From Civil War to Civil Society

The Transition from War to Peace in Guatemala and Liberia

the World Bank and the Carter Center

Background

The Liberian Civil War

Freed American slaves began to settle what is currently known as Liberia in the 1820s, often in the face of hostility from the local inhabitants. By 1847, the ex-slaves and their descendants had declared a republic and began a 150 year period of Americo-Liberian elite rule based on domination and exploitation of the indigenous population. In 1980, Americo-Liberian rule ended with a military coup staged by Samuel Doe. The ensuing regime, violently suppressed any form of opposition for the next ten years, creating deadly ethnic cleavages.

In late 1989, the National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL), under the leadership of Charles Taylor, began a rebellion in the north. When it reached the capital, Monrovia, during the summer of 1990, the NPFL was repelled by an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping force (ECOMOG). Shortly after, President Doe was killed by a splinter faction of the NPFL and a Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) under the leadership of Amos Sawyer was installed.

Major peace talks—started the subse-

on Guatemalan territory. The revolt failed but the officers disappeared into the rural areas, formed a guerrilla army, and began a war against the government.

Initially, the movement was aligned with Cuban revolutionary forces and concentrated in the Ladino areas of the country. However, over the next two decades, political and social reforms became a rallying point, with the indigenous populations playing a major role. The government counter-insurgency campaign, characterized by large-scale human rights violations, successfully restrained the guerrilla movement. Yet, the struggle continued, partly due to the strength of guerrilla movements in neighboring countries. In 1982, the groups united into the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG).

The transition to peace began in the early to mid-1980s with a new constitution, the election of a civilian president, political pluralism, and personal liberties such as freedom of speech. In 1987, the Guatemalan president, in concert with other Central American heads of state, signed a declaration outlining procedures for the establishment of sustainable peace in the region. For Guatemala, an important component of this agreement was the establishment of National Reconciliation Commissions (NRC).

The next three years were spent preparing for the negotiations. This process included a series of NRC consultations with political parties, the private sector, religious groups, academics, labor unions, and other members of civil society. These meetings were mediated by the Catholic Church and a UN observer. In 1991, formal discussions began between the URNG and the newly formed government commission for peace (COPAZ).

Three years later, civil society was explicitly brought into the negotiations with the establishment of a Civil Society Assembly. The ensuing agreement—bringing together accords on democratization, human rights, displaced populations, indigenous rights, socioeconomic issues, and the role of civil society and the military—took almost six years to reach and was signed in December 1996.

From civil war to civil society

Though the transition from war to sustainable peace is multifaceted and non-linear, we can distinguish the three overlapping phases of making peace, keeping peace and sustaining peace, with each phase requiring a mix of political, security, humanitarian and developmental activities. Yet, it is difficult to determine which set of activities will achieve its objectives in a given situation. Moreover, the appropriate timing of and the interaction between the various interventions is not well understood. The international community is working within a multi-disciplinary and inexact science.

The following report has four main sections: the three overlapping phases of war to peace transition and a brief conclusion. The first section, making peace, discusses the peace process, including the role of civil society and the international community. The second section, keeping peace, addresses post-conflict governance, elections and issues related to implementing the peace accords. The third section, sustaining peace, explores reconstruction and reconciliation. The final section concludes by emphasizing the need for an integrated strategic framework a coherent approach to sustainable peace.

The peace process

The essential element of a peace process is *political willingness* by all warring factions to enter into negotiations and a *security framework* to maintain the peace. This usually requires extensive investments in time and money before the parties are brought to the negotiating table. In particular, the various parties must overcome the lack of interpersonal trust that has developed during the conflict. Another important component is the need for all involved to view the negotiations as a "way out" of the conflict where not all demands will be meet. As conflict results from differing societal perceptions, even the best peace process will result in a compromise.

However, to minimize discontent, maintain momentum and reach the "largest common denominator," the process needs to be comprehensive, transparent, and inclusive. This means that all social, economic and political aspects of the conflict should be addressed in an open forum, allowing all interested members of the society an equal opportunity to participate. Throughout the process, no

system of risks and rewards should encourage peaceful pursuit of livelihoods, rather than intimidation, violence and rent-seeking; fourth, *adversaries* must come to view each other as members of the same society, working toward a common goal—a peaceful and prosperous future; and fifth, *structures and institutions* must be amended at all levels of the society to support these new peaceful transformations.

The nature of war determines the nature of peace

Participants also noted that the nature of war determines the nature of peace. This means that the factors which produce and sustain the conflict will directly impact the ensuing peace settlement.

The Guatemalan peace process offers many lessons: first, transparent processes increased trust and reduced suspicion; second, participation by most of the stakeholders built a sense of partnership among the various components of society, legitimizing the process and outcome; and third, the agreements addressed the root causes of the conflict, providing a blueprint for socioeconomic development. In this manner, the agreements went beyond addressing military arrangements to provide a comprehensive package for a new nation. Participants stressed that the peace was brokered by the Guatemalans themselves, not imposed by outsiders.

The role of civil society

Civil society can play an important role during the peace process by: (a) ensuring that discussions and recommendations take into account the needs of the larger society, and (b) monitoring the implementation of these very recommendations. In this manner, the agreements become an exercise in *national* conflict resolution and reconstruction. As already noted, civil participation legitimizes the peace process and outcome.

However, participation by civil society requires that the factions open the process to all interested members of society, that institutional mechanisms are in place to guarantee civil participation, and that resources are available to support local peace-building and conflict management efforts. A workshop participant described this as inclusiveness in meaningful institutions. This process may be very difficult in a highly militarized society.

Involving civil society in the peace process can contribute to psychosocial healing. Civil society—the network of informal and formal relationships, groups and organizations which bind a society together—can provide the environment within which the levels of trust and sense of community necessary for durable peace are constructed. By allowing civil society to participate in the peace settlement, reconciliation becomes part of the peacemaking process itself.

Involving civil society in the peace process can contribute to psychosocial healing

The displacement and destruction associated with conflict usually has an adverse effect on civil society. Yet, some aspects of civil society usually survive and can be built on. This is the case, even in Liberia, where civilians were targeted by the

Post-conflict governance

In the final analysis, two important elements of successful peace accords are active involvement by civil society and skillful governance. With the state apparatus and civil society both weakened by conflict, good governance — the management of resources on behalf of all citizens with fairness and openness — is an important goal. Successful governance, in this and other contexts, has several key features:

- *Transparency,* which requires budget, debt, expenditure, and revenue disclosure. Who pays and who benefits must be apparent to all.
- *Accountability,* which means that the governing body will be responsible for how it is generating revenue and allocating expenditure.
- *Rule of law,* which demands a legal framework by which government and society conduct themselves.
- *Institutional pluralism* rather than unitary structures, which supports the forgoing conditions.
- *Participation,* which implies the involvement and empowerment of all those affected by governance.

Participants suggested that the following considerations might ease the burden on post-conflict governing bodies and facilitate good governance. To the extent possible, authority should be decentralized to increase the participation of civil society. Community-centered development and increasing capacity at the local level may produce quick impact and sustainability. Decentralization may also avoid a winner takes all scenario. Another important consideration is that the relatively weak administrative capacity of the government means that it should concentrate on a few priorities. A small number of targets should be set and pursued with vigor. Overly ambitious programs may produce public dissatisfaction and loss of faith in the process. Moreover, while establishing a macroeconomic framework may be necessary to reduce inflation and stabilize the economy, regulatory and administrative procedures should be kept to a minimum. Incentives for good behavior, however, need to be included early on.

Participants also emphasized that good governance does not always require political democracy. Unelected regimes can manage public resources openly and fairly, while democratically elected governments can be corrupt and incompetent. Such distinctions have important implications for societies emerging from conflict. While ill-advised to follow political blueprints, such societies should seek to establish the institutional basis for a move toward democracy.

In search of a representative government

Although democracy may not always coincide with good governance, popular participation in decision-making does encourage transparency and accountability. These are two key features of good governance, and in the long term, good governance is correlated with socioeconomic

fighting is one stop on the long road toward improving the living standards of society.

- *Meeting expectations.* In order to achieve consensus among warring factions and other groups with competing agendas, peace accords often offer a wish list, ignoring resource constraints. Translating political discourse into concrete actions will require a more realistic approach and timetable.
- *Restructuring the wartime economy*. Conflict societies undergo fundamental economic changes, which may take years to reverse. The implementation of peace accords can restore confidence and promote the return of private capital. Legitimate activities must replace the exploitation of resources that sustains the warring factions.
- *Targeting high-payoff interventions*. Given the weak economic base that characterizes most post-conflict societies, targeted interventions with immediate impact are essential. Access to land and alternative sources of income, and support for civil society and women s groups, inter alia, should be considered.
- *Neutralizing private violence.* The instability caused by the transition period coupled with sluggish implementation of the peace accord often leads to an increase in crime rates. Reductive measures in this area need to include carrots (counseling, training and employment generation programs for vulnerable groups, especially ex-combatants) and sticks (a civilian security force and justice system).

HUMAN AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Neglected during conflict, human rights protection and promotion are crucial in war to peace transitions. To begin the process, human rights could be incorporated in peace accords, including protection for indigenous identity and rights where necessary. The Guatemalan accords were very successful in this area. If human rights monitors are deemed necessary during the transition process, their role should be clearly defined.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recognizes five roles for human rights monitors: (a) dissuasive presence in the rural area, (b) human rights verification and monitoring, (c) strengthening and training the justice system, i.e., civilian police, prisons, judges and courts, (d) facilitating the return of internally displaced populations (IDPs) and refugees, and (e) human rights promotion, institutional development and support for civil society.

Participants suggested the following measures to improve a country s human rights situation, increase social cohesion and prevent the escalation of ethnic tensions: (a) drawing on revered intermediaries (teachers, lawyers, etc.) from different groups, (b) promoting economic autonomy at the group and, where possible, individual level, (c) providing a predictable degree of rule of law, (d) ensuring absorptive capacity in the economy to encourage private investment, and (e) encouraging ethnic identity and heritage development, including reconstruction of historic and religious sites. All members of society, including the different ethnic groups and factions, should participate economically, socially and politically.

Participants stressed that achieving a lasting peace requires time and patience. The impact of war is profound and resentments run deep. It usually takes years for the economy to take off and generations for the wounds to heal. Achieving the peace dividend is even more challenging for poor, multi-ethnic states. Involving civil society in the process is one way of buying *social patience and consensus*, sharing the burden of waiting and ensuring that everyone receives a bit of the pie as it becomes available. In Guatemala, for example, a national consensus has emerged that taxes need to be raised to pay for the reconstruction effort.

Post-conflict economic management

Peace also requires a wide range of confidence-building measures (e.g., job creation, training for ex-combatants, road rehabilitation) in the area of economic management. Otherwise, as one participant noted, the society will begin to wonder: what is peace for, if not improved living standards?

Catalyzing the private sector is an important part of this confidence-building. This requires the reduction of three key constraints: lack of business confidence, lack of capital, and lack of infrastructure. Reducing uncertainty and boosting business confidence is a precondition for transforming the private sector into an engine of growth for the economy, permitting the flow of capital necessary for reconstruction. The removal of this constraint will catalyze the removal of the other two. Decreasing uncertainty requires: (a) reestablishing political authority and direction; (b) increasing security, i.e., demobilization, police and military reform; (c) providing a stable macroeconomic framework; and (d) establishing a transparent legal and regulatory environment. Yet, support for demobilization and police reform are often underfunded or not addressed up-front; and the process of

characteristics, needs and aspirations. Reinsertion and reintegration opportunities should then be provided in the form of transitional safety nets and programs promoting sustainable livelihoods.

Assistance to other war-affected populations

The other main categories of war-affected populations include refugees, IDPs and those who stayed. The third group often suffers equal hardship but is frequently overlooked in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. These groups, like the ex-combatants, have special needs that must be addressed with well-designed programs. For example, a participant noted that the return of displaced persons should ensure their safety and dignity, and they should be provided legal documentation.

Reintegration programs for all war-affected groups should concentrate on addressing basic needs, i.e., food, health care, shelter, and building morale. Also, where possible, people should be empowered to meet their own needs, especially in the area of employment. However, providing basic primary education for all, training and large-scale employment will stretch an administratively weak transitional government. Experience in Latin America has shown that land reform and possibly access to credit can also be important for long-term reintegration, especially for the transitional poor.

An important subgroup within all of these groups is women. As single heads of households, they have unique socioeconomic needs; and as victims of sexual violence, they require particular attention during the reconciliation processes, especially since most of them will not disclose such information due to shame and fear of rejection.

From emergency to development assistance

As a society makes the transition from war to peace, the role of the international community changes from saving lives to sustaining livelihoods, from relief- to development-oriented activities. Sustaining livelihoods after a period of prolonged violence requires (a) rebuilding social, economic and political infrastructure, and (b) providing credible economic alternatives to avoid further conflict. In this context, the international community needs to consider the following set of issues to ensure successful reconstruction and sustainable socioeconomic development.

PLANNING. Preparation is crucial to the success of any reconstruction program. Often this process can begin before an official cease-fire is in place.

CONTINUITY. Building on the experience gained during the emergency phase, e.g., the secondment of relief staff, is important for informing reconstruction planning and implementation.

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Toward an Integrated Strategic Framework

A theme that emerged repeatedly during the workshop was that the transition from war to peace is a highly complex process, laden with dilemmas, paradoxes and tensions. Moreover, each situation is unique and requires a singular approach. However, we have learned some lessons which can improve the design and implementation of future transition programs.

once but avoiding duplication, and (c) be committed to long-term objectives, not quick-fixes.

RECONCILIATION VS. JUSTICE. A tension exists between getting on with reconstruction and building new lives and bringing those who have committed atrocities to justice. Each society needs to decide how it will address the reconciliation process.

EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY is an important way to inform the design, implementation, and monitoring of transition programs and to buy social patience during this volatile period.

RECOGNIZING THAT CONFLICT IS PART OF SOCIAL INTERACTION and that the challenge is finding nonviolent forms of conflict management and resolution.

In terms of responding to these tensions, *consensus* is emerging in two areas. First, though every society is different and requires its own mix of interventions, there is a need for a broad gamut of confidence-building measures early in the transition process. These include restoration of economic processes (demining), demobilization, reintegration (training, job creation), good governance, human rights, security (neutral police, sound judicial system), democratic institutions, and empowerment of civil society and women. Second, new approaches and techniques are needed. Perhaps most important is the need to mobilize local human and financial resources for peace, and to identify and address demands at the local level.

What are the implications of these lessons and the emerging consensus? At the international level (UN Security Council and Secretary-General), there is a need for preventative actions and early warning systems, and more collaboration between the UN system, governments, and NGOs. Intervention should be limited to situations where they are deemed necessary and beneficial. At the country level, interventions should (a) reflect local realities and aspirations, (b) be homegrown and bottom-up, (c) be inclusive of political, social and economic institutions, (d) have clear objectives and priorities, (e) be flexible, (f) mobilize not displace local human and financial capital, and (g) be monitorable with distinct indicators.

In more general terms, the participants advocated an *integrated strategic framework* characterized by:

- a coherent and comprehensive approach by all actors;
- partnerships and coordination between the various members of the international community and the national government;
- a broad consensus on a strategy and related set of interventions;
- careful balancing of macroeconomic and political objectives;
- the necessary financial resources.

Perhaps most important, however, is a sense of humility. The international community should not underestimate its level of ignorance as to why conflicts occur and how they can be resolved. Also, the ultimate responsibility lies with the peoples and governments themselves. The international community can only play a supporting role, fostering local institutions, capacity and self-reliance. We have come a long way in our understanding of war-to-peace issues, activities and processes. We are beginning to know *what* needs to be done in general—but the question often remains *how*. The answers are complex and ill-understood at the country level. As stated by a participant at the conclusion of the workshop, what is needed is less intelligence and more wisdom.

Annex 1
Workshop Agenda

Wednesday, February 19
The Carter Center, Atlanta

5:30pm	Opening remarks: Greetings by President Carter and World Bank Vice President Ismail M. Serageldin; discussion of workshop objectives
6:15pm	Plenary Discussion: Panel on Peace Negotiations and Demilitarization Moderator: Nat Colletta, World Bank Panelists: Jean Arnault, United Nations Jimmy Carter, The Carter Center
7:30pm	Reception for workshop participants

Thursday, February 20
The Carter Center, Atlanta

8:30am	Continental Breakfast
9:00am	Small Group Discussion
10:30am	Coffee Break
10:45am	Plenary Discussion: Reports from small groups
11:30am	Plenary Discussion: Panel on Post-Conflict Governance and Economic Management Moderator: Gordon Streeb, The Carter Center Panelists: Robert Pastor, The Carter Center Nils Borje Tallroth, World Bank Ian Bannon, World Bank Thomas O. Melia, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
12:45pm	Lunch
2:00pm	Small Group Discussion
3:30pm	Coffee Break

3:45pm Plenary Discussion: Reports from small groups

4:30pm Plenary Discussion: Panel on Social and Economic Reintegration of Vulnerable Groups in Transition
Moderator: Anne Willem Bijleveld, UNHCR
Panelists: Carlos Boggio, UNHCR Guatemala
Ian Martin, University of Essex
Edelberto Torres Rivas, UN Research Institute for Social Development
Victor Tanner, Creative Associates

5:45pm End of day

Friday, February 21
Ritz Carlton Hotel-Downtown, Atlanta
8:00am Continental Breakfast

8:30am Small Group Discussion

10:00am Coffee Break

10:15am Plenary Discussion: Reports from small groups

11:00am Plenary Discussion: Panel on Conflict Transformation, Restoration of Social Capital, and Strengthening of Civil Society
Moderator: Harry Barnes, The Carter Center
Panelists: Mamadou Dia, World Bank
Roger Plant, MINUGUA
Christopher Mitchell, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
William Partridge, World Bank

12:15pm Lunch

1:30pm Small Group Discussion

3:00pm Coffee Break

3:15pm	Plenary Discussion: Reports from small groups
4:00pm	Plenary Discussion: Integrated Strategic Planning Moderators: Nat Colletta and Gordon Streeb Panelist: Margaret J. Anstee
5:30pm	Closing Remarks

Group A	Group B	Group C
Arne Aasheim	Preeti Arora	Napolean Abdulai
Rodrigo Asturias	Amadou Ould Abdallah	Jean Arnault
Andy Agle	Dame Margaret J. Anstee	Eileen Babbit
Mikael Barfod	Mikihiro Arakawa	Harry Barnes
Tahseen M. Basheer	Alejandro Bendana	Peter Bell
Anne Willem Bijleveld	Carlos Boggio	Hans-Petter Boe
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Preface

Ending violent conflict in countries suffering from chronic instability is a prerequisite for sustainable social and economic development. The transition from war to peace, however, is a complex process marked by the need to establish basic security (including disarmament and demobilization), protect the most vulnerable war victims, reintegrate displaced populations, rehabilitate basic infrastructure and productive assets, stabilize the economy, promote transparent and accountable government, restore social capital, and strengthen civil society. In recent years, as the number of countries undergoing violent conflict has increased, a growing number of governments and agencies have become involved in the war to peace transition process. Hence, lessons and experiences need to be shared on a more systematic basis and support measures synchronized in this relatively new discipline. It is also important to increase collaboration not only among the development community but also between the development community and the peoples and governments of the war-torn societies.

The Atlanta workshop sought to facilitate this process by promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience among politicians, policymakers, and practitioners to (a) build capacity, (b) provide opportunities for collaboration, and (c) improve coordination among

OBJECTIVE: Using Liberia and Guatemala as case studies, the workshop sought to enable discussion on resolving conflicts peacefully, facilitating the transition process, and preventing future outbreaks of violence

ISSUES: Workshop discussions were organized around four issue areas or modules: (a) peace negotiations and demilitarization, (b) post-conflict governance and economic management, (c) social and economic reintegration of vulnerable groups, and (d) conflict transformation, restoration of social capital, and strengthening civil society.

ORGANIZATION: A plenary session and working groups were organized around each module. During the plenary sessions, resource persons with pertinent experience made keynote presentations. Participants and group facilitators then divided into three working groups to discuss the issues raised by the presenters. A workshop coordinator was responsible for the overall organization