Applying a critical peacebuilding perspective to Australia's foreign policy

Submission to the Australian Foreign Policy White Paper consultation

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Protesters outside the Australian Embassy, Dili, 2016, calling for a fair maritime boundary.
IMAGE CREDIT: REUTERS/LIRIO DA FONSECA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world is changing rapidly. It is more interconnected than ever before, and its centre of economic activity is moving to the Indo-Pacific region, where Australian interests lie. The recent Australian Defence White Paper highlighted the importance of the Indo-Pacific region by estimating that it will produce 'almost half the world's economic output' by 2050. The region is home to nearly 60 per cent of the world's population.

Australia's actions to take advantage of the economic, political and social opportunities arising from its deeper regional engagement must be tempered by recognition and understanding of threats to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and how this links to Australian national and international interests. These include interconnected threats associated with resource competition, climate change, rising inequality and poverty, social and political exclusion, rapid urbanisation, increased mobility, exceptionally youthful populations, the rise of violent extremism and disruptions to longstanding international policy and security postures. These threats do not need to lead to conflict and instability if national and regional actors are willing and able to rise to the challenge to address them.

The Foreign Policy White Paper presents a timely opportunity for Australia to position itself as a stabilizing force in the region, joining other global leaders in the pursuit of peace through its foreign policy. This necessitates clearly outlining an overall strategy on how to address existing challenges by leveraging and giving visibility to Australian expertise.

Fundamentally we believe this can be achieved by the integration of a critical peacebuilding perspective into Australia's Foreign Policy and across the whole of government. A critical peacebuilding perspective is focussed on reducing the occurrence and recurrence of violent conflict and promoting positive peace. It fosters trusting, resilient and cohesive societies in order to strengthen their capacity to manage conflict in non-violent ways. It entails a deep and shared understanding of context, coherent, aligned and predictable assistance and conflict sensitive, long term programming. At a minimum, it calls on actors to Do No Harm through their interventions.

Because the development losses from conflict and violence are so high, investment on conflict prevention and peacebuilding is highly cost effective. The Institute of Economics and Peace estimated that in 2015 the cost of conflict was 13.6 trillion dollars or equivalent to 13.3% of the World's GDP. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention in contrast would provide a cost-effective investment for world leaders. Funding peacebuilding in conflict affected countries to appropriate levels would reduce the cost of conflict by 16 dollars for every dollar spent now.

Australia should adopt a critical peacebuilding perspective in order to develop a foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with this approach, we recommend that the Australian government should:

1.1 Integrate a critical peacebuilding perspective as a central component of Australian Foreign Policy by the end of 2017, in line with the commitments in the UN's 2016 Peace Promise and SDG Goal 16 and in consultation with Australia's peacebuilding, development and security community.

1.2 Foster longer term-dialogue between Australia's security and peacebuilding communities on a balanced approach to security and peacebuilding in Australia's foreign and defence policies and integration of proposed actions outlined within the Defence White Paper and Australian Aid policy.

2.1 Address domestic peace and justice issues, most particularly addressing Indigenous disadvantage and ending its punitive border protection policies.

3.1 Recalibrate Australia's strategic alignment to balance its relationship with the US with our geographical and strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region; and pursue Australian engagement in regional and global organisations in line with a critical peacebuilding perspective.

3.2 Increase Australia's aid budget in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16 and address gaps that are particularly relevant for a peacebuilding agenda, such as: rapid urbanisation coupled with underdevelopment; exceptionally youthful populations; youth unemployment; and increasing mobility and the forcible displacement of people.

4.1 Cement its status as an internationalist nation by continuing and strengthening its support for regional and international institutions and civil society organisations to promote and support peacebuilding objectives.

5.1 Promote ethical and conflict sensitive business practices by Australian businesses, including
   a. Harmonising economic and trade considerations with a critical peacebuilding perspective.
   b. Investing in extractives sector development assistance.
   c. Applying a critical peacebuilding perspective to our response to cyber threats.

6.1 Promote the realisation of a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region by integrating lessons from good practice in the region and elsewhere to address protracted conflict situations, inter alia:

   a. Allowing Timor-Leste to restore full sovereignty with a fair and permanent maritime boundary as well as working with Timor-Leste to support transparent and effective management of its natural resources.
   b. Working with Myanmar and neighbouring countries in finding a durable solution to the Rohingya crisis
   c. Working with regional and key national actors (e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia) on harnessing the energy of youth positively, countering the spread of violent extremism and ending human rights violations.
   d. Collaborating with regional and national actors to address mixed-migration, including regional solutions and legal mobility options to reduce criminal smuggling networks.
   e. Supporting a peaceful independence referendum in Bougainville.

6.2 Increase support for UN-led peacebuilding efforts and increase Australian contributions to UN-mandated peacekeeping missions. This applies to the Middle East in particular, where principled humanitarian engagement should be the lead approach.

7.1 Increase investment in policy, educational and research capacity on peace and conflict studies in Australia and the region, from secondary through tertiary education in order to strengthen national capacity in implementing a foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This submission was prepared by a group of peacebuilding researchers, practitioners, and policy analysts from a number of Sydney based universities (University of New South Wales, University of Technology, University of Sydney) and not-for-profit organizations (Peacifica, the Institute for Economics and Peace). The group has come together having recognised that Australian foreign policy and development practice stand to benefit from the implementation of a critical peacebuilding perspective.

1 PEACEBUILDING AND AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Australia should integrate a critical peacebuilding perspective into its foreign policy. This includes diplomatic, trade, development and humanitarian policy, and related policy areas, notably defence and security.

We acknowledge that Australia's foreign policy currently includes references to peacebuilding, especially within the Australian Aid Policy. Its focus is primarily on fragile and conflict-affected states and prioritises working with institutional frameworks over more inclusive approaches to peace and security. Furthermore the Defence White Paper emphasizes rules-based governance in this respect, through participation in and contribution to multilateral peacebuilding initiatives[1] and its framework for working in fragile and conflict-affected states.[2]

Australia is a supporter of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office and of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, and has a distinguished history of contributing military and police personnel and funding to UN peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding-related activities. This support includes $10 million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund over three years from 2017, building on a long history of support; and participation in the OECD's International Network on Conflict and Fragility and through it the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Further, Australia has shown commitment to contribute to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals, which include peacebuilding as part of Goal 16.

Despite the very high return on investment in peacebuilding, it typically makes up only 16% of overseas development assistance (ODA) that goes to conflict affected states,[3] or an estimated 0.7% of the World's combined GDP. Australia does a little better having spent a not insignificant 20% of its aid budget on line items related to peacebuilding. Dealing with the effects of conflict in contrast costs an estimated 13.6 trillion dollars per year or the equivalent to 13.3% of the world's GDP. "To put this into perspective, a 10% reduction in the economic impact of violence is equivalent to ten times the value of ODA, more than the total value of global food exports or of global foreign direct investment in 2014."[4]

Peacebuilding nevertheless remains marginal to Australia's foreign policy, in contrast to its place in the foreign policy of many OECD and NATO member states (including the United Kingdom, Norway and many European states). The difference is seemingly that Australia lacks a coordinated peacebuilding strategy. Peacebuilding is becoming an increasingly significant part of international affairs, and each state's accountability for its contribution to peace is growing. Australia can follow the lead of these allies and take a leadership role on these issues in the Asia-Pacific. The Foreign Policy White Paper offers an opportunity for the government to develop and centralise a critical peacebuilding perspective in Australian foreign policy, from where it can be applied to a wider range of Australia's interests.

The Foreign Policy White Paper consultation process offers a unique opportunity for Australia to better align and integrate our support for multilateral peacebuilding initiatives with our promotion of peacebuilding within our fragile and conflict affects states programs – and to promote a whole of government approach across all Australian overseas engagement under the leadership of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

We propose the adoption of a *critical peacebuilding perspective* across Australia's foreign aid and humanitarian policy, trade policy and multilateral, bilateral and regional relations in order to align and optimise our contribution to peace and security in the region, and through it transform not only structures and institutions but also relationships.[5] Doing so would be in line with the 2016 Peace Promise by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) that call for "common commitments of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors to simultaneously deliver humanitarian assistance, ensure conflict-sensitivity and synergies in programmes and address the drivers of conflict".[6] Such an approach also contributes to the realisation of Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and ties in with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1) and the current negotiations about the adoption of a global compact "for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018."[7]

A Critical Peacebuilding Perspective

Australia needs to revisit its current understanding of peacebuilding and establish a whole-of-government approach based on existing best practice and leading international thinking. We propose a *critical peacebuilding perspective* that aligns with the UN's 2016 Peace Promise, the Institute for Economics and Peace's conception of 'positive peace' and the 'pillars of peace', the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, and the work of leading peacebuilding NGOs:

A critical peacebuilding perspective is focussed on reducing the occurrence and recurrence of violent conflict and promoting positive peace. It fosters trusting, resilient and cohesive societies in order to strengthen their capacity to manage conflict in non-violent ways. In addition to rules-based governance (effective, accountable institutions) as currently emphasized in Australian policy, a critical peacebuilding perspective prioritises inclusivity, local ownership, justice, transformed, trust-based relations, gender-sensitivity, context-sensitivity, and sustainability, implemented through a combination of short, medium and long-term interventions.

Peacebuilding embodies internationally accepted principles of development effectiveness. However its relevance goes beyond a traditional understanding of a development or humanitarian agenda. A critical peacebuilding perspective provides an understanding of the factors that can drive violent conflict and offers tools to ensure more inclusive, peaceful outcomes. This perspective can be applied to a range of policy considerations, including economic and trade activity, responding to violent extremism, addressing gender inequality and the response to climate change.

WHY IS PEACEBUILDING RELEVANT TO AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY?

The adoption of a critical peacebuilding perspective in foreign policy can contribute to the realisation of Australia's interests and goals by:

- enhancing Australia's reputation in the region and globally;
- strengthening trust and cooperation with the governments and citizens of our neighbours;
- influencing the priorities and approach of Australia's aid program generally;[8]
- aligning Australia's foreign policy with the priorities of key allies and multilateral organisations;
- promoting Australia's economic well-being;
- strengthening the economic capacity (enhanced revenue collection, private sector growth, increased incomes) of neighbouring countries;
- promoting regional and global security;

- mitigating the risk of violent conflict in the region and around the world, especially in countries with recurrent violence;
- reducing the costs associated with violent conflict, which then can be channelled into national and international development (as noted by the Institute for Economics and Peace, "The total economic impact of violence to the world economy in 2015 was estimated to be $13.6 trillion"[9]);
- working on preventing future conflict by ensuring strong and resilient societies and governments;
- preventing the spread of violent extremism in the region; and
- addressing the drivers of forced displacement and develop pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration.[10]

Recommendations

1.1 Integrate a critical peacebuilding perspective as a central component of Australian Foreign Policy by the end of 2017, in line with the commitments in the UN's 2016 Peace Promise and SDG Goal 16 and in consultation with Australia's peacebuilding, development and security community.

1.2 Foster longer term-dialogue between Australia's security and peacebuilding communities on a balanced approach to security and peacebuilding in Australia's foreign and defence policies and integration of proposed actions outlined within the Defence White Paper and Australian Aid policy.

2 AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS

Over the last two decades, since the 1997 Foreign Policy White Paper, Australia's foreign policy has taken a pragmatic approach to expressing and acting on the national interest, which could be understood as pursuing economic advantage while promoting liberal democracy and respecting a 'fair go' and human rights for all.[11]

In practice this has meant that some governments have emphasised multilateralism and soft power while others have prioritised bilateral economic relationships and national security. 'National interest' has been vaguely defined and episodically observed.

The last two decades have seen tumultuous changes in the world's security, technological, environmental and humanitarian landscapes. Australia itself has undergone considerable change, and it is appropriate to question and recalibrate our understanding of our own national interest.

In responding to these changes, and in line with a critical peacebuilding perspective, the government must recognise that national interest is not the same as self-interest. In today's globalised world, violence, climate change and human mobility are less restrained by borders than ever before. So too are social, economic and cultural activities. These global trends are drivers of the world's shared commitment to end extreme poverty and reduce violent conflict, as captured in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, the 2016 Peace Promise, the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants and current negotiations on Global Compacts on refugees and migration.

In such an environment, a foreign policy that only considers Australia's priorities in isolation is likely to serve our national interest only in the short term. Longer term approaches that understand the relationships between Australia's interests and those of other countries - especially our neighbours' - are more likely to bear fruit and contribute to the security and prosperity of Australia, its people and its neighbours.

It is therefore in Australia's national interest to have both strong, multidimensional relations with our neighbours, and a sound economic foundation from which to engage with others. Australia's relationship with our 'neighbourhood', which encompasses the 'Indo-Pacific' region from India through east and southeast Asia and into the Pacific, is fundamental to our national interest. Socially and culturally, Australia's own socio-cultural mix increasingly reflects that of our neighbourhood. Our security depends on a stable, friendly region. And we stand to benefit tremendously, with the Indo-Pacific region on track to generate around half of the world's wealth by 2050.[12]

Our foreign policy, if oriented towards peace and preventive diplomacy, can ensure that economic, political, social and cultural ties are nurtured, in ways that advance Australia's interests by enhancing mutual regard and understanding. It also will contribute to regional security and to countering the spreading of violent extremism. Importantly, this consideration needs to be applied to countries with lesser economic and political power, especially those in the Pacific, as with our larger neighbours. For Pacific Island states, Australia looms large as a natural regional focal point. Yet Australia's engagement has generally been reactive and episodic. For example the RAMSI initiative, though significant in itself, stands out as a response to the events in the Solomon Islands that came to define the perception of Melanesia as the 'Arc of Instability', rather than as part of a continuum of long term, positive engagement. An alternative perception of the region as an 'Arc of Opportunity'[13] could transform Australia's understanding of our nearest neighbours and our alignment to the whole Pacific region.

Such an approach entails working not only from a position of economic strength, but also of economic and ecological justice. For example, fair dealing by Australia with Timor-Leste over our shared maritime border and access to the oil and gas resources of the Timor sea will be a critical moment in Timor-Leste's recovery from its violent past and provide it with a greatly improved economic foundation for its future development. Meanwhile, in Bougainville, enforcement of ethical standards for resource extraction could lessen risk of conflict resurgence and play a critical role in peaceful economic development.

Australia is perceived as being a just and equitable society, with a proud history as a champion of peace and human rights. Australia has actively participated with the United Nations for seven decades, is the 12th largest contributor to the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets and provided the first military personnel as peacekeepers under UN auspices in 1947, to Indonesia. It was also one of the first countries to become a state party to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Australia's pursuit of a seat on the UN Human Rights Council is evidence of the value we continue to place on this reputation.

However some in the international community see two ways in which this reputation has been tarnished. First is the continued and protracted discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, despite extensive efforts to address it. The second, and more immediately compromising to our foreign policy, is Australia's border protection regime. Over two decades, governments of both major parties have traded away our human rights standing for the sake of domestic political gain. The decision to locate detention centres on PNG's Manus Island and on Nauru further compounds Australia's loss of integrity as a human rights defender. Australia's previous international status as an 'honest broker' is under threat. Our practices in this area have led to conflict and death in the camps and condemnation in the international human rights system.[14]

Honest self-appraisal of our actions at home and abroad, such as steps to reform our border protection policy, are essential both for our reputation and as a step towards bilateral, regional and multilateral negotiated solutions to the larger global challenge of displacement. There is also urgency to address the social justice linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia, to ensure better progress on closing the gap and on native titles, treaty negotiation and constitutional recognition.

Recommendation

2.1 In adopting a critical peacebuilding perspective, Australia must be prepared to address domestic peace and justice issues, most particularly addressing Indigenous disadvantage and ending its punitive border protection policies.

3 AUSTRALIA'S GLOBAL INTERESTS

Australia's history of alignment with the United Kingdom and the United States of America has led to its involvement in many military ventures around the world, some without any clear strategic benefit for Australia.

By contrast, Australian economic policy has been more pragmatic with economic investment and ties less wedded to the Anglosphere. The rise of the Indo-Pacific region as an economic and political centre suggests that we should continue this trend, and indeed deepen our economic, political and social engagement with the region. Seen in this light, our strategic alignment with the USA seems anachronistic. Notwithstanding current politics, the USA will remain a major ally of Australia, but we need to engage with the understanding that our longer term interests also lie closer to home. A more balanced foreign policy can promote peace and security for all. As Australia realigns its foreign policy to the region, four trends stand out as requiring particular attention.

GLOBAL TRENDS

Four specific and interconnected global trends that threaten peace and stability in the region require immediate attention as part of a foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention. All four influence each other in a seemingly never-ending cycle of conflict. The challenge is to harness the positive within each and minimize the negative effects.

"The World Disasters Report 2016 paints a picture of a world facing complex challenges that cannot be comprehensively addressed through post-disaster response or emergency interventions. Forced migration is at its highest level since the Second World War. The number and scale of disasters triggered by natural hazards are increasing. Globalization and urbanization means outbreaks and other health crises are harder to contain, and the impact of climate change is taking its toll – 2015 was the hottest year on record with 32 major droughts, double the ten-year average. Between 1991 and 2010, the impact of recorded disaster events in poor countries resulted in over 840 billion US dollars of financial losses. Yet, over the same period, only 0.4 per cent of the 3.3 trillion US dollars spent on aid was dedicated to prevention or risk reduction." [15]

The future of developing countries in general and the Asia Pacific in particular is urban and poor, with an exceptional youthful population. This combination of poverty, rapid urbanisation and weak state capacities to provide services and jobs to young people, especially men, has been linked in the past to conflict potential, (violent) crime, and more recently violent extremism. [16] More recently, however, there has been a strong argument that a young population can offer a demographic dividend via innovation and economic growth. [17]

For this to work, however, youth has to be meaningfully engaged and their issues (education, jobs, and political ambitions) need to be addressed.

GLOBAL TREND 1: YOUTH BULGE

Outside the Global North, the world's population is becoming increasingly younger, with currently the largest youth population in history. There are about 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24,[18] and a quarter of the urban population is between 10 and 24 years old.[19] About 34-44 percent of the population in the Global South is under the age of 10 and about 53-68 per cent under the age of 15.[20]

Youth are increasingly affected by conflict, with more than 600 million estimated to be living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. [21] Based on World Bank definitions of fragility, almost three-quarters of the population in such countries are under 30, "and a large share of 15-29 year olds will persist for decades to come". [22] Youth also make up a large portion of the world's displaced people, especially those in protracted situations and also those living in cities.[23] They have been very visible in the recent events in the Middle East.

Conflict, rapid urbanization and underdevelopment combine to make for very stretched resources to meet basic services in general and for youth in particular. These include education, health care and economic opportunities, all of which are needed to assist in ending cycles of conflict, poverty, hopelessness and frustration.[24]

This has made youth susceptible to "the multiple and often interlinked forms of violence – from political violence and criminal gangs to organized crime and terrorist attacks that plague their countries and communities, bearing enormous and long-lasting human, social and economic costs."[25] Young men (15-29 years of age) often make up a majority of casualties of armed violence while young women are at risk of gender-based violence.[26]

Youth are often seen as a potential threat to peace and security – and more recently susceptible to violent extremism – especially when they appear concentrated in situations of underdevelopment and fragility.[27]

Youth, however, can also be seen as an opportunity. Most youth do not participate in violence. Both young men and women play active and valuable roles as active agents in development and peacebuilding and overall positive change.[28] This has led to turning the 'youth bulge' argument on its head with calls to treat them as a 'demographic dividend,' and ensure they are assisted to harness the positive in life.[29] This made the 2015 UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security equally ground breaking as Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. It followed the creation of a UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) in 2010 and a UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/64/130) emphasizing youth development. Furthermore, specialized UN agencies on Development and population have developed youth strategies.[30]

Despite constituting a demographic majority or critical mass in urban, post-conflict, and displacement-affected situations, youth are often invisible as a distinct category or social group. Youth are frequently excluded from major decision-making power in political, economic, and social life.[31] Too often, youth are viewed from an over-simplified 'victim-perpetrator' dichotomy—or as having the limited options of 'fight or flight'.[32] International actors, especially in post-conflict spaces, tend to focus on elections as a form of political participation, which fails to sufficiently appreciate the complex workings of youth agency beyond voting and as a source of social change.[33] More can and should be done here.

GLOBAL TREND 2: DISPLACEMENT

Australian foreign policy must focus on the prevention and management of forced migration and internal displacement, which links directly to the priorities of a critical peacebuilding perspective. According to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, we are witnessing an 'unprecedented level of human mobility' affecting all regions of the world.[34] The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that one in seven people across the globe are on the move voluntarily, forcibly or for mixed reasons (including from natural disaster and climate change).[35] Forced migration is 'the highest since the aftermath of World War II'.[36] Syria, Somalia and Afghanistan make up a great majority of all refugees world-wide.[37] In terms of internal displacement, Syria was the largest contributor at 900,000 newly displaced, with Yemen, Turkey, Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan taking the top five spots.[38] Countries in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia are thus among the key drivers of conflict-induced displacement.

Of note is that 95% of those on the move remain in the 'Global South' [39] and a majority of those never leave their country of origin. About 76 per cent of all migrants and 62.5 per cent of all forcibly displaced persons never cross international borders.[40] Internal displacement due to conflict has doubled over the last 15 years, reaching over 40 million by the end of 2015.[41] This creates an imperative for well-integrated aid, development, and foreign policy priorities in Australia. The increasing prevalence of internal displacement is a result of the opposing forces of strong 'economic, demographic and political drivers of migration' versus a growing hostility toward migrants and refugees by receiving countries.[42]

Meanwhile displacement caused by natural disasters has been slowly receiving more attention due to its link to climate-change and because it is slowly 'out-growing' conflict-induced displacement. In 2015, internal displacement as the result of natural disasters was double that of people displaced by conflict and violence: 19.2

million across 113 countries in contrast to 8.6 million conflict-induced IDPs. [43] 150 million people could be displaced by 'desertification, water scarcity, floods, storms and other climate change-related disasters' by 2050.[44]

We know less about slow-onset disaster displacement (e.g., drought), those displaced by development projects and crime-induced displacement, the latter particularly pertinent perhaps in countries with high levels of crime such as PNG.

The current dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region make migration from environmental and climate factors increasingly likely and will need to be a priority in Australia's foreign policy.[45]

Regardless of the causes of involuntary mobility, the movement of people itself increases the likelihood of violent conflict. A critical peacebuilding perspective on mobility and displacement is essential, both for the prevention of movement by de-escalation of local conflict and building resilience to shocks including disaster and climate change, and for the management of people on the move. This includes managing internally displaced populations, working collaboratively with transit and destination countries (most of which are themselves developing), and dealing generously and in line with international humanitarian law with those who seek Australia's protection.

GLOBAL TREND 3: URBANIZATION

There is growing evidence that migration has essentially become an urban affair, with both refugees and IDPs increasingly pushing into cities, where a reported 54 per cent of the world's population, or 3.9 billion people, live.[46] Half of all displaced people, especially those in protracted situations, live in cities.[47] In the Asia-Pacific, the overall urban population was estimated to be around 49 per cent, with some regions as high as 61 (East/North-east Asia), 63 percent (North and Central Asia), and 71 percent (Pacific).[48]

A majority of urban dwellers in the Global South are young and from a displacement background, with forced displacement contributing to the growth of cities (e.g., Afghanistan in Asia).[49] This rapid urbanisation is often associated with the expansion of informal or slum settlements. Between 1990 and 2014 the urban slum populations grew by 28 per cent and numbered 881 million worldwide.[50] Often forced to live on the periphery, the urban displaced face inadequate access to essential services, including health care, sanitation and education; and limited access to justice services. They struggle to become economically self-reliant; struggle with food and income insecurity, and are prone to social marginalisation.[51] As a result, cities are often viewed as 'sites of urban dystopia that play host to social violence, malaise, poverty, and inequality'.[52]

Such urban environments risk becoming focuses of violence, particularly when they have large populations of young people and significant inequality. In Australia's immediate neighbourhood this has been a long standing problem in Papua New Guinea and in Timor-Leste, and a critical peacebuilding approach to Australia's aid and economic relationships could have a significant impact.

GLOBAL TREND 4: CONFLICT, TERRORISM AND RADICALIZATION

According to the IEP's 2016 Global Peace Index, the world is has become less peaceful over the past decade,[53] in part due to intensification and internationalization of conflicts in the Middle East, and the increasing resilience of non-state armed actors such as Islamic State. IEP's Global Terrorism Index for the same year highlights similar trends as well as disparities by finding that "an improvement in the levels of global terrorism" on the one hand, but a "continued intensification of terrorism in some countries" on the other.[54] This affects particularly the Afghanistan-Pakistan region (and further west in Iraq and Syria); though improvements were visible in India and Thailand. The link between terrorism and conflict was evident by the fact that 90 per cent of all acts of terrorism occurred countries that are in conflict. On the positive side is that funding to UN peacekeeping has improved by 12 per cent over the past decade, and this is partially due to Australia's generous contributions to date.

These trends all highlight the growing gulf between those countries (largely in the Global North) that are increasingly peaceful and the twenty countries at the bottom (largely in the Global South) that are deteriorating at a fast rate and are plagued by protracted internal conflict. This makes for an increasing inequality in global peace that is closely aligned with trends of inequality in wealth and development.[55] The 2016 World Disaster Report observes the link between growing inequality and risk for countries to slip into disasters and crises, often at a time when populations reach a 'tipping point.'[56] The report continues:

There has been growing attention to resilience in recent years, as is evident from its prominence in the campaigns and strategies of donors and development organizations. This is a good thing. But is current resilience practice helping those who are most marginalized in an increasingly risky and unequal world? Many believe that governments and the aid systems are failing people who face the greatest risks.[57]

Another important trend to consider is the reach of terrorism into OECD member countries, where deaths from terrorism increased in 2015 by 650 per cent.[58] IEP's research however shows that it is not necessarily migration that influences vulnerability to terrorism, but socio-economic indicators such as opportunities for youth, weak democracies, and criminality that increase the likelihood of terrorism, highlighting the link between poverty, marginalization and violence. In contrast, countries that are rights-based and inclusive and have good neighbourly relations are less likely to attract terrorism.

Recommendations

3.1 Recalibrate Australia's strategic alignment to balance its relationship with the US with our geographical and strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region; and pursue Australian engagement in regional and global organisations in line with a critical peacebuilding perspective.

3.2 Increase Australia's aid budget in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16 and address gaps that are particularly relevant for a peacebuilding agenda, such as: rapid urbanisation coupled with underdevelopment; exceptionally youthful populations; youth unemployment; and increasing mobility and the forcible displacement of people.

4 REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Australia has a long and proud history as an active member of the international community and this should not change. As part of a deepened relationship with the Indo-Pacific region Australia should continue to invest in participation in those regional organisations. Likewise, Australia should continue its strong presence as a committed and constructive member of the United Nations. Australia's influence can be maximised if we are perceived to be a consistent and principled participant in international fora. The following summary identifies a sampling of relevant institutions, some significant ones (eg relating to climate change and the environment) have not been discussed.

AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Australia's 'region' encompasses several geopolitical groupings. Most prominent for Australia are ASEAN, APEC and the Pacific Islands Forum. Australia's differing membership status in each of these fora, and the discrepancy between Australia's influence and that of other members (especially for the PIF) will to some extent demand a different approach for each. The adoption of a critical peacebuilding perspective in Australian foreign policy, however, will contribute to more sustainable and beneficial outcomes for Australia and our region.

As the largest member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia has a particular influence in this organisation. Our engagement with the Forum over the years has been inconsistent; both our cuts to relevant aid programs and our resistance to commit to global climate change targets have been deeply problematic in this arena.[59] Relationships have improved since Mr Turnbull became Prime Minister and this trajectory needs to continue. Australia will benefit from a prosperous, resilient, and peaceful Pacific region. Australia's approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation will be a key factor in determining the future in this space.

ASEAN (where Australia is an observer) and APEC are central to Australia's economic and security interests. In formulating regional responses to the increased movement of people, a strong relationship with ASEAN members is vital. Australia has some good experience in this regard, in its support for anti-human trafficking programs in the Mekong subregion, for example, as well as participation in the Bali process. Further pursuing this work, incorporating the principles of a critical peacebuilding perspective (including an emphasis on inclusive dialogue, a willingness to understand context and a commitment to do no harm) will lay the foundation for long lasting, regional relationships.

AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS

The United Nations and its institutions must continue to be the prime focus of Australia's global engagement. As exemplified most prominently by the global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, and the work of key institutions including UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, PBSO and OCHA, the UN continues to be the forum through which the world pursues its most pressing challenges and protects the most vulnerable people. The current negotiations on global Compacts on migration and refugees demonstrate the continued relevance of the UN, and the critical importance of coming to the negotiating table with the interests of all people, and not only those of any particular country, uppermost.

Within the broader UN system, maintaining and increasing support for the UN's humanitarian and peace architecture should be an important part of Australia's UN engagement, particularly if the aims of the Sustainable Development Goals to eliminate the most extreme forms of poverty are to be met.

International economic and financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have been on a reform path for some years, and Australia should continue to engage with them as they work to improve their effectiveness as instruments of positive development for all people.

The OECD remains an essential global organisation in view of its role in setting the standards under which Australia and other developed nations work, including for overseas aid. Australia should continue as a member of the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (known as the International Dialogue, and which is hosted by the OECD), alongside other donors, fragile state governments (the 'g7+') and civil society peacebuilding organisations (the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding). The International Dialogue, through the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, has done more than any other initiative to secure global commitments to end violent conflict and extreme poverty in the world's most vulnerable countries and has informed the development of SDG Goal 16. The International Dialogue continues to grow, and support from Australia, including at Ministerial level, will help to ensure the success of this unique initiative.

Finally, Australian support for global civil society organisations (and indeed civil society generally) continues to be essential. Indeed, effective global responses to the challenges captured in the SDGs, Peace Promise and New York Declaration cannot be resolved by governments and multilateral alone. CSOs, including development, humanitarian and peacebuilding NGOs have the capacity to access vulnerable populations that cannot be reached by governments, to secure inclusive participation in critical peace processes and provide experience and alternative perspectives that governments may not otherwise access. Application of a critical peacebuilding perspective would create opportunities for new forms of engagement with civil society.

Recommendation

4.1 Australia should cement its status as an internationalist nation by continuing and strengthening its support for regional and international institutions and civil society organisations to promote and support peacebuilding objectives.

5 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Adopting a critical peacebuilding perspective in foreign policy will inform Australia's maintenance of current economic and trade relationships and our engagement with future economic and trade opportunities. Economic insecurity, resource scarcity, and exploitative trade practices are key drivers of conflict; a foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention therefore also promotes equitable trade practices, economic justice, and ethical investment and commercial conduct.

The UN estimates that at least 40% of all intrastate conflicts over the past 60 years have a link to natural resources. Cases across the Indo-Pacific (e.g. Aceh, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and West Papua) reflect this trend. The Australian Government recognises the challenges faced by resource rich developing countries in managing resource wealth and the risks of mismanagement on regional instability as evidenced by its ongoing development assistance to the extractives sector ($17.7 million in 2016-17).[60]

To be effective, the Government will need to prioritize sustainable peace in the region over short-term economic self-interest. Australia is already working hard to assist neighbouring countries to promote accountability and transparency in the extractives sector. This includes for example, the provision of funding to support the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) and the implementation of EITI principles by countries such as Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

Conflicts related to natural resources already witnessed in the Indo-Pacific however, suggest that 'the natural resource curse' involves not only economic, but ecological and cultural dimensions.[61] Major extractive sites such as the Grasberg mine in West Papua are caught up in highly emotive claims for cultural recognition, political representation and environmental justice.[62] It is imperative to recognise these interconnections to prevent conflict and support peace.

Mining related grievances on Bougainville, for example, became linked to broader separatist sentiments away from Papua New Guinea. This struggle gave rise to one of the deadliest conflicts to occur amongst Pacific Islanders.[63] While revenue management was a factor in the Bougainville conflict, the Panguna mine was entangled with a wider range of complaints concerning sovereignty and social and political change.

The events that unfolded on Bougainville show that failure to prevent conflict in the region can have a direct financial impact on Australia, and demonstrate the urgent need for a critical peacebuilding perspective on foreign policy. A foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention on Bougainville would have required engagement with a full range of justice claims that implicated the Panguna mine in armed conflict, over an extended period.

The maritime boundary dispute between Australia and Timor-Leste is a longstanding example of the need for the Australian government to balance peacebuilding principles against economic interests. Timor-Leste's peacebuilding process is intricately tied to its 500+ year struggle for self-determination, which will not be complete until it has permanent maritime boundaries in place. Australia has an important role in allowing Timor-Leste to restore full sovereignty with a fair and permanent maritime boundary as well as working with Timor-Leste in its management of natural resources. Both objectives require a foreign policy approach that is oriented towards peace and conflict prevention, in line with the critical peacebuilding perspective endorsed throughout this submission. The current border negotiation process offers an immediate opportunity to resolve this issue through the application of a critical peacebuilding perspective.

THE ONLINE ECONOMY AND CYBER THREATS

Economic growth globally, and particularly in India and China, is driven in large part by investment in human capital, driven by rapid changes in technology.[64] At the same time, a growth in cyber crimes (with up to 20% increase since 2014)) and the threat of structural violence in the online world are the biggest threat to an ethical

human capital. [65] Australia, like other countries, faces a shortage of human capital informed by a critical peacebuilding mindset to respond to this threat. Human security and positive peace offer frameworks through which cyber violence can be understood and addressed, not only by states but more importantly by the agents operating through cyberspace. [66] Investment in human capital is the key [67] to grow towards an ethical and peaceful cyber world.

Global collaboration is crucial not only to enable meaningful exchange of knowledge but also to strengthen high tech systems in securing cyberspace. Australian investment in innovation can target collaboration with both existing and new markets by building ethical alliances that will provide a sustainable and secure basis for personal and business net navigation. Ethical engagement for innovation guarantees a fair go and will deepen and increase the required human capital through technological know-how.

Recommendations

5.1 Promote ethical and conflict sensitive business practices by Australian businesses, including
   a. Harmonising economic and trade considerations with a critical peacebuilding perspective.
   b. Investing in extractives sector development assistance.
   c. Applying a critical peacebuilding perspective to our response to cyber threats.

6 SECURITY, STRATEGIC, AND TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES

Australian aid policy emphasizes the importance of 'political economy analysis' in order 'to identify the constraints to growth, including the underlying blockages and power structures that affect growth and development in each country'[68]. It sees assistance to 'fragile and conflict affected situations' as particularly important due to persistent inequality in the form of 'unequal access to the benefits of economic growth and employment, political alienation and a sense of injustice'.[69] To ensure that the aid programme does no harm (although this language is not specifically used), the strategy argues that aid will be tailored to offer 'support to the political context' in order to engage in action that 'is politically feasible and economically desirable' (p.18). It goes on to champion 'country-led reform initiatives' and local development solutions, being flexible to act when opportunities arise. Here the aid policies identify Australia strength in providing 'specialist technical advice, where needed'.

The aid priorities identified in Australia's aid strategy only partially map to the key challenges to peace and stability (as outlined in the Defence White Paper), which include 'variable economic growth, crime and social, governance and climate change challenges'. The cessation of violence promises much but must deliver explicitly if peace is to be secured in the longer term. People across the region require improvements to food security and access to educational opportunity, employment, and health services. In 2006, before the resurgence of violence in Timor-Leste, the President of Timor-Leste said "Poverty can potentially act as a breeding ground for social instability and civil disorder"[70]. The resumption of violence in Timor-Leste in 2006 reflected, in part, the presence of major inequalities, including failure to address sub-national geographic, gendered and age-related needs, many of which had roots in past conflict and the years of Indonesian occupation. Benefits such as extending access to electricity and water were inequitable and largely directed to urban areas, creating new grievances. The so-called 'youth bulge' apparent in many low and middle income countries highlights the need to address educational and employment issues so young people have a stake in the future.

In line with a critical peacebuilding perspective, a focus on human security as a complement to state security can enhance human rights and strengthen human development: "it seeks to protect people against a broad range of threats … and… to empower them to act on their own behalf".[71] Human security includes access to education and health care and "ensuring that each individual has opportunities to fulfil his or her own potential. It has been argued that every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict."[72]

Key drivers of an Australian foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention are respect for human rights, and international cooperation on critical issues including peace and development. The adoption of a critical peacebuilding perspective in Australian foreign policy would align foreign policy practices and priorities with national values including respect for the rule of law, multiculturalism, inclusion, and human rights.

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Australia has invested in concrete terms in the concept of good international citizenship. In 2015, the Heads of State and Government of all UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which included the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As stated in the Preamble of the 2030 Agenda, States are 'determined to mobilise the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people'.

Australia committed 'between 2015 and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.' This translates into a number of actions and initiatives, both in Australia and

internationally, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Investing in SDGs, including Goal 16 which relates to building strong institutions, governance, security and peace, will yield many positive results in Australia's foreign policy, including preventing the conditions which could create humanitarian crises due to mass climate migration and displacement.

Environmental degradation from overexploitation of natural resources and from climate change affects all levels of society, from individual farmers and fishers to the sustainability of cities and the viability of whole countries. Displacement within countries and across borders carries with it the risk of violent conflict. The mitigation of environmental change, and adaptation to its effects require a sustained and multilateral response, and one that is informed by peacebuilding principles.

Australia needs to take a leading role in addressing environmental crisis caused by resource exploitation and industrial growth. Australia has not only the capability to take this leading role, but also the responsibility. Especially among Pacific Island peoples, Australia, as a member of the developed West, is seen to have caused the changes to the climate that threaten their well-being and sovereignty.[73]

Australia has been taken seriously as a middle power nation concerned with multi-stakeholder partnerships to end poverty, address challenges related to global warming and other environmental challenges, such as climate migration in the Pacific, natural disasters in Indonesia and parts of the Pacific. For this to continue, there will have to be increased investments and a sustained pledge to the principles of financing, reporting and subjecting itself to peer-review mechanisms on measuring its own contributions for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals' commitments.

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN KEEPING AND BUILDING PEACE AROUND THE WORLD

Reinforcing Australia's commitment to international peacekeeping missions forms a key component of an Australian foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention. Past interventions have arisen both under UN mandate and as part of ad hoc coalitions, most notably in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Australian military commitments and resources to peacekeeping missions should be increasingly focused on UN-mandated operations.

Australia has also taken part in combat operations in wars that have only limited direct correlation to Australian politics, people or economy. The 1951 Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) binds Australia and the US to cooperate on matters of self-defence and security. This alliance – with 'Dangerous Allies'[74] – has influenced Australian independence in dictating its foreign policy.

Central to the adoption of a critical peacebuilding perspective in foreign policy is a commitment to investing in peace. This involves continued support to UN peacebuilding-related activity through consistent investment in the UN Peacebuilding Fund (building on the $10 million already committed), continued direct support to grassroots organisations in developing country contexts through autonomous, bilateral, and multilateral funding initiatives, and continued support of women-led peace and conflict-prevention initiatives through the Global Acceleration Instrument for the implementation of the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda in developing countries.

AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

Australia is a robust multicultural society that embraces people from diverse faiths, cultures and ethnicities. This diversity is not matched in our foreign policy relationships, however, which are primarily aligned to the USA, UK, and Europe. Australia should be able to represent our commitment to fostering domestic diversity and inclusivity in our external relationships with the Muslim world. This relates not only to our involvement in the Middle East, but also in our relations with Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, and with regard to the resolution of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar.

Australia must separate security alliances from strategic interests in Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and other parts of the Muslim world. Australian foreign policy in the Muslim world, as elsewhere, should adopt a critical peacebuilding perspective predicated on inclusivity, rules-based governance, local ownership and justice.

Reinforcing Australia's calls for a two-state solution to the protracted conflict in the Middle East, it should call for an immediate halt to the occupation of Palestine by Israel. The recognition of Palestinian right to self-determination as guaranteed in the international human rights law is a key step. Palestinian independence and the creation of a Palestinian state will create a home to Palestinians living in the occupied territories of West Bank and the besieged Gaza and millions of returning intergenerational refugees. As a fundamental issue with symbolic significance that has compounded tensions between the Muslim world and that of the West, Palestinian statehood is central to peace and conflict prevention in the future.

In keeping with the adoption of a critical peacebuilding perspective, Australia should reassess its military interventions in the Muslim world, which includes overt and covert operations conducted in disparate countries including Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Nigeria and Afghanistan. Our focus should be on peacebuilding-related activities that aim to identify and address different forms of cultural (historical) and structural violence which cause the outbreak of direct violence, as well as doing our part in fulfilling the Responsibility to Protect populations that are vulnerable to gross human rights abuses.

Regions and countries that are in a state of acute conflict like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen require Australian support in bringing a peaceful resolution to those conflicts. An Australian foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention would centralise peacemaking (cessation of violence, ceasefire agreement, international mediation programs) and peacebuilding. This could entail provision of technical, logistical, and diplomatic support to peace talks, negotiations, and dialogue from a position of neutrality so that the parties involved could be assisted in ending direct violence and envisioning a shared future. This is particularly true in regions that Australia has had a role in destabilising through its partnership in US-led invasions, occupations and ongoing bombing campaigns.

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING THE TRIPLE CHALLENGE OF RAPID URBANISATION, UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND AN EXCEPTIONAL YOUTHFUL POPULATION

A growing body of research has tried to reframe this discussion and focus on youth as active agents in both development and peacebuilding. This said, for youth to realize their potential – and become an economic dividend as increasingly prompted by UN organisations – youth need to be given options, otherwise indeed they might choose to 'vote' with their feet or join criminal / armed groups to make a living.

There tends to be a degree of political attention directed towards women and girls in fragile and conflict affected states, but often it is young men that are more likely to migrate or join criminal and insurgent groups if other opportunities are not available. The alienation and marginalization of young men needs to be addressed through capacity building initiatives, sport for peace programs, psycho-social assistance and accessible employment opportunities.

Recommendations

6.1 Promote the realisation of a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region by integrating lessons from good practice in the region and elsewhere to address protracted conflict situations, inter alia:

   a. Allowing Timor-Leste to restore full sovereignty with a fair and permanent maritime boundary as well as working with Timor-Leste to support transparent and effective management of its natural resources.
   b. Working with Myanmar and neighbouring countries in finding a durable solution to the Rohingya crisis

c. Working with regional and key national actors (e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia) on harnessing the energy of youth positively, countering the spread of violent extremism and ending human rights violations.

d. Collaborating with regional and national actors to address mixed-migration, including regional solutions and legal mobility options to reduce criminal smuggling networks.

e. Supporting a peaceful independence referendum in Bougainville.

6.2 Increase support for UN-led peacebuilding efforts and increase Australian contributions to UN-mandated peacekeeping missions. This applies to the Middle East in particular, where principled humanitarian engagement should be the lead approach.

7 ASSETS AND CAPABILITIES

In the longer term, the recalibration of Australia's national interests and their translation into our foreign and defence policy needs to be embedded in the Australian community. This requires both a deepened popular understanding of the issues, and investment in academic and policy discourse.

This can start at schools. Positive peace is a component of the curriculum in schools in some countries overseas, especially in Europe. [75] This requires a cohort of teachers and the development of curriculum material. Investment in the tertiary sector will provide stimulus for this enhanced policy and technical capacity.

Australia has a large number of universities with five making it into the top 50 QS international ranking. [76] Australian universities are also increasingly recognized in the disciplines linked to assisting with international development, governance and peacebuilding programs. [77] Despite some recent advancements and new programs on offer, there is little consistency across the country and often concentrated at the postgraduate level, rather than undergraduate. This forces students to move overseas to fill education gaps. More could and should be done to strengthen the Australian higher education sector in order to ensure a well-trained work force to implement the challenges that face Australia in the future.

Furthermore, there are few advisory-type organizations that can help Australian NGOs and other development actors to integrate peace/conflict thinking into their work, or work with the context-specific, conflict-sensitive approach, which is identified as necessary and important in Australia's aid strategy. [78] Many European countries that lead in the area of peace/conflict sensitivity have think thanks tht provide this service such as swisspeace in Switzerland, PRIO and the Christian Michelsen Institute in Norway, the Berghof Foundation and BICC in Germany, swedepeace in Sweden, and the United States Institute for Peace in the US (which over the years has become more influential and instrumental to supporting US peace/development efforts overseas).

Australia can take a lead in supporting evidence based research on peacebuilding effectiveness through a strengthened and better coordinated university sector. In addition, the largest independent globally focussed peace and development institute in Australia is the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), whose Australian and overseas staff have generated internationally recognised peacebuilding research. [79] Further development of a network of peace and development focused think tanks and research centres in Australia and the region could provide Australia with important convening space for policy discussions in international peacebuilding.

Recommendations

7.1 Increase investment in policy, educational and research capacity on peace and conflict studies in Australia and the region, from secondary through tertiary education in order to strengthen national capacity in implementing a foreign policy oriented towards peace and conflict prevention.

ANNEX: AN OVERVIEW OF PEACEBUILDING

As its name suggests, the guidance in the Framework document refers specifically to fragile and conflict affected states. DFAT's definition of peacebuilding as presented in the framework emphasises the role of institutions in peacebuilding:

> *Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development (OECD DAC). Peace‑building consists of two inseparable parts: (i) the construction of the structures of peace; and (ii) the deconstruction of the structures of violence. Solutions should not be imposed; rather space should be created that allow for indigenous actors to identify problems and formulate solutions (K Bush (2003) Hands‑on PCIA: A Handbook for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment).*

> *The emerging UN consensus is that peacebuilding involves a range of measures aimed at reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, by strengthening national capacities for conflict management and laying the foundations for sustainable peace. It is a complex, long‑term process aimed at creating the necessary conditions for positive and sustainable peace by addressing the deep‑rooted structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner. Peacebuilding measures address core issues that affect the functioning of society and the state (UNDPKO 2008)[80]*

The framework identifies three reinforcing aims:

1. building more responsive states
2. preventing violent conflict
3. building resilient communities.

It identifies the following implications for Australian assistance:

- managing risk
- increasing understanding
- translating knowledge into practice
- prioritising and sequencing
- building institutions and processes

It goes into detail on these issues and includes emphasis on community engagement and investment in the long term. The particular role of gender in peacebuilding is a priority within the Framework. Overall, however, the Australian Government's current definitions of peacebuilding are somewhat limited when compared to the leading practice of the UN and other leading actors.

GETTING THE PROCESS RIGHT

The application of peacebuilding principles to an issue means that the processes employed are at least as important as their desired result. Bad process, which may involve top down decision making, exclusion of interested groups like women, youth or minorities, unwillingness to face uncomfortable truths and many other factors, can lead to outcomes that disadvantage women and youth, exacerbate underlying conflict drivers, waste scarce resources, time and goodwill and potentially trigger relapse into conflict.

PEACEBUILDING VS. PEACEKEEPING

Sustainable peace is more than simply the absence of violence, and in pursuing it, peacebuilding goes well beyond peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. Peacebuilding is a long term process that is strongly linked

to self-determination, societal development and capacity building. Countries need time to rebuild trusting relationships, restore social cohesion and heal wounds, especially those that have experienced decades of war. Peacebuilding influences physical, social, political, diplomatic, economic and structural factors, with the aim to establish durable and sustainable peace and stable and resilient societies. It depends on and strengthens resilient and cohesive societies that pursue peaceful coexistence and powersharing over competition and fighting.

For the UN peacebuilding is defined as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war."[81]

Current understanding of peacebuilding begins with the work of Johan Galtung, credited by many to be the father of peace studies:

> *Peacebuilding is the process of creating self-supporting structures that "remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur." Conflict resolution mechanisms "should be built into the structure and be present there as a reservoir for the system itself to draw upon, just as a healthy body has the ability to generate its own antibodies and does not need ad hoc administration of medicine."*[82]

These principles of peacebuilding have been integrated into the United Nations since the seminal 1992 Agenda for Peace by then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and were reiterated in the subsequent 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (also known as the Brahimi Report). To strengthen its commitment to these principles, the UN established the Peacebuilding Commission and a Support Office in 2005 (A/RES/60/180; S/RES/1645(2005)). [83] Particularly relevant is the recent (2016) updating of the UN's commitment in the Peace Promise: Commitments to more effective synergies among peace, humanitarian and development actions in complex humanitarian situations.

The Five Commitments of the Peace Promise are:

1. Focus on the alignment and coherence of collective short-, medium- and long-term objectives simultaneously, which include addressing humanitarian needs, addressing the drivers of violent conflict and developing institutions, resilience and capacities simultaneously in a complementary and synergetic manner based on comparative advantages.

2. Conduct context, risk or conflict analysis regularly to understand the environment and the interconnected risks of conflict, disasters and climate change.

3. Develop capacities, tools and partnerships, ensure institutional learning and innovation and share information and translate analysis into conflict-sensitive programmes, prioritizing national and local actors.

4. Do no harm and ensure conflict-sensitive programming, and where possible leverage opportunities to Do More Good (DMG), by developing capacities and institutions, enhancing social cohesion and trust, strengthening resilience and reducing the risk of violence, while engaging local stakeholders.

5. Provide adequate, sustained and risk tolerant financing of collective outcomes on peace, humanitarian needs and development.[84]

This deepening commitment to peacebuilding includes new understanding of what 'peace' is itself, particularly that peace is much more than an absence of violence, and that recognising the defining goals for peace must be a locally owned and led process. The Sydney-based Institute for Economics and Peace has identified a number of measurable 'pillars' that comprise this concept of 'positive peace':

Positive Peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions and structures which create and sustain peaceful societies. These same factors also lead to many other positive outcomes that support the optimum environment for human potential to flourish… The "Pillars of Peace" represent a new conceptual framework for understanding and describing the factors that create a peaceful society... Over 3000 cross- country datasets were used to define the key economic, political, and cultural determinants that foster the creation of a more peaceful society. The eight interdependent pillars are:

1. Well functioning government
2. Sound business environment
3. Equitable distribution of resources
4. Acceptance of the rights of others
5. Good relations with neighbours
6. Free flow of information
7. High levels of human capital
8. Low levels of corruption[85]

It is well recognised that in peacebuilding, following good process is fundamental to the achievement of good outcomes. Around the world many organisations including the United Nations, donor governments and non-government organisations in both donor and conflict affected countries have recognised this and over time have contributed to a deeper and more refined our understanding of what comprises effective peacebuilding process. Interpeace, an international peacebuilding NGO, identifies the following set of principles of good peacebuilding process:

We understand peacebuilding as a process of strengthening a society's capacity to manage conflict in non-violent ways. Conflict is natural in society and can lead to positive change. However, it can also descend into violence.

Peacebuilding needs to enhance trust between individuals and between groups in a society. It also needs to restore the legitimacy of state institutions. Peacebuilding is about bringing together the different actors that are engaged in the rebuilding of a country. People from inside and outside a conflict-affected country need to work together to understand their different views, define priorities. This will enable a better alignment of national policy-making, external assistance, and local priorities.

We strongly believe that peacebuilding is about deep, long-term transformations. This requires an integrated approach engaging a diverse range of actors. We put people at the centre of building lasting peace. While every situation is different, the following principles guide our approach.

- Local ownership: Putting local people at the heart of building peace
- Building trust: Trust is the keystone of peace
- Reaching out to all groups: Building peace involves everyone
- Long-term commitment: Building sustainable peace takes time
- Process matters: The process determines the result[86]

These concepts – ownership, trust, inclusion, time and good process – are essential to peacebuilding and have the potential to significantly advance Australia's foreign policy generally, particularly in our region.

FRAGILE STATES

Fragile states have been defined as those where government "cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people including the poor" (DFID, 2005). Fragile and conflict-affected states typically have high levels of poverty and inequalities, made little progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and struggle to deliver basic services (Warrener and Loehr, 2005). They may be inadequate both with respect to

capacity and "willingness". A group of states that are 'weak but willing' have faced significant challenges in delivering health care, and require a range of forms of support and resources.

Timor-Leste is one such state. After the 1999 referendum on autonomy and independence from Indonesia Timor was in tatters requiring massive international community support (with strong Australian engagement) in all sectors, including the health sector. While Australia's role has not been uniformly positive, support to health policy making, services delivery, and system development have contributed to Timor-Leste's achievements. Indeed Timor-Leste has recently been documented as the state that has achieved most from the time the MDGs were launched to the adoption of the SDGs in late 2015 (see Lancet [ref]).

Timor-Leste was also significant as the prime mover among a coalition of fragile states (the g7+, now numbering around 20 fragile state members) that spearheaded the creation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. In contrast the security led approach of traditional interventions in fragile states, the New Deal established a process for collaboration between the fragile state government, donors and civil society in pursuit of a shared set of 'Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals'. These Goals encompass inclusive governance, peace, security, justice, economic foundations and service delivery and are tailored to context. The New Deal process, supported by Australia since its inception in 2011, significantly informed the final form of the SDG Goal 16.

PEACEKEEPING AND SECURITY

Peacekeeping efforts may focus on controlling the use of force and on the promotion of law and order, oversight of good (or at least 'better') governance, and ensuring a transparent system of justice. Peacekeeping aims to assist countries torn by conflict to create the conditions for sustainable peace: assistance may include confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, and contributing to shaping the environment for development. While peacekeepers can and often do make an immediate difference by restoring stability, quelling violence, and establishing sufficient security for markets to open, people to walk in the streets, and children to go back to school, ending immediate violence is just an input to promoting three interdependent conditions: security, justice and well-being (Hamburg and Holl, 1999).

Case Study: Health and peacebuilding[87]

Peacebuilding requires more than troops with governance and services delivery being crucial to building a functional and responsive state. The 'post'-conflict state must build trust and social cohesion, address grievances and inequities, and identify needs and mobilise resources.

The health sector present valuable opportunities to both strengthen the state and, importantly, to build the peace. Health investments bring returns that enable other entitlements, rights, and opportunities to be exercised.

Health investments bring measurable returns through prevention (e.g. immunisation), early detection and treatment, and support to reduce risks of disability or premature death and their consequent costs to the family, community, and society. Universal Health Coverage (see SDG 3.8) is a key development target but depends upon a functioning state able to organise and deliver services equitably and efficiently.

How the state addresses health problems offers insights into its relationship with its citizens:

The health sector has 'reach': it extends beyond the central policy and decision-making structures around priorities, resource distribution and underlying values, to the periphery where community members access services, expect respect, responsiveness and quality, as well as opportunities to participate in, and shape, decisions that have an impact upon their wellbeing.

Health structures provide opportunities for engaging local groups and responding to differential needs, as well as other aspects of context and culture. Underpinning values of health systems including the promotion of equity, the management of the market to address market failures and promote public good, and mechanisms to facilitate transparency and accountability are key. Inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities, or of health outcomes, may be perceived as unfair and unjust, contributing to grievance in such settings as South Sudan or north-eastern Sri Lanka.

The SDG target of Universal Health Access requires evidence, data, capacity to engage and prioritise and to articulate the underlying values and systems so as to ensure equitable and efficient utilisation of resources. Empowered and engaged communities, with agency, are able to better articulate their needs. Gaining confidence in effecting change is central to regaining control and agency, facilitating a path to recovery, healing and good governance. Health builds on relationships. The processes of engagement and decision-making will be important, as will be the balance between urban and rural, primary, secondary and tertiary level facilities, and the prioritisation of different social and health targets and objectives.

The health sector is an extremely valuable avenue for promoting gender equity, ensuring women have control over their bodies, choice over if and when to establish a family, and underpins the potential to benefit from educational, livelihood and market opportunities. The health sector is often the largest employer with significant opportunities for women, at all levels including the most senior leadership roles. The sector can demonstrate through its actions, the transformative potential of effective governance and accountable services delivery. The sector may (or may not) promote social justice, human rights, and dignity in its day-to-day functioning. Performing well legitimises the state; performing poorly in any dimension creates mistrust, suspicion and grievance.

Emergent inter-governmental organisations such as the g7+ may help conflict-affected and 'post'-conflict countries to make effective diagnoses, develop tools, and exchange strategies enhance equity in highly constrained and donor-dependant settings. Australian support – not only in the form of resources but ideas, partnership, solidarity – could draw on a committed reservoir of civil society and institution-based commitment, such as through the university sector. Building national capacities and enhancing accountability and performance will benefit both community, state and market.

Gender based violence and discrimination need to be explicitly tackled and the agency of women recognised and reinforced; active engagement with civil society, as envisaged by the 2030 Agenda for Development will help. Violent conflict undermines social networks and disrupts all aspects of political, social and economic life. Fear of the 'other' breaks down bridging social capital and encourages xenophobic and discriminatory interactions between communities, posing risks of further violence. In eastern and northern Sri Lanka Tamil communities did not trust services provided by others; whereas in Timor-Leste in 2006 the promotion of professional ethics protected health workers and community members.

Health services may, but do not necessarily, provide opportunities for partnership and transformation. Australian engagement with depth, sensitivity, resources and sustainability in mind could make a massive contribution in many fragile and 'post'-conflict states, to re-establish the contract between state and citizens, thus using 'aid' to address needs, respond to adversity and inequity, facilitate 'stabilisation' and longer term development. Emerging "willing but weak" states must drive agendas such as those identified above; Australia can and should assist in resourcing, capacitating and partnering in such endeavours. It should work both at bilateral and multilateral levels, supporting and influencing key organisations such as the g7+, the OECD, World Bank, ASEAN, and the UN family to reinforce a human security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding perspective.

We have articulated the many ways in which health-related investments may contribute to peacebuilding, nation-building and development. Australia's foreign policy would do well to elaborate on this perspective;

setting the tone and platform for more effective governance. Conflict-, culture- and gender-sensitive approaches should permeate all health-related programming in these contested environments.

'Do no harm' is central. Health has an important part to play: Australian commitment to health development as core to peacebuilding and 'aid' would be a profound global contribution. Evidence, effective engagement, and services delivery would demonstrably contribute to promoting the accountability of government, the building of trust, and potential to achieve of the SDGs.

ENDNOTES

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