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International Conflict Resolution:
Some Critiques and a Response

Tom Woodhouse

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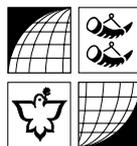
UNIVERSITY OF
BRADFORD

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE STUDIES

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1   Introduction

This paper is an attempt to explore some of the critiques of conflict resolution that have appeared in the academic literature during the past few years. In essence the thrust of these criticisms amount to serious questions about the capability of outsiders (and especially those intervening from the West) to influence and secure peace processes by negotiation and agreement. Indeed, it has been argued that attempts at impartial intervention can actually fuel and prolong war and its miseries. Linked to this kind of criticism is the idea either that the Western model of conflict resolution (promoted through the UN, for example) is fundamentally flawed. This is so because it is inadequate in both its analysis of the causes and dynamics of contemporary armed conflict, and in the prescriptions that follow from this analysis.

Three critiques in particular, presented by David Shearer, Christopher Clapham, and Mark Duffield, are considered. They raise serious issues about the nature of conflict resolution, and it is important that they be responded to for a number of reasons. Firstly, they tend to imply that force becomes the arbiter of change. Secondly, they may also encourage inactivity and paralysis in the face of what are perceived to be overwhelmingly powerful forces of global structural change, on which we can have no influence. Thirdly, they make very little reference to the literature on conflict resolution and, therefore, dismiss or are ignorant of perspectives coming from this literature. These perspectives do not provide such a negative view of the ability of the international community to intervene effectively in conflicts, guided by an impartial humanitarian concern for the victims of conflict. Fourthly, there has been a proliferation of 'non-official' conflict resolution organisations in the last ten years or so whose work in areas of conflict throughout the world has been built upon principles of non-violent peacemaking. This practice of non-violent conflict resolution provides the basis for a global 'peace praxis', that is the development of skills,

processes and resources necessary to sustain and develop cultures of peace. This dimension of practice is also largely ignored by our critics.

In the first section of this paper I will consider three critics of conflict resolution and, in the middle section, argue that they have inaccurately or superficially represented the significance of conflict resolution theory and practice. This is so firstly in relation to lessons learned about the use of force and the relationship between UN peacekeeping and conflict resolution; secondly in relation to the supposed assumptions of the conflict resolution field about the nature of conflict; and thirdly in relation to the nature of third party roles, and the dynamics of peacebuilding from below. The response to critics comes in section 3 (on the use of force and the development of peacekeeping); in section 4, (restoring harmony or negotiating change? the role of third parties); and in section 5 (restoring peace with justice, peacebuilding from below). In conclusion it is argued that conflict resolution has moved beyond reliance on a western model and has become a global practice. Difficult judgements remain to be made about the relationship between conflict resolution and the use of force, and about the relationships between outsiders and local peacemakers. Yet if the project of finding alternatives to the misery of war is a significant one for the international community, the work of those who identify themselves as theorists and practitioners of conflict resolution cannot be lightly discounted.

2.   Three Critics

The first critic to consider is David Shearer (1997). He argues that attempts to resolve conflicts in the 1990s are based on different assumptions than those that dominated the Cold War era. Now the stress is on promoting multi-track efforts to reach agreements in civil wars by negotiation, consensus and compromise, whereas conventionally, western policy was targeted at promoting victory by one side or another in civil wars. Shearer, reflecting on events in Sierra Leone, questions whether

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the consensus promoting strategy, based on impartial mediation and negotiation by the international community, is appropriate in all cases. In particular, he suggests that what have been typified as 'war lord insurgencies' may be especially resistant to resolution by consent and negotiation. In these situations, the role of military force in the resolution of conflict may need to be better understood.

The implications of these and similar arguments can be seen as a direct challenge to some of the core assumptions and approaches of conflict resolution, which in this analytical perspective are perceived to be ineffective, lacking in prescriptive guidelines for policy-makers, and even positively harmful. This is so because the pursuit of mediated settlements can have the unintended effect of prolonging the conflict, with civilian populations suffering most, while military action might have the effect of foreshortening the conflict by persuading those losing ground to accept a settlement. Citing Stedman and Licklider, Shearer observes that in civil wars, in general, most settlements followed a military victory rather than political negotiations or mediated interventions. Shearer is not advocating military action rather than consent based conflict resolution, but rather pointing to the need to examine carefully and to understand more about the limits (and possibilities) of consent-based strategies. This is given further urgency at a time when there may be an implicit move by states in the direction of preferring conflict settlement by force (even to the extent of contracting the services of specialised mercenary forces).

Christopher Clapham (1998), based on an examination of the conflict in Rwanda, adds further words of warning about western conflict resolution assumptions. Like Shearer, he suggests that in recent years the international community has been actively involved in intervening in civil wars and has, in the process of this intervention, articulated a standardised conflict resolution mechanism that has been universally applied. Clapham argues that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the victors of the cold war (that is, Western capitalist liberal democratic states led by the USA, as

well as NGOs and international agencies often funded by those states) set about a programme of international conflict resolution. These programmes followed processes and rules made in the image of these victorious institutions. The processes and rules of the post-Cold War approach are quite different from those that guided Cold War policy which gave a privileged place in conflict resolution to sovereign states, and to the territorial integrity and the non-intervention norms that are associated with them. State structures were to be kept intact, and the only movements that challenged existing state structures with some legitimacy were those involved in liberation struggles against colonial regimes.

Post-Cold War, the special status of states was diluted. All parties to a conflict were accorded a 'standing', and the break up of the Soviet Union meant that secession and independence from existing states became a recognised form of conflict resolution. The inviolability of state sovereignty was challenged, as democratic values and respect for human rights became part of the international humanitarian value system, and opposition groups, claiming to be victims of state repression, could be admitted to peacemaking processes on terms broadly equal to state authorities. Following this change in standing of conflict parties, a new model of conflict resolution was indicated. Cease-fires were negotiated to provide space and time for an agreed peace settlement; the peace agreement was in turn tied to a process of third party mediation, which itself carried the values of Western liberal democracy.

The basic model of conflict resolution to emerge from this had two variants or mechanisms through which a peace agreement was to be fashioned. In one variant of the model the parties negotiated an agreed constitution (based on multi-party democracy and respect for human rights) followed by elections under international supervision (Angola and Mozambique in the early 1990s). In the second variant a provisional coalition government is formed to introduce a series of confidence building measures (disarmament under international supervision), which would make

it possible to agree a new constitution, and then to have multi-party elections (attempted in Somalia and Liberia). In most cases, where variants one and two of the model have been used, international peacekeeping forces were used to supervise the peace process. In Rwanda, variant two of the model was applied, with disastrous consequences. Extremist parties, who were committed to an ideology of Hutu exclusivism, used the Arusha peace process, which was being managed by the international community, as a cover and during a phase when they effectively organised the genocide that occurred in April 1994.

In advancing this argument, Christopher Clapham does not claim that he is offering a general critique of conflict resolution, nor does he offer guidelines for policy in general. He does suggest that, based on what happened in Rwanda, we might be wise to exercise much more caution in our use of intervention strategies in civil wars. His fundamental point is that the conflict resolution model may be inherently flawed, its rules and prescriptions taken for granted. Reflecting on the Rwanda experience, what were the flaws in the peacemaking strategy? The approach did not recognise the need for the resolution of the deep-seated differences that caused the conflict. The timescale for effecting the peace process was short. The approach was mechanistic, and ignored the need to fashion a basic political agreement that rested on the support of key actors who shared at least some commitment to ideological norms, necessary to underpin the peace process. In relation to the latter point, Clapham raises a profound question about the 'western' assumptions built into the model, principally in the idea that the viability of negotiated solutions to civil wars rests on the assumption that conflict parties share a common value framework, within which differences can be negotiated. In Rwanda, says Clapham, this idea was 'fundamentally misconceived', and even in western culture it is a relatively new assumption historically, with most major conflicts from the 16th century onwards fought to a conclusion, either with a victor emerging or with mutual exhaustion resulting in a compromise settlement. A second assumption in the model that was not challenged was the idea that mediation is inherently a good thing,

being a neutral action and intended to fulfil humanitarian concerns. In reality mediators are not neutral by-standers, and in Rwanda they may have created conditions which allowed extremists groups to organise genocide, while they (the mediators) were pursuing a negotiated settlement to which the Hutu extremists would not have subscribed. Eventually, the war in Rwanda was ended, not by the three and a half years of international mediation, but by the military victory of the RPF.

In the aftermath of the war, as the new RPF regime attempted to establish control over the country, large numbers of NGOs arrived, as part of a major international response, to provide humanitarian assistance. Clapham raises significant questions about their role and impact. He raises three areas of concern. Firstly, that they adopted a victim complex, seeing all the refugees in the camps in Zaire and Tanzania as victims of the conflict, when many of the camps were controlled by the extremists responsible for the genocide. Secondly, they developed a juridical complex, following western legal norms about trial and punishment, when these norms could not be implemented in Rwandan conditions. Thirdly, they carried a reconciliation complex, where some NGOs promoted rehabilitation of individuals implicated in genocide, again, according to Clapham, of limited applicability to the situation in Rwanda. At this level also, therefore, 'the application to African conflicts of the values of Western civil societies' gave rise to problems, adding further force to the idea that the appropriateness of the Western conflict resolution model needs to be more extensively examined.

Another influential critic of the assumptions of methods of conflict resolution is Mark Duffield. Duffield has argued that rather than being an aberrant, irrational and non-productive phenomenon, contemporary internal wars may represent 'the emergence of entirely new types of social formation adapted for survival on the margins of the global economy' (Duffield, 1997, 100). Actors like the international drug cartels in Central and South America, and rebel groups in West Africa, have effectively set up parallel economies, trading in precious resources such as hardwoods, diamonds, drugs

and so on. Although this does not apply to all internal conflicts, there are war zone economies where civilians are seen as 'a resource base to be either corralled, plundered, or cleansed' (Duffield, 1997, 103). Humanitarian and development aid is captured, and humanitarian workers kidnapped, held hostage and killed. These wars can be seen to be both lucrative and rational for those who can take advantage and are prepared to act violently to gain power.

Conflict resolution projects in this critique can be seen as part of a 'delegitimising discourse' which has enabled Western regulation of third world politics. (Duffield, 98). Duffield and Clapham's critiques overlap at this point. With the collapse of 'Third worldism' and of 'international socialism', the liberal-democratic model of capitalist development has emerged unchallenged in the 1990s. The implications of this for the political settlement of conflicts has already been pointed to by Clapham. For Duffield, in the field of development, it means that inequality, economic growth and resource distribution are issues that have been sidelined in favour of the 'human development' paradigm in the 1990s (Duffield, p. 80). This largely involves securing 'behavioural and attitudinal change', so that people can 'cope with their situation' and be supported in 'mitigating the risks and stresses involved' (Duffield p. 80). Thus underdevelopment, and more recently transitions to democracy, have been 'internalised', that is seen as issues of the internal, domestic relations of the countries concerned. The process of change then becomes one of supporting behavioural change in civil society in conflict afflicted countries. In pursuit of this goal, aid has been privatised, NGOs have become the main agents of change, and conflict resolution 'represents an extreme form of this paradigm.' (Duffield, p. 80)

For Duffield, the whole approach of conflict resolution is questionable because of the assumptions on which it is grounded. Conflict resolution, he claims, 'is based on a socio-psychological model'. This model assumes that functional harmony is the natural state, and conflict is an aberrant and irrational condition which is

dysfunctional. The model also assumes that the origins of conflict lie in localised misunderstandings, ignorance and disagreements that may then lead to war. Conflict resolving interventions are intended to remove misunderstandings and restore functional harmony through a number of strategies:

Firstly the use of multi-track diplomacy to energise a peace process through the efforts of international, regional, national and local actors. The end goal of the peace process is 'a strong, plural civil society.' (Duffield Report, 95).

Secondly, plural institutions are encouraged by small-scale resource distribution to encourage co-operation on joint projects, by the promotion of multicultural projects, and so on.

Thirdly, the use of 'psychological interventions' directed towards re-establishing confidence and trust between groups. These interventions occur through conferences, workshops and programmes of training in conflict resolution skills designed to provide 'psychological and inter-personal tools for defusing potentially tense situations'. (Duffield, 97)

Duffield has a number of specific criticisms and problems with the model, which may be summarised as follows. Firstly, the way in which conflict resolution training provides 'concentrated immersion within the socio-psychological model of conflict', can look more like indoctrination than training. Secondly, the concentration on communications breakdowns and individual failings means that all people in conflict situations are as bad as each other. All are victims. This means that, in effect, the perpetrators of political violence are absolved from blame (peace is placed above justice in the model), and that in any case they rarely participate in the conferences and training prescribed by the model. Conflict resolution training does not impress Mark Duffield, presenting 'little threat to those in power'; providing Western donors

with a cheap means of 'doing something' in conflict situations; and even because it may be conducted by 'people who are without professional qualifications' (Duffield, 97). Finally, he has linked conflict resolution, together with aid and human development programmes, with a critique which sees Western intervention generally as a new form of imperialism, where 'Western humanitarian and liberal democratic discourse has the effect of disqualifying local political projects as inadequate or lacking' (Duffield, 98). In Africa, NGOs have undermined local capabilities and have 'made matters worse'.

It is not the intention in this paper to take on the task of replying to all of these criticisms, point by point. To a large extent, they amount to a concern about three core areas. Firstly, on the use of force (raised by Shearer and Clapham). Secondly, on the nature of the Western and interventionist motivations behind the conflict resolution model (in Clapham and Duffield). Thirdly, on the prescriptions for action which come from the model, which are based, it is alleged, on a misunderstanding of conflict especially by western NGOs (in Clapham and Duffield). These questions are considered in turn below.

3 On the use of force and the development of peacekeeping

Shearer pointed out that intervention might prolong the misery and suffering of civil wars by unintentionally prolonging the conflict. However, as he recognises, the costs of military enforcement or victory by one side over another may be as high, or higher, than political intervention. In some cases (Somalia), it did not work (Duffey, 1998). In others where it did work, the winning side has gone on to commit genocide against the defeated. There is in short no such thing as a military 'quick fix'. In answer to Shearer's question, the humanitarian imperative (the need to apply internationally agreed humanitarian standards) compels that serious and sustained attention be given

to understanding the processes and circumstances by which the conclusions of conflict resolution approaches can be operationalised. The point is not to encourage victory by one side, in cases where civilian populations on both sides have become the targets of combatants, but to link forceful intervention, which is internationally legitimised, with consent-based strategies, to develop a politically sustainable solution. Thus robust peacekeeping (with a capacity to enforce international agreements, and to apply human rights standards, especially for non-combatants), linked to conflict resolution mechanisms, is a clear policy option for the international community, and it is one which is emerging from assessments made post-1994 Rwanda and post-1993 Somalia.

Amongst the most comprehensive assessments of the 1994 catastrophe has been the Joint Evaluation conducted at the instigation of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its development wing, Danida (Eriksson, 1996). Oxfam has also produced a concise and carefully focused analysis of the response of the international community to the Rwanda crisis (Vassall Adams, 1994). For example, Vassall Adams concludes that, while primary responsibility for the genocide lay with extremist groups inside Rwanda, the international community (specifically the major powers) was culpable by failing to respond effectively. These and other evaluations suggested that a major reform of the UN, both in its peacekeeping role and in its humanitarian capacity, was needed (Whitman and Pocock, 1996; UN, 1996). For the future, Vassall Adams suggests that the UN form an Office of Preventive Diplomacy in order to be better able to respond to emerging conflicts; that UN peacekeeping be reformed including better preparation for early and rapid deployment of forces; that the efforts of civilian/humanitarian agencies be better co-ordinated both among themselves and with the military; and that arms flows to conflict areas should be much more strictly controlled and regulated through the UN's Register of Conventional Arms (and should cover small arms and land mines, in particular to governments or groups which violate the basic human rights of their citizens). The Joint Evaluation study found that the NGO response to the crisis was mixed, with criticisms directed at the duplication

and waste of resources and at some examples of unprofessional and irresponsible conduct (Eriksson, 1996, III, 152-153, 59-60).

The decision by the Security Council to reduce its peacekeeping force in Rwanda to a minimum once the Belgian contingent was withdrawn is seen to be precisely the reverse of what should have been done. The ability of the small rump force left behind in Kigali to protect thousands of civilians during the period of the genocide indicates that the caution about peacekeeping, which resulted from experience in Somalia, should be reviewed and a renewed commitment to peacekeeping made. UN peacekeeping forces, mandated to protect civilians and to provide the security necessary for the delivery of humanitarian aid, are an important part of the conflict resolution process in war zones, providing the platform from which political and humanitarian spaces can be maintained even under the most extreme pressures. This means, in the short term, much more positive support by those UN member states with the greatest military capacity to provide expertise, training, logistical support and finance for deploying UN peacekeepers under existing stand-by arrangements. For the longer term, both the Oxfam study and the Joint Evaluation recommended that UN peacekeeping capability should be strengthened by the creation of a rapid deployment force, either directly under UN control, or, with UN support, under the control of regional organisations such as the OAU and the OAS (Vassall Adams, 1994, 60; Eriksson, 1996, 48). Both reports also called for a 'harder' concept of peacekeeping which nevertheless belongs within the category of non-coercive forms of conflict management, through the definition of standard operating procedures for UN peacekeeping missions, enabling and resourcing them to protect civilians threatened by political violence (Woodhouse 1998).

In recent years we can observe a tendency by experienced peace-keepers to call for the integration of conflict resolution mechanisms in their policy-making and operational practices. It is noticeable, for example, how much of the peacekeeping doctrine of the British Army, elaborated in *Wider Peacekeeping*, is suffused with the

language of conflict resolution (Wider Peacekeeping, 1995). The same approach is taken in American doctrine covering peace support operations (Chayer and Raach, 1995). Here, the managing of consent (based on the principles of impartiality, legitimacy, mutual respect, minimum force, credibility, and transparency) is related to the techniques of promoting good communication, of negotiation and mediation, and of positive approaches to community relations through an active civil affairs programme which is amply resourced to win 'hearts and minds'. The development of such an approach to conflict resolution provides some prospect for developing intervention strategies which do attempt to address the deeper causes of conflicts, and this is a clear and preferable alternative for the international community than the role of passive observer in the face of violation of humanitarian standards, which may be implied by aspects of Clapham's and Duffield's critique. Over the past few years there have been innovative efforts to combine military peacekeeping with conflict resolution strategies. These efforts are reviewed below.

John Mackinlay sees the concepts and doctrine which defined classical peacekeeping as no longer adequate to cope with the demands placed on peace-keepers in the civil wars into which they have been drawn in the 1990s. Nevertheless, while he argues for broadened and strengthened forms of peacekeeping, he still maintains that consent is the major precondition for the success of peace support operations. In a redefinition of British peacekeeping doctrine beyond *Wider Peacekeeping*, Philip Wilkinson also expands the range of action to include a possible greater use of force, citing impartiality rather than consent as the key determinant in distinguishing forcible peacekeeping from war. But he, too, continues to see the nurturing and building of consent within the wider peace constituency as an essential aim. In particular, he identifies six different sets of techniques designed to maintain consent in conflict areas where peacekeepers are deployed and which are particularly important because 'the military element's presence in the operational area does not always inspire local support for them. For this reason, land forces will have to spend more time and effort,

down to the individual level, in consent promoting activity' (Wilkinson, 1996, 168). The six techniques are related to: (a) negotiation and mediation; (b) liaison; (c) civilian affairs; (d) community information; (e) public information; and (f) community relations. The objective of this kind of activity is to provide good information in order to reduce rumour, uncertainty and prejudice on the one hand, and to foster trust and stability in the area of conflict and positive perceptions of the role of peacekeepers and the nature of the peace process, on the other.

A further example of the use of conflict resolution theory in relation to peacekeeping is in the work of David Last, a Canadian officer with experience in the UNFICYP (Cyprus) and UNPROFOR operations. Last set out to review the contribution of peacekeeping to conflict resolution as practised in the past; he also wished to identify 'what new techniques may be used to help peacekeepers work more actively with civilians to eliminate violent conflict':

> To argue by analogy, I believe the situation of peacekeepers today is much like the situation of commanders on the Western Front in 1916, who were bogged down in defensive operations. To push the analogy somewhat, new tools of war were becoming available to commanders in 1916 that would permit them to take the offensive if they could only adjust their thinking about how to use their forces. In the same way, new techniques of peacekeeping, taken from conflict resolution theory and civilian experience, now permit peacekeepers to take the offensive to restore peace (Last, 1997, 129).

The integration of the operational and practical aspects of approaches from conflict resolution, and at this level of detail, into the processes of peacekeeping in the field is still at a somewhat unsystematic and rudimentary stage, but the requirement is now quite widely recognised.

Finally, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has pointed to the need for peacekeeping forces to find new capabilities for what he refers to as positive inducements to gain support for peacekeeping mandates amongst populations in conflict zones. Reliance on coercion alone is insufficient, he argues, because, while peacekeeping forces in the future will need to have a greater coercive capacity, the effect of coercion will erode over time. It is better, therefore, to attempt to influence the behaviour of people in conflict situations by the use of the carrot rather than the stick. Thus while coercion can restrain violence at least temporarily, it cannot promote lasting peace; a durable peace and a lasting solution require not only stopping the violence but, crucially, 'taking the next step'. For Annan, taking the next step means offering positive incentives or inducements. Peacekeeping forces, in other words, need to be able to make available rewards in the mission area. Annan defines two broad categories of reward.

> The first is what some military establishments have called 'civic action'. Its purpose is limited, namely to gain the good will and consequent cooperation of the population. The second, which might be termed 'peace incentives', is more ambitious. It is intended as leverage to further the reconciliation process. It provides incentives - a structure of rewards - for erstwhile antagonists to cooperate with each other on some endeavour, usually a limited one at first, which has the potential for expansion if all goes well.

This concept, which Annan sees as absolutely essential for the future effectiveness of peacekeeping operations brings peacekeeping squarely into the realm of conflict resolution as defined above.

> To employ them [positive inducements/rewards] effectively as tools of conflict resolution requires understanding peoples' problems in their complexity and

being able to respond at several levels simultaneously and with a certain amount of flexibility ...

Civic action, in short, is neither charity nor luxury but, in the types of conflicts we have been discussing, an essential requirement for operational effectiveness that requires a line item of its own in the peace operation's budget. Peace incentives, similarly, are rewards-cum-leverage rather than assistance for its own sake. (Annan, 1997, 27-28)

Working in conflict zones thus becomes a complex process of balancing coercive inducements with positive inducements; of supplementing military containment and humanitarian relief roles; and of promoting civic action to rebuild communities economically, politically and socially. A wide range of actors and agencies, military and civilian, governmental and non-governmental, indigenous and external, therefore constitute the conflict resolution capability in war zones. Simultaneous activities are targeted on broadening the security, humanitarian, political, and development spaces in which peace processes can take root. In this complicated arena the issue of the co-ordination of multi-agency activity becomes paramount. Once again the Rwanda evaluations agree in essence about the nature of required reforms: the Joint Evaluation report recommended the formation of a Humanitarian Sub-Committee of the Security Council, tasked to synthesise crisis information; to oversee the integration of political, military and humanitarian objectives; and to create an integrated UN line of command between UN headquarters and the field, and within the field. Vassall Adams suggests that this co-ordination might be secured by the creation of a new UN Department which would incorporate the Department for Humanitarian Affairs and all the disparate agencies involved in responding to emergencies (Eriksson, 1996, 47-48: Vassall Adams, 1994, 66). At the field level post-conflict evaluations are also yielding consistent recommendations. For Dallaire, the UNAMIR force commander in Rwanda, it is vital that co-ordination mechanisms be improved by the creation of a

UN multi-disciplinary team of senior crisis managers, and that there should be regular meetings between the UN and NGOs through civil-military operations centres (CMOCs). From this should emerge a culture of understanding between the various agencies, leading in turn to better defined standard operating procedures. In Dallaire's view, too, an interdisciplinary UN-led crisis management and humanitarian assistance centre is needed (Dallaire, 1996, 216). Speaking of the various agencies of the international community, whether they are primarily concerned with opening up security, humanitarian, or political spaces, Dallaire said: 'we are intertwined by the very nature of the crisis .… Clearly, peacekeeping cannot be an end in itself - it only buys time. In its goals and its design, it must always be a part of the larger continuum of peace-making, that is to say conflict avoidance, resolution, rehabilitation and development' (Dallaire, 1996, 217).

Similar conclusions were made from Somalia. Drawing on his experience as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Somalia, and as Deputy Secretary-General of the OAU, Mohamed Sahnoun proposed a new international institution for conflict management. Its role would be to 'mobilise all approaches to conflict resolution and ... increase communications and networks among different communities in local conflict areas through the integrated efforts of NGOs and the United Nations' (Aall, 1996, 441). The main challenge for such an institution would be to overcome well-founded objections to 'interventionary humanitarianism' from countries of the South on the one hand, and reluctance to be drawn into conflict zones unless clear national interests were involved on the part of powerful, mainly Western, governments on the other. In sum, the effort of conflict resolution research is focused on the challenge of strengthening the institutions of the international community to resolve civil wars non-violently. Of course there are many areas of concern related to new concepts and practices of peacekeeping, not least the question of how effectively military forces can be re-oriented to peacemaking roles, and how they relate to civilian agencies in areas of conflict. (Slim, 1997?). Yet it is by no means the case that the only lesson learned from Rwanda is for the international community to be uninvolved in such conflicts.

4.   The Role of Third Party Intervention. Restoring harmony, or negotiating change?

It is healthy and productive to urge caution about the effectiveness of third party intervention into internal and civil wars, based on clearly authoritative knowledge of specific cases such as Shearer has of Sierra Leone and Clapham of Rwanda. However, as with the argument about the use of force in conflict resolution considered above, there are also different conclusions which can be drawn about the political role of third parties in such conflicts. There are many useful case studies and an extensive literature on the effects of third party intervention, by both official and unofficial actors. It is not the intention to review all this here, but to highlight some significant findings from this literature which does not concur with the negative assessments of Shearer, Clapham, and Duffield. Hume's study of Mozambique, the work of Fitzduff, Bloomfield, Darby, and others in Northern Ireland, Corbin's account of the role of the Norwegians in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Yarrow's account of Quaker mediation, are just a few examples of positive appraisals of third party roles. A recent work by Hampson looks at the roles of a variety of third parties and the way in which they inter-relate to re-enforce each other in a sustained effort not only to make peace agreements but equally important to sustain them in the long run. The substance of his book consists in five case studies: Cyprus, Namibia, Angola, El Salvador, and Cambodia. In essence, Hampson's conclusion is that peace settlements are not self executing, but that they are sustained best by the work of third parties, external actors who use combined mediation, problem-solving and peacebuilding strategies. These third parties are crucial, providing the cement to hold things together and providing the creativity, incentives and pressure needed to prevent the parties in conflict from running aground. The analysis is both realistic and optimistic: third party intervention following non-violent principles and conflict resolution strategies can work, even if success may be partial and failures may dominate.

While we can point to a literature which allows us to draw perhaps more optimistic conclusions about the nature and effectiveness of third party intervention, we are still

faced with serious aspects of Clapham's and Duffield's critiques. Both writers as we have seen have problems with the model. For Clapham, these problems lie in the Western assumptions built into it, its mechanistic application and short time scale, and its failure to recognise the deep seated differences which led to the conflict. Duffield is less concerned about third party mediation conducted at the level of official diplomacy, than about the deficiencies of the model when applied by NGOs. For him both the analysis of conflict is wrong (the assumption that harmony is the natural state); and the prescription for action which from this (based on a socio-psychological intervention strategy) leads to a 'delegitimising' discourse. It is argued below that there is much in both the theory and the practice of conflict resolution which suggests that it has responded creatively to these kinds of critiques and that it remains a relevant field of enquiry and practice.

Mark Duffield's claim that conflict resolution is based on a socio-psychological model which assumes an underlying functional harmony as a natural state is not an accurate characterisation, and is derived from one report which itself is severely limited in its knowledge of the conflict resolution literature (Voutira and Brown, 1995). It is true that some NGOs may be better at analysis and use of theory than others, but not all would agree that 'harmony' is a natural or even a desirable state. Power imbalances in socio-economic structures are very much part of conflict resolution analysis. For example, thirty years ago Johan Galtung (1969; 1996, 72) proposed an influential model of conflict, suggesting that it be viewed as a triangle, with contradiction (C), attitude (A) and behaviour (B) at its vertices. Here the *contradiction* refers to the underlying conflict situation, which includes the actual or perceived 'incompatibility of goals' between the conflict parties generated by what Chris Mitchell refers to as a mis-match between social values and social structure.

Galtung argues that all three components have to be present together in a full conflict. A conflict structure without conflictual attitudes or behaviour is a latent (or 'structural') conflict. Galtung sees conflict as a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviour are constantly changing and influencing one another. As a conflict emerges, it becomes a conflict formation as parties' interests come into

conflict or the relationship they are in becomes oppressive. Conflict parties then organize around this structure to pursue their interests. They develop hostile attitudes and conflictual behaviour. And so the conflict formation starts to grow and develop. As it does so, it may widen, drawing in other parties, deepen, and spread, generating secondary conflicts within the main parties or among outsiders who get sucked in. This often considerably complicates the task of addressing the original, core conflict. Eventually, however, resolving the conflict must involve a set of dynamic changes that involve de-esclation of conflict behaviour, change in attitudes, and *transforming the relationships or clashing interests that are at the core of the conflict structure.* Neither does conflict resolution regard harmony and order as a natural or even desirable state. Rather, conflict is seen as a necessary and inevitable component of social change. Galtung (1981) also draws the distinction between direct violence (children are murdered), structural violence (children die through poverty) and cultural violence (whatever blinds us to this or seeks to justify it). We end direct violence by changing conflict behaviours, structural violence by removing structural contradictions and injustices, and cultural violence by changing attitudes.

Mark Duffield correctly recognises that what is claimed in the theory may run some way in advance of what happens on the ground. This is, of course, true of most forms of social theory. Both at the level of theory and of practice conflict resolution has for some time been concerned with appropriate forms of support and intervention, and with enabling and empowering a legitimate discourse and practice around the project of sustainability of peacebuilding. Of course it is not easy to do this in practice and it has never been a claim of those in the conflict resolution field that bitter and violent conflicts can be overcome by reading books on conflict theory. However, in all conflicts there are people who do wish to find ways out of the violence. The role of academic conflict resolution is to help them to understand how to do this. These issues are considered below.

5. Restoring peace with justice.
Peacebuilding from Below: Beyond the Western Model

In the past few years the field of conflict resolution has come under scrutiny from ideas generated by the literature of critical social theory, and from more pragmatic policy based concerns coming from field workers in both the UN system and in humanitarian agencies of various kinds. In particular exponents working within the tradition of conflict resolution wished, as practitioner-scholars, to strengthen its concepts and practices, and learned from experiences and perspectives coming from diverse fields such as participatory community development, non-violent peace advocacy groups and grass roots peace action campaigns. There has also been an enriching discourse with academic fields such as anthropology and development analysis.

The revision of thinking resulting from this has led to clearer understanding in three areas. Firstly, in the recognition that embedded cultures and economies of violence provide more formidable barriers to constructive intervention than originally assumed by the earlier research of conflict theory. In these conflicts 'simple' one dimensional interventions, whether by traditional mediators aiming at formal peace agreements, or by peacekeepers placed to supervise cease-fires or oversee elections, are unlikely to produce comprehensive or lasting resolution. Secondly, in the specification of the significance of post-conflict peacebuilding and of the idea that formal agreements need to be underpinned by understandings, structures and long-term development frameworks that will erode cultures of violence and sustain peace processes on the ground. Thirdly, in the related idea of the significance of local actors and of the importance of local knowledge and wisdom.

These shifts in thinking, which have given greater recognition to peacebuilding from below, can be illustrated in the work of two scholar-practitioners, Adam Curle, and John Paul Lederach. Throughout his academic career, (which ended formally in 1978 when he retired from the Chair of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford), and also through the period of his 'retirement', Curle, a Quaker, has been deeply involved in the practice of peacemaking . In the 1990s much of this involvement took the form of supporting the activity of the Osijek Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and

Human Rights. Osijek a city in Eastern Slavonia, was, with the adjacent town of Vukovar, the site of the most violent fighting of the Serb Croat War. This involvement with the people of Osijek, who were trying to rebuild a tolerant society while surrounded by the enraged and embittered feelings caused by the war, caused a considerable amount of reflection by Curle about the problems of practical peacemaking. It was apparent, for example, that the model of mediation specified in his earlier book on mediation (*In the Middle*) and distilled from his experiences in the conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s, was very difficult to apply on the ground in the confusion and chaos of the type of conflict epitomised by the wars in former Yugoslavia. It was still the case that the use of mediatory techniques would be much more likely to produce the shift in attitudes and understanding necessary for a stable peace, a resolution of conflict, than the use of conventional diplomacy alone: "solutions reached through negotiation may be simply expedient and not imply any change of heart. And this is the crux of peace. There must be a change of heart. Without this no settlement can be considered secure." However, Curle realised through his involvement with the Osijek project that the range of conflict traumas and problems were so vast that the model of mediation based on the intervention of outsider-neutrals was simply not powerful or relevant enough to promote peace. He made two important revisions to his peace praxis. Firstly:

> Since conflict resolution by outside bodies and individuals has so far proved ineffective [in the chaotic conditions of contemporary ethnic conflict - particularly, but not exclusively, in Somalia, Eastern Europe and the former USSR], it is essential to consider the peacemaking potential within the conflicting communities themselves. (Curle, 1994, p. 96)

Curle now sees the role of conflict resolution in post-Cold War conflicts as providing a variety of support to local peacemakers through an advisory, consultative-facilitative role which offers workshops, training and support in a wide variety of potential fields which the local groups might identify as necessary. The task is to empower people of goodwill in conflict-affected communities to rebuild democratic institutions, and the starting point for this to help in "the development of the local peacemakers inner resources of wisdom, courage and compassionate non-violence". (Curle, 1994, p. 104).

Secondly, Curle recognises an important role for the UN in this process of empowerment and in this sense recognises the need to make connections between the official mandates of the UN agencies, including peacekeeping, and the unofficial roles of the NGOs in conflict zones. The approach of Curle has been to transform his original idea of active mediation as an outsider intervention into an empowering approach which is much more context sensitive. Curle's approach may still be an example of the socio-psychological model which Duffield as identified. However Curle sees the model as a starting point for a conflict resolution process, not the totality of that process, or its end point. The project is concerned with the objectives of transforming behaviours, attitudes, and structures. This may be illustrated in the the work of two other peace researchers/conflict resolvers, Caroline Nordstrom and John Paul Lederach.

Following field research in Mozambique and Sri Lanka, Nordstrom explained the many stories of absurd destruction and the use of terror in warfare as deliberate efforts to destroy the normal meanings that define and guide daily life (Nordstrom, 1992, 269). This is the process whereby dirty war becomes the means through which economies of violence merge with what Nordstrom calls 'cultures of violence'. As she puts it, 'violence parallels power' and people come to have no alternative but to accept 'fundamental knowledge constructs that are based on force' (Nordstrom, 1992, 269). Nordstrom argues that there is a 'need to create a counter-life-world construct to challenge the politico-military one'. Obviously, it is very difficult for civilians wishing to seek an alternative to 'the dirty war paradigm as a survival mechanism' to find one in the vicious and dangerous environment of an active war zone (Nordstrom, 1992, 270). Nevertheless, there are innumerable examples of resistance to the 'rationality' and 'culture' of the war zone to set beside the otherwise overwhelming catalogue of brutalisation and atrocity. These are the usually unsung heroes of conflict resolution and peace-making in the midst of violence, often at great personal risk. In Burundi's capital, Bujumbura, for example, residents in two neighbourhoods, one Hutu and one Tutsi, formed a mixed committee of 55 men and women to try to protect each other

from attack. In Colombia there has been the growth of 'communities of peace', many of them developed by Colombia's indigenous Indians, declaring themselves neutral in the fighting between the military and guerillas. Many have been killed for taking this position, but they persist with the help of an organisation, the Antioquia Indigenous Organisation, supported by Oxfam, to help provide food, shelter and medecine, and to publicise their situation. In Liberia some communities have formed community watch teams to protect themselves against armed groups which threaten their communities (Cairns, 1997, 85-86).

In many of these community responses women are often the main creators of new modes of survival and conflict resolution, usually at local level and nearly always unrecorded. This is, for obvious reasons, much more difficult to chronicle - as also in the case of male victims and unsung peace-makers. Attempts have been made to compare the effectiveness of men and women as mediators with mixed results (Maxwell and Maxwell, 1989; Dewhurst, 1991; Stamato, 1992). Some see Track I conflict resolution approaches based on diplomacy and military power as male-dominated, and Track II citizen peace-making as associated more with women (Stiehm, 1995). A number of social anthropological studies of peace-making practices in different parts of the world have emphasised the key role played by women (Duffey, 1998).

The question has also been asked as to whether the discourses and institutions that reproduce militarism and violence are themselves gendered so that successful long-term conflict resolution requires a radical transformation here as well (Taylor and Miller, 1994). Duffey (1998) has pointed out that the involvement of women in formal peace processes and negotiations has been very limited, and that they are largely excluded from high-level negotiations despite their active participation in local peace movements and peace-making initiatives. The exclusion of women from the discourse about new political structures defined in peace agreements, and the political process of

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negotiations determined at international level, may well be factors which perpetuate the exclusionist and violent discourses and institutions which contribute to the conflict in the first place. Byrne has noted that, despite the many local organizations which represented women's interests in former Yugoslavia, there were no women representatives involved in the Dayton peace talks in 1995 (Byrne, 1996). Similarly, Duffey has demonstrated that the exclusion of women from the UN sponsored peace conferences in Somalia served to increase the legitimacy and power of the warlords, who were frequently unaccountable to the local community. When women are excluded from contributing to peace negotiations, the realities of a conflict in terms of its impact on communities may not be fully comprehended. For this reason, Berhane-Selassie (1994) argues that the international community should consult and involve women in order to understand more about the root causes of conflict, to understand how obstacles to peace processes can be removed, and to gain insight about how traditional practices can offer alternative ways of ending conflicts.

In its recently published Code of Conduct, the NGO *International Alert* identified ten principles which guided its work in conflict resolution, one of which recognised and supported 'the distinctive peacemaking role of women in societies affected by violent conflict' (International Alert, 1999, p.4)

John Paul Lederach, working as a scholar-practitioner and within a Mennonite tradition which shares many of the values and ideas of the Quakers, and with practical experience in Central America, has also stressed the importance of this approach, which he calls indigenous empowerment. Thus,

> The principle of indigenous empowerment suggests that conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily 'see' the setting and the people in it as the 'problem' and the outsider as the 'answer'. Rather, we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting. (Lederach 1995 p. 212)

The approach also suggests that it is important to identify the "cultural modalities and resources" within the setting of the conflict in order to evolve a comprehensive framework which embodies both short-term and long-term perspectives for conflict transformation. The importance of cultural relevance and sensitivity within conflict resolution theory has emerged partly in response to learning from case experience, and partly as an explicit critique of earlier forms of conflict resolution theory where local culture was given marginal significance. In the former case, both Lederach and Wehr, reflecting on their work in Central America found that the 'western' model of outsider neutral mediators was not understood or trusted in many Central American settings, while the idea of insider partial peacemaking was. In the case of critiques of John Burton's universal theory, Kevin Avruch and Peter Black, drawing on perspectives from anthropology, have argued for greater recognition of the issue of culture in the theory and practice of conflict resolution. They suggest that ethnoconflict theories (derived from locally constructed common sense views of conflict) and ethnopraxis (techniques and customs for dealing with conflict derived from these understandings) need to be developed and incorporated into the construction of general theory. What has emerged then is the recognition of a need for what Lederach has called a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution which is attentive to how short term intervention which aims to halt violence is integrated with long term resolution processes. This long-term strategy will be sustainable if outsiders/experts support and nurture rather than displace resources which can form part of a peace constituency and if the strategy addresses all levels of an affected population.

Lederach's comprehensive approach entails building what he refers to as an infrastructure for peace involving all of the affected population. He describes the affected population as a triangle, with the key military and political leaders at the apex, at level one. In the middle, at level two, are the national leaders who have significance as leaders in sectors such as health, education and within the military hierarchies. Finally, at the grassroots level, level three, are the vast majority of the affected population: the common people, displaced and refugee populations, local leaders, elders, church groups and locally based NGOs. At this level also, the armed combatants are represented as guerrillas and soldiers in militias. Most peacemaking at the level of international diplomacy operates at level one of this triangle, but for

conflict resolution to be successful and sustainable then the co-ordination of peacemaking strategies across all three levels must be undertaken. In this new thinking, peacebuilding from below is of decisive importance for it is the means by which, according to Lederach, a peace constituency can be built within the setting of the conflict itself. Once again this is a departure from conventional practice where peacemaking resources from outside the conflict (diplomats, third party intervenors etc) are valued more highly than peacemaking assets which may exist within the community.

6.   Conclusion

In this response I do not wish to claim that conflict resolution is a problem-free area of enquiry and practice. The challenges posed by our three critics are valid, helpful and challenging. My argument is that none of the critics have seriously engaged with the literature on the theory and practice of conflict resolution. While it does not claim to be universally effective, the field is more robust and self-questioning than many of its critics recognise. Further, there is a literature and a practice of conflict resolution and its cognate field of peace research spanning over forty years which is hardly touched upon by any of our three critics. The literature on third party mediation is well developed. The emerging policy on the doctrinal and operational links between peacekeeping conflict resolution indicates a potential to deal with issues of the security of people in conflict zones. Finally, in applying a peacebuilding from below approach the way in which a conflict is viewed is transformed, thus engaging with concerns about inappropriate intevention raised by our critics. Whereas normally people within the conflict are seen as the problem, with outsiders providing the solution to the conflict, in the perspective of peacebuilding from below solutions are derived and built from local resources. (International Alert, 1999: Goodhand and Lewer, 1998: Goodhand and Hume 1998). Commenting on the many examples the of local level cross-community peace-building work in Eastern Coatia as a complement to 1995 political-constitutional level settlement, Judith Large concludes that, although

it is easy for outside critics to be dismissive of these small-scale and usually unpublicised initiatives, this is not how things look from the inside. Here it is the practical transformative work of all those who oppose the 'discourses of violence' that is cumulatvely crucial: 'for activists inside, it mattered too much not to try' (1997, 4). This represents what Betts Fetherston (1998) calls anti-hegemonic, counter-hegemonic and post-hegemonic peace-building projects, and what Caroline Nordstrom refers to as 'counter-lifeworld constructs' that challenge the cultures of violence (1992, 270). In endorsing Large's conclusion, and applying it to the variety of indigenous peace-building enterprises that go on all over the world (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 1998), Edmund Burke's dictum: 'it is only necessary for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph', comes to mind.

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