states, combat warring factions and topple abusive warlords. But the result will be merely another form of authoritarianism unless the transitional administrators themselves submit to a judicious separation of powers and to genuine accountability to the local people whom they serve. Peace-maintenance will win legitimacy only if global governors lead by example. Thus far, the UN has not done so in East Timor.” (p. 27)

A Catholic priest from Dili told me in Jakarta in late 1999 of his despair that local people were not being involved – their inclination was to accept back Muslim families who had fled, his congregation had taken in a young boy who had committed atrocities under control of the militia (killing his own family members while drugged). As prospective employers, the Priest argued, the militias were still there. His people needed work and livelihoods, or at least the means to rebuild with their bare hands. He was desperate, and somehow already deeply offended by the arrival of a new authoritarianism. His concerns about rebuilding proved justified. In a report published early in 2001, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) stated that although 80% of housing stock had been destroyed in Sept 1999, “UNTAET has yet to adopt a housing policy, allocate sufficient resources or to appoint national officials responsible for housing reconstruction” (Budiardo, 2001).

Indeed, to observers long familiar with the region, UNTAET’s centralising tendency seemed to be replicating the Indonesian system of administration. Ironically, even Indonesia’s authoritarian government had previously permitted the World Bank’s CEP (Community Empowerment and Local

Governance Project) in other parts of the archipelago – a measure contested by the UN administration and analysed in depth in Chopra's *Survival* article.

Chopra argues that the problem was rooted in the circumstances of UNTAET's inception. *The planning phase in New York involved no genuine contact with, or participation by, East Timorese representatives.* On 19 October 1999, East Timorese leaders forwarded to the UN proposals for a transitional administration, outlining a Timorese role in the form of a Transitional Council. They were ignored. A token Transitional Council was established, but it is consultative only, with all decisions being taken by the UN Transitional Administrator. Chopra also points to the importance of cultural forms, observing that the Transitional Administrator had previously initiated the transitional administration in Kosovo, and brought with him an inner circle from the Balkans, "whose members projected a blunt, bullying style, when both the veterans of UNAMET and the traumatised Timorese would have responded better to modesty and genuine concern." (p.32)

"Integral to the repeated political failures of peace missions is a hierarchical system that cannot adapt to the novel mandates and the unique conditions of each deployment.

Administrators sabotage the objective of viable self-government when they refuse to engage indigenous parties and integrate them into a nascent system of governance."

Jarat Chopra p.35

As for regional "forces", to the east lies Australia's strategic and economic interests (oil and gas in the Timor Sea, plus exports of every possible commodity to East Timor/UN consumers) and to the immediate west lies the "other half" of Timor, still under Indonesian jurisdiction, with unrepatiated refugees, a porous border, and high profile militia configurations. There is the entire Indonesian archipelago, Indonesian teachers who want to return to Dili, Indonesian activists and NGOs (human rights groups and women's organisations) who have been accepted in East Timor. Jakarta has received independence leaders for first talks. Economic and political revival may depend on renewing these links, and certainly Indonesia is undergoing its own transition period.

II.c) Consider Maluku. The Maluku crisis sent shock waves throughout Indonesia. Unlike the severe protracted conflicts in Aceh, Irian (west Papua) and Kalimantan which had clear antecedents in history and grievance, here was a seeming flash fire of violence which no one had predicted. And spread like fire it did, from the outbreak of the Ambon riots in January 1999 to recurring bloodshed in the northern islands. To date there are some 5,000 dead, and estimates of displaced persons vary between 350,000-500,000.

From the onset of the violence (seemingly provoked deliberately and documented by a western human rights group which never circulated its report to communities from which it extracted information) local response on Ambon was impressive. Students organised mixed Muslim/Christian teams to visit IDPs, placing volunteers on 24 hour shifts with the most vulnerable, liaising with the local government disaster committee to audit needs and assist with resource distribution. With the impending government response of a "transmigration" (i.e. just move the problem) volunteers interviewed the displaced painstakingly, to look for skills (were they fishermen? farmers? Did they have relatives in other islands?) so that subsequent placements could be as informed as possible. Initially religious leaders attempted cross community forums. But violence widened when first army and police seemingly took sides for their own battles, and then the influx of militant supporters entered the fray.

In January 2000 the Government of Indonesia took the considered step of requesting assistance from the international community in order to fully address the needs of the people of Maluku. This was no small step in light of perceived national humiliation over the role of the International community in the loss of East Timor. There is strong anti-western sentiment in Indonesia, and a precarious political/religious power struggle nationally – compounded by economic crisis and impending decentralisation.

So in this case a national "blueprint" was devised: (shown below as reproduced in the United Nations Inter-Agency Appeal for *the Maluku Crisis*, March 2000):

Security

Stop the fighting, Sweeping for arms in conflict areas.
Confiscating arms, Patrols at sea.
Security force placed under military command instead of the police.
16 battalions (10,841 military command) instead of the police.
16 battalions (10,841 military and police personnel) for reinforcement.

Reconciliation

Appointment of a special team of non-governmental personnel within the Vice-Presidents Office.
Utilisation and enhancement of the Ambon-based Social Reconciliation Centre at provincial and local levels.
An important gathering of the Maluku community in the Jabotek area.
Meetings of religious and community leaders.

Prosperity (humanitarian-rehabilitation-development)

Continuing assistance to victims and IDPs: food, medicine, shelter, fresh water, sanitation and other livelihood facilities.
Temporary relocation of IDPs.
Social, economic and infrastructure rehabilitation.
Education, income-generating programmes.
Primary health care, resettlement.

Here is a case where internationals have had to tread very carefully, lest they be perceived as partisan. Even ICRC was initially denied access in the northern islands. Although the national government has proved slow in delivering, it did manage to change army commander in North Maluku which had beneficial results. There has also been gradual mobilisation of locally generated recovery initiatives and grass roots reconciliation teams.

In the case of Maluku the UN brought the potential of resources, but not overall control. There was the possibility of offending (see opening quotation), even of delaying and blocking response. But in a way this has freed locals to take their own initiatives – caught as they are between a well meaning but largely ineffective government, and continual fact-finding missions by equally well meaning internationals. In the words of Oni (student activist on Ambon) “This is an island. Unless you go by boat or plane there is nowhere to run. We need to make our own choices”. Ambon City is in total rubble and firmly divided between Christian and Muslim quarters. But people are talking, about jobs, about rebuilding, about how to govern themselves. Indonesian mediators have held first meetings with the police, a mixed force who had totally splintered during the fighting. The governor struggles to maintain a neutral zone around his office. There is talk of a mixed market. Gang leaders speak openly about their wish for jobs.

This is not presented as a success story. This is a transition in progress largely “from below”, with some external assistance. Indonesians talk a great deal about “horizontal” and “vertical” conflicts. While keeping their options open and liaising with government ministers and INGOs the people of Maluku probably do not place all their faith in help from “vertical” source. They are working horizontally too, thinking (in the words of one mediator) “sideways”. But inter-group relations are cultivated up and down the grid form: interactions and process nationally, regionally, locally.

At one peak point of fighting last summer a Muslim/Christian delegation from Ambon visited the national palace in Jakarta and presented First Lady, Ibu Sinta, a charter for alternative education for displaced children. They did this with dignity. But when the G.O.I built new housing in a destroyed Ambonese district using Javanese labour, it was torched almost immediately – salt in an old wound of overly centralised control from the mainland. The message is clear: Give us the means and we will self-build.

III) A Revolution of Sorts is Needed

III.a) It must be possible to conceptualise peacebuilding without resorting to the imposition of a mold, to have interim administrative arrangements with work on *developing governance* as priority, rather than emphasis on immediate elections. Rama Mani argues (Pugh, p.11) that peacebuilding should be exercised with extreme caution ‘to avoid collapsing – for entirely different reasons, and

with benign intentions – into the pitfall of last century’s empire builders’. Facilitating human security, demilitarisation, justice, good governance, accountability, national reconciliation and social development, should not be driven by a technical inventory, a blueprint, organisational imperatives or the quest for an imposed normative order. She suggests that the standards to which external organisations aspire for war-torn societies are often not only unrealistic, and therefore of dubious legitimacy, but rarely achieved in their own societies.

“Whose” peace is being built? There is a paradox in the top-down authoritarian imposition of “democratic” forms. Pugh (2000) stresses the importance of renewal and regeneration for “peace”, conditions in which:

“survivors not only acquire a stake in achieving non-violent goals but also assume direction of the means to achieve them. This approach to peaceful regeneration assumes that because conditions are dynamic, all kinds of relationships will adjust: the relationship between emergency relief providers and recipients; between external agencies and local authorities; between former elites and the people who follow or oppose them. The direction of the process is significant because when survivors do not have a stake in making non-violent adjustments, then ‘recidivist’ pressures can become ascendant.” (p.2)

In an attempt to provide connected platforms – to pre-empt or transform possible “recidivist” pressure, the former WHO Bosnia and Herzegovina policy officer came up with the idea in 1999 of a regional Balkan health forum under WHO auspices. In Bosnia he had spearheaded a DfID funded project which consciously addressed (through health sector activities) such issues as human rights, freedom of movement, and cross-community co-operation. (Although initially met with scepticism by local field offices, the “Peace through Health” initiative met with some success.) In spite of talk of a “Balkan Stability Pact” which gave off regional overtones, he could not raise interest or resources for his idea, and cited reasons as lack of vision, poor management, and a clinical approach to reconstruction. Internationals thought “with their heads, locals with their hearts” (Hess, 2001).

Interviewed for this paper about the interaction between levels in the Bosnian Peace through Health initiative, he said the following:

“In terms of communication, I would say there was a great deal of communication about actions and activities. However, I don’t think we ever reached *a common ground of understanding or expectations of peacebuilding initiatives*. For the internationals, Peace Through Health was about positions and principles, e.g. we could not accept discrimination in health services as an inevitable by-product of implementing our projects. At the local level, I believe Peace Through Health was perceived by many as the international community’s desire to make people be friends. As such, it was rationally accepted (i.e. we need to avoid going back to war) but was emotionally untenable (i.e. they tried to kill us for 4 years, why do you want us to be friends??!!).

To do over, we (WHO) might have tried to find more ways to discuss with national authorities the “fault lines” of conflict and their implications for the health sector. WHO national staff began to understand this perspective during the implementation of Peace Through Health and the national staff were absolutely essential for communication between WHO and Bosnia and Herzegovina nationals (health authorities and general population). Conversely, WHO international staff began to understand that Peace Through Health was not about making people be friends but rather was a conflict-sensitive approach to health sector reconstruction.”

A comment on “interplay between levels”:

“The concept of levels (by implication one being higher or lower than another) was itself a source of conflict at the field level. The clearly demarked and repeated distinctions between international and local “levels” were in contradiction to many of the principles we were espousing. It also led to an implicit valuing and devaluing of different types of knowledge – rational knowledge was valuable, emotional knowledge was not. Related to one of my earlier points, reconstruction is a matter of the

mind and the heart; successful reconstruction must value and incorporate both aspects. Perhaps alternative terminology would help in this regard.”

Gregory Hess, The Peace Path Group, formerly WHO Bosnia

Approaches which foster local ownership, recognise local norms, culture, values, and skills, will be longer lasting than the technical imperative. Hess and others encountered local groups in central Bosnia (as in East Slavonia, as in Vojvodina) which had organised self-supported multi-ethnic initiatives – on ecological, disability, or national traditions themes. They had their own approaches to reconstruction, and they were in charge. They welcome international interest, but the agenda is their own. This stands in stark contrast to a memory I hold of a Croatian woman in tears in Eastern Slavonia, because she could not meet the fixed “target” for staged reconciliation in Vukovar as stipulated in her Washington D.C. funded project. You cannot *programme* reconciliation on a technical basis. Perhaps even democracy cannot be programmed, but rather cultivated as a gradual process.

In Maluku a prominent women’s group which had intervened with militia, child soldiers, orphans, and the needs of IDPs was offered UN funding (a lot of it) if they re-constituted as a formal NGO. They reacted with incredulity – why fill out forms and change your way of organising if you were effective already?? East Timorese and Indonesian student human rights activists make their own bridges to discuss the politics of reform in their region. Peace and Security groups will hold a regional meeting in Malaysia this year, examining ways to support each other, to stay in contact, to build a broad base of concerted change. The NGO forum in East Timor continues in its efforts to influence and lobby for their own government and future.

On the “micro-level” of inter-action, international donors should revisit their funding formats and look for alternatives to fixed cycle project plans. On the “macro” side, instead of purely vertical short term concentration on localised protectorates, long term political co-operation on the regional level to promote regions as viable economic, cultural, and ecological units may be the way of the future.

III.b) New Thinking for Transformation

A myriad of transactions, structures, histories, motivations, values and experience inform each of the examples alluded to here. It is striking how both (ex)Yugoslav (in this case Bosnian) and Indonesian contexts are experiencing a roll-back, from old centralised, militarised orders to something new, however painful and uneven the process. Obviously this is not comparing “like” with “like”, nor is it a broad sampling of case studies. But it does prompt the question of the very idea of security, which is also central to peace.

It may be that we stand at a juncture of doctrinal shift:

Perceived as a follow-up to peacekeeping, the humanitarian efforts of peacebuilding tend to be viewed in ‘old’ security terms. Inter-action is a sub-set of military or quasi-military operations for the restoration of order. Seen as a preventative long term process, peacebuilding links ‘new’ and ‘old’ security agendas by helping to bridge the gaps in theory and practice which have existed between security and development. Social development and political transition must be cultivated on an inclusive basis.

A sweeping view of the inter-play between local, regional and international levels has been attempted here. What linkage towards policy, toward inclusion, towards local ownership, is within the remit of individuals? Individuals make their mark as spokespeople and leaders in affected populations, in the U.N. system, in related networks. “Thinking laterally” has led to cross community work (endorsed by both Diana Francis and Howard Clark in earlier papers of this series), accompaniment, witness, grass roots consultation, assistance to ex-combatants, work with “hard liners” and militants, creative use of media and journalism, education, job creation and institution-building.

The movement of information, of “truth” from local to international forums such as the Hague Tribunal is an example of inter-action between levels which peace constituencies applaud. While the War Crimes Tribunal receives criticism for being slow or cumbersome, you need only sit in a café in Sarajevo and watch with locals its daily broadcast to appreciate what it means. We can speak to

policy, speak through advocacy as well as example – and ask difficult questions, loudly, or to very particular audiences, when necessary. For example, why is it that current doctrine builds *markets but not economies*?? (Scope for another discussion here)

Useful current thinking on the subject of peacebuilding includes Luc Reyhler's work on "Peace Architecture" (EPCP, 2001 doc I) and Robert Ricigliano "The Chaordic Peace Process" (ECPC, 2001, Doc II) Cousens and Kumar (2001) contrast deductive (blueprint) versus inductive (elicitive problem-solving) approaches in a refreshing volume which looks at case studies from Haiti, Somalia, Cambodia, Bosnia, and El Salvador.

This paper has attempted a modest description of ongoing peacebuilding initiatives in different forms. It has attempted to demonstrate that the "inter-play", the inter-action between levels may be experienced as imposed or enabling. *Peacekeeping* requires the imposition of forces to provide security and safety, to create a space for some type of non-violent normality to be cultivated. As we move to a deeper understanding, often from bitter experience, of *peacebuilding* our flexibility must be challenged, and innovation sought. Treating "peace as process" is more difficult than it sounds, and the time for renewed strategy and action is now.

Judith Large, April 2001

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The interplay of domestic, regional and international forces in post-conflict peacebuilding

Report of a seminar held on 10th May at Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London N1 1RG

This seminar, the third in a series on *Supporting Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes* organised by the Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS), was attended by thirty people (listed at the end of this report). Its purpose was to examine the interconnected roles (whether destructive or creative) of local, regional and international forces in addressing the tensions and injustices that follow conflict.

Judith Large, a researcher, trainer, facilitator and long-term associate of CCTS, opened the seminar with a brief resume of her discussion paper, which is printed above. Her paper draws especially on her experience in the Balkans (which led to the publication, in 1994, of *The War Next Door*, a study of second-track intervention in the war in ex-Yugoslavia) and, more recently, in South East Asia, where she has been working to support recovery after violence in Maluku and East Timor.

Although Judith acknowledged that the subject of the seminar might be viewed at best as esoteric and at worst as impossible, she encouraged participants to 'tackle the impossible' and to view with optimism the opportunities for constructive engagement that it raised. She began by inviting participants to describe peacebuilding, which elicited a broad definition encompassing:

- understanding and resolving power-relations;
- building/transforming institutions;
- changing attitudes (or supporting appropriate attitudes);
- transforming relationships to support functional harmony;
- moving from violence to politics;
- addressing longstanding grievances;
- neutralising greed;
- supporting/introducing various forms of security;
- espousing justice.

She argued that peacebuilding needs to be addressed at each of the 'levels' (individual, national, regional and international) that have been written about by Waltz, Lederach and others, and stressed the importance of understanding not only the actions and interactions at each level but the complexity of interconnections between them.

Recent violent demonstrations in Banja Luka, where thousands of Bosnian Serbs broke up the UN-sponsored ceremony to lay the foundation-stone of a new mosque, illustrate in microcosm the problems associated with the subject of the seminar, as well as showing how long it can take for peacebuilding to overcome grievances. The international reconciliation initiative, intended to symbolise the end of ten years of ethnic intolerance, was unacceptable to local Serbs, who remained resentful

of their continuing 'pariah' image and of the inadequate share of international aid that Serbs have received throughout the Balkan region.

Judith articulated the three linked hypotheses that she proposed and illustrated in her paper:

1. *That peacebuilding is in danger of paralysis because of the tendency of external agencies to impose a uniform 'blueprint', irrespective of local circumstances.*
2. *That this uniformity stifles or sidelines local initiatives to (re)build relationships unless these initiatives conform to the imposed pattern.*
3. *That current practice (and theory) needs to be reframed: from 'top-down' to 'lateral'; from international to cross-community; from prescriptive to responsive; from short-term returns to long-term investment.*

This universal recipe of the UN and other international agencies for post-conflict peacebuilding contains all or most of the following ingredients: democratic institutions and especially multi-party elections; free-market economy; an active civil society, including NGOs and a 'free' and 'independent' press; security sector reform (army, police, judiciary); and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to deal with past atrocities and human rights violations.

The ingredients of this recipe are not, in themselves, necessarily bad: most people would agree, for example, that an independent press is beneficial. But when 'the solution' is imposed, regardless of local circumstances, so that, for example, locally-based social structures are only recognised if they are willing to reorganise as Western-style NGOs, local people become alienated and disempowered. And

when the UN, having imposed a solution, interfere with its implementation, for example by determining who may or may not stand in local elections, or by designing a new national flag, then the blueprint effectively creates a new colonialism.

If fact the UN has little experience of *peacebuilding* – having spent most of its past in a *peacekeeping* role. Judith argued that seminar participants had useful experience to share with the UN; that the local and cross-community initiatives in which so many participants work are the necessary ingredients for creating locally-tailored ‘peace architectures’ – living wholes that take account of what is possible and what assistance can be offered and found acceptable.

Judith’s introduction was followed by a plenary discussion, which was continued in groups during the afternoon and concluded with a report-back plenary session. Although the discussion sessions were not formally structured, most of what was said addressed in some way Judith’s three hypotheses (given above). Plenary and group discussions are therefore summarised together under these three headings as follows:

Imposing a peacebuilding blueprint

The international approach to peacebuilding seems to lead to the imposition of the ‘Western’ model of the free market economy, democratic elections etc., without regard for local circumstances. UN action is circumscribed by the political and economic policies of the major international powers, which calls into question the degree of independence and open-mindedness that it can bring to the search for a just solution. It also removes some legitimacy from the role of NGO workers, who are perceived as coming in on the UN’s coat tails and who are not, therefore, regarded as completely independent.

A number of participants had experienced UN peacebuilding action that reinforced the old power structures that had led to conflict. In East Timor, for example, the UN interacts almost exclusively with the elite Portuguese-speakers; there is no dialogue with ‘ordinary’ people, and consequently little understanding of their problems. There was also widespread experience of a ‘we know best’ attitude among international agencies: of a lack of desire for consultation. But as one person pointed out, without the dominance and patronage of the UN in the re-establishment of civil structures, the most likely local outcome might be the resurgence of the old hegemonies, which also ignored the voice of ‘ordinary’ people.

A further difficulty is the short time-scale (typically only two years) within which international agencies expect to be involved. Peacebuilding is a very long-term process (as experiences after World War II illustrate). In Serbia, for example, people are only now beginning to be willing to express a political opinion; they can’t be expected to leap straight into a

full ‘democratic’ model, especially under threat of the withdrawal of aid.

Peacebuilding is particularly difficult after large-scale military intervention. In circumstances where the choice seems to be either to enter in strength to stop the violence or to stand aside and watch it continue, a number of participants felt that the overriding priority was to stop the violence (albeit with more violence), though this raises hard moral questions. There seem to be problems, however, in moving from this type of ‘peace enforcement’ to constructive peacebuilding, with the international forces relinquishing civil control. (The East Timorese apparently talk about the intervention of the international community as ‘the third invasion’!) These problems were returned to repeatedly throughout the day, often with despondency. Should we accept that ‘poorly’ is the best that we can do, and preferable to doing nothing? Can we hope to do better, or can there never be any universally agreed legitimacy for military intervention?

When the intervention is non-military and on a small scale, as it is in Tajikistan, for example, it seems to be possible for local people to retain control of the peace process, and for international agencies to take a more constructive, supporting role.

Stifling local initiatives

Judith’s paper contains a number of examples of how a uniform approach to peacebuilding can sideline or stifle local action. A number of others were raised in discussion:

When the UN takes over the top jobs, policing, and distribution channels, there is no way in which anything local can grow to replace it. The more ‘perfect’ or comprehensive the imposed peace, the less scope there is for local initiatives. Similarly, the more prescriptive the blueprint, the more the bureaucracy of funding tends to set both the problems and their possible solutions in concrete, as NGOs are tempted to deliver the paperwork that will ensure funding, rather than express the uncertainties they are feeling. The tendency of funding agencies to support projects rather than processes exacerbates this problem.

International agencies become an important part of the local economic community, thus reducing the initiative for locally based economic development. In Abkhazia, for example, funding from DFID is one of the main sources of income. In this environment, fluency in English frequently becomes the highest valued economic asset. The ensuing ‘contract culture’, in which local teachers, doctors and other key professionals move to higher paid employment in international agencies, slows down the redevelopment of local civil structures and impoverishes much-needed local services and businesses. Even worse, perhaps, is the tendency of students to seek to escape the problems at home by

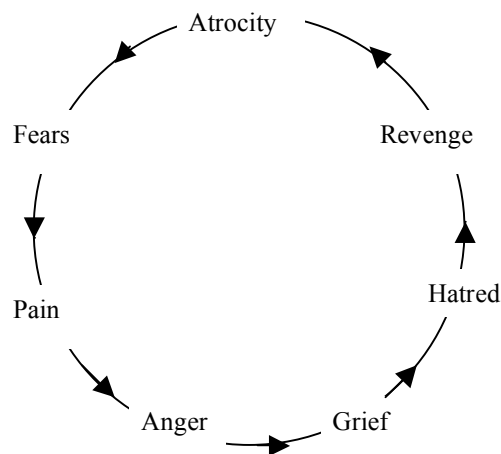
joining international agencies abroad, thus robbing the country of its future skills base.

Scope for change

The UN is keen to learn. Its current role in Tajikistan, for example, is informed by the recent Brahimi report, referred to in Judith's paper. The challenge, then, is not to blame them for sometimes failing in difficult circumstances, but to analyse and understand the reasons that problems arise and the behaviours that might produce more successful outcomes.

During discussion a number of problems were aired and some possible ways forward were suggested:

- An international force that aims to restore the rule of law must itself behave lawfully (one participant spoke with outrage about the thirteen East Timorese who had been killed by UN cars, not one of which stopped). Some degree of visible local accountability (with the possibility of redress) is needed, especially in very large-scale interventions.
- Short-term forceful intervention to stop violence could usefully be coupled with a resolution to stay long-term and 'hold the ring', providing good offices for dialogue and other support, but otherwise allowing problems to be resolved locally. (In Angola, for example, international action has created more room for local social movements to take hold, even though the violence continues.) This approach minimises the degree of disruption to local initiatives, although it does nothing to change the structures and relationships that caused the conflict and may even appear to legitimise them. The ethical dilemma remains: When is it better to intervene, and by what right do we do so?
- International involvement generally raises hopes and expectations for change among local people. If those expectations are not realised, the resulting feelings of disempowerment and demoralisation can deepen the internal rifts and make long-term peace harder than ever to achieve.
- 'Democratic elections' cannot be called democratic if they take place on the basis of a political situation that is unchanged since before the conflict, or if the UN dictates who can or cannot stand.
- One possible benefit of the Western economic model may be that it encourages people to acknowledge the economic benefits of peaceful coexistence, even with people you dislike!
- There needs to be some agreement about the factors that led up to the conflict if a lasting peace is to be re-established. Interveners generally don't have an accurate picture, and the short time-scales on which they prefer to work make it next to impossible to develop one.
- Grievances will not disappear unless they are heard, and there is some sense of justice. Peace commissions and tribunals have been successful in some countries; it is important to find a vehicle that is grounded in the local culture. Much value can be gained from addressing 'small' issues that impact day-to-day life.
- The emphasis on *structural* peacebuilding ignores the importance of the human factors and psychological influences that underpin the cycle of violence (depicted by one participant as shown below):



- Unless the fears, pain, anger and grief that form part of the cycle are dealt with before the cycle moves on, the violence will continue or come back. This *psychological* peacebuilding is a long-term, labour-intensive process and one whose outcomes are difficult to quantify.
- People who have been displaced by conflict can, when they return home, often see the scope for change more clearly than those who have never left, and can therefore act as 'ambassadors' or 'truth-tellers'.
- Many of the problems arising from military intervention can be understood in terms of patriarchal cultures and gender constructions – the fear men have that they are not manly enough. We need to find ways of supporting individuals to find the courage to act outside these constraints.
- Some hope can be drawn from the individual human capacity to work for change. Small-scale local efforts can produce significant results, especially if they are given recognition and support. Indigenous peacemakers are too often overlooked, or seen as cultural 'oddities'. (At the same time, we should not *expect* active participation abroad while accepting apathy in our own countries.)
- Too little attention is given to regional forces in peacebuilding. The interaction of families and friends living in neighbouring countries, the re-establishment of small-scale trade, the bridge-building that can be achieved by regional NGOs, can in some ways produce more concrete results

than larger-scale initiatives. This point, as one participant observed, was mirrored in the balance of discussion at the seminar, which also largely failed to touch on the role, positive or negative, of neighbouring countries' governments and of regional intergovernmental organisations (notwithstanding the discussion in Judith's paper of regional peacebuilding work in Maluku).

- The notion of 'levels', though useful, can also be constraining. Everyone acts and interacts with others as individuals – although each person has a different range and power to influence events. We need a better understanding of the interconnections between individuals (and their organisations) working at and moving between 'levels' in order to increase their potential for peacebuilding. Even when individuals or organisations don't knowingly interact in a given situation, the action (or lack of action) of each will affect the impact that the others can make.
- NGO workers need to be braver and more imaginative in their requests for funding for processes (as opposed to projects); the challenge for us is to design staged or rolling reviews that are acceptable to the bureaucrats while delivering what is really needed.

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