

From Peacekeeping to Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development

Positing a New Praxis for Discussion

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ABSTRACT

Often, those who theorise about conflict resolution and post conflict reconstruction and development are not necessarily the ones engaging in modes of practice; while those who engage in practice do not always have the luxury of informing their practice with new and innovative theory. The best of all possible worlds therefore is to bring communities of scholars together with practitioners in order that theory informs practice and practice can test, illuminate, and build on theory.

INTRODUCTION

The proposition being advanced in the new approach is quite simple – successful peace building requires socio-economic development and political and economic stability and conversely sustainable development and political stability requires a successful comprehensive peace building initiative.

The simplicity of this proposition however belies its immense complexity for it involves security, humanitarian/emergency assistance, consolidating democracy and political gains through responsible and accountable governance, sustainable socio-economic development, advancing human rights and social justice and dealing with issues of gender, disability, youth and the rights of the child.

This proposition emerges from two undeniable realities. First from a recognition that the traditional approach to peace building during the Cold War era was narrowly conceived and involved the use of the military to enforce peace and ceasefires – an approach located within a military-defence framework that served to act as a maximum deterrent to external aggressors, who might threaten the sovereignty of the state. In this sense, security has traditionally been conceptualised in a manner that emphasised state security over



human security. The approach was not gender sensitive and primarily involved disarming combatants. It did not address the root causes of conflict and largely ignored the effective re-integration of the parties involved in conflict. It resulted in states sliding back into conflict when the peace enforcing troops left the theatre of operations.

And second the new approach emerges from a recognition that the threat of interstate conflict has largely receded, but has been replaced by the growing phenomena of intrastate (internal) conflict that sometimes spills over into neighbouring states.

The changing nature of conflict presents new challenges to institutions responsible for conflict resolution. The mandate of the United Nations (UN) has evolved from traditional peacekeeping (which constituted the majority of UN operations during the Cold War) to that of “peace building and peacekeeping”. This modern form of peacekeeping recognises a mandate for peace operations that requires UN peacekeepers to participate in various activities outside the traditional scope of responsibilities.

By 2005, of the 49 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, at least 19 (excluding South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia) had been involved in internal armed conflict and strife with enormous costs in terms of the devastation of industrial and agricultural capacity, the loss of human life, the devastation of service delivery, and the internal and external displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) undertook a critical analysis of the socio-economic causes of civil wars and found that the likelihood of civil wars decrease with : (i) higher levels of GDP; (ii) the higher the levels of transparency of political institutions; (iii) increases in ethnic diversity (in fact beyond a certain threshold an increase in diversity reduces the probability of civil war); (iv) a reduction in dependence on natural resources (when dependence on primary products reaches above 24% of GDP the likelihood of civil war increases). Their research led them to conclude that “the relatively higher incidence of war in Africa is not due to the ethno-linguistic fragmentation of its countries, but rather to high levels of poverty, failed political institutions and economic dependence on natural resources”. The corollary to the diversity finding is that ethnic dominance defined as where an ethno-linguistic group constitutes between 45 and 80 percent of the population increases the risk of conflict.

Africa was certainly not immune to the traditional approach to conflict resolution which was not focused on the root causes that ignited conflict. With the failure of this approach, it became clear that a more holistic approach which encompasses human rights, institutional building, civil-society and socio-economic development was needed to address conflicts, creating a lasting and sustainable peace and development.

A definition of security based on these traditional assumptions is no longer tenable in an environment in which human security is under serious threat.

The United Nations Security Council (14 January 2008) noted that “Conflict prevention is a multidimensional task involving political, humanitarian, development and other measures tailored to each specific context. As a result, the United Nations is developing increasingly multifaceted approaches to the prevention of conflicts, drawing on the cooperation of many different actors, including Member States; international, regional and sub-regional organizations; the private sector; non-governmental organizations; and other civil society actors” (Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa).

The definition of post-conflict reconstruction is contested and encompasses a variety of meanings – including:

- Post-conflict reconciliation
- Reconciliation
- Recovery
- Reintegration
- Reconstruction

The debate around post-conflict reconstruction and development tends to centre on areas of peace and security with little emphasis being placed on issues of state building. In this endeavour, the public service is critical and the challenge remains prioritizing governance and political and administrative affairs. In many countries emerging from conflict, the administrative apparatuses of the state have been largely if not completely destroyed so rebuilding the administrative apparatuses including rebuilding the human resources capacity of the public administration is vital.

In response to the shortcomings of the traditional approach the UN adopted Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations (MIPO) which, in its application is similar to the African Union's PCRD policy framework. The PCRD framework informs African countries' involvement in peace operations. The latter is geared to ensuring that such interventions lead to sustainable peace, security, stability, economic growth and development.

Multi-dimensional and Integrated Peace Operations are those operations that rely on mutually reinforcing civil and military interventions in order to create sustainable peace. The creation of a lasting peace is achieved through the application of a holistic approach to the conflict. The adoption of the MIPO approach entails the coordination of the participation of all key stakeholders in the peace process. These stakeholders include: civil society, aid organisations, human rights groups, humanitarian organisations, donor organisations, the military, police elements and local actors.

The core objective of the MIPO is to address development of the state and the economy and to provide sustainable peace. Corruption, lack of service delivery, marginalisation and exclusion and violations of human rights and freedom amongst others, are fundamental causes of war and instability in states experiencing conflict.

Studies on post conflict reconstruction show that there can be no peace and security without paying significant and focussed attention to issues of poverty, inequality, gender inequality and oppression, underdevelopment, uneven development, unemployment poor, employment generating sustainable development. In addition issues related to the post-conflict reconstruction of effective administrative apparatuses, the reconstruction of the enabling legislative (and Constitutional) frameworks as well as the inculcation of good governance practices (including inclusive political participation, transparency, accountability, separation of powers, creation of a viable service driven public service, the rule of law and independent civil oversight) are essential to success.

Building relations of trust among former adversarial parties, levelling the playing field between and among them, asking them to put aside their respective individual agendas and focussing on the national agenda and ensuring that each party has a stake in the final outcome of the peace building process are all important elements to be considered to avoid

stalled peace. In addition, a wide range of socio-economic activities should be pursued in an integrated approach that links relief, transition and development. Key to the pursuit of socio-economic reconstruction and development is the balance between growth and the provision of social services, and the development of an appropriate technological base for sustainable recovery and reconstruction in the country emerging from conflict.

This approach is consistent with the African Union's Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) framework document which defines Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development as "a comprehensive set of measures that seek to address the needs of countries emerging from conflict, including the needs of affected populations; prevent escalation of disputes; avoid relapse into violence; address the root causes of conflict; and consolidate sustainable peace. PCRD is conceived within the African vision of renewal and sustainable development and while its activities are integrated, and must be pursued simultaneously, they are envisaged in the emergency (short-term), transition (medium-term) and development (long-term) phases". Accordingly PCRD has to involve:

- Politico-military security plus human security
- Humanitarian/emergency assistance
- Consolidating democracy and political gains through responsible and accountable governance
- Rebuilding the agricultural sector
- Sustainable socio-economic development (anti-poverty reduction, environmental sustainability)
- Advancing human rights and social justice and dealing with issues of gender, disability and the rights of the child.

State security cannot be seen simply as an end in itself – it must be pursued in conjunction with the implementation of post-conflict socio-economic reconstruction and development programmes which contribute to improved living conditions. The long-term goal of peace operations in general is to place the affected country on the path of sustainable socio-economic development. However, the immediate objective of any post-conflict reconstruction plan is to accelerate short-term socio-economic recovery. Herein lies the attraction of a multidimensional and integrated peace operation – it takes into account all possible elements which are relevant to fostering lasting peace solutions.

The application of Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operation does not take place in a vacuum, but within the context of the emerging African Union security architecture and is informed by its Post Conflict, Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Programme.

Typically, the constituent elements of peace building include building up local capacities, strengthening civil society, restoring essential infrastructure and commercial relations. Peace building within the context of the Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations process entails co-operation between the state and civil society to empower communities and affected populations to implement sustainable peace supporting operations. No one can doubt the veracity of this proposition. However, there is a need to engage in further discussions within both the academic and practitioner communities to determine whether the community of nations has gone far enough to develop effective post-conflict support mechanisms.

These integrated missions can contribute to a more demographically and gender sensitive approach to peacekeeping and peace building. In conflict situations the civilian population

becomes the primary target of violence, but men and women tend to experience conflict differently. The experience of women and girls, people with disabilities, children and youth in conditions of armed conflict is a reflection of both gender relations and status of historically disadvantaged groups in society.

It is equally important to make the case for the extension of United Nations – African Union co-operation to incorporate regional mechanisms as building blocks of successful peace operations. In the same manner that successful post-conflict peace building can be enhanced through the involvement of civil society, assigning a prominent role to regional organisations allows both the United Nations and the African Union to build on their comparative advantage, experience, established frameworks and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Peace operations must therefore be informed by these differentiated effects of conflict and should seek to protect women's rights and ensure that they are integrated in all actions designed to promote peace, implement peace agreements, resolve conflict and restructure war-torn societies. If peace operations are to succeed in ensuring sustainable peace and long-term reconciliation based on democratic principles and internationally recognised human rights, it is crucial that their activities and policies uphold the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination. Therefore, any credible peace operation should consciously mainstream gender and promote the empowerment of women.

There is also a need to seriously reflect on how integrated missions can facilitate effective disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants; as well as how can they facilitate security sector reform.

The greatest risks to stalled peace and the resumption of civil wars include the mismanagement of natural resources, ethno-linguistic dominance and domination; corruption (not just grand corruption) and unemployment and illiteracy particularly of the youth. – the latter need to have a real and tangible stake in the development process.

The move from immediate post war recovery to lasting peace, long term sustainable growth and development and poverty reduction requires significant public investment in physical infrastructure and in human resources. It also requires providing incentives to the private sector, reform of government and the institutions of governance and administration and instituting policies and practices of good governance.

Experience in the DRC, Ivory Coast, the Sudan etc. demonstrate the need to focus on state building and reconstruction of the administrative apparatuses of the state. The four pillars crucial for public service reconstruction include:

- Macro-organization of the state
- Essential systems for public administration
- Strengthening capacity of MDI's
- Restoring an ethos of service delivery

The African Peer Review Mechanism is a serious attempt by the African Union to foster the adoption of policies, and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice. These are to be accomplished through countries sharing best practices and supporting each other in capacity building and the exercise of constructive peer dialogue and persuasion. The African Union



has also taken a decision not to recognise a state or government that has come into being as a result of a military coup.

With respect to the macro-organization of the state, there is a need to create institutions and systems that improve overall quality of life for citizens and establish processes and policy mechanisms with regard to inter-governmental relations, planning, decision making and budgeting. To accomplish this, a state must develop and preserve human resources; enhance its capacity to maintain safety and security internally and externally and encourage public participation in development and policy. The core components for successful post conflict reconstruction include:

- Reconstruction of effective administrative apparatuses,
- The reconstruction of the enabling legislative (and Constitutional) frameworks
- The inculcation of good governance practices (including inclusive political participation, transparency, accountability, separation of powers
- Creation of a viable service driven public service, the rule of law and independent civil oversight
- Socio-economic development in both rural as well as urban areas
- Dealing effectively and swiftly to restore services (water, sanitation, education, basic health care, roads etc).

It is essential to avoid a stalled peace through pursuing a wide range of socio-economic activities in an integrated approach that links relief, transition and development. Key to the pursuit of socio-economic reconstruction and development is striking the balance between growth and the provision of social services, and the development of an appropriate technological base for sustainable recovery and reconstruction in the country emerging from conflict. And in the context of the South, reconstruction of the agricultural base through encouraging subsistence production is very important.

And there is a need to think through how the independence and delivery of humanitarian assistance can be safeguarded within the framework of integrated missions? The apparent increasing number of attacks on humanitarian personnel, is of grave concern. The only outcome of actions such as this, is that the people worst affected by conflict, namely the elderly, the disabled, women and children, do not receive the support and assistance they require for their survival.

This new praxis is based on the following core principles:

- Sovereign equality of all member states;
- Solidarity, peace and security;
- Respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- Equity, balance and mutual benefit;
- A commitment to eradicating poverty and inequality at national regional, continental and global levels; and
- Peaceful settlement of disputes.

It needs to be geared towards:

- Promoting sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that will ensure poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of the affected country and region;

- Promoting common political values, systems and other shared values which are transmitted through institutions which are democratic, legitimate, and effective;
- Consolidating, defending and maintaining democracy, peace, security and stability;
- Promoting self-sustaining development on the basis of collective self-reliance, and the interdependence of member states;
- Achieving complementarity between national and regional strategies and programmes;
- Promoting and maximising productive employment and utilisation of the resources of the Region;
- Achieving sustainable utilisation of natural resources and effective protection of the environment;
- Strengthening and consolidating the long-standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the region;
- Combating HIV and AIDS and other deadly or communicable diseases;
- Ensuring that poverty eradication is continually addressed in all activities and programmes;
- Mainstreaming gender in the process of community building; and
- Building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society, region and Africa.

Bringing the various factions together in the peace building process and establishing trust between and among them are complex but necessary processes. Each faction needs to be urged to put the national interest first and the experience in South Africa points to the value to two important initiatives that can pay huge dividends – creating conditions for the successful establishment and functioning of a government of national unity and establishing a truth and reconciliation commission with clearly defined terms and conditions. A government of national unity, based on some form of provides former adversaries with a powerful political incentive to build peace and not wage war. A truth and reconciliation commission could be a possible vehicle for national healing to take place and for national social cohesion to be built.

At another level, the actual process of post conflict reconstruction is a process that occurs in a number of overlapping phases. In Phase 1 there is an immediate and urgent need to maintain peace; institute measures for macro-economic stability and currency stability; resettle displaced populations; institute measures for the protection for women, persons with disabilities, youth and children; restore essential services; provide humanitarian relief; undertake an audit of the public service and develop a culture of respect for human rights and freedoms.

Effective immediately there is a need to develop a profile of the country to asses existing infrastructure – including its administrative and human resources. The focus should be on national needs rather that the dictates of aid providers. Peace keepers should move immediately to provide essential and basic services – water, electricity, sanitation, health care, schools, road repair, community based policing (a basic human needs approach); and Ministries and Departments need to be reconstructed and capacitated.

Overlapping phase one is phase two which is premised on the understanding that many developing countries in Africa are agrarian so there is a need to provide incentives for food production and engage in land redistribution; and rebuild the rural economy devastated by the conflict. In the urban areas there is a need to restore urban markets (commerce), rebuild industrial infrastructure and attract national and international investors; reinstitute administrative law; adhere to the rule of law and as soon as possible establish a constituent

assembly and a Constitution. Restorative justice is essential and the civil service would require training and development.

Overlapping phases 2 and 3 would focus on;

- Long term socio-economic growth and development
- Building efficient and effective administrative systems
- Decreased reliance on external aid
- Pro-poor sustainable development (where in Phase one the focus is on poverty amelioration in Phase 3 it should be on eradication)
- Capacity development for service delivery by placing citizens at the centre of public service planning and operations; and
- People oriented public service that is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to citizen needs.

The insights gleaned from the analysis of post-conflict economic, political and social reconstruction are shaping the new approach advocated in this presentation. Good governance, a coherent anti-poverty strategy; the promotion of macro-economic stability and sustainable growth, the strengthening of democracy, the promotion of good governance and sound transparent administration and the importance of social-capital formation form the foundation of this new approach. As Obidegwu notes, "... social inclusion, participation, a broad sharing of the gains from economic growth, emphasis on social services and social protection, institution building; decentralization; and partnerships between the governments, civil society and the international donor community are fundamental elements of the emerging new development paradigm" (Obidegwu, 2004).

In this way the theory of socio-economic development and post-conflict reconstruction informs the practice of coherent, cohesive post colonial reconstruction and development. And in turn the practice enriches the theory.

CONCLUSION

Both academics and practitioners can agree that poverty, inequality and underdevelopment constitute three of the great global, continental, regional and national divides. Economic growth and development cannot be realised in conditions of political intolerance, the absence of the rule of law, corruption, civil strife and war. Poverty thrives under such conditions, nurturing further political instability and conflict, reproducing a vicious cycle, of under-development and extreme deprivation. Democracy and political governance, including peace and security, conflict management, post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the combating of corruption and of illicit trafficking in human beings and in arms and related materials, are all essential prerequisites for achieving sustainable development.

SOURCES

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