



Peace and Conflict Studies

Volume 4 | Number 1

Article 5

6-1-1997

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Recommended Citation

Harbottle, Michael and Harbottle, Eirwen (1997) "The Two Faces Of Peace Building," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 4: No. 1, Article 5.

Available at: <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol4/iss1/5>

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THE TWO FACES OF PEACE BUILDING

[Michael Harbottle and Eirwen Harbottle](#)

Part I

THE PEACE BUILDING ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS' OPERATIONS

Michael Harbottle

Terminology, if not precisely defined, can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. This has been the case in the way in which the United Nations has been using peacemaking, peacekeeping and, more recently, peacebuilding. *Agenda for Peace*, produced by the UN Secretary General in 1992 suffers from some ambiguity in this respect. For example, it refers to the military performing a peacemaking role. The military cannot *make* peace, that is the role of the diplomat or politician. All that the military can do is to allay, defuse and help to end the manifest violence so that the peacemaking process can better proceed in a stable and calm atmosphere.

In another context, peacekeeping is seen, in essence, as an instrument for putting an end to conflict by whatever military means deemed necessary; hence the escalation of the UN operation in Somalia from a peacekeeping/humanitarian relief operation to one of peace enforcement, with the effect of discrediting the initial operational intention to assist in a peaceful settlement of the intertribal dispute.

Until the publication of *An Agenda for Peace*, the term peacebuilding had not found a place in the UN's vocabulary. If there had been any previous reference to it, it would have been described as a two-word concept or as 'building the peace' -- a reference to the theoretical solution to conflict. Peacebuilding as a single word is something different. It is the practical interactive approach to the solving of the structural causes of violence and regenerating peaceful relations between people and communities which will convert confrontation and 'enemy images' into cooperation and partnership. I first advanced the *peacebuilding* concept as the third dimension, with peacemaking and peacekeeping, in the peaceful resolution of conflict 25 years ago. It is at last being recognized for the important factor that it is.

To sum up the three dimensions of the peaceful settlement of disputes:

- *Peacemaking* is the diplomatic resolution of the politics of conflict.
- *Peacekeeping* is the military intervention and peaceful resolution of violence in a conflict, by non-enforcement means.
- *Peacebuilding* is a set of physical, social and structural initiatives which can help to prevent and resolve the consequences of conflict, and provide post-hostility structural reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Of the three, peacebuilding has to be paramount. Peacemaking and peacekeeping can only be transitory measures. They have no long-term or lasting effect as long as the peacebuilding factor is missing. Peacebuilding is the healing agent which ensures that the structural roots to a conflict are removed. Unless this happens, the conflict is not resolved. It will only repeat itself and the peacemakers and peacekeepers will be required to return.

The United Nations needs to reassess its mechanisms and practices for resolving disputes and countering violence. This calls for a wide ranging review covering all aspects of international security and its maintenance. Security is holistic. The UN needs to look carefully at its institutions and agencies and their capacity for meeting the demands of a holistic approach to security in its broadest sense. It is not my intent to indulge in such a wide-ranging assessment, but to address that part which deals with the practical resolution of conflict.

When Dr. Ralph Bunche, Nobel Prize winner and great UN peacemaker, evolved the concept of peacekeeping as a viable and important role for the UN, he described its purpose in these words: "the real importance [of peacekeeping] is that it does buy valuable time. It is not in itself a political instrument, but it does purchase time in which political developments can take place, and progress on fundamental issues can be made."

Bunche never intended that peacekeeping should become an enforcement agent; Chapter VII of the UN Charter provided for that. What he devised was a method by which international interventions could be effected in situations where international peace and security were under threat, but without resorting to the use of force; interventions which could contribute to the resolution of conflict. Sadly, with the increase in intrastate and inter-ethnic conflict over the last decade and a half and the increasing demand for UN peacekeeping, Bunche's founding principle has been blurred. There is a tendency on the part of some governments, the United States in particular, to use peacekeeping operations as a stepping stone to the more drastic actions of peace enforcement. In Somalia, what was intended as a peaceful UN intervention was turned overnight into an ill-judged enforcement operation in which the American contingent and some others became a party to the dispute. The outcome in both cases was an ineffective and inconclusive military result and the subsequent withdrawal of the Americans. But the more important result of their action was that it damaged the credibility and acceptability of the UN's peacekeeping/humanitarian operation (UNISOM) and seriously jeopardized its effectiveness; to the point where it was forced shortly after to withdraw with its task uncompleted.

This emphasis on the excessive use of force as the means of ending disputes appears to dominate the thinking of the United States on the resolution of conflict. It was not long after the catastrophe of Somalia that Americans were criticizing the handling of UNPROFOR in Bosnia, insisting that enforcement measures were necessary to end the ethnic fighting there, including the use of air strikes and ground action. No doubt they feel justified in this belief as they head up the Implementation Force which has now replaced UNPROFOR. A ceasefire has existed since IFOR has been in place -- a success which derives from the deterrence factor which IFOR's manpower and terms of engagement provides. But this same effect could have been achieved three years earlier had UNPROFOR been given a clear mandate to use force wherever and whenever its mandate was threatened or physically obstructed (as was provided for in the UN operations in Cyprus and Lebanon). But the UN's member states, including the United States, were not

prepared to volunteer the required contingents which would have given UNPROFOR its viability.

The United Nations has evolved a third-party procedure for dealing with conflicts on the ground. Its strength lies in the fact that the peacekeepers work with all sides to the dispute, acting to restore normality and stability without favoring one side or another. So long as the UN operation retains this credibility, it will continue to enjoy the confidence, trust, and, to an extent, the support of the parties to the dispute. It is not the aim of the UN peacekeepers to fight for any specific objectives and add to the violence already existing, but to seek solutions on the ground wherever violence may manifest itself. It does this as far as it can by interposing its troops between the warring factions and negotiating settlements/cease fires/withdrawals where possible. These can often be achieved at the very lowest level of contact and thus prevent an escalation of an incident into a major conflagration. Many have been the occasions when a quiet word or act of conciliation by a junior soldier on the site of the incident has avoided top-level interventions to resolve the problem. And this is where the peacebuilding character of the United Nations operations might be said to begin.

Besides keeping the peace where conflict and violence have ceased or subsided, the peacekeeper also has the responsibility for ensuring that the human and civil rights of the civilian population are protected and permitted to be exercised. Where appropriate, peacekeepers can take the initiative in resolving situations of inter-community confrontation, of fear and feelings of insecurity which interfere with the normal conduct of daily living. In this way the peacekeeper, while halting the fighting, can contribute to the peacebuilding process of restoring relations and interactive capacity between members of the different ethnic groups or communities. This can be well illustrated from my own experience with the UN in Cyprus.

The District of Paphos in 1967 was the scene of a series of reprisal murders in which some twelve Greek and Turkish Cypriots were killed and others just disappeared. The area was dotted with Greek and Turkish villages intermingled with one another. As a result of the murders, all movement between neighboring villages ceased. In some cases, villagers would not venture outside the strict confines of their village to work their fields and vineyards for fear of being murdered. Communication with the outside world also ceased. Normal deliveries of foodstuffs and supplies from Paphos were suspended, medical care and children's schooling stopped, while neither the government nor the Turkish Administration had any solution to offer.

Clearly, it was a situation which could provoke a serious breakdown of law and order and one which had to be resolved quickly. My solution was to visit the most affected villages, some twelve in all, and to talk to the *mukhtars* and elders. What I sought was an assurance that they would not attack or threaten in any way the villages of the other community, Greek or Turk. While admitting to being afraid of being attacked, they all insisted that it was not their intention to use violence themselves. With these assurances we set up a series of mixed meetings, some twenty in all, at which every village in the area gave verbal expression to their assurances, and agreed to the restoration of a complete freedom of movement, and for workers to work in their field without threat or interference. We also arranged for inter-village forums to be set up so that future disputes could be discussed and solutions found without resort to violence. This formula

worked and not only were the assurances respected thereafter but the area remained quiet and peaceful until the end of the inter-community violence in 1968.

As the above example illustrates, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are complementary. Many were the occasions in Cyprus when the UN ensured that farmers were able to sow and till their fields in areas occupied by the opposite community. Other services in the human rights field undertaken by peacekeepers included medical evacuation and escorting children to examination centers. Elsewhere, in the Middle East, UNEF provided the security along the Egyptian-Israeli border for ten years, which made it possible for farmers on both sides safely to farm their lands right up to the borderline -- something which they had never been able to do before without the threat of attack. In the Congo in the 1960s a UN civilian operation linked to ONUC set up a complete administration to ensure a viable infrastructure while the Congolese built up their own Civil Service to manage their affairs after the withdrawal of the Belgians. The UN did the same in West Irian to tide over the territory's transfer from The Netherlands to Indonesia.

Today the problems have become more complex for the UN. The upsurge in inter-ethnic warfare has brought with it a parallel humanitarian crisis, which can spill over into neighboring states. Massive exodus of refugees from one war-torn country creates equally severe security problems in the countries to which they flee. Conflict resolution is as much a preventive as it is a healing process. Peacebuilding has an all-embracing application -- from preventive diplomacy to post-conflict rehabilitation.

It would be desirable for peacekeeping/peacebuilding, because of their humanitarian character, to be 100% civilian, but the reality is that militarily controlled situations require a military peacekeeping presence to ensure the security of the humanitarian operation. Military tend to respect other military and in most cases to accept military decisions. The infrastructure and organizational capability which the military possess can provide the necessary framework within which a humanitarian aid operation has the best chance of success, especially where fierce conflict exists. Therefore, whether one likes it or not, there is a role for the military. But what is lacking at present in the UN's thinking is an awareness of the peacebuilding role open to the military and the understanding of the need to develop an effective structure which combines soldiers and civilians together in a single coordinated operation. The Congo came close to it but not close enough. Today civilian/military coordination is called for throughout the whole mechanism of the UN's management of conflict resolution -- in the planning, the direction, the conduct and the execution of peacekeeping operations. It should be a joint responsibility, varying in degree between civilian or military as the operational circumstances require. But the underlying principle which must prevail is that the operations should not focus on enforcement, *peacebuilding* should be the primary consideration.

So what does the United Nations need to do to improve its peacekeeping/peacebuilding technique? I suggest the following:

- incorporate the practices of peacekeeping and peacebuilding within the provisions of the UN Charter, defining specifically their terms of reference and modus operandi as being distinct from enforcement measures provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter;

- create an agency (joint military/civilian) to be responsible for the planning, conduct and execution of peacekeeping/peacebuilding operations (or an extension of the existing Military Staff Committee);
- broaden the concept of its operational responsibilities to include humanitarian and disaster relief operations;
- devise standing operating procedures and rules of engagement to ensure the protection of UN forces and their ability to fulfill their mandates against any threat;
- establish centers of training in joint military/civilian operations, using existing national staff courses for the training of commanders and staff for UN operations;
- undertake a study of the peacebuilding practices called for in the preventive conflict phase, the conflict phase itself, and the post-conflict phase;
- establish an archives section in the UN, to hold records of operational orders and directives, field reports and diaries and commanders' assessments from past and present operations; to ensure that lessons learned are not forgotten or ignored and that successful initiatives and decisions taken are properly recorded and readily available for future attention.

We need to understand clearly that conflict resolution is not just the successful defeat of the enemy and an end to the fighting (e.g., the Falkland Islands and the Gulf Wars), but the restoration of law and order, social and economic stability, the guarantee of peoples' human rights, rehabilitation of the structures of society and government, the reestablishment of peaceful relations (interstate, intrastate, inter-ethnic) and the ending of the structural violence which prefaced the manifest violence. Peacebuilding indeed!

Above all, it is good to remind ourselves that the essence of all conflict resolution is *peacebuilding*. In the words of the Chinese philosopher and military historian, Sun Tsu, who lived in the 4th century BC, "To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting, that is the acme of skill."

Part II

PEACE BUILDING Eirwen Harbottle

It is only fairly recently, since Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali's *Agenda for Peace*, that the term "peacebuilding" has come to be recognized as a specific activity within the UN. In the Centre for International Peacebuilding, we have been using this term for 13 years in many aspects of our work. These many aspects often exasperate people. "Why can't you stick to one thing and do it properly?" one executive of a well-known multinational complained. This, after having heard that over the years we had published three books on verification technologies; another during the cold war era of the 1980s, aptly entitled *War Games that Superpowers Play*; that we had sponsored a group of British child psychologists to visit the Peto Institute for Motor Disabled in Budapest to study a methodology that had achieved remarkable results in educating

brain damaged children; and that we had pioneered a kids' musical, "*Peace Child*," which had traveled the world drawing in young people from every continent to visualize the kind of society they wanted to live in 25 years hence. That item was generally the last straw. We were perceived as plainly irresponsible.

So why this grasshopper behavior, jumping about from issue to issue? It was because as we looked at the world today, at the wars, at the ugliness of fundamentalism, but most of all at the helpless, traumatized refugees who are victims of our inability to live together peaceably, we felt forced to ask ourselves: WHAT IS GOING WRONG? And where are the healing forces that are so sorely needed by so many people in so many places? We concluded, very definitely, that our thought processes are often wholly inappropriate. We seem to hobble ourselves by circumscribed thinking; by not seeing the kind of connections which could get us working together so we might outgrow our prejudices.

I recall a visit by a young Canadian early in the 1980s when I was Secretary of the World Disarmament Campaign in UK. He was from the Kundalini Institute and he asked whether in our new campaign we were thinking of how people actually *are*. When I asked what he meant, he explained that we have four specific attributes: we are part intellectual, part emotional, part practical and part spiritual. And unless we understand the need for a balance between these four, we will get into trouble. I told him that nobody had suggested we think like that. We were just campaigning for the Second Special Session devoted to Disarmament at the UN in 1982. We were canvassing signatures for a petition. But I have since thought a lot about that young man.

To be a successful peacebuilder, I believe we have to keep in mind each of these human attributes. We have to sense when it is not possible to expect too much of people; that there is a time when understanding finally dawns, though not necessarily at the same time for each person. But even so, when a front door seems closed there is nearly always some side door through which to enter -- and that has been the fun of our experience over the years. One just has to keep one's eyes open, looking for the openings and opportunities that may bring about changes in attitudes.

To go back to the Peto Institute. In 1983, when President Reagan was inveighing against the 'Evil Empire' in the east, I read one day in our *Guardian* newspaper that the Hungarians were achieving miracles in educating brain damaged children -- teaching them to play chess, to skate, but above all to control their bodily functions. In Britain at the time it was the accepted wisdom that such children could never be taught even bowel control. They would have to carry a bag around all their lives. It struck me that one could bestow no greater gift on a child than to ensure his dignity through caring for his own hygiene. And how could one call people 'evil' when they were so tenderly training these children to care for themselves? Moreover, the Hungarians were basing their methodology on the work of two Russian psychologists -- Luria and Vigotsky. We had been given 1,000 to devote to 'confidence building' and it had been perplexing to know how best to use this money. But here seemed to be a wonderful opportunity to build a bridge of respect and understanding between two sides in the cold war. So we gave the money to the Department of Child Psychology in Birmingham University and a team of four went to Budapest to see what this Conductive Education was all about. The term 'conductive' is like the conductor of an orchestra, we were told. It means that every part of the child is seen as belonging to a

coordinated whole -- mind, limbs, emotions and the spiritual element which is love. The team returned elated and thus began an ongoing collaboration between Britain and Hungary -- iron curtain or no iron curtain. In time, hundreds of anxious parents besieged the Hungarian Embassy and the University team to seek their help. Now Princess Diana is Patron of the British Institute for Conductive Education and we believe that the 1,000 could not have been better spent back in 1984.

More recently we learned that in mid-Wales there were problems about rehabilitating badly degraded land where there were once open pit coal mines. The Head of the Geography Department at what is now Brooks University, Oxford, wanted to replicate a successful methodology pioneered in similar terrain by the Bulgarians, where they had planted indigenous trees whose roots gradually broke down the old coal tailings. But our National Coal Board would have none of it. At vast expense, they blanketed the undulating region with topsoil, sowed grass seed and invited local farmers to use it as grazing ground. The seed germinated and the grass came up. But being Wales, the rain came down. And because there was no drainage in the iron-hard ground, moss superseded the grass. Sheep don't like moss and soggy moss gives them footrot. Before long, little islands of moss slid down the hillside, leaving the area in its former dismal state.

After some research we discovered that although there was an area in private ownership where one could conduct a pilot project based on the Bulgarian experience, the owner was not sufficiently interested to spend the modest sum that would fence it off. It seemed such a fun challenge that we decided our Centre could meet the cost in the interest of 'peace and confidence building'. The Bulgarian foresters came over to share their expertise. Volunteers turned up to help in the excruciating work of digging holes in the rock-hard mixture of coal and clay and to plant the little seedlings. Soon the project was adopted by Earth Watch and volunteers spent good money to come from all over -- environmentalists from Africa and Eastern Europe, pensioners from California, kids from anywhere, working on the bleak Welsh hillside, digging, planting, measuring growth from the previous year, monitoring the run off of rainwater, and all with the utmost good humor and commitment. When we join the volunteers, getting wet and muddy alongside them, we are asked at supper time to say why we think this is one of the best kinds of peacebuilding. Our reply is that when academics and others of all ages actually choose to work together for a common purpose, in the process they will find a new kind of energy and commitment for building a better world. This actually is what the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 recommends: that people should work together for a common goal in the interests of reconciliation and mutual respect. The sad thing is that it is hard to find anyone who has even heard of, let alone read this fabulous blueprint for peace! But it has been the inspiration for our Centre and it has given us untold pleasure as well as a lively hope for the future.

But the most significant of our concerns over the years has been watching -- and often helping -- the progress of *Peace Child International*. The musical "*Peace Child*" had been our initiative back in 1981, when we were with the World Disarmament Campaign. At that time it seemed pretty clear to us that the protests of nuclear disarmers in 'demos' around the country were cutting no ice with the politicians or those on the right of the political spectrum. How could we find a 'side door' into their condition of psychic numbness? And what sprang to mind was the example of "The Emperor's Clothes." It is one of the world's best loved stories simply because in it the

child blurts out the truth in the way that only children can. So we brought together Bernard Benson, author of the "*Peace Book*," which told how children had led the way to bringing peace to the world, with David Gordon, composer of the compelling modern oratorio, "Alpha Omega," that we had seen premiered at Coventry Cathedral in 1980 -- and there was our musical! The author/producer was my son-in-law, David Woollcombe (this was a distinctly family operation). In the teeth of opposition from colleagues who considered our ideas to be a piece of irresponsible whimsy (what on earth can *children* do to alter mindsets?), we obtained money from Buddhist sources and *Peace Child* saw its debut at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Well known actors gave their time for free and it was a knockout for the 3,000 people in the hall on that last night of Disarmament Week 1981. The 12-year-old boy who played a lead role needed no script. His passion tumbled out in a torrent of devastating kids' logic so that the late Nobel Peace Laureate Sean MacBride, who was present, turned to Michael and said: "You can't leave this here! You have got to take it to the UN!"

Inspired by that challenge, my young family took themselves off to Washington, DC, where the following year *Peace Child* was premiered at the Kennedy Center in conjunction with the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, in the presence of the Soviet Ambassador and a packed house. From then on, this musical has grown into a worldwide movement. In due course, the focus shifted from cold war confrontation to collaboration on environmental protection and understanding the elements of sustainability. The world's kids have now produced three fantastic books: *Children's State of the Planet Handbook*, based on research by 2000 kids and launched at the Rio Conference in 1992; *Rescue Mission: Planet Earth* -- a children's edition of AGENDA 21 (1994); and *A World in Our Hands*, a kid's tribute to the UN on its 50th anniversary. The last two publications have been sponsored by four UN agencies, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNEP, who recognize the ability that young people have to make complicated issues more plain. Adults now comment that for the first time they understand what AGENDA 21 is actually all about. The kids have explained it so much more vividly than the 40 chapters of the official UN document. On May 1, 1995, at the UN, *Peace Child* kids presented their "Indicators Pack for Sustainability." They have also met with leaders of the Commission on World Governance, surprising them by their capacity to understand such "adult" matters. Our hope is that in due course there will be dialogue between these young people and the growing number of retired military leaders who are prepared to take a holistic view of global security. And our bet is that it will be the kids who will hasten the debate in the public arena.

To sum up, we believe that confidence building is really an art form and one that needs to be acknowledged far more than it is at present. It does call for a certain generosity of spirit, for it is one thing to see an opportunity but quite another to be prepared, once having effected the introductions, to step back and allow others to get on with the business of collaborating without presuming to interfere. Perhaps it comes more easily to the elderly, like ourselves, who are more conditioned to watch from the sidelines, lacking the energy to dash around on the actual pitch. One thing is certain though. This type of facilitation of peacebuilding needs to be promoted and the philosophy of the Helsinki Accord is its inspiration. Interestingly, even Chapters 7 and 8 of the NATO Handbook advocate collaboration in the fields of science and environment to promote 'confidence building.'

Finally, to address the controversial issue of our spirituality. Although I am a Christian, I have every respect for people of other faiths and believe that in these times of social breakdown and huge change, there is a growing need for some supporting spiritual anchor. It seems to me that in times of disaster and loss, to know that one can somehow link, in energy or spirit (whatever one chooses to call it) to friends or loved ones through sharing the same invocation for sanity and hope is something very important. World Goodwill has a project which does just that. Through their Triangles Network they promote the sharing of 'The Great Invocation.' The time of day for repeating it is irrelevant. The point is that in becoming involved in such a worldwide network of literally thousands of 'Triangles' one is furthering an energy field of profound significance and solace:

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let Light stream forth into the minds of men
Let Light descent on Earth.
From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let Love stream forth into the hearts of men
May Love return to Earth.
From the center where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.
From the center which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.
Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.