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BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE

TIMING AND SEQUENCING OF
POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION
AND PEACEBUILDING



EDITED BY
ARNIM LANGER &
GRAHAM K. BROWN

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*Timing and Sequencing of Post-Conflict
Reconstruction and Peacebuilding*

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and

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BUILDING
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FOREWORD

Following the peaceful ending of the Cold War, a wave of optimism engulfed the world and it was widely believed at the time that we were heading towards a more peaceful and less divisive era. In spite of a moderate decrease in the number of violent conflicts in the world in the 1990s, by the turn of the century, almost nothing was left of the optimism that had existed a decade earlier. Unfortunately, since the start of the new millennium, very little—if any—progress has been made in making the world a safer and more peaceful place for the vast majority of the global population. Indeed, it appears that conflicts, violence, and terrorism are once again becoming pervasive phenomena in some parts of the world. With images and news reports of conflict and unspeakable acts of violence and terror in Syria, Libya, South Sudan, Ukraine, and Iraq reaching us daily, it is understandable that many people are sceptical and worried about what the future will bring. Recent statistics on conflict provide an equally bleak picture, with more than forty active violent conflicts being recorded in 2014, the highest number since 1999. The ‘new’ conflicts that have emerged in recent years are nearly all recurrences of earlier episodes of conflict.

The refugee crisis that is currently gripping Europe, which is a direct consequence of the tsunami of violence ripping apart Syria and Iraq, is a stark reminder that we cannot sit back and expect to be insulated from the consequences of violence in faraway countries. Self-interest and moral duty dictate that we need to offer help in resolving these conflicts and easing the suffering of the affected populations. In this respect it is particularly important that we help countries coming out of conflict to build peaceful and resilient societies which are able to resist falling back into conflict. But, as rightly noted by the authors of this book, it is clear that transforming conflict-torn societies into peaceful, stable, and more prosperous ones is a complex and daunting challenge. It requires not only the rebuilding of the physical damage and destruction caused by the violence, but also the rebuilding of social relations and inter-group trust, as well as the healing of psychological traumas and mental-health problems from which many people in post-conflict countries suffer.

However, current policymaking in the field of post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable peacebuilding is seriously hampered by a lack of understanding of when and in which order the plethora of peacebuilding measures, reforms, and policies are best implemented. This book, sponsored by Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs, addresses this challenge head-on and, in doing so, makes an important contribution to improving our understanding of the main timing and sequencing issues, dilemmas,

and trade-offs that local and international policymakers are facing when attempting to build durable peace in countries coming out of conflict.

Based on careful and insightful research conducted by an impressive collection of internationally renowned scholars with a broad range of expertise and experience, the book presents a very clear lesson: while there is no magic sequence and the timing of different peacebuilding interventions and reforms is very much context-specific, an appropriate timing and sequencing of interventions *can* make and *has* made a difference in individual cases. There are a number of important policy recommendations, which are clearly set out in the concluding chapter of this book. Above all is the need that the international community should focus more on ‘substantive time’ measured in terms of state-of-readiness assessments, rather than calendar time, when it comes to deciding what programmes and interventions to undertake and support, and when to withdraw or scale back support for a particular peacebuilding process.

A century ago, the First World War was raging in full force. An important part of this war was fought in Flanders Fields, where the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians from more than fifty countries worldwide were lost. While commemorating the centenary of this terrible conflict, we realize more than ever the horrific consequences of war. Over the last century Flanders has gone through a transformation process that fortunately has led to it being a peaceful region. In a world where more and more conflicts hamper sustainable development, the Government of Flanders wants to invest in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in its foreign policy. By sponsoring the publication of this important book, we want to encourage research that helps to put in place a durable peace. We hope that it may serve as a source of inspiration for the promotion of peace and human rights across ethnic, religious, and political boundaries, thus making an enduring contribution to a more peaceful future for all.

Geert Bourgeois
Minister-President of the Government of Flanders, Belgium
Brussels, September 2015

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The views and opinions expressed in the individual chapters are those of the authors, and should not be attributed to their respective organizations or the Flemish government. Further, the conclusions and policy recommendations we draw in the final chapter were developed on the basis of the contributor chapters and the broader discussion at the Leuven workshop, but they are the reflections of our views as project directors, and may not necessarily reflect the views of the individual contributors.

Arnim Langer, Leuven, Belgium
Graham K. Brown, Perth, Australia
September 2015

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Timing and Sequencing of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding

ARNIM LANGER, GRAHAM K. BROWN,
AND HANNE ALBERS

INTRODUCTION

IN the contemporary era, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding are high on the agenda of development agencies and the international community more broadly. Illustrative of this increased attention and focus of international actors on post-conflict peacebuilding in recent times was the establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in 2006. The PBF's overall objective is to prevent a relapse into violence in countries emerging from conflict by supporting 'peacebuilding activities which directly contribute to post-conflict stabilization and strengthen the capacity of Governments, national/local institutions and transitional or other relevant authorities'.¹ Despite the increased attention on sustainable peacebuilding by international actors such as the UN, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as the emergence of an extensive body of research which has analysed the challenges and complexities of economic reconstruction, institution building, democratization, transitional justice, and reconciliation in post-conflict countries, the politicians and policymakers, both local and international, who have sought to 'engineer' lasting peace settlements have found that their goal has remained elusive.

As shown in Table 1.1 recent research with regard to the proportion of post-conflict countries which have relapsed into violent conflict after a period of time without open

¹ Source: <<http://www.unpbf.org>>.

Table 1.1 Conflict recurrence according to different studies

| Author | Period | Number of cases | % recurrence |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
| Binningsbø (2011) | 1946–2006 | 254 | 46% |
| Mason et al. (2011) | 1945–1999 | 98 | 49% |
| Walter (2010) | 1945–2009 | 103 | 57% |
| Collier et al. (2008) | 1960–2002 | 74 | 45% |
| Jarstad Et Nilsson (2008) | 1989–2004 | 83 | 35% |
| Hartzell Et Hoddie (2007) | 1945–1999 | 49 | 37% |

Source: Cappelle (2012: 5).

violence or hostilities provides a very sobering picture. A range of factors and circumstances have been linked to an increased risk of conflict recurrence: for example, a poor economic situation characterized by low or negative economic growth rates is associated with higher rates of conflict recurrence (see e.g. Fortna 2004; Hartzell and Hoddie 2007); so too is a lack of involvement of the international community, with post-conflict countries where no UN peacekeeping forces have been deployed facing a higher risk of conflict recurrence than countries where a peacekeeping mission has been set up (e.g. Collier et al. 2008; Kreutz 2010); more intensely fought conflicts that have lasted longer and have resulted in more casualties are associated with higher levels of conflict recurrence (Fortna 2004; Walter 2004; Quinn et al. 2007); and negotiated settlements are also a factor, with some research suggesting that conflicts that have been ended via a negotiated settlement face a higher risk of conflict recurrence than conflicts that have been terminated via a decisive victory by one of the parties (Licklider 1995; Luttwak 1999; Toft 2010).

There are essentially two broad sets of reasons that explain why conflicts may reoccur and a durable peace may remain elusive in countries emerging from violent conflict. On the one hand, it may be that the international community has identified the ‘wrong’ policies for enhancing the prospects of sustainable peace in countries coming out of violent conflict, despite the extensive body of research which has focused on identifying the appropriate policies for different post-conflict contexts. An alternative reason might be that while the local and international policymakers have a fairly clear idea of the ‘right’ policies in different contexts, we have as yet little understanding of the ways in which the implementation of such policies might impact on the durability of peace processes. Central to this perspective, and central to the theme of this book and the associated research project entitled ‘Building Sustainable Peace: Timing and Sequencing of Peacebuilding Efforts and Reforms in Post-Conflict Countries’, are questions of *timing* and *sequencing*. Moreover, the central theme which we will examine in this book is how the timing and sequencing of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding interventions affect the durability and success of peace processes.