

The Importance and Difficulties of Reconciliation in the Peacebuilding Process

Hideki Tamai

Associate Professor
Faculty of Letters, Soka University

1. The Peacebuilding Process

Recently there has been an emphasis within the United Nations on support for peacebuilding activities. Reports that as many as 50% of post-conflict societies slide back into armed conflict within five years of the withdrawal of peacebuilding initiatives have given rise to an underlying awareness of the need for the international community to provide seamless support in the form of an integrated program of peacebuilding, reconstruction and development. ¹

The concept of peacebuilding currently being discussed by the international community first came to attention as 'post-conflict peacebuilding', put forward in *the Agenda for Peace* by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992. *The Agenda for Peace* proposed the notions of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping as actions to

be adopted at various stages by the international community in response to changes in the nature of a conflict over time, and it positions post-conflict peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict". It also emphasizes the importance of peacebuilding by asserting that "only sustained, cooperative work to deal with underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems can place achieved peace on a durable foundation".²

In August 2000, the U.N. published "The Brahimi Report" (Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations), a review of its policy on conflict intervention based on experiences in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Rwanda in the 1990s. The report defined peacebuilding as "activities undertaken ...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". The report is also noteworthy in that it does not use the term 'peacebuilding' in conjunction with 'post-conflict' and does not make simple, time-based distinctions between the respective activities of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, but instead clearly states that they are closely related. For example, it asserts that the task of peacekeeping is to create a secure environment for peacebuilding, while the task of peacebuilding is to support the political, social and economic changes that create a self-sustaining secure environment, and while the peacebuilders may not be able to function without the peacekeepers' support, the peacekeepers have no exit strategy without the peacebuilders' work.

In 2004, the U.N. published a report entitled "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility (Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change)". The report

refers to peacebuilding as "a long-term activity incorporating preventive activities prior to the outbreak of conflict to post-conflict reconstruction and development", recommends the establishment a Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) within the U.N. to oversee peacebuilding in a consistent manner, and highlights the need to bolster the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) based on the premise that coherent coordination of peacebuilding activities is also critical at the field level.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome which detailed the summit's agreement to establish the Peacebuilding Commission, discussion of peacebuilding was held in the specific context of post-conflict activities based on a statement "emphasizing the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace". However, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA) website states that there is no uniform definition for peacebuilding and instead presents the view that peacebuilding refers to "activities to support state initiatives for the promotion of peace before, during and after conflict".

In 2005, the U.N. released the Report of the Secretary-General Kofi Annan entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all". This report describes peacebuilding as "the transition from war to lasting peace" and declares its support for the PBC as a body to coordinate peacebuilding activities. Although the report limits the PBC's peacebuilding to "post-conflict activities", the term "post-conflict" is presumed to refer to a broad expanse of time from immediately after cessation of the conflict to medium-term recovery. The PBC is also expected to engage in a range of activities from reconstruction activities in the immediate post-conflict period to

the coordination of bilateral and multilateral activities, and the periodical review of recovery programs.

In order to ensure lasting peace, peacebuilding also incorporates reconstruction and development in the post-conflict phase in close coordination with peacekeeping efforts. Furthermore, the common point emphasized in each of the above-mentioned reports is that peacekeeping activities should be implemented in a coordinated, coherent and integrated manner.

2. Importance of Reconciliation in the Peacebuilding Process

Reconciliation is an important initiative for eliminating the mistrust and hatred which spark the recurrence of conflict, achieving the consolidation of peace, and enabling the realization of a sustainable peace. John Paul Lederach illustrated the conception of reconciliation as follows;

In more specific terms, reconciliation can be seen as dealing with three specific paradoxes. First, in an overall sense, reconciliation promotes an encounter between the open expression of the painful past, on the one hand, and the search for the articulation of long-term, interdependent future, on the other hand. Second, reconciliation provides a place for truth and mercy to meet, where concerns for exposing what has happened *and* for letting go in favor of renewed relationship are validated and embraced. Third, reconciliation recognizes the need to give time and place to both justice and peace, where redressing the wrong is held together with the envisioning of a common, connected future.

(John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997, p.31)

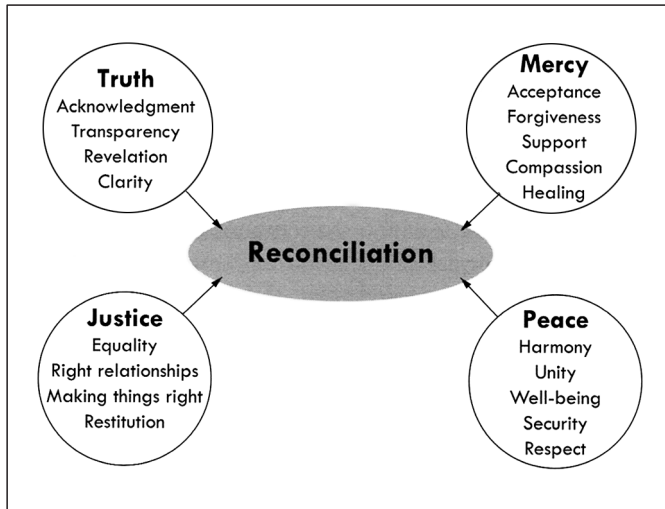
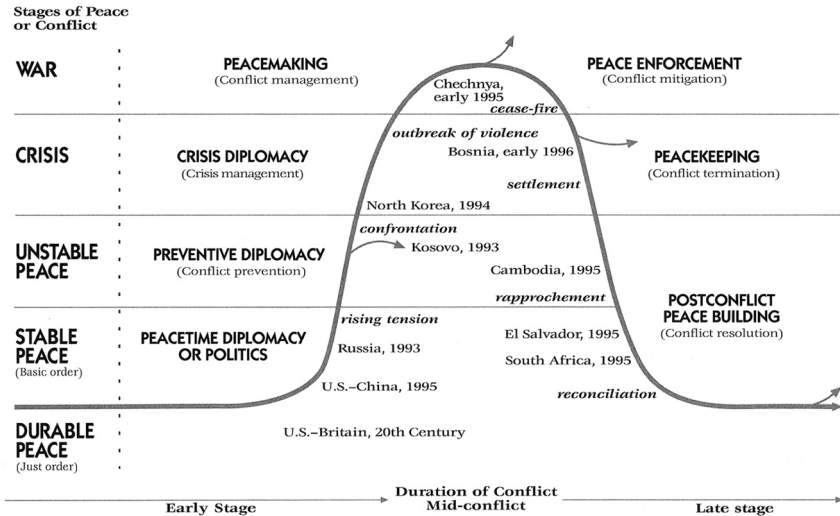


Figure1, The Place Called Reconciliation.

It is also a crucial step in making the transition from the process of conflict resolution, which seeks achieve to peaceful agreement between warring parties while mitigating violent confrontations, to the stage of conflict transformation, which attempts to eliminate the adverse relationships which give rise to conflicts. Within the conflict resolution/peacebuilding process, the threat of violence subsequent to the conclusion of a peace agreement has the potential to derail the entire peacebuilding process. Michael Lund indicated that it is the beginning of the post conflict peacebuilding that the position of reconciliation in "a conflict history".³

Figure 2.1, Life History of a Conflict.



Despite setbacks, the Belfast Agreement of 1998 had delivered a long-lasting ceasefire in Northern Ireland until an attack on British troops on March 7, 2009, which resulted in the death of two soldiers and the wounding of four civilians. This incident is not, however, expected to weaken the framework of Northern Ireland's comprehensive peace agreement thanks to efforts to shore up public support for peace among both Catholics and Protestants.

Meanwhile, despite the possibility of the 1993 Oslo Accords delivering a peaceful coexistence to the parties of another protracted conflict, namely the Israel-Palestine Conflict, the continued use of force by those opposed to peace on both sides has led to the escalation of the second intifada in 2000 and the breakdown of the Oslo process. In 2003, the international community put forward the "road map for peace" as a way for Israel and Palestine to find a way to coexist, but no significant progress has been made to date.

East Timor's move towards independence at the end of the 1990s was met by mass killing and destructive rioting instigated by pro-Indonesian militia, but intervention by the international community eventually led to the realization of independence in 2002. Subsequent efforts to rebuild following the destruction caused by rioting were thought to be proceeding smoothly until, in 2006, violence instigated by anti-government forces erupted throughout Dili on the back of protests against discrimination by soldiers in the western part of the country. The incident led to the collapse of the East Timor's national police force. In response, the international community established the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and stepped up its intervention in order to bring the situation under control. Law and order was partially restored due to the efforts of international peacekeepers and UNMIT's expansion, and both presidential and parliamentary elections were held in 2007 without incident. However, in February 2008 the President and Prime Minister were attacked by armed forces, resulting in the wounding of the President and the subsequent declaration of a state of emergency.

This chaos in East Timor serves as a reminder of the diverse array of problems surrounding peacekeeping efforts, which include the necessity of and difficulty involved in the promotion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), support for the upkeep of law and order as well as the timing of its termination and withdrawal, assessment of the impact of economic recovery and development assistance (i.e. the extent to which the local community's perceived inequalities have been minimized), and the promotion of social reconciliation.

3. Difficulties of Reconciliation in the Peacebuilding Process

Reconciliation relies on the premise of changing individual perceptions in order to overcome hatred and mistrust of perpetrators and former enemies. The process of bringing about these changes is in itself one which requires considerable effort. Furthermore, in order to achieve reconciliation in a post-conflict society, it is essential to consolidate and coordinate these individual changes to achieve reconciliation as a group. Although there are difficulties in garnering agreement to reconcile individuals as well as in coalescing individual reconciliations into a group reconciliation, it is vital to promote reconciliation as a tool for social change in order to realize peacebuilding.

① Reconciliation via changes to individual perceptions

(1) Reconciling perpetrators and victims

Relief for victims by way of both material and psychological support, that is, financial compensation and therapy to recover from emotional deprivations, are essential. This is also a preliminary step towards the victim accepting the atonement of the perpetrator and granting forgiveness. Meanwhile, perpetrators must admit and be willing to atone for their wrongdoings. Relief for the victim and atonement on the part of the perpetrator (by way of confessing to or being punished for one's crime) provide an avenue for both parties to return to a normal life within society, and can therefore be perceived as the achievement of reconciliation.

In the peacebuilding process, this type of reconciliation is carried out by truth commissions and international (humanitarian) law courts.

(2) Overcoming mistrust and hatred

In order to reconcile two parties who perceive each other as enemies, it is necessary to promote a process whereby each party acknowledges the other as a person, understands the other's values, historical perspectives and motivations, and accepts their existence. Even though it may prove difficult to establish an amicable relationship and achieve peaceful coexistence (in the short term), it is necessary to create a social relationship of respect for one another's existence by overcoming the mentality and feelings of hatred and mistrust. These types of antagonistic relationship are often characterized by a perception of "us" as victims and "them" as perpetrators, and it is therefore important to improve the abilities of both parties to communicate to the point where they can honestly recount their own experience of being a victim as well as calmly listen to the other person's experience of being victimized.

Within the peacebuilding process, efforts are being committed to improving the reconciliation 'capabilities' of parties to a conflict through educational programs such as multiethnic schools and encounter programs.

② Challenges to maintaining & enhancing changes to individuals

(1) Israel's encounter programs

A settlement located on the outskirts of Jerusalem called "Oasis of Peace" (Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam)" was established as a commune for people of many religions. The need to provide primary education to the children of these settlers gave rise to the operation of a unique bi-national and bilingual school. The diverse education programs created by these systems have been adopted by encounter programs targeting Jewish and Arab youths and facilitator training programs as

well as the School for Peace. The majority of children educated at these schools make friends regardless of whether they are Jewish or Arab and learn to live together as equals. However, upon entering the world outside of these programs, that is, Israeli society, the students are exposed to discrimination, confrontation, hatred and violence. Accordingly, the disparity between their experiences in the program and the reality of the outside world lead to frustration and disappointment among the program's graduates.⁴

Even if the participants are able to maintain the empathy for and coexistence with different ethnicities which they learned during the program, virtually none of the other people within their community attempt to share their feelings and values. This means that despite the ability of these programs to deliver outstanding education results, they have almost no significant impact on mainstream society.

The reasons why the promotion of reconciliation between Jews and Arabs within Israel's society is so difficult are complex in nature, but the development of public initiatives such as the Oasis of Peace settlement is arguably due to the lack of will on the part of the Israeli government to try and promote change.

In contrast, the Northern Ireland peace agreement can be attributed to the will of the parties, including the governments of Ireland and Britain, to fulfill the agreement, in other words, to accept change.

(2) Support for educational integration in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2005, the Japanese government carried out an educational reform project targeting the Mostar Gymnasium located in Mostar, one of the war-torn regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the aim of promoting ethnic reconciliation. Under the project, 30 computers were donated to the school's IT Laboratory and a multimedia education

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program including clay animation was set up.⁵

Ethnic rivalries still prevail in the region even 10 years after the advent of peace. Despite an agreement between the ministers of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska in 2003, it is yet to be implemented, and Bosnia (which is predominantly Muslim) and Croatia still maintain separate curricula.

Within this context, the above-mentioned project was implemented as an experimental after-hours class on the condition that both Bosnian and Croatian students learn together in the same classroom. JICA, the program's chief coordinator, was reportedly careful to play down the project's aim of facilitating ethnic reconciliation through IT education so as not to stir up negative ethnic sentiment. The aim was to prevent interference to the project as a result of political pressure from those touting self-interests on the basis of ethnicity. This educational program enabling students to learn new multimedia skills received positive assessments from the participating students and led to new joint activities such as the creation of a video which introduced the school using multimedia technologies. As of September 2006, the "Common Ethnic Integrated IT Curriculum" was implemented on a trial basis.

Although it has not yet led to the common integration of subjects pertaining to ethnic identity such as history education, the initiative aims to promote an integrated curriculum as well as the opportunity for ethnic reconciliation in an educational setting.

4. Requirements for promoting reconciliation

① Development of an outstanding reconciliation (education) program

This report has discussed the promotion of reconciliation as a

means to achieving social change, but it is also necessary to recognize the existence of reconciliation processes in response to differences social status and disparate levels of influence. By disparate levels of influence, we refer to those in a position to advise political leaders holding policymaking powers such as intelligentsia, public movement leaders capable of influencing public opinion and the general public. For example, while it is known that the Norwegian foreign minister's staff played a crucial role as intermediaries in the confidential negotiations known as the "Norway channel" which led to the realization of the Oslo Accords, such 'intermediation and arbitration' techniques are essential in facilitating reconciliation between the leaders of the disputing parties.

A collaborative project to create a common history education platform for Europe and East Asia is also being carried out by academics. Joint collaboration by intelligentsia is anticipated to have educational benefits for both political leaders and members of the public.

The promotion of reconciliation on the civic level is also being developed in the context of the various school education and encounter programs detailed above. However, the reality is that adversarial relationships are diverse in nature, thereby necessitating the research and development of effective reconciliations programs specifically catered to suit each case.

② The intention & framework to realize society-wide reconciliation programs

(1) Preparing for governmental change

Any attempt to develop or realize reconciliation programs will be ineffective unless there are frameworks in place to transform these efforts into social initiatives. Initiatives seeking change, such as the

Israeli government's launch of public bi-ethnic schools or the promotion of the Peace School program, are certainly desirable.

(2) Creating a government capable of maintaining social order & promoting change

As was the case for Bosnia-Herzegovina and East Timor, international society must support the promotion of reconciliation at government level. This is important in regions which are in the process of post-conflict recovery and rebuilding, especially failed states.

As stated above, the reconciliation of conflicting parties is paramount to the reconstruction of governance, including the promotion of DDR and security sector reform (SSR), the establishment of autonomous democratic systems, the recovery of social infrastructure capable of delivering equitable economic activity, and the rebuilding of local communities. At the same time, the above-mentioned restoration of social order is a social precondition for this reconciliation.

The international community's support for the promotion of peacebuilding, itself a process of reconciliation, is a crucial requirement in conflict-torn societies which have suffered material and personal losses as a result of conflict.

〈注〉

- 1 山内麻里「国連における平和構築の潮流——平和構築委員会設立——」（『外務省調査月報』2006年/No.2、25-44頁）
- 2 *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping*, (REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL A/47/277 - S/24111)17 June 1992. For the citations and/or summarizations from the UN reports in this paper, refer to

the Japanese reports as follows; 事業戦略研究調査報告『平和構築—人間の安全保障の確保に向けて』(国際協力事業団国際協力総合研究所2001年), 外務省第三者評価報告書『平和の構築に向けた我が国の取り組みの評価～アフガニスタンを事例として～』(2006年3月, 「第2章 平和構築に向けた国際社会及び我が国の取り組み」)

- 3 Michael S. Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy*, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996, p.38
- 4 As to the projects of the "Oasis of Peace" refer to the interviews with the staffs and as to the School for Peace refer as follows;
Rabah Halabi ed., *Israeli and Palestinian Identities in Dialogue: The School for Peace Approach*, Rutgers University Press, 2000
- 5 As to the JICA projects refer to the JICA reports on the web as follows;
<http://www2.jica.go.jp/hotangle/europe/bosnia-h/000145.html>
<http://www2.jica.go.jp/hotangle/europe/bosnia-h/000147.html>
<http://www2.jica.go.jp/hotangle/europe/bosnia-h/000395.html>