Beyond Peace and War

On Violence Control and Sustainable Peace Building in the Middle East

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The Centre for Peace Research and Strategic Studies (Centrum voor Vredesonderzoek en Strategische Studies) was established in the Department of Political Science of the University of Leuven in 1983.

The last five years research has been focused on: conflict prevention, democratic peace building, field diplomacy, conflict impact assessment and peace architecture. CPRS output appears in journals, books and in the Cahiers of the Centre for Peace Research. Linked to the Centre for Peace Research and Strategic Studies is the Master Program in Conflict and Sustainable Peace (www.kuleuven.be/macsp/).

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Abstract

The peace policy of Israel and the USA-UK is a failure. It is riddled with paradoxes: (1) anti –terrorism, also deemed 'barbarism', is significantly more violent than terrorism, (2) a considerable mass of world public opinion consider these 'terrorists' as freedom fighters and heroes, and (3) enormous efforts have been undertaken to rename and reframe the reality of the war. The narrow war on terrorism is clearly not in the interests of the Americans, the Europeans, the Arab-Muslims and the Israelis, as it has brought more human insecurity and prevented the democratization and development process of the region. A plea, therefore, is made for a radically new peace policy that looks at the larger picture of violence and involves a comprehensive solution of the conflicts. The sources of friction which are preventing progress are: the existence of senti-mental walls; gross inequalities of power, and the benefits of conflict. Complex conflicts have an undeniable potential to lead to more destruction; however, they can also generate great creativity and catalyze a peace building process. The latter is more difficult than fighting; it requires painstaking and heroic efforts of many.

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[1] Luc Reychler is a professor of international relations, violence prevention and sustainable peace at the University of Leuven. He is currently Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). **This paper expresses his personal opinions about the current conflict in the Middle East.** He has studied the Middle East conflict for more than 35 years. In 1971, Herbert Kelman organized in Harvard his first problem solving workshop. A small group of Israelis and Palestinians with the aid of a third party explored the possibilities for new options leading to a win-win solution. A few people in Cambridge denounced him as a traitor for talking to Palestinians. The aim of the problem solving workshops was to create space where the conflicting parties could get to know each other, jointly map the conflict, explore common ground and seek ways and means to transform the conflict and to build sustainable peace. Following 1971, the number of dialogue and dispute resolution efforts increased exponentially. However, in recent years, this trend has suffered something of a dialogue and negotiation fatigue.

Why are the Peace Policies of Israel and the US-UK Failing?

Since 9/11, all the peace efforts in the Middle East have been overshadowed by the war on terrorism. This has led to more destruction and instability in the region. The regime change in Iraq, the erection of the wall in the Palestinian territories and the violence in Gaza and Lebanon signal the failure of the peace policy of Israel and the USA[2]. It reminds us of Ambrose Bierce's definition of war as the side effect of the arts of peace. It is a peace policy based on the logic of war, and the assumption that you can attain peace and security at the expense of all other citizens in the region. The absurdity of such a policy is illustrated in the following three paradoxes.

Paradox 1: Anti-terrorism more violent than terrorism

Peace research tries to diagnose conflict and violence as objective, unbiased and accurate as possible. This means to deconstruct the politically correct or propagated reality, and to carefully examine the 'existential reality'. The first paradox rests in distinctions between 'terrorism' and 'anti-terrorism'. It is clear that both policies kill innocent citizens, however, it is significant that the latter kills many more. Preliminary research suggests that by 26 July, 2006, the Israeli army had killed 410 people in Lebanon, of which 90% were civilians. In contrast, Hezbollah had killed 54 Israelis, of which 25% were civilians[3]. Despite the fact that 'terrorism' has been depicted as the greatest evil and threat in the 21st century, it is creating appreciably less violence than the wars on terrorism. The wars on terrorism and regime change are considerably more violent; they slaughter ten to one hundred times more people. Since the second intifada more than 4,000 Palestinians have been killed, more than 20,000 have been wounded and over 10,000 are incarcerated as political prisoners, many of whom have been tortured. In addition, thousands of houses and properties have been or are being destroyed, and economically and financially the occupied territories remain strangled. Israel has transformed itself into a garrison state running two open prisons in Gaza and on the West Bank. In Lebanon, nearly one million people are dislocated or forced into migration. The Syrian Golan Heights are still occupied and efforts are underway to expand the Israeli territories. The US 'regime change' in Iraq and the Russian 'anti-terrorist' operations in Chechnya are similar in many aspects. In the strategic literature, this type of warfare has been called "barbarism"[4]. Barbarism is used in asymmetric conflicts by the

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[2] Otherwise labeled as Pax Zionica or Pax Americana
[3] Rudi Vranckx, VRT News, 26.07.2006.
[4] I.Arraguin-Toft on asymmetric warfare. Barbarism can be defined as a type of warfare used by the strongest party. It is characterized by the killing and maiming of a disproportionate number of people (10-100 times the number of people killed by the insurgents), most of the victims are civilians, it includes the use of collective punishment, the incarceration of many political prisoners not protected by the Geneva Conventions, the removal of people from their homesteads, forced migration, the destruction of the military and civil infrastructure, neglect of historical treasures and efforts to control the discourse on the war. For more information, see:

strongest party and is essentially large scale fighting without boundaries. In contrast to conventional warfare, it does not respect international or humanitarian laws and consciously targets citizens. The underlying assumptions are: that shock and awe can restore the standing of the regional or global superpower; that collective punishment can deter the people supporting the resistance or freedom fighters; and that collateral damage is an accepted part of the war. This aggression leaches the humanity, integrity and strength of democracy.

Paradox 2: Others see terrorism and extremism differently

The second paradox concerns terrorism and extremism, or more accurately 'political terrorism and extremism'. A considerable cross-section of their compatriots and/or world public opinion sees them as 'freedom/resistance fighters', heroes and martyrs. In stark contrast to the Western depiction of terrorists as cowards, they are commonly perceived as courageous and patriotic. Recent studies of 'suicide terrorism' show that there is little connection with Islamic fundamentalism and that such individuals share a specific and secular goal: to compel democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory which they consider their homeland. The aim of the Palestinian insurgency is to put an end to the occupation and colonization of its territories, especially the territories occupied after 1967. Similarly, the creation of Hezbollah was a reaction to the military intrusions and occupations by Israel of Lebanon. According to Marcus Yoel of Haaretz it is 'a force with a couple of hundred fighters, certainly not more than half a brigade'. The withdrawal from all the occupied territories after 1967 would take away one of the root causes of political terrorism, providing a more humane and effective anti-terrorist strategy. Terrorism is the logic of coercion applied by the weak actors in a conflict[5]. It should also be noted that in comparison to the other types of violence committed in the world, political terrorism is a relatively small killer. On a yearly basis, it accounts worldwide for approximately 3,000 deaths a year.

Paradox 3: Renaming and reframing reality

The third paradox relates to enormous efforts to rename, reframe and hide the reality of violence. This involves the definition of threats and policies, the distortion of data, the creation of politically correct language, a manipulation of media, and the assertion of pressure to conform. After 9/11, the US government started to focus attention on two threats that were much more horrific together than they were separately: radical Islam and weapons of mass destruction. Violence became narrowly defined in terms of terrorism or weapons of mass

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I. Arreguin-Toft, 'How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict,' *International Security* V.26, N.1 (Summer, 2001): 93-128
[5] Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, 2005, Random House

destruction, with increasingly less attention paid to the larger picture of violence in the world. Some neocons, such as Charles Krauthammer, envisaged a World War IV, in which the civilized world would be attacked by an enemy potentially as dangerous and powerful as those faced in the two World Wars and the Cold War[6]. Therefore, the argument follows, the best tools for protecting the US and its allies would be: an overwhelming military superiority, dedication to the U.S. alliances, missile defense, and preventive/preemptive warfare to stop catastrophic terrorism and the proliferation of rogue states. This new strategy is characterized by a great deal of propaganda and the use of politically correct-words, definitions, interpretations and evaluations. Steven Poole has written a seminal book on the use of 'unspeak', which he defines as a mode of speech that tries to persuade by stealth. 'Names become weapons. Distinctions are deliberately blurred; realities are denied and punishments don't fit the crimes'[7]. Here are some examples from Steven Poole:

- In order to avoid responsibility or pointing the finger, the killing of civilians are called 'tragic accidents ',

- Israel constructs what it calls a 'security fence' around its territory, thereby suggesting that it is not an unpleasant construction and that its motivation is solely 'security'. In fact, the wall is higher than the Berlin Wall built during the Cold War and it shifts 9.5% of the territory of the West Bank to the Israeli side.

- Ten thousand Palestinian political prisoners are called 'security prisoners', in order to avoid recognizing the political dimension of the problem and to evade international and humanitarian law.

- The 'disengagement' from Gaza and a small part of the West Bank actually entailed: the evacuation of 9,000 settlers from a total of 240,000; the demolishment of the evacuated homes, and; the maintenance of Israeli control over Gaza's airspace, offshore waters, and the majority of border crossings.

- Ethnic cleansing or attempted genocide has been used by the international community to evade the automatic duty to act. Since 1955, the world has seen more than 40 genocidal or politicidal events, the majority of which have never officially been termed 'genocide' or 'politicide'. "..this betrays the erroneous opinion that genocide is total destruction, and ignorance of the fact that any 'attempt' at such destruction already constitutes genocide ' (S. Poole, p.97).

- Calling the first operation in Vietnam a 'just cause' or the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 'peace in Galilee' did not succeed in persuading the local citizens that peace was the true motive. Interestingly, the US invasion in Afghanistan was originally called 'Operation Infinite Justice', but than changed to 'Operation Enduring Freedom'.

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[6] Francis Fukuyama, *After the Neocons*, 2006, Profile Books, p.70
[7] The following illustrations and many more can be found in: Steven Poole, *Unspeak*, 2006, Little Brown, Lancaster, UK.

- The terms 'surgical' or 'precision' strikes and their 'collateral' damage hide their real functions: killing insurgents and deterring people to provide support.
- States fiercely resist any characterization of their actions as terrorism. They have won the battle of definitions by exempting its own violence against civilians from being treated and perceived as 'terrorism'. Instead it is referred to as 'self-defense', 'retaliation', and 'security measures'.
- Body bags are now 'transfer tubes'.
- The use of the term 'terrorist suspect' can make someone a terrorist without ever having committed an act of terrorism.
- When you are labeled an 'enemy combatant', instead of a 'prisoner of war' you can be entombed indefinitely in Guantanamo and become the subject of some 'detainee abuse' or plain torture. The prisoners and their guards now both have first-hand experience of Alan Dershovitz's arguments for legalizing torture.
- Finally, there is the global struggle against the violent extremists, which all right thinking people would like to join. To label a person or a group of people as "extremists" is to say that they have no right to ask what they want. An extremist is not only someone who holds an opinion with which we disagree, but also someone who is essentially extreme, impossible to talk to and impossible to welcome into civilization.

A great deal of the above looks ominously like the work of the Minitrues (Ministries of Truth) in Orwell's book *1984*. Complementing the efforts to control the 'hearts and minds' of their own constituencies and of the international community are the conformity pressures and the silencing of dissident voices. This is attained in several ways, as people who express criticism are stigmatized as unpatriotic, unrealistic, ivory tower-ish, anti-Semitic, anti-American, and sometimes even extreme-rightists[8]. The inflation of the use of the label anti-Semitism has become unproductive especially when it tries to silence well-intentioned people from criticizing the peace policies of Israel, the USA or the UK. Critique is not necessarily negative; it can be an act of respect or even love. Equally disturbing is the misuse of the Holocaust to justify what is happening. The Iranian people or government were not involved in the Holocaust, and employ other memories to justify their anger towards the USA and the West. For instance, they will remind you of the toppling in 1953 - with the help of CIA and British intelligence operatives - of their elected head of state Mohammed Mossadegh, because he wanted to nationalize the oil sector. They will also remind you about how the West supported Saddam Hussein's war against Iran; a war which left 1 million victims. A friend told me, that she had a dream of the Holocaust. She overheard the souls of people, who died in

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[8] Illustrative was a recent dispute in Belgium between Jean Marie De Decker and Claude Marinower, in De Standaard, 25.07.2005, or the reaction of Mia Doornaert (De Standaard 29-30.07.2006) to an article on the conflict in the Middle East written by Luc Reychler (20-21.07.2006).

concentration camps, talking about the Middle East. Some of them were disappointed that the world had not learned much of the horrendous event. Others were planning a march on Jerusalem to stop making new victims in their name and to plead for peace.

Another facet of the conformity pressure is the occupation of the 'moral high ground', by depicting the conflict as a war between the axis of evil and the axis of good, and as a fight for civilization, freedom and democracy. Problems arise from the distinctions made between first-, second- , and third class victims. The first class victims (from the West) desire and receive most attention; the second class receives much less (for example, the Palestinians and Lebanese), and; the third class victims are completely negated (for example, the Congolese). There is also the doctrine of preventive war and the implicit recognition of Israeli's and America's exceptionalism. Such a doctrine destabilizes the international system. All of the above efforts serve to reinforce groupthink and close-mindedness in the decision-making process, or what *Newsweek*, on July 31, 2006, called the 'delusional machismo'. The negative strategic impact of this mindset has been illustrated in several studies, such as Stoessinger's 'Why nations go to war' or Barbara Tuchman's 'The march of folly'. This mindset prevents a questioning of peace policies that generate more harm than good and slows down the learning curve. As a result, the same mistakes are consistently made time and time again. Think of the non-recognition of the democratically elected FIS in Algeria and now Hamas in Palestine; or the support of the Taliban against the Soviets; or the creation of Hezbollah after the Israeli invasion in Lebanon. We fail to acknowledge that such actions create monsters that will later turn against their creator.

If Voltaire would be around, he would no doubt cast a sardonic laugh and probably write a modern version of Candide. It would satirize the horrors of the 21st century and the pursuit by governments of peace policies contrary to their own interests. The peace policy of Israel the USA and UK simply does not serve the interests of the people in the Middle East, the Americans and the Europeans. In the US the foreign policy is shaped by well-organized minorities who lobby for their particular interests. It has created more violence and instability in the region, whilst the arms escalation is on the rise and new layers of hate and despair are formed. The financial and the human price of the war on terror are excessive. The behavior of democratic countries have setback the democratization efforts in the region, as illustrated by: the unwillingness to deal with democratically related authorities such as Hamas, the imprisonment of elected Palestinian Parliamentarians, the interference in the political transition process in Lebanon in order to install a more friendly and collaborative regime; the support of 'friendly' authoritarian regimes (for example, Saudi Arabia and Egypt); Israel's mistreatment of the Palestinian people, and especially its destruction of the fragile democratic transition in Lebanon. The war on terrorism

is a policy of denial; the denial of the greater picture of violence9. The price of such denial will be more shocking surprises. Last but not least, this conflict is also siphoning a great deal of time and resources which are needed in many other conflict zones in the world (for example, Sudan, DR Congo, and the countless countries suffering with extreme poverty).

The 'Colosseum' of our Globalized World

The current peace policy is not adapted to the rapidly changing international environment. The globalization of world politics is not only the consequence of trade, technology, communications and environmental awareness; it also represents the growing consciousness of inequalities and conflict in the world. The conflict in the Middle East has become the 'Colosseum' of the 21st century. The whole world, willing or not, is watching the spectacle and judging the performance of the actors. Most battles are unequal, with the 'terrorists' confronting super and regional powers who boast air, land and sea forces. In the North-Western part of the theater the 'terrorists' are reproached as scum and cowards; whilst the rest of the spectators applaud them as brave characters, insurgents, resistance/freedom fighters and heroes. They notice that the Americans in the Lebanon spectacle expedite the delivery of precision missiles to Israel and humanitarian aid to its victims. Some spectators seem not to be disturbed by the use of double standards by the umpires; others are outraged. The weakest players are expected to disarm, so that the strongest can feel at ease and continue to do what they want. The EU stands on the side lines, as an innocent bystander and provider of humanitarian aid. This appears to be changing. The audience observes that most of the time '*might* is *right*', that international and humanitarian law is not invited and that the UN is not taken seriously by a super power. During the performance, democracy carries many masks. The spectators see that the meaning of democracy as used by the West is changing from a way to be liberated, to a way to provide security to those perpetrating regime changes. Although, the latter may promote democracy at the national level, it also resists it at the international level. Every day, with the words of Frantz Fanon[10], it is apparent that we are attending the striptease of humanism. There you can see it, quite naked and it's not a pretty sight. It is an ideology of lies, a justification of power; its honeyed words and affectation of sensibility are merely alibis for violence and aggression. A fine sight are the onlookers, who don't seem to support one or the other. Why are these passive spectators the ones perceived as cowards or traitors?

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[9] See Luc Reychler, 'Challenges of Peace Research', *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 2006.
[10] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963, Grove Press, New York.
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Building Blocks of a Sustainable Peace

It is high time to envision a radically different approach. Peace politics have become the art of the impossible; it leads nowhere. Sustainable peace cannot build on the ruins of 'the war on terrorism'; it requires much more. In peace research 'sustainable peace' is defined as a situation where (a) the armed violence has stopped, (b) the other types of violence (structural, psychological and cultural) are close to absent , (c) conflicts are handled in a constructive way, and, (d) that the government has a high level of internal and external legitimacy. The European Union is a good example (and one which owes a great debt to the visionary leadership of the US). Such a sustainable peace requires a series of conditions, which can be clustered into five groups. (Sustainable peace building pentagon[11]). The essential requirements – or pre-conditions – derived from peace research are: an effective system of communication, consultation and negotiation; peace-enhancing structures and institutions; an integrative political-psychological climate; a critical mass of peace building leadership, and; a supportive international environment[12]. The underlying assumption is that these five peace building blocks are mutually reinforcing and therefore need to be present or installed simultaneously. The lagging of one of these building blocks can seriously undermine the stability or effectiveness of the entire peace building process.

The strategy for ending the war in Lebanon and building sustainable peace in the Middle East will involve short term steps (such as an immediate cease fire, provision of humanitarian aid, a peace agreement with Lebanon (exchange of prisoners, reconstruction of Lebanese infrastructure, removal of Israeli mine fields in Southern Lebanon, the retreating of the Shebaa farms and the
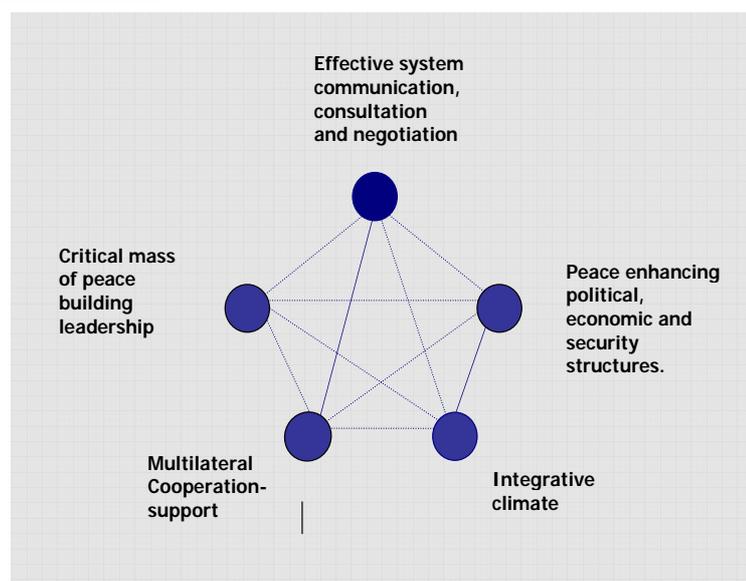

Figure : Sustainable peace building pentagon

[12] In addition to these five clusters there are necessary support systems (legal -, educational-; health- , humanitarian aid-, and information-systems) which play an important role in the peace building process.

installation of UN forces in Lebanon) and a longer term peace building process that requires:

1. Deep listening to all parties involved in the conflict and the facilitation of an inclusive negotiation process. This implies also listening to the so called 'terrorists and extremists' and the 'rogue nations'. I would stop using these labels as they tend to enhance self-fulfilling prophecies. Transcending a narrow minded approach requires a revised investigation of motivation and causation. It should be recognized that extreme circumstances tend to enhance extreme behavior. Normal people can imagine killing in abnormal circumstances

2. Further internal and regional democratization of the Middle East. I share the belief of the neoconservatives that the internal character of regimes matter and that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies. More internal and external democracy (as we see in the EU) will lead to sustainable peace. A great deal of the tension in The Middle East is caused by the presence of authoritarian regimes who justify themselves by the behavior of Israel and the US in the region. There are also the tensions between the resource rich and poor Arab countries and the widespread poverty. The muscled democracies, however, are also co-responsible for the slow democratization process. After all, the US and Israel have initiated or escalated three international wars, whilst the root cause of a great deal of the tension – the occupation and colonization of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories – is still there. A democracy with colonies cannot function as a genuine democracy.

3. The reconstruction of Palestine and Lebanon and stimulation of regional economic cooperation and development that will reduce poverty and alleviate vertical and horizontal inequalities.

4. The ending of unilateral military intervention and the development of a cooperative security system that raises the level of 'human security' in the region. A successful cooperative security system requires a political agreement to stop all the violence (not only terrorism, but also anti-terrorism and structural and psychological violence). This should be accompanied by the freeing of all the occupied territories and the international acceptance of the principle that 'the destroyer pays'.

5. The fostering of an integrative moral-political climate. One of the most difficult conditions to create is an integrative moral-political climate. This is the software of peace building and involves: (a) 'imaging a better common future as a consequence of cooperation', (b) the development of multiple loyalties, (c) reconciliation, and (d) the dismantlement of senti-mental walls. This is not easy, but it is possible, for example, one must

only look at the creation of the European Union or post-apartheid South Africa. Before 1945, Europe was one of the bloodiest places on the earth: it started two world wars; had several authoritarian regimes; exploited colonies; experienced civil wars and committed large scale genocide. Now it is one of the most free, affluent and secure regions in the world. This is not a question of higher and lower civilizations. It is about imagination, seeing alternative futures and looking forwards, instead of backwards. A second requirement is the development of multiple loyalties. The existence of exclusive and extreme nationalism is counterproductive. The third component is reconciliation. Dealing with the past is difficult, but it becomes easier when the parties are determined to build a new future. It involves matters of justice (e.g. compensations), reassurance that violence in the broad sense of the word will stop, the establishment of truth, recognition of responsibilities, apologies and possibly some forgiveness. The first victim of war, someone once said, is the truth. Sustainable peace requires a great deal of truth, especially the truth of the victims of the violence. Truth is empowering; it facilitates the peace process. Other obstacles are: the insensitivity of power for the dignity of the powerless; the stepping on people's souls, and the blatant assumption that suffering and pain is not universal.

6. Finally, sustainable peace building requires a critical mass of internal and external peace building leadership. Peace building leadership endeavors to: visualize a mutually beneficial future; it does not exploit, but contains, fear; it sees peace building as an adaptive and not a technical problem that can be solved by specialists (for example the military), and; they are willing to listen to dissident voices. Peace building in the Middle East needs a great deal of external leadership, not only of the USA, but also of the European Union. The USA should be more evenhanded and the Europeans more actively involved and both should certainly cooperate. They cannot allow a further destabilization of the region. They should not allow that weaker allies, such as Israel, monopolize the security policy in the region. This was one of the most destabilizing factors in the security system before the First World War. We should remind ourselves that it was not the two Bosnian terrorists who killed the archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, that started the First World War. Rather, among other reasons, it was the reluctance to loose diplomatic face and an alliance system where the strongest allies did not constrain the behavior of the weaker ones. Presently in the Middle East, the leaders of both camps neglect the concerns of the vast majority of their people and, irrespective of what public opinion polls may suggest, the latter are disappointed; they expect peace and better peace policies.

Frictions in the Peace Building Process

Avoiding, yelling, and killing are relatively easy reactions in conflict and may even be initially satisfying for an aggrieved party. Building peace is more difficult; it requires painstaking and heroic efforts. The rabbis of the Talmud defined a hero as 'one who changes an enemy into an ally'[13]. The initiation of a sustainable peace building process will be considerably retarded by unwarranted friction. Friction can occur in the following three ways.

Friction 1: Senti-mental Walls

Most of us are blind to our own tacit assumptions that inform our worldviews. In a conflict scenario this behavior is further exacerbated. It feels very risky to question the underlying assumptions that inform what we are doing. 'Each person, no matter how smart or capable, and this includes leaders – sees the world from a separate perspective and other legitimate perspectives could inform that view'[14]. One of the most important preconditions to move from an antagonistic approach to a more reflexive approach is the development of an analytical empathy or the ability of the conflicting parties to see each other's aggressions from the point of view of the other. A great deal of the violence in the Middle East is reactively motivated due to threats and frustrations concerning basic needs and values. The development of empathy in protracted conflicts is very difficult. People, including professional analysts, find it very difficult to transcend their positional perspective. At best, they develop some form of 'conceptual empathy. Not many are willing or able to get to the level of 'existential empathy'. It is especially difficult when you (a) believe that power will do the job, (b) consider the concerns of the other as illegitimate, (c) think you are superior, and (d) have exclusive loyalties to your group.

Friction 2: Power Asymmetry

Unequal power undermines the rational decision-making of the powerful and powerless. Sometimes powerful players become arrogant and underestimate the will of the powerless to fight back. They tend to believe that more military power will provide more security and victory. The powerless, who have less to lose, have a higher cost tolerance and hate and despair can drive them to terrorism and suicide killing. The current conflict asymmetry could be reduced by a more active involvement of the EU and more American evenhandedness.

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[13] See Jay Rothman. *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict: In Nations, Organizations, and Communities.* 1997, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, p.xiii.

[14] Michael Marquart, *Leading with questions*, 2005, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, p104.

Friction 3: Conflict Profiteering

If violent conflicts would be costly for all involved, they would have disappeared a long time ago. The current violence persists because some persons or minority groups profit from them. Today, one can get good statistics about almost everything, except about the profits of violent conflict. You don't find them in official publications and it's also very risky to gather data about the 'Shadows of war'[15]. More research is needed to name the actors who pursue their self interest in conflicts and contribute directly or indirectly to the escalation and the prolongation of conflicts. There are four types of profits. First, there are political profits (war takes the attention away from internal conflicts; it rallies people around the flag, the manipulation of fear helps to justify extremism and political repression etc.). Second, there are economic profits. War is good for promotion, for the testing and selling of weapons, it provides funds for reconstruction, and it facilitates shadow economies and politics in war zones and generates trillions of dollars. Third, there are moral profits. Framing a military intervention as a war on terrorism, regimes change or peace operation gives the warriors the belief that they can circumvent international and humanitarian law; it raises moral permissiveness. Fourth, and finally, there are psychological profits. War can be a source of psychological pleasure and healing. It goes hand in hand with feelings of superiority, the joy of the fittest, hubris, messianic certitude, excitement, and affords people a chance to rise above their small stations in life. In the words of Chris Hedges it creates a bizarre universe that has a grotesque and dark beauty[16]. A systematic analysis of the benefits of war should be a part of all conflict reporting. This demands more than academic armchair research; this requires field work, courage, digging in all areas of power, and especially in those areas usually deemed 'off limits'[17]. We need to establish who are the Basil Zaharoffs - the merchants of war - who benefit from the conflict in the Middle East.[18].

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[15] Caralyn Nordstrom, *The Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twentieth Century*, 2004, University of California Press, Berkeley.
[16] Chris Hedges, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, 2003, Anchor
[17] J.Nichols, *Tragedy and farce: How American Media Sells Wars, Spins Elections and Destroys Democracy*, 2005, New Press
[18] He was an arms dealer, fueling wars in the name of democracy at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

Let's Try Peace

Let me conclude by reiterating that the peace policy of Israel and the USA-UK cannot lead to a sustainable peace. Firstly, there is the problem of employing a narrow definition of war and peace. The policy argues that this is a war on terrorism and that peace will result in the defeat of the terrorists. This approach denies the existence of the bigger picture of violence in the world and the region[19]. It overlooks the whole fabric of structural, psychological and cultural violence that breeds extremism and terrorism. The same narrow analysis was made in Rwanda before the genocide. One cannot expect to be secure at the expense of others. The terrorists and extremists contribute to the violence, but are at the same time a symptom of a violent context which Israel and the USA-UK helped to create. If nothing is done to deal with the bigger picture of violence and the focus of security remains only to kill the terrorists and the extremists, we will only have more violence. The price of such a short sighted policy is always a surprise. The second reason why the current peace policy is doomed to fail is the nature of the physical violence used. Anti-terrorism kills and maims many more people than terrorism. It causes enormous destruction, imprisons people in their homeland, forces them out of their houses and leaves layers of hate and despair. In the strategic literature this type of violence is coined 'barbarism'. Barbarism is much more destructive than terrorism. It causes many 9/11's a year. Barbarism can reduce terrorism and insurgent movements for some time, but promises much more terrorism in the future. The third reason why we should be concerned is that the difference between war and peace is disappearing. Peace has become nothing more than a space between wars; it's a time where intensive preparations are made for the next war. The

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Physical violence : **terrorism**, guerilla , conventional warfare, and barbarism	Psychological violence	Cultural - epistemic violence
Structural violence: political, economic and cultural exclusion. = less visible indirect-intentional	**Violence is about shortening life** or significant lower the quantitative and qualitative life expectancies of particular group(s)	Bad governance -Maladministration -Corruption -Indifference and neglect -Greed and self interest -Religious and ideological inspired misgovernance -unintended negative impacts of well-intentioned interventions.
Organized crime	Extra-legal economic activities	Environmental violence

Figure : The big picture of violence at the national and international levels

amount of resources spent on the war on terrorism are tremendously high, whilst in comparison, the investments in sustainable peace building are peanuts. The lion's share goes to preventive and preemptive war fighting, and not to wider violence prevention and peace building efforts.

Until now, the EU has stayed on the side lines. It has given humanitarian aid to the victims of terrorism and barbarism. It has helped to reconstruct the infrastructure of the Palestinian territories over and over again and will now do the same thing for Lebanon. The EU still has still a lot of soft power, which the US and Israel have lost. It has learned from the holocaust and purged itself of authoritarian regimes, exclusive nationalism and colonies, helping it to succeed in building sustainable peace. The ineffectiveness in the past was caused by many factors: the low level of consensus on the Middle Eastern Policy, the priority given to the further widening and deepening of the Union, the monopolization of the management of the Middle East conflict by the US government, and a lingering, but diminishing, reluctance to criticize Israel. However, these factors are no longer valid and the EU must now play a more assertive role in the Middle East conflict.

Complex conflicts have the potential to lead to more destruction; they can also generate great creativity and catalyze a peace building process. The latter is more difficult than fighting; it requires painstaking and heroic efforts of many. The best of the Arabs, Muslims, Americans, Europeans and Israelis should take on this historical challenge. It is a risky joint venture, but just imagine the transformation of all the destructive creativity into a constructive creativity and the building of sustainable peace in the Middle East.

Leuven 6 August 2006

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