

Bridging the gap

Improving UK support for peace processes

Working paper

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conciliation
resources

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Conciliation Resources (CR) is an international non-governmental organization registered in the UK as a charity (1055436). We work mainly in the Caucasus, Uganda and West Africa in partnership with local and international civil society organizations and governments. We also publish *Accord: an international review of peace initiatives* and are involved in projects in Colombia, Fiji and the Philippines. Our funding is through grants from governments, independent trusts and foundations

Executive summary

1 Introduction

Conciliation Resources (CR), an international organization focusing on providing support for peacebuilding around the globe, recently commissioned an assessment of the UK's conflict policies. CR has concluded that there are conceptual, policy, institutional and practice gaps in the UK's responses to violent conflict. Informed by experience working in the field, CR is convinced that the UK can better address key global challenges by directing more of its diplomatic, political and economic resources to the resolution and prevention of conflict through increasing and improving support for peace processes leading to better peace agreements.

There are currently more than 70 situations of actual or potential armed conflict worldwide¹. While the number has fallen since the 1990s, there is little room for complacency. Factors such as environmental degradation caused by climate change are likely to increase pressures that could give rise to more conflict in the future. Globalization means that actions in one part of the world can fuel conflict elsewhere; just as conflict in one part of the world can have consequences far away from its origins. For these reasons and more, the urgent need to respond effectively and constructively to armed conflict remains one of the great global challenges of our time. The UK, as a leading member of the international community can do much to improve the quality of support to peace processes through its overall foreign policy tools.

What we mean by 'peace process' and other terms

A peace process encompasses all the initiatives intended to reach a negotiated agreement to ending an armed conflict. In addition to formal negotiations, peace processes include other efforts with belligerents and non-combatants to reduce animosities, increase understanding and improve relationships. Peacebuilding is the gerund of 'to build peace' (ie those multiple activities aimed at addressing the structural causes of conflict and reconciling relationships affected by conflict). Peace processes can create a framework conducive for longer-term peacebuilding, and are – in turn – underpinned by peace-building processes throughout the conflict.

2 Improving the UK's conflict policies

The UK is already involved in numerous peace processes around the world in a variety of ways, however it has yet to develop a

strategic and coherent approach for consistently supporting best practice in peacemaking as a part of an overall conflict response. The UK has played a leading role in building capacities for international intervention and civil-military cooperation towards 'stabilization', but it has paid far less attention to how it can support processes leading to effective peace agreements – or to preventing the descent into violence through better preventive diplomacy. Instead, peacemaking generally falls into a gap in the government's conflict response:

- *Conceptual gap* – there is little conceptual clarity guiding the government's approach to resolving conflicts through political negotiations and other processes of social and political dialogue and insufficient attention to ways of supporting the primary protagonists (the belligerents as well as others in the conflict-affected society) to develop political solutions to their differences.
- *Policy gap* – peace processes have been sidelined in the government's conflict policies, with the notable exception of DFID's new *Preventing violent conflict* policy, and are subject to competing policy goals that undermine the requirements of a good process.
- *Institutional gap* – inconsistency of cross-Whitehall mechanisms to develop and deliver support for effective peace processes.
- *Practice gap* – uneven resources, skills and specialized capacities to best support an inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable process.

Yet there is an opportunity for the government to bridge these gaps. *The Building on Progress: Britain in the World* policy review identifies the need to take a strategic approach throughout the spectrum from conflict prevention to nation-building. DFID's conflict policy sets out a solid framework for understanding conflict and peace processes, and recognizes the primacy of local actors in resolving their own conflicts.

3 What makes for better peace processes?

Peace processes are potentially much more than simply finding a way to silence the guns – as difficult as this challenge can be. If negotiations are conceived only as a means to reach a quick settlement on ending a war, too often the results are a recycling of power within the same basic structures. Done well, however, peace processes offer opportunities for developing a more peaceful future by addressing the underlying issues generating conflict, developing new rules of the game, and forging a new basis for the political and social relationships of those involved in the conflict. As such, peacemaking can be a political process

leading to profound social change, better governance and more responsive state structures.

The necessity of negotiation

Sustainable peace cannot be achieved through the exercise of force alone. It is extremely difficult to impose peace on those who remain committed to achieving their objectives through violence or those who feel excluded from peace processes. As the Iraq war demonstrates, those willing to achieve their goals 'by any means necessary' can sustain a military campaign against even the most powerful armed forces in the world. Consequently, decisive military defeat has become increasingly rare as the means of settling conflict.

For the first time in history, since the 1990s more wars have ended through negotiated agreement than through military victory.ⁱⁱ Yet many of those agreements failed and the belligerents returned to war within five years. The reasons for conflict recurrence are complex and varied, however there is clearly a need for better processes leading to stronger agreements that are strategically designed, skilfully implemented, and well supported. Much more needs to be done to ensure that future peace processes become the bridge from profound animosity to sustainable peace.

Local ownership and the limits of UK influence

For the UK to become better at supporting conflict resolution, it needs to recognize that primary responsibility rests with the belligerent parties and those affected by the conflict. It therefore needs to support their capacities to negotiate agreements, settle their differences, address the underlying causes, and repair relationships damaged by years of hostility. The government needs to recognize that while it cannot 'fix' these situations through the projection of UK power, it can better support and empower those in conflict to bring peace to their own societies – and even to prevent the disputes from escalating into violence in the first place. Promoting local ownership is complex and difficult; it has proven challenging in cases where genuine commitment to it does exist.

Multilateralism and opportunities for UK leadership

While the UK may not be a leading player in each peace process, it can contribute to ensuring that international strategies and mandates are effective in underpinning peace processes. The UK can also work to confront dilemmas, such as barriers to engaging appropriately with non-state armed groups. It can also help to ensure that the longer-term requirements of good peace processes are not overridden by more short-term objectives, including the need to be seen to be 'doing something' in response to crises. The UK should not seek to become the world's mediator, but there are opportunities for it to play a significant role in developing multilateral strategies to underpin peace processes.

Most armed conflicts attract at least some level of international attention from governments and humanitarian agencies. Yet their responses are often uncoordinated and sometimes

counter-productive, with different governments and agencies working either at cross-purposes or pursuing strategies that undermine the peace process. There is a clear need for the international community to better coordinate its response to conflict.

Too often, international action is determined through diplomatic negotiations that result in a lowest common denominator approach rather than in promoting the highest common purpose: a more peaceful and equitable resolution of conflict. It therefore requires strong leadership to shape a far-sighted and skilful international response.

The breadth of the UK's engagement on the international stage gives it great potential to encourage the development of better practice and to help craft international strategies to support more effective peace processes:

- It has key positions in the UN, European Union, Commonwealth, OSCE, NATO, and the OECD and IFIs, and can push towards coherent multilateral support for peacemaking.
- This is complemented by the UK's extensive bi-lateral relationships, including as a donor and trade partner and the potential to help incentivize a peace process.
- The UK's reach gives it the ability to make strategic contributions through more informal but often effective 'group of friends' networks of countries responding to specific conflict situations.

Comprehensive, inclusive and participatory processes

Good peace processes require a comprehensive process. A comprehensive negotiation agenda should address the root causes and underlying needs of the various stakeholder groups in the wider conflict system, in addition to the actual belligerent parties. A comprehensive process also often requires a negotiation structure capable of addressing a number of inter-connected conflicts within the state or in a sub-region (or at least having a strong interface with other processes aimed at resolving them).

Comprehensiveness is best achieved through inclusiveness. This can mean moving beyond the bi-polar logic of classic mediation efforts to develop and support multi-stakeholder – and possibly multi-level – processes involving representatives of multiple political and social groupings. This does not necessarily mean that everyone needs to sit together at the same table at the same time; however there should be mechanisms to involve the many constituent groups in a society in developing agreements that will shape how they live together.

Inclusiveness can extend beyond the decision-making elites to provide mechanisms for public participation in peacemaking. Depending on the social context, this can be achieved through a range of consultative processes, as well as through participation of elected representatives in talks and through dialogue at local levels. Participatory processes can build wide consensus on the content of the agreements reached and generate understanding of the reasons why the agreement is the best possible means

of addressing the conflict. The parties need to feel that the agreement is 'theirs' and that they are responsible for its implementation.

4 Intervention is not enough

The UK has increasingly emphasized the need for the international community to become better at international peace support operations and has invested heavily in strengthening its own military and civilian capacities for intervention and stabilization.

Conflicts are unlikely to end unless those involved agree on ways to settle their differences and to live together peacefully. Outsiders can help them to engage in processes to resolve grievances, contribute resources to help deliver solutions and help provide sufficient security so as to cool hostilities and protect the vulnerable. Yet outsiders cannot substitute for the parties resolving their conflicts themselves. As peacemaking in Darfur revealed, efforts to impose an agreement can backfire because the parties feel little commitment or responsibility for implementing the agreement. Attempts to impose security in the absence of a peace process leading towards a durable resolution tend often to fail outright. Alternatively they freeze the fighting while leaving the conflict intact and the society highly dependent on outsiders to maintain stability, as seen in Cyprus and Kosovo.

Too often external actors are so eager to reach agreement to end the fighting that they encourage compromises that create serious difficulties in the medium to long-term. Sometimes this pressure to reach a quick agreement comes from foreign governments keen to appear responsive to public concern for the humanitarian crisis and to move the story off the headlines.

Ultimately there is no substitute for peace processes when it comes to developing sustainable peace. Yet far more attention and resources go towards improving intervention than to developing state of the art peacemaking. A better understanding of the requirements of effective peace processes is needed to underpin coherent strategies and good practice.

Learning from experience in Northern Ireland

The UK can learn a great deal from its own experience in the long quest to resolve the conflict over Northern Ireland. Complex processes have aimed not only to settle the political disputes but also to support transformation of inter-communal hostilities. Ultimately it has been a shared responsibility between the parties and the peoples of Northern Ireland – as well as the British and Irish governments – to make the necessary changes and compromises to bring about peace. It required courage to engage with those who had been 'the enemy'. They were aided by a host of external mediators, monitors, facilitators, trainers, analysts, and donors. These external actors offered assistance and tried to ensure that their efforts complemented the needs of the overall peace process. While setbacks have been encountered and challenges remain, enormous progress has been made through the painstaking efforts of many over several decades.

“Participating in peace processes, engaging directly with political leaders, and building international coalitions of support are all central parts of our business”

**Dr Kim Howells, Minister
Foreign and Commonwealth Officeⁱⁱⁱ**

5 Achieving the UK's security and development goals

Improved support for peace processes will help the UK to achieve its broader security and development policy goals.

First, conflict resolution can help to generally promote global security by addressing the specific grievances that fuel instability in specific conflicts and, in the eyes of some, make terrorist actions seem justifiable as the only available means of redressing injustices. Furthermore, if the UK becomes more strongly perceived as a peacemaker, it may help to counterbalance the effects of an interventionist foreign policy in increasing hostility towards the UK and radicalizing some within the country.

Second, promoting peace through peaceful means can offer 'value-for-money' relative to many other response options. The costs of supporting preventive diplomacy and peacemaking are a fraction of those involving military intervention – although the former does not necessarily exclude the latter.

Third, resolving protracted conflict in some of the world's poorest countries is essential for poverty elimination and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are core government commitments and are essential for long-term development and security.

Fourth, resolving conflicts peacefully is one of the most important tasks of the international system. The UK, as a key member state, can do much to strengthen multilateral responses by strengthening its own capacities, as well as building the capacities of the relevant international organizations. Sustainable conflict resolution is necessary both for the wellbeing of conflict-affected societies and, in this highly inter-dependent age, for the long-term development of a more peaceful and secure world.

i International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch. Available online: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1200&l=1>

ii Human Security Centre. 2006. Human Security Brief. University of British Columbia. Available online: <http://www.humansecuritybrief.info>

iii Opening speech, CR's 10 year anniversary event 'Peacebuilding works: A British foreign policy priority', 2 November 2006

6 Recommendations

1. The UK should develop a coherent concept of effective peace processes and preventive diplomacy to guide UK policy, strategy and practice in its multilateral and bilateral engagement towards conflict:

- Conduct a study of recent practice within HMG of supporting peace processes and preventive diplomacy (including both successes and failures) to identify key learning points to feed into future staff training
- Build on DFID's Preventing violent conflict policy and develop a strategic approach to supporting peace processes as an explicit part of the UK's overall response to conflict
- Honour commitments to apply the DFID's Country Conflict Assessment tool and develop the second stage institutional tools and skills to connect analysis with response strategies
- Develop staff training to deepen understanding of what makes for effective peace processes and preventive diplomacy. These efforts should seek to institutionalize comparative learning and the ongoing development of good practice.

2. The UK should provide leadership through multilateral organizations for strong support for conflict resolution through preventive diplomacy and peace processes:

- Address practical and policy challenges that can impede preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, such as barriers to engagement with non-state armed groups (including prescription policies)
- Make more effective use of the multiple tools available to the UK to positively and constructively influence the choices and behaviour of governments and non-state actors in conflict to constructive engagement in a peace process through more effective use of incentives, sanctions and conditionality
- Ensure that mandates and operational concept of international peace support operations underpin effective peace processes and local peacebuilding capacities
- Support the development of institutional mechanisms and instruments for early dispute resolution
- Build capacity for peacemaking and preventive diplomacy and provide sufficient resources for effective operations.

3. The UK should strengthen its own institutional capacity to engage effectively in peace processes:

- Mainstream and integrate support for prevention and conflict resolution into the policies and strategies of all relevant government departments
- Strengthen the conflict-response architecture in Whitehall to build on best practice and better address these challenges
- Increase the resources available through the Africa and Global Conflict Prevention Pools and make greater use of their coordination mechanisms
- Prioritize support for the ACCP and GCCP in countries and contexts where the UK is not widely perceived to be a protagonist in the conflict
- Develop specialized capacities to provide expert knowledge and skills needed to back-stop UK involvement in peace processes
- Build upon and expand cooperation with NGOs and academics both in the UK and internationally with regard to specific conflict situations.

4. The government should support the parties to conflict to address their differences through peaceful means:

- Enable more effective and appropriate engagement with armed groups
- Build capacities of the parties to engage skilfully in peace negotiations
- Support greater public participation in peacemaking.

1. Introduction:

UK policy: prioritizing conflict while marginalizing conflict resolution?

This working paper analyses the UK government's response to conflict and concludes that it needs to increase and improve its support for peace processes. The government has directed far less attention to systematically supporting those directly involved in the conflict to resolve their differences through peace processes than it has to structural prevention and intervention. It is crucially important to tackle the long-term causes of these conflicts, yet efforts to alleviate poverty, inequality and discrimination, for example, are unlikely to address the political dynamics driving the conflicts in the short-term.

The source of longer-term sustainability is in the complex and painstaking efforts to resolve conflicts and build peace, as the UK government knows well from Northern Ireland. Such peace processes, when done well, can be the bridge to a new social contract underpinning good governance, less fragile states and more peaceful social relations, as in South Africa. In some cases, effective preventive diplomacy could be successful in helping the parties to reach agreement even before violence emerges, as was the case in Venezuela in May 2003. In other cases, intensive efforts are needed to settle conflicts that have been fought for decades, as happened with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ending the war between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in 2005.¹

Efforts to support conflict resolution through peace processes or preventive diplomacy too often fail to pave the way to sustainable peace. This is sometimes due to changes in the conflict context and the strategic calculations of the primary parties. However it is often the case that the strategies and methodologies intended to help the parties resolve their differences in fact undermine this goal, as seen in peace processes from Darfur to Sri Lanka and the break-up of Yugoslavia, all illustrated here.

The paper begins by exploring the conceptual, policy, institutional and practice gaps in the UK government's response to conflict. This is followed by an overview of how the government can begin to address these gaps. Chapter 3 explains why inclusive, comprehensive and participatory peace processes are crucial in the transition to a more durable peace and examines what makes for sustainable peace processes, extrapolating key principles from the work of CR and others in supporting peace-building. It contains a set of case studies that illustrate good and bad practice and is complemented by Appendix 1, which contains a list of criteria that can help to foster processes that are more likely to enable this kind of transformative peace-making.

Chapter 4 makes the case that increasing and improving support for peace processes is in the UK's own national interests: resolving protracted conflicts may help prevent terrorism; it is better to be perceived as an international peacemaker; peace-making is less expensive and potentially more effective than military intervention; and eradicating poverty and achieving the MDGs are dependent on peace and stability. Chapter 5 documents how the UK's current practice, institutional structures, policy, and even its way of conceiving conflict are inadequate for the challenge. It does this through detailed examination of the evolving policies of government departments and institutions. The paper concludes with a set of policy recommendations, a condensed version of which appears in the Executive Summary above.

For the UK to become better at conflict resolution, it needs to recognize that primary responsibility rests with the belligerent parties and those affected by the conflict. It therefore needs to support their capacity to negotiate agreements to settle their differences, to address the underlying causes and to repair relationships damaged by years of hostility. The government needs to recognize that while it cannot 'fix' these situations through the projection of British power, it can do much to resource and empower those in conflict to bring peace to their own societies and even to prevent the disputes from escalating into violence.

2. Peacemaking: a gap in the UK's response to conflict

The UK government's approach to conflict is rooted in its wider approach to foreign policy, which is self-characterized as 'activist' in response to global challenges. It is based on the use of both 'soft' and 'hard' power to achieve its objectives and combines a commitment to multilateralism with retaining and promoting UK influence as a global power. The government's policy discourse reveals an implicit assumption that the UK can best respond to conflicts through the projection of its power, with only limited attention paid to the role played by people in responding to their own conflict. Yet its own experience with the conflict in Northern Ireland indicates the importance of peace processes and the need for political courage to engage with those deemed to be 'the enemy'.

Conflict resolution and peacemaking consequently seem to be marginalized, falling into what this paper identifies as a 'gap' in the UK's conflict response in terms of concept, policy, institutional structures and practice. Although the UK is involved in numerous peace processes around the world, it has not made support for peacemaking the centrepiece of conflict policy or worked to strengthen its institutional capacities to back multilateral efforts at conflict resolution.

This chapter analyses the gaps in UK support for peace processes and contends that the government should work to address this gap and provide leadership to multilateral efforts to support effective peace processes. Chapter 5 documents the government's policy towards conflict in greater depth, but some of the key points are touched upon here.

2.1 Conflict resolution: a gap in UK conflict response

2.1.1 The 'conceptual gap' in understanding the importance of working with those in conflict to find ways of resolving their differences

There is a conceptual gap in how the government understands conflict and processes to resolve it – particularly when the conflict involves non-state armed groups. First, constrained by long-standing principles and tradition enshrined in international law, international relations and diplomacy, there is a strongly state-centric approach that makes it difficult to know how best to engage with non-state actors – whether armed or unarmed – who are invariably key to most conflict situations today. Second, the traditions of *realpolitik* power diplomacy tempt a reliance on the capacity to foist agreements on intransigent parties rather than working painstakingly through what are

often frustratingly long social and political processes to build consensus amongst the stakeholders. Both of these are explored in more detail in the next chapter. This gap is compounded by the fact that there appears to have been little concerted effort to systematically learn lessons from engagement in previous peacemaking efforts or to identify and better understand the requirements of effective peace processes.

2.1.2 The 'policy gap' in making support to peace processes a government priority

This conceptual gap is reflected in a policy gap. Until very recently the UK's formal policy instruments, including FCO and DFID White Papers, have been virtually silent on how the government will support peace negotiations and the social and political processes of responding to conflict. The government has identified "preventing and resolving conflict through a strong international system" as one of the UK's top ten strategic international priorities for the next ten years.² Yet this is then tackled by addressing the structural causes of conflict (such as poverty and bad governance), exacerbating factors (eg the arms trade) and intervention when prevention fails. While prevention and intervention are important, they are incomplete as a strategy to promote sustainable peace. It is particularly notable that the FCO's policy documents do not highlight how it can work systematically to help resolve conflicts and best use the diplomatic instruments at its disposal to support peace processes.

In many documents and speeches, the government's discourse on conflict tends to treat the protagonists as objects of international action rather than as subjects having some degree of agency in choosing how they will respond to their own conflict. Furthermore, the government's activist response to international threats gives far greater attention to ways of projecting the UK's power than towards ways of assisting those in conflict to reach a durable resolution of their differences.

This policy gap has been partially filled by DFID's new conflict policy, *Preventing violent conflict*, launched in March 2007. It gives a strong emphasis to support for political and social processes to manage conflicts peacefully and to peace processes that tackle underlying causes to resolve violent conflict. Furthermore, DFID's policy offers a coherent approach to understanding conflict, how it can be a major force for positive social change, and the conditions in which it is more likely to become destructively violent. Despite these strengths, it is unclear on how DFID will support peace processes – other than through funding to international institutions, as important as this can be. Greater attention needs to be paid to how this

important policy will be implemented and how the principles it espouses can become a guiding force for government policy, strategy and operations across Whitehall.

An additional challenge arises from the potential dilemmas over which of the government's many policy priorities takes precedence in determining government response to a specific conflict situation. For example, sometimes the imperative of securing a counter-terrorism or energy security goal can lead to actions that fatally undermine a peace process that, if successful, could have helped to achieve those other goals far more durably in the long-term. Some UK policies, including proscribing armed groups as terrorist organizations, create significant obstacles to engaging with them and exploring prospects of a negotiated resolution of conflict. Balancing seemingly conflicting priorities is doubtless an eternal dilemma for government. Yet decision-makers need to become better aware of why conflict resolution may be key to creating conditions in which many other policy goals can be achieved and should therefore be given much greater priority in determining government strategy and action.

2.1.3 An institutional gap in government structures and systems for delivering support to peace processes

The fact that DFID's new conflict policy is comparatively vague in how it will support peace processes partly reflects an institutional gap in the government. There is no clearly identified lead agency or unit to systematically guide and support the UK's role in peace processes. While mechanisms do exist for some specific conflict situations – such as the FCO's Middle East Peace Process Team or the cross-departmental Sudan Unit based in DFID – they are ad hoc and do not benefit from institutional systems that draw upon comparative experience from peace processes elsewhere. Furthermore, while both DFID and the FCO have some postings for personnel specialized in conflict more generally, they are not necessarily experts in peacemaking and mediation. There are also questions about whether the resource they provide would be sufficient to meet the need if the UK were to direct greater attention to supporting peace processes.

Currently, the only inter-departmental institutional structure that can help to lend coherence to the UK's support for peace processes around the world is the Conflict Prevention Pools funding mechanism. It has made a positive contribution and has generally led to the creation of a joint strategy for responding to specific conflicts, including through funding peace process support in many places. While valuable, a funding mechanism of this kind is insufficient to drive forward a coherent strategy for the UK's involvement in peace processes, which requires continual and skilful political engagement and nuanced response to encourage parties to continually move in a constructive direction.

The weakness of cross-Whitehall mechanisms to support peacemaking contrasts sharply with the government's effort to strengthen its role in international peace support operations through the new Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU). This

tri-departmental unit provides integrated assessment, planning and operational support and systematic 'lessons learning' service for DFID, FCO and MoD, as well as the UK's partners in other governments and international organizations. Ironically, given the fact that its work is in conflict zones, the PCRU's mandate is on stabilization without reference to support for peacebuilding, peace processes and support for implementing peace agreements. However it is likely that it will best be able to fulfil its mandate if it supports effective peace processes and implementation of good comprehensive agreements.

2.1.4 A practice gap in ensuring that the most effective support possible is given to peacemaking initiatives

Unsurprisingly, the conceptual, policy and institutional 'gaps' all too often result in inadequate practice in the UK's response to specific conflicts. While the UK has made a positive contribution in a number of specific peace processes, too often it has not lived up to its potential. It has occasionally even made the situation worse from lack of a coherent strategy or through unskilful involvement. This is sometimes because other strategic priorities have taken precedence over support for peace processes. In other cases there appears to be an expertise gap, when officials do not appear to know how best to support an inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable process.

Particularly in response to conflicts in Africa, the UK has provided funding for peace processes through DFID and the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool and has sent diplomats to help with the mediation. However, according to Laurie Nathan, a seasoned South African mediator, although these diplomats may be experts on the country concerned, they rarely have sufficient experience of peacemaking in civil wars. Peacemaking tends to be treated as an ad hoc activity instead of one requiring finely honed skills and knowledge as well as sustained and far-sighted engagement. After all, "You wouldn't send an untrained soldier or doctor into a war zone – why do they send untrained mediators to a peace processes?"³

At the same time, there are a number of examples where, in practice, the UK has been an important force in effectively supporting specific peace processes. Much can be learned from the UK's constructive roles in conflicts as diverse as Georgia/Abkhazia, Nepal and South Sudan. Yet these examples of good practice are not systematized into the UK's overall policy and practice. Instead of putting all its weight – politically, economically, technically and even militarily – behind the effort to reach peace by peaceful means, the government's focus is too often fractured and incoherent.

2.2 Addressing the gap: how the UK government can improve its response to conflict

2.2.1 Learning from British experience in Northern Ireland

The UK's own history reveals how important and protracted conflict resolution can be. The history of the constituent nations and peoples of these islands reveals the role of conflict in forming social and political relations. This history is marked by the ongoing contest for varying forms of self-determination, which have shaped the nature of the state, the structures of governance, and a host of policies related to issues as diverse as language, taxation, and relations with foreign governments. The UK can also draw on its experience of the European integration process to gain insight into the continual and painstaking process of negotiation to reach mutually satisfactory outcomes. EU integration has effectively put an end to centuries of armed conflict on the continent.

Most dramatically in recent decades, the Northern Ireland peace process has revealed the challenge of engaging various non-state groups who used violence, while at the same time ensuring that the wider array of political groupings were able to have their say in reaching agreements. Political negotiations were further backed by a sustained and well-supported effort to use peacebuilding to address long-standing grievances.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the parties and the peoples of Northern Ireland – as well as the UK and Irish governments – to make the necessary changes to bring about peace. But they have been aided by a host of external mediators, monitors, facilitators, trainers, analysts, and donors. These external actors offered assistance and support but did not take control over the situation. While challenges remain, enormous progress has been made through the painstaking efforts of many over several decades. With some exceptions, these lessons do not appear to have formed the foundations for the UK's approach to conflict and peace processes elsewhere in the world.

2.2.2 Going beyond the existing response: 'more prevention and better intervention'

Since the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's major study on 'countries at risk of instability' in 2004-05, government policy toward conflict has been organized around its overarching conclusion that there is a need for "more prevention and better intervention". This has led to a strategy of addressing structural risk factors on one hand while strengthening the intervention capacities of the international system on the other. It also set the trend in looking more to stabilization and statebuilding rather than to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. While progressive in its emphasis on prevention, it seems to ignore the capacities of local actors to be agents in making their own peace. It is also silent on the potential of peace processes to

create the framework for statebuilding and good governance and for peacebuilding more generally to strengthen societal resilience and moderate the potential for extremism of all kinds.

At the same time, the government has placed increasing emphasis on strengthening UK capacities for military intervention and civil-military cooperation. This is mostly through internationally-mandated peace support operations (PSOs) but the UK also aims to build its capacity to act unilaterally or through 'coalitions of the willing'. Despite widespread perceptions that the government at a senior level has tended to guide its foreign policy through its alliance with the United States, the UK has given active support to multilateral processes and international organizations. The UK was a leader in the effort to codify the Responsibility to Protect norm, as well as other reforms to strengthen the UN's capacities to respond to conflict. It has given greatest emphasis to improving its peacekeeping and PSO capabilities and the new – but strictly post-conflict – Peacebuilding Commission. It has given less attention and resources to strengthening the UN's mediation capacities. The UK has also worked to strengthen the institutional capacity of regional bodies, including the EU and the African Union, to intervene in conflict situations.

These initiatives largely reflected the tenets of the government's overall foreign policy. It has positioned the UK as an activist player in response to the full spectrum of threats and opportunities presented by the changes stemming from globalization. To fulfil this role effectively, Prime Minister Tony Blair has argued that the UK needs to be able to exercise both 'hard power' – eg, the threat or use of its war-fighting capabilities – as well as 'soft power', such as through delivery of aid, involvement in peacekeeping operations and engagement in multilateral treaties. He further asserts that the instruments of soft power are effective only if backed up by the demonstrable capacity to exercise hard power. Such hard power is seen as key not only to achieving the UK's specific strategic goals but also to more generally ensuring that the UK's "reach, effect and influence" are not "qualitatively reduced".⁴

The UK's military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and even in Sierra Leone have, however, been controversial at home and abroad. Climaxing in its role in Iraq, many have questioned the true motives and goals of UK intervention. Furthermore, its policies toward some conflicts, such as in Lebanon/Israel or Somalia most recently, raises questions about whether the UK should be viewed more generally as protector or as protagonist.

2.2.3 Leadership in multilateral peacemaking and preventive diplomacy

These issues highlight the overarching controversy over foreign policy and the UK's role in the world; they also raise a specific quandary in relation to its role in conflict situations. On the one hand, intervention is clearly insufficient to resolve a protracted violent conflict – though it may be needed in some cases to help provide sufficient security and stability for a peace process to take hold. On the other hand, the UK, unlike Norway, Switzerland, South Africa or intergovernmental and some non-

governmental organizations, is less likely to be viewed as an acceptable mediator to help resolve conflicts because of its history (and, often, its close association with the United States). The government is aware of this. In most cases, it has consequently pursued a low-key supportive role through multilateral peacemaking initiatives. While this may be appropriate, it falls short of what is needed.

Arguing for the UK to put increase and improve support for peace processes is not a call for the UK to 'go it alone' or to aim to become the world's mediator. Foreign governments and international organizations need to become much better at supporting effective peace processes – and even in helping to resolve conflicts before they become violent. Most armed conflicts attract at least some level of international attention from governments and agencies concerned to mitigate the consequences. Yet this response is often incoherent and sometimes counter-productive, with different governments and agencies working either at cross-purposes or pursuing strategies that inadvertently undermine the peace process – as is documented in more detail in Chapter 3. Too often, the scope of international action is determined through diplomatic negotiations that result in a lowest common denominator approach rather than in promoting the highest common purpose: a more peaceful and equitable resolution of conflict. Sometimes it even seems as though the greater the degree of international attention, the more difficult it is for an effective peace process to evolve.

The government has quite rightly stressed the importance of working multilaterally to prevent and resolve conflict through a strong international system.⁵ International organizations need strong support from member states to be effective peacemakers. It requires strong leadership to shape a more far-sighted and skilful international response. If a leading member state like the UK directs its weight towards increasing the status and coherence of peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives, it can help provide the leadership for other member states to come forward too. Furthermore, while questions of whether or not the 'international community' should intervene militarily are inevitably contentious, it is comparatively easy to build international consensus around the quest for peace through peaceful means.

The government's response to specific conflicts has to be based on a careful assessment of its role in the conflict and relationship with the parties. As it has learned in Zimbabwe, sometimes it needs to 'lead from behind' through support for regional efforts. In other cases, such as more recently in Nepal, it can be most effective in playing a direct and principled role in the process. The UK can work through an array of multilateral processes and structures from quiet diplomacy to 'Group of Friends' mechanisms to international peace support operations. It can help strengthen the capacities of international organizations in support of peace processes.⁶ It can work with others to address the normative and practical obstacles to preventive diplomacy and negotiations – as outlined below. It can also utilize the full array of diplomatic, political, economic and technical assistance instruments at its disposal to have a coherent strategy of rein-

forcing measures to encourage conflicting parties to negotiate durable agreements and to support the implementation and consolidation of these agreements. The UK is able to do this best when it has developed its own political focus, coherent policy, well-considered strategy and effective instruments for helping to resolve conflicts.

2.2.4 Towards a strategic approach to peacemaking

This paper argues that the UK can better respond to some of the key global challenges it faces by directing its diplomatic, political and economic resources – bilaterally and multilaterally – to the resolution of conflict through support for peace processes. The government should increase and improve support for peace processes. It needs to address the 'policy gap' to ensure a strategic and coherent approach, to strengthen the institutional architecture so the UK can mount a more consistently effective response, and to allocate financial resources to achieve these goals. As a general approach, the UK needs to become better able to support conflict affected societies to develop their own solutions to their own problems, while working in partnership to address the systemic factors in the global system that contribute to conflict.

To do this effectively, the government needs to:

- Prioritize strong support for effective peace processes, including by developing its understanding of how to engender inclusive, comprehensive and durable peacemaking
- Build upon DFID's conflict policy and ensure that other policies affirm the importance of peacemaking and enable appropriate engagement with armed groups
- Develop cross-Whitehall institutional structures and mechanisms to deliver effective involvement
- Increase the knowledge and skills base of relevant British officials to enable them to play the most effective peacemaking role possible and have relevant research, advice and other technical support readily available to utilize and offer to all parties involved.

3. Sustainable peacemaking: transforming war into peace

There are no magic formulas to guarantee successful peace-making, yet the numerous experiences of ending intra-state armed conflict through peace processes in recent decades are a source of knowledge of what can work. Through comparative learning from peace processes, it is possible to develop general principles to shape policy and to identify inspiring stories (and cautionary tales) to inform strategy elsewhere.

This chapter explores why it is necessary to participate in negotiations and to foster engagement between belligerents. It sets out the principles that should guide sustainable peacemaking and explains the need to give greater support to the unmet potential of preventive diplomacy so as to resolve conflicts before they have become violent. It is complemented by Appendix 1, which contains a summary of the main criteria that can help to underpin effective peace processes. The principles and criteria are based on CR's practical experience in peace-building, as well as its research into peace processes undertaken through its publication series, *Accord: an international review of peacemaking initiatives*.⁷

3.1 The improbability of victory and the necessity of negotiation

Sustainable peace cannot be achieved through the exercise of force alone. Once begun, armed conflicts are notoriously difficult to end. Even using the methods of power politics and military intervention, it is extremely difficult to 'impose' peace on those who remain committed to achieving their objectives through violence. There appears to be a growing willingness of groups to use unconventional means to wage war against those with clear military supremacy. From the Japanese kamikaze pilots, to the LTTE fighter in Sri Lanka, to various jihadi militants today, the suicide bomber can sustain a military campaign against even the most powerful military forces in the world. According to the US military commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, it is extremely difficult to protect civilians against attacks: "If someone wants to blow himself up the problem becomes very very difficult indeed." He acknowledges that military force alone is "not sufficient" to end violence and that political talks must include militant groups because such negotiations "will determine in the long run the success of this effort".⁸ In the face of such violence, the choice between using only military methods and using political dialogue can seem stark.

Even groups using conventional weapons find ways of sustaining their campaign, despite the military odds against them. For example, the Lord's Resistance Army has been able to wage a devastating war in Northern Uganda for two decades and

survived numerous onslaughts by the Ugandan army, assisted by US military aid after 2001.⁹ Furthermore, even when conflicts end with the defeat of the armed group, such as in the Angolan civil war, the remnant forces might continue to use violence.¹⁰

Non-state armed groups typically meet the challenge presented by the asymmetry of their power vis-à-vis the government – which can mobilize all the resources available to the state – through their sheer commitment to their goals.¹¹ Militarily, this can mean willingness to make great sacrifices and, sometimes, a willingness to achieve their goals 'by whatever means necessary' even if this violates the Geneva Conventions. In peace negotiations, the dynamics of asymmetry can translate into intransigence in holding on to cherished positions. Fearful that they may be outmanoeuvred by government negotiators – who are generally backed by a plethora of advisors and the advantage of international recognition – the armed group may well choose to return to the familiarity of interminable war. As Henry Kissinger once observed: "The guerrilla wins if he does not lose; the conventional army loses if it does not win."¹² Thus it is risky to assume that it is possible to achieve a durable peace unilaterally, either on the battlefield or at the negotiation table.

3.2 Making peace by peaceful means: engaging politically with the enemy

The British government and the international community need greater clarity on engagement with non-state armed groups, which is essential to ending civil wars. It is not possible to make peace by peaceful means without truly engaging with others across the conflict divide. As Nelson Mandela eloquently advised those in the Northern Ireland peace process: "You cannot make peace by talking to your friends; you can only make peace by talking with your enemies."¹³ Effective dialogue must be an integral part of any peace process aimed at truly resolving the conflict. At some point, those involved need to agree the basic terms and conditions according to which they will co-exist.

Sustainable peace processes are driven by the realization of the unsustainability of continued armed conflict.¹⁴ Early in a conflict, belligerents tend to believe that they can prevail in their demands either by using force or by threatening to use force. They do not generally consider the interests or needs of their opponents or others. Yet as the costs of conflict become painful, at least some elements within the leadership and their constituencies may come to realize that they are unlikely to get what they want through unilateral action. As they understand that their future and that of their opponents is inter-dependent, the disputants are more likely to recognize the need to make

Ending wars: documenting the historic shift towards negotiated settlement

Armed conflicts are increasingly ending through the power of dialogue than through the force of arms. Between 1816 and 1945 the overwhelming majority of wars ended through the military victory of one side. Over the past 60 years, however, negotiated settlements have become far more common than military victory in ending armed conflict. The 1990s marked a radical shift when more wars ended through negotiated settlements than in victory. Between 2000 and 2005, there were four times as many negotiated settlements as military victories.¹⁷

The Human Security Centre points out that those who argue that it is preferable to 'give war a chance' so as to achieve a stable military solution assume that belligerents can choose between victory and a negotiated settlement.¹⁸ Yet it is more often the case that neither side can impose a military defeat and, "When victory is not an option, negotiation is the only way to stop the fighting."¹⁹

Comparative research suggests that peacemaking initiatives – by the UN and other international organizations, individual governments and NGOs – are an important factor in both the decline of armed conflict overall and in the successful settlement of specific situations. Mediation has a dramatic effect on the expected duration of a civil war – and

economic interventions can also reduce the expected duration.²⁰ Crucially, external actors can provide the third-party guarantees that many belligerent parties find crucial for ensuring credible implementation of negotiated agreements and that, according to one study, are the most important factor in determining the durability of a settlement.²¹

Nevertheless, even when the fighting has stopped though a negotiated agreement, chances are high that it will begin again – to the point where a recent history of armed conflict is the strongest predictor of future conflict.²² According to one study, between 1945 and 1996, one in three civil wars was followed by another armed conflict shortly thereafter.²³ This rate became even worse during the 1990s, when 43 per cent of all conflicts that ended through negotiated settlements started again within five years. However many of these settlements were "inappropriately designed, ineptly implemented and poorly supported – hence their high failure rate".²⁴

Yet there are signs that this trend is changing. While it is too early to reach definitive conclusions about their durability, according to the Human Security Centre, in the six years from the beginning of 2000 to the end of 2005, only two out of 17 negotiated settlements failed.²⁵ While these trends are encouraging, the international community needs to get better at supporting more effective peace processes.

some sort of a deal with them – even if this means that some goals will have to be abandoned. This creates an incentive for cooperation, even at the same time as competition continues.

Engaging with armed groups

Strategically, engagement with armed groups is crucial in paving the way towards a negotiated settlement of violent conflict. Successful engagement tends to strengthen the pro-dialogue elements within armed groups, while political isolation tends to strengthen hardliners. This suggests that minimal levels of engagement need to be the norm, not a concession.¹⁵ Engagement can take many forms, from simple contact to substantive negotiations, potentially involving myriad possible third parties. Practitioners and policymakers should focus on identifying appropriate tactics and effective strategies that are context specific – considering who should engage and how, rather than whether to engage or not. While there may be a valid concern that engagement could confer legitimacy on an armed group's struggle or tactics, the range of available options means that support for low-key engagement strategies led by local community groups, NGOs or other unofficial intermediaries can keep the option of dialogue alive without appearing to legitimize a group – as in Northern Ireland, where discreet contact laid the basis for future negotiations.¹⁶

Armed groups make strategic choices about whether to pursue political dialogue or military tactics to advance their objectives.

Their decisions are likely to be determined by their analysis of the respective rewards or weaknesses of either strategy, as well as the relative strength of groups within the movement proposing different strategies. Yet peace negotiations are more likely to be successful when the belligerent parties are confident and skilled negotiators, capable of attaining their interests through political – rather than military – means. Increased confidence in the prospects for a negotiation process often becomes one of the important preconditions for successful peacemaking.

Helping to build this capacity can be a valuable role for external intermediaries. Such initiatives often require both financial support and also political support to protect against accusations that building negotiation capacities is tantamount to aiding an illegal group. Instead it is in the interests of reaching a durable peace for all the parties involved to be able to participate effectively in peaceful processes to resolve conflict.

The role of third parties

It is also important to consider the roles of outsiders in helping to facilitate engagement. Intermediaries working to end violent conflict need to consider how their actions affect a group's assessment of the choices available. Representatives of foreign governments, IGOs and civil society can all play valuable roles. Given the particular sensitivities of working with armed groups, trusted intermediaries may need to work exclusively with this constituency to help them understand and review their engagement options, enable them to engage more effectively in political negotiations and help to 'translate' the perspectives, interests and aspirations of the belligerents for other parties. This work can complement the efforts of other third parties who convene dialogue between opponents.

The non-state characteristics of armed groups mean that other unarmed non-state actors – including NGOs, respected individuals, or traditional and religious leaders – can be well placed to engage in unofficial diplomacy as they can have greater freedom of movement and access. Off the record, unofficial track two dialogue can be an invaluable means of opening communications, developing greater understanding of the conflict and exploring ideas to address it, as has been seen in numerous peace processes from South Africa to Tajikistan to the Middle East. In Sierra Leone, for example, local civil society groups contributed significantly to bringing the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to the negotiating table.²⁶ In Northern Ireland, Catholic priests were crucial to 'back-channel' engagement with Sinn Féin and the Republican movement.²⁷ Yet this area of work currently receives inadequate political (and financial) support and recognition from governments and IGOs.

There are also numerous cases where foreign governments have played important roles in supporting dialogue and negotiation with armed groups. El Salvador is just one example of the positive effects of international engagement, in which foreign governments assisted the ascendancy of more moderate factions within the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which in turn made the FMLN more willing and able to participate in political negotiations.²⁸ While the incentives and inducements that governments can offer may be vital to progress in negotiations, they are often blunt instruments and cannot substitute for the genuine commitment of the belligerents and other parties to the conflict.

3.3 Inclusive, comprehensive and participatory peace negotiations

The British government should seek to encourage processes that, by their design, are more likely to lead to transformative change. While engagement is essential, the means through which engagement takes place can make the difference between fostering peaceful change and further exacerbating conflict, as well as injustice. The transition between armed conflict and stability is often a moment of profound flux that can open opportunities for historic change. Wars and the processes to end them are a defining period in the development of a

country. They can shape relations between antagonist groups, lead to a reordering of state institutions and the economy, and influence the less tangible political and social aspects of the society. Yet if negotiations are conceived simply as a means to reach a quick settlement to end the fighting, too often the results are simply a recycling of power within the same basic structures.

The events that together comprise what is commonly referred to as a 'peace process' are the political vehicle to begin to make this transition. The nature of this process – who participates, the agreements reached, and how they are implemented – can create opportunities for structural changes in governance, human rights, security and development policies, as well as shape the relations between those engaged in conflict. Therefore process matters and can shape outcomes.

Yet too often the importance of process is ignored. Laurie Nathan, reflecting on the Abuja process to settle the conflict in Darfur, reminds us of two general lessons for mediating civil wars:

"First, these wars are not conducive to a viable quick accord. They have multiple historical, structural, political, social and economic causes that are complex, deep-rooted and intractable. The difficulty of resolution is compounded greatly by the protagonists' mutual hatred and suspicion. However grave the situation, mediators have no option but to be patient. Second, an enduring peace agreement cannot be forced on the parties. It has to be shaped and owned by them since it cannot be implemented without their consent and cooperation and its sustainability requires their adherence to its provisions in the long term. These lessons are frequently ignored by states and multinational organizations that seek to end civil wars through power-based diplomacy rather than confidence-building mediation."²⁹

This points to the need for processes that work towards a longer time horizon, engage the main stakeholders, build consensus and forge working relationships between the parties, seek to address the underlying causes of conflict, and create sound mechanisms for overseeing implementation of agreements reached, as well as resources and support for consolidating peace.

Multi-party negotiations: working towards inclusive processes

Governments and armed groups are likely to have the primary voice in agreements over ceasefires, demilitarization and other matters related to the military conduct of the war. However, agreements leading to cessation of armed hostilities are only one aspect of a peace process. They can mark the beginning of a protracted period of negotiations on a range of substantive and procedural issues. After getting the armed belligerents on board for a negotiation process, it is important to continually broaden participation in the process to include more stakeholders and expand the negotiation agenda to cover underlying issues.

There is a tendency to structure negotiations on a bi-polar model, as it seems to simplify the challenge of mediating an

agreement. In too many cases, it has seemed easier to construct a peace negotiations process between representatives of the government and one of the armed groups that is willing to participate in talks. In the push to reach a quick agreement, other key stakeholders are left out of the negotiations process – even though they have the potential to wreck the agreements reached at a later stage.

Most conflict situations involve multiple parties, with different political affiliations and representing various social groups, only some of which have taken up arms. There are strong arguments for why other political and social groups should have a voice in negotiating agreements aimed at addressing underlying causes of conflict and especially in formulating new constitutional arrangements. They may care about a different set of issues and may bring important ideas and resources to bear in ways to address them. Furthermore, only involving the belligerents is likely to lead to a skewed outcome – and create a perverse incentive to take up arms to secure one's objectives.

The dynamics of the process of negotiating a complex agreement that meets the major concerns of the parties can foster a shift towards a more cooperative relationship. They begin to build a degree of trust and understanding as they recognize that they will be more likely to achieve their own goals by helping the others to achieve theirs. Furthermore, as Fink Haysom remarks: "The text of an agreement cannot itself substitute for political will ... the process elements in negotiations are vital in creating the will, the trust and joint responsibility" needed to implement agreements.³⁰

In many cases, the engagement of large segments of the wider society, including women and others typically marginalized from decision-making, in peacebuilding processes can stimulate the changes needed for sustainable peace. Comparative experience shows that where a peace process enables broad-based participation and public debate, intensely conflictual issues can begin to be reclaimed as the normal subjects of political dialogue, problem-solving and constructive action. It therefore becomes a defining moment in the transition from one political order to

the next and can underpin moves toward a more participatory and democratic political system and society.³¹

Comprehensive negotiation agendas and structures: a key for more comprehensive change?

The political negotiations leading to peace agreements are also a time to address the underlying causes that gave rise to conflict. A comprehensive agreement requires a comprehensive negotiating agenda that goes beyond reaching agreements on how to end the military conflict and satisfying the minimum demands of the belligerents (such as the allocation of ministries in a new power-sharing government). Too often such agreements are seen as more about 'dividing the spoils' between those willing to use violence to access power than about promoting equitable development or fulfilling the identity and security needs of excluded groups. All too often, the implicit message is that violence pays – thus increasing the sense of public alienation from the agreement and from politics more generally.

In some cases, such as Colombia³² or Sudan³³, meeting the 'comprehensiveness test' also requires processes capable of engaging multiple parties involved in seemingly distinct conflicts to develop overarching agreements on the fundamental nature of the state. Trying to create a separate peace by addressing conflicts in isolation can be doomed to failure because the factors causing and sustaining violent conflict are interrelated. The result of such a piecemeal approach to interlocking conflicts may be number of separate agreements that are equivalent to a jigsaw puzzle with pieces that either do not fit or are missing altogether. In some cases, this principle holds true for entire regional conflict formations – such as the Caucasus or the Middle East – where it seems to be extremely difficult to resolve any one conflict in the absence of a wider regional framework for peace, which for example was a key factor in sustaining peace processes in Central America in the 1990s.³⁴

South Africa: progressively more inclusive and comprehensive negotiations³⁵

South African political leaders, with the assistance of civil society peacebuilders and technical experts from home and abroad, slowly constructed an inclusive and principled process for managing the multiple transitions to a post-Apartheid state, followed by a power-sharing transitional government, and finally a new constitutionally-mandated state structure and governing system. The process moved from initially secret talks between the ruling National Party (NP) and the opposition African National Congress (ANC) representatives. Upon President De Klerk's announcement of the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, bi-lateral pre-negotiation talks between the NP and ANC and other key parties determined the shape of a process to determine the

form and content of a new state structure. Amidst escalating violence, the political parties also negotiated a National Peace Accord, which created a host of structures at the national, regional and local level to prevent violence, largely through monitoring and mediation of localized disputes. The political negotiations were conducted through a multi-party process to agree the rules for a transitional government and key principles that would underpin a new constitution. These political negotiations led to South Africa's first non-racial elections for a Constitutional Assembly. The constitutional negotiations were accompanied by an ambitious – and largely effective – public consultation programme on the substantive measures that should be included in the new constitution. Thus, from its secretive origins, the peace process became slowly more open to public scrutiny and, in some cases, direct participation.

3.4 Local ownership and the limits of external influence

External actors can encourage peace processes to become progressively more inclusive and in providing political, technical and economic support to build capacities for participation. They can offer opportunities and support initiatives that create conducive conditions for wider participation or a more comprehensive approach. Yet there are significant risks associated with

becoming the principle drivers of the process through attempts to exert pressure. If the parties themselves do not take primary responsibility for the process and fully integrate its outcomes into their own internal strategic calculations and the dynamics of their relationships, the results are more likely to be superficial and to break under the inevitable strain of implementing the agreements reached.

Too often the international community is so eager to reach agreement to end the fighting in the immediate situation that

Sri Lanka: the risks of 'over internationalization' of peacemaking³⁶

In 2002, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), with the assistance of Norwegian mediators, signed a ceasefire agreement (CFA) based on recognition of a rough parity of military power. It included provisions to work towards 'normalization', resettlement and reconstruction in the war-affected regions and monitoring the military truce. In subsequent talks about a comprehensive agreement, the two parties initially seemed to build considerable momentum towards addressing political status questions, including some form of compromise in the form of a federal arrangement to address the LTTE's long-standing demands for independence.

The structure of the negotiation process may have undermined its durability. It developed as bilateral talks between the LTTE and the government, then led by Ranil Wickremesinghe of the United National Party (UNP). President Chandrika Kumaratunga, leader of the opposition People's Alliance party and other key southern political elites were largely excluded from the process. Among Tamils, non-LTTE parties had no role. Nor did the Muslim community, which makes up some 7 per cent of the population. After considerable lobbying, mechanisms were created to enable participation of women and representatives of the Muslim community. Yet the bi-polar negotiation structure exacerbated the inter-communal / inter-party conflict dynamics. Those outside the process largely rejected it, a factor that contributed significantly to the fall of the UNP government and the renewal of armed conflict in 2006-07. Furthermore, perceptions that the international community prepared to soft pedal human rights issues, particularly in relation to the LTTE, undermined the credibility of the UNF government for the southern electorate.

Additionally, donor involvement seemed to undermine the LTTE's confidence in the process. The ceasefire agreement and the Norwegian-led process had been based on the principle of political parity between the government and LTTE. They had agreed to equal and joint partnership in efforts to solicit international financial assistance for reconstruction in the north and east. A key priority of the UNF

government was to push through controversial reforms to liberalize the economy and it wanted international aid to cushion the shocks. A key priority for the LTTE was to bring a 'peace dividend' through aid to rehabilitate war-torn communities, infrastructure and economy. Thus international assistance was an important factor for both.

The Tokyo Donors Conference in July 2003 was intended to be the forum for securing these resources. That April, a preparatory meeting for the conference was arranged in Washington. However the US's proscription policies meant that it did not give visas to the LTTE, which is on its list of banned 'terrorist' organizations. The LTTE issued a series of statements in protest at its exclusion, claiming it undermined confidence in both the reconstruction initiative and the peace process.³⁷ Thereafter, it refused to come to the Tokyo Conference and suspended its participation in the talks process.

Donors at the conference did not adapt to this changed context. The GoSL was involved in drafting the Tokyo Declaration, viewing it as a means of applying pressure on the LTTE. Donors specified 'positive conditionality' with assistance linked to progress in the talks towards a final agreement, compliance with the CFA, Muslim participation in the talks, human rights, and gender equity – none of which compromised the government's position. In the LTTE's view, the donor conference represented over-internationalization of the process from which they were determined to extract themselves. The process had severely undermined the principle of parity and, however generous, aid proved insufficient an incentive to the LTTE in the absence of interim governance arrangements to allow them to decide how the resources were used.

International efforts at applying 'peace conditionality' were intended to encourage progress. Yet they essentially 'economized' peacebuilding, based on the mistaken assumption that economic incentives could override political imperatives. The actions of leading foreign governments tipped the dynamics between being a constructive force initially to distorting the process and possibly undermining it. Formal talks never resumed. Although the Norwegians continued to facilitate communication indirectly, the momentum slowly died until the process collapsed entirely into the resumption of a war strategy in early 2007.

they encourage compromises that create serious difficulties in the medium- to long-term. Sometimes this pressure to reach a quick agreement comes from foreign governments keen to appear responsive to public concern for the humanitarian crisis and to move the story off the headlines. Other times it is because international mediators may not believe it is possible to reach a more inclusive and comprehensive agreement – or do not believe that constructing such a process is in their remit. Yet there can be severe opportunity costs arising from these kinds of ‘short cuts’ to peace. The shortcomings of peacemaking during the break-up of Yugoslavia should provide an enormously cautionary lesson in the risks of not addressing the interlocking conflicts comprehensively.

3.5 Preventive diplomacy: resolving conflicts before they become violent

Preventive diplomacy through early response to impending conflicts aims to resolve disputes through peaceful processes. Often this calls for early involvement, before conflicts escalate

into violence, when the parties are most likely to be receptive to offers of assistance – especially if provided discreetly by a body seen as operating in good faith. The international norm of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states has long inhibited early action prior to a full-blown crisis. However once conflicts have escalated into the violence of warfare, it is often very difficult to pursue a negotiated settlement until some degree of military stalemate is reached, with all the tragic losses this inevitably entails.

The alternative is to have pre-standing mechanisms with appropriate mandates and resources. Regional IGOs are often well-placed to pursue such collective approaches to preventive diplomacy because they are close to unfolding events and typically their member states have a interest in ensuring that armed conflict does not spill over and threaten their own stability. The focus of preventive diplomacy mechanisms should be on early-stage dispute resolution, before full-scale armed hostilities have commenced, by facilitating de-escalatory dialogue and agreements to address sources of conflict that are consistent with internationally agreed norms and standards.

OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities: a regional instrument for preventive diplomacy³⁸

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was established in 1992 to identify and seek early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability or friendly relations between OSCE participating States. It has served as an important standing instrument not only for promoting international standards but also for proactively responding to potentially conflict generating tensions over minority-majority relations.

- When the High Commissioner believes that a situation needs attention, he informs the government that he would like to visit to develop a better understanding of the situation. While he does not ask permission, governments retain the right to refuse permission to enter, to meet with him or to comply with his recommendations. Therefore, while the procedure is proactive, it is ultimately subject to the government’s consent.
- On-site visits are essential for conducting discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including those in government, in the opposition, and in a diverse range of civil society organizations. The aim is to listen and seek to

understand the nature of problems and the difficulties in meeting these challenges so as to find ways of helping governments and others to respond to them in a realistic way. This role is best accomplished through a non-partisan and constructive approach to developing relationships with the different parties. Assessments are further complemented by fact-finding using statistical data and other independent analysis.

- The High Commissioner then offers ideas and recommendations based on defining the challenges, recognizing the concerns of the main stakeholders, and offering suggestions for how they can be addressed in ways that are consistent with international norms and standards. This approach has been called ‘one-way mediation’, as the government is the only interlocutor with formal status. Consequently, there has been a high level of acceptance of his role and his recommendations are generally well received by the governments concerned. Yet consultations with other stakeholders (especially, in this case, with representatives of minority groups) usually mean the High Commissioner also has considerable influence with them. Indeed, the very presence of a high-level international representative can increase their confidence that their concerns can be addressed through peaceful political processes and thereby help to calm the situation.

International mediation in the break-up of Yugoslavia: a cautionary example on the importance of inclusive and comprehensive processes

Many observers of international efforts to address the consequences of the break-up of Yugoslavia recognize the deeply problematic nature of international engagement in the conflict. In talks, international mediators accepted two premises that combined to exacerbate the ethnic cleansing. First, they did not believe they could address the underlying problems that had the potential to become major future conflicts, preferring instead to advocate 'quick fix' strategies. Second, they accepted the exclusionary, ethnonationalist principles promoted by the extremists who ran the governments and the paramilitaries of the parties concerned. There was a failure to develop a unified consensus on appropriate strategies; *ad hoc* tactics tended to reinforce the ethnic cleansing and expansionist tendencies of the ethnonationalists and simultaneously failed to prioritize the protection civilians, even when genocidal massacres were occurring.

Thus talks on withdrawal of the Yugoslav National Army from Slovenia did not address the impending crisis in Croatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina; talks on Croatia did not tackle the future safety of Bosnia-Herzegovina or take preventive measures to contain its explosion – as was requested by Bosnian President Izetbegovic. And none of the talks, including those in Dayton tackled the situation in

Kosovo – the extreme danger of which was completely predictable from the late 1980s. Only the situation in Macedonia received a more proactive international response that, while not able to completely prevent armed conflict, was successful in containing it.

The international mediators' strategies seemed to focus on bargaining around issues that had already been partially decided by military action or were in the process of being addressed through military action. This was thought to improve the chances of reaching a speedy and enforceable agreement. From a very early point in the Cyrus Vance–David Owen mediated talks over the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the mediators accepted the 'ethnic map game logic' promoted by Presidents Tudjman and Milosevic. Consequently, the emphasis was on seeking agreement for how the country would be partitioned, based on demographics and territorial acquisitions through military campaigns. This appears to have stimulated the incentives for ethnic cleansing. Failure to address the status of Kosovo in order to have Milosovic's support for the Dayton Agreement over Bosnia left space open for subsequent collapse in Kosovo, Macedonia and Southern Serbia.

Despite the enormous external investment – including peacekeeping and development assistance – totalling billions of dollars, today neither Bosnia nor Kosovo are self-sustaining. Agreement on the status of Kosovo remains challenging, despite guiding principles agreed by the 'Contact Group' of countries supporting negotiations.

Preventive diplomacy in Venezuela³⁹

The government and opposition groups had become so polarized that, by 2002, the political crisis threatened Venezuela's stability. The Organization of American States (OAS), The Carter Center (an international NGO) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in August 2002 to begin a formal process to help resolve Venezuela's political crisis.

The international tripartite working group began talks in early November 2002 between the government and opposition political and civil society groups to move the country beyond the crisis. OAS Secretary-General César Gaviria led the talks, with support from The Carter Center and UNDP. Amid those negotiations in late 2002, a two-month general strike occurred, shutting down oil production and many other businesses. To keep communications going, The Carter Center introduced a 'third side' project to identify people affected by the conflict willing to push for a peaceful resolution. Besides facilitating different levels of talks, the Center collaborated with UNDP to hold peacebuilding seminars with civic groups and the media.

After six months of intense negotiations, the OAS and the

Carter Center helped Venezuela's government and opposition agree in May 2003 on terms for a possible referendum on whether embattled President Chávez should step down. Supporters of the government and the opposition who were members of the Forum on Negotiation and Agreements signed an accord agreeing to respect human rights, freedom of expression, and the right to petition for recall referenda of elected officials, witnessed by the Center and the OAS.

The OAS and Carter Center observed the recall effort and worked with both sides and with the electoral authorities to develop consensus on the 'rules of the game' at each step of the process. After a long and contentious period of verifying signatures requesting a recall, frustration grew. The delay in announcing the number of validated signatures and the preliminary disqualification of many of the signatures led to massive protests in Caracas that turned violent in February 2004. Sufficient signatures were eventually verified in June 2004, triggering a recall vote in August 2004. President Chávez won almost 60 per cent of the vote and went on to complete the remainder of his term. While political conflict continues, few believe the country is at risk of collapsing into armed struggle.

Darfur: deadline diplomacy and paradoxical consequences of international pressure⁴⁰

In Darfur, a variety of foreign governments – including the UK – pushed through what was intended to be a peace agreement between the Sudanese government and the armed opposition movement. Yet only one faction of Darfur's fractious insurgency signed the agreement on 5 May 2006. Far from ending the fighting, the signing marked a splintering of the insurgency loosely along ethnic lines. The renewed military offensives meant that civilians, once again, paid the price of continued conflict. Furthermore, even the agreement itself – heralded by leading international figures as a good text and the foundations for peace – was resisted by many Darfurians, especially those displaced by the fighting who the international community was keen to protect. While the parties themselves bear ultimate responsibility for the conflict, it seems the external push to agreement clearly backfired.

Final negotiations to settle the conflict were held under African Union (AU) auspices in Abuja, Nigeria. Yet neither the circumstances nor the process were conducive to effective peacemaking. The Darfurian armed groups were militarily weak, politically inexperienced and divided – all of which made it more difficult for them to have sufficient confidence to pursue a satisfactory negotiation strategy or even form a unified position. Furthermore, they felt they had little to concede other than their commitment to rebellion. The government displayed little real commitment to the process, seemingly viewing its opponents as not posing a military threat, unrepresentative of Darfurians and without legitimate grievances. It seems the government participated because international intervention had impeded their efforts to crush the insurgency. Given these conditions, it would inevitably be difficult to foster a negotiated resolution.

Yet the mediated process did little to address these challenges. In fact, it seemed to make matters worse. A major factor undermining a good process was pressure from leading governments to get the parties to reach an agreement fast. With the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of fighting making a compelling case for peace – and regular headlines helping to generate domestic pressure on governments such as the UK – interest in a quick settlement was high. Frustrated by the intransigence of the principals, from November 2005 the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council issued a series of deadlines on an almost monthly basis for the parties to reach a comprehensive agreement by the end of that month. In the absence of international action to back them up, the Sudanese negotiators largely ignored them. But the mediators, dependent on these bodies for their mandate and funding, took these resolutions very seriously.

According to Laurie Nathan, a member of the mediation team, the ever-looming deadlines made it pointless to develop a comprehensive mediation strategy. Instead this 'deadline diplomacy' was the strategy and, as such, was completely inadequate. With talks always due to end in a matter of weeks, it was not possible to develop a programmatic approach to build momentum and trust over time or to foster the parties own capacities to participate in a successful negotiations or to address the deepening divides among the insurgents. It also meant that the mediators could do little to engage with other important groups not represented in the talks or to communicate in a meaningful way with the people of Darfur. By insisting on a comprehensive agreement, the AU greatly reduced the mediator's control of the process and constrained their options on whether to work first towards an enhanced humanitarian ceasefire agreement to reduce violence and improve the climate for talks and then work on a comprehensive agreement to address the substantive issues. Instead, the external pressure fixed in place a process that did not have the confidence of either the mediators or the parties but from which little deviation was possible.

In the absence of an alternative, each round of talks became a forum for each party to reiterate its condemnation and its demands of the other. By April 2006, the AU and its international partners – particularly the US – had lost patience. Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, British international development secretary Hilary Benn, US deputy secretary of state Robert Zoellick, among others, arrived at the talks to pressure the parties to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement drafted by the AU. The 106-page English language text was tabled only five days before the deadline that the externals were this time determined to impose. The Darfurian negotiators struggled to master the contents (not helped by the fact it took three additional days to produce an Arabic translation) and were unable to consult with their people in Darfur. In the end, only the government and the faction led by Minni Arkou Minawi signed, seemingly for tactical reasons in a calculation to strengthen his position vis-à-vis the other Darfurian groups. The larger factions, including those who had support from a greater number of Darfurians, refused.

The Darfur Peace Agreement drafted by the mediators drew heavily on (and was constrained by) the contents of the earlier Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the SPLM to end the war in South Sudan. Yet they were not able to draw on lessons from that process, which was characterized by extended direct negotiations between the principals with the IGAD mediators controlling the process and drawing on international support as needed to resource and encourage progress in the talks. In Darfur, the parties – both the signatories and the abstainers – did not negotiate the agreement, there was no consensus on its contents, nor did they feel any strong responsibility to abide by its terms.

4. Making the case: why the UK should increase and improve support for peace processes

Alleviating suffering and the incalculable costs incurred in armed conflicts through their prevention and resolution is evidently a goal in its own right. However there are also a number of other reasons why improving the prospects for the peaceful resolution of conflicts is in the UK's own direct strategic interests. It can help to prevent terrorism and help to counterbalance the effects of an interventionist foreign policy in increasing hostility towards the UK and radicalizing some in the country. It offers 'value for money' relative to some other response options, and is essential for poverty elimination and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Ultimately, sustainable peace is necessary both for the well-being of conflict affected societies and, in this highly interdependent era, for the long-term development of a more peaceful and secure world for everyone.

4.1 Resolving protracted conflicts may help to prevent terrorism

Terrorist actions find support when they are perceived as the only available means of redressing injustices that have given rise to conflict. Furthermore, war zones can provide opportunities for terrorist groups to become established and to operate.⁴¹ Resolving protracted conflicts and satisfactorily addressing the specific grievances that gave rise to them can therefore help to reduce the justification for terrorism, weaken the credibility of organizations employing tactics of terror and reduce opportunities for such organizations to consolidate.

A conventional security strategy should therefore be matched with political and economic strategies aimed at resolving conflict in efforts to prevent terrorism. This should not be interpreted to imply that peacemaking should be a part of the government's counter-terrorism strategy. Rather, the government should give greater priority to the needs of peacemaking. In practice, counter-terrorist strategies from Mindanao to Somalia have thus far done more on balance to undermine peace processes than to help resolve protracted conflicts in areas where terrorism is a concern.

In the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001, many protracted conflicts around the world – from Mindanao to Colombia to Northern Uganda – have been reframed as fronts in the so-called 'Global War on Terror'. In many cases, this led to the unintended consequences of damaging existing peace processes and reinvigorated strategies aimed at military defeat.

It has become increasingly common for governments to put armed insurgency groups onto the 'proscribed' list of terrorist organizations.⁴² These include both long-standing armed movements with territorially- and politically- specific goals

(such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka or the FARC in Colombia) and newer transnational groups, such as those in the al-Qaeda network. Once it has been imposed, the blunt instrument of proscribing a group can have paradoxical consequences. It creates obstacles to political engagement, as it makes it both more risky for armed groups to participate in negotiations and calls into question the legality of initiatives by intermediaries to engage with such armed groups.

Furthermore, there are indications that hardening military strategy has at times lent greater credibility to factions willing to use terrorist actions to achieve their objectives. In some cases, being proscribed has strengthened the hand of the 'hardliners' within an armed group. They argue that a continued military strategy is the only legitimate and viable response to their exclusion. There are also a number of cases where it has impeded the progress of ongoing peace talks. For example, in 2003 the LTTE was prevented from attending a donor conference held in Washington to discuss development aid and reconstruction due to US domestic legislation. This was a significant contribution to the negative dynamics that led to the deadlock of a previously dynamic peacemaking process.⁴³

Legislation adopted in many countries makes it illegal for anyone to have contact with these groups, so it has become difficult even for well-known peacemaking organizations and individuals to explore the opportunities for a negotiated settlement or to provide support for durable peacemaking. They may risk being labelled as 'pro-terrorist' just by seeking to explore ways of addressing the conflict.

4.2 Better to be perceived as an international peacemaker

While conflict resolution may help to reduce terrorism by addressing some of the grievances that are exploited to give it legitimacy, developing a reputation as a leading force for promoting peace by peaceful means might help to prevent the UK from being a target of terrorist actions and other hostility. It may help to counterbalance the effects of the UK's interventionist foreign policy that has seemingly led to increased hostility towards the UK and radicalizing some elements in the country.

Particularly since the UK's involvement in the invasion of Iraq, opinion abroad of UK foreign policy has become increasingly negative – especially in the Muslim world. For example, a British Council survey in 2003 asked respondents in the Middle East to name the negative aspects of the UK, 37 per cent named its political stance with the UK's close relationship with the US the most frequently cited factor.⁴⁴

Negative attitudes towards British foreign policy appear to be exploited by extremists to further radicalize those with a sense of persistent injustice. One of the often-cited, perhaps unfair, grievances of some Islamist militants hold against the British government is that the West has failed to act to protect Muslims in numerous conflicts around the world. While Palestine is often claimed as the most grievous example, such claims date back to the failure to protect Bosniak Muslims, Chechens and are currently extending to the conflict over Nagorny-Karabakh. In general, inconsistency in Western responses is perceived as a pattern of injustice that fuels resentment and is conducive to radical views and even support for extremist responses.⁴⁵

The UK Parliament Select Committee on Foreign Affairs has also recognized the links between unresolved conflict, UK foreign policy and propaganda fuelling global Islamicist militancy.⁴⁶

“We conclude that propaganda is one of the major tools in al-Qaeda’s arsenal. We further conclude that progress towards resolving key international conflicts would go some way to removing widespread feelings of injustice in the Muslim world that feed into the causes of and support for terrorism.”⁴⁷

Yet the government has often tried to dismiss its foreign policy as a factor that has fuelled radicalization and militancy amongst some – abroad and, importantly, at home. For example, in the aftermath of the July 2005 London bombings, the Home Office established a ‘Preventing Extremism Together’ initiative that included a working group on extremism and radicalization to address the process by which some British Muslims were being radicalized. The government’s starting assumption was that this is reflective of their being ‘inadequately integrated’ – a line seemingly connected to Prime Minister Blair’s denial of any link between the London attacks and the UK’s role in Iraq, the stated reason for the attack given by some of the bombers. As Shane Brighton notes:

“This difficulty in situating UK foreign policy within an account of the radicalization towards violence of some British Muslims, as a means of objectively assessing how it has or has not contributed to that radicalization, pervades many of the analyses that followed the London attacks – including, notably, the PET report. The issue of foreign policy is raised, its central importance is noted, but little if any account is offered of its relationship with domestic radicalization. Instead there is a return to the need for ‘integration’ and by extension for a reworking of the domestic framework of multiculturalism.”⁴⁸

These issues are clearly complex and strengthening the UK’s capacities to be an effective peacemaker is only one element in a possible foreign policy response to address them. However it does illustrate the risks of over-reliance on ‘military instruments’ and the exercise of ‘hard’ power as a primary response to conflict.

4.3 Peacemaking is less expensive – and potentially more effective – than military intervention

A Bradford University study estimated that, on average, each £1 spent on prevention generates a £4 saving to the international community.⁴⁹ This becomes a compelling argument for why the government and others need to ‘spend to save’; a fact the government has recognized in a number of its policy documents. The government’s Investing in prevention study goes further to acknowledge that the indirect impacts of instability on the UK in terms of energy security, criminal activity, migration, asylum and foregone economic opportunities are not included in these calculations – thus making efforts to manage instability and conflict effectively a core national interest.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, armed conflicts and wars still occur and need to be addressed. Military intervention and stabilization are very costly responses, although they may be necessary occasionally. Yet using the UK’s diplomatic and development instruments to support the political resolution of conflict – both for preventive diplomacy and for peace negotiations – costs comparatively little. According to an off-the-record comment by a Treasury official, the ‘military tool’ is estimated to cost ten times as much as diplomatic activity and other economic and technical support. Yet in practice it is far easier to secure funds for military activities because the Treasury releases money for UK military activities from contingency funds but money for non-military purposes has to be found in departments’ existing budgets.⁵¹

Furthermore, over-reliance on military-based intervention risks overstressing the UK armed forces. The government has been criticized both by senior members of the armed services and by its political opponents for its strategy, which has sometimes seemed over-reliant on using the armed services as the spearhead of foreign policy.

Ultimately, an agreement reached through an inclusive and comprehensive peace process is likely to prove more durable and effective in preventing the resurgence of armed conflict than mere stabilization bolstered by international forces, for the reasons described above. This, most would agree, is money well spent.

4.4 Eradicating poverty and achieving the MDGs are dependent on peace and stability

Crystallizing with its presidency of the European Union and hosting the G8 summit in 2005, the government has made poverty eradication a central concern. The government sees it as both a good in its own right and as one of the keys to a more secure world, as a part of what Prime Minister Blair refers to as the “universal application of global values”.⁵²

4. MAKING THE CASE: WHY THE UK SHOULD INCREASE AND IMPROVE SUPPORT FOR PEACE PROCESSES

Violent conflict dramatically erodes development gains and impedes efforts to end poverty. The UK Parliament's Select Committee on International Development has warned that an increase in violent conflict could in effect cancel out the increases in aid resulting from the 2005 commitments.⁵³ According to DFID, poor people are increasingly concentrated in fragile states and by 2010 half the world's poorest people could be living in countries experiencing or at risk of violent conflict.⁵⁴ Armed conflict is recognized as a significant threat to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁵⁵ Of the 34 countries furthest from achieving the goals, 22 are emerging from conflict. Prevention and sustainable peacebuilding are therefore necessary to achieve the MDGs.⁵⁶

The government has strongly recognized the links between conflict and poverty, particularly in reference to development challenges in Africa.⁵⁷ Similar observations could be made about conflicts in Asia and elsewhere. Yet little attention has been paid to the importance of supporting good peace processes that are able to resolve underlying conflict issues and help reconcile war-torn communities.

5. UK conflict response: mapping the gap on peace processes

Despite the promise and necessity of peacemaking and the many reasons why effective peace processes are in the UK's interests, this area of its response to conflict is comparatively neglected. Chapter 2 outlined a conceptual, policy, institutional and practice 'gap' around peacemaking in British foreign policy. This chapter examines UK foreign, security and development policy in greater depth to document the UK's current approach to conflict and the ways in which it essentially sidelines conflict resolution.

Preventing and resolving conflict is however identified as one of the top ten strategic international priorities of the United Kingdom for the next ten years. The government fully appreciates the reasons why it is important to respond to conflict effectively. As the FCO's website explains:

"The cost of conflict in terms of lives lost, communities divided and livelihoods destroyed is immense. The benefit to the UK and the wider international community of resolving violent conflicts and their aftermath is substantial. Conflicts have the potential to destabilise countries and regions, displace people as international refugees and provide havens for criminal and terrorist activity. In an increasingly interdependent world, the consequences of conflict are felt directly in the UK. Preventing conflict is an integral part of our work to promote international security and stability, protect human rights and reduce poverty."⁵⁸

Yet the UK's formal policy instruments, including FCO and DFID White Papers, are almost completely silent on how HMG can support social and political processes that aim to resolve conflict and negotiated peace processes.

The one exception is DFID's new conflict policy⁵⁹ launched in March 2007, which fully recognizes the importance of such processes in its analysis. Yet it does not elaborate how the government will develop or implement a concerted political, economic and diplomatic strategy to support peace processes. The fact that the policy was signed off across Whitehall does provide an opportunity for the government to do this, however.

The predominant emphasis of this government's approach towards armed conflict is to respond through various forms of intervention rather than giving primacy to supporting the conflicting parties to resolve their differences. The government seems to assume that conflicts can be addressed through the projection of British power – whether 'hard' or 'soft' – rather than through political dialogue amongst the parties themselves.

An 'activist' foreign policy: prevention and intervention at the expense of resolution?

In recent years, UK foreign policy has been heavily dominated by the 'activist' approach to its role in the world. Arguing that globalization has led to an interdependence of threats, it sought to make the UK proactive in responding to challenges. Prime Minister Tony Blair argued in March 2006:

"Over these past nine years, Britain has pursued a markedly different foreign policy. We have been strongly activist, justifying our actions, even if not always successfully, at least as much by reference to values as interests. We have constructed a foreign policy agenda that has sought to link, in values, military action in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq with diplomatic action on climate change, world trade, Africa and Palestine. The basic thesis is that the defining characteristic of today's world is its interdependence; that whereas the economics of globalisation are well matured, the politics of globalisation are not; and that unless we articulate a common global policy based on common values, we risk chaos threatening our stability, economic and political, through letting extremism, conflict or injustice go unchecked. The consequence of this thesis is a policy of engagement not isolation; and one that is active not reactive."⁶⁰

At the same time, the government's foreign policy seems motivated by the desire to retain and promote the UK's influence as a world power. This is clearly indicated in the Prime Minister's January 2007 speech where he argued the need for the UK to retain its capacity to utilize both 'hard' and 'soft power' and, specifically, to be able to engage in both 'war fighting' and in peacekeeping. Recognizing that the former is controversial, he argues that:

"The risk...is that the politicians decide it's all too difficult and default to an unstated, passive disengagement, that doing the right thing slips almost unconsciously into doing the easy thing. Many countries are already in this position. But the consequences for Britain are hugely significant. Before we know it and without anyone ever really deciding it, in a strategic way, the 'hard' part of British foreign policy could be set to one side; the Armed Forces relegated to an essentially peacekeeping role and Britain's reach, effect and influence qualitatively reduced."⁶¹

In addition to the risk of reducing Britain's influence in the world, Blair argues that the UK's military power is necessary because: "Global interdependence requires global values commonly or evenly applied. But sometimes force is necessary to get the space for those values to be applied: in Sierra Leone or Kosovo for example. So, for me, the setting aside of 'hard' power leads

5. UK CONFLICT RESPONSE: MAPPING THE GAP ON PEACE PROCESSES

inexorably to the weakening of 'soft' power."⁶²

The government appears to operate on the implicit assumption that conflicts can be effectively addressed through the projection of British power – whether hard or soft. Little attention is given to the role of the primary protagonists to the conflict (ie the belligerent parties) and those in conflict-affected societies in developing political solutions to their differences. And there is little recognition of the fact that external intervention sometimes makes the situation worse. In fact, there are signs that the government aims to further strengthen the UK's capacity to intervene militarily – both to secure its strategic interests and when it perceives it has the "moral imperative" to do so in response to humanitarian crises.⁶³ For example, the January 2007 background paper prepared by the Cabinet Office for the Policy Review on the theme 'Britain in the World' states:

"We are likely to use our armed forces in both conflict and non-conflict situations to intervene at source when our strategic interests are threatened, to maintain the security and stability of the international system and when we have the moral imperative to do so (e.g. in response to humanitarian crises). But there will be less distinction between conflict and non-conflict situations, and operating environments will become more demanding. Military action alone will not be enough: integrated civilian and military solutions will be needed."

Increasingly, it seems that the predominant emphasis of the government's approach to violent conflict is intervention, balanced by efforts to address some of the structural factors that can cause conflict. This overlooks the need for foreign countries to make concerted efforts to foster and support comprehensive peace processes wherever they are needed.⁶⁴ Conflict-affected actors seem to be implicitly relegated to the status of objects of foreign response rather than viewed as subjects having a degree of agency in deciding how they will act toward the conflict and opportunities for peace. Their role in responding to their own conflict appears to be marginalized in the government's overall strategy for responding to conflict.

This general approach has been reflected in many of the thematic policies of key government departments with direct responsibilities for implementing foreign policy. While the government emphasizes the role of international organizations in helping to support conflict resolution, it stresses developing the UN and regional organizations' capacities for conflict prevention and, should that fail, direct intervention. The prevalent discourse and strategy appears to veer between a highly technocratic approach, on the one hand, and a military interventionist approach on the other. The government fails to maintain a central and consistent focus on engaging politically to encourage parties towards a negotiated agreement and to foster more inclusive and comprehensive peace processes.

In many ways, it seems as though there is a 'concept gap' in government on the centrality of dealing with conflict through political means. This is then reflected in UK's security, foreign, development policies, which reveal uneven and disjointed approach towards conflict resolution and peace processes. This policy incoherence is then reflected in the fact that the

necessary infrastructure and resources to support peace processes exist only erratically across HMG.

5.1 Risks of instability, 'fragile states' and stabilization: new agendas that short-circuit resolution-oriented approaches

Many of the government's current policies towards conflict are influenced by a major initiative of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit in 2004-05 on how to respond to countries 'at risk of instability'. Its report, *Investing in prevention: an international strategy to manage risks of instability and improve crisis response*,⁶⁵ appears to have been mainstreamed into government priorities and been the basis for a number of subsequent policy instruments.⁶⁶

The study argues powerfully for more effective international responses to reduce the risk of instability and thereby prevent crises and the enormous and tragic costs they entail. As such, it made a valuable contribution in moving conflict prevention up the international agenda and has helped to mobilize greater resources to address this challenge. The report provides an evidence-based analytic framework to identify the causes and dynamics of instability; it also sets out measures and initiatives to address the causes of instability and to strengthen international response capacities should crises arise. It recognizes that a country's capacity to manage conflict effectively and peacefully and to adapt to change is central to creating stability.

Crucially, the analytical framework for the study focuses almost exclusively on sets of risk factors for instability and ways they can be addressed by international policy responses.⁶⁷ Most of its recommendations focus on reducing structural risks – such as poverty and economic decline, dependency on extractive industries and a 'bad regional neighbourhood' – and promoting external stabilizers, such as security guarantees and membership in desirable international 'clubs', such as the EU.

Yet the study omits the fundamental questions of conflict resolution practitioners: Who are the parties to the conflict? What do they want? Are there ways to mutually satisfy basic needs and reach compromise on less central goals? Such questions as these stem from an understanding of conflict as the pursuit of seemingly incompatible goals, which may or may not be pursued through violent means. The failure to ask these basic questions means that attention is directed away from identifying grievances, as they are perceived by specific groups within the society, and away from considering means through which they could be addressed. Furthermore, greater attention is devoted to the policy responses of external actors than to convening parties to potential conflict in negotiated dialogue on how to address their disputes.

In a report of almost 200 pages, the role of mediation in responding to instability is addressed in two rather minor paragraphs. In these, it recommends strengthening the 'good offices'

capacities of the United Nations and other multilaterals, largely through staff training and increasing the strategic capacity and resources of relevant departments – especially the UN Department of Political Affairs.⁶⁸ The recommendations do not mention the significance of Member States actively supporting peace negotiations through their policies and actions. Nor does it encourage the UK to strengthen its own capacities to play such a role effectively. The report gives some attention to multilateral institutions for peacebuilding operations and to conflict financing. However the chapter on improving response to crises gives its most significant attention to improving peace support operations.⁶⁹

As such, the Countries At Risk of Instability project appears to have set the trend in looking more to stabilization and state-building than to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It also frames a policy strategy based on trying to directly address risk factors on the one hand while strengthening the intervention capacities of the international system on the other. While progressive in its emphasis on prevention, it seems to ignore the capacities of local actors to be agents in making their own peace and is silent on the potential of peace processes to build country capacity and resilience. These omissions are echoed subsequently in the full range of policies guiding other relevant government departments.⁷⁰

5.2 The FCO and foreign policy: overlooking conflict resolution as a core institutional aim

The FCO's March 2006 White Paper, *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: the UK's International Priorities*, proclaims that:

"We are committed to improving further the UK's capacity to tackle the root causes of conflict; to intervene effectively in conflict situations; and to make our contribution to building a sustainable peace when the fighting is over. We are improving our capacity to spot countries at risk of instability and to help them develop more stable and democratic government. We have established an inter-departmental Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit to contribute better to the civilian aspects of reconstruction. And we are campaigning to end irresponsible arms transfers which fuel conflict around the world."⁷¹

To achieve its strategic international priority goal of preventing and resolving conflict, the White Paper specifically aims to promote implementation of the newly codified norm of the 'responsibility to protect'. It also aims to "strengthen the capacity of the UN, EU, NATO and other regional organizations to respond to conflict, humanitarian crises and post-conflict situations, including through an effective UN Peace-Building Commission" and to "strengthen the EU's capacity to carry out military and civilian operations and make sure that this capacity reinforces NATO," among other specific measures.⁷²

In this and in other official policy documents and reports the FCO does not present a clear strategy for how it can work systematically to support political process of conflict resolution

through its diplomacy. Instead it promotes a host of structural responses aimed at tackling the root causes and triggers of conflict and building peace once the fighting has stopped. It also aims to strengthen the UK's and international capacities to intervene effectively, such as by deploying armed forces and police officers in peace support operations aimed at "creating conditions that allow peace and security to develop".⁷³

These structural and operational measures are important. Yet *Active Diplomacy* does not mention how the UK can support political negotiations, mediation or the wider challenges in promoting the peaceful resolution of conflict through peace processes. They are not enumerated in the section outlining the 'specific aims' of the FCO. Nor does it specify how the FCO could best use the diplomatic instruments at its disposal to promote peace processes. It does state that a specific aim for the FCO is to work with the MOD and DFID to "ensure effective international action to tackle conflicts and support countries emerging from conflict, in particular in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Sudan and elsewhere in Africa and South Asia".⁷⁴ Yet this rather general language does not directly detail peace negotiations. Read together with the document as a whole, it would seem that support for peace processes remains marginalized.

There are, however, numerous cases where the FCO is actually involved in supporting peace processes. For example, it has a Middle East Peace Process Team aimed at ensuring a coherent UK strategy that is supportive of the Quartet's efforts.⁷⁵ It also supports several British 'special representatives' to regions in conflict, such as the South Caucasus (see box on page 28). The diplomatic corps more generally are involved in efforts aimed at resolving conflicts in many parts of the world. The FCO has created a special 'Conflict Issues Group' within the International Security Directorate. Much of the focus of the group, however, is on the UK's involvement in crafting the mandates and the operation of international missions as well as taking a policy lead on thematic challenges in a systematic global response to conflict. Additionally, the FCO hosts the Global Conflict Prevention Pool and is one of the core departments in the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool, both of which are potentially valuable mechanisms for responding to conflict, as described below.

Despite these units and mechanisms, it seems that the FCO does not systematically focus on support for conflict resolution. It could draw on some of the effective mechanisms it has used on an ad hoc basis to develop a coherent institutional architecture to spearhead the UK's support for peace processes.

5.3 DFID: Conflict as a development challenge

DFID views conflict primarily as a threat to its principal goal of eliminating poverty. For many years, DFID has been among the world leaders in promoting effective international engagement on conflict and, more recently, in 'fragile states'. Within the UK, DFID has become well-established as a lead agency on policy, operations, and donor coordination in response to conflict in many parts of the world. In fact, the development and conflict discourses have become so entwined that conflict is sometimes viewed principally as a development challenge and consequently the primary responsibility goes to DFID to prevent it.

Similarly to the FCO, DFID's conflict policy concentrates on the structural and operational dimensions of the international response to conflict. Nevertheless DFID's 2006 White Paper, *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor*, is far more explicit in recognizing the significance of social and political processes than the FCO. Furthermore, DFID does at least mention the importance of mediation and conflict resolution. In its section on 'tackling conflict and building peace' it notes that:

"Meditation through the UN, AU and sub-regional bodies is critical to resolving conflict. More civil wars have been brought to an end in the past fifteen years through negotiation than in the previous two centuries. Diplomatic efforts by the UK and other international partners can help – as we are trying to do in Darfur. And, behind the scenes, local and non-governmental organisations play an important role in defusing conflict and reconciling communities. Mediation efforts deserve more support."⁷⁶

Yet the specific commitments section of the White Paper only mentions working with international organizations to build their capacity and to respond to conflict.⁷⁷ It does not address how it can best support 'local and non-governmental organizations' (other than through its funding, as important as this can be) nor does it mention building the UK government's capacity to support conflict resolution in all the countries where it would be relevant.

'Preventing violent conflict': shifting concepts, if not shifting strategy

This trend may change with DFID's new conflict policy, *Preventing violent conflict*, which was launched in March 2007. The policy sets forth a clear conceptual understanding of conflict, seemingly for the first time in UK government policy documents:

"Conflict exists in all societies at all times and need not necessarily be negative or destructive. Conflict is the pursuit of contrary or seemingly incompatible interests – whether between individuals, groups or countries. It can be a major force for positive social change. In states with good governance, strong civil society and robust political and social systems where human rights are protected, conflicting interests are managed and ways found for groups to pursue their goals peacefully. Where there is poor governance, however, grievances, disillusionment, competition for resources and disputes are more likely to become violent."⁷⁸

Stemming from this understanding, the policy acknowledges that the most significant groups in resolving conflict are the people involved and that even seemingly intractable conflicts can end once political leaders decide that peace is better than fighting.⁷⁹ It also profiles the important peacemaking and peacebuilding roles that can be played by civil society. In so doing, it bucks the trend towards treating conflicts as problems to be fixed by external actors. Its goals are to: (1) help prevent conflicts from becoming violent by supporting the political and social processes that manage conflicts peacefully, (2) improve DFID's responses to violent conflict by increasing its practical and political support to peace processes, and (3) ensure all its development work is 'conflict-sensitive'.

The predominant means for offering this support appears to be financial rather than political or technical. It explicitly mentions funding for capacity building of international institutions – namely the UN, EU and African Union – and (implicitly) for civil society efforts. It also specifies that "where it is well placed to assist, the UK through either DFID or the Global or African Conflict Prevention Pools will offer financial, technical and political support for strong peace processes, making efforts to ensure women are included."⁸⁰ Yet it is unclear how this political support will be mobilized, given the fact that DFID is a development agency (albeit an influential one) and the Pools are essentially a funding mechanism.

What is missing from the policy is specification of how the government as a whole will develop a strategy on supporting specific peace processes and then deploy the diplomatic, political, financial and technical resources at its disposal to pursue this strategy. The priority that will be given to peace processes vis-à-vis other policy goals is also unclear. While it is doubtless outside of DFID's remit to drive forward the cross-Whitehall process this would entail, the policy paper nevertheless seems to underscore the absence of such a strategic framework.

'Fragile states' and 'statebuilding': the high-priority agenda

In recent years, DFID has placed considerable emphasis on addressing the challenge of development in what it terms 'fragile states'. It developed its policy on fragile states concurrently with the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's 'countries at risk of instability' project, described above. DFID considers fragile states to be those that "cannot or will not deliver what citizens need to live decent, secure lives," are the most difficult to help develop and "are more likely to become unstable, to destabilise neighbours, to create refugee flows, to spread disease and to be bases for terrorists."⁸¹ Not all fragile states are affected by violent conflict, nor are all conflict-affected countries characterized by fragile states. Yet there is a strong overlap between the two, both in terms of causes and in terms of consequences.

Nevertheless, the policy discourse around fragile states – and the 'state-building' agenda that has emerged in response – seems to have supplanted a more explicit focus on conflict and

the ‘peacebuilding’ agenda within DFID, though perhaps not as much as within other departments such as the FCO. While the peacebuilding discourse focuses attention on the role of conflict parties and people in working towards peace, statebuilding tends to involve a much more technocratic approach to institutional capacity building coupled with pressure to generate political will for reform. It will be interesting to see whether and how the new conflict policy will shape the strategies that DFID (and HMG more widely) develop for supporting peace processes in some fragile states, such as Sudan and Nepal. In other countries considered to be fragile, greater emphasis is given to statebuilding strategies that are silent on the concurrent challenges of sustaining an effective peace process.

DFID: developing its institutional architecture for responding to conflict

DFID has played an active technical and financing role in addressing some common conflict challenges. The Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE) was created to lead on policy and to provide advice and support on conflict to other parts of DFID and other bodies.

Many of these strategies include components essential for consolidating a peace process, such as security sector reform (SSR) and demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR). Building on this technical and operational expertise, it has increasingly moved into other areas of institutional reform, such as rule of law and public financial management. Yet these are typically post-settlement activities and therefore tend to weight UK involvement towards the later stages of responding to conflict. Aside from these points of thematic expertise, DFID has aimed to strengthen its institutional capacity to respond to conflict effectively, although this has not yet been mainstreamed into all the Department’s work.⁸²

Lack of funding for peace processes?

Looking ahead, changes in development policy may mean that the UK provides fewer resources for peacemaking. DFID may concentrate all its programmes – and its vastly increased budget – on eliminating poverty in Low Income Countries.⁸³ This has the potential to decrease its capacity to respond to conflicts in medium-income countries, where numerous actual or potential armed conflicts exist, whether Azerbaijan, Georgia, Colombia, Indonesia, Lebanon or Philippines, to name only a few. A commitment to working in states it deems ‘fragile’ could incorporate many of these low-middle income countries.

The FCO, which might be well-placed to play a constructive operational role in supporting peace processes in these countries, does not have programme funds, other than those available through the Conflict Prevention Pools, and has few specialist staff working on peacemaking. Nor does support for peace processes fit PCRU’s current remit, as its mandate is predominately about operational response strategies. Consequently, it is likely that HMG’s institutional capacities to play a sustained, proactive and strategic role in support of peacemaking will be further reduced if DFID closes its programmes in many medium-income countries.

5.4 Countering international terrorism: a gap in the strategy

The UK’s strategy for countering terrorism (known within government as CONTEST) recognizes the importance of preventing terrorism by tackling the radicalization of individuals.⁸⁴ Prevention is one of the four principal areas of the strategy and it includes both domestic and international elements. Yet the measures it specifies seem inadequate to meet the challenge presented. International measures include development assistance and projects to support reform in the Muslim world, scholarships, and public diplomacy by “doing more to explain that our foreign policy is based upon striving for UK interests in a safe, just and prosperous world and to counter extremists’ allegations that it has an anti-Islamic agenda.”⁸⁵ In a subsequent ‘box’ itemizing UK support for Muslims across the world, the strategy paper lists UK support for peace processes in Kashmir, Palestine and Darfur. While these measures may be valuable in their own right, even taken together they seem far from comprising a comprehensive and strategic approach to tackling conflict as an aspect of prevention (of terrorism).

The strategy does not take into account the ways in which protracted conflicts in many parts of the world stem from and in turn fuel grievances that may contribute to radicalization. There are many other protracted violent conflicts around the world that have been framed by both the protagonists of the ‘war on terror’ and by radical Islamists as the frontlines of struggle. These include conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in Chechnya, Kashmir, Mindanao, and Somalia, to name just a few. Each of these situations is unique and stems from its own specific history of grievances and conflict dynamics that need to be painstakingly addressed.

The government has not made resolving many of these conflicts a key priority – even though addressing them could be seen as a strategic imperative for reducing the risk of terrorism over the medium to long-term. Instead this important element of prevention receives only erratic attention. This is probably due more to oversight rather than considered intent. Furthermore, there is a persistent reluctance to acknowledge that the government’s own policies – particularly in Iraq – have done much to aggravate perceived grievances against the UK, which is considered by many, particularly in the Muslim world, to be an illegal invader aiming to control Iraqi oil wealth rather than a protector of Iraqi people as the government argues.

In a speech made in October 2006, Gordon Brown stressed that in addressing the threat posed by terrorism, it is necessary to consider every means and every resource – including all methods of diplomacy – and that “at each stage we scrutinise the policies we have, the structures we have in place and the resources we have available and ask to what extent...they are fit for purpose not just to contain this new threat but to overcome it.” He recognizes that “Nothing can justify terrorists’ acts. But as we tackle injustices that breed resentment we must match our security strategy with an economic and political strategy too.”⁸⁶ He goes on to acknowledge the need to “put the Middle East road map back on track.”

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Yet Brown fails to note that this challenge is much wider than Israel and Palestine, as important as this situation may be. It is also necessary to work to resolve conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and all the other many contexts mentioned previously. However the UK's policies, structures and resources are not yet 'fit for purpose' in implementing a coherent political or economic strategy to successfully support peace processes in these myriad conflict situations. Other objectives – including not wanting to upset relations with governments, who are typically parties to the conflict – often take precedence. Similarly, Brown's goal of establishing the equivalent of a 'Marshall Plan for Africa' to address poverty and promote education, also mentioned in his speech, is laudable. Yet one of the major stumbling blocks in achieving this goal are the many unresolved conflicts that continue to destroy lives and erode development.

5.5 Comprehensive Spending Review: aiming for the government to be 'fit for purpose' for the next five years

One of the major policy processes underway since July 2005 has been the government's second Comprehensive Spending Review "to identify what further investments and reforms are needed to equip the UK for the global challenges of the decade ahead". The CSR is a long-term and fundamental review of government expenditure.⁸⁷

As a part of the CSR, the Government analyzed key long-term trends and challenges that will shape the next decade. Intra-state and inter-state instability are considered a key factor in global uncertainty, of which violent conflict is the most extreme manifestation. The report's assessment of conflict is one of the few instances in this government's policy papers where political processes are explicitly acknowledged as an essential factor in conflict.

"It is widely accepted that both structural and political factors are important. Conflict occurs when grievances and stresses can no longer be handled by existing political systems. It requires a political decision by some of the actors to make use of violence as a means to obtain advantage of some kind, such as political power or increased access to resources. The importance of these political drivers is as true of intra-state conflict as of inter-state conflict."⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the CSR report goes on to reiterate the FCO's Active Diplomacy approach to these issues, emphasising support for the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which has only a 'post-conflict' mandate.⁸⁹

5.6 Cross-Whitehall structures for responding to conflict

In recent years the government has created a number of new institutional structures and mechanisms aimed at increasing the

UK's capacities to respond to conflict effectively. While these have made important contributions to implementing conflict policies, they remain largely directed toward international peace support operations and post-settlement peacebuilding and 'stabilization'.

Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit

The Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) was established at the end of 2004 as a tri-departmental Unit of the Ministry of Defence, Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Its focus is on 'stabilization', which the PCRU defines as: "The process by which underlying tensions that might lead to a resurgence in violence and a breakdown in law and order are managed and reduced, whilst efforts are made to support preconditions for successful longer-term development."⁹⁰

PCRU currently focuses on governance, security and justice and plans to develop capacities for infrastructure and livelihood projects. It aims to provide the UK and its partners with integrated assessment and planning support, underpinned by an operational capability, and to deliver more effective stabilization operations, along with efforts to learn lessons from operations where it has been active.

While the PCRU is not a policy-making body, it has begun to develop instruments to guide its assessments and approach to stabilization. While these were still in the development phase, conversations with staff indicated that support for peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements has not, thus far, been an explicit aim of the approach. Nor has it been part of the strategic conception of operations.⁹¹

This is perhaps because much of the work thus far has been in Afghanistan and Iraq, conflicts that have not been characterized by peace processes (although there have been considerable political 'pact making' processes, which can bear similar characteristics). It may also be due to the fact that much of the emphasis has been on military-civilian planning and coordination with a strongly technical approach, rather than on peacebuilding strategies leading to longer-term socio-political change. Nevertheless, 'stabilization' is likely to be difficult in many contexts in the absence of a strong political framework for resolving the conflict and substantive agreements paving the way for state reform and longer-term development.

The Conflict Prevention Pools

The Conflict Prevention Pools (CPPs) were set up in 2001 as a part of a push toward 'joined up government'. They are run jointly by the FCO, DFID and MOD and are intended to stimulate joint policy formulation, programme delivery and "a more strategic and cost-effective approach to conflict reduction".⁹² The Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) covers Sub-Saharan Africa and is hosted by DFID, while the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) is hosted by the FCO covers the rest of the world. They address conflict prevention and management, as well as some post-conflict reconstruction by bringing together diplomacy, defence and development work in a

common strategy based on a conflict analysis shared between the three departments. They have been an important source of funding for peace processes and peacebuilding initiatives more generally in numerous countries.

In practice, CPP strategies and programme activities tend to be only one, often small, component in UK policy towards the conflict situation. In some cases, it is principally a funding mechanism for stand-alone projects rather than part of a broader strategy.⁹³ Furthermore, the disbursement of funds has meant that there are comparatively few resources available for the political and social processes of resolving conflict. The vast majority of funds allocated have been directed towards peace-keeping and peace enforcement operations. Security sector reform and DDR are the other significant activities funded through the CPPs. Additionally, a significant – and many would say disproportionate – amount of funding has been allocated to programmes in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁹⁴ According to an evaluation of the Pools:

“A large share, about 30 per cent, of GCPP country programme spending in 2003/4 allocations was devoted to Afghanistan. In the ACPP, almost 60 per cent has gone to Sierra Leone. After those slices are taken out, and thematic strategies are funded, the share of CPP non-peacekeeping funds allocated to other types of activities is quite low. For many conflict situations, the CPPs’ main function has become that of a seed fund or a mobilizer of action by others, mostly by local actors.”⁹⁵

Furthermore, a survey of the specific strategy overviews published on websites reveals that some have an explicit aim of supporting political negotiations and peace processes, such as the GCPP strategy for Nepal⁹⁶ or the ACPP strategy for the Great Lakes Region.⁹⁷ Yet many of the strategies appear to be focused on security sector reform and state-building activities, on the one hand, or on international peace support operations on the other – once again reflecting the way peacemaking per se is overlooked.

Conflict specific structures and strategies

It is not always clear where strategies are developed and decisions made on how the UK will respond to specific conflict situations. Since 2000, the government has created several institutional mechanisms to foster greater inter-departmental cooperation. As discussed below, this has been partially successful – particularly in relation to conflicts that are not viewed as high strategic priorities for the government. It seems, however, that when a conflict is considered to directly threaten national security or other key interests, the strategy is determined in the Cabinet Office – often far removed from the officials working on the conflict situation on an ongoing basis. Critics point out that the result has often been an alignment of the British strategy with the US’s approach – as seen in the conflict between Lebanon and Israel in August 2006 and more recently in Somalia.

There are a number of instances where the government has created a dedicated team to guide its overall involvement in a peace process – such as the Middle East Peace Process Team in

the FCO, or the more informal but coherent relations between the government officials working on the South Caucasus (see box). A particularly interesting example is the mechanism created to oversee the UK’s involvement in Sudan.

The Sudan Unit: “joined-up” government in practice?

The joint FCO-DFID Sudan Unit is unique in the UK government. Originally established in 2002 to integrate UK support for the peace process, because of its utility to both departments it continued after the subsequent Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed between the Sudanese government and the SPLA/M. The Unit is intended to be a one-stop-shop for political, development and humanitarian policy on Sudan. It reports to both the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for International Development. The team – drawn from both government departments – brings together expertise on foreign and development policy. The British Embassy and DFID office in Khartoum are an extended part of the Unit. This integrated approach has proven extremely useful in the Sudan context, where political, humanitarian and development issues are closely linked. DFID has benefited from FCO political analysis and reciprocally has delivered aid in support of the peace process. The Sudan Unit is regarded as a prime example of joined-up government, winning a Public Servant of the Year Award in 2004. The Sudan Unit’s philosophy is one of working with others, both within Whitehall (where it plays a central role in coordinating UK policy towards Sudan), the international community (for example through the establishment of the Sudan Contact Group, which the UK has chaired) and other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, parliamentarians, the media). The creation of the Unit has increased the UK’s ability to deal quickly with a range of issues – be they peace talks, tackling human rights, military/security requirements, providing for IDPs, debt relief, donor co-ordination, health and education.

The Sudan Unit has been an important institutional mechanism bringing greater coherence to the UK’s involvement in Sudan. Yet it also reveals the limitations inherent in strengthening institutions in the absence of a deeper conceptual appreciation of the requirements of good peacemaking. This is witnessed in the UK’s participation in the ‘deadline diplomacy’ tactics at the Abuja talks on Darfur (see box). This reveals the need for the UK to address all the gaps – conceptual, policy, institutional and practice – so as to be able to give consistently strong support for effective peace processes.

The UK's role in the conflict over Abkhazia: good practice in opening space for engagement, reducing isolation and encouraging reform

Since the outbreak of war in 1992, the UK has played a quiet role in the Georgia / Abkhazia peace process. The UK has sought to support the peace process politically, economically and technically. It has supported multilateral efforts primarily through the UN, but also through the OSCE in its role as an observer, as well as international NGOs.

The UN chairs official negotiations within the 'Geneva Process', which is supported by the Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia – a self-appointed group consisting of France, Germany, Russia, the US and the UK. Russia and the USA, with their close relationships with the Abkhaz and Georgian authorities respectively, are often seen as the decisive powers in the process. But the UK and Germany in particular have played important roles in trying to open up a more comprehensive and longer-term approach to peacebuilding in this stalemated conflict situation.

The UN's position is to find a solution to the political status of Abkhazia within the internationally recognized borders of Georgia. For much of the past fifteen years, international organizations and many governments responded to what they saw as Abkhaz intransigence by isolating it, including through a package of trade and travel restrictions imposed through the CIS. Many now recognize that this had the paradoxical effect of driving the Abkhaz deeper into dependence on Russia, rather than encouraging it to take a more flexible position in negotiations.

Recognizing that isolation and continued under-develop-

ment of Abkhazia was not effective in getting it to make concessions, and could impede democratization and peacebuilding over the longer term, the UK was a leading voice in the gradual shift towards international support for economic development and promoting access and exposure to the wider world. A step contributing to this was a willingness to issue laissez-passer travel documentation to enable Abkhaz civil society activists, politicians and de facto officials to visit the UK for study visits and dialogue with Georgians.

First through DFID and later through the Global Conflict Prevention Pools (GCPP), the UK supported a number of NGO peacebuilding initiatives aimed at creating a more conducive atmosphere and underpinning political negotiations over the long term. This included: opening space for dialogue across the conflict divides through both Track II diplomacy and civil society initiatives; capacity building initiatives within Georgian and Abkhaz societies; and challenging stereotypes and increasing information through media and public education projects. The EU and USAID have subsequently drawn inspiration from the UK's support for these pioneering initiatives and have embarked on large capacity building programmes along these lines.

The UK has developed institutional mechanisms enabling it to pursue a coherent strategy. It has appointed a special representative, Sir Brian Fall, to help ensure greater coherence in the strategies pursued by the UK in Moscow, New York and Tbilisi. The GCPP acts as a mechanism for developing joint analysis and strategies between the FCO, DFID and MOD – and even undertook a joint assessment mission to the region in 2004. The UK has also sent personnel to the UN Monitoring Mission (UNOMIG), provided personnel to the OSCE, including the Head of Mission, and assisted security sector reform and good governance in Georgia.

5.7 Challenges for filling the peacemaking gap

If support for peace processes was at the centre of the UK's response to conflict, more political attention, institutional structures and financial resources would be directed towards the challenge of making peace through peaceful means. The government would work to better mainstream and integrate long-term support for prevention and conflict resolution into the work of all relevant departments and strengthen mechanisms to integrate strategies across the system. In response to the need for expertise, a specialized unit or team could be established. It would provide expertise and backstop support for the UK's involvement in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking.

The government appears to recognize the need to take action to strengthen the UK's response to conflict. The review of UK foreign policy, *Building on Progress: Britain in the World*⁹⁸ calls

for a new cross-governmental conflict strategy "that spans the entire spectrum, from conflict prevention, management and stabilization to securing long-term security".⁹⁹ To implement this strategy, it recommends strengthening the central government machinery at both the ministerial and office levels, among other measures. There is an opportunity for the government to put conflict resolution, through support for peace processes and preventive diplomacy, at the centre of this new conflict strategy. DFID's *Preventing violent conflict* policy, signed-off by the Cabinet, sets out a solid framework for understanding conflict, peace processes and the need to support local actors in resolving their own conflicts. The government should build on this foundation to develop and implement a strategic approach for deploying its political, diplomatic and economic resources in the response to conflict.

6. Policy recommendations¹⁰⁰

1. The UK government should develop a coherent concept of effective peace processes and preventive diplomacy to guide its policy, strategy and practice in multilateral and bilateral responses to conflict:

a) Conduct a study of existing policy and practice to identify key learning points, drawing on the principles outlined in this paper. To play a strong role in bilateral and multilateral peacemaking efforts, the government should develop a coherent and evidence-based understanding of effective peace processes. Greater clarity about its interrelationship with other key responses to conflict – including prevention, peace support operations, peacebuilding more generally – can help to sharpen the focus of the UK's conflict response at all levels, including its policy, strategy and operations. This understanding should inform departmental white papers, with the results mainstreamed into institutional priorities and budgets. It could be achieved through an inter-departmental or Cabinet Office-led study, like the Countries at Risk of Instability project or an independent commission of experts or other mechanism. The team should draw on and further explore the principles and criteria suggested in this paper.

b) **Improve practice by learning from experience.** The government should create a structure to foster systematic efforts to learn from each situation, to draw out lessons for potential application elsewhere, and to ensure that the results of comparative learning are used by those who are responsible for developing strategy and practice in current peacemaking efforts. This could be done through creating a 'lessons learned' or 'best practice' unit in the Cabinet Office or through some other mechanism to systematize learning across Whitehall. It should include working together with relevant NGOs and academics. In addition to examining current cases, reflecting on peacemaking practice should include: (a) retrospective studies that analyze processes from ten or more years ago to see how they have played out over time; and (b) processes with very little international involvement as well as those with extensive international efforts. There should be strong incentives to learn from painful experiences of 'failure' as well as from what has seemed to work well. It can be done in partnership with other governments, international organizations and researchers. However it is achieved, the mechanism must be capable of closing the gap between those who identify and document these lessons and the practitioners who need to be able to apply them.

2. The UK should provide leadership through multilateral organizations for strong support for conflict resolution through preventive diplomacy and peace processes:

a) Utilize the full range of diplomatic instruments available to the government to build consensus on the need to support inclusive, comprehensive and participatory peace processes. The UK should engage with the full range of multilateral organizations in which it plays a leading role – including the UN, EU, Commonwealth, OSCE, NATO and Council of Europe – to bring greater priority to peacemaking and a coherent and strategic approach. Learn from and further develop the UK's role in multilateral peacemaking efforts through using such mechanisms as 'group of friends' and UK special representatives and ministerial participation in mediation efforts.

b) **Work with others to remove normative barriers impeding preventive diplomacy and peacemaking.** Member states should address the existing barriers to constructive engagement and cooperation between non-state, state and inter-governmental actors (including non-state armed groups, state-like non-state actors and civil society). This should include a review of proscription policies

c) **Support the development of institutional mechanisms and instruments for early stage dispute resolution and preventive diplomacy.** Refine the application of the tools inter-governmental organizations already possess to ensure that they are applied more systematically in all countries experiencing – or at risk of experiencing – violent conflict. Encourage regional organizations to develop a high-level and action-oriented specialized mechanism or body to serve as the principal catalyst for preventive diplomacy in response to specific at-risk situations before they have escalated to wide-scale violence. Provide funding and technical support to bolster the peacemaking capacities of the UN and regional organizations. In light of international agreement on the Responsibility to Protect, there should be greater attention to the 'responsibility to prevent' that is central to this norm. This should be seen as giving greater weight to resolving disputes through peaceful means and exploration of the responsibilities of sovereignty this entails.

d) **Creating conditions ripe for a negotiated resolution.** Make more effective use of the multiple tools and approaches available to positively and constructively influence the choices and behaviour of governments and non-state actors towards constructive engagement in a peace process. Develop finely honed instruments to help effectively incentivize the parties to address their differences through peace

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

negotiations and help create greater ‘ripeness’ for a negotiated resolution – being careful to underpin rather than overwhelm the peace process.

e) Ensure that the mandates and operational concept of international peace support operations support and complement peace processes and local peacebuilding capacities. The design of peace support operations should ensure that the various agencies and partner organizations have comprehensive and coordinated strategies for supporting or complementing the peacemaking initiatives of local actors rather than displacing them. The government should aim to ensure that local perspectives are considered in the development of the mandate and concept of all international peace support operations it funds. This might include incorporating senior positions for civil society liaison officers and a budget for supporting the development of locally-driven strategies and peacebuilding initiatives. It should aim to ensure that strategies are not significantly biased towards one of the sides, in ways that end up exacerbating conflict dynamics.

f) Support international capacity building for peacemaking and preventive diplomacy and ensure there are sufficient resources for effective operations. The government could set up an inter-departmental task force or other mechanism to engage in dialogue with counterparts in other governments, international organizations and NGOs, possibly under the auspices of the UN Department of Political Affairs’ new Mediation Support Unit, to elicit international best practice in peacemaking and to develop strategies to better address persistent challenges.

3. Make conflict resolution a central goal of government policy and strengthen the UK’s own institutional capacities to engage effectively in peace processes:

a) Develop a clear policy framework for the UK’s support for peacemaking. Build on DFID’s new *Preventing violent conflict* policy to develop a cross-governmental strategy that has support for conflict resolution at its centre. In particular, develop and more clearly articulate the policies guiding the FCO’s peacemaking role (multilaterally and bilaterally) in civil war situations.

b) Mainstream and integrate support for prevention and resolution into the policies and strategies of all relevant government departments. Ensure that FCO, DFID, MOD, DTI and the Treasury develop a coherent policy for their support to peace processes. Create inter-departmental mechanisms to ensure a coherent strategy and joined-up operational response to specific conflict situations so that opportunities for peacemaking are seized in a timely and sensitive manner. Ensure that conflict assessment tools – including DFID’s new quality of governance assessment – incorporate specific questions to better connect conflict analysis and response strategies.

c) Develop specialized capacities to underpin UK involvement in peace process strategy and mediation efforts.

- Effectively resource the government’s peacemaking capacities by creating a unit, team, institute or some other mechanism (either within the FCO, as an inter-departmental group, or some sort of quango) that can provide specialized knowledge, technical advisors and even experienced mediators to back-stop the government’s involvement in peace processes.
- Professionalize the peacemaking skills of key personnel who are involved in conflict resolution directly as part of mediation teams and indirectly as part of policy and strategy development.
- Build capacities for the full palette of peacemaking strategies, including in process development, negotiation, dialogue, mediation and quiet diplomacy, as well as in innovative approaches to addressing a range of conflict issues and procedural challenges.
- Ensure that the UK is able to provide appropriate funding, through flexible funding mechanisms able to rapidly disburse amounts when opportunities emerge and longer-term sustained funding for processes and programmes addressing key conflict issues.

d) Provide appropriate funding to support the peaceful resolution of conflict. Funds could be used to support political negotiation processes, provide resources for confidence building measures and projects that address specific grievances, as well as finance medium-term initiatives aimed at peacebuilding, reconciliation and transitional justice. This could be a part of the mandate of the conflict prevention pools, so long as there are sufficient measures to ensure that proactive support for conflict resolution-oriented processes has a high priority in the allocation of available funds.

e) Provide support and strengthen partnerships with international NGOs and local civil society organizations working in support of peace processes and peacebuilding. Support and work with the UK’s peacebuilding NGOs and others internationally to develop strategies and initiatives to respond to specific conflict situations, as well as systemic factors causing or exacerbating conflict. Possibly through partnerships with international NGOs, support local civil society peacebuilding initiatives and capacities.

4. The government should support the parties to conflict to address their differences through peaceful means:

a) Enable more effective and appropriate engagement with armed groups. Strategic and principled engagement with armed groups can build the confidence among belligerents necessary for a sustainable resolution of the conflict. Carefully consider the UK’s own policy and strategy for

engagements. Provide appropriate political and financial support for third parties' initiatives to engage armed groups in peacemaking and support their capacities to participate effectively in peace processes.

b) Build capacities for effective peace negotiations.

- As appropriate, the government should provide political support and technical assistance for negotiation training to all the parties to increase their confidence in a negotiation process.
- The UK should live up to its commitments to provide practical support and political encouragement to ensure that women are represented equally at the decision-making level in formal peace negotiations, in keeping with Security Council Resolution 1325.
- Encourage the parties to foster inclusive and comprehensive peace process structures and work with any international mediators / facilitators to help ensure they are working towards a long time horizon and incorporating lessons from international best practice.

c) Support greater public participation in peacemaking.

- Just as participation has been recognized as a central principle in development, it also needs to be mainstreamed as an essential quality of effective conflict policy and peacebuilding practice – including in peace negotiations. The UK has the potential to play important roles in supporting participation at all phases of the peace process.
- Even prior to the emergence of sustained political negotiations, DFID can provide support to civil society actors to prepare them for effective participation through training and capacity building in participation, negotiation and policy formulation. This is an investment not only for the peace process but also for later democratic participation in policy processes and 'good politics' post-settlement.
- Prior to and possibly during the negotiation process, the UK could help to ensure there is sufficient financial and technical support for multi-sectoral forums convening diverse civil society groupings – including those aligned with the belligerent parties – to develop and debate the key issues that should be addressed in the negotiating agenda and, as relevant, to deliberate on the substantive measures to address them. International mediators and special envoys should be informed of relevant initiatives and the substantive ideas generated.
- The UK can work with international partners, including at the UN and in regional organizations, to encourage and support civil society involvement. It can work to ensure that there are mechanisms for appropriate degrees of transparency and for public participation in negotiations on substantive constitutional and policy matters related to the future of the country.

APPENDIX 1

Meeting the challenge: criteria for effective peace processes

Conciliation Resources' documentation of peace processes and experience with practical peacemaking and peacebuilding over the past ten years suggest a number of criteria to guide the development of good peace processes.

CRITERIA FOR STRENGTHENING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEACE PROCESSES

Process design structure: sufficiently comprehensive?

- Even if the process begins with fairly limited objectives (eg reaching a ceasefire, direct negotiations between a government and an armed group), does it envision a process that widens out to become more inclusive and more comprehensive?
- Recognizing that many protracted conflicts are connected to a web of other conflicts, does the negotiation structure either create a comprehensive framework for resolving these interlocking conflicts or enable a coherent interface with other negotiation processes?
- Is there a robust mechanism for consulting with the allies and external supporters of the main parties to the conflict and efforts to try to enlist their constructive involvement?
- Are there strategic complementarities between track one (formal, official-level engagement between leaders), track two (informal, typically 'off the record' engagement between people close to decision-makers), and track three (people-to-people engagement and societal dialogue) processes?
- Are there mechanisms that enable constructive public debate and public participation to feed into the agreements that involve fundamental changes to the state structure, constitutional arrangements and other core substantive issues?
- Will the substantive agreements require some form of public endorsement, such as through a referendum or other measure that encourages the negotiators to develop public support?
- Are there efforts to increase public confidence in the process, in the parties and in the negotiated agreements?

Participation: sufficiently inclusive?

- Does the process allow for the equal and active participation of women in the peace negotiations as well as in drafting and implementation of peace agreements?

- Does the process adequately enable engagement of those who might seek to sabotage it – or ensure they will be marginalized if they do not engage constructively?
- Is there a mechanism (such as elections or a process to nominate delegates) to help foster greater legitimacy and representativeness of the parties and / or delegates participating in negotiations leading to constitutional changes or other major substantive shifts in public policy?
- Are there mechanisms designed in a way that will enable the broadest possible engagement of the various constituent elements of the society – including women, youth, minorities and indigenous people?
- Are all the parties to the negotiations able to access effective technical support to build their capacities to negotiate?

Negotiating agenda: sufficiently comprehensive?

- Does the negotiation agenda include issues that have generated fault lines in society led to a crisis of the state and are root causes of the conflict?
- Does it include issues of concern to many 'ordinary' people who have been affected by the conflict – such as victim's rights, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and transitional justice?
- How have issues for the negotiation agenda been chosen? Were consultations held with those other than the main belligerent parties?
- Are gender concerns mainstreamed into the negotiation agenda?

Negotiations process: capable of building consensus?

- Do the facilitators / mediators take sufficient account of skills and power asymmetries between the negotiating parties and take measures to ensure that the process will help the parties to reach an equitable agreement?
- Is technical assistance available, helping the parties to learn from experience elsewhere and to craft innovative agreements that meet the core needs of all the parties?
- Are there efforts to increase trust of the various parties to the conflict in the process and towards each other? Is sufficient attention given to strengthening the cooperative working relationships of the people involved in the process?

- Is there sufficient opportunity for negotiators to consult with their constituencies and to 'bring them along' in the process, helping to build consensus around the substantive and procedural aspects of possible agreements?
- Have the parties themselves been the principle negotiators / drafters of the agreements and feel primary responsibility for them (ie feel a sense of 'ownership' of the outcomes)?
- Has the process as a whole helped to establish a pattern of dialogue, debate and negotiation as the basis for political decision-making?

Peace agreements: a 'road map' for a sustainable future?

- Do the agreements address – or identify a follow-on process for addressing – the underlying causes of conflict?
- Do they integrate a gender perspective into the substantive and procedural provisions agreed?
- Are the terms consistent with internationally agreed human rights standards?
- Are the key terms clearly defined and agreed by the parties?
- Do they specify procedural mechanism(s) for overseeing implementation of the agreement and for clarifying any disputes that may arise during implementation? Are these mechanisms sufficiently participatory and transparent to strengthen democratic decision-making and enhance accountability?

External actors: strategic supporters?

- Are there mechanisms and agreements to enable strategic complementarity in the roles, approaches and resources provided by international actors (including foreign governments, international organizations, IFIs and key international NGOs)?
- Have international agencies and key foreign governments developed sufficient strategic complementarity of the humanitarian, human rights, development and structural reform agendas, as well as their own strategic objectives, to help underpin rather than undermine the peace process?
- If international actors are involved in providing security guarantees, observing the process or assisting implementation, are the resources in place to be deployed in a timely and effective manner?

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Mark Simmons and Peter Dixon, Eds. 2006. *Peace by piece: Addressing Sudan's Conflicts*. Accord 18. Conciliation Resources. Available online: <http://www.c-r.org/accord/sudan/>
- 2 Identified as the third 'strategic international priority' in the White Paper of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. March 2006. *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: the UK's International Priorities*. p.31 Available online: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>
- 3 Conversation with the author, March 2007.
- 4 Tony Blair *Our Nation's Future - Defence*, speech delivered on 12 January 2007, available online: <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page10735.asp>
- 5 Identified as the third 'strategic international priority' in the White Paper of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. March 2006. *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: the UK's International Priorities*. p.31 Available online: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>
- 6 While the FCO's *Active Diplomacy White Paper* notes that the UN is the cornerstone of the international system and the need for it "to act more effectively to protect international peace and security" it advances support for Security Council reform, the new Peace Building Commission and overhaul of the human rights machinery as the means to do so. It does not address the need to shore up UN capacities to help resolve disputes before they become violent (preventive diplomacy) or to help steer peace processes and mediate peace negotiations. Nor does it mention the UK playing a leading role in supporting peace processes politically or practically, such as through active participation in 'Group of Friends' mechanisms. (The UK does, in fact, play a role in these valuable mechanisms but its involvement is not highlighted in FCO policy.) As is discussed elsewhere, DFID's new conflict policy - which has been approved by the Cabinet - does go some way toward addressing this gap. Yet it does not seem that, on its own, it will be proportionate to the need.
- 7 *Accord: an international review of peacemaking initiatives* is published twice a year by Conciliation Resources.
- 8 Patrick Cockburn "New commander says there is no military solution in Iraq" *The Independent*, 9 March 2007.
- 9 For background on the conflict, see: Okello Lucima, Ed. 2002. *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*. Accord 11. London: Conciliation Resources. Available online: <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/northern-uganda/contents.php>
- 10 Guus Meijer, Ed. 2004. *From military peace to social justice?: the Angolan peace process*. Accord 15. London: Conciliation Resources. <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/angola/contents.php>
- 11 See: C. R. Mitchell. 1991. "Classifying Conflicts: Asymmetry and Resolution" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 518.; I William Zartman, Ed. 1995. *Elusive peace: negotiating an end to civil wars*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.
- 12 Henry A. Kissenger. 1969. *The Viet Nam Negotiations Foreign Affairs* vol.47 no 2. p 214
- 13 Quoted in Harris, Peter and Ben Reilly, Eds. 1998. *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*. International IDEA Handbook Series. Stockholm: International IDEA.
- 14 See, for example: Dean G Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin. 1986. *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*, 1st edition. New York: Random House; I. W. Zartman, 1985/1989. *Ripe for Resolution*, New York, Oxford University Press; Jeffrey Z. Rubin. 1991. "The Timing of Ripeness and the Ripeness of Timing," in Kriesberg & Thorson, Eds. *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflicts*. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press.
- 15 Robert Ricigliano, Ed. 2005. *Choosing to engage: armed groups and peace processes*. Accord 16. London: Conciliation Resources. Available online: <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/engaging-groups/contents.php>
- 16 Clem McCartney, Ed. 1999. *Striking a balance: The Northern Ireland peace process*. Accord 8. London: Conciliation Resources. <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/northern-ireland/index.php>
- 17 Human Security Centre. 2006. *Human Security Brief*. University of British Columbia. p19. Available online: <http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/>
- 18 They argue this point in response to Edward Luttwak, who has made the case that more lives would be saved in the long term if violent conflicts were allowed to 'burn themselves out' as efforts to mediate tend to extend the length of violence. July 1999, "Give war a chance" *Foreign Affairs*.
- 19 *Human Security Brief*, p5
- 20 Patrick Regan and Aysegul Aydin. October 2006. 'Diplomacy and other forms of intervention in civil wars' *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 50:5
- 21 Barbara Walter. 2002. *Committing to peace: the successful settlement of civil wars*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 22 Paul Collier, et. al. 2003. *Breaking the conflict trap: Civil war and development policy*. World Bank Policy Research Report.
- 23 Barbara Walter. 2004. 'Does conflict beget conflict? Explaining recurring civil war' *Journal of Peace Research*. 41:3.
- 24 *Human Security Brief*, p21.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p23.
- 26 David Lord, Ed. 2000. *Paying the price: the Sierra Leone peace process*. Accord 9. London: Conciliation Resources. <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sierra-leone/contents.php>
- 27 Martin Mansergh "The early stages of the Irish peace process" in McCartney, Ed. 1999. *Striking a balance: the Northern Ireland peace process*. Accord 8. London: Conciliation Resources. <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/northern-ireland/early-stages.php>
- 28 Joaquin Villalobos. "The Salvadorean insurgency: why choose peace?" in Ricigliano, Ed. *Choosing to engage*, op.cit.
- 29 Laurie Nathan. 2006. *No ownership, no peace: the Darfur peace agreement*. Working Paper No 5. Crisis States Research Centre. London School of Economics, p.3.
- 30 Interview with Nicholas (Fink) Haysom in *Peace by piece*, p31.
- 31 Catherine Barnes, Ed. 2002. *Owning the process: public participation in peacemaking*. Accord 13. Conciliation Resources Available online: <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/public-participation/contents.php>
- 32 Mauricio García-Duran, Ed. 2004. *Alternatives to war: Colombia's peace processes*. London: Conciliation Resources. <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/colombia/contents.php>
- 33 c.f., *Peace by piece*.
- 34 Cynthia J. Arnson, Ed. 1999. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Bruce Bagley, Ed. 1984.

Contadora and the Diplomacy of Peace in Central America: The United States, Central America, and Contadora. SAIS Papers in Latin American Studies.

35 Eldred De Klerk. "South Africa's negotiated transition: context, analysis and evaluation" in Barnes, Ed. *Owning the process*, op.cit.

36 Based on Jonathan Goodhand and Bart Klem 2005. *Aid, conflict and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: 2000-2005*. The Asia Foundation.

37 Tamil Net. "Exclusion from donor conference undermines peace process - LTTE", 4 April 2003, www.tamil.de

38 Connie Peck. 1998. *Sustainable Peace: the Role of the UN and Regional Organisations in Preventing Conflict* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield)

39 Extracted The Carter Center report, available online: <http://www.cartercenter.org/countries/venezuela.html>

40 Drawn from Laurie Nathan. No ownership, no peace: the Darfur peace agreement, c.f., and "Failings of the DPA" in *Peace by piece*, c.f., and Alex de Waal, "I will not sign" *London Review of Books*, 30 November 2006.

41 In a global context where the concepts of 'terror' and 'terrorist' are ill defined and highly contested, assigning the label to a group can have a range of political purposes. While the 'international community' has generally ruled out the concept of 'state terrorism', in part because the use of violence by states is regulated in international law, many people around the world perceive double standards. See, for example, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Report of the Secretary-General In Larger Freedom; Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All. A/59/2005. March 2005.

42 It is also interesting to reflect on this policy in a wider historical context. Conservative Party leader, David Cameron, recently renounced his predecessor, Margaret Thatcher's, policy of branding Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress as terrorists and opposing sanctions against the apartheid regime. The Independent notes that there is also a broader lesson for British politics, given the government's recent legislation making the 'glorification of terrorism' an offence. It observes that if this legislation had existed 20 years ago, it would have made the supporters of the ANC in the UK, of which there were many thousands, potentially guilty of crime. ("History exposes a bad law" leading article, *The Independent*, 28 August 2006.)

43 Liz Philipson "Engaging armed groups: The challenge of asymmetries" in Ricigliano, *Choosing to engage: Armed groups and peace processes*. (op.cit.)

44 Cited in: Mark Leonard and Conrad Smewing. 2003. *Public diplomacy in the Middle East*. London: Foreign Policy Centre.

45 Indeed, the government acknowledges this dynamic. In its July 2006 paper "Countering Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy", it recognizes that factors contributing to the radicalization of individuals includes developing a sense of grievance and injustice and notes: "some argue that the West does not apply consistent standards in its international behaviour. Conflicts such as Bosnia and Chechnya are cited, where Muslims have been the victims of violence, and it is argued that the Western nations have failed to act quickly or effectively enough to protect them, ignoring many positive interventions." (p10)

46 It is notable that despite acknowledging the importance of 'resolving key international conflicts', the Committee mostly concentrates on the UK extending its public diplomacy initiatives and putting much greater funding and attention into 'countering terrorist propaganda' and to support for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While resolving this conflict is clearly important, the Committee does not go further to acknowledge the importance of resolving the wider range of conflicts that are considered frontlines in the global struggle by both the US and its allies and by Islamicist militants.

47 House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. June 2006. *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*. Fourth Report of Session 2005-06. Available online: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmfaff/cmfaff.htm#evid>

48 Shane Brighton. 2007. "British Muslims, multiculturalism and UK foreign policy: 'integration' and 'cohesion' in and beyond the state" *International*

Affairs, 83:1, p3.

49 Malcolm Chalmers. 2004. *Spending to save? An analysis of the cost effectiveness of conflict prevention versus intervention after the onset of violent conflict*. Centre for International Cooperation and Security, University of Bradford. Available online: <http://www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/cics/publications/spending/>

50 Investing in prevention, p.63

51 Richard Teuten, Head of Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit, speaking at a meeting at the Royal United Services Institute, London, 31 January 2007.

52 Tony Blair A moment for reconciliation, speech delivered on 26 May 2006, Available online: <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page8893.asp>

53 UK House of Commons International Development Committee. October 2006. *Conflict and development: peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction*. Sixth report of session 2005-06. Available online: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmintdev/cmintdev.htm>

54 Preventing violent conflict, p1.

55 These goals have integral value as a minimum threshold for human dignity and welfare. They are also an important step towards fulfilling the wider framework of human rights, which are needed to create conditions for sustainable peace and human security. Therefore it seems that peace is crucial to achieve the MDGs and fulfilling the MDGs may also help to prevent future conflict.

56 UN Millennium Project. 2005. *Investing in development: a practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*.

57 "We have come here to announce a plan of action, in partnership with Africa. It isn't the end of poverty in Africa, but it is the hope that it can be ended. It isn't all everyone wanted, but it is progress, real and achievable progress, it is the definitive expression of our collective will to act in the face of death, and disease, and conflict that is preventable. The \$50 billion uplift in aid, the signal for a new deal on trade, the cancellation of the debts of the poorest nations, universal access to Aids treatment, the commitment to a new peace-keeping force for Africa, the commitment in return by Africa's leaders to democracy, and good governance, and the rule of law." Tony Blair. Statement on the final day of the G8 Summit. 8 July 2005. Available online: <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page7877.asp>

58 <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1152009782345>

59 Department for International Development. March 2007. *Preventing Violent Conflict*. Available online: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/>

60 Clash About Civilizations, speech delivered on 21 March 2006, available online: <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page9224.asp>

61 Tony Blair Our Nation's Future - Defence, speech delivered on 12 January 2007, available online: <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page10735.asp>

62 Ibid.

63 Cabinet Office. 2007. *Britain in the World*, p12, available online: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/policy_review/britain_in_the_world/index.asp

64 For example, a key word search of Tony Blair's speeches revealed that he has generally referred to 'peace process' only in reference to the Middle East and Northern Ireland. (Search conducted on 28 February 2007, using the search engine on the 10 Downing Street website: <http://www.pm.gov.uk>.)

65 Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. February 2005. *Investing in prevention: an international strategy to manage risks of instability and improve crisis response*. Cabinet Office. Available online: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/countries_at_risk/index.asp

66 Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. February 2005. *Countries at risk of instability: Risk assessment and strategic analysis process manual*. Cabinet

Office. Available online: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/countries_at_risk/index.asp

67 The study recommends four 'strategic packages of response': (1) investing in stability by building country capacity and resilience; (2) aligning the incentives of elites with those of their wider society so that elites support reforms necessary for stability; (3) increasing international responsibility to provide a more stabilizing external environment; and (4) improving international response to crises.

68 Ibid., p.140.

69 The study argues that international response can be improved through implementing the 'responsibility to protect' agenda, through conflict financing interdiction and through better support and staffing of Peace Support Operations (PSOs).

70 It has also underscored the attention given to addressing the challenges posed by what are considered fragile states, though with differing emphases between departments. While DFID considers fragile states primarily as a threat to poverty reduction goals and second as a security threat, the FCO and MoD view fragile states important mostly due to their potential threat to national and global security. See, for example, Diana Cammrack, et al. 2006. Donors and the fragile state agenda: a survey of current thinking and practice. Report submitted to Japan International Cooperation Agency. Overseas Development Institute.

71 Active Diplomacy, p.31.

72 Ibid., p.54.

73 Ibid., p.31.

74 Ibid., p.54.

75 The Quartet comprises the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia. Its aim is to assist the parties in implementing the Middle East Roadmap of steps needed to achieve peace between Israel and Palestine. See: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1051782172293>

76 Department for International Development. July 2006. Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor. p.49 Available online: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/wp2006/default.asp>

77 Specifically, it states that the UK will: "Work with others to ensure that the UN, AU, EU and other regional organisations have adequate capacity to prevent and respond to conflict by ... mediating between conflicting group, for example through the UN Secretary General's Special Representatives or the AU's Peace and Security Council and Panel of the Wise." Eliminating World Poverty, p.53.

78 Preventing violent conflict, para 8, pp6-7.

79 Ibid., para15, p10.

80 Ibid., para32, p22.

81 Department for International Development. January 2005. Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states. p.5. Available online: www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/fragilestates-paper.pdf

82 Another challenge that DFID faces in bringing greater coherence to its conflict response is to bring greater clarity to the relationships between its policy and operational units, which include the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE), the Fragile States Team, the Security and Development Team, the Africa Conflict Group, along with the various country teams in conflict affected states - as well as with the inter-departmental structures (see below) - which are all involved in managing DFID's response to conflict.

83 Interviews by author with various DFID officials, December 2006.

84 HM Government. July 2006. Countering international terrorism: the United Kingdom's strategy. Available online: <http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/general/Contest-Strategy>

85 Ibid., p15.

86 Speech made by Gordon Brown, MP, chancellor of the exchequer, on "Meeting the terrorist challenge" given to Chatham House on 10 October 2006.

87 In relation to its core goal of promoting 'a secure and fair world', it commented, "in 1997 the challenge was to raise international development up the public agenda and to restructure defence and security forces following the end of the Cold War. The major challenges now are to confront the threat of international terrorism, to develop a long-term international consensus on actions to tackle climate change and to continue to tackle global poverty." HM Treasury. November 2006. Long-Term Opportunities and Challenges for the UK: Analysis for the 2007 CSR. Available online: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_csr07/spend_csr07_longterm.cfm

88 Ibid., p.93.

89 "The UN's work on conflict prevention, conflict management and peacekeeping has continued to develop in the post-cold war period, as the UN learns from important successes and significant failures. The newly created Peace-Building Commission, linked to the UN Security Council and General Assembly, is intended to increase the international community's ability to address issues arising in states emerging from conflict. The challenge will be to make the organisation more effective so that it can better co-ordinate the international peace-building effort, and avoid being politically hamstrung." Long-term opportunities and challenges for the UK, p103.

90 Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit website, <http://www.postconflict.gov.uk/>

91 Interviews with author. December 2006.

92 The Global Conflict Prevention Pool: A joint UK Government approach to reducing conflict. p.3. Available Online: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1091891937471>

93 Nevertheless, in Conciliation Resources' direct experience, the pools have generally functioned well as a funding mechanism and as a means to encourage strategic thinking. They have helped to foster engagement between relevant government departments, as well as between government and specialist NGOs, on how to respond to specific conflicts. This can lead to improved action on the ground and more informed policymaking in Whitehall. The pools have also proven to be flexible. They enable grantees to adapt activities to changing political realities and opportunities within broadly agreed strategic parameters, which is crucial for effective peace-building efforts. In at least some cases, they have also enabled the UK to be at the forefront in promoting innovative strategies for addressing conflict dynamics.

94 Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Synthesis Report. DFID Evaluation Report EV647. Available online: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/performance/files/ev647.asp>

95 Ibid. p.5.

96 See Conflict Prevention Pool Nepal strategy, available online: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1062157711194>

97 See The Africa Conflict Prevention Pool: An Information Document. A Joint UK Government Approach to Preventing and Reducing Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. Available online: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1091891937471>

98 Available online: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/policy_review/documents/bop_britainintheworld.pdf

99 Ibid, p34.

100 A condensed version of these policy recommendations appear in the Executive Summary

Our goals:

support people

provide opportunities for dialogue

influence governments

improve peacemaking practice

challenge stereotypes