IV. The peace being sustained: operationalizing prevention

MARINA CAPARINI AND GARY MILANTE

The call for a greater focus on preventing conflict has resonated across international forums over the past year (see section II). Former United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, acknowledged that 'preventing and ending conflicts are recognized in the Charter of the United Nations as our first and foremost responsibility to humanity. Yet, that effort is not where our political leadership or resources are currently focused'.[1] The three major reviews of 2015 on peacebuilding, peace operations and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 each called for greater prevention efforts, and for increasing strategic capacities for prevention at the highest levels of the UN, within peace operations, and through resident coordinators and country teams. First, the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture held that peacebuilding occurs not only in post-conflict situations, but also before, during and after conflict, and that more attention needs to be paid to conflict prevention: a wider understanding of peacebuilding that was termed 'sustaining peace' (see section II). Second, the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) called for conflict prevention and mediation to be 'brought back to the fore', with more attention on root causes of conflict and through inclusive and equitable development work.[2] It specifically recommended investing in and building the UN's own capacities for conflict prevention, developing a more integrated UN approach to conflict prevention, the creation of a broad-based, high-level international forum on prevention, and the creation of new regional offices that could engage in preventive diplomacy in fragile regions.[3] Third, the Global Study on women, peace and security emphasized that 'prevention of conflict must be the priority, not the use of force' and the need to implement both short-term, operational strategies and long-term strategies addressing root causes and structural drivers of violence.[4]

The preamble of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly links peace and development, declaring: 'We are determined to foster peace-

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[1] United Nations, General Assembly, *One Humanity, Shared Responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit, 70/709, 2 Feb. 2016.
[2] United Nations, General Assembly and Security Council, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnerships and People*, Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/70/95–S/2015/446, 17 June 2015, para. 38.
[3] United Nations, General Assembly and Security Council, A/70/95–S/2015/446 (note 2), pp. viii–ix; see also the specific recommendations on preventing conflict and mediating peace on p. 21.
[4] United Nations Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (United Nations: New York, 2015), pp. 15, 195.

ful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.'[5] As part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, it further sets out to 'strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime'.[6]

The emphasis on engaging more with conflict prevention continued throughout 2016. In his report for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), Ban Ki-moon identified global leadership to prevent and end conflict as the first and foremost of five core responsibilities to humanity.[7] Further, recognizing that conflicts are linked to 80 per cent of all humanitarian needs, the first core priority identified in the WHS was the need for global leadership to prevent and end conflict.[8] However, humanitarian action also responds to suffering resulting from disaster and, as with prevention of conflict, there is a growing emphasis on disaster preparedness and risk mitigation. The World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Sendai, Japan, resulted in a global framework for the coming 15 years to prepare for future natural and climate-related disasters.[9] It identified seven global targets, including the substantial reduction in global disaster mortality, in numbers of people affected, and in economic losses relative to global gross domestic product, but stopped short of agreeing on concrete financial commitments.[10] Other initiatives include the new Global Partnership for Preparedness (GPP), led by the Vulnerable 20 (V20) Group of Ministers of Finance of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, which will strengthen preparedness capacities for future disaster risks in 20 high-risk developing countries by 2020.[11] The Global Alliance for Urban Crisis was also launched at the WHS, and is conceived as a framework for global urban preparedness, response and recovery, targeting municipalities and affected communities.[12] The New Urban Agenda that was adopted at HABITAT III in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, as a guide for how cities should be planned and managed to achieve sustainable urbanization, seeks to create a mutually reinforcing relationship between

[5] United Nations, General Assembly, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', A/RES/70/1, 21 Oct. 2015, p. 2.

[6] United Nations, General Assembly, A/RES/70/1 (note 5), para. 16.a.

[7] United Nations, General Assembly, 70/709 (note 1).

[8] United Nations, General Assembly, 70/709 (note 1).

[9] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), *The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015–2030* (UNISDR: Geneva, 2015).

[10] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (note 9), para. 18.

[11] Reliefweb, 'New Global Partnership for Preparedness Launched: V20, UN and World Bank Collaboration to help countries get ready for future disasters', 24 May 2016.

[12] World Humanitarian Summit, 'Global Alliance for Urban Crisis: Special Session', Istanbul, 23–24 May 2016.

urbanization and development, and also has a strong, cross-cutting emphasis on prevention.[13]

Shifting towards prevention in practice: avoiding the conflict trap

The concept of 'sustaining peace' emphasizes the critical importance of conflict prevention, which has from the beginning been one of the UN's primary goals, but has consistently failed to deliver, including through the restrictions imposed on the Peacebuilding Architecture in 2005 to work exclusively in post-conflict settings.[14] As mentioned above, the necessity of focusing on conflict prevention was a core finding in each of the three UN reviews on peace and security that were delivered in 2015.

As the new consensus for the need for a renewed UN focus was developing, a deeper understanding of the link between security and development was also emerging. A landmark study published by the World Bank in 2004 clarified the impact that conflict has on development, establishing that a state's experience of civil war—the most common type of conflict today—not only damages the economy during the conflict, but reverses and profoundly retards future development, creating a so-called 'conflict trap'.[15] Conflict further exacerbates and worsens those conditions that initially resulted in conflict (e.g. poverty, inequality, poor governance, ethnic tensions and marginalization from the global economic system), making those countries that have experienced civil war more likely to relapse into conflict. In about half of post-conflict countries there is a resumption of conflict, while a third manage to remain in peace but in a marginalized state characterized by low incomes, slow growth, and a higher risk of recurrence of internal conflict.[16]

Civil war may also have a spillover effect into neighbouring countries through population displacement, the mobilization of diaspora communities and effects on domestic politics, excessive military spending by neighbouring states that may engender a regional arms race, or the spurring of external intervention by regional and in some cases major powers.[17] The spillover risks of civil war are amply demonstrated by Syria, which has created 4.9 million refugees and 6.6 million internally displaced people.[18] The civil

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[13] United Nations, Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, 'HABITAT III: new urban agenda', Draft outcome document for adoption in Quito, 10 Sep. 2016. Endorsed by United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 71/256, 23 Dec. 2016.

[14] Sucuoglu, G. and Hewanpola, T., 'With "Sustaining Peace" can the UN turn rhetoric into action?', *Global Peace Operations Review*, 20 July 2016.

[15] Collier, P. et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (World Bank and Oxford University Press: Washington, DC, and Oxford, 2003), p. 4.

[16] Collier, P., *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What can be Done About it* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007).

[17] Phillips, B. J., 'Civil war, spillover, and neighbors' military spending', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, vol. 32, no. 4 (2015).

[18] On the conflict in Syria see chapter 3 in this volume.

war has caused the spread of conflict to Iraq and has prompted external intervention by Russia, Iran and Hezbollah in support of the Bashar al-Assad regime, while Turkey, the Gulf states and the United States have intervened in support of the opposition.

Moreover, it is the 2.1 billion people living in the 90 countries constituting the world's dangerous places (see section II) that are particularly susceptible to experiencing civil war, because of the conditions that exist in those countries. According to one study, the risk of recurrence of civil war in post-conflict countries more than doubles for 40 years following the end of the conflict, with low-income countries at even greater risk of civil war—both of entering into civil conflict, and once experiencing it then sliding back into civil conflict in the future—and of posing a spillover risk to neighbouring states.[19]

These findings on the conflict trap highlight the value of conflict prevention: avoiding internal armed conflict in the first place, given its comprehensively destructive social, economic and material effects, and its lingering impact, and propensity to result in a resumption of conflict, with ripple effects in the region.

However, international efforts to engage states at risk of conflict remain limited. As noted by the HIPPO Report, a culture of prevention has still not materialized in the UN or among its member states, and conflict prevention remains 'seriously under-resourced'.[20] Post-conflict interventions have included international peacekeeping missions, stabilization (maintaining a negative peace), and the painstakingly slow processes of supporting state-building, including democratization, institution-building and capacity building. This type of approach can be effective. Despite media and popular attention frequently focusing on failures (to prevent genocide in Rwanda, and more recent failures to protect civilians in Darfur and South Sudan), empirical evidence over the past 15 years has confirmed that, on average, the presence of a large multidimensional peacekeeping mission in a country emerging from conflict generally succeeds in maintaining peace in that country.[21]

Institutional development in countries emerging from conflict has become a primary focus of peacekeeping operations once the context is stabilized. Some empirical studies have suggested that democratic political institutions

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[19] Walter, B. F., *Conflict Relapse and the Sustainability of Post-conflict Peace*, World Development Report background paper, 13 Sep. 2010, pp. 8–23.

[20] United Nations, General Assembly and Security Council, A/70/95–S/2015/446 (note 2), ix and para. 30.

[21] Doyle, M. W. and Sambanis, N. 'International peacebuilding: a theoretical and quantitative analysis', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 94, no. 4 (Dec. 2000): pp. 779–801; Doyle, M. W. and Sambanis, N., *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2006); and Fortna, P., *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices After Civil War* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2008).

(i.e. constitutions, democratic elections and power-sharing agreements) have weak to no impact on whether conflict will resume and should be promoted on their own merits, not linked to conflict prevention or used as a benchmark for exit of a multidimensional peace operation.[22] Rather, those researchers argue that it is the presence of military peacekeepers to maintain stability combined with long-term economic development that appear most effective in preventing the recurrence of internal conflict. Recent research has further refined understanding of precursors of the recurrence of war, identifying the perceived subjective quality of established legal institutions and the rule of law in post-conflict states as significant factors in reducing the risk of a return to civil war.[23] In other words, what is important is not whether a legal institution such as an independent judiciary formally exists, but whether the legal institutions are considered strong, effective and impartial. The inclusiveness, effectiveness and accountability of state institutions, especially in the justice and security domains, are the essence of SDG 16. It is also in keeping with a key finding of the World Development Report 2011, according to which 'institutional legitimacy is the key to stability. When state institutions do not adequately protect citizens, guard against corruption, or provide access to justice; when markets do not provide job opportunities; or when communities have lost social cohesion—the likelihood of violent conflict increases', and thus, 'investing in citizen security, justice, and jobs is essential to reducing violence'.[24]

Far from being nebulous aspirations, the concept of positive peace is increasingly being defined, refined and even measured.[25] Peaceful societies are inclusive, accountable and equitable, and are characterized by a well-functioning government, an equitable distribution of resources, low levels of corruption, a free flow of information, an acceptance of others' rights, good relations with neighbours, high levels of human capital, and a sound business environment.[26] These factors are multidimensional and interact in complex ways, representing systems of peace, societal development and resilience. Thus, instead of the traditional conflict prevention focus on violence and conflict-prone societies—what might be considered the pathologies of human interaction—the positive peace approach studies the drivers of peaceful, inclusive and equitable societies.[27]

[22] Collier, P., Hoeffler, A. and Söderbom, M., 'Post-conflict risks', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 45, no. 4 (July 2008), pp. 470–71.

[23] Gleason, K. A., *Building Out of the 'Conflict Trap': The Role of Legal Institutions in the Prevention of Civil War Recurrence*, 24 May 2014, pp. 23–26.

[24] Zoellick, R. B. (ed.), 'Foreword', *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2011), pp. xi–xii.

[25] Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *Positive Peace Report 2016*, IEP Report no. 42, 2016, p. 8.

[26] Institute for Economics and Peace (note 25).

[27] Institute for Economics and Peace (note 25), p. 3.

Common wisdom has held that every dollar spent preparing for disaster saves seven dollars in economic losses.[28] A recent study by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) has sharpened understanding of the costs of violence containment spending on national and global economies. Based on a new methodology working with ten indicators in its Global Peace Index plus three expenditure indicators, the study found that the global economic impact of violence containment in 2012 was valued at $9.46 trillion, or 11 per cent of gross world product.[29] It found that a reduction of world expenditure on violence by 15 per cent would have provided enough money to pay for the European Stability Fund, repay Greece's debt, and achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Possible pathways to positive peace

Even in the face of current uncertainty, there are reasons to be optimistic about the future. All of the examples discussed in this chapter—the Grand Bargain, the Sendai Framework, the Global Partnership for Preparedness and the Global Alliance for Urban Crisis—are indications of positive peace: efforts to invest in institutions today that will improve resilience in the face of crisis in the future. There are many paths to positive peace and some recent developments described below indicate areas where further progress can be made.

The UN's new sustaining peace agenda coupled with the energy of a new Secretary-General could create an opening for multilateral progress on conflict prevention, mediation, support for peace processes and conflict resolution. A new architecture for sustaining peace with an eye towards delivering the 2030 Agenda could support societal reconciliation, institutional reform, and a revitalized commitment to promoting respect for human rights, inclusion and gender equality. This could be more effective if leaders make a global recommitment to principled multilateralism—one suitable to address 21st century challenges.[30]

Where multilateralism falters or fails, regional actors and local leaders are increasingly taking up the mantle of promoting peace with positive

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[28] See e.g. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Preventing Crisis, Enabling Recovery: A Review of UNDP's Work in Conflict and Disaster-Affected Countries, 2012* (United Nations: New York, 2013), p. 8. For empirical research on the ratio of conflict prevention spending to savings see Chalmers, M., *Spending to Save? An Analysis of the Cost Effectiveness of Conflict Prevention*, Centre for International Cooperation and Security, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, June 2004. Chalmers concluded that spending GBP 1 on conflict prevention would generate, on average, savings of GBP 4.1 to the international community (with a range of GBP 1.2–7.1).

[29] Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *The Economic Cost of Violence Containment: A Comprehensive Assessment of the Global Cost of Violence*, IEP Report no. 25, p. 4. On the Global Peace Index see chapter 2, section IV, in this volume.

[30] Independent Commission on Multilateralism, *Pulling Together: The Multilateral System and its Future* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2016).

effect. 'Groups of friends' (less formal coalitions of interested parties, typically regional) and similar structures have played instrumental roles in resolving certain conflicts during the post-cold war period. Collectively, however, their effectiveness has been mixed. Among the key determinants of the effectiveness of a group of friends are the regional environment of the conflict, the group's composition, the demands and behaviour of the conflict parties, the group's internal leadership and relationship with the chief mediator, the timing of the group's engagement, and the phase of the conflict and/or peace process.[31] In successful cases, groups of friends have provided a way for external actors to give support to the mediator, conflict parties and UN bodies by leveraging a different set of resources (funds, knowledge, influence and relationships) and strengthening the legitimacy of the peace process.[32] One example is the Group of Friends on Sustaining Peace, established by Mexico in 2016; an effort by UN member states to prioritize conflict prevention and other recommendations outlined in the sustaining peace resolutions and recent UN reviews.[33] Nevertheless, the potential impact is contingent on the evolving geopolitical landscape and interests of the major powers—namely the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The New Deal for development in fragile situations, agreed in Busan in 2011, built a mutual commitment of national and international partners to 'country-owned and country-led' exits from fragility, and effective use of resources to build local capacities and institutions.[34] The Stockholm Declaration of the International Dialogue in April 2016 reaffirmed the commitment of the membership of the International Dialogue to building on the experience gained and lessons learned from the New Deal, and to build a more 'robust network of countries, organizations, and forums committed to finding new and better ways of building peace and preventing conflict'.[35]

Conclusions

Peace and development is a temporal study of what is possible today, given the prospects and expectations people have of the future. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, policy makers must somehow chart a course for progress in five years or a decade, while facing the very real challenges of today. Development can take at least a generation to achieve, and for some

[31] Whitfield, T., *Working with Groups of Friends*, Peacemaker's Toolkit Series (United States Institute of Peace Press: Washington, DC, 2010).

[32] Whitfield (note 31).

[33] In the Peace Operations Review, the Peacebuilding Architecture Review and the review of the implementation of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; see also Whitfield (note 31).

[34] International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 'A new deal for engagement in fragile states', 30 Nov. 2011.

[35] International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 'Stockholm Declaration: Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World', Fifth Global Meeting, Stockholm, 5 Apr. 2016.

people living in dangerous places this can amount to a lifetime. While it is important to monitor conflict trends, security capabilities and diplomacy, these often reflect only the negative peace part of the peace–violence spectrum. To understand positive and sustainable peace, and therefore the prospects for sustainable development—where it is possible and where progress is being made—it is necessary to monitor changes to the nature of peace in developing countries and the global, multilateral system, which may contribute to violence, negative peace or positive peace.