

Recommendations for the National Security Strategy review: *Prioritize peace process support strategies and build institutional capacities to resolve conflicts*

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The National Security Strategy rightly points to the significance of addressing conflict and fragile states. Well-designed and resourced external political engagement can provide essential support to enable those in conflict to resolve disputes, make peace and develop a more inclusive political settlement to underpin responsive governments. As outlined in para 4.31, the UK can play an important role in offering such support. But support needs to be appropriately conceived, implemented and resourced. Yet the UK's peacemaking strategies and capacities are unevenly developed and given negligible resources.

With its extensive bilateral and multilateral networks, the UK is well placed to play a vital role in supporting peacemaking. HMG's role will depend on its relations, reputation and access to the conflict parties. It may play either a leading role or encourage others to engage proactively. Effective support requires coherent strategies and strong institutional capacities to deliver this strategy, including a clear understanding of mediation and process design.

Recommendations

1. Develop a peace process support strategy for each country in conflict to harness influence and increase prospects of more effective involvement.

Elements that could be included in such a strategy are outlined in the attached table.

- The strategy should align HMG's diverse policy objectives (economic, security, political) with its diplomatic, development and military capacities to positively influence conflict parties' engagement in peace initiatives. This includes a more sophisticated understanding and strategic use of the various incentives and sanctions at the government's disposal.ⁱ
- The strategy should be used to marshal the multilateral political will and resources needed to help parties come to the negotiating table, reach a viable agreement that addresses underlying causes, and to implement that agreement.
- It should be based on an inclusive and comprehensive approach to involving all the parties to the conflict.ⁱⁱ This should include building the capacities of conflict parties to engage confidently and effectively in peace negotiations.
- The strategy should include political encouragement as well as technical and financial support for more democratic processes involving non-combatant stakeholders, including women, youth and minorities, who are crucial for building the peace and making a more resilient state and society.ⁱⁱⁱ

2. Strengthen the specialist capacities of HMG and international institutions to offer state-of-the-art support for confidence-building, mediation, and other peace process support. There is a need for improved analysis, effective training and professional development, knowledge management of lessons from comparative experience, and support for research to improve practice.

Rationale

Why peace processes?: changing nature of war and the necessity of negotiation

Sustainable peace cannot be achieved through the exercise of force alone. It is extremely difficult to impose peace on those who remain committed to achieving their objectives through violence or who feel excluded from peace processes. As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate, those willing to achieve their goals 'by any means necessary' can sustain a military campaign against even the most powerful armed forces in the world. Even forces like the Lord's Resistance Army are able to continue their operations for decades, despite successive military offensives against them. Consequently, decisive military defeat has become increasingly rare as the means of settling conflict. Furthermore, even if they were successful in ending the violence, 'give war a chance'^{iv} strategies aimed at defeat are only able to deal with the symptoms of violent conflict and often exacerbate the underlying causes of conflict and fragility.

There are negative consequences from leaving conflicts unresolved, even if they are relatively stable, as illustrated when the long-neglected conflicts over Abkhazia and South Ossetia led to armed confrontation in August 2008 and subsequent tension between NATO members and Russia. Assessing such unresolved conflicts as Cyprus, Kashmir, Kosovo, Nagorny-Karabakh, to name but a few, indicates the ongoing risks and costs they generate even if battlefield deaths are minimal.

For the first time in history, since the 1990s more wars have ended through negotiated agreement than through military victory. Some of these have broken down, with the belligerents returning to war within five years. The reasons for conflict recurrence are complex and varied, however there is clearly a need for better processes leading to stronger agreements that are strategically designed, skilfully implemented, and well supported.^v Much more needs to be done to ensure that future peace processes become the bridge from profound animosity to sustainable peace and statebuilding.

How can peace processes promote the UK's security and development goals?

- *Security.* Resolving conflicts can enhance global security by addressing the grievances that fuel instability. This can help reduce the justifications for terrorism, as well as opportunities for terrorist organizations to consolidate.^{vi}
- *Development.* Conflict resolution can be key to the security and responsive governance crucial for poverty elimination and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- *Cost effectiveness.* The costs of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacebuilding are often a fraction of those incurred by military intervention. Peacekeeping operations without a viable peacemaking strategy are likely to be prolonged and less effective.

ⁱ See Griffiths and Barnes (eds) 2008 *Powers of persuasion: incentives, sanctions and conditionality in peacemaking*, Accord 19, Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/incentives/index.php>

ⁱⁱ See Ricigliano (ed) 2005 *Choosing to engage: armed groups and peace processes*, Accord 16, Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/engaging-groups/index.php>

ⁱⁱⁱ See Barnes (ed) 2002 *Owning the process: public participation in peacemaking*, Accord 13, Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/public-participation/index.php>

^{iv} In reference to Edward Luttwak's argument that more lives would be saved if violent conflicts were allowed to 'burn themselves out'. July 1999, "Give war a chance" *Foreign Affairs*.

^v See Human Security Centre 2006 *Human Security Brief* www.humansecuritybrief.info; Barbara Walter 2002 *Committing to peace: the successful settlement of civil wars* Princeton University Press

^{vi} Recent research suggests a robust causal link between serious domestic instability with international terrorism. N Campos and M Gassebner, 2009, *International terrorism, political instability and the escalation effect* IZA Discussion Paper No 4061, <http://ftp.iza.org/dp4061.pdf>

Elements of a peace process support strategy

	Changes needed	Some external strategies to support changes
↑ 'Getting to the table'	<p>The parties recognize they cannot achieve their goals unilaterally and that simply continuing with the status quo entails risks of unacceptable costs.</p> <p>They become willing to risk exploring engagement with their opponents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help parties 'de-commit', mentally and practically, from their current approach by convincing leaders that negotiations are a viable alternative to achieve their most important strategic goals. • Harmonize measures to enforce international humanitarian law with strategies to encourage parties to enter into peace talks. • Reduce the feasibility of continued military struggle by cutting off the means of waging war (eg arms embargos or boycotts of conflict commodities) or otherwise increase the costs of belligerence. • Increase the attractiveness of a negotiation process through conditional measures, such as easing isolation, extending recognition or signalling international assistance to deliver a tangible peace dividend.
	<p>The parties begin to have sufficient confidence in their counterparts that the risks of engaging are outweighed by the potential benefits of achieving their goals.</p> <p>The choice to engage in a negotiations process becomes the preferred strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish 'agreed conditionality' by identifying and agreeing principles that form the 'terms of engagement' for the negotiations. Violations of these terms are the basis for imposing sanctions while adherence triggers rewards. • Negotiate conditional or partial removal of proscriptions that complicate engagement such as travel / visa bans. • Provide technical assistance to address fears of being out-manoeuvred in negotiations (eg negotiation skills; defining a political strategy; public communications). • Develop mechanisms among external stakeholders and intermediaries to harmonize influence and generate strategic complementarity in peace process support strategies.
Consolidating a peace process	<p>A viable process is established.</p> <p>The process is sufficiently inclusive and comprehensive to increase the likelihood of sustainable conflict resolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide reassurance – especially for opposition groups – that the process will address the 'real' issues and that any international involvement will not result in a bias that will undermine their objectives. • Provide guarantees to address security dilemmas; implement confidence and security-building measures, including monitoring agreements on cessation of hostilities. • Fund and assist programmes to promote public discourse around alternative solutions to the conflict and strengthen constituencies for peace, especially within social groups affected by the conflict. • Use incentives to encourage inclusive processes involving all the main stakeholders, women, youth, minorities and political groupings.
	<p>Parties negotiate specific agreements to achieve enough of their goals without entailing unacceptable costs.</p> <p>Parties develop sufficient confidence that the agreements will be implemented, either because of confidence in the good faith of their counterparts or because of external guarantees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help parties take small, constructive and irreversible steps toward becoming deeply invested in reaching a mutually agreeable outcome. Encourage reciprocity, with parties agreeing measures that will assist each other to make compromises – possibly enabled through external support. • Support study visits and other opportunities to stimulate ideas and proposals on reframing the issues and moving from 'zero-sum' to 'positive-sum' integrative agreements. • Identify how international support will enable implementation of agreements that address the immediate contested issues as well as key substantive issues such as gender, human rights, transitional justice, and other underlying causes such as land reform.
← Reaching and implementing agreements	<p>The viability of the agreements is secured during the implementation phases.</p> <p>Parties are encouraged to abide by their commitments and sabotaging manoeuvres are prevented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help parties overcome distrust in their adversaries' intentions to implement agreements by instituting third party verification mechanisms to ensure compliance. • Offer political and technical support to oversee agreed reforms and mechanisms and help iron out the inevitable disputes between the parties. • Provide symbolic and material incentives to help make the agreement more acceptable both to the rank-and-file of belligerent groups and the wider public in ways that enhance the long-term goal of reconciliation. • Target those who seek to wreck the agreement with appropriate sanctions. • Offer flexible and timely assistance to implement the measures, based on agreed benchmarks.

ⁱ See Griffiths and Barnes (eds) 2008 *Powers of persuasion: incentives, sanctions and conditionality in peacemaking*, Accord 19, Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/incentives/index.php>

ⁱⁱ See Ricigliano (ed) 2005 *Choosing to engage: armed groups and peace processes*, Accord 16, Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/engaging-groups/index.php>

ⁱⁱⁱ See Barnes (ed) 2002 *Owning the process: public participation in peacemaking*, Accord 13, Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/public-participation/index.php>

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