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A new agenda for peace

20 years later

This year, 2012, marks the 20th anniversary of Boutros Boutros-Ghali's seminal "An agenda for peace." Penned in response to a request by the United Nations security council to prepare and circulate an "analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient within the framework and provisions of the Charter the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping."

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the 1992 document took advantage of a unique moment in history. The end of the Cold War provided fresh resolve among security council members to fulfil “the Purposes and Principles of the Charter [of the UN]” and presented new opportunities for building sustainable peace.¹ Alongside recommendations for more thorough and activist preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping, the agenda for peace added a fourth tool, postconflict peacebuilding, to the international toolkit. This issue focuses principally on this fourth tool.

Over the past 20 years, there has been much development in the practice and study of peacebuilding.² The meaning of peacebuilding and its application on the ground have lengthened in time, broadened in scope, and deepened in engagement. Peacebuilding has become institutionalized within the UN and the broader international community, and peacebuilding endeavours have shown successes in their ability to respond to violent conflict and prevent its recurrence. But there have also been challenges and even failures in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding has had to contend with the aftermath of September 11 and the falls of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Most recently, peacebuilding must be envisioned in the context of the 2011 Arab Spring. 2012 thus presents an opportune moment to revisit “An agenda for peace.”

This issue stems from a workshop held at the University of Toronto in October 2011. The workshop brought together peacebuilding practitioners, including a UN fieldworker based in the Middle East and a member of the peacebuilding commission working in west Africa, alongside scholars engaged in peacebuilding work, to reflect upon the state of peacebuilding today—nearly 20 years after “An agenda for peace” was published—and to move forward the possibility of a new agenda for peace. The seven articles that follow consider critically the goals of “An agenda for peace” and evaluate peacebuilding successes and failures. In this introduction, we consider what the last 20 years have taught us about peacebuilding, focusing on several lessons for moving the peacebuilding agenda forward into the next decades.

This article proceeds as follows. In the first section, we define peacebuilding. In the second, we survey peacebuilding since 1992 from an

1 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy and other matters,” United Nations, New York, 1992 (paras. 1 and 3, respectively), www.un.org. In subsequent references, we note the relevant paragraphs in the text.

2 See, for example, Elisabeth King and Robert O. Matthews, “Peacebuilding: An annotated bibliography (2005-2011),” 2011, www.columbia.edu.

optimistic perspective. In the third, we don pessimists' lenses and present a more negative account of peacebuilding over the past 20 years. In the fourth section, we suggest how the lessons learned from the past two decades may inform a new agenda for peace.

WHAT IS PEACEBUILDING?

“An agenda for peace” defines postconflict peacebuilding as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (para. 21) and which “will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people” (para. 55). Peacebuilding, as Boutros-Ghali saw it, aimed “to address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression” (para. 15). In other words, the idea of peacebuilding was to help states move from a merely negative peace—the absence of violence—to a positive peace marked by the deeper social, political, and economic features that help make a society work. We acknowledge that peacebuilding means many different things to different people, including the authors in this special issue. Ian Spears’ contribution, for instance, considers peacebuilding as any action taken in the pursuit of peace, including those that fall under the “agenda for peace” rubrics of peacekeeping and peacemaking.

Boutros-Ghali envisioned a range of activities in the aim of building peace. They “may include disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation” (para. 55). In the peacebuilding literature, these various activities have been integrated into five key “pillars” or challenges most states emerging from violent conflict must face: security, legitimate political institutions, economic progress, justice, and reconciliation.³ Nonetheless, it may be more useful to think about peacebuilding as an impact, rather than a specific set of activities.⁴ As Aisha Ahmad’s article on Somalia illustrates, activities considered part of

3 See, for example, Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews, eds., *Durable Peace: Challenges for Peacebuilding in Africa* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

4 Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999); Kenneth Bush, “Commodification, compartmentalization, and militarization of peacebuilding,” in Tom Keating and Andy W. Knight, eds., *Building Sustainable Peace* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2004), 97-123.

peacebuilding can sometimes lead to conflictual outcomes, just as activities not specifically undertaken to promote peacebuilding can sometimes help build peace.

While Boutros-Ghali recognized the interconnectedness of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding (see, for example, paras. 45, 57, and 58), he identified peacebuilding as a unique and specifically *postconflict* endeavour. He wrote that “preventive diplomacy is to avoid a crisis; postconflict peacebuilding is to prevent a recurrence” (para. 57). The UN has often continued to specify peacebuilding as a postconflict enterprise since this formulation seems a lesser intervention against sovereignty than intervention before or during conflict.⁵ In contrast, many today recognize that “conflict prevention and peacebuilding are not at opposite ends of a straight-line continuum but are adjoining points on a circle of policy options.”⁶

“An agenda for peace” also concentrates on peacebuilding by the UN and international community. Given what Boutros-Ghali was asked to do, peacebuilding comes across as a predominantly international activity, and the “Agenda for peace” discusses peacebuilding in a largely “top-down” manner. While Boutros-Ghali notes that his document “draws upon ideas and proposals transmitted to me by Governments, regional agencies, non-governmental organizations, and institutions and individuals from many countries” (para. 4), peacebuilding is not construed to have domestic actors take key leadership roles. A different emphasis—on the importance of localized peacebuilding “from below”—comes through strongly in the articles in this issue.

Finally, the agenda for peace emphasized the importance of building democratic institutions. As Boutros-Ghali put it, “[t]here is an obvious connection between democratic practices—such as the rule of law and transparency in decision-making—and the achievement of true peace and security in any new and stable political order. These elements of good governance need to be promoted at all levels of international and national political communities” (para. 59). Since the agenda for peace, both the practice and study of peacebuilding have emphasized a “liberal peace,” or the

5 Alex J. Bellamy, “The institutionalization of peacebuilding: What role for the UN peacebuilding commission,” in Oliver Richmond, ed., *Advances in Peacebuilding: Critical Advances and Approaches* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 193-212.

6 Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews, eds., *Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999), 306. See also “Supplement to an agenda for peace,” United Nations, New York, 1995, www.un.org.

idea that building peace is largely an exercise in building a liberal democratic society with open elections and free markets. Debate about the merits and faults of a liberal peace has been a major preoccupation of the peacebuilding literature over the last two decades.⁷

PEACEBUILDING 1992-2012

The optimists' account

Over the past 20 years, there have been some major advances in institutionalizing peacebuilding, giving us confidence that there is renewed and long-term commitment to building sustainable peace around the world. Within the United Nations, the most important institutional changes are represented in the new “UN peacebuilding architecture”: the peacebuilding commission, the peacebuilding fund, and the peacebuilding support office. In “An agenda for peace,” Boutros-Ghali lamented that “there is no adequate mechanism in the United Nations through which the Security Council, the General Assembly or the Secretary-General can mobilize the resources needed for such positive leverage and engage the collective efforts of the United Nations system for the peaceful resolution of a conflict” (para. 40). There had also been significant gaps in the international community’s ability to provide a sustained and coordinated commitment in postconflict situations. The creation of this new peacebuilding architecture fills these “critical void[s],” and has been deemed to represent “a genuinely historic moment” in the international community.⁸

One of the problems that the practice of peacebuilding had faced from the very beginning was the lack of coordination among the diverse actors engaged in attempts to rebuild durable peace. It’s not surprising, then, that one of the core objectives of the peacebuilding commission was to develop “common approaches among external actors” and to develop “rational divisions of labor among actors, domestic and international.”⁹ By proposing integrated strategies for the development of long-term peace in individual countries, by ensuring predictable financing for early recovery activities and

7 See, for example, Roland Paris, *At War’s End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Oliver P. Richmond and Jason Franks, *Liberal Peace Transitions: Between Statebuilding and Peacebuilding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

8 “Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture,” United Nations, 2010, www.un.org.

9 Rob Jenkins, “Organizational change and institutional survival: The case of the peacebuilding commission,” *Seaton Hall Review* 12, no.3 (2008): 1327-64, 1329.

for sustained stability, and by extending the period of attention to postconflict recovery, the peacebuilding commission, when it began in 2006, seemed to offer a solution for many of the obstacles confronted by peacebuilding efforts. The peacebuilding commission has six countries on its agenda: Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Central African Republic. It has brought significant attention to the peacebuilding endeavour and sparked fundraising. The peacebuilding fund has been perhaps even more progressive and innovative in the support it extends to peacebuilding and is able to operate in more countries than those on the commission's agenda.

A second fundamental, and positive, change in terms of peacebuilding at the international level is captured in the international community's endorsement of the "responsibility to protect" (R2P).¹⁰ Adopted at the world summit in 2005, and discussed in the general assembly in 2009, 2010, and 2011, R2P is a norm based on the idea that state sovereignty—"the importance and indispensability" of which Boutros-Ghali recognized in "An agenda for peace" (para. 10)—comprises a responsibility. Indeed, even in 1992, Boutros-Ghali stated that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty...has passed," citing the need "to find a balance between the needs of good internal governance and the requirements of an ever more interdependent world" (para. 17). Embracing the idea of "human security," the R2P principle goes significantly further: if a state is unwilling or unable to protect its citizens from mass atrocities, the international community has a duty to intervene. R2P comprises further responsibilities in line with peacebuilding, including the responsibility to prevent and the responsibility to rebuild. A number of recent interventions show that the responsibility to protect is not only rhetoric: the R2P norm is said to have successfully prevented further violence in Kenya in the immediate aftermath of the violence surrounding the December 2007 presidential elections and the 2011 intervention in Libya was explicitly framed in R2P language.

Regional organizations have also taken significant strides in institutionalizing peacebuilding. For instance, the African Union replaced the Organization for African Unity and embraced a very different and much more activist mandate. Indeed, as Thomas Tiekou argues in his

10 "Responsibility to protect," international commission on intervention and state sovereignty, www.iciss.ca. For academic analyses of R2P, see Cristina G. Badescu, *Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: Security and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2011); and Alex J. Bellamy, *The Responsibility to Protect: The Global Effort to End Mass Atrocities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

contribution, if a new agenda for peace were to be drafted today, the African Union would argue, based on its current position on peacebuilding, for “an *ubuntu* understanding of sovereignty; an acceptance of elements of the responsibility to protect; a shift towards a human security-oriented view of peace; and finally, a new set of doctrines on postwar reconstruction.”

Individual states have also strengthened their peacebuilding institutions. Many countries created new functional units and budget lines to address the problems associated with peacebuilding that fall between conventional relief and development assistance. Canada, for instance, developed a special peacebuilding fund within the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), while the United States formed an office of transition initiatives to help countries move towards a stable and more democratic government.¹¹ Though not particularly well-funded, they did provide special attention to the peacebuilding efforts undertaken in postconflict societies. States at risk of conflict also developed their national peacebuilding capacities. Faced with potential threats to their stability, many governments have taken steps to restore peace and order. One interesting avenue of research might be to study how these states, while faced with such threats, have succeeded in averting armed violence. Many lessons might be learned from that research.

There has been a proliferation of peacebuilding actors and institutions beyond the state and international system as well. These include international, national, and local nongovernmental organizations engaged in advocacy as well as service delivery. As Nathan Funk writes in his article in this issue, “because the notion of peacebuilding affirms the contributions of nonstate actors working from the bottom up and endeavouring to build solidarity across conflict lines, the term has been enthusiastically embraced by a wide range of civil society actors, many of whom have found in the term a framework that grants greater legitimacy and profile to long-standing commitments and activities.” He describes peacebuilding “as a field of practice through which individuals who are neither diplomats nor soldiers can play a significant role in peace processes.” At our October 2011 workshop we highlighted, in particular, the role of the Peacebuilding Centre for the Horn of Africa, which works “exclusively with grass root organizations, particularly youth, students and women, to build and consolidate a cultural of tolerance, of inclusiveness,

11 See Shepard Forman and Stewart Patrick, *Good Intentions: Pledges of Aid for Postconflict Recovery* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

and of respect for basic human rights.”¹² Reflecting “An agenda for peace” and echoing the work of countless organizations and individuals working to build durable peace, the mission statement of the centre states that “the signing of an agreement is not the beginning of peace, just a step in that direction. After the conflict has been resolved and a settlement reached, there remains the problem of building peace. If peacemakers ignore this final stage in managing conflict, there exists a very real likelihood that the settlement will collapse and violence erupt once again.”¹³

There are also a number of positive peace and conflict trends that give us reason to be optimistic about the state of peacebuilding today and over the past 20 years. The authors of the most recent *Human Security Report* find that since the 1950s, international war has become increasingly rare and that since the end of the Cold War, there has been a 77 percent decline in the number of what they call “high-intensity civil conflicts.”¹⁴ In addition, wars have generally become less deadly. While it is difficult to determine decisively the causes of these improving trends, the *Human Security Report* notes significant increases in peacebuilding efforts, such as a “tenfold increase from 1991 to 2007 in the number of Friends of the Secretary-General, Contact Groups, and other political arrangements that support peacemaking and postconflict peacebuilding initiatives.”¹⁵

Some of the cases most often deemed peacebuilding successes come from parts of the world that have experienced some of the worst tragedies. These include, for instance, Sierra Leone, which the security council recently deemed to have had “exceptional successes” in the 10 years since its civil war, and Burundi, called “a peacebuilding success story” in the general assembly—perhaps not coincidentally the two first two countries

12 Katrine Sivertsen, Ragnhild Olaussen, and Reidun Lankan, “The Horn region observed from within: Dialogue with the Peacebuilding Centre for the Horn of Africa (PCHA), Asmara,” *Friendship North/South Magazine*, October 2011.

13 “Peacebuilding Centre for the Horn of Africa,” www.pchasmara.org.

14 *Human Security Report 2009/2010: The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6, www.hsrgroup.org. See also Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: Viking, 2011); and Joshua S. Goldstein, *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide* (New York: Dutton/Penguin, 2011).

15 *Human Security Report*, 6.

on the peacebuilding commission agenda.¹⁶ Other possible success stories include East Timor, where the international community maintained a major presence over a lengthy period of time; Mozambique, where the two warring parties have refrained from fighting each other for nearly two decades; and Cambodia, where a hybrid domestic-international tribunal has finally begun to address the crimes against humanity committed by the Khmer Rouge. As the authors of the *Human Security Report* note, “while it is true that UN peacemaking and peacebuilding missions of the early 1990s had relatively low success rates, in the pre-Cold War years virtually nothing was being attempted. Even a low success rate is a huge improvement on zero.”¹⁷ Peacebuilding need not result in a universal utopia to be recognized as positive in the pursuit of peace.

The pessimists' account

But, as many of the articles in this issue suggest, the peacebuilding record also needs to be assessed critically. Ahmad, for instance, describes how a large-scale international intervention in Somalia perpetuated state failure rather than resurrecting the state. Paul Kingston examines how two international development projects facilitated the consolidation of elite-based political power rather than promoting broad-based participatory government processes in postconflict Lebanon. John Schram tells the reader about Canadian participation in ineffective international interventions in Somalia, Eritrea-Ethiopia, and Darfur-Sudan. Tammi Sharpe argues that in spite of the progress Liberia has made towards consolidating peace over the last eight years, “the grounds that led to violent conflict continue to exist.” And finally, Spears maintains that in spite of international efforts to resolve conflicts in Afghanistan, Rwanda (in 1993), Somalia, and Iraq, peace remains elusive. He even goes so far as to argue that international intervention in postconflict countries is not likely to succeed in bringing about peace, or at least is less likely to be of central importance to the success of peacebuilding.

The pessimist would draw attention to the fact that since 2003 there has been a substantial increase in state-based armed conflicts, even if they have been less destructive in terms of casualties. What is noticeable is that

¹⁶ “Sierra Leone must pass ‘crucial test’ of November elections to consolidate exceptional success achieved since civil war, security council told,” UN security council, New York, 2012, www.un.org; “Peacebuilding commission adopts outcome of final strategic framework for Burundi as delegates hail ‘milestone’ in four-year-old process,” UN general assembly, New York, 2011, www.un.org.

¹⁷ *Human Security Report*, 7.

many of these conflicts appear to be intractable: today's conflicts are more difficult to bring to an end than those of previous decades.¹⁸ This is well illustrated in the International Crisis Group's April 2012 *CrisisWatch* report, in which it lists 11 "deteriorating situations": Afghanistan, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eritrea-Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.¹⁹

The alert on South Sudan and Sudan comes as no surprise to international observers. The so-called comprehensive peace agreement of 2005 that brought an end to almost 20 years of violent conflict was comprehensive in name only. It was little more than a glorified ceasefire, constituting what Taisier Ali has described as "peace by pieces." Focusing only on the north-south conflict, the peace agreement ignored other conflicts in the country, notably those in South Kordofan, Abyei, Blue Nile, and the Nuba Mountains, not to mention Darfur and the eastern region. It is no wonder then that these areas have, since September 2011, become battlefields for Khartoum's army and indigenous opposition groups, resulting in the killing of thousands of people and the displacement of as many as 700,000. At the same time, Khartoum is facing a financial crisis after losing more than 70 percent of its oil revenue following the independence of South Sudan, as well as alarming figures on unemployment and decreasing grain production and social services. Sudan is fast becoming a dysfunctional state.²⁰

As to the new UN peacebuilding institutions created in 2006, their record has not been overly inspiring. Peacebuilding has been translated by the United Nations system "into a set of programmatic interventions on the ground," meaning "different things to different offices and decision-makers."²¹ These trends result, according to communications with workshop participant Alexander Costy, in "bureaucratic confusion and competition." In deciding what action to take in a given country, Costy notes that "the various UN offices—the department of peacekeeping operations, the department of political affairs, the United Nations development program, and the peacebuilding support office—engage often in acrimonious discussions over who analyzes, what the priorities are, and who decides." This frequently

18 Ibid.

19 *CrisisWatch* no. 104, International Crisis Group, New York, 2012, www.crisisgroup.org.

20 Taisier Ali, "Reflections on a jigsaw puzzle of conflicts: An overview of the Horn of Africa," Peacebuilding Centre for the Horn of Africa, Asmara, 2012.

21 Personal communication and Alexander Costy, "Multilateral peacebuilding: Back to basics?" working paper, 2011.

results in “convoluted strategies, compromised funding decisions, and ineffective interventions on the ground.” In effect, the UN’s approach to peacebuilding has introduced a set of institutional dynamics that has led to a confusion of mandates and tension across departmental programmes. Clearly, the peacebuilding commission has not assumed the coordinating role that many had hoped it would. It suffers from the same criticisms as many other programs in the UN, unable to give overall direction to the UN and its various offices as they go about the business of peacebuilding. Moreover, the peacebuilding commission has the capacity to advise, not to enforce, and has limited funding.²²

The R2P record is equally problematic. While the adoption of the R2P principle was an important first step in providing protection for all peoples from mass atrocities, there still remains the difficult task of implementing that norm. Before any action can be taken, the UN security council must give its approval, an approval that includes all five permanent members. The recent attempt to launch sanctions against Syria was effectively blocked by Russia and China. Indeed, the concept has also been applied inconsistently, incorrectly, and sometimes ineffectively. For instance, the R2P norm did not bring about meaningful peace in Darfur, was wrongly invoked after cyclone Nargis in Burma in 2008, and was abused by Russia as its justification for the military incursion into South Ossetia in 2008. Similarly to R2P, in cases where the International Criminal Court can issue an indictment against someone responsible for crimes against humanity, there remains the difficult task of implementation, or taking that person into custody, as the case of Sudan’s President Omar Al-Bashir illustrates.

In some sense, the peacebuilding glass is both half full and half empty. Optimists and pessimists usually differ when asked to make judgements as to whether a country emerging from civil war has succeeded or failed in establishing sustainable peace within its borders. The simple answer might be that if a country has avoided a relapse into violent conflict over the course of five years, peace has been achieved. Should peace therefore just be the avoidance of a return to fighting, or what is called a negative peace? Or does it require the elements of a positive peace—the establishment of social harmony, the reconciling of warring parties, the administration of justice, and economic recovery? Do countries where a civil war has ended through military victory count as success stories? In many respects, they should

22 For an assessment of the peacebuilding commission, see Bellamy, “The institutionalization of peacebuilding.”

count, as in such countries organized violence is clearly impossible, at least in the short term. Often however, in post-genocide Rwanda and postconflict Sri Lanka, for instance, order and stability have been secured through the use of force, the human rights of the defeated party are overlooked, and justice belongs to the victor. There lies a danger that over time, if this discrimination is not ended, those groups that are repressed will rise up and war will return. What has been considered Burundi's success may be on the verge of being overturned.²³ Given the difficulty of building durable peace and the speed with which countries have slid back into violent conflict, it may be wiser not to speak about successes and failures but rather of noticeable trends towards peaceful or violent outcomes, as we have done in the optimists' and pessimists' views, and then to develop further indicators of such trends.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? MOVING FORWARD WITH AN AGENDA FOR PEACE
If "An agenda for peace" were to be rewritten today, what should it say? What practices have shown the most promise? Which failures have jeopardized the project of peacebuilding? Is the international community learning from its experiences with peacebuilding? The last 20 years of peacebuilding practice and scholarship offer a number of lessons for a "new" agenda for peace. We elaborate on four such lessons below.

First, a new agenda for peace must recognize the manner in which the causes and consequences of intrastate conflict reach far beyond the borders of any given state. Peacebuilding frameworks have been predominantly focused on the domestic dynamics of conflict and "An agenda for peace" was generally state-centric. Related, dominant peacebuilding approaches have implicitly assumed that a country that is at peace with itself will also be at peace with its neighbours. Yet experience suggests that the distinction between conflict as inter- or intrastate fails to capture that most violent conflicts are best characterized as both. For instance, the conflict in the Congo (DRC) has been dubbed "Africa's first world war," involving at least seven states, and it would be virtually impossible to understand the war in Sierra Leone without insight into Liberia and Charles Taylor's role. In this issue, Kingston discusses the integral role of Syria in understanding conflict in Lebanon. Ahmad's study of Somalia goes further in capturing the international nature of intrastate conflict, arguing that "[p]oor states that are struggling with internal strife are often in that position because of the past interventions of the UN security council permanent members

23 "A sour mood; Burundi's troubles," *The Economist*, 10 March 2012.

through colonialism and the Cold War.” Ahmad also shows that there are many important actors who are often overlooked, such as the local business community in Mogadishu that she interviewed as the basis for her article.

The social, political, economic, and environmental consequences of conflict also flow across borders, graphically captured in the global refugee crisis. 9/11 brought to the fore the idea that the consequences of conflict do not simply “spill” over contiguous borders; there are consequences of instability in the global south that put North America and Europe at risk.

Consequently, one of the lessons of the last 20 years is that peacebuilding too must become less geared towards addressing only individual, “internal” conflicts. It would behoove peacebuilding actors of all levels to engage more in regional peace. There will be a key role, for instance, for neighbouring Kenya, which currently hosts nearly 400,000 Somali refugees, in any successful peacebuilding in Somalia. The interconnections between Afghanistan and Pakistan also stand out as an example of the importance of regional dimensions of peace and conflict, and improving Iraq’s bilateral relations with its many neighbours—Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Arab states, Syria, and Jordan—is a crucial step for peacebuilding there. Tiekü’s article in this journal discusses a new (and increasingly activist) continental African peace and security architecture, illustrating the importance of regional actors in peacebuilding moving forward.

Second, a new agenda for peace must further acknowledge and respond to the interconnection of the five pillars of peacebuilding: security, political institutions, economic progress, justice, and reconciliation. “An agenda for peace” began to recognize the relationship among the different components of peacebuilding and foreshadowed debate about sequencing. Boutros-Ghali wrote, for instance, that “the social stability needed for productive growth is nurtured by conditions in which people can readily express their will” (para. 81), alluding to the primacy of the security and political pillars of peace and their role in underpinning economic growth. The experiences of the last two decades show us that questions of sequencing and the mutual reinforcement of different pillars have become even more important than Boutros-Ghali intimated. As Sharpe’s article in this issue illustrates in the case of Liberia, while the right institutions are critical, a focus on the political pillar of peacebuilding to the detriment of other pillars, such as justice and reconciliation, may lead a state to collapse under its own contradictions. Elisabeth King’s research on education in Rwanda also finds that the political and reconciliation pillars are interlinked, although in a different manner. She argues that despite the Rwandan state’s explicit

focus on “unity and reconciliation,” a pillar that many peacebuilding efforts ignore, the absence of political space to voice disagreement (progress on the political pillar) means that efforts to build reconciliation are unsuccessful. “The ‘Rwandanness’ policy, at least in the top-down way it is currently being deployed...is reaching unity without reconciliation by commanding individuals to unite.”²⁴

Third, a new agenda for peace must refocus the attention of the international community on human security. While Boutros-Ghali emphasized “international security” and state sovereignty in the new and changing context of 1992, he also referred to “human security” (para. 16) and implied an appreciation of human security challenges: “the continuing and devastating problems of unchecked population growth, crushing debt burdens, barriers to trade, drugs and the growing disparity between rich and poor. Poverty, disease, famine, oppression and despair abound, joining to produce 17 million refugees, 20 million displaced persons and massive migrations of peoples within and beyond national borders. These are both sources and consequences of conflict that require the ceaseless attention and the highest priority in the efforts of the United Nations” (para. 13). Human security puts people on the ground in conflict-affected states, rather than states, as the principal beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts. As a matter of fact, the years immediately after the “agenda for peace” held promise that the human security concept was gaining international traction.²⁵

In contrast, the post-9/11 antiterrorist agenda, focused on building stability in conflict-affected and fragile states that could be havens for terrorists, has “securitized” peacebuilding—just as many have noted of development aid—and drawn attention away from those who should be, in our view, the key beneficiaries of peacebuilding.²⁶ The securitization of peacebuilding is reflected in this quote from a 2005 issue of *Foreign Affairs*: “there is a crisis of governance in a large number of weak, impoverished states, and this crisis poses a serious threat to US national security.”²⁷ The global

24 Elisabeth King, *From Classrooms to Conflict? Rethinking Education in Rwanda and Beyond*, book manuscript, 2011, 224.

25 “Human development report 1994: New dimensions of human security,” United Nations development program, New York, 1994.

26 Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001).

27 Stuart Eizenstat, John Edward Porter, and Jeremy Weinstein, “Rebuilding weak states,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 1 (January-February 2005): 134-47.

peacebuilding agenda today often looks more like “state-building” by and for the rich and powerful states (and indeed this linguistic slippage is notable in some of the articles in this issue). Securitization shapes peacebuilding priorities, programs, and targets and defines the type of response. In terms of official international development assistance for education, for example, Iraq receives almost as much aid as all of sub-Saharan Africa.²⁸ Even CIDA supports its plans and priorities, noting that “Canada recognizes that achieving significant economic, social, democratic, and environmental progress in the developing world will have a positive impact on the prosperity and long-term security of Canadians, reduce poverty for billions of people in recipient countries, and contribute to a better and safer world.”²⁹

We recognize that states will be motivated by their own foreign policy goals. Schram argues in this issue, based on his experience as high commissioner or ambassador in nine African countries, that when and where peacebuilders intervene has always been, at least in part, an issue of national interest and domestic politics. Alongside the African examples that Schram discusses, we witnessed this in Canada when the Harper government, eager to strengthen the relationship with the US and shore up the international community’s struggle against terrorism, turned the attention of both the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and CIDA to “all Afghanistan, all the time.” The last 20 years have offered a lesson about the dangers of allowing an obsession with international security to define the peacebuilding program. If peacebuilding actors allow their own security goals to supersede human security for those on the ground in conflict-affected and fragile states, peacebuilding will lose much of its rationale.

Finally, the most prominent lesson stemming from our workshop and captured in the articles that follow is about the limits of the international role in building peace and the importance of what Funk calls “localizing” peacebuilding. If the role of the international community was once characterized as relatively straightforward and necessarily positive, provided there were enough resources and attention paid to a conflict, the lessons of the last 20 years are sobering. As the pessimists’ account above indicates and the contributions in this issue further suggest, the international community’s efforts to build peace have often fallen short. Sharpe’s article argues, for example, that while “days of anarchy seem a distant past for Liberia” and

28 King, *From Classrooms to Conflict?* 270.

29 “2011- 2012 report on plans and priorities for the period ending March 31, 2012,” CIDA, Ottawa, www.tbs-sct.gc.ca.

the international community has made a strong commitment to Liberia, including through the peacebuilding commission, “[t]he root causes and conflict drivers have not yet been comprehensively addressed.” Spears and Ahmad go further, contending that the international community is often part of the problem and not the solution—bolstering conflict rather than undergirding peace. As Ahmad writes, drawing on field work in Somalia, “though well intentioned, I argue here that this sweeping agenda can actually inadvertently undermine the domestic processes of political order-making that occur naturally within failed states, thus increasing predatory violence and prolonging civil war.”

The contributions differ in terms of their view of the ability of international peacebuilding to produce better results, although nearly all are, to some degree, cynical. Spears is among the most pessimistic, writing that “[w]hen efforts at building peace have failed, the assumption is made that there has been a problem in terms of implementation or method or because insufficiently benevolent individuals have been selected as stewards of the postconflict peace process. So the international community continues to advocate the same practices but recommends starting sooner and allowing for longer timeframes, being more proactive, being more inclusive, being freer of other countries and their meddling ways, involving more of the community, and being more educated and informed.... It is not clear that more of anything will produce more favourable peacebuilding outcomes.” Perhaps the most contentious suggestion stems from an interview in Ahmad’s paper with Hawa Abdi, a prominent Somali physician. Dr. Hawa requested that the international community “[s]top making peace negotiations.... Stop making this forced government that you are making for us. Somalis themselves can solve their own problems sitting under our own trees. We can make our own peace.... We don’t want their relief. We don’t want their advice. We don’t want their political help. The international community—let them leave us. If they leave us, within two years I am sure that we will have our peace among Somali people.” In fact, both Ahmad and Spears argue that rather than a more thorough, interventionist role for the international community, as advocated in “An agenda for peace,” the best way forward is for the international community to do less. Spears contends that “if the objectives really are an end to war and the advancement of a protracted peace, there is at least some evidence that having outsiders do less is better. In the end, the most meaningful and sustainable peacebuilding is done by those who will be its principal beneficiaries”.

While not going as far in terms of limiting the role of the international community, most of the other authors in this issue note that local efforts have been more successful than peacebuilding initiatives that have relied too much on top-down intervention by the international community. As Funk writes, “[s]ome of the more remarkable peacebuilding stories...[come from] places in which an ‘on-the-ground’ international presence was not determinative, such as Somaliland, Mozambique, and South Africa. Such examples give credit to the idea that a strong, internally driven process can affect changes that international parties cannot, and invite reflection on how humbler, but still proactive, approaches to peacebuilding might support and advance—but not predetermine or direct—sustainable initiatives.” For many, the lesson learned is that, in contrast to the focus of the agenda for peace on the international community’s role in peacebuilding, “localizing” peacebuilding is essential to building sustainable peace. Several of the articles in this issue speak of a “humbler” role for the international community in peacebuilding. At the very least, the last 20 years have shown that internationally driven approaches to peacebuilding suffer from important limitations and that a balance should be struck between international and locally led efforts, very likely tilting the scales in the local direction.

Perhaps the international community can best be a facilitator in peacebuilding, rather than the central, driving force that was implied in the 1992 document. As the 1995 UN supplement to “An agenda for peace” notes, “The United Nations is, for good reasons, reluctant to assume responsibility for maintaining law and order, nor can it impose a new political structure or new state institutions. It can only help the hostile factions to help themselves and begin to live together again. All too often it turns out that they do not yet want to be helped or to resolve their problems quickly.”³⁰ Similarly, in this issue, Schram writes that “The ‘agenda for peace’ was in broad terms right: UN and multilateral interventions must and can help provide the resources and create the context and infrastructure for human security, stability, good government and a strong civil society. But only [those on the ground in conflict-affected states] themselves will really fix the root causes of...conflicts and build lasting peace.”

In order to play a facilitator role, the last 20 years have taught us that the international community still needs better coordination and long-term direction among the different UN organizations that have specialized but overlapping mandates. Without some improved measure of coordination,

30 Supplement to “An agenda for peace.”

as Jenkins has warned us, the peacebuilding exercise will become even more fragmented and incoherent.³¹ The same is true within donor states, where, for instance in Canada, ministers in charge of relevant ministries change relatively frequently and want to each leave an imprint. As Schram argues, “CIDA, the Department of National Defence, and DFAIT must do better at coordinating who does what, and when.” This type of coordination, known as a whole-of-government approach, is being attempted by countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the US, and Sweden, yet the International Peace Academy assesses their efforts as “at best a work in progress.”³²

Envisioning and implementing this facilitator role is not without problems. One challenge is the practical relationship among international, national, and local peacebuilders. Spears describes “difficult dilemmas for outsiders who are building peace on the premise that local authorities should have a sense of ownership and sovereignty. If, in the case of Afghanistan, international backers want to reinforce the idea that the government is not merely the creation of western intervention, how far should the international community go to make sure that women’s rights, for example, are upheld?” He posits the more general question: “whose vision prevails when there are disagreements that cannot be reconciled?” While our workshop suggested that a new agenda for peace must find a balance between the local and international communities on a case-by-case basis, it is very difficult to imagine what this means in practice. A step in the right direction would be to gain a stronger understanding of the context—which several contributions in this special issue identify as persistently weak—prior to international engagement.

Moreover, the international community facilitating from below is not in itself a panacea for peacebuilding. As Kingston argues in his paper on Lebanon, “donor-initiated peacebuilding strategies, while professing an interest in promoting broad-based, participatory governance processes in postconflict Lebanon, have been more likely...to facilitate the consolidation and reproduction of elite-based political power.” Indeed, “the local” should not be mythologized: there is no single unified local and not everything local is better than nonlocal. One way forward is to improve the monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding efforts—both international and local—to better

31 Jenkins, “Organizational change and institutional survival.”

32 Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown, “Greater than the sum of its parts: Assessing ‘whole-of-government’ approaches to fragile states,” International Peace Academy, New York, 2007, 128.

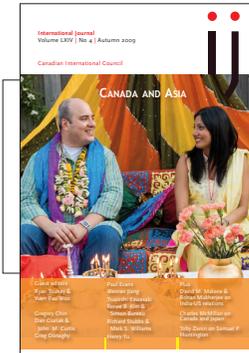
identify when, where, and how specific interventions are (un)successful in building peace, which is important in and of itself, and as a way to think about international-national-local partnerships.³³

CONCLUSION

It seems to us, and in fact to all of the contributors to this issue of *International Journal*, that the time has come for a new agenda for peace. Based on the 1992 “Agenda for peace” and the experience of the last 20 years, this article has raised some of the issues that should influence its writing: the international nature of intrastate conflict in terms of causes, consequences, and required responses; the interconnectedness of the pillars of peacebuilding and their sequencing; significant disagreement as to the appropriate role of the international community moving forward; and the important, if difficult, need to continue to localize peacebuilding.

Alongside the efforts of international, regional, state, and nongovernmental actors the world over, a new agenda for peace would also, by its very writing, help ensure that peacebuilding remains at the top of an international priority list. Boutros-Ghali wrote “An agenda for peace” to seize the critical moment at the end of the Cold War and to open possibilities for peacebuilding. A new agenda for peace could also take the opportunity—at a new critical juncture when there are at least 11 countries in deteriorating conflict situations, including Arab Spring countries, and when the ends of active military interventions in Iraq and soon Afghanistan are opening space for more traditional peacebuilding tasks—to remind us that the international community should never lose sight of what surely is the primary purpose of peacebuilding: the restoration of positive peace in those countries that have suffered through years of violent destruction.

33 Cyrus Samii, Annette Brown, and Monika Kulma, “Evaluating stabilization interventions,” International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, London, 2011.



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