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Towards Conflict Transformation and a Just Peace

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1. Introduction

Peace, justice, truth and compassion are central to most utopian and religious visions. For example, the concepts of Paradise and Nirvana both have strong connotations of justice, harmony, non-violence and union. These aspirations are religious ways of saying that most people in most communities and cultures, confronted with choices between order and chaos, peace and war, harmony and disharmony, structural stability and instability, equality and inequality, inclusion and exclusion, justice and injustice, tolerance and intolerance or abundance and poverty will wherever possible choose the former over the latter. There is a good justification for this as well. Stephen Jay Gould (2001), for example, states:

> *Good and kind people outnumber all others by thousands to one. The tragedy of human history lies in the enormous potential for destruction in rare acts of evil not in the high frequency of evil people. Complex systems can only be built step-by-step, whereas destruction requires but an instant. Thus in what I like to call the Great Asymmetry, every spectacular incident of evil will be balanced by 10,000 acts of kindness, too often un-noted and invisible as the „ordinary" efforts of a vast majority.*

The critical question, therefore, is how to ensure that these normal acts of kindness, altruism, reciprocity, justice and courtesy are translated into strong political commitments to justice, peace and conflict sensitive development. Why are these seemingly universal impulses so difficult to realise in political practice?

There are some factors, which occur with sufficient regularity to suggest a fairly universal correlation with violent conflict, and there are other factors (e.g. specific triggers or local means of mobilising group differences and discontent to violent ends) that are much more unique. The conceptual challenge is to identify the universal risk factors within potential or actual conflict situations while being sensitive to the cultural specifics.

In acknowledgement of the interdependent nature of these different dynamics, Nafziger, Stewart and Väyrynen (2000, Vol 2, 2), in *War, Hunger and Displacement*, state the following:

> *Economic, political and cultural sources [of complex humanitarian emergencies (CHE)] are intertwined; economic stagnation or collapse, especially when coupled with large disparities among groups (horizontal inequality) and individuals (vertical inequality), spur political discontent, which leaders use to mobilize people to support their struggles for power, thus deepening and exploiting perceived cultural differences. Group differences, based on differences in ethnicity, race, religion, caste or class, are reinforced, and sometimes created, by the conflict. While these differences are not the primary cause, they acquire an independent force that makes peacemaking difficult. Moreover, in war, collective action is the consequence of individual decisions. Individuals' political and economic aims may be served by war. Such motivation fuels and may even cause conflict.*

To ignore such dimensions and focus intervention processes on, for example, enhancing civil society capacity, attitudinal changes, relationship and confidence building may be useful at the level of community relationships, but it is unlikely to have any decisive impact on the underlying sources of

structural or direct violence. On the contrary these community-based processes may generate a false consciousness of peaceful relations when the underlying processes are much more malign.

This chapter, therefore, is an attempt to do two things: first, to make sense of some of the economic, political and social origins and dynamics of organised violence; second, determine how conflict analysis and conflict resolution processes might enable diverse actors concerned with violent conflict at the official and unofficial levels to change the attitudes, behaviours and institutions which generate structural (indirect) and direct violence. It will begin with an acknowledgement of the centrality of structural transformation for stable peace and an analysis of some of the underlying political and economic dynamics that form the backdrop to modern conflict. It will then examine how and why conflict resolution practitioners should focus more attention on the political economy of conflict in the analysis, design and implementation of conflict intervention processes.

2. Stable Peace

Stable peace, by which is meant the persistence of non-violent cooperative relationships through time, cannot be delivered simply by addressing the presenting tensions, contradictions, disputes and manifestations of violence. There is a need for much deeper and shared analysis (between intervenors and intervened and all those with legitimate interests in the conflict) about the underlying structural sources of the conflict. It is particularly important to incorporate regional and global organisations in this analysis, especially where there is any indication that national state systems (responsible for order and human security) are the major sources of insecurity and humanitarian crises for their citizens.

This analysis should be undertaken prior to the design or development of assistance or intervention processes. It should focus on a radical contextualisation of the underlying problems, historical awareness of their origins and the development of a shared awareness of institutional impediments, obstructions, or deficiencies preventing the realisation of stable peaceful relationships. This initial analysis, which is so critical to the success of any subsequent intervention, may, for peacebuilders and others involved in conflict resolution, result in decisions not to intervene, or the development of interventions which look more political rather than procedural in order to address the underlying sources of the problems.

2.1 The centrality and primacy of the political

It is extremely difficult to tackle these deeper questions of structural violence and socio-economic injustice without paying attention to the institutions, mechanisms and processes that generate order and effective participatory governance. Kalevi Holsti (1996, 20-21), for example, asserts that:

> *Wars of the late twentieth century are not about foreign policy, security, honour or status; they are about statehood, governance and the role and status of nations and communities within states.*

There is more and more evidence from the world's war zones for example, that many so called sovereign states and governments lack a monopoly of coercive capacity and are incapable of bringing order to territory under their control. Far from governing on behalf of and for the people (their citizens), they are either unable to extend legitimate authority and security to citizens or are

intensely predatory and exploitative. International law confers sovereign equality on these states but the states, themselves, lack the basic means to confer the benefits of sovereignty and human security on their peoples.

In relation to these deficient sovereign entities, conflict resolution workers are caught in a terrible dilemma. If official and unofficial actors assume that failed or failing state systems are capable of delivering negotiated agreements when they are not, the negotiation process will be nullified in its implementation. If the opposite assumption is applied, namely that there is no point in negotiating with corrupt, ineffective or deficient states, there will be no negotiated solutions to violent problems. Somewhere between the Scylla of hypocrisy and the Charybdis of impotence lies the realm of the politically possible.

The major challenge facing all conflict resolution workers (official or unofficial) is identifying what that realm of possibility looks like and whether interventions are likely or unlikely to result in the achievement of just and sustainable relations between peoples.

There is a disposition on the part of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), for example, to work with civil society actors to help them to deal with the problems that state systems are either causing, or are unwilling or incapable of addressing. This sometimes results in some segments of civil society having more organisational and professional capacity than key elements of

Table 2: Early Warning about What?	
refugee / interdependencies / development / human rights violations	Future of Global Interdependence (FUGI)
	Amnesty International
	Human Rights Watch
	Interdisciplinary Research Programme on Root Causes of Human Rights Violations (PIOOM)
ethnopolitical conflict	Early Recognition of Tensions and Fact-finding (FAST)
	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER)
	International Crisis Group (ICG)
Genocides and politicides	Accelerators of Genocide
	Genocides and Politicides Project
	Life Integrity Violations Approach (LIVA)
armed conflict / military expenditure / arms production	Global Event Data System (GEDS)
	State Failure Project
famine and food supplies	Famine Early Warning System (FEWS)
	Global Information Early Warning System (GIEWS)
successes and failures in preventing violent inter-group conflict	Conflict Early Warning System (CEWS)
militarised disputes	Correlates of War
crisis development and effectiveness of attempts at management	International Crisis Behaviour (ICB)
telecommunications and its relation to conflict	Leland Initiative: African Telemetric Project
Minorities	Minorities at Risk (MAR)
direct political action	Protocol for the Analysis of Nonviolent Direct Action (PANDA)
CHEs	ReliefWeb (UNDHA)
terrorism	Terrorism in Western Europe: Event Data Project (TWEED)

the state system. In Burundi, for example, the Ministry of Human Rights has fewer resources available to it than many of the human rights NGOs working within the country.

This asymmetry raises two deeper issues. The first is how the civil society sector articulates its interests vis-à-vis the state and the second is whether this is useful or not in those situations where states are deficient, incapable of effective governance, predatory and/or corrupt. The second issue confronts governmental and intergovernmental actors. If official intervenors deal with failed, failing or predatory state systems as though they were capable of effective governance when they are not, then this may generate deep disillusionment for the excluded and exploited citizens. It will certainly result in bad faith negotiations and render effective implementation of any agreement extremely unlikely. Not dealing with putative authority, however, means no negotiations. Responding to violent conflict, therefore, at both civil society and governmental levels often generates as many problems as solutions.

2.2 Critique of realpolitik

The field of conflict resolution developed, to some extent, as a critique of and alternative to political realism and *realpolitik*. Conflict analysts acknowledge that power, although a major motivator, is not primary for most people. On the contrary, cooperative relations and a desire for the satisfaction of needs for identity, security, belonging and welfare are equally important sources of human motivation.

Conflict resolution workers, therefore, have always been somewhat ambivalent towards state and political systems. On the one hand there is a willingness to acknowledge the importance of the state, while on the other there is a critique of the state‘s monopoly of power and a rejection of threat and coercion as the primary means for generating order and stability. Because of this, there has been a strong inclination on the part of many conflict resolution workers to try and modify political behaviour by working with and through civil society groups.

One of the central arguments of this chapter is the necessity for conflict specialists to devote more time to specific analyses of the ways in which the state generates and sometimes escalates violent conflict. If this does not occur and there is no development of ‚conflict sensitive politics‘ (in the same way as Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) methodology has contributed to ‚conflict sensitive development‘) then the political agenda will continue to be set by the application of realpolitik, rather than by a less adversarial problem oriented politics. This is no easy task (witness the retreat of idealist politics in the face of the newly declared War against Terrorism) but it is one that should be undertaken in order to further test and develop non-violent alternatives to war and violence.

Another reason why realpolitik needs to be challenged is because State systems in the major conflict zones of the world are seriously deficient and more likely to be associated with the initiation and prolongation of violence than with its resolution. This poses very particular types of problems for conflict resolution workers seeking to devise processes for dealing with such violence.

2.3 Political sources of violence

In an analysis of 17 recent complex humanitarian emergencies (CHE), Kalevi Holsti (cited by Nafziger et al. 2000, Vol 2, 4) argues that the political factors likely to result in this type of emergency or large scale organised violence include the following:

The risk of an emergency is likely to increase with two or more distinct ethnic, language, or religious communities; among countries which acquired independence after 1945; where there is government exclusion and persecution of distinct social groups; where there is rule by kleptocrats or entrenched minorities; and where there is weak government legitimacy.

These are all factors that generate structural disposition to violence and they are consistent with most of the political risk factors and indicators identified by those devising tools and methods for more conflict sensitive development strategies. Interestingly, Holsti concludes from his study of their application to 17 cases that it is not ethnic hatred or group divisions which generated violent behaviour, but the deliberate and intentional acts of politicians and government officials who organised violence against different groups within the communities under their control.

...organised politicides by governments have resulted in far greater casualties than other types of civil war, including rebellions. The presence of early warning indicators has not helped the international community to prevent such emergencies. (ibid.).

This conclusion is made even more explicit by Väyrynen (*ibid., 437*) who states:

My key hypothesis is that humanitarian crises occur in societies in which the state is weak and elites greedy in pursuing their own interests. In the post-colonial neo-patrimonial state, a strong leader stands at the top of the power pyramid and supports a network of cronies in civilian and military bureaucracies. Beneficiaries of the political system are decided by coercion and clientalism, the key features of most peripheral states.

He develops this hypothesis to elaborate the dynamics between the political and economic spheres through a theory of state predatory and rent seeking activities. The net result is state plunder, exploitation and anarchic, anaemic or failed state systems and increased reliance on force, coercion and the possibility of organised state sponsored violence against opposition forces.

If conflict resolution workers do not acknowledge these fundamental realities when devising intervention strategies, they may unwittingly generate peaceful illusions on unjust and untenable institutional bases. When the coercive power of the state and the exchange power of the market have been subverted by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats it makes the prospects for sustainable peace extremely unlikely. Trying to harness the integrative power of the community in such a situation by working in and through other civil society institutions, (families, religious, educational, health and others) may be helpful in terms of emergency relief and humanitarian assistance. However it will not yield sustainable peace in either the medium or long term. It may enhance the ‚feel good factor' but generate even deeper despair at the incapacity of government and state systems to perform their social functions. These good initiatives will always be subverted by the actions of corrupt governments, and the increasing criminalisation of politics.

2.4 Criminalisation of politics

This is characterised by six core elements: subversion of the rule of law, impunity, organised crime, drugs, non-enforcement of law and corruption.

(i) Subversion of the rule of law: This has happened in most conflict zones around the world. First of all the police become corrupted; second there is a challenge to the independence of the judiciary and the court system breaks down. Anarchic states, for example Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia underwent a complete breakdown of central authority with no legal system that commands respect and no way of implementing the law. In short, this means that individual friendship and kin groups are the major providers of basic protection.

(ii) Impunity: When the rule of law is subverted cultures of impunity emerge. Impunity can lead to wide scale human rights abuses or even genocide, as happened in Rwanda and within Zimbabwe, where the Mugabe government has systematically undermined the rule of law. In situations where some have impunity and others do not, it is normally those with economic and political power who can rise above the law and those with no such power who become subject to arbitrary, corrupt and oppressive law. For example, the relatively weak and powerless are victims of petty corruption such as arbitrary police fines and also victims of high-level elite corruption such as expropriation of national revenues. They are also the ones most likely to be held to account for the petty corruption while those who are stealing millions utilise their authority to confer impunity on themselves.

(iii) Organised crime: In the United Kingdom (UK), the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) argued last year that organised crime was the major threat to British security (*see* NCIS 2000). Organised crime syndicates are a threat to democracy and stability in many parts of the developing world as well. In Colombia, drug syndicates directly confronted the state in an attempt to prevent an extradition treaty being made with the United States of America (USA). In the Caucasus, organised crime syndicates have at times threatened to undermine already fragile economies through smuggling of contraband, thus evading duties as well as using an extreme level of violence in their activities. In the Balkans, criminal groups became aligned with radical nationalist groups creating a criminal state as in Serbia under President Miloπevic. The Kosova Liberation Army (UÇK) in Kosovo has allegedly had strong links with Albanian criminal groups operating in the West. Organised crime groups such as the Chinese ‚Snake Heads' are involved in smuggling people across the world. This is slavery by another name. The UN estimates that about 4 million people are illegally trafficked world-wide each year. The profits made from this trade are also significant, amounting to between $5 billion and $7 billion annually. Along side the human misery involved, the impact of the migrants can also cause conflicts in some recipient states.

(iv) Drugs: The United Nations (UN) estimates that the annual proceeds of illegal trafficking of narcotics amounts to about $500 billion. As long as the production of drugs (especially heroin and cocaine) remains economically attractive, the potential destabilising effects of drugs will continue in many countries. Addiction levels in the west are matched or exceeded in Iran, India and Pakistan. Problems associated with the impact of narcotics can also lead to international conflict. A key area of tension between the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and its neighbour Iran, for example, could be traced to the significant levels of heroin addiction inside Iran. About one million Iranians are thought to be addicts and over 3,000 Iranian police have been killed fighting gangs associated with the opiate trade. There is also recent evidence that smugglers are now choosing to direct heroin through the Former Soviet Union (FSU), especially Turkmenistan. This could well disrupt already unstable states. The profits from drug smuggling may also be used to help finance the activities of Islamic rebels in countries bordering Afghanistan.

(v) Non-enforcement of law: The contribution by the United State of America of up to $1.3 billion in military aid to Colombia in support of Plan Colombia is officially aimed at controlling the Colombian drug trade. There is evidence to suggest, however, that the Colombian army have diverted equipment intended for anti-drug use to the war against left wing guerrillas – thereby fuelling the dynamics of the civil war because the opposition forces become involved in an internal arms race. Similarly, in July 2001, the USA support to the Taliban of $34 million in support of an anti-drug trafficking campaign has undoubtedly been diverted towards fuelling the current conflict. Aside from the corrosive influence of crime, therefore, the interaction between crime and conflict – especially where ruling elites or subversive groups use organised crime to finance their activities – needs to be given more prominence in the design of conflict resolution processes.

(vi) Corruption: Corruption exists in virtually every country in the world. Normally it is an occasional aberration or alternatively an essential way of bypassing extensive bureaucracy. However, in cases of extreme corruption the very ethos of the state can be undermined. The 1999 coup in Pakistan was largely caused by military frustration at the levels of corruption practised by many democratic politicians. Similarly, the Estrada regime in the Philippines was overthrown in a demonstration of people's power, specifically roused by wholesale abuse of power by the politicians, as also happened in Serbia more recently. Corrupt regimes have stoked up ethnic hatreds as a way of gaining popularity, as in Serbia and arguably now in Indonesia. When corruption becomes institutionalised and cultures of theft become dominant and widespread, those who benefit most from them may resort to coercion and organised violence in order to defend their economic interests. The reality is that corruption subverts political processes everywhere and makes rational politics that much more difficult.

2.5 Regional political impacts

Failures of state systems, subversion of the rule of law, state depredation and the persistent political marginalisation of significant minorities are all potent internal sources of conflict. These dynamics are, however, exacerbated by the actions and decision of neighbouring states or powerful external powers. These regional dynamics very often shape and determine the major contours of national conflicts and can best be grasped in terms of sub-regional and regional conflict systems. In the South Caucasus, for example, there are two major bilateral disputes (Georgia and Abkhazia, and Armenia and Azerbaijan) neither of which can be resolved bilaterally; the Russian government is implicitly, if not explicitly, at every bilateral table. Any agreement that does not include the Russians will be subverted and spoiled by them. Similarly in Africa, regional hegemonic states (like Nigeria) and former colonial powers (UK, Belgium and France) influence the ways in which conflicts are defined, understood and dealt with in a variety of ways. Conflicts between them, as for example, between Belgium and France in relation to the Great Lakes often do not generate conditions conducive to negotiated settlement of disputes. Furthermore, the reasons outside actors get involved – like the US, the European Union (EU) and others in Macedonia or before that of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Kosovo – are very much determined by national and regional interest as much as a desire to see the conflicts managed and transformed. All of this suggests the importance of political analyses that capture complex internal and external realities and view them in systemic terms.

One of the deficiencies of many past interventions in conflict at the inter-governmental, governmental and NGO levels has been a reluctance to incorporate economic factors into the analytic or intervention phases. There has been a tendency in the past to assume that violent conflicts can be resolved at the political and civil society levels without paying much attention to the powerful economic motivators and sustainers of violence. This has sometimes resulted in an air of unreality around diverse dialogue and negotiation processes, which sometimes seem rather disconnected from their economic bases.

The local, national, regional and global economic systems underpin both the civil society and state sector levels of activity. These have their own dynamics, with key market (private and public sector) elements sometimes supporting, sometimes obscuring and sometimes subverting peace initiatives. The economic sphere of activity, has been relatively under-analysed by the conflict resolution community (official and unofficial), although recently it has been addressed specifically by organisations such as the World Bank, the United Nations (UN), the Development Assistance

Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) and key NGOs such as the Prince of Wales Business Leader‘s Forum, International Alert (IA) and the Council on Economic Priorities (*see* International Alert 2000). There are three general elements to this concern. The first has to do with relative and absolute deprivation and the role that this plays in the generation of conflict. The second concerns the breakdown of the social contract between state and citizen and unwillingness or inability on the part of the state to satisfy the public sector, developmental and welfare needs of citizens and the third has to do with the competition for and control over natural resources.

All these issues are beginning to be acknowledged within the field, and indeed there is now a specific area of specialization, that of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), which has been stressing the necessity for more conflict sensitive approaches to development planning at macro and micro levels (*see* Gaigals and Leonhardt 2001; and the contribution of Mark Hoffman in this volume).

2.6 Economic greed as motivator

Economic factors have a major impact on conflict. Paul Collier, Mats Berdal, David Malone and others argue strongly that many conflicts can be explained in terms of a competition for control of the production and distribution of natural resources, including land (*see* Berdal & Malone 200). The econometric models that have been developed to test this demonstrate very interesting correlation between conflict and the ready availability of high value commodities such as diamonds, gold and coltan. These arguments suggest strongly that greed is arguably as important as *grievance* in generating conflict (*see* Collier & Hoeffler 1998). As with the political dynamics, these economic motivations need to be factored into conflict analysis. Much more attention needs to be paid to the development of adequate incentive mechanisms for motivating peaceful as opposed to warlike behaviour. ‚Conflict diamonds‘ and the often illegal exploitation of other natural resources such as timber and oil in Sierra Leone, Angola, the Congo and Sudan point towards resource wars being a significant feature in future conflict transformation work.

These are perhaps the more visible examples of the political economy of war, which will become a key framework for helping to understand the causes of internal conflict. Such a framework should be understood in the context of globalisation which suggests that increased economic integration, though it is presenting new opportunities for growth for some, is also generating exclusion and hardship for many others and this may lead to violent conflict. The ways in which it does this are, however, extremely complex.

Wayne Nafziger and Juha Auvinen have advanced one of the more interesting arguments in this area (*see* Nafziger et al. 2000). They demonstrate that low per capita incomes, low or negative growth in incomes and stagnation in agricultural production are important factors leading to conflict. In addition, they note that high rates of inequality are also associated with a propensity to conflict „especially if it reflects or contributes to high inequality among regional, ethnic or class groups“ (Nafziger et al. 2000, Vol 2,3). This idea of horizontal inequality between groups is an important development in thinking about economic sources of conflict because it suggests important new directions for targeting development or economic assistance programmes. The two non-economic factors that Nafziger and Auvinen identify as strongly correlated with violent conflict are levels of military spending and past history of conflicts.

It is a little surprising that the old literature on the political economy of war seemed to be ignored by conflict analysts for so many years, but reassuring that it has been rediscovered and is now

being placed at the centre of new thinking about deep rooted and intractable internal conflicts. One author who has taken this idea further is Georg Elwert with his idea of „markets of violence" (*see* Box 1).

Box 1: Markets of Violence

Markets of violence are understood as economic fields dominated by civil wars, warlords or robbery, in which a self-perpetuating system emerges which links non-violent commodity markets with the violent acquisition of goods. It is the profit implied in the entwined violent and non-violent forms of appropriation and exchange that is the guiding principle of action. A self-perpetuating economic system emerges beneath the surface of moral, world-view and power conflicts – even in the absence of such attempts at legitimisation. It is possible that irrespective of the conscious motives of the actors (such as freedom, honour or revenge) only those actors who pursue economically profitable strategies – irrespective of their intentions – will survive.

Diamonds and gold smuggling in contemporary Congo/Zaire, trade of the drug qat in Somalia, emerald smuggling in Colombia and, last but not least, convoys carrying food aid in Sudan, Somalia, Liberia and Bosnia have made this „protection" the most important source of income during certain periods. An aid organisation paid $1,000 in 1994 to a Liberian warlord for each lorry with medical equipment which he allowed to pass through his territory.

Markets of violence will continue to emerge wherever there is a coincidence of areas open to violence, exploitable resources and corresponding markets, and where the economic environment remains neutral or favourable.

Source Elwert 1999

This renewed attention to the economic element will require shifts in the international community's development policies in order to make them more conflict sensitive and capable of providing economic disincentives to move warring parties away from war and incentives to move towards peace. In many of the conflicts that are afflicting the FSU, sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, these economic dimensions are the critical motivators and sustainers of conflict. To ignore them in favour of more ‚epiphenomenal elements' will mean that there is a very slim chance of their resolution. Political economy factors that will continue to generate conflict in future include: unregulated transnational trade networks, fragile international financial system, the power of transnational corporation and the impact of aid and trade polices.

(i) Unregulated transnational trade networks: The unregulated and illicit trade in war commodities whether it be diamonds, timber, oil other natural resources, drugs, or guns are likely to continue to help explain the persistence of many conflicts (*see* Duffield 1994). The revenues made from these commodities by warring factions is increasingly seen as a key incentive for the perpetuation of war, and the international community will continue to seek ways to regulate the flow of these goods and restrict the funds from them that fuel conflict.

(ii) Fragile international financial system: The financial economic crisis in 1997/8 in Asia and the contagion that spread to many other developing economies drew attention to the fragility of the international financial system and the need to reform it in order to make international financial institutions (IFIs) and other relevant institutions more transparent and accountable to donors and recipients. Although not appreciated so much at the time, the link between neo-liberal economic reforms, political instability and, in turn, conflict is an issue that is of growing importance. There are, for example, arguable connections between the economic reforms embarked upon by

Indonesia and growing violence in Aceh and other provinces. As Susan Woodward (1995) argues, it is also quite clear that economic reform processes certainly complicated the political transitions in the Balkans. However in a more recent study, Christian Morrison (cited in Nafziger et al. 2000, Vol 2, 4) suggests that International Monetary Fund (IMF) stabilisation programmes, while undoubtedly generating local discontent do not cause large scale complex humanitarian emergencies.

> *He [Morrison] distinguishes between ‚soft repression' (involving, for example, strikes and demonstrations and moderate political instability which when repressed may lead to deaths) and ‚hard repression' with major episodes of violence. The history of adjustment in Africa and Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s show that adjustment policies often involved social costs but not humanitarian emergencies.*

In this argument, the activities of the IMF and other financial institutions may generate limited, intense humanitarian emergencies for small segments of the population for short periods of time. Nevertheless, Morrison suggests that they are more likely to accelerate conflict rather than the primary or major causes.

(iii) The power of transnational corporation: Transnational corporations (TNCs) are key actors in many internal conflicts (such as Angola, Sudan, Colombia and Nigeria). The economic interests that they represent must be defended and there are numerous examples where these have resulted in conflict (e.g., the activities of Shell in Nigeria and BP in Colombia). In addition, the wealth and resources available to TNCs often remind other state and non-state actors of their relative powerlessness and inability to have a significant effect over economic affairs. There is growing recognition by corporations of their responsibility to be more attentive to the ways in which their investment, employment and other decisions generate violence, and there are growing opportunities for them to play a constructive role in helping resolve conflict in areas where they work (*see* International Alert 2000).

(iv) Impact of aid and trade polices: The link between development and conflict and how the assistance provided by the international community to war-affected countries might exacerbate rather than mitigate conflict will continue to be a controversial issue. The negative impact of humanitarian aid is seen by some as being relatively small in comparison to other drivers of conflict, but others (including many NGOs) consider it is a contributing factor. It gives governments political backing and allows them to offset social costs to donors, using money thus saved for military purposes (*see* Uvin 1998). The Congo war is a prime example of this. It is hoped that development aid will increasingly incorporate measures to encourage greater conflict sensitivity, but it may prove more difficult to secure effective implementation of this conflict sensitive approach to development on the part of national and multilateral donor agencies. It is likely, though, that in broader development debates there will be renewed focus on how trade relations affect poverty alleviation in developing countries as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) comes under increasing pressure to reform its polices and become more transparent. Although the EU has already focused on how its trade policies might impact upon conflict through the Cotonou Agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, the WTO may well be forced to address these issues as well in the future.

There are other factors such as environmental issues, which are certain to have some impact upon future conflicts – whether these will be precipitated and driven by scarcity or abundance is a matter of debate. The predicted conflicts over access to safe and clean drinking water will clearly be fuelled by scarcity factors. The conflicts over wealth generating minerals are more likely to be spawned by concerns to protect and enhance existing wealth. Fairhead, for example, argues that environmental riches rather than poverty are the major precipitants of environmental conflict as groups struggle to gain control over wealth generating resources (*see* Fairhead in Nafziger et al.

2000, Vol 1, 147-179). He argues that societies become divided between those wealthy or politically connected groups who struggle for control of the resources and the destitute who become the foot soldiers of the struggles.

2.7 Long term conflict dynamics

There are several long-term global dynamics that will have a profound impact on violent conflict over the next 15 to 20 years. Most of these need specific national and international policies tailored for dealing with them. Three such elements are demography, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), and diasporas.

- **Demographic factors** need to be taken into account when considering the origins of future conflict since most recent civil wars are fought by young men who are either unemployed or under-employed. The world population is expected to grow from 6.1 billion in 2001 to 7.2 billion by 2015. Developing countries will account for 95 per cent of the increase, mostly in rapidly expanding urban areas. Given that many of these countries have fragile political systems, the combination of population growth and urbanisation will encourage instability by attracting resources from rural areas and by straining already stressed labour markets. Many states now have a disproportionate number of children under 15 (60 per cent in Algeria, for example). The increasing number of unemployed or under-employed youth in some of the potential conflict zones will provide a ready pool of people who see themselves as having nothing to lose by joining political (or pseudo-political) movements willing to use violence to realise their aims. Many of these people may feel better off in armed groups, able to loot and pillage for their survival, compared to a more peaceful way of making a living (*see* Jackson et. al. 2001, 1).
- The **world refugee situation** will continue to generate discontent and provide fertile recruiting grounds for soldiers and militia. In 1970 there were only two million refugees; by 2001 this number had leapt to over 21 million according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). With no solution in sight for Palestinian refugees, conflict in that part of the Middle East is certain to continue. In West and Central Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus, large refugee groups, if allowed to fester, will also continue to provide the basis for guerrilla bands to form. Recent refugee flows from Afghanistan, for example, are destabilising Pakistan and the region. These humanitarian catastrophes must be counted as major sources of future conflict. In addition, there are millions of internally displaced people in Africa and elsewhere, representing another potential source of conflict unless action is taken to resolve their plight.
- **Diaspora groups** of exiles or expatriates often fund guerrilla movements in their homelands. It is speculated, for example, that Tamils abroad send millions of dollars to the rebels in Sri Lanka every year. To try and resolve the Sri Lankan crisis without taking the interests of the Tamil and Singhalese diaspora into account will yield only partial solutions to that crisis.

3. The Role of Peacebuilders in Transforming Violent Conflicts and Promoting Just Peace

In the light of this analysis of some of the structural sources of organised violence, the challenges facing peacebuilders seem far greater than their current capacity to respond to them. This means that peacebuilders need to maximise their resources wherever possible, seeking higher levels

of communication, cooperation and positive working relations with like-minded actors in the governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental sectors.

For purposes of this discussion, primary consideration will be given to Track II initiatives and how they might catalyse Track I and Track I1/2 initiatives to address some of these harsh political and economic dynamics of conflict.

The NGO conflict resolution and peacebuilding sector, for example, is expanding, professionalising and acquiring more resources to engage in long term conflict transformation processes. However, it remains predominantly Northern, its resources are miniscule compared to those available to the world's military and armed non-state actors and it has limited capacity to challenge the political and economic dynamics of organised violence. It certainly has difficulty dealing with the criminalisation of politics, failed states, predatory states, institutionalised corruption and widespread subversion of the rule of law. The NGO sector cannot ‚mediate with muscle' nor can it enforce solutions to problems. Its strength lies in other areas. It has flexibility, and an ability to respond to human suffering without being politically constrained.

In relation to the transformation of violence and the promotion of just peace it can forge partnerships with local people in conflict zones and respond to the immediate suffering. At the same time it can catalyse discussions and dialogues with those in conflict about ways in which they might resolve their differences, solve their problems and satisfy their human needs. It can and does use its micro-knowledge to try and influence the macro-policy decisions of donors and multilateral organisations in relation to economic development and the promotion of human security.

Sometimes the NGO role is catalytic, facilitating communications between conflicting parties. At other times its role is much more analytical and the processes much more deliberative (e.g., as in interactive problem solving workshops). In all of these activities the basic aim, however, is the same. Most conflict transformation NGOs and academics seek to build on the unifiers rather than the dividers in society on the assumption that strong and resilient communities are the fundamental prerequisites for human existence and security.

It is clear, however, from the preceding arguments, that resilient and tolerant communities are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for conflict transformation and just peace. Because of their dispersed and fragmented character, communities have difficulty mounting effective or sustained critiques of organised economic and political power. In those areas, however, where economic and political power is itself disorganised a little community organisation can be highly effective.

In order for humanitarian NGOs to realise their well intentioned and altruistic aspirations there is a much greater need to have clear and coherent strategies which are linked much more deliberately and explicitly to other official and unofficial Tracks. For all those seeking effective ways of dealing with violent conflicts and promoting just and sustainable peaceful relationships in conflict zones, the challenge is finding ways to share analyses, communicate these to all relevant actors and seek higher levels of synergy between all peacebuilding actors.

To develop better analytic and effective peacebuilding processes, it is absolutely essential that there is a process of radical and critical dialogue between the development and conflict transformation communities. Neither can deliver stable and lasting peace acting alone and neither can resolve the differences between themselves by subsuming the interests of one in the other. In other words, it is not just a question of adding a development or justice dimension to conflict transformation work or a conflict transformation perspective to development and justice work. Rather development and conflict transformation theorists need to sit down with each other in order to identify the comparative analytic and process advantages of both perspectives and ways in which

the theoretical and practical contributions of each might be enhanced. This might produce contributions that are more informed and wiser, thereby aiding individuals, organisations and movements working for social and political change, structural stability and stable peace.

Conflict transformers and development specialists have set themselves a formidable task in trying to transform violent relationships, while helping catalyse processes aimed at challenging structural violence and injustice. The challenge is nothing less than that of devising ways and means of empowering citizens and societies so that they can transform violent relationships. At the same time it is necessary to ensure that economic, political and social institutions are developed (or changed when they are demonstrably incapable of achieving their purposes) so as to minimise the prospects of violence in future and guarantee these processes through time.

In order to do this effectively, it is essential that there are more hard headed discussions between development and conflict transformation specialists about ways in which negative economic processes such as neo-patrimonialism, or clientelist political networks (which benefit certain groups and disadvantage others) can be challenged and changed. These distorted economic processes generate malign social and political outcomes, which increase frustrations. As a result those in power are disposed to consolidate their increasingly untenable positions by violent means or force marginal groups to consider violent options. Too little attention is devoted to these issues in most conflict transformation activities.

To facilitate such discussions, however, requires higher levels of collaboration between development and conflict resolution experts. Instead of leaving such issues to the World Bank or bilateral donors, it is vital to incorporate civil society stakeholders as well, because this will help focus attention on who is included and who is excluded from the allocation of scarce national resources. How to place such issues on agendas so that they can be talked through and discussed is the central challenge facing those seeking not only to stop the violence but also to generate a just and lasting peace.

Although reducing fear, building trust and restoring confidence are all critical elements of any move towards a cessation of violence, they are not sufficient. This requires a much more active politicisation of the Track II conflict resolution process built on a different kind of politics. It demands a less adversarial, problem solving orientation to politics. Perhaps this is the major contribution that the conflict resolution community can make to transform corrupt deficient state systems. It can begin modelling political processes which are collaborative rather than competitive, unconditionally constructive rather than adversarial and where the interests of all are placed at the heart of the political process. This may sound rather utopian but it is essentially the direction in which most of the major development donors are moving.

Box 2: International Alert programme in Burundi: A case study

IA has developed programmes in a variety of violent conflict zones: the Caucasus, the Great Lakes, West Africa, Sri Lanka and Colombia. In all of these places, it has seen its role primarily in terms of catalysing and enabling locals to address their own conflicts and standing along side them as they devise their own solutions to these problems.

Burundi, for example, is an area of fairly extensive IA activity. Staff have worked with political and military leaders in a series of dialogue processes, which have been instrumental over the past few years in helping to lower the paranoia levels and to rebuild a measure of trust between key Hutu and Tutsi factional leaders. They have also developed confidence and trust building programmes between diverse women‘s groups and with the Catholic Church. There has been work with the Attorney General‘s department and the Ministry of Human Rights. Analyses of the Justice and Education systems in Burundi have highlighted some of

the ways in which institutional arrangements are discriminatory and perpetuate grievances across the ethnic divide. All of these activities have been widely acknowledged as useful in terms of generating constructive bridges across a deeply divided community.

The trusting relationships that have been built up since 1995 have also enabled staff to start asking partners more probing and critical questions about some of the more sensitive political issues. Questions have been raised about the integration of the army and the gendarmerie and the lack of Hutu representation in both institutions; also about unequal access to jobs, schools and the benefits that flow from state power. By and large, however, there has not been a systematic effort to locate the dialogue processes or the development of civil society capacity in the context of what Patrick Gaffney (2000) calls, „. . . the economics of ethnicity and modernity and the diverse ways in which the different ethnic groups in Burundi are incorporated/excluded from the modern economy and world market system". This means that although there has been much effort dedicated to rebuilding working relationships across ethnic divides, the underlying economic gap and sources of division have been addressed much more obliquely.

There have been few discussions that have focussed specifically on issues such as, for example, the concentration of the labour force, economic dependence on coffee, budgetary allocations to the rural/urban sectors. Bujumbura and its immediate surrounds, for example, absorbs 50 per cent of the nation's total investment. When this is coupled with the 16 per cent allocated to Bururi – which is home to the political/military elite – this means that only one third of the nation's total investment is available for three quarters of the population (ibid.). This issue lies at the heart of who is included and excluded from Burundian society and yet because of its sensitivity there is often uncertainty about how to raise this and other issues effectively in conflict transformation processes. Dialogues about political economy would generate very different types of discussions than those that concentrate on bridging the Hutu/Tutsi ethnic divide or gaining understanding and agreements between the political groupings of UPRONA (Union for National Progress) or FRODEBU (Front for Democracy in Burundi). They are certainly very different from discussions about ways of incorporating rebels into peace negotiations. All of these have their place in the quest for peace but in terms of developing a just and sustainable peace some of these processes may, in the end, turn out to be more critical than others.

Track I actors (politicians, diplomats, representatives of regional and global organisations, and multilateral financial institutions) are all concerned to work out ways in which they can direct the bulk of their resources towards the prevention of violent conflict, rather than responding to it once it has occurred. There is a deepening reflection on the part of policy makers regarding the positive and negative impacts of different development interventions on violent conflict. This is coupled with a desire for more coherent conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies and for methodological tools that will enable conflict sensitive development to take place (*see* Gaigals & Leonhardt 2001). Conflict prevention is truly at the heart of the political and development agendas.

What remains to be developed is more political commitment and greater recognition of how conflict sensitive development strategies might be mainstreamed and, most importantly, implemented in macro -policy and micro-programmes and project cycle frameworks. There are ongoing discussions at different levels about what constitutes the right programming needs and priority responses at all phases of violent conflicts and there are certainly many discussions about

specific roles, responsibilities, burden sharing and basic operational co-ordination among development agencies. The fact that these discussions are taking place is in itself a positive sign and there is now general agreement that peace, stability and human security should be at the centre of bilateral, regional and multilateral development planning, funding, and implementation in violent conflict zones.

While many of the multilateral development initiatives place economic questions at the heart of their negotiations (e.g. in terms of stabilisation programmes and aid conditionality), these issues are normally missing from many conflict resolution initiatives by civil society. What remains more problematic for Track I actors (as it is for Track II and private sector actors) are appropriate ways and means of raising more difficult political questions.

The principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states mean that official level negotiators often have to ignore many concerns they may have about whether *de facto* or *de* jure sovereign parties are able to exercise effective authority over the territory they control. They certainly have to stifle concerns about state challenges to human security and corruption and about anaemic or ineffective governance. They can discreetly ascertain, through diplomatic representation, whether national elites are promoting conflict or seeking to contain it and develop appropriate responses accordingly; they can also trigger concerns with the UN Department for Political Affairs (UNDPA) or raise humanitarian concerns with the Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA). They may, if the situation is sufficiently serious, ask the World Bank and the IMF to think about new conditionality in relation to corruption and illegal trade issues. The problem with this strategy, however, is that the Bank and the Fund are much more interested in efficiency than horizontal or vertical equity. If, as Nafziger et al. (2000) argue, these are the major sources of violent conflict in many war zones then it is up to other actors to put these items on the agenda.

The realities of international politics make it difficult for state actors to take unilateral initiatives in these areas and the opportunity costs of generating a wider coalition of like minded countries and then mobilising collective political will are often too high. This means that the questions that should be asked remain unasked and the actions that should be taken remain untaken. This is certainly so at the first signs of an impending conflict. The international community still has not figured out effective ways of responding to the acute crisis phases of conflict either. It is reasonably good at monitoring but not good at reacting. It is marginally better at mobilising itself for the post-conflict phases, especially in relation to peacekeeping, civilian policing, development of independent judiciaries, disarmament and demobilisation strategies. Even here, however, the difficult questions about who gets what, when, why and how from different political arrangements are more often than not left to locals to decide.

This may be an area within which the private sector can make an important contribution, since, by and large, business prefers to operate in stable zones rather than unstable; in corruption free rather than corrupt environments and with efficient state systems committed to public welfare rather than inefficient systems committed to greed. Certainly, it seems important that if governments cannot put the difficult political questions on the agenda that there should be Track I support for private sector, local and international NGO actors in trying to work out ways in which they can raise these issues at community and civil society levels. Donor and state support for free and courageous NGOs in war-torn societies is an important way of circumventing narrow interpretations of the sovereign inviolability of states.

The major problem with many of these war-torn societies is that deficient or failed states, by definition, neither have coherent or effective political leaders nor effective civil society actors to respond to bold acts by external intervenors. The international community through the United

Nations cannot and does not want to assume ‚trusteeship' over such societies in order to facilitate a return to viability. Thus political and community leaders in such environments develop vested interests in freezing the conflicts and deriving as much economic and social benefits as they can from rent, depredation, and exploitation of diminishing natural and political resources. This means that conflict transformers need to become much more aware of ways in which they can catalyse discussions about effective, democratic and incorrupt governance and the economic systems that are required to sustain such processes. This is the priority issue for effective conflict transformation and just peace. The prospects for stable and just peace seem very remote unless this issue is addressed and all that it means in terms of the political and economic inclusion of all key groups with a view to ensuring a dramatic reduction in horizontal inequality. Nafziger et al. (2000, Vol 2, 20) argue that

> *Preventive policies need to be applied to all countries vulnerable to conflict, which includes all countries exhibiting sharp horizontal inequalities, all low income countries, all countries with negative growth and countries which have had serious conflict over the past quarter of a century. Preventive action needs also to be concerned with countries in which the state is fragmenting and cannot govern the society in a legitimate manner.*

The agenda, for the future, therefore is very clear. There is a pressing need for all conflict resolution workers to become much more sensitive to the political economy of conflict and there is a much greater need for the development field to become much more aware of the conflict sensitive nature of development. This is going to require new perspectives, new ways of thinking about old problems and new processes for designing truly empowering and emancipatory partnerships between donors and recipients in war-torn societies. The fact that both the development and conflict resolution communities have realised this need is an optimistic sign. There is a reasonable expectation that in the very near future there will be an integration of both theoretical perspectives in the design of different sorts of intervention processes for war-torn societies.

4. Lessons Learned

Some of the lessons that IA and others have learned in relation to the development of these new perspectives are the following:

- First, it is important to *acknowledge the specificity and relative uniqueness of each conflict.* There are some universals – especially in relation to causes e.g. horizontal inequality and predatory states – but these are not as important as the specifics in relation to solutions. This means that the most important work conflict resolution experts can do is provide more than just an adequate analysis of the sources of the conflict, the parties to the conflict and impediments to its solution. They need to provide the best possible analyses of the conflict, viewing it from as many perspectives as possible; from the inside, the outside, the bottom, middle and top; from a socio-economic as well as the political perspective. This means a radical contextualisation of our analysis. Without this, all subsequent engagement is likely to be relatively flawed. Ed Garcia, from IA, is fond of saying „Text without context is pre-text!" To contextualise conflicts well requires a principled framework or Code of Conduct so that parties in conflict know where conflict resolution workers are coming from and whether their intentions are honourable. It also means that intervenors need to be learners first, second and third so that in their learning and listening they can be helpful to antagonists in understanding the issues, changing unhelpful attitudes and modifying negative behaviours and structures.
- Second, it is vital to *adopt a multi-disciplinary and multi-level analysis of the conflict*. It is

fashionable to have a bias in favour of civil society organisations against state systems but the reality is that state systems are absolutely indispensable to the peacebuilding process and need to be analysed and engaged with in their own right. State systems alone cannot deliver peace; civil society organisations alone cannot deliver peace. We need to acknowledge the contributions of both spheres to the solutions of vexed intractable conflicts.

- Third, it is vital to *understand the linkages within and between different political complexes* and the networked nature of relations between the state, civil society, the formal and non-formal economic spheres, criminal and non-criminal groups, paramilitary, police and military elements. In particular, it is necessary to understand something of the relationship between the micro- and the macro-levels of activity and how these are connect to each other. There, is for example, no point making agreements at an elite macro-level which do not have any connections to what is happening at a grassroots micro-level of activity.
- Fourth, it is vital that we get a *more realistic analysis of the political economy of war and violence*. In particular, it is important to know much more about the incentive systems or motivations of those who wage war and the coping mechanisms of those who suffer from war. If we do not know what these are and who benefits and who loses from war we may be able to get a political agreement but we will never win a lasting and stable peace, especially when the economic incentives flowing from instability are greater than those flowing from stability. In West Africa, for example, what enticed Charles Taylor to abandon support of the RUF given that this support resulted in access to the Sierra Leonian multi-million-dollar diamond trade? To what extent did the UN‘s Security Council sanctions policy against Liberia increase the costs sufficiently to modify President Taylor‘s political and military behaviour?
- Fifth, it is important that more attention is focused on conflict dynamics rather than statics. Conflicts must be tracked through time, identifying patterns, trends and shifting coalitions. Tracking the dynamics of conflicts is also helpful to the parties since while one is immersed in conflict one is only dimly aware of the ways in which different actions contribute to escalatory or de-escalatory spirals. They are sometimes pleased to be shown how different conciliatory gestures might make a positive difference to the conflict.
- Sixth, in relation to responses to conflict, it is important to *acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of different actors.* Positive experiences will be unattainable until there is a clear sense of the division of labour in the field: who is specialising in what and how might they be incorporated into the work. At the least, higher levels of complementarity must be ensured; at maximum it is vital to know when to transfer different activities to other groups more specialised than our own. While it may be difficult to get high levels of co-ordination in the field, at the very least we need to avoid competition, and we need to make sure of the motivation for engagement.
- Seventh, *peacebuilding and conflict resolution work must not be dislocated from issues of justice and democratisation*. If a special sphere of activity known as peacebuilding is created that does not have a central focus on coercive agency, then peacebuilding becomes depoliticised and loses its bite. Peacebuilding becomes impotent. Thus, it is paramount to be somewhat sceptical of work that focuses on civil society alone since civil society alone cannot deliver peace. Similarly, states, political systems and elites alone cannot deliver peace so there is a need to ensure that state systems value the role of civil society groups in relation to changing violent attitudes, behaviour and situations.
- Eighth, one of the most important lessons that IA has learned over the last few years is that *external organisations do not solve other people‘s problems* and, if they claim they do, they are

engaged in a deception. All that external organisations can do is to provide a safe space, or some space, within which the local parties to conflict themselves might begin addressing the sources of their conflict and solving it for themselves. The most important principle in conflict transformation work is that it is the parties in conflict who must solve their own problems. Nor can the elite representatives of those groups deliver solutions alone. They have to bring their constituencies along with them and this requires more prior consultation and discussions than most ever undertake before reaching the negotiation tables. Richard Holbrooke, for example, knocked heads together at Dayton and reached a peace agreement for Bosnia that stopped ethnic cleansing, but it did not resolve the underlying sources of the conflict in the Balkans. Furthermore, it did not remove the animosities at civil society level. It did not address the underlying sources of the violence and, most importantly, it didn‘t address the historic grievances in the Balkans which continue to surface today.

- Ninth, there is a *need for proportionality* about what external parties (whether NGOs, IGOs or individual states) can bring to conflicts. The amount spent on non-violent conflict prevention and transformation is still pitiful. It is important to evaluate what is done in different locales in terms of the limited resources available. Nevertheless, it is clear that more could be achieved with better resource management: an area that should be further addressed. It is important, however, to ensure that peacebuilding and conflict resolution do not become the new vehicle for welfare dependency, as development was in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Tenth, much that has been said can be summed up in the dilemma of how individuals and organisations establish empowering and emancipatory partnerships. This is a difficult thing to do but it is vital to peacemaking. Who are effective intervenors? How do external intervenors work to build trust, cultural sensitivity, encourage accountability and promote autonomy? How do such intervenors accompany local partners so that they can ask the difficult questions and transform the problematic structures?
- Eleventh, it is critical that everything we do is aimed at *sustainability*. All of our work is process work and this only has an effect through time. This means that we have to commit to parties in conflict for the long haul, before, during and after conflict. There is no permanent peace, rather a series of negotiated agreements or understandings that enable us to think about the future hopefully and without the threat of violence.
- Twelfth and finally, all of this *work must be imbedded* in some theory of social and political change. What is our vision of a desirable future; what are the visions of parties to conflict; where do they intersect? How sensitive are we to visions that we have difficulty accepting but which might be very salient for others? How do we let go of our own visions so that we might enable the realisations of others and in that process discover some deeper meanings for ourselves.

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