

Expanding Strategies to Foster Disarmament and Peace

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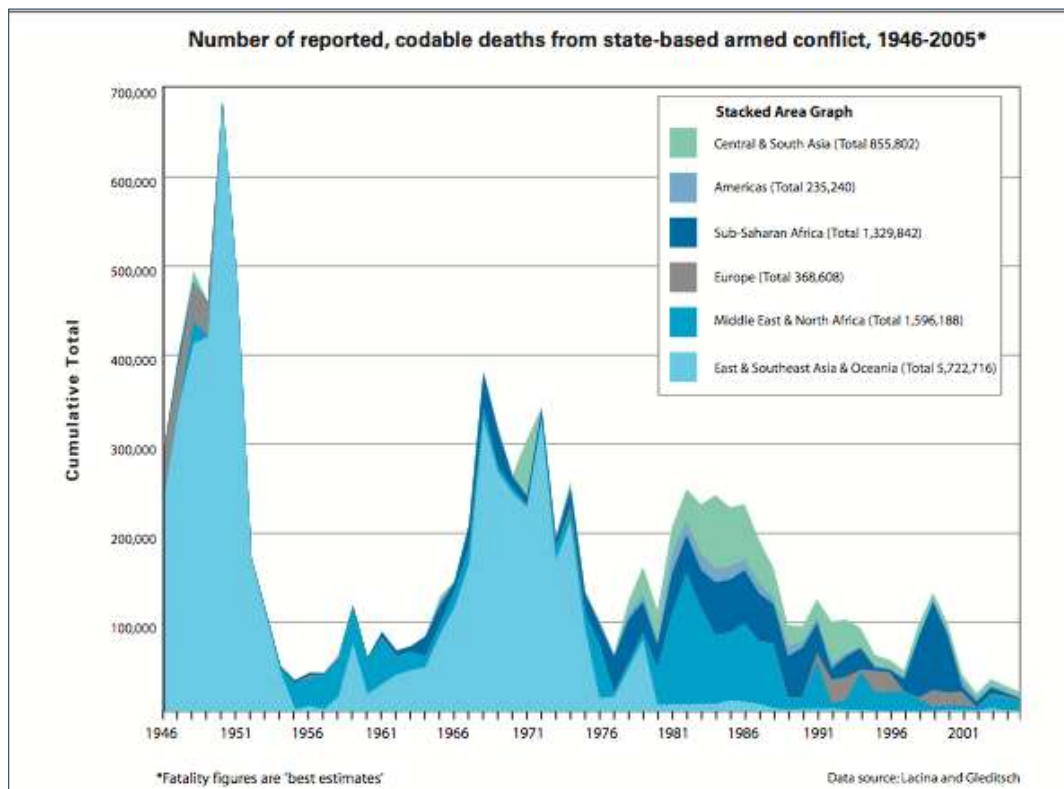
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It is proposed that a community of learning be created between policy makers in nuclear disarmament and those in peacebuilding. Each field has made important contributions to lessen the chances of conflict. Their strategies overlap, but also differ. Together these two fields can help each other expand their strategies and practices.

This paper includes an overview on the status of peace with emphasis on the roles and trends in the peacebuilding community, which may be newer to the distinguished participants in the Dubrovnik conference who are highly expert in the history and strategies used to promote nuclear disarmament. The author regrets that due to illness he will not be present for the important discussions in Dubrovnik.

1. Why Peace is Winning

The number and severity of conflicts (violent clashes where there are more than 1000 casualties) has declined markedly since the end of the Cold War. This is shown graphically below:



Even including a rise in the number of terrorist incidents, these trends hold².

¹ The first two sections of this paper are from an article co-authored with Melanie Greenberg, an outstanding authority, who is President, Alliance for Peacebuilding, with research provided by Cora Lacatus, published in the World Academy of Art and Science's journal, *Cadmus*, October, 2011

The causes of this decline are threefold: Greater reliance on the United Nations; a far larger number of people who have stronger stakes in the stability of their societies; and far greater activity by civil society organizations mediating between potential and actual combatants. In addition, the normative landscape for conflict and intervention has changed considerably in the post-Cold War era. Norms about the appropriateness of using war and violence to resolve disputes have shifted, making it difficult for leaders to wage war with impunity. And Cold—War era presumptions regarding the inviolability of national sovereignty have eased to allow for intervention under the mantle of the UN’s “responsibility to protect.”

Prior to the end of the Cold War, prolonged conflict often served the interests of the two major powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. One thinks of the Cold War battleground of Vietnam and the conflict in Angola that straddled the end of the Cold War. Where superpower standing was at stake, there was a common interest to prolong conflict, and to stoke the fires of local conflict in the name of Superpower rivalry. Hence there was often a shared policy of the West and East to by-pass the abilities of the UN to help reduce some of the main conflicts of the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

After the Cold War ended, it became common policy of all the Permanent Members of the Security Council (the P-5) to turn to the UN to avoid conflict and to broker peace. There was a dramatic upgrading of UN Peacekeeping. From the end of the Cold War in 1989 to the present there was a ten-fold increase in the number of peacekeepers, from 10,300 to the current level of 97,000 military (from 119 countries) plus 20,000 civilians. The number of peacekeeping missions increased from eight very modest missions to 16 more robust missions³. Academic research bears out the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in reducing conflict. The 2009/2010 *Human Security Report* summarizes recent findings, concluding that “an appropriately designed peace operation significantly improved the prospects for peace,” and that the risk of war recurring “was reduced by at least half compared to post-conflict countries where there was no peacekeeping operation.”⁴

Accompanying this was far more active use of UN Security Council sanctions against aggressors; some institutional reforms to make UN peacekeeping more effective; the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission to smooth the transition from conflict to post-conflict normalization (by moving in a coordinated way from emergency humanitarian help, to reconstruction help, to normal development help); and the creation of international criminal law against aggressors including the establishment of special tribunals and the International Criminal Court. All of this considerably expanded the array of UN hard powers to reduce conflicts and the affects of conflict. The work of Paul Collier at Oxford (e.g., *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2009) demonstrated that without long term development and security assistance, conflicts have a way of re-igniting, and when they do the whole neighborhood of surrounding countries usually suffer greatly as well. So it is in the interests of national and regional peace to bind up the wounds of conflicted societies..and this takes many years of concerted efforts. An important case in point is Afghanistan where repeated early leave taking by the international community has left the country prone to new conflict. Arguably the UN and other important parts of the international community are getting better in learning how to help societies move out of conflict and into sustained development. Cases in point are Sierra Leone and Liberia.

² Andrew Mack, “Global Political Violence: Explaining the Post-Cold War Decline,” *International Peace Academy Working Series*, March 2007

³ UN Peacekeeping Fact Sheets, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml>

⁴ Human Security Report Project, Simon Fraser University, *Human Security Report: The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 70, 2009/2010

Certainly there are critiques about the UN's roles. Well researched proposals to improve the UN's peacekeeping operations (e.g., the 2001 report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, known as "The Brahimi Report") have been neglected by the General Assembly due to almost trivial budget considerations. The process of creating ad hoc peacekeeping missions means throwing together all kinds of different military standards, procedures and linguistic groups and troops that have not trained together...all under ad hoc command, rather than having a standing military (which the P-5 opposes). Alas, there have also been a number of well reported incidents of UN peacekeepers abusing civilians they are supposed to be protecting. But far better to have a variably functioning UN peacekeeping force than not to have one at all.

So today the UN has the second largest deployed military in the world, and is very often called upon to maintain peace.

The second main factor leading to a decline in conflicts and the rise of peace has been the sharp rise of the middle class in countries that had been prone to conflict. Quantitative research has found "a very strong association between GDP per capita and the risk of war: high incomes are associated with low risks of war."⁵

It used to be a cliché that no two countries ever got into conflict if they had McDonalds restaurants. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia put an end to that cliché. But the principle remains that people with higher and more reliable income are more apt to opt for peaceful resolution of disputes. This principle is not a stand alone. But it does operate as an important and measurable ingredient for peace. The World Bank's World Development Indicators data show that countries at peace have less poverty, better health, and higher growth than countries in and out of conflict.

The third factor promoting peace is the least appreciated. It is the rise of civil society groups that help resolve conflicts. While UN peacebuilding, peacekeeping and mediation efforts have garnered wide attention in the media and academic writing, the proliferation of private conflict prevention and resolution efforts have remained far under the radar. In fact, there is a thriving ecology of groups working to prevent and resolve deadly violence at every point of the conflict spectrum, in every imaginable topography. These groups are local and international, and are found in all but a very few countries. The professionalism of these groups has been increasing markedly and their impact is profound. Why so? Why not leave peace to the diplomats? The answer is that diplomats certainly have useful roles, but they tend to deal with only part of society (and they may be prevented by political considerations from actual discussion with potential or real combatants), and most often their key job is to keep relations with the party in power. Diplomats representing Great Powers usually are associated with the policies of the incumbents. In contrast, civil society groups can work as neutral entities with both or all sides in a potential or real conflict. They are not wed to a fixed national position. They are wed to finding what can work to allow peoples to live together in peace.

Civil society groups perform a number of useful functions, both in preventing and resolving conflict.⁶ While the groups we mention here are largely American and European, working with local partners, a huge variety of civil society organizations of all nationalities work in conflict zones around the world.

⁵ 2010 Human Development Report, UNDP, p. 3.

⁶ For a full listing of Alliance for Peacebuilding members, all of which work actively to prevent and resolve conflict worldwide, see www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org.

1) *Early Warning*: Civil society groups can voice an alarm when situations are deteriorating. The best known such service is Crisis Group (formerly known as the International Crisis Group), which regularly reports on leading signs of the erosion of peace and cases of rising risks of conflict. A parallel service is Refugees International, which alerts the global humanitarian and political communities when there is a rise in refugees, often a sign of severe upcoming conflict. The ENOUGH Project and the Genocide Intervention Network serve as advocacy organizations, alerting government officials about imminent genocide in Africa, and building political will for intervention.

2) *“Structural” conflict prevention*: An increasing number of groups work very far back in the conflict spectrum, striving to develop strong local institutions that can resolve conflict long before actual violence breaks out. Some of these groups might not even identify themselves as conducting “peacebuilding” *per se*, but nonetheless carry out activities that lead to stronger and more resilient societies that are less prone to violence. The development organization Mercy Corps, for example, embeds conflict prevention into its development work, targeting groups like young men who might otherwise be drawn into violence, and providing jobs and education. Search for Common Ground develops media strategies for better relations between ethnic and political groups, including a long-running radio soap opera in Burundi. Partners for Democratic Change has offices around the world dedicated to strengthening communities' ability to manage change, maximize the benefits of diversity, and prevent and resolve conflicts.

3) *Conflict Resolution*: A huge range of civil society groups works in societies either undergoing, or immediately threatened, by outbreaks of deadly violence. Some groups, like Crisis Management Initiative and Humanitarian Dialogue, offer mediation services at a “second track” level outside governmental channels, and have worked in areas as diverse as Aceh, Somalia and the Philippines. The Public International Law and Policy Group offers legal representation to parties in actual peace negotiations, and serves on the ground in conflict areas around the world to avert election violence (Kenya, Nepal) and promote rule of law (Tanzania, Somaliland). Other groups, like Conciliation Resources and the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy, work with civil society organizations to develop strategies for influencing governmental behavior or changing conflict dynamics. 3P Human Security works in Afghanistan on civil-military dialogue, and prepares civil society groups to engage in discussions about long-term peace in Afghanistan. BEFORE works to avert election violence in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau.

4) *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*: While it is not always easy to separate conflict prevention from post-conflict peacebuilding, an increasing sector of the field is working to re-build war-torn societies, and to prevent a repeated descent into violence. The period after a peace agreement is signed is often the bloodiest time of a conflict, and these groups focus on easing this transition. The Project for Justice in Times of Transition assists leaders in divided societies struggling with conflict, reconciliation and societal change by facilitating direct contact with leaders who have successfully addressed similar challenges in other settings. The International Center for Transitional Justice provides technical assistance for countries establishing truth and reconciliation commissions, and other forms of post-conflict judicial processes.

5) *Dissemination of theory into practice*: Peacebuilding is a field driven to an unusual degree by ideas, with robust interaction between academics and practitioners. Under the cover of academic research, many universities offer peacebuilding services, holding conferences and bringing warring groups together for reflection and the development of new ideas for resolving conflict.

2. Future Trends in Peacebuilding

The active involvement of civil society in peacebuilding shows no signs of abating. In addition to areas of current interest, three areas of increased growth for peacebuilding is predicted: a systems approach to peace; the more active engagement of women in peacebuilding; and a stronger focus on the links between climate change and conflict.

A Systems Approach to Peace

A tremendous challenge for the peacebuilding community to date has been how to realize the *collective* impact of groups intervening in the same conflict arena. Typically, diplomats do not communicate with military actors or civil society groups; civil society groups do not communicate with one another; and actors working in a range of substantive areas – from environmental security to public health to development – do not reach across disciplinary lines to analyze how they might cooperate more effectively for joint gain. One of the most exciting areas of change in the conflict resolution field is the development of a “whole of community,” or “systems” approach to peace. In a whole of community approach to peace, each level of peacebuilding practice interacts consciously with every other, sharing information and dividing labor to form a more efficient overall strategy. Operating at a systems level allows policy makers and practitioners to more fully understand complex conflict environments, find the linkages that should be made between programs, identify leverage points where impact can be amplified, and set the most compelling priorities for action.

3. Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding

A second area of growth in the field is the burgeoning role of women in fostering peace. While women often form the backbone of civil society organizations working toward peace, women are vastly underrepresented as mediators, and as governmental parties signing peace agreements. A typical experience for countries in conflict is for women leaders to work for peace, sometimes decisively and very often with high risk and amazing dedication, only to be quickly subordinated by men at the bargaining table, and in post-war reconstruction efforts like demobilization, disarmament and re-integration programs. This was the common situation in the struggles for renewed national life in Eastern Europe when the Soviet empire was dissolving, and has been found through the range of African conflicts, an exception being Liberia where women were decisive in forcing a peace agreement and then instrumental in obtaining political power.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 31, 2000 called upon all nations to increase representation of women in all decisions making levels (national ,regional, international) to prevent, manage and resolve conflict; and called upon the UN to involve women at all levels in these processes and in peacekeeping operations. The rather remarkable creation of UN Women a few years ago, a major organizational reform of the UN, has reinvigorated interest in and action on 1325. Far more attention is also being given to making sure women are represented at the peace table, as parties and mediators, building on a very weak base of seven percent representation. And sexual violence is finally being recognized as a war crime and treated accordingly by peacekeepers, military actors, and tribunals. In short, the motto of a major new USAID program on women in peacebuilding is apt: “Nothing about them without them.”

Peace and Climate Change

The peacebuilding community – at the governmental level and the civil society level – is increasingly recognizing the links between climate change and conflict. The Darfur conflict,

for example, was properly treated not only as a crisis of governance and violence, but also as an ecological disaster – increasing desertification caused by global warming led to clashes between nomadic and pastoral tribes, who now needed to compete over decreasing amounts of arable land. Many organizations are already helping parties mediate over scarce water supplies, devising creative solutions to scarcity in watersheds ranging from the Middle East to the Himalayas. Negotiating over water has even been called “The Blue Peace,” with the idea that countries that cooperate over water resources will be less likely to fight over other issues. Conflict prevention operating at the margins of ecological change will only increase in the coming decades, bringing a range of scientific expertise, novel conflict resolution techniques, and new forms of cooperation.

4. Potential Collaboration between the Nuclear Disarmament and the Peacebuilding Communities

It is not unusual to find two allied communities operating in parallel and not learning from each other. For example, it took years before the many groups working on population planning and the numerous groups working to combat HIV/AIDS found a way to explore their common interests and their opportunities for synergies.

To be overly simplistic, the nuclear disarmament community is highly expert in formal negotiations and in the technical steps necessary to actually reduce arms. There are many lessons in their work which are not well known in the peacebuilding field. For example, the peacebuilding field is weak in knowing how to achieve enduring reductions in conventional armaments. At the same time, the peacebuilding community has accumulated considerable expertise in helping resolve the kinds of problems and threats that lead countries to desire nuclear weapons. A community of learning between the nuclear disarmament and the peacebuilding fields should start with sharing lessons learned.

Once there is a better mutual appreciation of the depth of expertise and learning in both communities, there will be a sounder basis for both communities to jointly explore issues that could well enhance the performance of both. Among challenges facing both fields are the following:

- The new learning in fostering peace through such strategies as the Whole of Community approach calls for more complex and longer term strategies to foster peace than either field now fully appreciates.
- Several of these strategies would be strengthened by strategic alliances with other fields, e.g., it is already clear that economic development is critical to fostering peace in many parts of the world. It is becoming clear that a special field of fostering peace over environmental issues is quickly rising in importance. Neither field is optimally utilizing the resources of theological leaders in seeking peace, particularly with theocratic regimes.
- Both communities need to find ways to better integrate women in their work and leadership. The practice of women leading to peace but not being part of the peacemaking process must stop as it feeds into creating undemocratic post-conflict societies and, of course, is unethical.
- Neither community is particularly strong in public affairs. Public advocacy, popular campaigns, use of the media and use of modern electronic means of communications while present in both communities are weak in both communities. An example from the United States: last year leading Republicans tried to close down the highly effective US Institute of Peace, a government institution whose budget equals one

fifteen thousands of the Pentagon's budget. It was a close call that exposed how weak the advocacy interests and practices of both communities are.

As the fields of peace building and nuclear disarmament look at their performance they can take pride in a number of important accomplishments. Interstate conflict has been sharply reduced. The global nuclear stockpile has been reduced and the world's great powers do not threaten each other with nuclear annihilation. But both fields also face very significant challenges in the Middle East and South Asia, particularly. Neither field can rest on its laurels. Both fields need to find added creativity to accomplish their important work.

It is time that the two fields find a way to meet together, to learn together and perhaps to work together.