NGOs in Conflict - an Evaluation of International Alert

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R 1997: 6

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CMI Report Series

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E-mail: cmi@amadeus.cmi.no

Price: NOK 145

ISSN 0805-505X

Indexing terms

NGO
Conflict resolution

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Preface

This study has been commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the five main donors supporting the work of International Alert (IA): Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Novib.

Data collection for the study commenced in May 1997 and has been carried out by Gunnar M. Sørbø (team leader, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen), Joanna Macrae (Overseas Development Institute, London) and Lennart Wohlgemuth (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala). The evaluators have been assisted by Mark Duffield (University of Birmingham), Siri Lange (Chr. Michelsen Institute), Philippa Atkinson (London) and Bente Bingen (Colombo) who have all worked on assigned topics (see annexes). While none of these individuals is responsible for any of the views expressed in the main report, we have benefitted much from their contributions.

During the assignment, we also received much assistance from the staff of International Alert, both at London headquarters and in the field (related to programmes in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka). In the process, we tried to share our findings as much as possible with IA staff and received important feedback which, in various ways, affected the final product. The comments made by IA on the draft final report (submitted in August 1997), were shared with donors. We are grateful to IA for the generous assistance provided to the evaluators. IA's response to (a) the recommendations of this report as well as (b) the Sierra Leone Case Study has been annexed to this report (Annex 6).

We would like to thank the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the donor consortium for a difficult and inspiring assignment and the support extended throughout the study period. Two meetings have been held with the donors, one in Copenhagen during the early stages of the review process, and one in Bergen discussing the draft final report. The study has depended on the contributions of numerous persons who gave of their valuable time, taken from already overburdened schedules, to provide information, analysis, interpretations and explanations, and patiently subjected themselves to being questioned. Without their assistance this report could not have been completed. Finally, our thanks go to the Chr. Michelsen Institute for providing institutional support, particularly to Inger A. Nygaard and Marianne Serck-Hanssen for their secretarial efforts.

Bergen, London and Uppsala
October 1997
GMS, JM, LW

Executive Summary

This report is an evaluation of International Alert (IA), a London-based international NGO which was founded in 1985 as a "standing international forum on ethnic conflict, genocide and human rights". Over the years, IA has grown into an increasingly operational organisation which works to prevent and resolve conflict through fieldwork and advocacy activities in different parts of the world. From having only a few staff members and a small budget in 1992, the organisation expanded rapidly during 1994-96 and had, in 1996, 50 staff and a budget of £ 3 million. In 1997, however, there have been major cuts leading to lay-offs and redeployment of staff. The evaluation is carried out on behalf of the major donors which are the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Norway along with Novib. The main purpose is to analyse and assess the work of IA and to make recommendations on future directions regarding its role and performance.

The expansion of IA and its increasing involvement with conflict prevention and resolution must be seen as part of a wider process whereby such activities have become an important and rapidly expanding area for aid agencies. Since the end of the Cold War, changes in the international system, including the outbreak and intensification of many internal wars, have increased opportunities for NGOs to engage in conflict. Their involvement is seen by many, particularly in the NGO community, as stemming from deficiencies within the existing official diplomacy system, which is regarded as circumscribed by political interests and national constraints. By virtue of employing the services of NGOs engaging themselves in conflict resolution, donor governments have accepted the case for private diplomacy.

It is difficult to evaluate conflict resolution. First, there is the issue of scale. That is, whether remedial work at the level of specific groups or individuals can impact on wider social and political processes. Second, there will often be a complex configuration of factors, at different levels, which serve, e.g., to create opportunities for negotiations and peace. It may, therefore, be hard to judge the extent to which any single organisation or political body exercised influence (whether primary or not) in such processes.

In this report, we have tried to assess the impact of IA's activities mainly through case study analysis. More specifically, we have considered IA's programmes in Sri Lanka, Burundi and Sierra Leone in relation to (a) the premises and understanding that formed the basis for IA's interventions; (b) IA's own objectives; and (c) the

claims made by IA itself in its own impact assessment report and other documents. This is done in Chapter Three.

Chapter Two is primarily based on material collected and interviews made at IA headquarters in London. A brief presentation of IA's history, objectives and profiles is followed by a review of (a) selected management and organisational issues; (b) finance; (c) training; and (d) advocacy.

During a brief period, from 1992 until 1996, IA grew rapidly, largely due to the innovative efforts, fund-raising ability and reputation of the present Secretary General. It was recognised, however, that management systems and procedures had to be put in place if IA were to maximise the use of its resources. A report commissioned to evaluate the appropriateness of existing structures and procedures pointed out that IA must establish and communicate to all stakeholders a clearer vision of its strategic direction and role in an increasingly competitive sector. Among the key recommendations, therefore, were for IA (a) to establish clear organisational aims and objectives, focusing on work in which it can demonstrate competitive advantage, and (b) to develop a coherent, organisational strategic plan (BDO review).

IA has taken a number of steps to make the necessary improvements. This applies particularly to procedures, routines, increasing staff participation, staff development and changes to the organisational structure. A clearer vision of its strategic direction and role in an increasingly competitive environment is, however, still needed, requiring a considerable effort.

The accounting and budget systems have been considerably improved in the past year and appear to fulfil necessary requirements for a good internal control system. Currently, considerable efforts are made to control expenditures in a situation of reduced funding and scarce resources. Regarding IA's *income and finance*, it is noted that five donors contribute close to 60 per cent of total funds. In the past four years, these five donors (Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Novib) have put collectively more than £ 5 million into IA. Most funds are earmarked for specific programs of activities and only a small portion is unrestricted core funds. It is important that IA continues its efforts to (a) broaden the funding base and (b) secure sufficiently stability in terms of funding.

Training is carried out as a component within most of the programs of IA and as a separate activity by itself. It is recommended (i) that IA should not involve itself in conflict resolution training on any large scale as a separate activity, and (ii) that it be done in close cooperation with local and other partners. While training can be important in a peace building process, it should be part of a medium - or long term strategy rather than an activity of its own, i.e., be integrated into other, complementary programmes of IA. It should also be exclusively planned for each particular conflict in question and tailor-made to address the particular situation

in a given country. This is in line with current thinking at IA's Resource Development and Training Department.

One of IA's main achievements has been in the area of *advocacy* and a separate department was set up in 1995, aimed at promoting policy changes amongst key international organisations towards sustainable peace and conflict prevention. In the view of the evaluators, there is currently less need for generic advocacy to promote policy changes regarding preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention among international organisations and Western governments. IA should concentrate on working with targets in the development and operationalisation of prevention policies rather than raising the issues in general. In particular, there would seem to be a need for advocacy and lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice which are at the core of most internal conflicts in the world. Advocacy projects should be carefully planned and IA should seek sustained and in-depth cooperation with other institutions whenever this is possible.

Sri Lanka. IA has been engaged in Sri Lanka since 1985 and its priorities and programme have evolved with changing circumstances. From trying mainly to build strategic constituencies for peace at the time when a peace agenda was not on the cards, IA shifted its focus towards trying to build communication channels between the government and LTTE during 1994-95. When negotiations broke down, the process was reviewed and priority given to (a) creating space for dialogue and negotiations, and (b) helping to create, in the South, a bipartisan approach to negotiations, mainly through working with a cross party group of parliamentarians.

IA has struggled to implement and follow up on some of the activities directed towards the media, the military and the business community. The organisation, however, has successfully organised three meetings for parliamentarians in Crete, Northern Ireland and the Philippines. While particularly the last seminar generated considerable criticism in Colombo, it is recommended that IA proceeds with its contacts with the group on a low-profile basis as a durable peace can only be achieved if the polity and people of the South are behind any peace initiatives being carried forward.

The evaluators question the wisdom of the high profile held by IA in Sri Lanka at the present time, although it is recognised that this is not easily controlled given the peculiar character of Sri Lankan politics as well as the role of the country's media. The Sri Lankan attitude to NGOs as well as international agencies remains largely ambivalent, particularly when it comes to what is regarded as interference and meddling in internal conflict. For IA, this problem is compounded by the fact that its Secretary General is a Sri Lankan who has played a part in the past in the island's political life. Such perceptions are part of the political realities which IA must relate to and confront.

Burundi. IA started its activities in Burundi in 1995, in close liaison with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative (SRSG). The aim of the programme is to help prevent escalation of the conflict, and to contribute effectively to a process of achieving a just and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi. IA's activities have been directed at different levels and include working with an elite group (CAP) that emerged from one of three study tours to South Africa, and activities to strengthen the peace-building capacity of the Burundian Women's Movement.

IA has succeeded in making itself well established as a small, neutral NGO. By co-operating with other partners and in particular with the SRSG, and by an approach of listening and learning, IA is today accepted and appreciated by all main actors on the Burundi scene. The analyses made by the IA Burundi secretariat on political developments in the country are well worked through and generally accepted. The choice of activities seems to be in line with those analyses and results notably fulfil the immediate project objectives. However, the ultimate objective of the different actors on the scene, namely a breakthrough in the efforts to reach a sustainable peace, is still far from being met.

Sierra Leone. While originally planned as being based on a multi-track approach, IA's interventions in Sierra Leone came almost exclusively to focus on the negotiations leading to a peace agreement in November 1996. While IA played an important role in the different events and processes leading up to the agreement, it has been subject to a number of serious allegations regarding its involvement.

IA's engagement in the hostage release process was defining for the organisation and its relations with other international actors. The circumstances surrounding this process left IA vulnerable to accusations of being unprincipled. Such perceptions continued to affect IA's work related to the Sierra Leonean conflict and led to mistrust and suspicion that the organisation was not neutral nor transparent, but working as advisors to the RUF.

Our criticism of IA in Sierra Leone is not that it engaged itself. IA was one of the few bodies arguing that the RUF had a significant political agenda and clearly influenced the RUF to move towards negotiations and peace. Rather, our criticism is that IA operated with sufficient lack of clarity and transparency which, in the end, both exposed the organisation to criticism and constrained its operational capacity. While IA admits to having made mistakes in the Sierra Leone conflict, it does not yet seem to have been able to articulate clearly the lessons learned by clarifying sufficiently key policy issues regarding, e.g., neutrality, consent and dealing with non-state military forces.

IA's priorities and forms of engagement have evolved with changing circumstances. Among NGOs, IA was among the first to become engaged in conflict resolution and has been a leading advocate for claiming that NGOs have

a number of comparative advantages which can prove invaluable in conflict situations. In the view of the evaluators, IA's main achievements have been in the following two areas:

(i) IA has, both through its numerous publications (most of them authored by Kumar Rupesinghe and Ed Garcia) as well as its advocacy work, contributed to making conflict prevention and resolution issues an important sphere of action among governments, IGOs and NGOs. In the NGO community, IA has largely inspired the entry of NGOs into this area of work.

(ii) Through many of its field programmes (e.g. in Sri Lanka and Burundi), IA has successfully contributed to the development of local peace constituencies which are involved at different levels in creating spaces for dialogue, building bridges and improving communication between conflicting parties (e.g. MP group in Colombo, CAP group and women's groups in Burundi). Through such work, IA has actively supported those who seek non-violent solutions against powerful advocates of violence.

On the negative side, the lack of a clear and transparent strategy has made IA seemingly unpredictable in what it is doing and where it is going. This has been particularly highlighted by its involvement in Sierra Leone. In the report (Chapter Four), we elaborate on some of the areas which we believe are important for the organisation to confront and articulate clearly when developing a strategic plan for the future such as the importance of analysis, ethical issues and principles, cooperation and partnerships, and a number of management and organisational issues. We also recommend that IA establish greater clarity regarding the niche it intends to occupy in the broad area of conflict resolution.

NGOs can perform a number of potentially constructive roles in crisis situations, including intercession/good offices work and mediation to prevent violence. There is, however, only very limited space within which an NGO can operate at the highest level of political negotiations, and the opportunity arises often by chance. This normally happens when a particular organisation is called upon and widely accepted, is able to operate in close and transparent partnerships with other organisations (like the UN, other IGOs or governments) and is seen to have general as well as country-specific expertise and competence to offer. Based on such considerations, it is not advisable that IA should define mediation as its particular niche. Rather, we feel that the organisation should give priority to the following areas:

(a) IA should strive to *create spaces for dialogue*, not primarily by facilitating negotiations but by helping to develop local peace constituencies at different levels. In this area, IA should help empower such constituencies through the transfer of skills, knowledge and resources.

(b) IA should be engaged in *advocacy and lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice*, i.e. flag its solidarity and human rights profile as part of its input into long-term processes of conflict management and resolution. In this work, projects and target groups should be carefully selected and IA should seek cooperation with other institutions whenever this is possible.

(c) We would encourage *efforts towards geographic concentration*. Given that the origins and contours of intra-state conflict differ substantially from country to country, due to historical, cultural, political and regional factors, interventions in any country requires considerable competence. In this sense, IA is not, at the moment, a "knowledge-based" organisation to the extent one would wish to see it. It makes sense, in our view, to concentrate efforts on a limited number of countries, within only a few sub-regions, and to build competence as well as strong, long-term partnerships in the respective areas of work.

The evaluators have noted that IA has drawn up an agenda that will guide future planning and follow up to this evaluation, very much in line with the above recommendations.

At the end of the report, a limited number of issues is briefly raised for donors in particular, regarding policy coherence, the need for developing criteria for appraising projects in the field of conflict resolution, and the need for system-wide evaluations of the international conflict management systems to ensure accountability and assess further the comparative advantage of different actors, including NGOs working in this sphere.

Chapter One: Introduction: Context and Approach

Background

This report is an evaluation of International Alert (IA), a London-based international NGO which was founded in 1985 as a "standing international forum on ethnic conflict, genocide and human rights". Over the years, IA has grown into an increasingly operational organisation which works to prevent and resolve conflict through fieldwork and advocacy activities in different parts of the world. From having only 2 staff members and a small budget in 1992, the organisation expanded rapidly during 1994-96 and had, in 1996, 50 staff and a budget of £ 3 million. The evaluation is carried out on behalf of the major donors which are the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Norway along with Novib. The main purpose is to analyse and assess the work of IA and to make recommendations on future directions regarding its role and performance.

Over the last year or so, IA has been subject to serious allegations in connection with its involvement in Sierra Leone which the organisation itself has celebrated as its main achievement. Some of its activities in Sri Lanka have also become increasingly controversial, particularly in the eyes of Sinhalese hardliners. Because of such developments, and because this may be one of the first serious attempts to evaluate a conflict prevention NGO, we have felt the need both (a) to have a good grasp of the larger aid and development context within which IA's activities take place, and (b) to make our own approach to the assessment of IA as explicit as possible from the outset. As part of our assignment, therefore, we commissioned a discussion paper from Mark Duffield of the University of Birmingham entitled "Evaluating Conflict Resolution - Context, Models and Methodology" (Annex 1). We were also assisted by Siri Lange (CMI) who collected information and presented an overview and selected profiles of some key NGOs working with conflict resolution (Annex 2).

The Larger Context

The expansion of IA and its increasing involvement with conflict prevention and resolution activities must be seen as part of a wider process. Conflict prevention and resolution have in the past few years become an important and rapidly expanding area for aid agencies. This is related to the fact that the number of internal wars, or at least what we might call smaller wars, have been increasing, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Today, almost all armed conflicts in

the world are some variation of internal or civil confrontation. In contrast, inter-state war has been in long-term decline. While the conduct and cessation of inter-state wars have usually been governed by conventions and political treaties, internal wars are problematic in relation to existing international rules and conventions.

Such differences have created space for NGOs. They have become more and more involved in conflict prevention and resolution activities. This involvement is by many, particularly in the NGO communities, seen as stemming from deficiencies within the existing system. Official diplomacy is regarded as circumscribed by political interests and national constraints. In contrast, reflecting earlier ideas of NGO comparative advantage in the development field, non-governmental bodies are closer to the grass roots, are better informed, can more easily build trust, are flexible, and so on. In other words, NGOs are well placed to play an "unofficial diplomacy" role.

By virtue of employing the services of NGOs engaging themselves in conflict resolution, donor governments have tacitly accepted the case for private diplomacy. Aid has, as already in so many other fields, also here become "privatised", which has led to NGOs attempting to create a growing role for themselves, not only in providing aid in complex emergencies but also in relation to trying to mitigate and resolve conflicts. A Prevention and Management of Conflicts directory published in the Netherlands in 1996 lists 288 organisations world wide (private as well as public), without claiming to be exhaustive. Lange's more limited overview and selected profiles made for this review of some key NGOs working in this area, reveal that most of the organisations in this area depend heavily on donor funds. Some of them are quite big in terms of staff and budget, and, while there is variation in terms of geographical focus, philosophy, methods and funding sources, there would seem to be considerable overlapping, which, i.a., indicates the emergence of an increasingly competitive aid market.

Below follows an attempt to capture important aspects of the current debate taking place on this important issue. This section draws heavily on Duffield's background paper to set the context within which IA is working (see Annex 1).

According to Duffield, conflict resolution is the promise of social engineering on a grand scale. It is also a good example of the manner in which the theory and practice of development has radically changed, from a focus on inequality, economic growth and resource redistribution as main issues, to concerns with how people cope with their situations and the means by which they can be supported in mitigating the risks and stresses involved. The onus is on changing the way people do things and what they think. Rather than being different, conflict resolution represents an extreme form of this paradigm, given its ambitious aim of attempting to modify behaviour as a means of avoiding political violence.

There are several factors which underpin the international framework within which conflict resolution operates. There has been a trend to regard underdevelopment and, more recently, the transition to liberal democracy, less as a malfunction of the international system and increasingly an internal problem of domestic institutions and social relations in the countries concerned. Many would argue that the demise of alternative international political projects (Third Worldism, International Socialism) has been a necessary prerequisite for the emerging view of political instability and "failed states" as a consequence of predominantly domestic factors such as poverty, environmental degradation and lack of democracy. In this perspective, support for human rights, civil society and democratisation is now identified as an essential complement to structural adjustment programmes in the economic sphere.

Development problems were increasingly redefined in terms of internal failings during the 1980s. The practical application of this redefinition, however, has largely depended on the end of the Cold War. Since 1989, a crucial aspect of this application has been a new found ability of the UN, IGOs and NGOs to work on all sides in situations of unresolved conflict and political crisis. Prior to this, concerns about sovereignty and non-interference had precluded such intervention as a widespread option. Aid mainly flowed through the medium of recognised governments and cemented Cold War alliances.

As a result of these changing circumstances, it is commonly argued that international intervention, sometimes with military support, has quietly become a *de facto* norm in response to large-scale refugee flows, famine or genocide/mass killings. In the process, the principle of state sovereignty has also been increasingly challenged, as in the case of Northern Iraq where safe havens for Kurds were established.

Development and security concerns within Western aid policy have increasingly coalesced around the issue of civil society. The development aid community is increasingly converging around the idea that the primary aim of development is the creation of a strong civil society. In so far as such a structure embodies plural and democratic values, civil society is also a source of stability and security. Civil society is also regarded as capable of playing an important conflict resolution role, e.g., by allowing confidence building measures to be pursued.

By largely equating civil society with NGOs, one approach to conflict resolution is suggested. On a more general level, however, the shift of the aid regime from an inter-state resource transfer model to one which focuses on the quality of internal relations, has been accompanied by, and largely depended on the privatisation of aid. Some even argue that without a major expansion of NGO activity, it is difficult to see how the prominence given to civil society could have been achieved. For donor governments, sub-contracting aid functions to NGOs

establishes an arms length relationship with agencies attempting to modify internal behaviour and attitudes.

The enlargement of the aid market has been synonymous with the expansion of NGO projects, and the post-Cold War ability to work in situations of ongoing conflict has been a major contributing factor to this growth and the increasing complexity of contractual relations involving also NGOs with UN, EU and other IGOs. Not only have IGOs become major conduits of NGO funding, they have also become more operational in their own right.

The mid 1980s represented a major change in the nature of aid flow. Until this period, government to government development assistance was the predominant pattern. Increasingly, however, donor governments have channelled development and humanitarian assistance through NGOs. Not only has the number and scale of NGO operations grown, a type of competitive aid market has emerged where none existed before.

This aid market is a two way process. To varying degrees NGOs are dependent upon government and IGO funding. At the same time, however, growing access and control of information has strengthened their advocacy role in relation to aid policy. Indeed, NGOs have been at the forefront in pushing for human development and the reorientation of aid towards civil society issues. Donor governments have generally accepted the NGO critique of state led development and shifted much of their funding away from recipient governments and toward NGOs.

While the relation of NGOs to governments is essentially a critical one based on attempts to define, maintain and expand their role, the case for private diplomacy has also been accepted by donor governments. However, it would appear that institutional deepening is developing more between NGOs as opposed to political linkages between NGOs and donor governments. Generally, though, we are seeing a multi-level process, involving the expansion of NGOs, growing connections between them, the development of new forms of subcontracting and partnership linking NGOs,IGOs, donor governments, commercial companies, and so on.

Despite different activities and operational models, conflict resolution, in Duffield's view, rests on a relatively narrow conceptual base. He questions several of the core assumptions on which the basic model is based. While the social background to internal war is regarded as stemming from scarcity issues such as impoverishment and lack of democracy, the actual practice of conflict resolution is often insufficiently concerned with issues of large-scale redistribution. Geared toward engineering behavioural and attitudinal change, it is shaped more by a socio-psychological model of instability. Conflict is seen as originating at the level of disagreements or communication breakdown between individuals and groups. From this perspective, conflict is essentially irrational. Internal war is also

typically seen as a cyclical phenomenon, and this conception informs the view that conflict resolution should develop techniques and approaches that are appropriate for each stage (escalation, stalemate and decline). Intervention becomes a means of restoring order and balance disrupted by conflict.

Following the analogy with disease, early intervention prior to open conflict developing is seen as having more chance of success (and being less expensive) compared to later involvement. Support for conflict early warning systems is, therefore, an important part of conflict resolution, the general approach being similar to that which developed in the mid 1980s in relation to drought and famine.

The basis of much of the early warning activities has also been questioned, particularly in view of the poor history of Western response to known humanitarian threats. Early warning rests on the assumption that donor governments will react when told. The problem is seen as being a lack of information. Information, however, did little to prevent several years of systematic and gross human rights abuse in Bosnia, nor did it lead to quick and decisive action in Rwanda. Some argue that in terms of donor response, it may be better to regard internal conflict as representing a series of "wars of choice" for the West. Rather than collecting more information, perhaps a realistic approach to "early warning" would be to analyse the framework of choice and political calculation that currently defines and informs Western interest.

A very important discussion concerns the question whether the conflict resolution model also supports more direct psychological interventions, either by arranging appropriate conferences and workshops that bring people from different ethnic groups or countries together, or through training in conflict resolution skills. Such training is often based on clarifying mistaken perceptions and providing psychological and interpersonal tools for defusing potentially tense situations. According to Duffield, conflict resolution training tends to locate the origin of political violence at the level of flawed perceptions and communications breakdowns. Its logic is that conflict and its associated abuses are somehow all a mistake, which means that perpetrators and victims of violence are similarly affected by distorted views, and that, in a sense, we are all as bad as each other, everyone becomes a victim.

Organisations attempting to regulate conflict are, by definition, also taking it on themselves to adjudicate over internal processes of social and political transformation. If one takes at face value the aims of conflict resolution, it represents social engineering on a massive scale. The dilemma might be and sometimes is that such engineering is based on questionable suppositions; but also that conflict resolution may lack an ethical or political framework sufficiently capable of distinguishing between just or unjust claims. Within this vacuum, all that can be done is to declare an opposition to harsh or coercive violence.

There is a growing number of critics of conflict resolution, indeed, the new aid paradigm generally, who interpret increased Western involvement in the crisis regions as a new form of imperialism. Others suggest that the world appears to be dividing into strategic and non-strategic areas with the disengagement of effective Western interests in the latter. The privatisation of aid and the growth of NGOs, which have achieved their greatest autonomy in non-strategic areas, is a sign of this disengagement.

Rather than being a transitory problem in the creation of liberal-democratic structures, internal war can be seen as the emergence of essentially new types of social formation adapted for survival on the margins of the global economy. Internal conflict is part of a process of transformation and is internal to social structures and relations. Moreover, open violence is only one expression of the tensions and contradictions within a system at a given point in time. The absence of open conflict or peace is not, of necessity, an indication that those underlying antagonisms have been resolved. Peace can be a condition in which the same contradictions continue to operate and shape social and political discourse but in a different way. While open fighting might have a beginning and an end, the underlying conditions and relations that support it are structural and long-term.

While internal war is associated with impoverished regions and scarcity, scarcity itself does not cause or determine conflict. The more important factor is the manner in which those with influence approach and deal with its modalities. Whether the development path chosen is going to lead to political instability and internal war, depends on what strategies are chosen. Many poor countries, for example, are not unstable. Where insecurity does exist, however, rectification of the socio-psychological model of conflict is required.

As a pro-active response to scarcity, internal war is not the result of ignorance or some localised misunderstanding. It signals conscious political design and calculation. Regarding internal war as a rational and conscious process also allows questions of guilt and justice to be introduced. Not everyone is to blame. Internal wars have leaders and followers, extremists and moderates and, especially, winners and losers. As conscious political projects based on choice, their perpetrators are open to judgement. Regardless of its contents or methods, internal conflict can be an essentially rational process. If this is true, if conflict is symptomatic of practice and rational attempt to control and manage scarcity, it cannot be assumed that external aid is a panacea for instability.

The Challenge for Evaluation

Duffield's basic model is "good to think", in the sense that it draws out important implications of the premises on which it is based. However, when confronted with the complex world of the many NGOs working in the area of conflict resolution,

it does not of course represent an empirical statement on their activities and possible failings. Thus, e.g. many NGOs would strongly object to being accused of a lack of concern with issues of justice. It is, however, not difficult to agree with Duffield when he claims that it is difficult to evaluate conflict resolution. While interventions take the form of different technical activities, the aim is to influence wider social and political processes. It is this gap and the qualitative difference between the means and ends where the difficulty lies. There is no direct or unambiguous link between the technical competence of an agency in meeting immediate organisational aims and the significance of its activities for achieving wider social goals. This is because the link between institutional action and social environment is not of a technical nature. Organisational goals are mediated by economic, political and ideological relations with its surroundings.

There is also the issue of scale. That is, whether remedial work at the level of specific groups or individuals can impact on wider social and political processes. Training groups of people is one thing. Whether such activity can mollify societal instability or entrenched group hostility, however, is another. For many practitioners engaged in conflict resolution, the relationship between the two may be more an act of faith than proven certainty.

If one accepts the socio-psychological model of conflict being used, or at least has an interest in whether its claims are justified, impact evaluation becomes an exercise in monitoring behavioural change. This is extremely difficult. Instead, a methodology for assessing the impact of conflict resolution is more concerned with defining the interface between the organisation and its environment and isolating a number of key areas for critical social and political enquiry.

Evaluating International Alert

While the various issues raised above obviously have a bearing on this evaluation, it is important to distinguish between theory and practice. In general, the claims made by conflict resolution activists and their attempts to generate a comprehensive framework significantly runs ahead of what exists on the ground. We would also like to emphasise that IA's approach, as judged by its practice or the writings of its Secretary General (Kumar Rupesinghe) or other staff cannot simply be reduced to a version of the socio-psychological model. Duffield's basic model is "good to think", in the sense that it draws out important implications of the premises on which it is based. However, when confronted with the complex world of the many NGOs working in the area of conflict resolution, it does not of course represent an empirical statement on their activities and possible failings. Thus, e.g., many NGO would strongly object to being accused of a lack of concern with issues of justice.

We do, however, believe that whether IA's activities actually do help prevent, mitigate or resolve conflicts can only be properly assessed through case study analysis. Even then, impact on larger scale processes can normally just be imputed rather than confirmed. In most cases, there will be a complex configuration of factors, nationally, in the sub-region and internationally, which serve to create opportunities for negotiations or peace, e.g. by placing pressure on warring parties to seek a dialogue. It may therefore be hard to judge the extent to which any single organisation or national, political body exercised influence (whether primary or not) in such processes.

The impact of a given conflict resolution programme can only be assessed through critical social and political analysis. More specifically, an analysis of the conflict and its social character is required, and these are some of the key questions we need to ask:

- Does the analysis support the assumptions about the nature of conflict used by IA (i.e. IA's own analysis)?

- What is the relationship between IA's own assessment and the interventions adopted or chosen?

- Are the social and political relations established in the process of gaining access and implementation conducive to peace or part of the problem?

- How do other actors (individuals, groups, organisations) perceive IA's interventions and activities?

- Are relevant local opinions or activities being ignored or possibly even undermined by the intervention?

In our exercise, we have been helped by the impact assessment that IA itself carried out as part of the review process (IA, May 1997). The document briefly reviews all the regional programmes, training as well as thematic programmes and various support functions. The *objectives* of different activities are clearly stated, *claims* are being made regarding main achievements, *mistakes* and *lessons* as perceived by IA are listed, and *needs* from the evaluation identified. We have done our best to assess a selected number of activities in relation to their stated objectives as well as the claims made by IA itself.

On a more general level, we have also tried to assess the organisation in relation to its *overall objectives*. These are formulated in the Memorandum of Association, at the time when the organisation was registered with the Charity Commission (1985). The evaluators do, however, recognise that objectives and mandates may develop over time. IA is currently in the process of trying to translate statements of strategic intent into a strategic plan. This is taken account of in our report.

In addition to case studies of IA's work in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, (Chapter Three) the evaluation has also covered activities primarily carried out at HQ level in London. These include thematic areas such as advocacy and training, but also some selected issues related to organisation and management, its key focus being whether the organisation is technically and managerially capable of meeting its objectives (Chapter Two).

Ethical Considerations

The increasing involvement of NGOs in the very heat of war, conflict and violence has given rise to a growing sense of moral unease among agency policy makers and field workers alike. Quite clearly, aid and other interventions can do harm as well as good. Therefore, the subject of humanitarian ethics is moving rapidly up the agenda of NGOs and academics alike.

As argued by Slim (1997),[1] the debate on moral responsibility is essentially a debate between actions and consequences, and about who should take responsibility for what. Some people believe that certain actions are always good in themselves. Others believe that actions are only ever good when their wider consequences are also good.

In the highly uncertain area of conflict prevention and resolution, the evaluators recognise that there are no easy choices, and that a maximalist approach which tries to take account of all the consequences will be plagued with uncertainty, speculation and endless calculation about possible outcomes, as well as temptation to feel personally responsible for every terrible thing that happens in one's theatre of operations.

The field of ethics, however, has always been clear about particular factors which determine whether or not one is acting responsibly in the present. There are a number of principles of good practice which IA and others would do well to consider more formally in any ethical analysis of their programming. Following Slim, they can be grouped around three main aspects of any agency's action: what drives an agency; what informs an agency; and what empowers an agency. Thus an organisation's intentions must be good. It must be able to show that it was acting out of the best intentions in any situation, even if these intentions were not realised in full. Similarly, it must be able to show that its motives were good, and that it made every effort to collect all possible information relevant to any particular decision. Considerations of an agency's capacity must also be factored into the organisations's ethical thinking. This has two important sides to it. On the

[1] Hugo Slim (1997): "Doing the Right Thing - Relief Agencies, Moral Dilemmas and Moral Responsibility in Political Emergencies and War - Studies in Emergencies and Disaster Relief", Report no. 6, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala.

one hand, an agency can only really be held responsible for not doing something if it could have done it but chose not to do it. On the other hand, starting activities which cannot be sustained for reasons of limited capacity also may have important ethical implications which must be considered before decisions are made.

The evaluators recognise that IA may face difficult trade-offs between ends and means, particularly regarding the possible tensions arising between its professed human rights and conflict resolution mandates. The challenge for an organisation like IA is to determine the proper limits of their moral responsibility for what Slim calls "the dark side" of humanitarian and other interventions (i.e. that they may well have negative repercussions beyond their original intention) and then to make all efforts to mitigate against it in their programmes.

For any organisation involved in conflict resolution activities, efforts to develop ethical guidelines are important. At the moment, IA is an instructive case in point. It is being subject to very serious allegations concerning its involvement in Sierra Leone. Whether well-founded or not, *perceptions* of IA's work are *realities* which IA must relate to and part of the different and changing political contexts in which its work will always take place. While it may be possible to falsify or corroborate most of the claims that are being made by IA or its detractors, there will always be some room for different interpretations of events that take place. If it is impossible to prove the falsity of all allegations directed against the organisation, it is extremely important that IA be able to present itself, through its different activities, as an organisation with a "moral core". It must have in place a set of core values and guidelines on and by which it operates and through which it can gain the trust and respect which is essential for working in the sensitive conflict resolution area. We will come back to this further in Chapter Four. Suffice is here to say that IA or any other organisation working with conflict resolution can only protect itself from, and minimise the effects of potentially damaging allegations by holding a high ethical profile.

Confidentiality, Sources and Rules of Evidence

Conflict resolution activities often require confidentiality. They also often become controversial and may be continuously assessed and judged by others who may, or may not, themselves be stakeholders in the process. This implies, i.a., that IA as well as others (including the evaluators) may have information which can not easily be revealed. IA provided to the evaluators a proposal for a code of conduct for the evaluation. One clause suggests that we should rely only on sources which are willing to be cited publicly.

In principle, the evaluators endorse the principle of transparency. However, confidentiality is a *sine qua non* of formal diplomacy. While this has proved an obstacle to parts of the evaluation itself, particularly for the Sierra Leone study,

we recognise that discretion is often a precondition for the establishment of trust between parties, and that to cite and publicise sources would not necessarily contribute to improved international relations. Without the resources or authority of a public enquiry to call for full disclosure of confidential documentary information held in diplomatic and international security circles, the evaluators have been forced to rely on extensive interview material, much of which is non-attributable, and comes from sources, some of whom arguably may have vested interests in undermining IA's reputation.

The evaluators are aware that they could be accused of being unaccountable in terms of their evidence and assessment, given that many of their sources spoke on condition that their comments would not be attributed. This was mainly a problem for the Sierra Leone study, partly also in Sri Lanka. The evaluators have therefore sought to work to a series of rules:

- We have sought to identify within the time and political constraints, a wide and balanced range of sources.
- We have aimed to listen carefully and accurately report the views of different sources.
- Where there are marked differences in reporting of facts, we have sought to explain these differences, recognising the particular interests and priorities of different parties.
- No substantive conclusions are drawn from the evidence of only one informant - at a minimum two reliable sources must confirm the story.

The evaluators have been mindful throughout that their task is to evaluate IA and not to pass judgement on the performance of other international bodies on governments. There is, however, likely to be considerable value in donors commissioning system-wide analysis of international conflict-management initiatives. In addition to evaluations of specific NGO interventions, this might ensure greater accountability and transparency in the sphere of conflict management, but would also add to our understanding of individual actors and their interaction with others (see also Chapter Four).

Chapter Two: International Alert - Some Key Issues and Areas of Work

Subject Matter

This chapter is primarily based on material collected and interviews made at IA headquarters in London. A brief presentation of IA's history, objectives and profile is followed by a review of (a) selected management and organisational issues, (b) finance, (c) training, and (d) advocacy. The chapter also serves as an introductory discussion to topics further pursued in Chapter Three and Chapter Four.

International Alert - History and Brief Presentation

The Standing International Forum on Ethnic Conflict, Genocide and Human Rights - International Alert was registered as a charitable foundation in the United Kingdom in March 1985. International Alert (IA) was a response to frustrations felt by many working in international development agencies and human rights organisations. Internal conflicts within countries undermine efforts to protect individual and collective human rights and deter sustainable social and economic development. In the mid-1980s, internal conflicts were seen to be dramatically increasing, and the world lacked the procedures and institutions for resolving or preventing them. The conflict in Sri Lanka, in particular, became of interest to IA as an example of internal conflict in urgent need of study and intervention. Thus in 1985, Sri Lanka became the central focus of IA's work and it still retains great importance for the organisation today. One of the founders, Martin Ennals, became IA's first Secretary General.

According to the Companies Act (Charity Commission), the *objectives* of IA are:

- to relieve poverty, suffering and distress;
- to advance the education of the public by the promotion of research into the causes and effects of conflict and research into the maintenance of human rights and development of economic well-being in the context of such conflict, and to disseminate the useful results of such research; and
- to promote all means of conciliation and resolution of such conflict.

IA is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO), governed by a Board of Trustees who are recruited from different countries. Lord Judd (UK) has most recently been elected Board Chairman. Trustees based in the UK meet monthly as

members of the Management Advisory Council (MAC) and thereby ensure a close relationship between trustees and staff, particularly the Secretary General (SG).

Not being a membership organisation, IA relies on grants and donations to sustain its work. Donors include bilateral development agencies, intergovernmental organisations, development and human rights NGOs, religious bodies and trusts. Over the past 4 years, 5 core donors (the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Novib) have collectively put more than £ 5 million into IA (see below). This demonstrates a considerable commitment to and faith in an international NGO which is not even based within their own borders. Without them, IA would not have been able to move into the expansive phase which started in 1993, spearheaded by its present Secretary General (SG) Kumar Rupesinghe.

From being essentially a one-man effort and a small grassroot activist agency concerned with human rights and social justice, IA has, during its 12-year history, grown into an increasingly operational organisation which works to prevent and resolve conflict. From being mainly involved in the prolonged armed conflict in Sri Lanka, IA initiatives have grown to include projects and activities in many different countries, complemented by thematic areas of work such as conflict resolution training, preventive diplomacy, networking and advocacy. In addition, IA has recruited three Special Envoys who undertake missions to regions of conflict and advise on policy issues affecting programme work.

In 1996, IA was active within parts of Africa, the states and republics of the former Soviet Union, Latin America and Asia. However, 77 per cent of expenditures on country programmes were allocated on activities in the three countries selected for further case study analysis: Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka (see Chapter Three). IA was also involved in thematic programmes which address issues of early warning, preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution training, networking and advocacy. In 1997, drastic cuts in expenditures have had to be implemented, leading to lay-offs and cuts in most major activities (see below). With the exception of work related to Sierra Leone, however, no formal decisions have been made to terminate any major activity.

Profile

When marking the first decade of IA's existence, Rupesinghe wrote the following:

> "During its 10-year history, International Alert has been many things: a one man mediation effort; a small grassroot activist agency; a research and training institution; and a flexible, medium-sized conflict resolution organisation with the professional capacity to effect change in situations of armed social conflict. On the cusp of the 21st century, I believe that IA has the ability to be all of these and more." (In Pursuing Peace - A decade of experience, p. 7, IA, 1995).

While IA still deliberately tries to be "many things", increasing priority has been accorded to more operational work "to resolve violent conflicts within countries and regions and to promote the prevention of conflict" (latest mission statement, July 1997). This is reflected in the different country programmes. The Secretary General, however, has actively kept IA on the map when it comes to research and studies related to conflict analysis, prevention and resolution. Perhaps more than others, Rupesinghe has also claimed that NGOs have a number of advantages which can prove invaluable in conflict situations. Based on the argument that official state-based diplomatic efforts have proven to be limited in their capacity to tackle internal disputes, he has become a prominent advocate of *multi-track diplomacy*, which is defined as "the application of peacemaking from different vantage points within a multi-centred network" (Rupesinghe 1997, p. 1), involving different actors (UN, IGOs, governments, NGOs) at different, complementary levels.[2] In a multi-track approach, Rupesinghe argues that NGOs enjoy a number of advantages: "They can operate at different levels of a conflict simultaneously - at the high political level in mediation with the warring parties, concerned governments and the UN, and pursue mid-level and grassroots dialogue with citizens' groups, district councils and women's organisations" (*ibid.*, p. 27). Also, because of their small size, independence and flexibility, NGOs are in a position to react quickly to dangers and opportunities when larger organisations may have to follow bureaucratic procedures (ibid.).

During the last years, IA has created an overall framework for its approach to transforming violent conflict. Within this framework, the organisation has developed a variety of approaches, methodologies and tools for preventive action. The diagram below is picked from IA's annual review 1995 and shows IA's approach to transforming violent conflict, highlighting some of the tools and methodologies used in 1995.

[2] Kumar Rupesinghe, 1977: *The General Principles of Multi-Track Diplomacy*. ACCORD, Preventive Diplomacy Series, No. 2, Durban.

Early Warning	Consultations with Academics and Experts	Developing an Action Plan	Implementing the Action Plan	A Catalyst for Action
Information gathering	Consultations	Fact-finding missions	Exposure trips	Coalitions for peace
Analysing EW information	Working groups	Colloquia	Strengthening local NGOs	Conflict prevention consortia
Reviewing indicators		In-depth analysis	Pre-negotiations	
Recommendations for early action			Resource development and training	

Management and Organisational Issues

The BDO Review

IA has grown rapidly in recent years. It operates in a complex, dynamic and politically sensitive environment which makes planning particularly difficult. The scale of its programme depends on the ability to find donors willing to fund its work. Historically one of IA's strengths has been its ability to react quickly to emerging crisis situations or opportunities to develop new areas of work.

The rapid period of growth, which led to a personnel complement of 50 at the end of 1996, was largely due to the innovation, fund-raising ability and reputation of the present SG. It was recognised, however, that structured management systems and procedures had to be put in place if IA were to maximise the use of its resources. As part of this process, an Associate Director was appointed, and personnel policies, planning and project approval procedures, staff development activities, programme development guidelines, and a comprehensive set of financial reports were put in place.

In addition, and as a preparation for this evaluation, a consultancy firm was commissioned (in August 1996) to evaluate the appropriateness of the various structures, procedures and controls and to identify and prioritise those which required further action (BDO Stoy Hayward, 1996).

We have read the BDO report with particular interest and care as it seems a comprehensive report likely to prove a useful reference for IA and its donors to monitor progress in terms of effecting management reforms over the coming years.

Many of the points raised by the report are of continued relevance. The BDO report pointed out that

> ... it is important that IA should establish and communicate to all stakeholders a clearer vision of the strategic direction and role in an increasingly competitive sector... Many staff and donors do not fully understand the strategic intent and direction of IA other than at a broad level (p. 4, p. 6).

While IA, at the time of the BDO review, had produced a statement of strategic intent, this had not yet been developed into a strategic plan. Therefore, it was difficult to understand "how each proposed strand of the strategy integrates with its fellows to present a cohesive whole" (p. 6). It was also not clear, according to the BDO consultants, how priorities were determined: "The statement of strategic intent does not indicate any priorities and it must be assumed that all activities have the same priority and call on resources" (p. 6). For such reasons, "the capacity of the organisation's ability to change focus (e.g., to decide quickly which programmes to cut at times of financial restrictions) may be impaired" (p. 7). By implication also, the organisation does not sufficiently "assess the competitive environment in which IA operates" (p. 7). Among the key recommendations, therefore, were for IA (a) to establish clear organisational aims and objectives, focusing on work in which it can demonstrate competitive advantage; and (b) to develop its statement of strategic intent into a coherent, organisational strategic plan (p. 1).

IA generally accepted the comments and recommendations of the BDO review and has taken a number of steps to make the necessary improvements. This applies particularly to procedures, routines, increasing staff participation, staff development and changes to the organisational structure. As indicated above, some of the changes were being implemented before and during the BDO review and good progress has been made in developing and implementing such measures.

It would be a significant step forward if rigorous pre-project appraisal systems were to be introduced, as it would prevent programmes being developed in an ad hoc manner and decisions being taken without a full assessment of their potential impact. It would also enable IA to ensure that they only undertake those programmes which will help achieve the strategic objectives. Of course, this presupposes that there will be clear and agreed objectives. Developing effective feasibility assessment mechanisms will also be contingent upon IA having the financial and manpower resources available to ensure that it can invest in sufficient research and information to underpin such an analysis.

While the evaluators would like to take note of and recognise the efforts made to address several problems raised in the BDO report, it should be noted that IA is still in the process of addressing the key recommendations referred to above. A strategic planning process started in April 1997. Based, i.a., on two away-days

with staff, two draft papers on (i) IA's mission and values and (ii) on how IA plans to achieve its mission, were submitted to the Board for a first discussion on July 26. IA is also working on new guidelines for the approval of new projects and programmes.

Some Planning Problems

The evaluators can only urge IA and its trustees to give such efforts their highest priority. During the last years, IA seems to have been driven by opportunities that have come their way rather than by a clear strategy and clear objectives. IA's approach seems often to be reactive rather than proactive, and the agenda often influenced by approaches and appeals made to the organisation by external parties, often to the Secretary General, Trustees or staff members. The implications for effective planning, including financial planning are potentially negative. Specifically if responding to ad hoc requests draws time away from management support to the organisation's "core business", the lack of focus of the work could prove problematic. While it is only natural that programme ideas may come through a number of various routes, their development and implementation must be preceded by an assessment of their contribution to the strategic objectives of the organisation and with a consequent impact on scarce resources.

This brings us to another important point. In the impact assessment report carried out by IA itself as part of the review process, the most frequently noted "constraint" or "mistake" made in various programme activities is *poor follow-up*. Again, this seems to be related to the way in which decisions have been made. While granting that it is sometimes necessary to launch initiatives before one is reasonably sure about securing funds for their follow-up, the ad hoc approach referred to above seems to have allowed IA to pursue more activities than it could effectively support. As stated in Chapter One, there are ethical sides to this, particularly when expectations are created among potential partners to particular undertakings, which are then not fulfilled by IA.

IA is also attempting to focus its work geographically. The Secretary-General reported that since 1994, while the turnover of the organisation had increased significantly, the number of countries in which IA was working had declined as it sought to consolidate activities into regional programmes rather than maintaining a series of ad hoc and geographically dispersed series of projects. This seems an appropriate strategy, enabling the organisation to build up expertise and experience of a particular region.

However, given the regional dimensions of many conflicts it may be the case that by putting a considerable number of eggs in a particular regional basket, the organisation could be vulnerable if its interventions in a particular country prove

controversial. Potentially, IA's intervention in Sierra Leone could have a negative impact on its wider aim to engage in conflicts in Ghana and Liberia, for example.

Further, the definition of regions means that the organisation is still leaving the door open for engaging in a significant number of countries. For example, the Overview of Programme 1996 states that in Africa IA will focus on West Africa and the Great Lakes (p. 5). Later in the same document (p. 7), rather than referring to the Great Lakes, IA's Programme is referred to as the Greater Horn Programme. This is part to accommodate the Kenya programme which would not technically fit under the Great Lakes. However, using the term "Greater Horn" rather than "Great Lakes" enables the organisation to legitimately include Sudan under its priority countries. Thus, the large size of "priority" regions potentially undermines the idea of having priorities, as it is still possible to have numerous interventions spread relatively thinly over a significant number of countries.

As indicated in the BDO report, and in the report by Lange (Annex 2), IA operates in an increasingly crowded field of competitors, often applying for the same funds and support as IA. Donors will be increasingly concerned with the profile and specificity of IA. How does IA differentiate itself from its competitors? In contexts where cooperation between different actors on different levels is required, what is the value added by IA's input? We will come back to this in Chapter Four. Suffice is here to say that while IA needs to seek opportunities when they arise, and continue to be a risk-taking organisation venturing onto new ground and into new areas, there is a balance to be struck. This implies that criteria for setting priorities, forward planning and co-ordination of activities need to be established without either reducing creativity and innovative approach or restricting IA's flexibility unduly.

Programme Guidelines

The term "programme guidelines" is used here in the sense of information provided by the organisation to its staff to advise them of the methodology and modus operandi of IA's operations and advocacy work. As with the process of priority setting, programme guidelines are linked fundamentally to a definition of the agency's strategy and identity.

IA reports that over the past couple of years, greater efforts have been made to refine internal and public understanding of the organisation's mandate and methodology, through codifying experience to date, so building up institutional memory. A number of mechanisms exist to do this.

The *staff development programme* is managed by the Training Department. The rationale for this is that by tapping into staff experience a collective basis for institutional memory can be established and then disseminated back through

training initiatives. The staff development programme appears to have provided an important space for discussion of issues such as the potential contradictions between peace and justice; appeasement or transformation and to define values e.g. re. human rights, sustainable development etc.

The reports of these meetings are, understandably, largely in the form of bullet points and notes and it is difficult therefore to make an accurate assessment of the rigour of the discussions. A superficial impression, however, is that staff have been dependent on their own experience to inform discussions, potentially resulting in a rather parochial view and underestimating the wealth of experience available in other organisations and in a wider literature. As it seems that senior staff, in particular the SG do not necessarily participate in these exercises because of their own workload, this sometimes results in rather thin analysis. This view reinforces the impression of IA's work that there has perhaps been an underinvestment in building knowledge and in forming collaborative links with academic and other organisations involved in similar work, to work through core issues intensively. Also in the case of the draft *Staff Development Guidelines*, which is presently a checklist more than a tool for analysis and guide for interventions, there is a need for IA to make the necessary changes as part of the ongoing planning process.

Also lacking in terms of programme guidelines is a code of ethics or principles for staff to follow in the necessarily complex environment in which they work. For example, while there is consistent repetition that the organisation aims to work in an impartial and neutral manner, only a draft paper on this topic is available; similarly no guidelines were available to the evaluators' knowledge with, e.g., regard to the principle of consent of sovereign governments nor on relations with IGOs and other international bodies nor on the potential conflict between IA's human rights component and the conflict resolution element of its work. The 1997 strategic intent paper states that "International Alert will attempt to examine and define such concepts as sovereignty, impartiality and neutrality as far as they impinge on our activities" (p. 7). It is somewhat surprising that this has not been done already.

Secretary General's Office

The important role of the Secretary General (SG) in the rapid build-up of IA since 1993 has already several times been alluded to above. As a result of the strong personality of the present SG in combination with the increased expectations and pressures on the organisation, his work load became extremely large. In order to cope with this, a rather large organisation was created around the SG- the SG's Office - which grew at the same time and at the speed of the overall growth of IA. In 1996 it thus contained 6 persons (the SG himself, one Public Affairs Manager, one Executive Assistant, One Administrative Assistant and two Research

Assistants/Speech Writers). In 1997, however, lay-offs and redeployment have reduced this number to only two persons (Public Affairs Manager and Executive Assistant). This is also a consequence of the BDO evaluation.

The major activities of the SG's office fall into three categories.

First, it concentrates on what can be characterised as Public Relations activities. Through participation in or by taking initiatives to seminars, workshops, conferences, making speeches of all kinds, lecturing at different fora etc. all over the world on the subject of conflict resolution and conflict prevention, the SG and his immediate staff have exercised considerable influence on putting the subject on the international policy agenda. Staff of the SG's Office have done the necessary background work for these activities such as research, speech- and paper writing, seminar preparation and implementation. There is no doubt that these activities have been considerable and important. The reputation of IA in this field thus far exceeds the small size of the organisation.

Secondly, the activities referred to above as PR activities also, to a certain extent, include elements of training and advocacy, which is also the work of separate departments at IA. For example, the Secretary General's Office has run a number of conferences which have included some elements of training activities carried out as one-off enterprises and often as part of a specific public relation or advocacy activity. The recent Wilton Park Conference on Conflict Prevention and Violence in the 21st Century and two conferences in Addis Abeba on Capacity Building (1994) and Creating an Effective Interface between Civil Society, the OAU and Governments in Africa (1996) are examples. These activities form part of the major efforts made by the Secretary General's Office to put the question of conflict resolution on the map of "important issues of today", but can also be seen as part of the training or advocacy programmes of IA.

The third kind of activity of the SG's Office relates to the task of running the organisation as such.

The question of duplication was raised in many of the interviews made by the evaluators. The question of developing a parallel organisation has also been raised in the BDO Review. Thus it forwards as one of its findings "that there is a perception amongst many of the staff that, because of its size, role and staff complement, the SG's personal office is almost a separate organisation with its own objectives and resources" (p. 12); and that "IA should consider the most appropriate structure for ensuring that the skills of the SG's office contribute to the organisation as a whole" (p. 14). It continues to stress that "it is important that the SG's office is seen to be an integral part of the organisation and that all its skills support the organisational objectives" (p. 14). In 1996, the SG's Office had a budget of £ 441,000.

As the notion of a parallel organisation still seems to exist despite lay-offs and redeployment, it is important that the organisation resolves any problems that may remain in this area.

Rapid Response

In 1996, IA initiated a Rapid Response Programme, headed by a Programme Officer. In a project proposal prepared for a private foundation, the purpose of the Rapid Response Programme is described as enabling IA to respond to requests for urgent assistance to prevent or resolve conflict. It

> "... provides IA with the capacity to act swiftly in situations where it is confident that its intervention will have a positive and significant effect. In the absence of such a capacity, IA may be forced to decline requests for assistance because it lacks the flexibility and scope to respond at short notice. The rapid response may take a variety of forms, including the facilitation of fact-finding missions, the development of mechanisms for early warning or the mobilisation of political will to exert pressure for a negotiated settlement. Following on from such an intervention, IA will develop, if appropriate, longer-term projects to help establish a sustainable solution to the conflict situation."

The objectives set in 1996, and currently valid include: the development of an information system for the Rapid Response Manager and other staff working on Africa; mapping of actual and potential conflicts in Africa; keeping a watching brief and facilitating discussions and meetings on countries like the Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria; and commissioning a background paper on potential conflict issues and social conditions in Cuba.

There are a number of potential contradictions in the described modalities and aims of the Rapid Response Programme. For example, one of its short-term objectives is to identify and analyse the underlying issues and causes of the conflict in question at the same time that it is argued "... effective conflict prevention depends on having the capacity to respond rapidly when an imminent conflict is identified".

To make this possible, extensive capacity is required to monitor on-going conflicts in a wide range of settings. Developing such capacity is a long-term task. However, at present it is not clear to the evaluators that sufficient capacity exists to deliver on such a complex set of objectives and tasks as currently presented.

Because it remains relatively small, at present the RRP seems to respond primarily to requests for intervention. Without specific evaluation of different interventions it is not possible to comment on their efficacy, but there seems to be a follow-up problem in several instances. The capacity constraint is compounded by the fact that in addition to the rapid response tasks, the RRP also seems to act as a source of funds for project development, almost like a contingency fund. While there is

a link between the two activities, this becomes problematic when the RRP is also working in areas outside those prioritised by IA, e.g. Mexico. Clarity about the interface between the strategic plan and such programmes will be needed.

Expenditure, Income and Cost-Effectiveness

The following summary presents in a nutshell the considerable fluctuations in income and thereby also in expenditures that IA has gone through in the past few years (in 000 £):

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1997
		Actual budgets			(first half)	budget
Income	879	1,758	3,821	2,442	936	3,060
Exp.	793	1,543	2,596	3,116	1,159	3,060

From having been a small organisation with up to 10 employees and an annual turn-over of less than £ 800,000 the funding situation changed drastically in 1994 culminating in 1995 with an income of £ 3.7 million. In 1996 income was then again drastically cut to £ 2.6 million and for 1997, if no major change will take place towards the end of the year, this major decrease will continue. For the first half of 1997, only £ 936,000 had been secured, supposed to cover a budget of some £ 3 million. Expenditures have followed the level of income with some delay. In 1994 and 1995 therefore reserves were built up which then were used in 1996 in expectation of a revival of income in 1997. As this did not occur, significant cuts in expenditures had to be implemented in early 1997 leading to lay-offs of staff and cuts in major activities, in particular core-funded support activities. The staff situation can be taken as a good example of the actual development over the years:

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997 (30/6)
No. of staff (end year)	12	29	45	50	43

Expenditures

The consolidated accounts of IA are annually audited by a well reputed audit firm in accordance with the law governing NGOs in the United Kingdom. In the past few years accounts have been prepared, audited and approved by the Board of Trustees of IA within half a year after the year of account ended. The accounting and budget systems have been considerably improved in the past year and appear

to fulfil necessary requirements for a good internal control system. Additional training on the system and improved budgetary discipline are still required and being planned for.

The spending pattern has been strongly influenced first by the rapid increase of available resources and then the drastic cuts. In the first phase, all efforts were concentrated on getting new programs started and less emphasis was put on measures of cost consciousness. Currently, considerable efforts are made to make as much as possible of the scarce funds available. In that spirit, employment policies, including setting of salaries and implementing a system for performance appraisal, are being worked on and recommendations on international travel and on the standard of hotel accommodation are being discussed. A system of allocating all indirect costs to the respective programs is also being introduced.

The distribution of expenditures between the different programs can be seen from Table 1 and Table 2 (annexed to this chapter). The break-down of indirect or support cost started first in 1996 - for the sake of comparison IA has made an effort to make a break-down also for 1994; for 1995 this was not possible. The second table gives the same data without allocating support or indirect costs to the various programs.

From an analysis of the two expenditure tables it follows that IA spends the main part of its funds on very few programs. In 1996, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka completely dominated the expenditures of the country programs - £ 1.048 million out of £ 1.366 million or 77 %. Very few other countries, perhaps with the exception of Rwanda, are thus worked on by IA in a way whereby they could easily be taken up if additional funds were available, i.e. the pipe-line seems not very large. Other areas of large expenditures are advocacy (£ 179,000), training (£ 146,000), and the Secretary General's Office (£ 441,000).

It seems that in spite of the problems following from the fluctuations in available resources, expenditures are well controlled and costs kept under close surveillance. However, a number of points can be made:

a) The allocation of expenditures between different items is a matter for the long term planning and the annual budget process. It is also highly influenced by the large amount of funding which is restricted to specific projects by the founders. The major question to further be looked into and which has been complicated by the fluctuations of income between the years, are the relations between expenditures on programs and on support costs. The new budget procedure in which support costs are allocated to programs will be helpful and is certainly a step in the right direction.

b) The number of staff, their deployment and the salary structure must continuously be looked into in a volatile situation. At the end of 1996, IA

employed 50 persons who were categorised as shown in Table 3. In addition, there were also 4 interns and 4 volunteers working with IA office. It is particularly praiseworthy that a good gender balance has been struck; also that so many different nationalities (at least 17), were represented. An approved staff appraisal procedure, a remuneration and a training policy for staff are operational and seem also to work in practice.

The number of staff is of course closely related to the funding situation and the programs that can be implemented with available funds. The drastic fluctuation in the number of staff is certainly not good for staff morale, competence building and continuity of IA´s work. It appears that the volatile situation has created an added turn-over of staff in addition to the necessary changes due to lack of funds. This is very unfortunate as the capacity of IA has been considerably weakened thereby. This problem is highly recognised by IA and the training department has got a special assignment to work on organisational learning so that the loss of staff will not lead to an equivalent loss of experience and knowledge.

It is extremely difficult to make an over all judgement of the allocation of staff. It appears however, that despite above mentioned reductions of support staff, there exists an imbalance between some of the support units and the staffing of operational programmes. In fact some of the operational programmes are understaffed due to lack of funding security in the medium and long term. It is recommended that this matter is thoroughly studied and discussed as part of the annual budgetary process.

Finally, on the salary structure it appears that the level of salaries offered at IA for the majority of staff including the section managers and directors are in line with average NGO salaries in the UK. The salary levels of the three Special Envoys seem to be at director level or slightly higher. The evaluators have met some question and doubts as regards the title Special Envoy. It is recommended that IA changes the title of the Special Envoys to something like Special Advisor, i.a., to avoid giving the impression that IA belongs to the IGO or governmental system. We would also agree with the BDO review, where it is stated that Special Envoys may provide IA with flexibility, but the effect of their multiple involvement in a small organisation may be a potential lack of integration and a weakening of the role and authority of Programme Directors (p. 9).

c) The efforts of controlling costs wherever possible should be encouraged. It is recommended that the existing travel policy, particularly regarding use of cheapest means of travel, is enforced on all levels. This is a major source for savings particularly in an organisation depending so much on travelling. It is also recommended that the formal policy on the standard of hotel accommodation is finalised and approved. These and many other symbols of

day to day cost consciousness should be discussed and anchored within the organisation.

Income and Finance

Table 4 below contains a detailed break down of the income received by IA during the past three years. Some interesting conclusions can be drawn from these figures:

a) The large number of varied sources of finance. Although sometimes very small amounts, IA has been successful in securing funds from a large number of small but new sources. This is important for an organisation wishing to be as independent as possible and not reliant on only a few donors.

b) Still, there is an overreliance on Government sources from only a few countries. In 1996 £ 1,441,000 or 59% of total funds received arrived from the four countries and the one NGO backing the current evaluation (Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden and Novib). In 1995 the same figures were £ 2,354,000 or 62%. In the past four years these five donors have collectively put more than £ 5 million into IA. It should be noted that the Government of the UK hardly committed any funds to IA during this period. However, IA has recently received a substantial grant from the British Lottery for its Great Lakes programme.

c) Most funds secured are earmarked for specific programs of activities and only a small portion is unrestricted or core funds. The unrestricted funds come almost exclusively from the five donors referred to above and have been decreasing in relation to total funds secured in the past year. In 1997 IA is, as stated above, facing a major financial crisis. By midyear only £ 936,000 had been secured of which only £ 579,000 are unrestricted funds.

Cost Effectiveness

Analyses of cost-effectiveness have for some years been an important part of evaluations. In general, it is safe to say that cost-effectiveness analyses of projects are methodologically weak. They often suffer from lack of comparative data, and they rarely contribute to the assessment of the projects in question. This is certainly the case with evaluations of social sectors and of research.

The data required for a cost-effectiveness analysis, in spite of its apparent theoretical simplicity, is quite demanding. A proper cost-effectiveness analysis requires prior preparation, ex ante - a costly and sometimes impossible task to undertake ex post. Data must be made available from the start, and to be arranged in a proper way. Furthermore, such data become meaningless unless they can be

compared with data from a similar activity with a similar objective and similar output.

The methodological requirements for a cost-effectiveness analysis are therefore demanding. Institutional cross-comparisons of this kind are difficult to make in an analytically satisfactory way. In the case of an institution such as IA, there is particularly the problem of assessing the quality of output. Activities can be recorded, as well as output in terms of number of books, articles, seminars etc. Each output can be given a unit cost, such as the average cost per seminar arranged, the average cost per book published etc. But then each output possesses a quality which should be determined. For IA it is rather meaningless to produce seminars which are of poor quality. The cost-effectiveness analysis does not possess any means for capturing "quality" and hence it becomes of limited value for an evaluation of institutional performance.

A good expenditure analysis is quite often as useful as a cost-effectiveness analysis. Analysis of expenditure data, comparing different expenditure categories with each other, relating expenditures to output etc. can all yield important insights about the efficiency with which an institution is being operated.

For IA, the exact data available mainly cover expenditures. These can be found in the annual reports to the donors, broken down and analysed in different ways. As stated above, IA has established a degree of cost-consciousness. So far, no system of measuring cost ratios has been implemented, although some ideas are being discussed within the Finance Department.

Training

Background

Training is an art in itself through which sustainable results are always difficult to achieve. First, clear objectives have to be established, which is often difficult enough. Thereafter, and even more difficult, the way in which the training is supposed to help to achieve objectives must be established and understood. Experience has shown that there are many pitfalls on the way which must be avoided if a sustainable result shall be reached.

Training in the field of conflict resolution is no exception to the rule. While the ultimate objectives of conflict resolution may not be difficult to establish, it is extremely difficult to construct and measure ways in which training can assist in achieving these objectives. As has been argued by Mark Duffield and summarised in Chapter One, training easily leads to already existing norms and attitudes being strengthened rather than changed in the direction of achieving the objectives of sustainable peace. By focusing overly on behavioural and attitudinal change,

conflict resolution training often concentrates on how to change behaviour and attitudes among different groups in a society instead of on the deep causes of conflict such as economic, social, cultural and political factors. Training should facilitate the creation of space for a dialogue on major underlying causes for conflict rather than try "make people more peaceful and thereby create peace". Also, conflict is culturally bound, and strategies for peacemaking appropriate in one context may be destructive in another. Training programmes must therefore be adapted to and merge out of local experience, struggle and reflection.

Within this perspective, training by itself is a rather weak instrument in conflict resolution, but in combination with other instruments it can be important. From practical experience, training seems to be most effective when being part of an overall medium term project. In cases when training is given as a one-off activity, on the other hand, it is much more difficult to observe and measure any sustainable results.

The International Alert Training Programme

Training is carried out as a component within most of the programs of International Alert. However, it can be identified under three different headings:

a) as part of specific country- or other programmes,
b) as part of the public relation or advocacy activities of the Secretary General's Office, and
c) as a separate program.

The first point is being discussed in more detail in the separate case studies. Generally, we believe that training programmes well integrated in an overall country programme can be effective, as seen particularly in the case of Burundi. Other programmes such as the advocacy programme contain elements of training. As regards the Secretary General's Office a number of conferences which have included some elements of training activities have been carried out as one-off enterprises and often as part of a specific public relation or advocacy activity (see above).

The third category of training efforts are those undertaken by the "Resource Development and Training Department" (RDTD) which was created in 1993. Since then, 12 training, or as they also are called " capacity building" events, have taken place for approximately 250 participants from the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa. The reporting from those events (held in the former Soviet Union, Lebanon and different African countries) is extensive and comprehensive. On the one hand, it points to the fact that the immediate objectives of the training activities have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of the participants. On the other hand it points to all the problems met in undertaking training in the very difficult field of conflict

resolution which is relevant and leads to sustainable results. For IA, however, training has been a convenient way of creating contacts in a specific country or region and finding one's way to what is a relevant activity in that particular place and situation. It has also provided ample experience for making future improvements in the training field.

As part of its work the Training Department has also developed a "Resource Pack", which is supposed to be used as a training manual for all types of courses on conflict resolution (see below).

Lessons Learnt by International Alert

Based on its experiences up to the end of 1996 the RDTD of IA is reassessing its work in the field of conflict resolution training. In a paper still under preparation at the time of the evaluation, Training and Learning in Conflict Transformation NGO´s International Alert's Response - A New Role for the Training Department (draft) these experiences are summarised and a new working method elaborated on. The paper talks of "building capacity and support local efforts" rather than of conflict resolution training per se. And it emphasises the importance of creating "spaces for dialogue" and that this can only be done "where training is combined with other efforts". It underlines the importance of staff training which is expected to increase the capacity of IA staff to design training as an integral part of country programs. The underlying theory of change should according to that paper be that "more effectively targeted training will better prepare communities for conflict transformation.... This will contribute to the learning of the wider constituency of trainers and peace builders. Organisational learning will help connect training with the broader goals and development of IA as an organisation while creating an infrastructure that will enable IA to respond effectively to change in the long run".

RDTD thus sees two roles for its future activities, namely organisational learning (mainly within IA itself) and designing of training for conflict as integral part of country- and other programs of conflict resolution. Consolidation of a pool of trainers/facilitators, the development of a resource base and the development of a range of training materials are support activities which need to be further developed.

The RDTD has also made a point of emphasising the need for its staff to be both reactive to requests from country programmes and proactive in progressing its key roles within IA. In a recent paper Designing a course for IA's partners in conflict transformation - a concept paper, the RDTD recognises that it needs to "tread that delicate line between clarity of what it can offer regarding training (a proactive approach) and responding to expressed needs of different country programmes (a reactive approach)". It is clear that if training is to be considered an integral

component of country programmes then time must be invested in building relationships between the RDTD and other parts of IA.

Assessment

The lessons learnt and elaborated on in the draft new proposal for the RDTD correspond with the experience the evaluators draw from the literature on conflict resolution training and the experience of the ongoing programs undertaken by IA and others in the field. While training can be important in a peace building process, it should:

- be part of a medium- or long-term strategy rather than an activity of its own. This implies that training should be integrated into other, complementary, programs of IA, such as country programs, and/or other organisations working in a particular field or region;
- create space for further dialogue rather than making people accept the status quo. This has large implication on the development of training materials and the supervision of the content and actual implementation of the training activities;
- be exclusively planned for each particular conflict in question and tailor-made to suit the particular situation in the country. There are no blueprints for training.

It follows (i) that IA should not involve itself in conflict resolution training on any large scale, and (ii) that it be done in close cooperation with local and other partners. The RDTD has committed itself to the process of drawing together IA's diverse experience in a way that will enable the organisation to better communicate its approach to training in this field. Such an activity is welcomed in that it should ensure that IA has a more consistent approach to training.

A Note on the International Alert Resource Pack

IA has put substantial efforts into the development of the IA Resource Pack for conflict Resolution Training. It has been produced through a process of wide consultations and distributed to approximately 300 individuals/organisations, of which many have used it with positive effect. It was originally published in English but has been translated to French and Russian and there are plans for further translation into Spanish, Tamil and Sinhala.

The Resource Pack is thus seen as an important achievement by IA and has therefore been carefully studied and assessed by the evaluation team. Advice has also been sought outside the evaluation team. The Resource Pack is a comprehensive document consisting of five parts (modules) comprising 215 pages. The content is in summary:

1. Introduction
   Conflict transformation and sustainable peace
   Peoples participation in peace processes

The capacity-building approach to training
About the resource pack
Feedback and future developments

2. Thinking about conflict
   Conflict violence and peace
   Conflict transformation
   Culture

3. Capacity building workshops - Content
   Conflict
   Conflict analysis
   Communication
   Conflict transformation
   Communication
   Conflict parties in negotiation
   Third-party participation
   Post-agreement - sustaining the peace process

4. Capacity building workshops - Process and planning
   Aims of capacity-building workshops
   Types of capacity-building workshops
   Designing capacity-building workshops

5. Annotated bibliography
   Manuals for conflict resolution training
   Books an papers on conflict and conflict resolution
   Journals and newsletters
   IA publications and training reports

As stated above, there is no simple tailor made model explaining the causes of conflict, describing conflict and how conflicts are resolved. Therefore training material can only present background materials for discovery and learning on the specific conflict in question at every training opportunity. This is also the main approach chosen by the Resource Pack. It can be seen as containing training modules for the different aspects of conflict resolution. It gives a good overview of present theory and the ongoing world wide discussion. The bibliography is excellent and useful for finding additional materials if and when needed.

Such material, however, requires well trained and skilful trainers in order to apply the considerable number of facts and figures to the specific situation of interest. It also requires considerable theoretical knowledge of the trainers as some theories and debates sometimes are more explicit than others making it difficult for an unskilled reader or trainee to choose between them.

Certain parts of the Resource Pack have become too abstract. The level of concrete application which can be found in Module no 4: Capacity Building Workshop: Process and planning, should have been used in the other modules as well (for example by presenting short practical stories on the conflict transformation process in module no 1). The way module no 4 is presented gives some good ideas for the trainers to consider before, during and after the training activity.

Module no 1 on conflict transformation contains a great deal of highly topical issues and materials. It requires however a lot from the trainer to place pre-conflict situations in their right perspectives. There is again a need for a combination of effort where training is only one of facilitation.

Module 2: Thinking about conflict is on the whole a good overview over conflict theory concepts, including third-party forms of conflict intervention. Some problems can however be noted. The first relates to the section on ideology-religion which contains some stereotyped mistakes/ignorance-based views on the role of religion in armed conflicts. The examples used are old and hardly relevant for internal conflicts of today. The other relates to the concept of conflict transformation which is problematic. Conflict transformation appears as a key concept but is never really developed. The description provided does not sufficiently add to the understanding of what should be a specific characteristic of IA activities. It might have been useful to discuss an example of a transformation process in order to give a better understanding, also for understanding what follows in the other modules.

Finally, module 3 on Capacity-Building Workshops: Content (on conflict theory) consists of general applied conflict theory approaches. It does not reflect a specific theoretical approach to conflict (other than a clear sociological one) but a blend of descriptive figures from various sources. Some are helpful, but the level is too general; it is difficult for someone without a background in conflict theory studies to grasp the content of the figures to the level where she/he is able to convey it to the participants in the workshop.

On the whole, the Resource Pack is an ambitious and a valuable contribution to conflict resolution training . It contains most of the present theory and debate, some of it good, some less so, some relevant and some less relevant. It requires good theoretical background and pedagogical skills of the trainer - but so do most training materials which are aimed at a subject in a general way. It should be developed further but can, on the condition of good supervision and within the perspectives outlined above, be useful in its present shape.

Advocacy

Although advocacy has been part of the activities of IA ever since it was established in 1985, a separate and comprehensive programme for advocacy was first elaborated in 1995. While advocacy mainly used to contain elements of the promotion of the concept of preventive diplomacy, a separate department was set up which today consists of 5 people, and has developed the programme further towards policy analysis, monitoring and lobbying of intergovernmental institutions and EU Member States, also adding elements of presenting practical policy proposals. The strategy presently being worked out within the department includes "bringing the existing projects into one coherent programme that addresses policy issues from a thematic approach and covers key areas not previously tackled".

The overall aim of the advocacy programme is "to develop an innovative, integrated and coherent programme aimed at promoting policy changes amongst key international organisations towards sustainable peace and conflict prevention". In doing so IA will target the Organisation for African Unity, the European Union, NATO, The United Nations, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the major bilateral and the NGO-community.

At present five thematical projects are in the stage of full implementation and two projects (closely linked with the existing ones) are being researched for the

development of proposals (to be ready for funding purposes in the next six months).

1) Light weapons and human security - the first phase concentrating on researching weapons flows in Central Africa and identifying key local and regional actors is presently being finalised. The second phase, starting now, focuses on implementation of recommendations emerging from phase one - particularly lobbying the EU - and expansion of the research and advocacy to the West Africa Region.;

2) Early warning and early action. As a member and secretariat of FEWER, the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, IA will provide a forum for collecting, analysing and disseminating information on conflicts and provide recommendations for action. This builds on a project already implemented over a number of years.

3) The European Union and conflict prevention. This project finalised its first phase in July 1997 having achieved a significant proportion of its stated objectives of making politicians and policy makers aware of the importance of conflict prevention and translating this awareness into EU instruments. The second phase (starting in August 1997) will focus on lobbying for the implementation of agreements at EU and member states and working on the UK Presidency of the EU (January to June 1998).

4) Development and conflict prevention/Humanitarian agencies and war prevention program. In its first phase IA has acted as a catalyst developing interest in conflict prevention among country-specific NGOs and encouraged them to develop action plans for preventive diplomacy activities and advocacy. Today there exists a network of such NGOs which have jointly decided to continue their work in this particular area. A second phase of the project started in April 1997 refocusing the project towards influencing the integration of conflict prevention in the Lome Process; looking at the relationship between humanitarian assistance and rearming of factions in refugee camps (as a direct link to the light weapons project) and developing a better understanding of how to integrate conflict into the development process (development project and programs, development management and institutional capacity). Within this programme, collaborative work with Bradford University and London School of Economics is proposed. The overall aim is to support the operationalisation of conflict prevention in the development process and to enable an understanding of what is required from major actors i.e. intergovernmental organisations and bilateral bodies.

5) Conflict prevention in Africa. This programme falls out from 3) and 4) above. IA together with three other European NGOs have joined in the task of promoting a series of NGO consultations on the European Communiqué on

Conflict Prevention in Africa. The major purpose of this activity is to analyse the EU proposals on structural stability and provide informed feedback for the implementation of the recent resolution.

Projects being developed

6) Conflict prevention, reconstruction and economic development. This project resulting from 1) and 3) above, is being developed with help from the outside. The objective is to look, in particular, at how the International Finance Institutions such as the World Bank and African Development Bank can introduce conflict prevention initiatives more effectively. This includes expansion of the work in reconstruction to disarmament and demobilisation; rethinking economic packages and increasing understanding of economies in transition.

7) Mercenaries in Africa resulting from 1) above is currently being developed. The purpose of the programme is to understand the relationship between light weapons flows and privatisation of the security industry. The intention is to raise awareness of how mercenary activities contribute to the destabilisation of Africa and what can be done by governments (e.g. tighter regulations and monitoring, coherence in foreign policy, etc.) to curtail this phenomena.

In addition to the advocacy programme planned and implemented by the special department for advocacy, a number of country specific programs contain elements of advocacy. These elements sometimes fall under the heading of facilitation, sometimes networking. How they are defined, however, does not matter very much as long as they are well integrated in the overall country program.

An important component in the overall advocacy programme of IA is the participation by its management and in particular its Director in a great number of international and national fora, presenting its views and advocating for conflict resolution.

Other departments do, however, sometimes also initiate new advocacy projects, without prior consultations with the advocacy department. This relates in particular to the Rapid Response Programme which at times has taken such initiatives. While advocacy themes and issues result from IA's programme in the field and its Rapid Response Programme, it is essential that effective co-ordination and consultation takes place and the management of thematic advocacy does not lie in several places in the organisation since this can lead to confusion and duplication.

Assessment

It is difficult to measure the results stemming from an advocacy project. There is little doubt, however, that IA through its many activities and its participation in the current debate on conflict resolution has had an impact and been more visible than its smallness would suggest. The high profile of its Director has been pivotal in this regard. The number of books in which he has been actively involved, the number of meetings in which he and his immediate staff have been major participants and actors are well documented.

There is also to some extent complementarity between the work of the Secretary General's Office and the Advocacy Program. While the first raises the issue of conflict resolution and prevention in general, the second is working on the implementation and operationalisation of the concept. While there is an increasing recognition by governments and multilateral institutions that conflict resolution is important, most of those bodies are very far from making their commitments a reality. There is therefore according to IA still a need to keep the issue on the agenda and provide inputs for policy makers who are responsible for defining the contents of policies in the area.

As regards the projects implemented within the advocacy programme only three have been undertaken over a period long enough for making an assessment possible: the European Union project, the one targeting the NGO community (Development, Humanitarianism and Conflict Prevention) and the one on light weapons. The activities undertaken within particularly the two first projects are considerable - so many that there might be a risk for over-saturation (see below). Also as regards the overall objectives it appears that they have been reached, although it is difficult to say that the results have been reached due to the efforts of IA or for other reasons.

A number of NGOs participating in the group originally set up by IA have now themselves become important advocates for conflict resolution and partners with IA in new projects trying to convince others of the importance of taking conflict resolution seriously. Also within EU and most of its member states the importance of conflict resolution is today being recognised. Some of the more immediate objectives of IA programme such as including certain texts in major documents seem also to have been obtained.

Also some of the more recently started projects already seem to have reached interesting results. Thus the Light Weapons project in July 1997 convened a meeting on Light Weapons and Peace Building in Central Africa in Cape Town discussing the findings and documentation worked out so far by a special project group.

Why Advocacy

In the early nineties IA saw itself as one of the few independent actors engaging itself in conflict resolution. After the end of the Cold War the number of internal wars was seen to be increasing, and as discussed briefly in Chapter One, there was a greater willingness in the international community to recognise that the complex array of instruments which had been developed to manage inter-state conflicts were of limited use in the context of internal war.

A number of countries in Europe supported the not unreasonable view of IA taking on this role of trying to act as a go between the rapidly expanding findings of the research community on conflict resolution and the world of practitioners. IA obtained support for these activities and did some rather important work in (i) creating awareness among a number of NGOs on the importance of conflict resolution, and what to bear in mind when acting in conflict areas and (ii) in promoting the concept within the EU bureaucracy (project 2), 3), 4) and 5) above).

Today such ideas and concepts seem to have become accepted among the major actors - including the UN system. There is, therefore, less need for generic advocacy towards these groups. IA should concentrate on working with targets in the development and operationalisation of prevention policies rather than raising the issues in general. In particular, there would seem to be a need for advocacy and lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice which are at core of most internal conflicts in the world. Some of these issues raise complex questions for conflict resolution practitioners around the relationship between advocacy and mediation, but being among the deep causes of conflict, they need to be put on the policy agenda much more than is presently the case.

Advocacy as a Separate Programme

Advocacy is implemented both as a separate programme targeting specific groups and as an integral part of specific country programs implemented by IA. Most interviewed by the evaluators agreed that the latter is an important part of an overall country programme approach on conflict resolution. The importance of and the support for such activities seem therefore to be well established.

As regards the general advocacy programme many questions are raised. Some refer to the competitive advantage of IA for such activities, others to the ways that advocacy projects are implemented and others to the choice of areas or targets for intervention.

As stated above the evaluators do accept that IA has had and may still have a competitive advantage in the area of dissemination of findings from ongoing research and up to date documentation on different aspects of conflict resolution. However, partly through IA's own efforts, the number of institutions, both NGOs

and governmental, with similar tasks and knowledge has increased rapidly in the past few years. IA has become increasingly aware of this fact and has started to collaborate with a number of other organisations with relevant specialisation for respective projects.

Currently, all projects in the advocacy department are jointly implemented with partner organisations that can complement IA´s expertise and expand the potential for impact. In order to avoid duplicating existing efforts a mapping of organisations (research institutions, NGOs, etc.) is done before projects are implemented. Following this, a selected number of groups are approached and invited to collaborate from project design to implementation. There are a number of indicators that IA uses in the identification and selection of its partners: complementarity of skills, knowledge and geographical experience; coherence with IA´s objectives; implementation capacity; legitimacy vis a vis targets and potential beneficiaries.

Advocacy - Concluding Remarks

Advocacy within a county programme on conflict resolution can become an important element whenever it is well integrated therein.

Advocacy as a thematic programme run by IA, needs however to be carefully considered. It is an important part of IA´s overall activities since it targets the institutions and organisations which have an important role to play in conflict resolution. However, in order to be effective and achieve its goal the following important points should be taken into account:

- Advocacy must be built on a shared vision within IA on how conflicts occur and on the role of conflict resolution.
- The number of projects undertaken at each moment of time should be few and limited in time. Extreme care should be shown to avoid over-saturation both in time and in the way the projects are implemented.
- The advocacy programme should be planned and developed in a coherent manner under control of one department. Ad hoc measures should be avoided.
- Each project should be well and narrowly focused to maximise the effects of the efforts made.
- New areas of intervention should be target groups which have so far not been reached and still appear insensitive to the importance of taking conflict resolution matters seriously as well as important new thematic areas. IA should particularly consider advocacy or lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice.
- Serious consideration should be given to the actors that are currently engaged on advocating for policy changes on conflict resolution. IA must ensure that it develops effective collaboration and, where others better equipped to do the job

are already working on an issue, IA should consider either to withdrawing or working with them if it brings to it a new perspective or angle.

SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BY PROJECT

	6 mths to 30 Jun 97 £'000	year ended 31 Dec 96 £'000	year ended 31 Dec 94 £'000
Programmes Department			
Africa - seminars		121	180
Burundi	160	402	
Former Soviet Union	41	67	80
Great Lakes	2		
Latin America		29	52
Liberia	24		50
Kenya	11	3	12
Rwanda	43	90	
Rapid Response	28	79	19
Sierra Leone	53	248	
Sri Lanka	99	398	135
Training	37	146	204
Director	8	61	45
Other			68
Sub-Total	505	1,644	845
Communications Department			
Advocacy	105	179	139
Fundraising	61	108	42
Press Events	18	32	
Publication & Media	35	91	99
Director	18	53	
Sub-Total	236	463	280
Finance & Support Service Department			
Total	186	353	275
Secretary General Department			
SG's Office	172	441	143
Special Envoys	61	183	
Net expenditure of subsidiary		32	
TOTAL	1,159	3,116	1,543

NB. The basis of preparation for 1996 and 1997 is consistent. Figures are not available for 1995.
The wide variances between 1994 and 1996/7 on costs for special envoys, and the SG's office probably reflect differing allocation of costs as much as a change in activity.

Information supplied by IA Finance team

EVALREP.XLS 08/08/97

ANALYSIS OF GRANT INCOME FOR THE YEARS 1994, 1995, 1996

Donor	1996 Unrestricted £'000	1996 Restricted £'000	1996 **Total £'000**	1995 Total £'000	1994 Total £'000
Alusuisse-Lonza Holding	0	0	**0**	10	-
American Friends of Kashmir	0	0	**0**	13	-
Bilance/Cebemo	0	154	**154**	60	-
Charity Aid Foundation			**0**		1
Charity Projects	0	0	**0**	10	8
Christian Aid	0	0	**0**	9	-
CIDA (Canada)	43	0	**43**	41	47
Commonwealth Secretariat			**0**		4
Conflict Management Group	0	0	**0**	3	-
Conseil de L'Europe	0	0	**0**	1	-
DanChurchAid	13	0	**13**	13	14
DANIDA (Denmark)	500	8	**508**	656	434
Diakonisches Werk EKD (Germany)	50	0	**50**	100	110
Doen Foundation	0	79	**79**	-	-
Foreign & Commonwealth Office			**0**	-	10
ICCO (Netherlands)	23	4	**27**	40	28
European Commission	0	109	**109**	266	223
German Government	0	0	**0**	50	-
Irish Government	0	82	**82**	82	-
Joffe Foundation			**0**	-	25
Dr Alan Kay	7	0	**7**	-	-
Methodist Church			**0**	-	1
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland	0	67	**67**	29	49
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands	264	0	**264**	464	332
Misereor	0	0	**0**	22	9
National Endowment for Democracy (USA)	0	0	**0**	22	10
Norad (Norway)	0	0	**0**	51	-
Norwegian Church Aid			**0**	-	7
Novib (Netherlands)	97	92	**189**	184	92
ODA	0	0	**0**	5	-
Oxfam	0	102	**102**	-	-
Rissho Kosei Kai (Japan)	53	0	**53**	100	50
Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway	50	149	**199**	201	112
Sasakawa (Japan)	0	100	**100**	338	-
SIDA (Sweden)	254	27	**281**	798	168
Trocaire (Ireland)	0	10	**10**	40	-
United Nations ISRD			**0**	-	1
United Nations University			**0**	-	20
UN Mission	0	4	**4**	-	-
UNDP	0	14	**14**	-	-
USAID	0	38	**38**	16	-
Westminster Foundation		11	**11**	-	3
Winston Foundation	0		**0**	172	-
Other	6	7	**13**		-
Anonymous	0	25	**25**	25	-
					-
Total	1,360	1,082	**2,442**	3,821	1,758

Information supplied by IA Finance Team

EVALREP.XLS 08/08/97

EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS FOR THE YEARS 1994, 1995, 1996

	1996 Actual £'000	1995 Actual £'000	1994 Actual £'000
Staff salaries	**817**	791	497
Staff NI & pension	**151**	170	99
Interns & volunteers	**19**	60	46
Temps	**27**	7	11
Consultants	**111**	18	
Employment costs	**1387**	1028	653
Direct costs:			
Central Secretariat	**120**	78	
Finance & Support Services	**22**		
Communication	**1**		
Fundraising	**3**	7	
Media & Information	**37**	20	
Preventive Diplomacy	**51**	36	
Programmes	**1**		
Rapid Response/Prog D	**44**	63	
FSU	**22**	108	
Latin America	**2**		
Peace Envoys	**95**	13	
Pan Africa	**75**	226	
Kenya	**1**		
West Africa	**155**		
Rwanda	**50**		
Burundi	**243**	302	
Training	**66**	175	
Sri Lanka & S Asia	**214**	122	
	1202	1150	0
Variable office costs:	**126**	120	104
Support costs:	**369**	272	205
Net expenditure of subsidiary	**32**	26	
Total expenditure	**3116**	2596	962

The detailed information is not available for 1994

Information supplied by IA Finance Team

EVALREP.XLS 08/08/97

INTERNATIONAL ALERT

ANALYSIS OF STAFF AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

	Total no.	Male no.	Female no.	Prog/Comm no.	F&SS/Fundraising no.	Average salary £'000
Contract length						
Full time:						
Up to 1 year	9	4	5	8	1	16.9
1 to 2 years	3	3	0	3	0	33
2 to 3 years	2	2	0	2	0	31.9
Open-ended	36	12	24	22	14	27
Total	50	21	29	35	15	
Functions:						
Secretary General	1	1	0	1	0	83
Special Envoys	3	3	0	3	0	42
Director	4	2	2	3	1	32
Section Manager	13	4	9	9	4	22.1
Officer	22	10	12	14	8	16.6
Admin assistant	7	1	6	5	2	13.2
Total	50	21	29	35	15	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Average salary 1996	21	22.8	19.7	21.8	19.1	

Information supplied by IA Finance Team

Chapter Three: International Alert in the Field - A Review of Programmes in Sri Lanka, Burundi and Sierra Leone

Subject Matter

IA's first initiative was to form a committee of experts in an attempt to resolve the protracted armed conflict in Sri Lanka. Since then, IA initiatives have grown to include a number of country- and region-specific projects in many parts of the world, in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Former Soviet Union. However, as indicated in Chapter Two, Sri Lanka, Burundi and Sierra Leone completely dominated the expenditures of the country programmes in 1996 - £1.048 million out of £ 1.366 million, or 77 %. For this reason, it was decided to select those countries for further case study analysis. Due to limitations of time and resources, we have not been able to judge the merits of other country or regional programmes. In this chapter, we will consider IA's activities in Sri Lanka, Burundi and Sierra Leone in relation to (a) the premises and understanding that formed the basis for IA's intervention; (b) IA's own objectives; and (c) the claims made by IA itself in its own impact assessment report and other documents. Only a brief summary of our findings is presented here. For more details, we refer to the annexed case study reports (Annex 3, 4 and 5).

International Alert in Sri Lanka

Background

IA was established in 1985 partly in response to the unfolding developments in Sri Lanka which has suffered from a protracted ethnic conflict for more than 15 years. The organisation's initial involvement was essentially based on monitoring the conflict and on lobbying efforts to raise awareness of its consequences among politicians and policy-opinion makers, IGOs and international NGOs. Martin Ennals who was then the Secretary General (SG) of IA, was very actively involved in this work.

In 1992, Kumar Rupesinghe, himself a Sri Lankan, was appointed SG of the organisation, and in 1993/94 IA established its "Sri Lanka Peace Programme-paths to (political) negotiations", a relatively comprehensive document outlining the

organisation's "planned intervention into the Sri Lankan situation" (1994, p. 3). The change in focus and strategic preoccupation called for organisational strengthening to translate the various components of the Programme into action, as well as expansion of capacity. At the peak of its activities in 1995, IA's Sri Lanka Programme employed five persons in London and one at its suboffice in Colombo.

The Sri Lankan Conflict

No two observers will agree entirely on the balance between the causes of the current ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. They are intertwined and some more visible, although not necessarily less important, than others. The most visible source of conflict has been the language issue. In 1956 the Sinhala Only Act was passed in Parliament and the supremacy of Sinhala was subsequently made constitutional in 1972. The same Constitution also gave "Buddhism the foremost place" and made protection and fostering of Buddhism the duty of the state. Within the education sector, a scheme of "standardisation" was introduced in the early 1970s. The main effect was increased intake of Sinhalese students from rural areas at the expense of Tamil students from Jaffna and students from Colombo. A major background cause of the present conflict also lies in the direct conflict between sections of the Sinhalese and Tamil populations for professional occupations and public sector jobs as well as trading opportunities. The policy of land colonisation in the Dry Zone pursued since the 1930s also became an increasingly important source of grievances from the side of the Tamils, and partly, the East Coast Muslims.

Although parliamentary politics for the most part is conducted by peaceful means, communal tensions in Sri Lanka have nonetheless often turned violent. The Tamils were exposed to collective violence in 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983. The nature of the violence in 1983, however, was qualitatively different in its intensity, brutality and organised nature. This pogrom is etched deeply in the collective memory of Tamils, and is usually seen to mark the beginning of the present civil war.

The Tamil militants took to arms in the 1970s. By 1985 militant groups more or less controlled the Jaffna peninsula. Relations between them were, however, marred by internecine conflict incited by differences relating to caste, class, approach and vision, and gradually the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) emerged as the strongest group. LTTE has since not allowed political parties or other Tamil groups to operate in areas under its control.

There have been many attempts to negotiate between the Tamil parties and the government. However, expectations arising from "pacts" made in 1957 and 1965 invariably proved to no avail as successive governments demonstrated no firm commitment to implement what had been agreed upon.

The present People Alliance (PA) government, headed by Kumaratunga came to power (1994) on a promise of negotiating a just peace that would safeguard the rights and dignity of all communities, and extensive constitutional reform. In January 1995 the government and LTTE agreed on a cessation of hostilities and four rounds of talks followed between the two parties before LTTE withdrew (April 1995) from the talks. Targeted attacks on military installations were resumed and in July 1995, the government initiated the largest military offensive ever in the 15 year armed struggle. In December the army took control over Jaffna, the emotive focus of Tamil lore and heritage.

In spite of the resumed war, the Kumaratunga government presented (August 1995) its proposals for institutional reform that would acknowledge the multi-ethnic composition of Sri Lankan society and thus rectify previous discriminatory legislations. Under these proposals, Sri Lanka would constitute "a union of regions", each of which would have considerable powers. This "Peace Package" has since January 1996 been discussed in the Parliamentary Select Committee.

The new proposals have not officially been given to the LTTE for consideration. Rather, the government pursues a "two-pronged approach to peace", i.e. weaken the LTTE military, while working towards obtaining a southern consensus on political reforms. Several governments, institutions, organisations and eminent individuals - sixteen in all - have offered to facilitate or lend their "good offices" in order to overcome the present impasse in the communication between the government and LTTE. So far, however, the Sri Lankan government has publicly not responded to any of these, claiming that the conflict remains an internal affair that does not merit foreign intervention. In April this year, hopes were raised for a softening of this position after the successful intervention of the then British Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Liam Fox. who brokered an agreement between the two major political parties -the SLFP and the UNP - to transcend partisan politics in the search for a political solution to the conflict.

The current situation therefore, is riddled with paradox. On the one hand a government is in power which has presented the most ambitious proposals for devolution of power to date; proposals that might have offered a real chance for a viable peace. On the other, war has been resumed on a hitherto unknown scale, resulting in massive displacement and a major humanitarian crisis. The conflict appears again to generate its own momentum.

IA's Programme in Sri Lanka

IA's Peace Programme for Sri Lanka, which outlines the parameters of IA's "planned intervention into the Sri Lankan situation" aimed at "bringing about a negotiated peace", was initiated between IA and the funding agency DANIDA towards the end of 1993. The terms of reference were that:

- the process should focus on Sri Lankans, not on outside mediators;
- it would primarily be a process supported by projects;
- it must be confidential if it were to succeed; and
- reporting on the programme would be ad hoc and primarily verbal.

The formulation of the programme was thus premised on the recognition that the transition from war to peace can be slow, and that local involvement and ownership in peace-building is essential.

In defining programme activities, IA cast its net widely. Initially, the intelligentsia,the military, the business community, press and other media, religious organisations, politicians and civil society at large were all designated strategic sectors to work with in enhancing a peace constituency. Some of these initiatives exhausted themselves, for different reasons. Thus, e.g., attempts to establish an "eminent persons group" embracing former as well as serving high-ranking military officers to "catalyse the peace process", were abandoned already towards the end of 1993, as "the dynamics of the group broke down and the enthusiasm for the project was lost". Likewise, efforts to penetrate the business community appear to have had much of the same fate. The endeavour to map IA's technical activities, therefore, will basically focus on the organisation's targeting of the media, capacity building and politicians respectively.

Media

The following activities can be grouped under this heading:

- a peace exposure/trip for 8 journalists and peace activists to other conflict-torn societies (South Africa and Northern Ireland) March 1995;
- the production of 10 TV programmes to introduce and advance concepts and formats for conflict resolution through staged discussions on contentious topics like ethnic relations, devolution of powers, impunity, media freedom, etc. (jointly with Common Ground Production (USA) and Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (1995);
- a workshop on "Covering Conflict (1995) organised in conjunction with the Sri Lanka Television Training Institute and the Media Peace Centre (South Africa); and
- a seminar (with The Free Media Movement) on responsibility of the press (1994). In December 1996, this was followed by a similar event focusing on human rights and conflict resolution (under the aegis of the Sasakawa Media Project).

Capacity building

- Assistance rendered to the Centre for Policy Research and Analysis (CEPRA) at the University of Colombo, in order to establish a post-graduate course in conflict resolution (as from 1993).
- Support for the National Peace Council (NPC) which was launched in February 1995, covering all aspects of peace-building measures. NPC is organised as an NGO and based on membership.
- In addition, IA, in 1994/95, had planned two initiatives targeted exclusively at the Tamil Community: (a) a seminar on conflict resolution training in the Jaffna peninsula, and (b) a conference on conciliation between Sri Lankan Tamils (in Singapore). Both initiatives were aborted, in Jaffna because of the military situation and in Singapore for security reasons.

Politicians

IA's most ambitious project was sending a crossparty group of parliamentarians first to Crete (1996), then to Northern Ireland (1996) and lately to the Philippines (1997), to learn about peace processes elsewhere, to provide participants with a wider set of options for a solution to their own domestic conflict, and to forge better contact between politicians of different parties (MP project).

As soon as general elections were called in 1994, IA started preparing for an "accelerated Sri Lanka Programme". Drafted in September, the outline of this document aims at giving maximum support to the new government's quest for peace. Thus in October IA's programme director met with representatives of the military and the negotiating team and handed over a compilation of various ceasefire and confidence-building agreements (from other countries) in preparation of the first round of talks. However, IA was not invited into the process of negotiation as such.

Assessment

In assessing IA's Sri Lanka Programme, we would like to make the following points:

(a) Undoubtedly, IA commands a deep and detailed knowledge of political developments in Sri Lanka and monitors developments on a daily basis. This applies particularly to the political situation in Colombo while accessing LTTE and the territories under its control remains difficult. There is also a close relationship between the analysis made by IA and its evolving priorities. Thus from trying primarily to build strategic constituencies for peace at the time when a peace agenda was not on the cards (pre-Kumaratunga), IA shifted its focus towards trying to build communication channels between the government and LTTE during 1994-95, When negotiations broke down, the process was reviewed and priority given to (a)

creating a voice/space for dialogue and negotiations, and (b) creating, in the South, a bipartisan approach for negotiations, mainly through the MP project.

(b) IA claims that it enjoys excellent access to senior figures on all sides of the conflict. This is difficult to assess given the hierarchical structure of the LTTE as well as the conflicting statements experienced in Colombo regarding IA's relationship to the present Government. In general terms, it is also difficult to assess the impact of IA's activities in Sri Lanka. Some planned activities were never implemented, some that were introduced failed and others were aborted.

Regarding the efforts towards the media in particular, they have met with only limited success. The impact of the peace exposure trip must be considered limited given the small number of people (8) that the project embraced. The production of programmes, while being based on promising ideas, was fraught with conflict between the cooperative partners on various aspects. According to IA's own consultant, "the whole concept of imparting the message of being able to reach agreements in any conflict related situation, was lost". While the workshops on responsibility of the press were widely attended, there has been little or no follow-up. Also, the 3-week course targeted as responsibility in covering conflict and producing television for change, aimed at senior TV-journalists, failed in attracting the desired attraction. A follow-up scheduled for 1996 was postponed as funding proved difficult. On a general level, and given the structure of ownership and control, as well as the hierarchical culture that prevails in the Sri Lankan media, it is difficult for initiatives from outside to have much impact.

(c) By organising the meetings for parliamentarians from all main Sri Lankan parties, IA has helped form a multi-party group of MPs who will hopefully be able to play a constructive role in moving the peace process forward.

The composition of the group - identified with the assistance of the National Peace Council (NPC), who to begin with co-sponsored these arrangements - was largely the same throughout the seminar series. At the end of the meeting in Northern Ireland, the group agreed on signing and publicising a document outlining measures perceived of as imperative to inducing new vigour in the domestic effort to end the ethnic conflict peacefully. These suggestions encompassed to; establish a process of negotiations that should include the LTTE; that a third party facilitator should be considered to move the process forward; and that the deliberations of the Parliament Select Committee should continue with the active support of all parties. While there was no agreed public statement from the meeting in the Philippines, all but one of the 23 MPs wrote a joint letter to the Chairman of the Select

Committee on constitutional affairs, reiterating i.a., the need for a bi-partisan approach and for LTTE to be drawn into discussions.

For the two first events, the outcome was generally welcomed by intellectuals and analysts already committed to a resumption of political negotiations. The latest seminar, however, i.e. in the Philippines, generated a storm of criticism, not least among the respective participants' colleagues in Parliament, resulting in, i.a., the SLFP whip calling his colleagues to book. The critics raised the issue of independence of local parliamentarians from foreign influence, particularly by an international NGO headed by a Sri Lankan who had played a part in the past in Sri Lankan political life.

Given the peculiar character of Sri Lankan party politics, this outcome might have been expected. A more careful strategic consideration therefore, e.g., by advising the group to make public their recommendations after returning to the island rather than before leaving the Philippines, might both have prevented the ensuing debacle and thus, perhaps, made the impact more tangible. However, we do realise that this may have been beyond the control of IA.

Nonetheless, despite the criticism bestowed upon them, the parliamentarians the evaluators met with were unanimous in their appreciation of IA's initiative. The exposure to similarly protracted conflict situations, as well as the realisation that a resolution is possible, was obviously a source of inspiration and reinvigoration for many of those involved. However, when asked to consider the possible short and long term impact of this process, it was generally held that the structuring of Sri Lankan politics was highly resistant to change and hence, represented a serious constraint in this respect. It is, however, recommended that IA proceed with its contacts with the MP group on a low-profile basis, as a durable peace in Sri Lanka is only possible if the polity and the people of the south are behind any peace initiatives being carried forward.

(d) In the field of capacity building, the outlines of the CEPRA course are now finalised, but not yet implemented as the proposal still awaits the endorsement of the university senate. It is expected that the Sinhalese nationalist student movement which is well entrenched in the University of Colombo will strongly object to the introduction of this academic subject.

IA must be given credit for helping to form the National Peace Council (NPC) and for supporting the Council in different ways since its establishment. While appreciating this support, the NPC is careful to point out that the Council is an indigenous initiative with its own work programme and set of priorities. There are worries among some NPC staff that the close association with IA may be considered a possible liability in achieving the

objectives of the Council, particularly following frequent attacks on IA in Sri Lankan newspapers.

(e) The evaluators question the wisdom of the high profile held by IA in Sri Lanka since the Kumaratunga government came to power. IA's advocacy of bipartisan approaches to resolve the ethnic conflict (which is crucial) is by many perceived of as a possible threat, i.e. to the political system, and suspected by certain quarters of including personal political ambitions on the part of its Secretary General. To those nurturing a climate of suspicion, the fact that such allegations could be falsely construed, appears irrelevant.

Unfortunately, such suspicion occasionally seems to spill over also on IA's cooperative partners, and colour the perception of the nature of this collaboration. The Sri Lankan attitude to NGOs as well as international agencies remains largely ambivalent. While acknowledging the positive contribution of international assistance, several international and some domestic, organisations have had to fend off charges of partisanship, and have experienced threats and overt expressions of hostility because of perceptions of their partiality. It is difficult to assess whether IA is particularly vulnerable in this respect. However, many of their partners were careful in underlining their own mandates and contributions to various projects, thus underplaying the significance or extent of IA's input. This attitude, we assume, both reflects a general reluctance to be perceived of as stakeholders in any particular political project, and in part served to control what was by some referred to as "aggressiveness" on the part of IA.

(f) IA has proposed to establish a Sri Lankan Peace Foundation (PF). The plan is to use the foundation for developing a network of scholars and policy makers from Sri Lanka and throughout Asia, as a focal point for promoting peace and mutual understanding between different ethnic groups. The PF will also look to provide active assistance to the government and the LTTE to articulate and elaborate upon their perspectives towards a negotiated settlement. In the longer term, the PF will also be able to input into other regional areas of conflict, particularly in South Asia.

The proposal for the Peace Foundation has been approved by IA's board of trustees but not yet funded. The strategy of building new institutions in the countries where IA operates would seem to go against the frequently expressed objective that IA should support local efforts rather than work on their own.

(g) On 28-30 July 1997, IA organised, in Lucerne, Switzerland, a gathering of key decision makers involved in past peace efforts in Sri Lanka, along with analysts and experts, to review and analyse the attempts that have been made to bring peace to the island and to distil lessons and ideas that can be taken

forward into any future processes. On the Sri Lanka side, there were no government representatives, but participants included many of the key Indian and Sri Lankan officials involved in the various peace processes up to the early 1990s. IA deserves credit for organising the important conference which is likely to be followed up by different measures in the coming months.

International Alert in Burundi

Background

There is no doubt that Burundi is, and has for some considerable time, been in a state of severe political crisis. There is an abundance of books, research reports and studies on different aspects of the remote and more contemporary history of recent developments in that country. An analysis of all this documentation does not provide easy explanations for the present situation of violent conflict and bitter political recrimination. On the contrary, one of the only safe conclusions that can be reached is that the recent events and the present crisis result from an accumulation of past events, with one factor forming a building block for the next, and all actors and factors interrelating and interacting in a complex manner. They are all important but one should be careful not to stress one more than the other.

The causes of politicised ethnicity - involving the two major groups in the country, Hutu and Tutsi - are thus not easily defined. Suffice it here to say that a crisis has been built up in Burundi over a long period of time leading to a severely divided nation on the brink of self-destruction.

After the coup of October 1993 which resulted in the assassination of President Ndadaye, the international community has been following the development of the crisis in Burundi with keen interest. Following the genocide in Rwanda and the self critique among international organisations and the major powers, this interest has led to a great number of initiatives which are all aimed at preventing the escalation of the conflict in Burundi. The United Nations and OAU appointed Special Representatives to Burundi and a large number of international organisations, bilateral donors, and NGOs sent missions and observers to assess the situation and what they could do in order to alleviate the situation. International awareness of the crisis can, therefore, be clearly established and there is no doubt that there was also willingness to contribute to its de-escalation.

However, most actors lacked previous experience on preventive diplomacy and thus a strategy on how to act in the particular situation. In this situation the UN Secretary General´s Special Representative for Burundi (SRSG), Mr Ould Abdallah, made an important contribution and, as far as his mandate allowed him,

assisted in the co-ordination of outside activities and in the assignment of specific roles to the different actors on the scene.

The democratic experiment ended in July 1996 by an army coup that marked the return of former military president Buyoya as the new leader of the government. Although the expectations or hopes today have changed slightly towards giving Buyoya some benefit of doubt that he will work for a sustainable peace, including the restoration of democracy, according to the plan he presented at his re-inauguration, *the fact remains that few improvements, if any, have been made in Burundi since October 1993 towards a long-term peaceful resolution of the conflict.* Thus there have been continued killings going on in the country on a considerable scale. However this does not preclude that international and national efforts made in the area of conflict resolution did not have any effect. The much feared descent into genocidal war on the Rwandan scale of 1994 has been avoided and it can be argued that international attention - in particular the conflict containment and crises management of UN SRSG Ould Abdallah in 1994 and 1995 - has had a preventive effect in this regard.

The International Alert Programme in Burundi

Following the attempted coup in November 1993 and the swift and violent reactions and counter-reactions, Burundi became the focus of international community attention. IA also turned its attention to Burundi and, among other things, established contact with the SRSG, Mr Ould Abdallah. Mr Abdallah suggested that IA use its comparative advantage to convene a meeting between all interested parties - particularly NGOs - to commence a process of co-operation between them and to work out a common agenda of action to help prevent an escalation of the Burundi conflict. IA thus convened a "Burundi Colloquium" in London in February 1995 with some 80 participants from many organisations, where a programme of action was discussed and sketched out. This programme which contains a large number of activities must be seen as a collection of ideas agreed upon by many groups representing donors or NGOs and the Burundi authorities, and as important building blocks in a strategy to prevent further violence - not only for IA but for all actors involved.

In April 1995, IA started activities in Burundi by setting up a three-person team. Before the team worked out its own detailed informed analyses on the situation in Burundi it relied heavily on the SRSG. The activities that dominated in 1995 centred around study tours to South Africa. These were included in the agreed programme and were left to IA to co-ordinate, in close co-operation with the SRSG and other partners. Three such tours were arranged in 1995 leading to a number of follow-up activities such as return visits from South Africa, the CAP-project etc.

These tours and other activities in 1995, provided learning time for the IA Burundi team and opportunity while they were able to rely on the experienced guidance of the SRSG. This period also enabled the building of a degree of trust with the Burundian contacts, and consultation with them on programme ideas.

Based on the experiences gathered during this first year and the analyses made of the situation in the country, a strategy and programme for IA was defined for 1996 and later for the 1996-1999 Programme Proposal. The aim of the programme was now defined as: "helping to prevent escalation of the conflict, and contributing effectively to a process of achieving a just and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi".

The programme builds on the following premises:

"The goal of and for Burundians is durable peace. There are no quick fixes. The strategy has to be one of process. A primary mechanism for catalysing and sustaining the process is the encouragement and facilitation of dialogue".

With these orientations in mind the strategy and programme were built initially on two constructs:

- attention/intervention targeted at four levels: international, regional, national elite and national grassroots,
- attention/intervention on medium and short term time scales.

The programme comprised four parts:

- international information exchange and a capacity for facilitation and advocacy initiatives (INFA);
- an enabling partnership with the Compagnie des Apotres de la Paix (CAP) Group that had emerged from the South African Study tours of 1995;
- a multi-faceted programme to strengthen the peace-building capacity of the Burundian Women's Movement; and
- a number of more finite projects: Political cohabitation support, Peace Radio support, Schools Peace Education support.

The different programmes are in summary and with reference to the classification above:

- the INFA programme operates mainly at the international and regional levels and mainly in the short time frame;
- the CAP partnership operates mainly at the national elite level and in the medium time frame (although there were short term spin-offs, and despite a mistake of expecting too much in the short term);

- the Women's Programme operates at both elite and grassroots levels and in the medium time frame; and
- the political cohabitation project was abandoned. Preparations for the Schools Peace Education project and support for the Peace Radio project are both aimed at the grassroots level and in the medium time frame.

Included in all programmes are elements of training and discussions between and among selected groups of people.

Analyses of the Strategy and Programme of International Alert in Burundi

Context analysis by IA. The over-all aim of IA´s Programme in Burundi as stated by IA itself is "to help prevent escalation of the conflict, and to contribute effectively to the process of a just and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi." In order to fulfil that aim, a deep knowledge of the situation in the country as it develops over time has to be developed and continuously improved and analysed. From the documentation by the IA secretariat in Burundi and interviews with its members and other actors in and outside Burundi, it is clear that a great deal of effort has been made by IA to understand the situation in the country and to draw conclusions from that information. Initially, IA relied heavily on the SRSG´s office. Today most other actors in Burundi seem to value the judgements of IA highly and to think that the analyses of IA are of great use.

Although not always explicitly stated there seems to be a close relationship between the analyses made by the IA secretariat in Burundi and the strategy chosen for the actual interventions. There is an underlying sense of humility that runs through the IA strategy and program. This is evidenced partly by the explicit admission of the difficulties involved in understanding the situation and the constant need to learn and re-learn. A preparedness to reassess the situation and to make necessary changes when needed, can also be seen, for example, after the army coup in July 1996. In fact, the closeness to the day to day developments sometimes might have created an almost excessive readiness to make reassessments and readjustments.

General strategy and programme aim. The aims presented seem to be well adapted to the specific situation prevailing in Burundi in underlining both the immediate short-term need for de-escalating the conflict and the importance of building long or medium term assurances and institutions for a real peace. It seems as if the bias of the programme over time leans toward activities more medium term in nature, an approach which seems to be the only feasible one in the present special situation.

Programme composition. The different activities of the programme ultimately accepted by IA for implementation build on the original proposals developed already at the Burundi Colloquium in early 1995. They were further developed in close co-operation with the SRSG and out of the learning process during 1995. Although many ideas were put forward at an early stage, it appears that IA has been open-minded and receptive and has with great care picked out what a small flexible NGO best could support. In as far it is possible to assess, it seems that the choice of activities has been made in accordance with IA´s analyses on the overall situation and how to alleviate it. By being prepared to work with other partners, it has been able to act as a catalyst and supporter at an early stage before larger or more specialised actors have been able to take over or come in to help.

Some minor exceptions have been discussed. For example in the area of facilitation and advocacy, although in most cases IA has been successful in assisting to implement or start the implementation of important activities on the ground, in at least one major case IA should have refrained from intervention.

Fulfilment of objectives. For each activity IA sets out its aim, strategy and detailed objectives/action plan. From the available documentation and after meeting with people involved in all of the activities, it seems that the immediate objectives in most cases are being fulfilled with the necessary flexibility to make changes when ever needed. Whether each activity fulfils its overall aims depends more on overall developments than on the implementation of the activities themselves, something that is evidenced by examples from the different activities supported by IA.

An important part of all the activities supported by IA is the training component. To prevent escalation of a conflict and in particular to start the long term process of a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi, a new attitude leading to different ways of behaviour must be built up in the country.

Again the fulfilment of the immediate objectives is easy to establish. Many seminars, workshops, briefings and also longer courses have been implemented according to schedule. Most of them are well documented and contain self evaluations and often follow-up activities to assist the trainees to keep up their newly attained knowledge and experiences.

Hardly any training activities supported by IA have been undertaken as one-off events, but, rather, always as part of a clearly defined process with short and long term objectives.

From the "Role of Women's Organisations Program" it is concluded that the important ingredients in this training programme are a) that it forms part of a wider programme of women's peace work and thus does not act as a one-off training activity and b) that the training forms part of a long term strategy where women who have been trained will build up their own committees and continue

to work for peace. From the interviews and study visits, a number of very interesting follow up activities were identified.

The content of the training is extremely difficult to assess. In the interviews, we have, however, tried to assess the impact of the training on the trainees to understand whether the training has avoided possible pitfalls (see Chapter One). It appears that the outcome of the training performed with the support of IA has been to make people aware of possible means of airing grievances and solving conflicts other than by violence, and this it has done successfully without making the trainees complacent or resigned to the status quo. This balance is however very delicate and the issue should be kept under close surveillance at all times. The ethnic divide and the educational imbalance in favour of the Tutsi can easily affect this balance.

Summary and Conclusions

International Alert has only been active in Burundi during a period of two years. It has in this short period of time succeeded in making itself well-established and found a niche for its comparative advantage of being a small neutral NGO with some experience from development work and preventive diplomacy from other similar conflict areas. By co-operating with other partners and in particular with the experienced SRSG and by an approach of listening and learning, it is today accepted and appreciated by all main actors on the Burundi scene, internal as well as external. From interviews with all parties (including extremists on both sides), no major critical voice was raised against IA. This is not a small achievement operating in such a sensitive area as conflict resolution.

The analyses made by the IA Burundi secretariat on the political developments in the country seem well worked through and generally accepted. The choice of activities seems to be in line with those analyses and as far as it is possible to judge, the results notably fulfil the immediate project objectives, but also the overall aims of the IA programme in the country. However, the ultimate objective of the actors on the scene, namely, a major breakthrough in the efforts to reach a sustainable peace, is still far from being met.

International Alert in Sierra Leone

Background

The origins of conflict in Sierra Leone are rooted deeply in the country's history and can be traced back to poor governance and unequal distribution of resources. Outright war broke out in March 1991 when a small group of fighters calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) began launching attacks in the south and east of the country around the Liberian border. Many sought to explain

the fighting as a spillover from the Liberian conflict, downplaying the internal factors which had promoted the formation of the RUF. At this stage, very little was known however, regarding the RUF and its leader, Foday Sankoh, many even doubting the latter's existence. The violence spread quickly, and the Sierra Leone government deployed the army against the rebels without much success. In April 1992 a military coup led by young soldiers brought to power a new (NPRC) government. It promised to make a serious attempt to deal with the rebel incursions and succeeded, with the assistance of Guinean and Nigerian forces, to push the RUF back towards the periphery of the country.

The second major phase of the war began in late 1994 when the RUF broadened the range of its attacks on key economic installations and started a campaign of hostage-taking. Rebel troops reached the outskirts of Freetown in January 1995. The government's response was to bring in foreign troops/mercenaries, first Guerkas who were later replaced by the South African firm Executive outcomes. The war reached its height in 1995, severe abuses against civilians being perpetrated by both sides. By early 1996, it was estimated that over half the population had been displaced.

The capture of the hostages focused international attention on the conflict in Sierra Leone, prompting the involvement of inter-governmental organisations in the search for a resolution to the conflict for the first time. A special envoy was appointed by the UN Secretary General and delegations despatched to the region by the Commonwealth Secretarial (CS) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). At the same time the Government of the Ivory Coast was also proactive in supporting a political process. These initiatives coincided with significant fluctuations in the fortunes of the warring parties, both of whom were finding the political and military price of conflict to be unsustainable and therefore faced pressures to reach a negotiated settlement. The seeds for a peace agreement were sown in late 1994, developed during successive peace talks in late 1995 and early 1996 in talks between the new NPRC government and the RUF held in the Cote d'Ivoire.

The process of negotiation coincided with the process of democratisation, in motion since the people had voted overwhelmingly in favour of multi-party elections in a referendum in 1991. Elections were held in February 1996 and resulted in a broad-based parliament, with Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP elected president. Peace talks continued with RUF leader Foday Sankoh meeting directly with President Kabbah in April 1996. The signing of a peace accord took place in November. Implementation was delayed and has now been postponed since the coup of May 25, 1997.

Many believe that implementation, particularly of the demobilisation process has been deliberately obstructed by Foday Sankoh himself, as the peace process was unable to provide him and the RUF with what he judged a suitable role in post-

conflict Sierra Leone. Members of the RUF external delegation attempted a coup against Sankoh in March 1997, but were subsequently kidnapped by field commanders who have remained loyal to Sankoh. The commitment by the government to the peace agreement has also appeared questionable in light of the military offensives carried out against the RUF by the paramilitary *kamajors* with the support of powerful members of the new government.

The recent coup, instigated by dissatisfied members of the army in collaboration with the RUF, has plunged the country into uncertainty. Once again civilians are the main victims. The combination of violence and suppression by the coup leaders, and the effects of the international sanctions imposed on the country after the army/RUF takeover, has raised the spectre of a major humanitarian crisis in the country.

IA's Programme in Sierra Leone

IA's approach to the conflict in Sierra Leone was laid out in a grant application in 1995. Prior to this IAs programme was low-key, funded out of general funds and an anonymous donation. These early funds enabled IA to undertake two missions to the country in January and February 1995.

The 1995 proposal outlines a "multi-track" approach comprising three elements: facilitation of peace negotiations; assisting a national peace constituency; and building an international support group. Later, post-conflict reconstruction was added, making it a four-pronged approach. As it happened, the scope of the programme was reduced to focus almost exclusively on the negotiations leading to a peace agreement in November 1996.

There has been considerable controversy about IA's engagement in Sierra Leone, and a number of serious allegations have been made regarding several aspects of the organisation's work there.

Assessment

An impact assessment prepared by International Alert for the European Commission evaluation team states that: IA (International Alert, 1997 b), pp. 21-22;

1. Negotiated the hostage release, so clearing a fundamental obstacle to dialogue between the RUF/SL, the GoSL, and the international community;

2. Succeeded in encouraging the RUF/SL to come out of the bush;

3. Helped to build confidence between the rebels and the international community;

4. Established strong links and a good working relationship with the Government of the Cote d'Ivoire, which offered to mediate and host the talks;

5. Brought a balanced perspective to different phases of the negotiation, particularly with regard to the RUF/SL's handicap in communicating and negotiating with inter-governmental organisations;

6. IA supported the first direct contact between the RUF/SL and the ICRC, the Government of La Cote d'Ivoire, the OAU, UN, Commonwealth Secretariat and members of the diplomatic corps in Abidjan.

These claims in relations to IA's activities have been explored in detail by the evaluators. In brief, we present the following assessment:

Hostages

IA's involvement in the hostage-release process was defining for the organisation and its relations with other international actors. The RUF is on record as accrediting IA, and specifically its Special Envoy, with playing a major role in the release of the hostages. It is, however, the evaluators' understanding that ICRC was mandated by the RUF, the GoSL and the governments whose citizens were held captive as the neutral facilitator in the hostage-release process. As a result of the ICRC's interventions and those of other actors, it is also the evaluators' understanding that an agreement had been reached for the release of the hostages prior to IA's intervention. A significant number of sources argue that IA's intervention actually complicated and may have delayed the release of the hostages. This view contrasts sharply with that of IA. The evaluators were unable to reach a final opinion with regard to the positive or negative impact of IA on the timing of the hostages' release. However, evidence does suggest that IA complicated the negotiations which were ongoing and allegedly far advanced. The intervention of a small NGO without previous experience in hostage release and without effective communications infrastructure was clearly a high risk strategy which could have jeopardised the security of the hostages. As it happened, however, all hostages were taken out safely and received by an ICRC delegation at the border to Guinea on 20 April 1997.

When publicising its role in the hostages release, IA was seen as downplaying the mandates and roles of other bodies involved. In addition, it was in this period that IA's neutrality and transparency was first widely questioned by the Freetown authorities, international organisations and other governments. Of particular concern was the poor level of communication between IA and these authorities about the timing of the Special Envoy's visit. As it was, the lack of clarity on this issue resulted in GoSL claiming that IA's Special Envoy had violated Sierra

Leonean sovereignty. By working outside accepted conventions, the organisation was left vulnerable to accusations of being unprincipled and partial.

Facilitating Pre-negotiation Talks

IA played an important role in counterbalancing the widely held view of the RUF as an undisciplined, semi-criminal group. IA was one of the few bodies arguing that the RUF had a significant political agenda. In terms of IA's role in bringing the RUF to the negotiating table, the evidence suggests that there was a complex configuration of political and military factors, nationally, in the sub-region and internationally, which served to create an opportunity for the peace process, and to place pressure on the warring parties to seek a dialogue. However, IA deserves credit for recognising the opportunities for dialogue which were emerging in late 1994 - early 1995 and for maintaining pressure on respective parties to realise it. This opportunity was also recognised by others (UN,OAU,CS,ICRC, Ivorian government). While it is difficult to judge the impact of one variable (IA), there is consensus that IA, in particular its Special Envoy, had a close relationship with Foday Sankoh, which offered the organisation important opportunities to influence the RUF, and facilitate contacts between the RUF and the international community.

Allegations have been made that International Alert undermined the efforts of international organisations to establish links and negotiate with the RUF. The evidence reviewed by the evaluators suggests that at least some of IA's senior staff were at best ambivalent in their attitudes towards international organisations. Relations between IA and the UN SG Special Representative in particular, have been characterised by misunderstandings and mistrust. This was particularly unfortunate as the UN was mandated by the Security Council to facilitate the Sierra Leonean peace talks. The poor relations between IA and the UN have impacted negatively on the broader peace process and international perceptions of the organisation. On balance, therefore, IA was merely one among others that helped to encourage either of the parties to participate in talks. This is also recognised by IA.

Negotiations

IA has claimed a substantive role in the negotiations as a neutral facilitator and that it prepared different materials that were submitted to all parties during the negotiations. These claims were not endorsed by others involved in the peace process, many of whom argued that IA actively advised the RUF, often endorsing its stance on key issues such as the sequencing of peace and elections. IA has stated publicly that it had no position on this issue. However, evidence suggests that it held the view that the elections should be postponed until after the peace agreement had been signed.

While the evaluators respect the view that there was a legitimate discussion to be held regarding the issue of sequencing in the Sierra Leonean case, IA's position gives rise to two key concerns. First, that of transparency. Many actors involved in the process were confused by the apparent contradiction between IA's stated position and its actual interventions. Second, because it denied that it held the position, IA did not publicly make the case for the peace before elections position and therefore did not articulate the conditions under which elections might be postponed. This has given rise to the impression that IA unconditionally supported the RUF's position that the elections should be postponed for an unspecified period. The evaluators recognised that IA was pursuing a risky strategy in being seen to oppose the emerging orthodoxy within the international community on the sequencing issue: its poor handling of this matter meant that it could not effectively articulate the issue but rather caused considerable irritation among those it claimed as its partners in the peace process.

The appearance that IA supported the RUF's positions, and in particular those of its leadership, was reinforced by IA's position with regard to the long interregnum between the formulation of the draft accord in the Spring of 1996 and its final signing in November that year. IA has argued that it was primarily security concerns which prevented Sankoh from returning back to the bush, while others argue that it was more a matter of intransigence. While the evaluators were not able to determine whether or not a significant security threat existed, evidence indicates that there remained substantive political matters outstanding during this period, in particular regarding Sankoh's position in the newly elected government. Throughout this period, the impression was sustained among many in the international community that IA was working as an adviser, not a neutral facilitator, in the peace process.

On a number of occasions it has been alleged that IA insisted on being attributed equal status to that of the IGOs (including the status of moral guarantor/signatory to the peace agreement) and that it would not cooperate with the IGOs and facilitate introductions with the RUF unless this was granted. IA claims that the allegations are untrue and that the organisation openly announced that it would not sign if this would be an obstacle or would delay the signing of the agreement.

Post-negotiations

Following the signing of the peace agreement at meetings of the Trustees in December 1996 and March 1997 it was decided that IA would cease its operational role in Sierra Leone, but that the SG would ensure that the organisation continued to monitor and advise the Trustees of developments.

One month after the signing, the peace agreement was already in trouble. Foday Sankoh refused to meet with the UN Team, led by the UN Special Envoy, to

discuss demobilisation. Without the consent of the RUF, the UN Peace-keeping force could not be dispatched, and so the terms of the Abidjan accord could not be met. Sankoh saw the proposed force as threatening the RUF militarily, so compounding its political marginalisation. Others within the RUF maintained that demobilisation represented the only way forward, participating in Freetown committees to prepare for demobilisation and attempting to persuade Sankoh to modify his position.

In February 1997, there was a meeting between Lord Judd, the Chair of IA's Management Advisory Committee and the UN Secretary-General. Following this meeting it was agreed to send IA's Special Envoy to Abidjan in an attempt to persuade Sankoh to meet with the UN team. However, by the time IA's Special Envoy arrived in Abidjan, Sankoh had been arrested in Lagos on charges of carrying a pistol and ammunition.

Despite the fact that the Special Envoy's visit came about as result of the meeting between the UN Secretary General and one of IA's Trustees, IA's continued involvement in the Sierra Leone since the signing of the Agreement has attracted further controversy. IA's interventions, in particular its continued lobbying of senior politicians and international civil servants, despite the Trustees' decision to become "non-operational", served to create confusion (and thus suspicion) regarding IA's intentions.

Further, throughout this period, also after the coup, IA has been seen to present itself as an advocate of RUF interests rather than a neutral party advocating the achievement of a just and peaceful settlement. This is reflected in, e.g., the non-mention of Sankoh's failure to return to Sierra Leone and to meet with UN peace-keeping authorities. The fact that the RUF has actively aligned itself with a military coup overthrowing an elected government, however frail, has not made matters easier.

The evaluators regret that international organisations and several governments while making serious allegations that IA's intervention had serious negative effects on the peace process in Sierra Leone, did not make their feelings known formally and in writing to IA and its Trustees. This has weakened the agency's capacity to be fully accountable and indeed to defend itself. However, while IA claims to have examined rigorously the risks of its continued involvement in Sierra Leone, it is of concern that senior staff and Trustees did not, at an earlier stage, respond to the adverse reactions against IA and its work in Sierra Leone.

General Comments

IA faced a genuine moral dilemma in its work in Sierra Leone. It rejected the view, and perhaps rightly so, that by ignoring the RUF and seeking to marginalise

them they would somehow disappear. It therefore sought to engage with the RUF, and the RUF mandated IA to "facilitate all contacts that may be proposed by any international body, organisation or groups" (11 September 1995). Taking the RUF seriously, however, was itself a political statement and contributed to the legitimacy and political strength of the movement.

This is a dilemma which faces inter-governmental organisations repeatedly, but usually in their dealings with "illegitimate" governments. Thus the UN and others dealt with the NPRC, perhaps one of the most violent and illegitimate regimes Sierra Leone has seen - without international condemnation for doing so.

In a state-centric world the playing field is uneven. In trying to redress the imbalance between state and non-state actors, IA, like other conflict resolution NGOs, is breaking new ground and trying to address an obvious failing of existing formal diplomatic structures. In such circumstances, there are no clear maps or manuals, rather it is necessary to adopt an iterative approach, to exercise good judgement, and to operate according to clear guidelines, even more so in such unruly and difficult terrain as is the case in Sierra Leone.

Our main criticism of IA's work in Sierra Leone is not that IA engaged itself, but that it operated with insufficient clarity and transparency. We would particularly like to make the following points:

a) More than anything else, the hostage issue, besides being a high-risk strategy for a small organisation, contributed to adverse feelings and negative perceptions among other actors and groups being involved in the Sierra Leone peace process. It was particularly perceived that IA was not transparent in its dealings with other actors; that it lacked procedures and competence to carry out the role it had mandated itself to do; and that it placed undue emphasis on its own institutional goals.

(b) Problems of credibility and transparency continued to affect IA in Sierra Leone and led to mistrust and suspicion that the organisation was not neutral nor transparent in its dealing with international organisations. In other words, it lacked a series of principles to guide its work when engaging with a violent non-state entity widely perceived as illegitimate. Whether or not IA appreciated the complexities of the conflict, in terms of the different perceptions of the RUF by others, and that there were substantial political interests particularly within the Sierra Leone Government, in "demonising" rebel activity, is somewhat uncertain. This is not to say that IA's early engagement in Sierra Leone was not justified, but rather that there seems to have been a lack of explicit appreciation of the difficult issues, including the RUF's lack of support within the country and its record of human rights abuses.

(c) IA explicitly sought to legitimise the RUF and by so doing enable the warring parties to communicate and so seek a political settlement. This is a legitimate approach. However, its apparently unconditional engagement with the RUF, particularly during the long interregnum between May and November 1996, and again following the signing of the peace talks, not only served to question IA's neutrality, but also its interpretation of its self-proclaimed human rights mandate. While conflict resolution and human rights work are not necessarily compatible goals, in IA's documentation it continues to profess a role in the latter as well as the former activity. Apparently engaging as an adviser to and advocate for the RUF with its rather poor human rights record raised questions about its interpretation of its human rights mandate.

(d) International Alert and its Trustees have engaged in regular internal reviews of the Sierra Leone programme, lately in a submission to the Board on July 26, 1997. In this document and others, IA admits to having made a number of mistakes, including its inability to re-establish full communication with all parties after the hostage episode, the failure to pursue a multi-track approach, poor communications with its partners and the different governments involved, lack of sufficient research and administrative support capacity for its efforts, and failure to act in a way which would be seen as even-handed or impartial at all times. The organisation, however, does not seem to have been able to articulate clearly the lessons learned by clarifying sufficiently key policy issues regarding for example, neutrality, consent and dealing with non-state military forces. Nor do these reflections seem to have resulted in sufficient understanding of the nature and extent of international mistrust of the organisation. It is particularly the overarching and principled issues, and not only the details, that IA needs to confront and articulate in the case of Sierra Leone.

(e) During our assignment, we have felt strongly that the many allegations directed against IA in connection with its involvement in Sierra Leone is seriously affecting the organisation's reputation, credibility and effectiveness and, therefore, also staff morale. While we do appreciate the need for the organisation as well as staff members to defend themselves against allegations which they find grossly unfair and unjustified, there is an urgent need to confront the main issues and then to move on to new challenges and pressing priorities.

Chapter Four: International Alert at the Crossroads - Summary of Findings and Recommendations

International Alert: An evolving mandate in a changing world

International Alert was established as a response to frustrations felt by its founders concerning how internal conflicts, particularly those which target ethnic minorities, undermine efforts to protect human rights and deter economic and social development. Governments, it was felt, were not sufficiently concerned with this, because they endorsed the principle of state sovereignty; human rights organisations like Amnesty International, were mainly concerned with individuals rather than collectivities; and aid organisations were generally not preoccupied with human rights issues. The early concerns that led to the establishment of IA were, therefore, in large measure, related to massive human rights violations (including "structural" violations) affecting ethnic minorities and producing serious conflicts in many different parts of the world.

Martin Ennals and the small group of colleagues who were involved in the creation of IA gave themselves a difficult mandate. First, the violence which has haunted countries as diverse as Sudan, Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone, has multiple origins inside and outside the countries, reflecting a complex configuration of social, economic and political factors. Alongside the majority who seek political solutions to end violence, is often a significant minority (including international actors) who seek to sustain the conflict dynamics in different ways.

Second, it seems to be particularly difficult to manage or resolve conflicts where deep-rooted and sensitive identity-issues are at stake. The tendency on the part of those who dominate the status quo is to deny the essence of the problem and give it more palatable labels, which represent partial truth at best and distortions at worst. When culture, religion and other factors are merged into a composite identity which is then projected to define the nation, the crisis becomes a zero-sum contest for the soul of nationhood. Under these circumstances, even diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict tend to shy away from the truth because it points the path to failure. And yet, it cannot be wished away and solutions based on half-truths are not likely to endure.

Diplomatic or other intercession that seeks quick fixes in addressing such complex issues can only complicate the crisis. There is a tendency to look for aspects of a problem that lend themselves to relatively easy solutions and to postpone more difficult ones. While this is understandable, and perhaps even practical, it is probably the more difficult ones that eventually provoke people to violent confrontation making them determined to kill and risk being killed.

While a complex array of instruments has been developed internationally to manage inter-state conflicts, these have proved themselves extremely limited in the context of internal war. For those working in internal conflicts the obstacles are, therefore, formidable. They are at once analytic (both in terms of seeking an explanation of a particular conflict, and recognising that these explanations situate their actors politically), as well as being ethical, juridical and highly practical.

The main reason for addressing such intricate issues at the outset of this final chapter is related to our concerns pertaining to IA's current profile, priorities and problems. We have noted in earlier chapters how the mandate and priorities of IA have evolved with changing circumstances. Among NGOs, IA was among the first to become engaged in conflict resolution and has been a leading advocate for claiming that NGOs have a number of advantages which can prove invaluable in conflict situations. As a consequence, IA has given increasing priority to more operational work, including attempts to bring parties in conflict together for negotiations.

There is general agreement that much of the organisation's growth, its high profile and capacity to raise funds and to network has been due to the creativity and the energy of IA's current SG. His skills and numerous contacts have led to innovative initiatives to be undertaken by the organisation. Paradoxically, these very strengths may be considered a source not only of the organisation's successes but also its problems, particularly in terms of management structure and style.

Following internal processes and the BDO review referred to in Chapter Two, some of these problems are now being addressed by IA. They can be conceptualised in different ways. In an internal memo, Special Envoy Ed Garcia writes about the need to "routinise charisma": How does one create structures and processes that are transparent, predictable and participatory without at the same time losing flexibility and the capacity to respond rapidly to fast-changing situations? How does one delegate authority and manage a fast-growing organisation as well as assess performance to ensure the high quality of work expected of an organisation like IA?

The BDO review pursued such questions and a number of recommendations were made mainly regarding management systems and procedures (see Chapter Two). Some good work is currently being done at IA to improve things in this area. This is positive.

The BDO consultants, however, also argued that IA would have to develop a strategic plan based on clear organisational aims and objectives. If it is to flourish in an increasingly competitive environment, they argue that IA must focus on work in which it can demonstrate competitive advantage.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, IA started a "strategic planning process" in April 1997, and has so far concentrated on getting management systems "right", and less on some of the key issues that would seem to arise from this evaluation. By way of a summary, we will, therefore, pull together some main points as we see them and make a number of recommendations as we move along. At the end of this chapter, we will convey our opinions on the future role and profile of IA.

General Assessment

The picture we have drawn of IA, mainly in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, contains both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, we regard IA's main achievements to have been in the following two areas:

(i) IA has, both through its numerous publications (most of them authored by Kumar Rupesinghe and Ed Garcia) as well as its advocacy work, contributed to making conflict prevention and resolution issues an important sphere of action among governments, IGOs and NGOs. In the NGO community, IA has largely inspired the entry of NGOs into this area of work.

(ii) Through many of its field programmes (e.g. in Sri Lanka and Burundi), IA has successfully contributed to the development of local peace constituencies which are involved at different levels in creating spaces for dialogue, building bridges and improving communication between conflicting parties (e.g. MP group in Colombo, CAP group and women's groups in Burundi). Through such work, IA has actively supported those who seek non-violent solutions against powerful advocates of violence.

On the negative side, we would particularly like to make the following general assessment:

It has been noted that IA still lacks clear organisational aims and objectives. This is reflected in many areas of its work. Thus, e.g., while Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka are different countries with different problems and therefore, in need of different interventions, IA's approaches and programmes in those countries are so different that they appear almost to have been made by three different organisations. For those who cooperate with the organisation or entrust their funds to it (i.e. the donors), the lack of a clear and transparent strategy has made IA seemingly unpredictable in terms of what it is doing and where it is going. This has been particularly highlighted by its involvement in Sierra Leone. Thus, e.g. on

what grounds, with reference to what part of its mandate, did IA choose to engage in hostage release? How did it come about that IA was seen by many as a competitor to other agencies with clear mandates, either regarding hostage release (ICRC) or conflict management (UN)? These and other questions have justifiably been raised and they reflect, in our view, weaknesses pertaining to IA's current identity, profile, objectives and strategy.

In what follows, we will elaborate on some of the areas which we believe are important for the organisation to confront and articulate clearly when developing a strategic plan for the future. The evaluators have noted that IA has drawn up an agenda that will guide future planning and follow up to this evaluation, very much in line with the recommendations below.

The Importance of Analysis

Many actors who intervene in Africa and elsewhere are motivated by good intentions, but lack reliable and robust analysis. The challenge, therefore, is to engage in thorough analysis of specific conflicts and their causes before any final decision is made to engage in any particular conflict situation.

In the case of Burundi, we have seen the efforts which have gone into a continuous review of broad aspects of the political situation, and how the high quality of IA's analysis of evolving conditions in Burundi has earned wide respect and provides an important basis for IA's work in that country.

As stated in Chapter Three, we feel that the failure of IA to analyse objectively the dynamics of political conflict in Sierra Leone and in particular its own work, adversely affected its work relations and contributed to perceptions that IA was not working as a neutral party, but rather as a partial adviser and advocate of the RUF.

We do of course acknowledge that information is highly politicised in the environments in which IA works, and that there are risks of having written analyses which might be leaked and offend others, thus perhaps undermining IA's own efforts. Our point however is different. First, without a thorough, robust and impartial assessment of the origins, contours and deep causes of any particular conflict, it is impossible to identify key entry points for intervention and to reassess the situation as things develop.

Second, any analysis of a particular conflict must, following IA's new draft guidelines, include considerations relating to (a) the possible impact of intervention, (b) resource requirements, (c) possible risks involved, and (d) the fit between any particular intervention and IA's objectives and values. We take note of and recognise that IA is about to introduce this kind of preinvolvement

appraisal, and would like to underline that it must be done as a continuous internal process, independent on whether or not IA can or would want to publicise its analyses. Thus in the cases of both Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, we have, i.a., questioned IA's judgement regarding the political impact of certain interventions as well as the potential risks for a continued constructive engagement.

Finally, it goes without saying that analysis is equally important when it comes to more thematic areas of IA's work, such as advocacy and training. The impact and relevance of such work is only as good as the contents on which it is based.

Recommendation

Any decision to establish activities in a particular country affected by conflict must be preceded by a thorough and impartial analysis of the conflict and its causes. In addition, such analysis must be related to IA's objectives and core values, an assessment of impact of alternative activities, the risks involved and the resources required, in terms of both staff (and thereby also knowledge) and money. Sufficient funds, clearly allocated, should be earmarked for this purpose.

Ethical Issues and Principles

Generally, IA is faced with two levels of moral decision-making. The first level is strategic and concerns whether or not the organisation should be involved in a given situation. The second level is more tactical and concerns how IA and its staff should operate once they are involved. The challenge for an organisation like IA is to determine the proper limits of its moral responsibility, a "moral bottom line" which has to decide what is an acceptable trade-off between ends and means (see Chapter One). While such trade-offs may be extremely difficult to determine, we find that IA has paid insufficient attention to the problems involved.

Neutrality: Perhaps more than anything else, it was a perceived lack of clarity in terms of the basis on which IA was intervening, which served to adversely affect IA's credibility in Sierra Leone. IA consistently described its role in Sierra Leone as that of a neutral facilitator, yet its approach was more like that of an advisor to the RUF. Significantly, a number of key informants took the view that it would not have been inappropriate for IA to have played the role of advisor to the RUF, because (a) they were obviously in need of advice, and (b) IA was seen to have potentially important resources which could have been used to act in this role. While it is unclear why IA did not publicly take the route of acting as an adviser to the RUF, what other actors found confusing, not to say harmful, was that IA consistently claimed that it was working as a neutral facilitator, when its actions appeared the opposite. In Burundi, it is our clear impression that IA is seen as being neutral, and that such perceptions provide the organisation with more space within which to operate.

It is of concern to the evaluators that at present only a draft paper exists on neutrality although the Trustees asked for guidelines to be worked out in November 1995. The paper does not fully reflect the international experience and literature on the issue nor does it provide working definitions of the terms used.

Dealing with the unlike-minded: IA still describes itself in its literature and letterhead as "the standing international forum on ethnic conflict, genocide and human rights". It says that it is "... strictly bound to international standards of human rights and humanitarian law".

As there are tensions between the role of neutral facilitator and that of advisor, so there are tensions between that of a human rights group and one concerned with conflict resolution. In particular, the conventional strategy of denouncement used by human rights agencies is frequently seen as incompatible with the strategies required for facilitation of negotiations.

The issue of working with the "unlike-minded", be they rebel groups or governments, is not one faced by IA alone: in Sierra Leone, the UN and Commonwealth Secretariat among others, have been engaging with successive regimes with known poor human rights records. In the case of IA, the tension between its human rights and conflict resolution mandates is problematic for the organisation's work in all three countries selected for case study analysis.

At a broad level, it seems unclear how IA interprets its human rights mandate. In Sierra Leone, we are aware that IA staff provided copies of Amnesty International's reports on Sierra Leone and copies of the Geneva Conventions to senior RUF officials and military commands. Such work is extremely important, and needs to be made very explicit when an organisation claims to represent a human rights perspective while simultaneously promoting the RUF as a "just cause". The legitimation of warring partners is a key dilemma. Not that it is itself bad. The question is how far this should extend, on what principles support is given and under what conditions it should be withdrawn.

Any actor in the field of conflict resolution in Burundi is faced with the same kind of difficulties. Many people in public life are in one way or another identified with the continued internal strife, some of them, being themselves instigators of extreme violence and killings. At the same time, they must also be part of any solution. At the moment, clear ethical guidelines do not exist regarding how IA staff should act in such situations.

Again, the main reason for bringing up such issues is not that we believe there are easy answers. Rather what has been seen as a lack of ethical framework at IA has not only (a) exposed the organisation to criticism, but also (b) constrained its operational capacity.

Recommendations

IA should produce a code of conduct, including ethical guidelines for its engagement in conflict situations. This should include a policy outlining IA's understanding of the principle of neutrality. It is advisable that IA consult with reputable international experts as part of this process.

IA should clarify its mandate on human rights, and in particular articulate the contradictions and complementarities between human rights and conflict resolution work.

Relations with International Organisations and other Actors

According to its latest "mission and values" statement (July 1997), IA will work to achieve its goals, i.a., by facilitating peace processes through collaboration with others, by supporting local efforts and encouraging peace coalitions and multi-track approaches (p.3.)

While in Burundi, IA has entered an active cooperation with the UN and other partners, including local organisations, the organisation failed to cooperate effectively with most international organisations and governments in Sierra Leone. In Sri Lanka, particularly following the largely negative press coverage of IA's activities there, there are worries that a close association with IA may be considered a possible liability.

In Sierra Leone, and given that IA set itself the objective of working closely with international and other bodies, it is alarming to find at times that the organisation was clearly seen by others as actively working against the spirit of these objectives, and that this contributed to the breakdown of trust between IA and other bodies crucial for its work. As a strong advocate of multitrack diplomacy, IA was seen to break with its own principles.

Based on our findings, IA was often not successful in achieving its objectives of partnership and coalition building. Admittedly, some failures are due to lack of funding which, e.g., has made it impossible to follow up on initiatives, meetings and conferences, thereby disappointing potential partners who thought they were about to be included in a major activity. Given the increasing competition for donor funds in the broad area of conflict resolution, we cannot exclude that others might also be in the wrong, making steady and long-term cooperation particularly difficult. However, our message is simple:

Recommendation

For a small NGO, it is important to act as a catalyst, facilitator and/or fund raiser in the implementation of well defined programmes of peace-building rather than

keep projects for itself. Not only does multi-track diplomacy, for which IA has been a major advocate, require such cooperation, but peace building more generally is best done in partnerships - both local and international. IA's *role*, however, in such partnerships will depend on how it sees itself: as an *advocate* for effective conflict management by warring parties and the international conflict management system, or as a *participant* in the conflict management process. More on this below.

Management and Organisational Issues

Recommendations

In Chapter Two we have reviewed a limited number of issues related to the running of the organisation. We take note of and recognise some of the good efforts being done to address weaknesses as identified in the BDO review. There are still a number of remaining issues which need to be tackled. We refer to our various recommendations in Chapter Two. We would, however, particularly like to emphasise the following points:

(i) At present, the lack of clarity regarding priorities (geographical focus vs. dispersal of resources, thematic concentration areas, a.o.) means that "it is difficult for stakeholders to determine the "balance of intent" which the organisation is seeking to achieve" (BDO review p. 17). This may impair the organisation's ability to attract funding and maximise the benefit derived from its scarce resources.

(ii) A greater clarity of objectives will also improve internal communication and ensure that IA only implements those projects which will support the strategic objectives of the organisation. This ought to ensure a better follow-up of activities which have been started, which is currently a problem according to IA's own impact analysis.

(iii) Given the fact that IA operates in an area where some of its activities are likely to become controversial and subject to allegations, like we have seen it in the case of Sierra Leone in particular, it is important that IA has a management style characterised by openness and a willingness to be self-critical if it is to defend its interests. In the conflict resolution area, a preoccupation with being recognised and maintaining high profile, although understandable and legitimate to an extent, may undermine the capacity to operate in optimal ways.

(iv) In order for IA to build up long-term programmes in partnership with other organisations, long-term commitments are important. Short-term programmes are unlikely to deliver sustainable results. It is therefore important that IA's

fund-raising department continues its efforts to (a) broaden the funding base and (b) secure sufficient stability in terms of funding. Following the review, it is important that IA engages with donors so as to reach a common understanding on its funding requirements in relation to its strategic plan and objectives, including the issue of core vs. project/programme funding.

Training and Advocacy

Recommendations

Training. It is recommended (i) that IA should not involve itself in conflict resolution training on any large scale and (ii) that it be done in close cooperation with local and other partners. While training can be important in a peace building process, it should be part of a medium - or longterm strategy rather than an activity of its own, i.e., be integrated into other, complementary programmes of IA. It should also be exclusively planned for each particular conflict in question and tailor-made to address the particular situation in a given country. This is in line with current thinking at IA's Resource Development and Training Department.

Advocacy. There is currently less need for generic advocacy to promote policy changes regarding preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention among international organisations and Western governments. IA should concentrate on working with targets in the development and operationalisation of prevention policies rather than raising the issues in general. In particular, there would seem to be a need for advocacy and lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice which are at the core of most internal conflicts in the world. Advocacy projects should be carefully planned and IA should seek in-depth and sustained cooperation with other institutions whenever this is possible.

NGOs and Conflict Management - the Future Directions of IA

As indicated above, there is concern at the moment with the current profile of IA, both among donors, in the aid community and among trustees. With its very rapid growth a few years ago, the organisation developed into "many things". It has recently been engaged in a broad range of activities, including mediation, early warning, establishing dialogues between warring parties, advocacy, training, working with local NGOs, peace building programmes at the grassroot levels, and so on.

In all these areas, there are many other organisations working, often in the same countries and often with basically the same approaches and methodologies. How does IA differentiate itself from its competitors? In contexts where cooperation between different actors on different levels is required, what is the value added by IA's input?

IA has recently started to raise such questions, i.a., in a submission to its Board of Trustees (IA's Mission and Values) on 26 July 1997. In this paper, which will be revised, it is proposed that IA's main "mission" is "to work to resolve violent conflicts within countries and regions and to promote the prevention of conflict". An attempt is also made to summarise IA's comparative advantage, basically referring to (a) its 12 years of accumulated experience, (b) IA being a "knowledge based" organisation, and (c) being strategically located with an outreach to both grass roots movements and political elites. This position enables IA to be a *catalyst* in initiating new actions, in mobilising contacts and providing insights into conflict situations. IA will therefore be a *broker*, and a *facilitator*, in bringing disparate groups together.

The paper goes on to spell out how IA will work to achieve its goals; by (i) creating spaces for dialogue; (ii) facilitating peace processes; (iii) building capacities and supporting local efforts; (iv) advocating, alerting, informing and catalysing early action and policy information; and (v) encouraging peace coalitions and multi-track approaches.

This is well as far as it goes. However, as argued throughout this report, we feel strongly that IA must establish greater clarity regarding the niche it intends to occupy in the broad area of conflict resolution. In that context, we would particularly like to make the following points:

a) If we go back to the discussion briefly introduced in Chapter One, one of the lessons we can learn from the humanitarian tragedies of Somalia, Rwanda and the Balkans is that long-term structural causes of conflict are not easily amenable to manipulation. While the seductiveness of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention seems obvious, the urge to take preventive action - to do something, anything - can lead to poorly thought out policies that lack strategic sense. To the extent that preventive diplomacy or conflict prevention are tools for conflict suppression, and to the extent they may be effective (which is often not the case), they may also have the effect of freezing a disadvantageous status quo and stifling political change. Preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention do not lessen difficult choices for leaders, nor do they necessarily lessen costs. For either of them to succeed, policy-makers must spell out their interests, create priorities among cases and balance goals with resources. For preventive diplomacy to contribute to conflict resolution, therefore, its adherents must answer the question that has riddled peace studies and international relations alike for centuries: how to create conditions for peaceful political change.

(b) In most cases, successful intervention would clearly seem to depend on the implementation of a comprehensive, multi-faceted process. A comprehensive approach often implies that more rather than less time will be needed - something that may frustrate "quick-fix" practitioners. In the absence of such

a process, interventions are likely to be isolated, haphazard, oriented towards crisis-solving and mostly counter-productive.

Solutions are likely to be temporary unless they are based on all-inclusive policies that accommodate the aspirations and fears of all or most citizens of a country. Solutions that restore the rights of minorities or majorities (like in South Africa) previously excluded should not result in new groups being formed that in turn feel excluded. This will merely sow the seeds of future conflict and instability.

Political solutions that involve the active participation of civil society are likely to be more durable than agreements made between political elites only. Not only can such participation ensure that agreements have the support of the broader population, it can also initiate options which political constraints prevent party-political leaders from introducing.

(c) Conflict resolution is a complex business with very high stakes for all those involved, but particularly for those living in the conflict-affected country. At present the comparative advantages of government-funded NGOs in these environments are unclear. We do believe that many NGOs bring several special qualities to peace building, especially through their particular insights into different cultures, their relationships with local partners, and their understanding of the links between crisis management and long-term development. Developing an infrastructure that sustains peacebuilding within a given conflict is of paramount importance. In looking at a situation of long-term conflict and war, agencies from outside the country, including NGOs, should recognise that there are many levels of activity, as well as many actors and functions necessary for peace building. Most peace operations tend to rely on a top-down approach, in which elites make decisions that are supposed to be implemented throughout the rest of the country. In many cases, however, relying solely on a top-down approach to peace building results in failure.

As a result of their focus on the middle and grassroots levels of societies in crisis, NGOs tend to be particularly effective at working with both a country's mid-level officials and local populations. Because of their familiarity with the country and its decision makers, NGO representatives often have a keen understanding of the realities on the ground, allowing them to reach across their counterparts from other agencies into a web of indigenous officials and resources in order to build and maintain a sustainable infrastructure that has a better chance of ameliorating not just the manifestations, but also the causes of conflict.

(d) We are of course also aware that individual mediators and NGOs have helped or even taken the lead regarding negotiations in some areas - for example, the Carter Center in Haiti and the Comunità di Saint Égidio in Mozambique. We do believe that NGOs can perform a number of potentially constructive roles in crisis situations, including intercession/good offices work and mediation to prevent violence. However, the Sierra Leonean case suggests that there will often be very limited space within which an NGO can operate at the highest level of political negotiations. IA maintains that in the Sierra Leonean case it has encountered powerful interests who have actively sought to undermine its work, and that it has evidence of this. What is at issue is not the truth or otherwise of these claims, but rather that such interests will almost invariably exist in such contexts. While governmental and inter-governmental organisations can counter these pressures by virtue of their legal status, NGOs are necessarily extremely vulnerable. Endeavours such as those by IA in Sierra Leone entail high risks, tend to become controversial and are also particularly demanding in terms of staff requirements, knowledge and administrative support. Generally, NGOs may not be able to sustain such efforts, particularly if they are not done in very close and transparent partnerships with other organisations, like the UN, other IGOs or governments. They also nee to be widely accepted, have the necessary respect and support, and be seen to have very special, general and country-specific expertise and competence to offer. Also, the opportunity for playing such roles often arises by chance. We do not believe, therefore, that an NGO like IA should define mediation as its particular niche. Nor do we believe that NGOs alone can compensate for the failure of governmental and inter-governmental bodies to effectively confront the problem of internal war. Rather, the priority should be in improving the effectiveness and accountability of public diplomacy. The primary role of NGOs in these environments is more likely to be as scrutineers of these public processes and as advocates to increase their effectiveness rather than as participants in them.

Recommendations

Based on such considerations, we feel that IA should give priority to the following areas:

(a) IA should strive to *create spaces for dialogue*, not primarily by facilitating negotiations but by helping to develop local peace constituencies at different levels (f.ex. MP project in Sri Lanka, CAP project and grassroot organisations in Burundi). In this area, IA should help empower such constituencies through the transfer of skills, knowledge and resources.

(b) IA should be engaged in *advocacy and lobbying around critical issues of political, social and economic justice*, i.e. flag its solidarity and human rights profile as part of its input into long-term processes of conflict management and resolution. In this work, projects and target groups should be carefully selected and IA should seek sustained and in-depth cooperation with other institutions whenever this is possible.

(c) We would encourage *efforts towards geographic concentration*. Given that the origins and contours of intra-state conflict differ substantially from country to country, due to historical, cultural, political and regional factors, interventions in any country requires considerable competence. In this sense, IA is not, at the moment, a "knowledge-based" organisation to the extent one would wish to see it (see above). It makes sense, in our view, to concentrate efforts on a limited number of countries, within only a few sub-regions, and to build competence as well as strong, long-term partnership in the respective areas of work.

Issues for Donors

At present the total amount of official development assistance which is being allocated to conflict prevention and resolution work of the type practised by IA is unclear. However, there appears to be an expansion in the funding available for such work with an increasing number of donors creating specialist budget lines and structures for this type of work.

Funding NGOs to work in these complex environments raises questions for the donors who support them in terms of how such grants are to be managed. While this type of activity is typically funded from aid budgets, the content of these interventions lies very much in the domain of ministries of foreign affairs. While it was outside the remit of the evaluation to specifically review the mechanisms used by the donors funding this study in terms of the way in which information is shared and used across departments in this sphere, clearly the issue of coherence between aid and foreign policy domains is of significant importance in order to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to appraise, monitor and evaluate this type of programme. The issue of coherence raises a further question for donors regarding whether their support for such interventions is likely to be conditional upon the NGOs they support necessarily following strategies which are consistent with the foreign policy of donor states. Either way there are risks. If NGOs act in a manner which conflicts with the foreign policy position of the funding state this can be embarrassing politically. However, demanding that NGOs toe a donor's foreign policy line is also not necessarily a desirable precedent to be setting. Clearly, donor involvement in this type of programme also raises significant practical and ethical dilemmas which are worthy of further analysis and exchange of experience between different agencies.

An additional set of issues confronts donors in terms of the criteria they should use to appraise the appropriateness of different project proposals, and to monitor and evaluate their performance. Unlike other aspects of development cooperation where consensus has been developing over several decades regarding what constitutes good practice, at present donors lack similar understanding of the conflict resolution sphere. Defining such good practice in relation to NGO-led conflict resolution work would need to be done as part of a comprehensive review of the comparative advantages of multilateral, bilateral and NGO conflict resolution efforts.

In March 1997 the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD published the report of the Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development. This highlighted the important and growing role of official development assistance in conflict prevention and resolution. In light of the growing international interest in funding NGO projects specifically aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, and the complex political and administrative issues this raises for bilateral donors, it is proposed that Member States should encourage the DAC Secretariat to research and draft guidelines for Members in this area.

Further, in this context it is recommended that donors should commission system-wide evaluations of the international conflict resolution system, similar to that supported by the Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Genocide and Conflict in Rwanda. By reviewing the performance of different actors and parties to a particular conflict, greater accountability and transparency could be achieved in the sphere of conflict management. Further, it would help to define more clearly the comparative advantages of NGOs working in this sphere.

Annex 1:

EVALUATING CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Context, Models and Methodology

A Discussion Paper Prepared for the Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway

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May 1997

The discussion paper is structured as follows. The opening section defines conflict resolution and establishes some of its key characteristics. It also examines the challenge that conflict resolution represents for independent evaluation. That is, assessing its claim to be able to resolve and prevent internal war. In approaching this issue, Section 2 describes those factors within the current international system which have helped conflict resolution to gain prominence. Notably, the collapse of alternative Third World and Socialist political projects. Section 3 examines in more detail the socio-psychological model of conflict employed and its derived resolution activities. Section 4 contrasts this model with an alternative view of internal war derived from anthropology and political economy. Finally, Section 5 draws these strands together to consider a possible methodology for evaluating conflict resolution. It is argued that attempting to assess effectiveness using technical criteria is futile. Impact can only be imputed through critical sociological analysis.

1. DEVELOPMENT AS BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Since the end of the Cold War, two related but different images of the international scene have gained currency. On the one hand, we have an alleged 'new world disorder' and the decent of some regions into apparent chaos and mindless violence (Kaplan, 1994). In contrast, an increasing number of agencies are claiming that this instability can be controlled and mitigated through appropriate forms of intervention and support (Rupesinghe, 1996). From this perspective, it is possible to end wars and avert future confrontations by transforming conflict into non-violent means of social change. This paper is tasked with addressing how one could evaluate such claims.

Unless indicated otherwise, conflict resolution is used in this paper as a generic term covering a wide range of prevention, management and resolution activities currently undertaken by non-governmental (NGOs) and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs). Prevention, for example, can involve establishing early warning systems, mounting fact finding missions, mediation and other forms of preventive diplomacy. Conflict management might encompass lobbying protagonists, deploying sanctions in support of international law, or using political leverage to gain humanitarian access. Finally, conflict resolution itself can comprise a number of activities including confidence-building exercises between opposed groups, training in methods of non-violent social transformation, or support for plural civil and political

institutions. There is no single definition for this type of work. Moreover, although described here under different headings, actual interventions may well involve a mixture of these various activities.

The different undertakings that fall within conflict resolution represent an important growth area for aid agencies (Voutira and Brown, 1995). Aspects of conflict resolution, however, have a long pedigree. For example, in relation to resolving labour and business disputes in the West. What marks the present departure, however, is the extension of this type of approach to the larger and more complex field of political processes within countries. Conflict resolution is nothing if not the promise of social engineering on a grand scale. It is also a good example of the manner in which the theory and practice of development has radically changed over the past couple of decades.

Until the 1970s, the post-colonial model of development was mainly concerned with inequalities between nations and the economic and political measures necessary to redress this situation. For example, resource redistribution, preferential economic mechanisms, support for infrastructural improvement, together with the creation and expansion of international structures to represent Third World political opinion. Today, however, the urge to recast international relations has been replaced by a different emphasis and direction. Development has been increasingly redefined as a series of measures which, rather than the international system, are intended to change the behaviour and attitudes of institutions, groups and individuals within the countries concerned. While present neo-liberal approach is often regarded as harsh or even unjust, it is nevertheless widely accepted as the optimal model for maximising global welfare. Through attempts to transform expectations and approaches, the task of development has become one of helping people better adapt to this environment.

Inequality, economic growth and resource redistribution *per se* are no longer the main issues within the new "human development" paradigm (UNDP, 1992). It is how people cope with their situation and the means by which they can be supported in mitigating the risks and stresses involved. This is now the focus of practical development (Unwin, 1996). Ideas of empowerment and sustainability are refracted through a lens of behavioural and attitudinal change. Whether this relates to co-operative forms of working, promoting the role of women, managing small loans, or conserving the environment; preferably through participatory methods, the onus is on changing the way people do things and what they think (Pupavac, 1997). Rather than being different, conflict resolution typifies the new development paradigm. Indeed, given its ambitious aims of attempting to modify behaviour as a means of avoiding political violence, it represents an extreme form of this paradigm.

1.1 The Challenge for Evaluation

History would suggest that even-handed outside mediation, providing an honest-broker figure, and so on, has sometimes played an important role in helping resolve particular political crises. Such functions are central to the traditional view of diplomacy. While presently under great strain, the 1993 Oslo agreement which paved the way for limited Palestinian self-

government is an example. One is not questioning the utility of mediation in such instances. The issue of evaluation, however, has largely arisen because conflict resolution has ceased to be a preserve of governments. As the growing number of NGOs and IGOs involved with this work suggests, conflict resolution has been privatised. Dependence and competition between agencies for external funding has significantly changed its dynamic and ethos.

Rather than conflict resolution being implemented by governments and seen as effective in some circumstances, it has increasingly become a form of commercial product, packaged and sold to donors as fit for general application. Claims for effectiveness over a wide range of circumstances are encouraged by an agency's wish to maintain or increase market share. The aid industry does not reward public admissions of failure or self-doubt. As a commercial activity, however, demands that its effectiveness be proven are to be expected. Since the stakes can be high for the aid agency involved, evaluation has also become a sensitive and often controversial undertaking.

Leaving aside the issue of organisational competence for the moment, a central problem in evaluating conflict resolution is one of scale. That is, whether remedial work at the level of specific groups or individuals can impact on wider social and political processes (Voutira and Brown, 1995). This is a problem that conflict resolution shares with the new emphasis on human development. Training groups of people in conflict resolution techniques, for example, is one thing. Whether such activity can mollify societal instability or entrenched group hostility, however, is another. For many practitioners engaged in conflict resolution, the relationship between the two is more an act of faith than proven certainty (Duffield, 1996). It is common to assert that one is dealing with long-term processes rather than something amenable to a quick-fix. One cannot, therefore, expect simple or straight forward measures of success.

The difficulty of evaluating wider effects, at least as a technical exercise, will be returned to below. Here, it should be emphasised that how individual and group behaviour impact on, and is shaped by, social processes is hardly a new issue. Indeed, it lies in the origins of sociology itself. Writing a century ago the French social theorist Emile Durkeheim, for example, was directly concerned with the relationship between individual and social phenomenon. In his case and contrary to the approach of conflict resolution, arguing that the later could not be reduced to the former. To some extent, however, one can put theoretical contentions aside. Since the relationship between individual and social phenomenon is an old concern, one cannot help but feel, so to speak, that the truth is out there. If social engineering on the scale implied by conflict resolution was indeed possible, it would have been applied long ago. The twentieth century would, perhaps, have been spared the pain of being the most violent and barbaric in history (Hobsbawn, 1994).

To point out that conflict resolution is based on supposition, however, could miss the point. That is, despite the difficulty of evaluating outcomes, it is nonetheless a growth industry. This suggests that whatever the effect they have on war-torn and unstable areas, the agencies associated with conflict resolution are also playing a social and political role in their own right. For one thing, they are attracting the trust of donors either because governments want to have faith in the project, or else, that at this specific international conjunction, the policy cupboard is particularly bare. Whatever the case, why an old sociological problem has reappeared as a new departure is an interesting development. It demands an examination of

the global context in which the present attempts to regulate conflict is operating.

2 THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

There are several factors which underpin the international framework within which conflict resolution operates. There has been a trend to regard underdevelopment and, more recently, the transition to liberal democracy, not as a malfunction of the international system but as a problem within the domestic institutions and social relations of the countries concerned. This move toward internalisation, as noted above, has been accompanied by the redefinition of development as a process of behavioural change. For both development and transitional thinking, the arena for this change has been defined as civil society. In an operational sense, internalisation and support for civil society has also been dependent on the privatisation of aid and the growth of NGOs.

2.1 Internalising the Problem

For aid agencies working in the field of conflict resolution it is almost obligatory to cite the rising incidence of internal war, together with its great human and material costs, as the reason for their existence. One would not wish to dispute the increasing significance and major implications of internal war. This positioning by aid agencies, however, tends to take for granted and thereby overlook a factor of equal importance: NGOs and IGOs *are now able to operate in a manner and in areas which even less than a decade ago would have been impossible*. While many factors underpin this ability, one thing is paramount. It would have been unfeasible without the prior demise of alternative political projects within the regions under consideration. Projects which, in different ways, attempted to maintain national independence and autonomy.

The demise of Third Worldism together with the more recent collapse of international Socialism have been necessary preconditions for internalisation and the redefinition of development. Apart from East Asia (Amsden, 1990), there is presently no viable formal alternative to the liberal-democratic model of capitalist development. During the mid 1970s, when the so-called Golden Age of post-war economic expansion had already run its course in the West (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1996), the Third World project reached its apogee with the OPEC induced oil crisis and pressure within the UN for the formation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO). As a political project, it declined from then on and was already as spent force by the mid 1980s.

In 1980, on the occasion of the UN's first 'Root Causes' debate on the origin of refugee flows, Third Worldism was still in evidence (Suhrke, 1994). The debate within the UN's Special Political Committee divided along internal versus external views of the problem. The West, in part reflecting its anticommunist position, focused on human rights abuse. Socialist and Third World countries, however, countered that the effects of colonialism, deteriorating terms of trade and global inequality were the real causes of political unrest and refugee movements. Two reports were produced from this debate. One reflected the Third World view and was not finished until 1985. The more influential, which elaborated the internal causes, was completed first in 1981 by Sadruddin Aga Khan. The factors promoting refugee flows were variously associated with problems of state formation, the ready availability of firearms,

population growth, unemployment, rapid urbanisation and environmental degradation.

Such factors were seen as leading to political instability and population displacement. In essence, refugee flows marked,

> ..the inability of many governments to create conditions in which the population as a whole can expect to enjoy - quite apart from civil and political rights - the economic, social and cultural rights set out in the Declaration of Human Rights (Aga Khan, 1981, quoted by Suhrke, 1994: 16).

For many observers the growing focus on internal relations and constraints was a welcome trend. Something which reasonably promised to give a more rounded view of development problems at a time when Super-power patronage shielded even the most corrupt of states. With hindsight, however, when coupled with the erosion of economic sovereignty through the growing hegemony of neo-liberal structural adjustment, the emerging view of the 'failed state' confirmed the disappearance of the Third World as a collective project to be replaced by political fragmentation and a concentration on domestic issues (Westlake, 1991). Interestingly, the view in the 1981 Aga Khan report of instability resulting when a state is no longer able to cope with multiple difficulties, largely anticipates the UN definition of a 'complex emergency' which emerged at the end of the 1980s (Duffield, 1994 March).

The demise of alternative international political projects has been a necessary prerequisite for the emerging view of political instability as a multicausal consequence of predominantly domestic factors such as poverty, environmental degradation and lack of democracy. This *scarcity* analysis sees a mechanistic connection between such social factors and internal war. Based on engineering behavioural change, the new development agenda, including conflict resolution, springs from this view.

By the end of the 1980s, Western aid was increasingly being associated with political conditionality and support for democratisation (ODI, 1992). This development reinforced the earlier phase of structural adjustment and its associated erosion of economic sovereignty in the erstwhile Second and Third Worlds. The growing hegemony of the liberal-democratic model of capitalism was further reinforced by the apparent role of civil society in the relatively rapid collapse of socialism in the European planned economies (Hankiss, 1990). Following the redefinition of development within the UN, what the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has called the "Human Dimension", that is, support for human rights, civil society and democratisation is now accepted as an essential complement to the economic modalities of the transitional agenda (OSCE, 1995).

2.2 Intervening in Unresolved Political Crises

During the 1980s, development problems were redefined in terms of internal failings. The practical application of this redefinition, however, has largely depended on the end of the Cold War. Since 1989, a crucial aspect of this application has been a new found ability of the UN, IGOs and NGOs to work on all sides in situations of unresolved conflict and political crisis (Duffield, 1994 Oct). Prior to this veritable revolution, concerns about sovereignty and non-interference had precluded such intervention as a widespread option. Aid mainly flowed through the medium of recognised governments and cemented Cold War alliances (Griffin,

1991).

Beginning in Africa but spreading to Eastern Europe and the CIS countries during the early 1990s, working in ongoing crises has mainly been achieved on the basis of aid agencies, often the UN or other IGOs, negotiating formal access to civilian populations or institutions through agreement with the conflicting parties. Recent humanitarian variants include, for example, Sudan, Angola, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Rwanda. In terms of civilian institutions, the expanding OSCE programme of electoral support in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union can be cited (OSCE, 1995). Western intervention of this nature has created a major expansion opportunity for both international and local NGOs. Most of these programmes are based on reaching multiparty agreements with local political actors including opposition movements where necessary (Duffield, 1994 Oct).

The collapse of the Cold War has encouraged the emergence of such internal or 'cross-line' type operations. Without Super-power rivalry it is easier for IGOs to broker agreements between conflicting parties. At the same time, the loss of political patronage and its associated development aid has often made such groups more dependent on the humanitarian or reconstruction assistance that characterises current integrated programmes. Indeed, due to political conditionality, relief or other basic assistance is often the only external aid now available for many unstable countries. Obtaining such assistance is also usually conditional on reaching some form of multiparty agreement governing external access.

As a result of these changing circumstances, international intervention, sometimes with military support, has quietly become a *de facto* norm in response to large-scale refugee flows. Perceptions of sovereignty have also hardened.

> ..a state's freedom from external intervention is now understood to end when its domestic actions (or inactions) begin to impinge significantly on other states (Dowty and Loescher, 1996: 45).

Although the current phase of Western intervention has been associated with an erosion of absolute sovereignty (Boutros-Ghali, 1995), it should be emphasised that it is still largely dependent upon the agreement of local political authorities. In actuality a conditional form of sovereignty has been reasserted within areas of protracted crisis. The nature of this conditionality is indicated by the dual role that negotiated access bestows on local political regimes. It is understood, especially in relation to internal war, that indigenous actors are often directly responsible for widespread suffering and population displacement. At the same time, however, within the new development paradigm the notion of responsibility has been broadened.

> Governments...must not only be held to account for actions which force people to seek sanctuary in other countries [they] also must be encouraged to create the conditions which will allow refugees to return to their homeland (UNHCR, 1995: 43).

The perquisites for such a return lie within the liberal-democratic model of free markets supported by a facilitator-state kept in line by a pluralistic and democratic civil society. This model is now hegemonic in the West (Shuurman, 1993). Not only does it inform internal social discourse in Western countries, it pervades all aspects of external aid. It shapes current

thinking, for example, on the provision of humanitarian relief, on how social reconstruction should be approached, together with providing a framework in which the long-term security of the West is conceived.

2.3 Development, Security and Civil Society

During the early 1990s, the theoretical normalisation of internal war was given impetus by the UN's reformulation of a "relief to development continuum" (UNDP, 1994). The continuum argument is grounded in the scarcity view of internal conflict. That is, a multicausal phenomenon resulting from impoverishment and non-democratic structures. In other words, conflict is primarily a problem of underdevelopment. Since this condition affects all people and institutions, everyone is, as it were, a victim. A formulation which tends to downplay the role of deliberate political action and sectarian gain.

According to continuum thinking, humanitarian aid can, through creating dependency and undermining local capacity, actually reinforce underdevelopment and hence instability if not properly administered. Although based on earlier approaches to natural disaster, the continuum demands that relief, even in the highly polarised context of internal war, must be made developmental. That is, through engaging with indigenous human and material resources, it should be used to enhance local structures and capacities (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell, 1994). These resources need to be built up and play a full role in the relief programme. In this manner, it is argued that societies will be less dependent on outside assistance in any future emergency. The continuum debate reflects the wider redefinition of development in terms of behavioural and institutional change. It is one more example of how the new aid paradigm has come to focus on the idea of *civil society.*

In both development and transitional thinking, civil society has become a central concept. This development is all the more interesting given the absence among aid agencies and donor governments of any consensus regarding what civil society is and how it works (Voutira and Brown, 1995). At best, it is an ill-defined space between the family and the state is which plural civic institutions hold sway. In relation to NGOs in Croatia, it has been noted that,

> Any application for funding, any explanation of the nature of democratisation; any plans for future development; all seem obliged to include [civil society] as a central concept. Yet, it is almost always under-theorised, insufficiently concretised in terms of specific practices, ansd rarely subject to critical scrutiny (Stubbs, 1995).

These remarks could just as well have been made of aid agencies operating in Africa. While there may be a problem in theorising civil society, in practice the situation is easier. It is generally regarded as synonymous with NGOs, especially local NGOs. Moreover, on the basis of Western experience, is usually seen as an inherently stabilising force. Regarding Eastern Europe, for example,

> Systemic transformation in these regions is motivated by the positive experience of Western Political Systems base on law, human rights, pluralist government and the market economy. All of these Western values culminate in liberal democracy which, in the view of the EU and its Member States, has an in-built quality of peaceful conflict resolution, a respect for minorities and a comparatively high potential for

popular participation in public policy (Rummel, 1996: 21)

It is misleading to think of civil society as a 'thing' to be 'built'. It better understood as the institutional embodiment of favourable behavioural and attitudinal sentiments: as a social process rather than a physical content.

Development and security concerns within Western aid policy has increasingly coalesced around the issue of civil society. The goal of development is the creation of a strong civil society. Insofar as such a structure embodies plural and democratic values, civil society is also a source of stability and security (Ake, 1997). That ultimately this also means Western security is illustrated in the transitional thinking relating to Europe's former planned economies. During the Cold War, international security was regarded as an inter-state matter. With the collapse of the Socialist project and the internalisation of aid policy, however, the human dimension has increasingly been regarded as a legitimate international concern.

> ..the individual, and his/her well-being, were to become a component of international politics, a factor for co-operation, peace and security. This was the antithesis of the traditional state-centric approach to international relations (Heraclides quoted by Guerra, 1996: 17-18).

As well as democratisation, civil society is also regarded as capable of playing an important conflict resolution role. For example, by allowing confidence building measures to be pursued.

> Confidence-building during the cold war meant transparency in military information, and open communications among diplomats. The concept of confidence building today has come to mean the building of trust in a wider sense. Trust is built among people from different groups in the same society as well as between countries. And it has become more and more obvious that this building of trust can best be done by involving NGOs (Strom, 1995: 9).

By equating civil society with NGOs, one approach to conflict resolution is suggested. For example, supporting local NGOs (LNGOs) which have a multiethnic constitution, or promoting contact between LNGOs from different ethnic groups or countries. In this manner, it is possible to conceive of civil society as a transnational project, capable of not only uniting individuals and groups from regions affected by war and instability, but also establishing transnational links across Europe and beyond.

Support for civil society has become a central feature of development and transition policy. Indeed, since the liberal-democratic model of capitalism is now hegemonic within the West and its sphere of influence, these policies have increasingly merged. Or, at least, their central concepts have become inter-changeable. It is now possible to see the idea of a pluralistic civil society as the political equivalent, and compliment, of structural adjustment. A mono-theory applied across continents regardless of conditions, institutions or history.

2.4 The Privatisation of Aid

The aid regime has shifted from an inter-state resource transfer model to one which focuses on the quality of internal relations. Rather than resource transfer *per se*, it seeks to modify

behaviour and promote institution change. This transformation has largely depended on the privatisation of aid. Indeed, without a major expansion of NGO activity it is difficult to see how internalisation and the prominence given to civil society could have been achieved. Neo-liberalism is wary of erstwhile Third and Second World states and, at the same time, donor governments are usually reluctant to be directly involved in implementing development and transitional policy. Especially when this relates to potentially sensitive human dimension issues. Sub-contracting aid functions to NGOs offers a solution. In particular, it establishes an arms length relationship with agencies attempting to modify internal behaviour and attitudes.

The mid 1980s represented a major sea change in the nature of aid flow. Until this period, government (or IGO) to government development assistance was the predominant pattern. Increasingly, however, donor governments have channelled development and humanitarian assistance through NGOs (Clark, 1991). Donors fund non-governmental agencies to implement aid projects. NGOs, in turn report back to donors and lobby for more effective assistance. Not only has the number and scale of NGO operations grown, a type of competitive aid market has emerged where none existed before. At the same time, however, it is not a pure free-market. Donor governments usually fund their own national NGOs preferentially. State authority has been recast. Since the end of the 1980s, however, the increasing role of IGOs in negotiating access to unstable regions and, especially, their acting as a multilateral funding conduit for NGOs, has complemented this situation. The growth of UN and EU subcontracting, for example, has meant that for international NGOs the aid market now has a more global existence.

The enlargement of the aid market has been synonymous with the expansion of NGO led welfare safety-nets and human dimension projects first in the Third World and then in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The post-Cold War ability to work in situations of ongoing conflict has been a major contributing factor to this growth and the increasing complexity of contractual relations (Duffield, 1997). Not only have IGOs become major conduits of NGO funding, they have also become more operational in their own right. The formation of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) in 1992, together with an increasingly operational OSCE illustrate this trend. A situation which has been further elaborated by the trend to employ military assets in aid interventions. Taken together, these developments are indicative to the emergence of large-scale, integrated and multi-agency operational interventions within the crisis regions.

The aid market is a two way process. To varying degrees NGOs are dependent upon government and IGO funding. At the same time, however, growing access and control of information has strengthened their advocacy role in relation to aid policy. Indeed, NGOs have been at the forefront in pushing for human development and the reorientation of aid toward civil society issues (ODI, 1995). Donor governments have generally accepted the NGO critique of state led development. Or at least, they have been happy to shift their funding away from recipient governments and toward NGOs. IGOs, however, especially the UN, have been more reluctant to abandon state-centred development models. This uneven policy development adds to the complexity and contradictions within the aid market. Many NGOs, for example, would insist that they are critics of donor policy while operating within a framework dictated by the aid market.

A catalytic NGO role is visible in relation to conflict resolution. It is NGOs that have pushed for a greater involvement in conflict prevention and resolution activities. A role which is often seen as stemming from deficiencies within the existing system. The need for preventive diplomacy, for example, arises,

> ..out of the failure of traditional forms of state-based international diplomacy in dealing with internal conflicts (Rupesinghe, 1996 May).

Official diplomacy is regarded as circumscribed by political interests and national constraints. In contrast, reflecting earlier ideas of NGO comparative advantage in the development field, non-governmental bodies are closer to the grass roots, are better informed, can more easily build trust, are flexible, and so on. In other words, NGOs are well placed to play an "unofficial diplomacy" role. For some NGOs, the task is both to develop this activity and establish new forms of public-private partnership so the full benefits of formal donor and informal NGO action can realised (Strom, 1995). This theme will be returned to below in relation to the question of institutional deepening.

Conflict resolution involves a variety of preventive, management and ameliorative activities. There are also a large number of NGOs working in this field, each bringing differences of style, emphasis or detail. While not exhaustive, Voutira and Brown (1995: 21-24) have distinguished three models of NGO operation.

Model A NGOs

Key sentiments are,

> ...active research, conflict management, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, training, preventive diplomacy, and facilitation (Ibid: 21).

Typical characteristics:

- reliance on donor governments and foundations for funding
- information gathering to identify key areas of work
- fact finding missions
- establishing regional information networks
- high profile conferences and workshops
- publications and newsletters
- conflict resolution skills training usually through client invitation
- training aimed at changing group dynamics
- takes a psychological interventionist approach
- concerned with influencing decision makers and donor governments
- less critical of governments and human rights performance than other agencies
- work given a high public profile

This approach includes Saferworld, International Alert, War-Torn Societies Project, Life and Peace Institute, and so on.

Model T NGOs

Key sentiments are,

> ...research, education (including public education), conflict mitigation, peace culture, and sustainable development (Ibid: 22).

Typical characteristics:

- conflict mitigation subsumed within a wider development brief
- funding from the public as well as governments
- uninvited mitigation preferred to conflict resolution skills training
- workshops and publications to increase public understanding
- empirical field research favoured over training simulations
- make use of international mediation practices
- ignorance regarding concerns of other parties is main cause of conflict
- takes an information dissemination approach
- concerned with influencing public opinion
- can be critical of governments and have a human rights aspect to their work

This approach reflects multi-functional NGOs such as ACORD, ActionAid, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children Fund, and so on.

Model B NGOs

Key sentiments are,

> ...peace and justice, solidarity, tolerance, education, peace marching, demonstration, non-violent action and independence from governments (Ibid: 24).

Typical characteristics:

- fellowship groups often with a religious connection
- wide mandate including human rights and peace promotion
- all war viewed as a crime against humanity
- limited budgets
- closely involved with grass roots
- eclectic methods including selective adoption from other NGO models
- innovative ways of confronting conflict, for example, peace vigils

This approach includes National Peace Council, Balkan Peace Group, Balkan Peace Team, Christian Council of Sweden, Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, Responding to Conflict, and so on.

3 THE BASIC MODEL OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Despite different activities and operational models, conflict resolution rests on a relatively narrow conceptual base. Indeed, almost all of its activities can be derived from several core assumptions. This section will examine these suppositions and indicate how the practice of conflict resolution relates to them.

3.1 Cyclical Conflict and Functional Harmony

While the social background to internal war is regarded as stemming from scarcity issues such as impoverishment and lack of democracy, the actual practice of conflict resolution is unconcerned with issues of large-scale redistribution. Geared toward engineering behavioural and attitudinal change, it is shaped more by a socio-psychological understanding of instability. Because conflict resolution must uphold the possibility of technical application, it is conceptually locked-in to regarding political violence as having relatively small, localised and treatable beginnings. In this respect, its imagery borrows heavily from the world of medicine. Conflict is likened to a treatable illness which if left unattended can develop into a terminal disease.

While not always articulated in full and often employing different terms, many NGOs and aid agencies employ a socio-psychological model of conflict. That is, they regard it as originating at the level of disagreements (ActionAid, 1994) or communication breakdowns between individuals and groups.

> Lack of good communication is nearly always a contributory - sometimes the most important - factor in conflict: both a cause and a result of heightened tensions and the growth of misunderstanding. Good communication, on the other hand, is both an expression of respect and a means of creating it (Greek, 1995:4).

Under certain conditions, people may simply misunderstand each other. Especially, if they are ignorant of the other groups concerns or there is a history ethnic animosity. Left alone, such dissonance can deepen. For example, people usually discuss grievances with members of their own circle rather than the other party. By drawing in allies, triangulation can compound the initial problem. Social and political cleavages are reinforced and, eventually, open conflict breaks out.

> To the extent that regional conflicts are driven by reciprocal fears and misunderstandings, confidence building measures and arms controls can contribute to improving political relations and reducing risks of accidental war (Cottey, 1994: 25).

From this perspective, conflict is essentially irrational. Except for cases of clear victory, internal war is typically seen as a cyclical phenomenon. While terms may differ, it begins with escalation as each side struggles for dominance. Stalemate occurs when forces equalise

and become entrenched. Finally, decline sets in as the impossibility of outright victory is slowly accepted by the warring parties (ActionAid, 1996).

This cyclical conception informs the view that conflict resolution should develop techniques and approaches that are appropriate for each stage (Rupesinghe, 1996). The conflict prevention, management and resolution activities defined at the beginning of this paper are ideally associated with phases of escalation, stalemate and decline respectively. Conflict resolution is a good example of solutions springing from the manner in which problems are defined. Moreover, the socio-psychological model involved is capable of further refinement. Saferworld (Cottey, 1994: 16-17), for example, distinguishes eight types of conflict ranging from inter-state war, through various forms of political, secessionist or ethnic civil war, to genocidal conflicts and large-scale loss of life and population displacement. The elaboration of types within a cyclical framework, at least in theory, allows preventive, management or resolution activities to be better tailored to the circumstances.

The socio-psychological model of conflict rests on an unspoken premise: that the natural state of the world is one of functional harmony. That is, an ideal condition in which a properly adjusted and aware society is synonymous with an optimal balance of resources and power between its competing groups. From this perspective, conflict is an irrational aberration which forces the system out of kilter. Its origins lie at the level of individual or localised misunderstandings and ignorance. Such disagreements, if allowed to develop, lead to instability and war. Conflict is a thing-in-itself; growing and evolving with a certain autonomy from the societal relations that gave rise to it. Conflict resolution derives its conviction from the need to re-establish functional harmony. Intervention becomes a means of "..restoring order and balance disrupted by conflict (Voutira and Brown, 1995: 16).

3.1 Costing Conflict

Agencies working in the field of conflict resolution usually cite the rising incidence of internal war and protracted political crisis as their reason for existing. Such perceived instability demands a response. Many NGOs, however, are critical of the reaction of donor governments and IGOs to the problem. At best, this is seen as *ad hoc* and halting (Cottey, 1994). In response, agencies and academics have increasingly urged donors to adopt a position of *enlightened self-interest* with regard to the blight internal war (Dowty and Leoscher, 1996). Arguments concerning the interdependence of global events and the alleged economic and political costs to the West of external instability are central to this position (George, 1992).

> ..there is no way of isolating oneself from the effects of gross violations abroad: they breed refugees, exiles, and dissidents who come knocking at our doors - and we must choose between bolting the doors, thus increasing misery and violence outside, and opening them, at some cost to our own well being (Hoffman, 1981: 111)

Although internal wars may appear far away, it is argued that they have significant direct and indirect cost implications for the West. These are separate from the deaths and misery involved. Refugees flows, for example, impose burdens both on the international community and the receiving country, including social security budgets in the West. Moreover,

humanitarian and peace-keeping operations are themselves extremely expensive and often present major extrication problems once committed. At the same time, there are indirect costs. For example, loss of trade and disruption of markets, together with the environmental damage that can result from conflict and large-scale population displacement. There are also threats. As well as regional destabilisation, refugee and displaced populations often foment international terrorism. The destruction of medical services, coupled with population movement, is also seen as a growing health hazard.

It is on the basis of such dysfunctions that the case for donor self-interest is built. It supports the main resolution argument that proactive and preventive intervention is better than reactive humanitarian aid. In this respect, it is interesting that cost arguments usually eschew issues of ethics or justice. In some cases, consciously so. Urging self-interest in terms of cost-benefit calculations is regarded as a more hard-nosed and professional spur to donor action (Dowty and Loescher, 1996).

It is undoubtedly the case that internal war does involve costs and the countries of the world are interdependent. It is also true, however, that the cost argument rests largely on supposition. The most exhaustive attempt so far to estimate the costs of conflict using the above framework has been that of Saferworld (Cranna, 1994). The resulting report is, at best, disappointing. Many of the factors involved are multilevel, globalised or qualitative processes which do not lend do lend themselves to simple cost-benefit accounting. A situation which forced the editor to present the material anecdotally in terms of seven disconnected country case studies. No overall synthesis was possible. In the last analysis, the man thrust of the cost argument is that internal war is both an additional welfare burden and an economic loss to the West. When total aid budgets are declining while the core regions of the world economy continue to grow - indeed, the wealth gap between these areas and the global periphery is accelerating - this argument lacks conviction. In the last analysis, however, its aim is not to promote analytical understanding. It is to encourage a more interventionist approach on the part of Western governments.

3.3 The Primacy of Early Warning and Preventive Action

Following the analogy with disease, early intervention prior to open conflict developing is seen has having more chance of success compared to later involvement. At the same time, it can significantly reduce the cost of conflict and avoids difficult choices once war is entrenched.

> Conflicts are usually easiest to resolve at an early stage in their evolution, before opposing positions have hardened (Cottey, 1994: 22).

This view pervades the field of conflict resolution. Indeed, it constitutes its *common-sense.* It should be pointed out, however, that the claims for preventive action relate directly to the socio-psychological model that is used. Conflict has its origins in the irrationality of individual misunderstandings and their propensity for violent extrapolation. The logic of this model is that political violence has localised beginnings; a starting point, before which conflict did not exist. Like a disease, the harmful effects of political violence can be neutralised by early remedial action.

Support for conflict early warning systems is an important part of conflict resolution. The general approach is similar to that which developed in the mid 1980s in relation to drought and famine. In this case, the collection of economic stress indicators, such as, unseasonable population movements, changes in the price of livestock and grain, sale of assets, and so on. These indicators, it is argued, can be used to predict localised shortages and trigger compensatory measures to prevent these developing into famine. Conflict resolution agencies have argued that this natural disaster model can be applied to war. The main modification being that political rather than economic stress indicators should be collected. Boutros Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* (1992), in calling for a UN conflict early warning system, is widely regarded has giving impetus to the attempt to extend such an approach to the level of internal political relations.

Early warning depends on developing systems which will indicate where and when conflicts are likely to occur (Cottey, 1994: 19). Ideally, early warning aims to predict trends which can then be used to initiate preventive action. While the UN is regarded as best playing an umbrella and synthesising role, following the alleged comparative advantages of NGOs (being close to the ground, and so on) they are seen as playing the main role in actually gathering information and establishing local networks (Rupesinghe, 1996 May). The use of Email and the Internet is regarded has having great potential in this respect. Attempting to establish conflict early warning systems has also prompted an, as yet, unresolved discussion on what political indicators to collect and the need for standardisation (IA, 1995 August).

The aim of an early warning system is to initiate a remedial response. Some agencies, for example, International Alert, have positioned themselves to the fore in the attempt to develop techniques of preventive and multi-track diplomacy. The response to early warning information will be discussed below in relation to institutional deepening. It should be mentioned here, however, that while many agencies have urged the need for a comprehensive early warning system, in practice, application has been fragmented and patchy. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, for example, has initiated an information exchange network. At the same time, ActionAid has established an information gathering and exchange system covering Central Africa. Similar information exchange systems exist for other unstable regions. There a great qualitative differences, however, between the type of material collected. Questions of agency ownership, differing mandates and conflicting NGO interests have also undermined, so far at least, the emergence of a more standardised and comprehensive system (Rupesinghe, 1996 May).

Apart from problems associated with establishing early warning systems, another practical consideration is the poor and equivocal history of Western response to known humanitarian threats. Early warning rests on the assumption that donor governments will react when told. That is, the problem is seen as being a lack of information. To cite but one example, the West's delay and indecision in relation to compelling evidence of the growing danger of genocide in Rwanda should urge caution (Adelman, et al, 1996). Bosnia, moreover, in terms of human rights violations has been the most monitored conflict in the history of warfare. Even down to the timing and trajectories of individual mortar shells. This information, however, did little to prevent several years of systematic and gross human rights abuse.

In terms of donor response, it is better to regard internal conflict as representing a series of

"wars of choice" for the West (Freedman, 1995). While genuine concern does exist, donor involvement in outside conflicts is largely determined by a series of choices based on strategic, national and domestic calculations. In this respect, some conflicts fare better than others. Using a phrase of Boutros-Ghali's, such choices have produced the 'orphan wars' of Africa and Eurasia. Even when well informed, and in the age of CNN and unprecedented NGO access to unstable regions this is more likely than not, one cannot assume that donor governments will automatically respond. Indeed, rather than collecting more information, perhaps a realistic approach to 'early warning' would be to analyse the framework of choice and political calculation that currently defines and informs Western interest.

The idea of early warning also tends to assume the political authority in the affected country is a benign construct. That is, embodying an inclusive welfare and political dynamic that operates for the greater good. In other words, that it will support any preventive measures that arise from early warning. The difficulty and pitfalls in attempting to establish famine early warning systems during the 1980s would tend to qualify this view (Eldridge and Rydjiski, 1988). In the highly politicised context of internal war or protracted crisis, that one cannot take for granted a benign view of the state should hardly need stating.

3.4 Application As Institutional Deepening

The redefinition of development in terms of behavioural change, together with the reworking of sovereignty has created a window of opportunity through which Western views of conflict resolution have been introduced into the crisis regions. This has been further encouraged by the emergence of comprehensive humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes. This major expansion of the aid industry tends to qualify the argument concerning the costs of conflict. Rather than attempting to analyse the situation from a cost-benefit perspective, a more accurate description would be that internal war has been a major factor in the restructuring of Western aid budgets. The previous sections on internalisation and support for civil society has indicated the broad direction of that process. Through the privatisation of aid, this restructuring is synonymous with NGO attempts to create a growing role for themselves, including the expansion of public-private aid partnerships.

If the aims of conflict resolution could be realised, it would be tantamount to social engineering on a grand scale. While the feasibility of this is debatable, what is occurring in the attempt is a process of institutional deepening. The above discussion on the aid market has already suggested some to the contours of this development. That is, a multilevel process involving the expansion of NGOs, growing connections between them, the development of new forms of sub-contracting and partnership linking NGOs, IGOS, donor governments, commercial companies, and so on. This expanding web of relations is, perhaps, more real and tangible than the possibility of realising the stated aims of the organisations involved (Duffield, 1992).

Issues of scale are a limiting factor in terms of conflict resolution. That is, the problem of translating work at the level of the individual or group into wider social and political processes. In a practical sense, institutional deepening within the aid market represents an attempt to resolve this difficulty. Agencies working in the field of conflict resolution have been active in urging organisational networking and the strengthening of inter-agency co-operation. This allows for a division of labour in terms of early warning, preventive

diplomacy and conflict resolution training (IA, 1995 Aug). The idea shared by some NGOs of the complimentarily between formal and in-formal diplomacy has also been mentioned. By virtue of employing the services of conflict resolution organisations, it is interesting to consider how far donor governments have tacitly accepted the case for private diplomacy. Apart from contractual considerations, however, it would appear that institutional deepening is developing more between NGOs as opposed to formal political linkages between NGOs and donor governments. As the discussion of cost and early warning suggests, the relation of NGOs to governments is, essentially, a critical one based on attempts to define, maintain and expand a role. In other words, developing what is implied and tacit within the sub-contracting relation.

To complement early warning and fact-finding exercises, some NGOs have promoted so-called multi-track diplomacy which,

> ..is defined as the application of peacemaking from different vantage points within a multi-centred network, reflects the different levels and variety of factors that need to be addressed. The involvement of multiple actors at every level of a conflict is intended to first, bring greater accountability and adherence to human rights ad humanitarian law by all sides, and second, to ensure that all those affected by, and involved in a conflict are given the opportunity to voice their concerns (Rupesinghe, 1996 July).

Within a framework of preventive action, multi-track diplomacy implies the involvement of international, regional, national and local actors, including NGOs, that are involved in some way or are able to respond to the problem. Failure at one level does not necessarily mean that the peace process has collapsed. The range of possible preventive, management and resolution activities has already been described. Not least of these are those measures designed to support a strong, plural civil society.

Preventive measures are usually accorded primary importance within a resolution framework. In practice, however, reflecting the questionable nature of the cyclical model used, actual interventions are not easily related to the alleged stages of conflict. Preventive and conflict resolution activities, that is, measures for pre-conflict and post-conflict situations, usually reduce to a similar package of interventions. In other words, how you prevent a conflict developing and post-conflict reconstruction involves the same mixture of mediation, confidence building, support for civil society and conflict resolution training. Only measures to limit the spread or impact of ongoing violence, that is, conflict management, has any real distinction. Such activities, however, are usually undertaken by operational humanitarian agencies rather than conflict resolution NGOs.

3.5 Social and Psychological Interventions

Rather than examining the application of conflict resolution in terms of the alleged stages of conflict, it is more useful to unpack the implications of the socio-psychological model involved. This model is informed by the assumption that functional harmony is the natural state of society and interventions are regarded as restoring the balance that conflict has destroyed. Regarding these imbalances, the social aspect of the model mainly relates to advocating plural political institutions together with projectised, that is, small-scale resource

redistribution.

> From the standpoint of policy making and social engineering, the aim of different policies is to provide structures of incentives for different groups as political and social actors with a view towards changing the ethnic balance of rewards and opportunities (Voutira and Brown, 1995: 12).

As these authors have pointed out, much of this approach is derived from Western race relations. Positive discrimination, for example, would be one way to improve the position of minority ethnic groups. With regard to civil society, attempting to introduce multicultural initiatives, supporting anti-discriminatory legislation, or suggesting coalitions between disadvantaged groups is also possible (Suhrke, 1994). Of particular popularity among NGOs, however, are projects that impart a collective welfare benefit for the different groups involved. For example, the offer of building materials to previously divided communities on the understanding that reconstruction work is done together (Borger, 1997). While clearly paternalistic, initiatives requiring the joint management of shared resources, or other forms of group reciprocity, are regarded as playing an important conflict prevention and resolution role. The project brings people together who, from their own experiences, can correct their distorted views of each other and realise the benefits of peaceful co-operation.

Complementing small-scale and projectised resource redistribution, the model also supports more direct psychological interventions. Based on the view that conflict stems from misunderstanding, such measures are directed toward re-establishing confidence and trust between different groups. There are at least two main psychologically orientated approaches. First, the arranging appropriate conferences and workshops that bring people from different ethnic groups or countries together. Usually with a facilitator, such events allow perceptions and individual attitudes to be explored and discussed (Lantz, 1995). Such meetings can be aimed at so-called opinion formers or members of the general public. The audience usually depends on the focus of the NGO involved. Second, training in conflict resolution skills based on clarifying mistaken perceptions and providing psychological and inter-personal tools for defusing potentially tense situations.

By way of illustrating conflict resolution training, the work of Mercy Corp (MC) and World Vision International (WVI) in Bosnia will be briefly considered (Duffield, 1996 November). The approach of both these international NGOs is very similar. Conflict resolution, for example, was recently added to their physical rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes involving displaced centres and schools respectively. Training is aimed at either the local managers or school teachers working within these establishments. Such people are regarded as 'opinion formers' and capable of influencing the wider situation. What is also noteworthy is that both NGOs are using problem solving techniques that have been patented by different American academics whose experience derives from the business world. For WVI, the intention is,

> ..to teach what we call "life skills" to the teachers. They are mainly common sense things like creating a partnership atmosphere [between potentially hostile groups], redefining problems as joint problems, clarifying the perceptions of A and B, focusing on the individual in the group, developing power 'with' rather than power 'against' scenarios, and so on (Quoted by Duffield, 1996 Nov: 38).

Using a similar approach, MC sees its role as getting the collective centre managers "..to see the other side", and to give them the skills "..to get through the day" (Ibid).

It is interesting that both church and secular oriented NGOs use more or less the same skill training techniques. There is an affinity between psychology and the dynamics of saving soles. They both follow a similar trajectory from cognitive dissonance or despair through to harmony or enlightenment. While the mode of delivery may differ, the content of the training sessions is very similar (cf, Greek, 1995). Skill training usually takes the form of a concentrated immersion within the socio-psychological model of conflict and its derived implications. By exploiting small group dynamics and manipulating peer group pressure, the aim is to produce conformity and agreement. In this respect, indoctrination may be a more apt term than training.

Conflict resolution training locates the origin of political violence at the level of flawed perceptions and communication breakdowns. Its logic is that conflict and its associated abuses are somehow all a mistake. Not only does this approach have difficulty in viewing conflict as a rational political act, it also has a more subversive aspect. Ultimately, since conflict results from individual failings, both the perpetrators and victims of violence are similarly affected by distorted views (Pubavac, 1997). In a sense, since we are all as bad as each other, everyone becomes a victim. Not only are ideas of justice undermined, conflict resolution training becomes something that is good for all people and groups. Since, however, it is unusual for NGOs to have access to the actual perpetrators of sectarian violence, more often than not, such training takes place among the victims and general public (Voutria and Brown, 1995). Moreover, despite the efforts of non-violent education, within conflict situations direct experience tends to contradict the message of the trainers.

> ..for all the peace education initiatives in former Yugoslavia, the use of force is seen as having been the actual way of dealing with conflict. Whilst people may have been involved in internationally funded non-violent conflict resolution programmes, they were aware of the demands in the West for UN and US military intervention and they witnessed it being successful or even morally justified. It was Serbian armed forces which took Srebrenica and elsewhere, it was the Croatian and Bosnian armies that took Krajina and Western Bosnia, and it was the power of the US army, not non-violent conflict resolution initiatives that resulted in the Dayton Agreement (Pupavac, 1997: 15).

Conflict resolution training, with its focus on individual perceptions and its tendency to treat everyone as a victim, represents little serious threat to those in power. While providing Western donors with the belief that they are doing something, it also has the advantage of being relatively cheap. Training projects, for example, can be run by people who are without professional qualifications and, themselves, often the product of a short training workshop. Finally, the approach also has a useful blame the victim quality. If, after all, future violence is not averted - those being trained must not have paid attention in class.

3.6 A New Imperialism?

If one takes at face value the aims of conflict resolution, it represents social engineering on a massive scale. Throughout this discussion, however,

there has been an attempt to distinguish between theory and practice. The claims made by conflict resolution agencies and their attempts to theorise a comprehensive framework significantly runs ahead of what exists on the ground. Nevertheless, that such theorising and attempts at application are possible is important. At the present moment, the ability of the West to directly modify internal political processes within the crisis regions is greater today than at any time since the colonial period. The collapse of alternative Third World and Socialist projects has been central to this development.

Few people would endorse political violence and repression as a thing in itself. At the same time, however, conflict can be just as much an agent of social change as that of death and denial. Conflict has been a major factor in shaping the course of world history and political development. In other words, organisations attempting to regulate conflict are, by definition, also taking it on themselves to adjudicate over internal process of social and political transformation. Many working in the conflict resolution field recognise this problem. That is, wanting to help but not wishing to stifle legitimate pressure for change.

> The goal, therefore should not be to eradicate disputes but to support their peaceful outcome. It is violent conflict, harsh repression and coercive force, rather than conflict per se, that are unhealthy and unacceptable factors of political life. The EU, if it wants to shift from dealing with violence to preventing it, needs to control the escalation of conflicts (Rummel, 1996: 16).

The dilemma for conflict resolution is that it lacks an ethical or political framework capable of distinguishing between just or unjust claims. Within this vacuum, all that can be done is to declare an opposition to harsh or coercive violence. However, if the aim is early and preventive action, that is, before conflict breaks out, how can you be sure that it would develop in a brutal manner? Conflict resolution NGOs are not able to answer such questions. Indeed, a serious attempt would involve jettisoning the socio-psychological model on which it is based. In practice, interventions appear to take place as and when access can be obtained. This process is largely unconnected with the nature of the conflict or the stage it has reached. Moreover, despite lip-service to differences between acceptable and unacceptable change, in practice the impression given is that *all* conflict needs to be regulated *all* of the time. In other words, without a clearer ethical and political framework, conflict resolution appears somewhat reactionary.

There are a growing number of critics of conflict resolution, indeed, the new aid paradigm generally, which interpret increased Western involvement in the crisis regions as a new form of imperialism (Furedi, 1994). The basic argument is that Western humanitarian and liberal-democratic discourse has the effect of disqualifying local political projects as inadequate or lacking. UNICEF's declaration on the rights of the child, for example, has allowed aid agencies to assume the role of leading a civilising mission in unstable areas (Pupavac, 1997). In the Balkans, Western insistence on 'human dimension' criteria are argued to have effectively disenfranchised legitimate nationalist concerns in the region (Chandler, 1997). In Africa, NGOs have undermined indigenous capacities and, rather than helping, have made matters worse (Hanlon, 1991). As a means of furthering Western interests, such delegitimising discourse has supported NGO expansion and the imposition of external regulatory structures.

The behaviour of many aid agencies would lend credence to such accusations. At the same

time, the conflict resolution literature, with its calls for enlightened self-interest, does imply an approach befitting an imperialist gloss. The analysis supporting the new imperialist critique, however, has a number of limitations. It is strongest in relation to the deconstruction and criticism of the internal logic of Western policy discourse. At the same time, however, it is relatively weak in terms of defining what exactly Western interest has become at a time of increasing global polarisation and a growing disarticulation between its core and peripheral regions (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1996). From this perspective, rather than a new imperialism, it is possible to construct a contrary argument.

The world would appear to be dividing into strategic and non-strategic areas with the disengagement of effective Western interest in the latter. The privatisation of aid and the growth of NGOs, which have achieved their greatest autonomy in non-strategic areas, is a sign of this disengagement. While the effect of NGOs as a development tool is debatable, they are the cheapest way for donors to maintain a semblance of global interdependence. Perhaps with the exception of securing some key mineral supplies (Harding, 1997) or specific security goals (Freedman, 1995), the privatisation of aid has filled a vacuum left by a declining overall concern regarding areas outside the core regions of the global economy.

The new imperialist literature is also weak in terms of its limited analysis regarding the social formations emerging in crisis regions. These formations are usually given flesh by intimation rather than concrete analysis. That is, in so far as Western aid policy is shown to caricature its object as infantile, ignorant or barbaric, by implication, the formations concerned are uncritically bathed in a contrary reflected light. The new imperialism is grounded in a belief that the emerging formations are inherently progressive. In this respect, there are similarities between development and transitional thinking. Like this thinking, the critical literature seldom attempts a serious or concrete analysis of these societies as they actually are. Their ideologies or political economy are rarely subject to the same searching analysis as Western agencies and aid policy. To the contrary, the new imperialism continues to depend on the sentiments of old Third World and Socialist solidarity.

The need to better understand the social formations in the crisis regions is not simply a research exercise. The limited analysis in this area has been thrown into relief by another aspect of international policy. Since the end of the 1980s, no one wants refugees; either Western countries or those neighbouring unstable formations in the crisis regions. In this respect, Western aid policy has developed a complementary duality (Jean, 1997). That Western agencies are now able to work in situations of ongoing conflict, is tantamount to a growing ability to prevent displaced populations crossing international boundaries. At the same time, the non-*refoulment* (voluntary return) elements of the 1951 Refugee convention have been eroded. Whether they want to or not, refugees are now expected to go back, with varying degrees of encouragement, to their countries of origin. Relief and social reconstruction in war zones, therefore, complements Fortress Europe's growing preference for refugee repatriation.

Apart from cost considerations, pressures to repatriate refugees have no doubt been buoyed by the claims of conflict resolution agencies that ethnic animosities can be resolved. Lets hope they are right for, unlike more pastoral development activities, peoples lives can be directly stake. This policy trend has highlighted the erosion of *protection* within the new aid paradigm (Ferris, 1996). A worry that will remain in the absence of any serious analysis of the actual

nature of the societies to which refugees are being returned.

4 CONFLICT AND SCARCITY

Conflict resolution is based on a socio-psychological model which regards internal war as a cyclical and relatively autonomous phenomenon having irrational and localised beginnings. The social background that gives rise to conflict is defined by the scarcity modalities of impoverishment, environmental decline and the absence of democratic structures. There is a Malthusian connection between scarcity and conflict. Moreover, development and transitional agendas have a mechanistic relation to this analysis: address the former to solve the latter. Conflict resolution therefore complements development and transitional thinking. In attempting to restore harmony once the normal social balance has been disturbed, it supports the view that internal war is an unfortunate but temporary setback on the path to liberal-democracy.

From anthropology and political economy, an alternative view of internal war can be suggested. This is not a model but more a way of approaching the issue. What follows is not a finished argument. It is a partial account intended to stimulate wider discussion.

Rather than a transitory problem in the creation of liberal-democratic structures, internal war can be seen as an symptom of something different. That is, the emergence of essentially new types of social formation adapted for survival on the margins of the global economy. As with the growing pressures to return refugees, establishing such a difference is not just an academic issue. If conventional wisdom is wrong, it would mean that aid agencies and policy makers are not even asking the right questions, let alone providing the solutions. In this respect, the failure of Western analysts and research establishments to predict the rapid collapse of the European planned economies is a sobering thought.

The empirical evidence would suggest that the number of internal wars have been increasing since the 1960s (Gantzel, 1994). In contrast, intra-state war has been in long-term decline. Today, almost all armed conflicts in the world are some variation of internal or civil confrontation. In the past, intra-state conflicts have been associated with formal armies and national economic mobilisation. Their conduct and cessation have usually been governed by conventions and political treaties. While internal war can reflect such elements, its ethos is different (Bojicic, et al, 1995: 10-11). It is associated with informal military forces together with economic and administrative collapse and fragmentation. How such wars are fought, especially their relation to civilian populations, means that they are problematic in relation to existing international rules and conventions.

How one judges beginnings and ends provides another distinction. In this respect, intra-state war is, again, more formal. For internal wars, however, periods of open conflict can be particular expressions of the protracted crisis within the societies concerned. In other words, while intra-state wars can be seen as political, internal conflicts are social.

4.1 The Rationality of Internal Conflict

The increasing polarisation of the global economy and the disarticulation between its core and

peripheral regions has shaped the terrain on which internal war has become more visible (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1996). In the space of thirty years, the income gap between the poorest and richest 20% of the world's population has doubled to 61:1 (UNDP, 1996). At the same time, outside much of the central North American, West European and East Asian zones, for several decades conventional economic indicators been going backwards. In some places, for example, parts of Africa, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, this decline has been a veritable collapse. Global polarisation and, especially, the contraction of the formal economy into the core areas, has influenced the process of social transformation in the crisis regions.

The view of internal war in this paper does not adopt a development or transitional framework. While regarding the social formations concerned as the result of an ongoing process of transformation, it is more concerned with what these societies are rather than what they are supposed to become. In this respect, the social structures in the crisis regions are seen as already full-blown and socially and politically complete (Verdery, 1996). Conventional wisdom clouds this condition. It continually confuses and interposes an imagined future with today's conditions. Rather than a tool of analysis, it is an instrument of ideological closure (COX, 1995). The description of such societies *at the outset,* before exploration has begun, as either developmental or transitional illustrates this limitation.

Regarding internal war, conflict is not an autonomous phenomenon that can be isolated and neutralised like a disease. It is part of a process of transformation and is internal to social structures and relations. Moreover, open violence is only one expression of the tensions and contradictions within a transformational system at a given point in time. The absence of open conflict or peace is not, of necessity, an indication that these underlying antagonisms have been resolved. Peace can be a condition in which the same contradictions continue of operate and shape social and political discourse but in a different way (Keen, 1996). While open fighting might have a beginning and an end, the underlying conditions and relations that support it are structural and long-term.

In flagging global polarisation, one is not attempting to rehash a scarcity analysis of conflict (Edkins, 1996). There is no mechanistic connection between the two. Deepening economic crisis, for example, does not necessarily lead to internal war. Levels of prosperity within countries and the degrees of political instability are not correlated. Moreover, the leaders and organisers of today's protracted crises are seldom drawn from among the most impoverished. They are usually the more privileged and well positioned within their social *milieu.* At the same time, however, internal war, political instability and insecurity does tend to predominate in those regions where the effects of global polarisation are more marked (UN, 1994). In other words, while internal war is associated with impoverished regions, not all poor countries are insecure or prone to civil conflict.

These observations have several implications. Scarcity *itself* does not cause or determine conflict. The more important factor is *the manner in which those with influence approach and deal with its modalities.* Social agents are not determined by scarcity and they are not its victims. To the contrary, they respond to it by attempting to control and manage its realities. For example, through strategies of economic and political mobilisation which try to protect, maintain or extend defined interests. From this perspective, transformation is not a mechanistic activity. It is a long-term and organic process involving complex patterns of

socio-economic alliance, incorporation and exclusion. Such processes relate to scarcity as pro-active means of overcoming it. As different ways of insulating particular social groups from its consequences. In other words, they reflect what could be called *actually existing development or transition* within the societies concerned.

Actually existing development is not necessarily synonymous with political instability and internal war. This depends on what strategies are chosen. Many poor countries, for example, are not unstable. Where insecurity does exist, however, rectification of the socio-psychological model of conflict is required. As a pro-active response to scarcity, internal war is not the result of ignorance or some localised misunderstanding. While one may not approve of the outcome, rather than irrationality it signals conscious political design and calculation (Keen, 1994; Richards, 1995). The principle that if scarcity exists, it should be the lot of others is a rational if unethical means of survival. In this respect, regarding internal war as a rational and conscious process, also allows questions of guilt and justice to be introduced. Not everyone is to blame. Internal wars have leaders and followers, extremists and moderates and, especially, winners and losers. As conscious political projects based on choice, their perpetrators are open to judgement.

4.2 Transformation, Adaptation and Separatism

As a form of actually existing development, internal war is usually associated with a long-term processes of socio-economic mobilisation and exclusion. For example, in Southern Sudan, Dinka pastoralists have lost a good deal of cattle through raiding since the mid 1980s. This has been made possible due to the slow erosion of their political status by successive Arab dominated governments since independence in 1956 (Keen, 1994). Similarly, ethnic cleansing and the break up of Yugoslavia was an outcome both of the character of the socialist regime and its successive but failed attempts at modernisation (Schierup, 1992). A crisis which deepened with the incorporation of Yugoslavia within the world economy during the 1970s. The issue of early warning in relation to such long-term processes is problematic. When the Sudanese civil war rekindled in 1983 and the raiding of Dinka cattle began in earnest, it was after three decades of transformation which had stripped them of all political legitimacy. Although one can argue that open fighting signalled a period of escalation, it also emerged after a long period of deepening social exclusion.

Polarisation has witnessed the contraction of the formal world economy into the core regions. Outside of these areas, transformation as a rational and pro-active response to systemic crisis has largely depended upon the creation or elaboration of alternative parallel economies (Duffield, 1994). In the erstwhile Second World, such alternatives had already existed as a consequence of the rigidities of the planned economy. Parallel economies vary greatly in their nature and scale. They can range from the international narcotic cartels of Latin America (George, 1992), to smuggling networks, asset appropriation, and localised warlord structures based on the control of gemstones or hardwoods (Reno, 1995). While such economies do not necessarily lead to internal war, since they are extra-legal, if not criminalised, they are prone to authoritarianism and violence. At the same time, while such economies might be a socially mediated response to scarcity, one should not underestimate the great wealth that can be generated.

Parallel economies are flexible and adaptive. They change over time, opening up new avenues

as old ventures cease to be lucrative. They can also move in and out of periods of open conflict and violent resource redistribution. In the case of South Sudan, for example, during the latter half of the 1980s, a predominant activity within the South was armed asset transfer between ethnic groups (Duffield, 1994). Since 1989, however, with the establishment of the UN's Operational Lifeline Sudan this has tended to diminish. Aid capture has become an alternative economic and political strategy (Karim, et al, 1996). Systems of social mobilisation are closely integrated with parallel economies. Not only are these structures often ethnically mediated, in many respects, there are no 'civilians' within them. Everyone is aligned in some way. This explains why within internal wars the general population tends to be the main target. They are a resource base to be either corralled, plundered or cleansed.

Regardless of its content or methods, for those that gain internal conflict is an essentially rational process. A series of misunderstandings and disagreements, for example, did not produce the ethno-centric states of Eastern Europe. Rather, it was political calculation and conscious action. That these are adapted projects following different trajectories to the core areas is suggested by comparing the regional dynamics involved. In the core zones of the global economy the process of state formation has largely finished. In these areas regional economic integration is increasing. Within the crisis regions, however, competitive state formation is still underway. Political assertiveness, social exclusion and regional fragmentation would seem to shape the dynamics of social survival in many parts of the crisis regions.

A final consideration relates to the role of external aid. Conventional wisdom tends to regard conflict as a direct and unmediated consequence of scarcity. The development and transition agenda springs from this understanding. In so far as it is successful in ameliorating scarcity, external aid is thought to promote a return to stability and normal development. If, however, conflict is symptomatic of pro-active and rational attempt to control and manage scarcity, a different dynamic is suggested. It cannot be assumed that external aid is a panacea for instability. Rather than solving the problem, more realistically, it can become part of the socially mediated project of internal war and long-term crisis. That is, absorbed within its ideological, political and economic structures (Duffield, 1994 Oct). This is not an argument in support of ending all assistance, especially humanitarian aid. It does, however, urge caution in relation to knee-jerk demands to make relief developmental and uncritical support for civil society. Aid capture by rational and adaptive local political projects can be an important part of actually existing development. In this respect, conflict resolution interventions can be just as easily incorporated and manipulated as food aid.

5 EVALUATING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

It should be noted that the absence of effective evaluation methodology is a recognised problem in social reconstruction (Stubbs, 1996) and development work generally (Keen, 1993). Appropriate criteria, definitive outcomes and proven successes are few and far between. Given that long-term aims are predicated on attempts to change existing attitudes and behaviour, modern development work appears more an act of faith than a certain endeavour.

The difficulties of evaluating conflict resolution have already been indicated. In summary, while interventions invariably assume the form of different technical activities, the aim is to

influence wider social and political processes. It is this gap and the qualitative difference between the means and ends where the difficulty lies. There is no direct or unambiguous link between the technical competence of an agency in meeting immediate organisational aims and the significance of its activities for achieving wider social goals. This is because the link between institutional actions and social environment is not of a technical nature. While metaphors abound, development is not like constructing a building or a road. Organisational goals are mediated by economic, political and ideological relations with its surroundings. In this case, a particular model of conflict together with an historic set of international relations which allows attempts to operationalise that model.

If one accepts the socio-psychological model of conflict being used, or at least have an interest in whether its claims are justified, impact evaluation becomes an exercise in monitoring behavioural change. One only has to think of the implications of this, however, to realise the problems involved. Sophisticated and relentless TV advertising within industrialised countries is at this moment attempting to change peoples attitudes. At the same time, a large industry has emerged to measure public opinion. Not only are the effects of advertising inconclusive, however, it highlights the difficulty of evaluating the impact of conflict resolution in this way.

Compared to the pervasive advertising in the West, conflict resolution within an unstable country is often synonymous with a number of workshops and training sessions for relatively few people. At the same time, the countries concerned usually lack any formal means of measuring changes in public opinion. In this case, a technical evaluation of impact would have to include some attempt over time to monitor the activities, behaviour and attitudes of the individuals and groups involved. Given the resources that would be required, this scenario is unfeasible. Indeed, in the last analysis, it would reveal little that could not have been deduced earlier. Including, perhaps, the naiveté of the evaluation team.

Although inter-related, issues concerning an organisation's bureaucratic competence and the wider impact of its activities should be treated separately. The first is, essentially, a technical assessment, while the second is a matter for sociological investigation. That is, because the relation of the organisation to its environment is mediated by a specific set of social relations and assumptions, it is the socio-political implications of these relations which have to be critically assessed in relation to its operational environment. An alternative approach to that environment has been sketched in the previous section. Questions relating to the means of gaining access, the political dynamic of the relations established, and so on, are implied. From this perspective, rather than monitoring behaviour, a methodology for assessing the impact of conflict resolution is more concerned with defining the interface between the organisation and its environment and isolating a number of key areas for critical social and political enquiry.

5.1 Organisational Competence

Since there are several different types of agency working within the field of conflict resolution, this discussion focuses on what Voutira and Brown (1995) have called Model A NGOs. That is, dedicated organisations that regard themselves as an interface between donor governments and other agencies, and developments on the ground in conflict areas. Besides a preventive diplomacy role, they can also undertake advocacy, lobbying, early warning,

training, research and networking activities. Such agencies would be expected to have a central office together with a number of country or regional programmes. What follows should not be regarded as an exhaustive check-list. It is meant to be indicative of areas to be examined.

Compared to social impact, the evaluation of organisational competence is more straightforward and conventional. Its key focus would be whether the organisation is technically and managerially capable of meeting its immediate aims. This would largely involve work at HQ level and includes:

- management issues, structure, delegation, etc
- decision making, establishing priorities, etc
- staff resources, numbers, experience for the job, etc
- relations between the HQ and the field, support, representation, etc
- relations with other organisations, managing networks, agreeing divisions of labour, etc
- programme cohesion, representation within the HQ structure, etc
- follow-up, management and support of long-term activities, etc
- monitoring activities, etc
- self-evaluation, learning from failures, etc
- relations with donors, reporting, accountability, etc

Some to these factors also relate to country and regional programmes and relevant information would be provided from the case studies.

5.2 Achieving Wider Social Aims

While the technical competence of an organisation is important, for most observers the key question is whether its activities actually do help prevent and resolve conflicts. Evaluation in this area can only properly be addressed through case study analysis. It is assumed, therefore, that an evaluation team would choose a representative group of programmes to examine.

Within individual case studies two types of work would seem advisable. First, participatory observation regarding the organisation and its activities. To some extent this relates to and is and extension of the HQ study. Some of the areas for investigation mentioned above could be repeated here. Second, information gathering outside of the organisation. This would involve the perceptions of other agencies and, importantly, local groups or bodies not involved with the organisation. Apart from getting an external view of the organisation, this is important for establishing a wider socio-political understanding of the situation. As far as possible, an evaluation team would carry out this aspect of its work independent of the organisation being evaluated.

5.2a Case Study Analysis

For the case studies, one way of guiding the evaluation is to structure it around the normal project cycle of selection, assessment, implementation and follow-up.

1 Selection

There are two main issues regarding selection:

- why was work in this country chosen?
- how were invitations to become involved obtained?
- has early warning been involved?

The key issue is that of *access*. Within the highly politicised context of an internal war how an aid agency gains access is of central and defining importance (Duffield, et al, 1995). Through which party the approach was made and, importantly, what promises or undertakings resulted are vitally important. They tend to shape future dynamics and, for local actors, colour the perceptions and expectations of agency involvement. In other words, the method of gaining access can shape future outcomes.

- how have access issues affected selection?
- in gaining access what undertakings or constraints have emerged?
- what relations exist with the warring parties or political elites?

2 Assessment

The agencies assessment of the situation, the perceived causes of the conflict, and so on, is important.

- nature of the investigation, depth, main assumptions, etc
- is assessment influenced by access considerations?
- how do assessments affect the decision making process and project design?

3 Implementation

Implementation issues also divide into technical and impact considerations. Regarding the former, important considerations would include:

- effectiveness of multi-track diplomacy, co-operation with other agencies, networking in the field, etc
- does a division of labour between formal and informal diplomacy exist?
- what relations exist with local organisations?
- what are the criteria for inviting people to workshops and training sessions?

In relation to impact issues, implementation concerns build on the comments regarding access. How access was obtained can influence what an agency is able to implement. Implementation can be either developed or constrained by the political relations established. Such relations can involve local partners, academic institutions, other NGOs, and so on. There is a need to assess the possible significance of these relations on the desired goals.

- is the political position of local partners analysed and taken account of?
- are such positions conducive to peace or reducing tension?
- when it takes place, what are the implications for working with local elites or authorities,

is neutrality jeopardised?
- is human rights work undermined?
- does the organisation have a choice over its local partners?

4 Follow-up

This should examine issues related to self-evaluation and follow-up.

- how is impact evaluated within the organisation?
- does self-evaluation change policy?
- what capacity is there for long-term monitoring and support?
- is reporting to donors adequate, do reports reflect the realities of project outcomes or are they sanitised?
- what is the influence of donor reporting requirements?

5.2b Evaluating Impact

The social impact of a given conflict resolution programme can only be imputed through critical social analysis. A couple of concerns that should guide this analysis are:

- what evidence is there to support the conflict resolution thesis?
- is there evidence of aid capture and manipulation by local actors?

More specifically, however, a synthesis of three broad areas of enquiry are implied.

(a) Drawing together the above investigation concerning the social and political relations established in the process of gaining access and implementation.

- are these relations conducive for peace or part of the problem?

(b) The experience and views of those who are affected and involved in the crisis but were not connected with the conflict resolution programme.

- are relevant local opinions or activities being ignored by the intervention?
- is there widespread support or criticism for the intervention?
- are other actors and agencies aware of the intervention?

(c) A documentary analysis of the conflict and its social context.

- how does the organisations assessment relate to this material?
- does this analysis support the assumptions about the nature of conflict used by the organisation?

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Annex 2:

NGOs in Conflict Prevention and Resolution: Selected Profiles

Siri Lange

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War conflict resolution has become a "growth industry" within the NGO sector. Among the non-governmental organisations that are engaged in this field we find academic institutions, church-based NGOs, comparatively young NGOs specialised on conflict prevention and resolution, and well-established global NGOs that have earlier primarily focused on humanitarian relief and development issues.

To help donors, researchers, and non-governmental organisations to comprehend this complex NGO landscape, several guides have been published during the last few years. The most comprehensive is the *Prevention and Management of Conflicts* directory, published by the Dutch Centre for Conflict Prevention, in co-operation with ACCESS and PIOOM in 1996. The directory covers 288 organisations world wide, but goes beyond those that view conflict resolution as their core business. The Conflict Resolution Program at the Carter Center have published two editions of their *International Guide to NGO Activities in Conflict Prevention and Resolution.* The enlarged edition which came in 1995, features 88 organisations. It is more narrowly focused on conflict resolution than the directory of the Dutch Centre for Conflict Prevention, and has less information on each organisation. The *Directory of Mediation and Conflict Resolution Services* (Mediation UK 1994) lists 255 organisations in Britain alone.

The purpose of this paper is to present updated and, within the limit of one page for each, detailed profiles of selected NGOs working with conflict prevention and resolution. On the basis of the directories and on recommendations from researchers working in this field, 30 organisations were selected, five of which were not listed in any of the guides. Information was received from 21 NGOs, and these organisations are compared according to some common variables. Before this discussion however, we will present some introductory notes on the growth of the NGO sector generally, and the criticism that has emerged in response to this development.

NGOs in development aid and conflict resolution

The growth of NGOs engaged in conflict resolution is part of the general burgeoning of NGOs after the 1970s. The organisations were, in Western Europe as well as in North America, seen as both an alternative and supplement to the public system (Tvedt 1992:9). Private organisations were hailed for being less costly, more effective, more grass-root oriented etc. than public organisations and governments. In the words of the World Bank: "NGOs work at low cost: they are funded largely by charitable contributions and staffed by volunteers. In any case, they do not seek to make profit." (quoted in Tvedt 1992:10).

As with NGOs in general, NGOs in the field of conflict resolution have been acclaimed special effectiveness:

"Because of their familiarity with the country and its decision makers, NGO representatives have a keen understanding of the realities on the ground, allowing them to reach across their counterparts from other agencies into a web of indigenous officials and resources in order to build and maintain a sustainable infrastructure that has a better chance of ameliorating not just the manifestations, but also the causes, of conflict" (Aall 1996:439).

The NGOs have, to put it strongly, had as their mission to fulfil the role that the UN has failed. After his optimistic 1992 report *An Agenda for Peace*, UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali three years later acknowledged that the UN did not have the power or means to tackle crisis like the ones in Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia. With few exceptions, most of today's global conflicts are intra-state. The UN has no mandate to intervene in domestic conflicts, although humanitarian imperatives have indeed led "governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organisations ... to intervene more and more in essentially domestic matters" (Weiss 1996:435).

While the UN is restricted by each state's right to sovereignty, the NGOs, on their side, argue that they can "intervene legitimately if they are invited by citizen groups or rebel communities to provide assistance and humanitarian help" (Rupesinge 1996). Paul von Tongeren of the Dutch Centre for Conflict Prevention sums up the fundamental roles that NGOs might play in conflict resolution in this way (1996:19-20):

- a preventive role by means of early warning;
- human-rights monitoring;
- peace-building/strengthening civil society;
- conflict resolution activities;
- advocacy/lobby/education

He also argues that NGOs qualify for these roles as they collectively have the ability to (1996:20):

- function without being constrained by narrow mandates of foreign-policy mandates;
- achieve access to areas inaccessible to official actors;
- talk to several parties without loosing their credibility;
- deal directly with grassroots populations;
- operate in obscurity without media, parliamentary or public scrutiny; take the greatest risks, given their public-advocacy and social-justice agendas;
- effectively network, given their long-standing relationships, built on trust, with civil society in the conflict zones;
- draw upon public opinion to galvanize political will;
- to focus on a long-term perspective than governments are able to do.

These arguments are coming from a spokesperson from within the NGO sector, but The Commission on Global Governance, which consists almost entirely of former government officials, similarly praises the NGOs, stating that "in their variety, they bring expertise, commitment, and grassroots perceptions that should be better mobilised in the interests of better governance" (1995:254).

Governments and donors have indeed welcomed the NGOs to the scene. In the case of Norway, 70% of the humanitarian relief is channelled through NGOs, and the same goes for more than 25% of the bilateral development funds (Tvedt 1992:70). The organisations under discussion here, NGOs engaged in conflict prevention and resolution, receive funding from both sectors.

Critical Voices

In the early 1990's, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway saw the need to evaluate the work of the NGOs that they had been funding extensively for the last years. The evaluation was headed by Tvedt, who concluded that the generally positive assertions about NGOs are much exaggerated:

"The NGOs do not have the comparative advantages that they are generally assumed to have in the literature on the NGOs in development. On the contrary, in some cases they have comparative disadvantages because they can survive despite organisational failures" (Tvedt 1995:19).

One of the main problems as Tvedt sees it, is the way the NGOs are perceived as uniform, even if they represent organisations ranging from several thousand employees to no salaried staff at all. Due to this misconception, their comparative advantages have not been exploited for different types of missions. He also holds that there is no empirical data to support the conclusion that they are better at

poverty alleviation and other development work (Tvedt 1995:19, 105). Some researchers argue that contrary to being grass-root, many NGOs reflect elite interests where charity is used for personal gain and influence (Arnove 1980, Cockson and Persell 1985, Stanfield 1984). Most of the local organisations supported by NORAD have weak roots in local society and are totally dependent upon foreign funds (Tvedt 1995: 83). Further, the World Banks optimistic notion that NGOs do not "seek to make profit" is countered by the fact that many of the NGOs in Bangladesh, according to the local NORAD representation, look more like business projects (Tvedt 1992:13). Also, the degree of voluntarism vary greatly. In Norway, it has been comparatively strong, while in a country like Zimbabwe, almost 70 % of the rural NGOs have no volunteers, or only one or two, and in half of the cases these persons are foreigners (Vivian and Maseko 1994:11-12).

The fact that an ever increasing part of the budget of NGOs has come from the government, questions the very notion "Non-governmental organisation". Figures from the OECD shows that for NGOs in the Scandinavian countries, Netherlands and Canada, 30-50% of the resources come from the government, while organisations in Great Britain, Germany and France receive far less support (Tvedt 1992:42). It is not possible to read from this however, to what degree the organisations receive support from foreign governments. In the case of International Alert, they do not receive funding to speak of from the British government (1% in 1995), while the rest of their grant income is covered by contributions from donor agencies in other countries.

So far what we have discussed goes for NGOs in general. Let us now consider the case of NGOs engaged in conflict prevention and resolution specifically. As we have seen, a common argument for the positive role of NGOs in conflicts is their "neutrality". This ideal has been adopted from the humanitarian relief operations, like the ones administered by the International Federation of Red Cross, and the groups avoid taking sides in a dispute in order to pursue their goals of promoting dialogue (Aall 1996:435). Some of the NGOs themselves now challenge the neutrality policy however, "pointing to circumstances in Somalia and Rwanda, in which relief organisations unintentionally aided individuals and groups who were perpetuating the conflict" (Aall 1996:435). The same thing happened during interventions in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and in the conflict in Sudan. In Voutira and Brown's eyes, the organisations that they label Model A NGOs (one of the traits being that they address conflicts at top level) are in particular danger of finding themselves "giving credibility to, and "empowering" the main culprits" (1995:27). Voutira and Brown argue that the principle of impartiality is hard or impossible to observe as the NGOs mobilise local partner organisations or individuals. And even more important, they note, is the incompatible relation between keeping a neutral position and at the same time be working for human rights (1995:27).

Developing countries have criticised the so-called neutral NGOs for being voice-tubes for their mother governments. Voutira and Brown argue in the same vein when they state that the NGOs by claiming to represent "civil society" conceal that they in effect promote the donor government policies (1995:28). Tvedt advises both the state and the organisations to be more conscious in their choice between letting the development aid being an integrated part of the foreign policy and complete political neutrality which has been the central goal for most NGOs (Tvedt 1992:105-106).

In crisis situations, there are several cases where NGOs have assumed responsibilities that far exceed their intended missions. Aall writes:

"Two clear examples are Rwanda and Somalia, where the collapse of the central authority resulted in a political vacuum that was immediately filled by chaos and intercine warfare. NGOs moved into these "Stateless" situations and took on many of the services typically provided by the failed governments" (Aall 1996:442).

Aall notes that the crucial question that arises in such situations is: To whom are the NGOs accountable? One of the more common critiques of the NGOs is that their personnel tend to not always be satisfactorily trained for their missions. In an extremely difficult situation like the one above, this is especially alarming. Weiss argues that NGOs engaged in internal conflicts must "learn to say no", and that "more analyses and fewer impulsive reactions are in order" (1996:459) He criticises the organisations for having a tendency to ignore long-rage strategic planning (1996:453). In some cases, there may simply not be much time for planning when an emergency comes up and the first imperative is to save lives, but Weiss also blames the lack of analysis to the need of the NGOs to keep fund-raising appeals simple. As a result, the NGOs tend to "place more emphasis in their public statements on the gravity of suffering in humanitarian crisis than on the complex web of historical, social, economic, ethnic, and political forces that cause and complicate conflicts" (1996:447).

Voutira and Brown have published a review of the literature and practices of UK NGOs involved in conflict resolution, conflict resolution training, and preventive diplomacy (1995:5). They come to the same conclusion as Weiss above, but putting it perhaps more strongly when they argue that NGOs "neglect the issues of power and control" (1995:6). The way the deeper causes of the conflict is understood, necessarily affects the method of intervention. Voutira and Brown state that when reallocation of power and the redistribution of resources is not a feature of analysis of conflicts that are termed *ideological, racial, environmental,* etc., "any intervention - however apparently successful - (...) would necessarily be palliative and short-term" (1995:13). They further criticise the ideology of harmony which they see as a potential tool of oppression when justice is traded for harmony (1995:29). In this case, the foreign involvement in local communities may actually generate or exacerbate conflict in the long run (1995:7).

Voutira and Brown conclude from their study that donors should "target their resources to those involved in conflict resolution *within their own societies* to empower them to travel, hold meetings, and to organise appropriate rituals of reconciliation" (1995:7, my emphasis). Weiss also see the local NGOs as important, but still find a role for the international NGOs:

"Given their close working relations with community groups and their relatively low costs, the United Nations should subcontract for more humanitarian services from NGOs (...). In addition, governments and other donors should expand resources made available to private agencies and strengthen incentives to make better use of local NGOs." (Weiss 1996:455).

Quite to the contrary to Weiss, Voutira and Brown, Tvedt does not see a solution in supporting local NGOs directly. His view is partly due to the fact that he found that most of the local organisations supported by NORAD had weak roots in local society (Tvedt 1995: 83). Tvedt also sees great difficulties in achieving equal partnership between an embassy and a local organisation. He advises NORAD to "consider gradually terminating its support for local NGOs, because of foreign policy considerations and problems related to power structures, sustainability and organisational cultures" (1995:XIII). We will come back to his view on supporting local NGOs through non-governmental organisations in the donor country.

The critical voices are many. Important as they are, we should still have in mind the few celebrated cases where NGOs indeed have contributed to peace. Weiss notes the role of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique (Weiss 1996:448). Aall is particularly interested in women's role in peace processes. Her examples includes a case where women in Uganda began forming a peace network with women in Rwanda, and women's associations in Somalia which were able "to play a vital role in establishing communication between the fighting factions", due to their links to various clans through birth and marriage (Aall 1996:440). Aall's examples are groups working with conflicts in their own area, the kind of groups Voutira and Brown argue should be supported. Their own examples of successful reduction of conflict is a case from northern Ireland where the Peace and Reconciliation Group's interventions at the grassroots level resulted in reduction of local violence, and a case from the US which showed that neighbourhood conflicts were reduced when groups worked on a common project (1995:25).

Selected NGO Profiles

There is obviously no scope for covering the whole range of organisations engaged in conflict prevention and resolution in a report of this format. As noted in the introduction, 30 organisations were selected. With the exception of two, African Association of Political Science, and Unrepresented Nations and Peoples

Organisation, all the organisations are specialised on conflict prevention and resolution. AAPS and UNPO were included because they represent NGOs working in their own society with issues closely related to conflict prevention and resolution. The great majority of the NGOs in the conflict resolution are based in the West. Of the 83 organisations listed in the Carter Center directory, only 15 are not. In our selection, 11 were organisations working within their own society, but five of them ended up not being included, for various reasons.[1] The overall response was satisfactorily. Information, of varied degree (from half a page to a package of information brochures and personal letter) was received from the following 21 NGOs: [2]

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), South Africa
African Association of Political Science (AAPS), Zimbabwe
Berghof Research Center, Germany
Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, USA
Carter Center, USA
Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), South Africa
Center for Preventive Action (CPA), USA
Community of Sant'Egidio, Italy
Conciliation Resources (CR), UK
Conflict Management Group (CMG), USA
Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Uganda
INCORE, Ireland
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), USA
International Alert (IA), UK
International Crisis Group (ICG), Belgium
International Peace Academy (IPA), USA
Life and Peace Institute (LPI), Sweden
Responding to Conflict, UK
Search for Common Ground, USA
Transnational Foundation (TFF), UK
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), Netherlands
Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (WFC), South Africa

Tvedt has, as mentioned above, criticised the tendency to see all NGOs as representing one and the same thing. There is no doubt that the variation among them is great, but seeing each one of them as unique would make the landscape very hard to manoveoure in. The challenge is to find a typology that is not too

[1] The Center for Human Environment, Ethiopia, and the Nairobi Peace Initiative did not reply. The Vuleka Trust, South Africa, replied, but too late to be included. The Uganda Development Service and the Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project, Macedonia, were not reached due to insufficient fax numbers in the directories.

[2] In addition to the above, the following organisations did not reply: Christian Council of Sweden, Saferworld, UK and the University of Kent, UK.

limiting. Below, we will discuss some of the variables that the NGOs can be classified by. The various organisations fit into a complex cross-cutting web of classifications, by size, funding sources, philosophy, methods and geographical focus. It will be clear from this discussion that rather than suggesting a ready-to-fit typology we must recognise that there are indeed many ways to classify and that such typologies can only be applied when we have a specific mission to do so; to find the organisations working in a given country, on a certain issue and so on. We first see our selected organisations in relation to each other according to some basic variables, before we consider Voutira and Brown's typology of Model A, T and B organisations.

One general way of categorising the NGOs have already been applied above; distinguishing between the organisations working in their own societies and those that do not. The former can be further categorised according to level: regional, national, or local. Of the selected organisations, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative of Uganda works nationally, while all the others have projects in several countries. In our selection, the South African organisations are noteworthy for having a basis in local projects but applying their ideas and methods also in other countries on the African continent. All the other organisations that work in societies other than their own, have their base in a western country.

A quick reference comparison between various NGOs is to compare their size by number of staff. The great majority of the selected NGOs in conflict prevention and resolution have from three to twelve employees. Of the four largest organisations, two are affiliated to Universities.

3-12 employees:
Berghof Research Center, Germany
Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, USA
Carter Center, USA
Center for Preventive Action (CPA), USA
Conciliation Resources, UK
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), USA
Life & Peace Institute (LPI), Sweden
Responding to Conflict, UK
Transnational Foundation (TFF), UK
Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (WFC), South Africa

15-20 employees:
International Crisis Group (ICG), Belgium
International Peace Academy (IPA), USA
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), Netherlands

25-30 employees:
Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), South Africa
Conflict Management Group (CMG), USA

50 - and more employees:
Search for Common Ground, USA

There is no correspondence between the number of staff and the budget. The UNPO, one of the largest when it comes to staff, is in the low range when it comes to budget, while the CPA has it the other way around. We have not received sufficiently detailed information to check whether this has to do with the level of wages or with the expenditure of the projects other than manpower.

All the organisations are by and large donor funded. Voutira and Brown write that "the sources of funding is the major variable dictating the relative independence of NGOs from the political influence of governmental interests" (1995:21). One general trend in our survey is that while the western NGOs are sponsored by governments or NGOs in their own or neighbouring countries, the third world NGOs are, not surprisingly, supported by external sources, i.e.. donors from the West. Commenting on the fact that most NGOs receive the bulk of their recourses from governments, Weiss notes that "the staffs of such organisations argue, for the most part justifiably, that their priorities dominate those of their donors" (Weiss 1996:441). Some of the organisations explicitly state that they try to attract funding from as many different sources as possible, in order to keep their "neutrality". Successful organisations quickly become the favourites of the donors and tend to grow fast. Conciliation Resources for example, more than doubled their budget from 1996 to 1997. Search for Common Ground, which started with two employees in 1982, now have, together with its partner organisation in Brussels, more than one hundred staff members.

Harder to compare than the other variables, but perhaps more important, is what we may call the philosophy and methods of the organisations. Voutira and Brown suggest that the NGOs may exaggerate the differences in order to attract funding (1995:24). Despite their different methodologies, they write, "the different models of NGO activities all operate within the same functionalist model of society that views interventions as restoring order and balance disrupted by conflict" (1995:16). Their main general criticism is, as mentioned earlier, that the NGOs perpetuate a harmony model, where metaphors like "health" and "disease" are used to describe the causes of conflict. An organisation like Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management would not fall prey to same criticism as they explicitly state that "conflicts are an important and necessary component of social change" (An Outline, n.d.). The organisation is, together with AAPS, the only NGO in our sample that has research as their main focus.

Organisations that base their activities on scholarly research and collaborate closely with universities, like several of our selected NGOs do, necessarily have a very different approach than church-based organisations like Community of Sant'Egidio. On the basis of desk study only, it would be unfair to judge these approaches against each other. Participant observation of the organisations at work would give a much richer picture of the type of knowledge and methods which is applied by the various organisations (see also Voutira and Brown, 1995:10).

The organisations Community of Sant'Egidio, Life & Peace Institute and the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre all fall under a typology we could label "Church-based NGOs". Less apparent is the kinship between the International Crisis Group and the Carter Center which both see well-known high-profile personalities as especially potent and efficient brokers in conflict resolutions. Other NGOs in our sample see their main role as supporting local organisations and their work. This is especially true for Conciliation Resources and Life & Peace Institute, and, to somewhat less degree, the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy. In the case of Conciliation Resources, the organisation has been instrumental in substantial fund-raising for the exclusive use of local partners.

Tvedt sees the trend of "supporting organisational and institutional processes which aim at building up institutional strength and capacity in the non-governmental sector" in the third world as a development that should be strengthened and continued. He suggests that the western NGOs should search for organisations with whom they have a 'community of interests' in order to increase 'equity' and 'reciprocity'. This will imply, he writes, the export of Western models for organising societies, which may be more productive than the export of unclear donor paternalism, covered in rhetoric about 'universal' ideas of popular participation etc.". Tvedt warns however, that the co-operation with local partners may solve fewer problems than the organisations tend to believe, and that "proper analysis and understanding of the organisation should be a prerequisite for funding" (Tvedt 1995:xvi).

The single most "popular" activity among the selected NGOs is training (see table one). This concept covers a whole range of activities, from one-day workshops and seminars to a specialised full-time course that last for almost three months. Responding to Conflict which organises the mentioned course, the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre, the Conflict Management Group, and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, all have training as their one major focus. To what degree their specialising in the field result in better training than what the other NGOs perform, is hard to tell without attending the training as well as interviewing participants.

Voutira and Brown examined materials used for peace education and training in schools for their study. They conclude that these materials "fail to take account of the differences between the classroom environment and the society at large".

When it comes to conflict resolution training courses for adults, they note, the individuals who have undergone the training "may appreciate peace education in the context of the classroom, but, on the return to their conflict-ridden real life, the relevance of such training cannot be assumed to be effective" (1995:6). As is observed in the evaluations, they continue, "the most common way of accommodating the educational experience is to maintain positive feelings towards the individual members of the opposing group by considering them as exceptions to the group as a whole" (1995:26). Voutira and Brown also question the fact that none of the NGO-personnel interviewed for their research saw refugees or liberation groups as targets for their interventions. Considering the fact that these groups one day may come to power; teaching them about human rights and conflict resolution would be a good investment for the future (1995:15).

This criticism is echoed by their observation that very few of the British NGOs working with conflict resolution are actually "involved in direct negotiation which include both parties to a particular conflict" (Voutira and Brown, 1995:20). Weiss on his side, notes about negotiating for access to people who need humanitarian help, that "nongovernmental organizations are unlikely to play major roles in such negotiations unless they are the only actors in a particular geographical area". He mentions the role of the Carter Center in Haiti and Bosnia, the Community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique, and the All Sudan Council of Churches in Sudan, as cases where NGOs have been of great importance for such negotiations (Weiss 1996:448). The organisations in our sample that focus more on mediation than on other methods of conflict prevention and resolution are in addition to the Community of Sant'Egidio; the International Crisis Group and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation. The US based Search for Common Ground (with its sister organisation European Centre for Common Ground), also work with mediation, but has profiled itself by specialising on the use of media in conflict prevention and is the only organisation in our sample to have done so.

On the basis of their analysis of the agendas and reported actions of the British NGOs engaged in conflict resolution, Voutira and Brown suggest a classification of NGO activities and philosophy into three broad types (the below is taken directly from their own summary on page 6 in their 1995 report):

Model A NGOs:

- address conflicts at the top level;
- use UN vocabulary;
- rely on funding from government sources and international bodies;
- presuppose early warning information from academic sources;
- undertake field missions to collect information, network, and solicit invitations;
- organise high profile conferences; and
- assume that conflicts are generated by basic misunderstandings among the parties to the conflict

Model T NGOs:

- aim at influencing public opinion;
- use "development" vocabulary;
- rely on funding from membership, public, church and some governmental sources;
- undertake independent field research at all levels of society;
- encourage citizens diplomacy and grassroots awareness, as well as attempting to influence leaders; and
- assume that conflicts are generated from the lack of the free flow of information to all parties involved.

Model B NGOs:

- address conflicts at the grassroots level;
- use peace activist vocabulary;
- rely on funding from membership and private foundations;
- make use of methods and techniques selected from the other two models; and
- assume that conflicts are the result of human rights violations and aim at the promotion of peace.

Analysing the "different NGO descriptions of the results of their interventions into conflict resolution and conflict resolution training", Voutira and Brown found that "the middle-level interventions are more effective than those that aim at effecting higher levels of leadership". Model T NGOs are thus assumed to be the most effective, but have, according to the study, greater difficulty in getting funding (1995:6). Voutira and Brown do not explicitly categorise given NGOs as model A, T or, B, but it is apparent from their use of quotations that they see International Alert as belonging to Model A NGOs.

The models are illuminating, and very useful for spotting what to pay special attention to when reading material published by NGOs. As general models however, they are problematic. Most of the NGOs in our sample were hard to fit in any of the categories. This may partly have to do with the fact that Voutira and Brown made the models on the basis of British NGOs only. One of the main problems we faced was that many of the NGOs that on the level of "philosophy" fit well into Model T or B, rely on funding from donors, not membership. Also research institutions, like the Berghof Research Center, are hard to place in the schema. The fact that each organisation have several projects and that these projects tend to be quite different in mission and focus and are implemented in different countries, also make general categorisation of the NGOs very problematic (Macrae, personal communication).

Tentatively, we could group our sample as follows:

Model A:
Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carter Center, Center for Preventive Action, Conflict Management Group, INCORE, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, International Crisis Group, International Peace Academy, and Life & Peace Institute.

Model T:
African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, and Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre.

Model B:
Community of Sant'Egidio, Responding to Conflict, Transnational Foundation, and Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation.

The following organisations were, even with the modifications applied to the other NGOs, impossible to fit in any of the models: African Association of Political Science, Berghof Research Center, Conciliation Resources, and Search for Common Ground.

Notes on the NGOs in Conflict Resolution Profiles and Tables

All the information is taken from the organisations' own publications and information brochures. The degree of self promotion vary, and despite editing on our side, the profiles still reflect this fact. Nine of the organisations have very informative home pages on the World Wide Web, some of them even containing project reports and annual reviews (see the profiles for Web addresses).

The profiles were ideally meant to include the following information for each NGO: Address etc, Mission, Founded, Staff, Budget, Geographical focus, Programmes/projects, Networks/Co-opeation, Funding sources and Publications. Where one or more of these data is missing for a given organisation, the column(s) is omitted in order to utilise the space for other information.

The three tables on Activities, Geographical Focus and Co-operation, are meant to facilitate cross-reference. As with the models discussed earlier however, they can not be taken to be absolute. For the table on Activities, for example, we have attempted to mark the main focuses only. All the NGOs certainly do research of some kind before they embark on a project, but only NGOs that have research as one of their major fields are marked in this category.

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)

C/O University of Durban-Westville
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Durban 4000
South Africa

Tel: +031 204 4816 / 262 9340
Fax: +031 204 4815 / 262 9346
Email: info@ACCORD.udw.ac.za
Contact: Vasu Gounden, Director
http://www.accord.org.za

Mission: ACCORD is constituted as an educational trust which seeks to encourage and promote the constructive resolution of disputes by the Peoples of Africa. To realise its mission, ACCORD provides training in the skills of negotiation, conflict anticipation, resolution and management. It also establishes forums to foster the development and application of the above skills and provides conflicts resolution services in the form of facilitation, mediation and other consensus building techniques. The organisation is committed to finding African solutions for African challenges.

Geographical focus: Africa

Programmes: 1. School of Peacekeeping: which seeks to meet the aims of constructive conflict resolution through an approach involving the diplomatic corps. Training have been conducted in eight African countries. 2. School of Preventive Diplomacy: During 1966, ACCORD undertook the necessary canvassing and lobbying toward the establishment of a Preventive Diplomacy Forum comprising eminent persons from Africa. The group will serve as a NGO platform to intervene in conflicts on the continent in a preventive way. ACCORD has also accepted responsibility for an academic curriculum in peace keeping at the University of Durban Westville in KwaZulu Natal. 3. School of Conflict Resolution: Training programs on the Public Service, Civil Society, Women's Epowerment and Youth. Training sessions involving women representing Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia have been held in Nairobi. In 1966, ACCORD launched the Youth Skills Empowerment Project. The project primarily focuses on training of the youth of KwaZulu Natal. As a forerunner to the formalisation of the project, ACCORD hosted youth from Burundi, Sweden and South Africa in a program towards conflict resolution. 4. Africa Peace Award.

Networks/Co-operation: 1. Norwegian Institution for International Affairs (NUPI) and the Institute for Defence and Policy. 3. South African Council of Churches. For publishing: John Hopkins University.

Funding sources: USAID, Norwegian Government, Ford Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Trust, SIDA - Swedish Youth Council, UNESCO, Engen South Africa, UNDP.

Publications: The Foreign Policy Institute, at the school of Advanced International Studies at John Hopkins University, has given ACCORD permission to reprint their 26 FPI Case Study Series. New original case studies are being added to the series on an ongoing basis.

African Association of Political Science (AAPS)

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P.O. Box MP 1100 Mt. Pleasant
Harare
Zimbabwe

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Email: aapp@harare.iafrica.com
Contact: Prof. Kwame A. Ninsin

Mission: AAPS is an pan-African organisation of scholars whose mandate is to promote the study and application of political science in and about Africa. The Association's long term perspective is to grow into a formidable, broad-based pan-African social science institution that could derive active moral and financial support from its membership which shall be based in universities throughout Africa and among Africans in Diaspora, and offer dynamic intellectual and scholarly leadership to the social community based in Africa, as well as offer technical support to African governments and civil society organisations. Its aim is to promote relevant and critical research as the fulcrum of its activities, and back this up with a vigorous publications programme as a mechanism for disseminating research findings or information as well as ideas on African political issues.
Founded: 1973. The individual members are grouped in national and local chapters in universities throughout the continent, with a branch in North America. Its work is carried out by four major organs; the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, the Secretariat and the Local and National Chapters.
Geographical focus: Africa
Programmes/projects: The activities of AAS fall into three broad programme areas: research, education and service. AAPS' primary objective is to promote both basic and applied research by African scholars in political science, public science, public policy, political economy and related fields. To attain this objective, workshops, symposia and a major conference at each biannual are organised so that scholars from all over Africa can present research papers on chosen themes. The educational programmes are aimed at both the university community and the public at large. AAPS offer the expertise of its members to both governments and non-governmental organisations with respect to institutional capacity building, human resources management, governance, policy analysis and conflict resolution.
Networks/Co-operation: The AAPS works closely with other professional associations in and outside Africa. The most important of them are CODERSIA (Senegal), SAPES Trust (Zimbabwe), African Studies Association (USA), and National Conference of Black Political Scientists (USA).
Funding sources: SAREC of SIDA (Sweden), The Ford Foundation (USA), The Carnegie Corporation of New York (USA), The Rockfeller Foundation (USA).
Publications: *African Journal of Political Science*, Newsletters, Textbooks for African Universities.

Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management

Alsteinsrate 48a
14195 Berlin
Germany

Tel: +49 30 831 8090/99
Fax: +49 30 831 5985
email: n.n@berghof.b.shuttle.de
Contact: Norbert Ropers, Director

Mission: The institute aims at identifying constrictive procedures and models for dealing with ethnopolitical and socio-cultural conflicts in Europe, and at providing scientific analysis of, and support for, the practical application of such methods. Stress is explicitly laid on the constructive aspect in order firstly to highlight the fact that conflicts are an important and necessary component of social change in all European societies, and that the challenge therefore lies not in containing them, but in dealing with them constructively, and secondly, to emphasise that, within these processes of change, the goal must be to reduce violence and promote social justice.
Founded: 1993 by the non-profit making Berghof Foundation for Conflict Research, which was founded in 1971 by Prof. Georg Zundel. Board of Trustees.
Staff: 10. Welcomes guest researchers from eastern Europe and the Soviet successor-states.
Budget: Over $ 500 000
Geographical focus: Eastern Europe, Soviet Union's European Successor states
Programmes: 1. Developing Model Workshops for Use in Conflict Management in Areas of Ethnonational Tension: A Series of Scientifically Observed Seminars on the Future of Romanian - Hungarian Relations and Peaceful Development in Southeast Europe 1992-95. 2. Conflict Cultures and Intercultural and Intercultural Mediation. The project aims, within an international context, to develop, test, and provide the theoretical foundation for a procedure for dealing with intercultural conflicts, focusing in particular on the description, analysis, and conceptualisation, of the third party. 3. Peace Building and Crisis Intervention: Joint Project Development and Mutual Consultation for NGO-Initiatives. The intention is to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of up to 15 separate initiatives, through mutual consultation and supervision, with the overall process itself being simultaneously subject to scientific scrutiny.
Networks/Co-operation: Project 1: Various organisations in Romania. Project 2: University of Minnesot and Université de Paris. Project 3: Russian Academy of Science and International Alert.
Funding sources: Project 1: KSZE Consult, Berghof Foundation, the German Protestant Church, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development. Project 2: Volkswagen Foundation. Project 3: EU (PHARE/TACIS democracy programme).
Publications: Berghof Report series.

Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict

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Washington DC 20036-2103
USA

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Contact: Jane E. Holl, Executive Director
http://www.carnegie.org

Mission: The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict was established to address the looming threats to world peace of intergroup violence and to advance new ideas for the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. The Commission is examining the principal causes of deadly ethnic, nationalist, and religious conflicts within and between states and the circumstances that foster or deter their outbreak. Taking a long-term, world-wide view of violent conflicts that are likely to emerge, it seeks to determine the functional requirements of an effective system for preventing mass violence and to identify the ways in which such a system could be implemented. The Commission is also looking at the strengths and weaknesses of various international entities in conflict prevention and considering ways in which international organisations might contribute toward developing an effective international system of non-violent problem solving.

Founded: 1994 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The 16-member Commission is chaired by David A. Hamburg, president emeritus of Carnegie Corporation of New York, and Cyrus R. Vance, former US. secretary of state.

Staff: 10

Budget: Over $ 500 000

Geographical focus: Global

Programmes: The Commission sponsors over 40 projects, mainly research and analysis of issues in conflict prevention, for example; the role of the media and the international financial institutions in conflict prevention, third-party intervention to mediate conflicts, the cost of conflict, envoys and special representatives of the UN secretary-general. The Commission also cosponsored forums in: Jerusalem, South Africa and Moscow, and dialogues between Greek and Turkish leaders.

Networks/Co-operation: For Jerusalem forum: John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. For the South Africa forum: University of Cape Town and University of Western Cape. For the Moscow forum: Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford University and Institute of Universal History of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Funding sources: Carnegie Corporation of New York

Publications: Books, conference proceedings. The commission also sponsors a book series published by Rowman and Littlefield.

Carter Center

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USA

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Contact: Office of Public Information

Mission: The Carter Center is dedicated to fighting disease, hunger, poverty, conflict, and oppression through collaborative initiatives in the areas of democratisation and development, global health, and urban revitalisation. The conflict resolution program is dedicated to the peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts, particularly civil wars. One of the Carter Center's principal approaches is co-ordination of efforts. It believes that by co-ordinating resources and avoiding duplication of efforts projects and mediation can be more effective. It works to identify creative ways to address problems and seeks partners to implement solutions that achieve lasting improvements. Because the Center is not aligned politically with any particular party, group or government, it can step in where governments and other agencies cannot go and mobilise world leaders and other eminent people to affect change.
Founded: 1982 by former US. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn as a non-profit, non-partisan public policy institute. The Center is a separately chartered and independently governed member of the Emory University community.
Staff: 200, 7 with conflict resolution
Budget: $ 28 million annually (entire institution)
Geographical focus: Global
Programmes/projects: 13 core programmes. The conflict resolution program closely monitors conflicts in some 15 countries. In Sudan, the Carter Center has been involved in dispute resolution since 1989 and in March 1995, all major Sudanese parties agreed to a four-month cease-fire negotiated by Jimmy Carter. In 1994, Carter brokered talks between North Korea and the United States resulting in an agreement on ending the North Korean nuclear programme. One of the center's largest projects in Europe was a conflict prevention project in the Baltics, which was based in Estonia and was conducted in conjunction with INN members. The center set up several informal dialogues between ethnic communities, such as the Estonian majority and the ethnic Russian community living in Estonia. In Africa. the program organised two summits to try to help resolve the crisis in the Great Lakes District. The program entails both the one-track diplomacy of Jimmy Carter or other members of NNI and projects with a more long-term, on-location character.
Networks/Co-operation: Member of the Emory University community.
Funding sources: Private donations from individuals, foundations and corporations.
Publications: See home page.

Centre for Conflict Resolution

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South Africa

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Email: Mailbox@ccr.uct.ac.za
Contact: Laurie Nathan, Executive Director

Mission: To contribute towards a just peace in South and Southern Africa by promoting constructive, creative and co-operative approaches to the resolution of conflict and the reduction of violence.
Founded: 1968, as an independent institute associated with the University of Cape Town. Formerly called the Centre for Intergroup Studies.
Staff: 25
Geographical focus: South Africa, Mozambique, Burundi, Africa in general.
Programmes/projects: 1. The Africa Project extends the Centre's conflict resolution activities to other African countries (Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the Great Lakes Region). The goal is to build conflict resolution capacity at governmental and grassroots levels through training, networking and sharing resources. 2. The Mediation and Training Services Project (MTS) acts as an independent third-party mediator or facilitator in violent and other conflicts; and provides training in facilitation, mediation and other conflict resolution skills to community groups, political parties, non-governmental organisations and local authorities. 3. The Project on Peace and Security undertakes academic and policy research on defence and security issues in South and Southern Africa. 4. Project Saamspan (Working together as a team) empowers rural communities in the Western Cape by establishing and training local teams of conflict resolution practioners. 5. The Police Training Project trains South African and Zimbabwe police personnel in the management of conflict and multi-cultural diversity. 6. The Southern African Military Information Project collects and disseminates information and analysis on arms trade, defence production and military expenditure in South and Southern Africa. 7. The Team is an internship programme for aspiring conflict resolution practioners (12 months). 8. The Youth Project engages in long-term peacebuilding through the design and implementation of peace education and conflict resolution programmes for children, youth, teachers and parents. It has pioneered peer mediation courses to equip pupils to act as mediators in school settings.
Networks/Co-operation: 17 international, 10 local partners (see Annual Report). Workshops, consultanties, co-writing of books, exchange of visiting researchers.
Funding sources: 10 international and 12 local donors (see Annual Report).
Publications: *Track Two*, a quarterly publication which promotes constructive conflict resolution around a specific theme per edition. Videos, training manuals, books. Annual Reports.
Other: Evaluated by Gerald Kraak, Interfund, 1996, for J. R. Charitable Trust.

Center for Preventive Action (CPA)

Council on Foreign Relations
58 East 68th Street
New York 10021
USA

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Fax: +1 212 517 4967
Email: scampbell@email.cfr.org
Contact: Barnett, R. Rubin, Director

Mission: The center for Preventive Action was established to study and test conflict prevention - to learn how preventive action can work by employing it.
Founded: 1994, by the Council on Foreign Relations. The Council on Foreign Relations is a non-profit and non-partisan membership organisation dedicated to improving the understanding of US foreign policy and international affairs through the free exchange of ideas. The Council takes no institutional position on issues of foreign policy, and has no affiliation with the US government. CPAs Advisory Board is chaired by John W. Vessey.
Staff: 5
Budget: Over $ 500 000
Geographical focus: The Great Lakes Region, Nigeria, the South Balkans and the Ferghana Valley region of Central Asia.
Programmes/projects: Many of today's most serious international problems - ethnic conflicts, failing states and humanitarian disasters - could potentially be averted or ameliorated with effective early action. CPA defines preventive action as those steps which can be taken in a volatile situation to prevent a crisis. CPA uses the unique resources of the Council on Foreign relations to accomplish its three objectives of action, analysis and co-ordination. CPA has selected four case studies through which to test the viability of conflict prevention: 1. *the Great Lakes region of Central Africa* (from 1995), 2. *the South Balkans* (from 1995) 3. *Nigeria* (from 1997) and 4. *the Freghana Valley region of Central Asia* (from 1997). CPA has assembled diverse and experienced practioners and experts in a working group for the case studies and has hired consultants to act as project directors. A delegation of each working group was sent on a study mission to the region to map out strategies for settling or managing the conflict. There, the delegation spoke not only with politicians, but with business leaders, religious leaders, journalists, non-governmental organisations, and anyone else who could contribute to their understanding of the conflict.
Networks/Co-operation: Co-sponsoring of the Great Lakes Policy Forum with Search for Common Ground, Refugees International and the African American Institute. Collaborate with the Carter Center on the Nigeria project.
Funding sources: The Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Twentieth Century Fund, and the Winston Foundation.
Publications: A series of *Preventive Action Reports* in collaboration with the Twentieth Century Fund. The reports are published under a joint imprint with the council on Foreign Relations, and describe all the projects of the Center.

Community of Sant'Egidio

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Italy

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Contact: Andrea Riccardi

Mission: The Community of Sant'Egidio is a world-wide assembly of Christian communities. It is involved in a wide range of different actions in favour of the poor, in world-wide interreligious dialogue, international development co-operation programs and in conflict resolution and track-two (non-official diplomacy). Most of its members are in Italy, where it was founded, some 2000 are organised in small groups in 23 other countries.

Founded: 1968

Geographical focus: Mozambique, Algeria, Great Lakes region, Kosovo, Lebanon, Kurdistan, Sudan, Middle East, Guatamala.

Programmes/projects: Though laypersons themselves, the religious character of Sant'Egidio is an asset to their negotiation activities. It enhances their credibility, especially among Moslem parties. Their work has borne fruit in Mozambique and Algeria. Thanks to their discreet work, the peace negotiation in Guatamala was fastened and facilitators from Sant'Egidio are trying to create a breakthrough in the terrible situation of the Great Lakes in Africa, as well as to improve the quality of life of the civil population in Kosovo through an agreement about normalisation of the education and university system. In past years concrete actions started by the Sant'Egidio helped refugees find a new life escaping from wars and lives in danger in Irak, Chouf in Lebanon, Kurdistan and other areas. Decompressing religious confrontation, Sant'Egidio is also active in the Balcans on the whole, Sudan and Middle East.

Conciliation Resources (CR)

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UK

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Contact: Andy Carl, Co-Director

Mission: Conciliation Resources serves as an international resource for local organisations pursuing peace or conflict prevention initiatives. The principal objective is to support the sustained practical activities of those working at the community and national levels to prevent or transform violent conflict into opportunities for social, political and economic development based on more just relationships. In attaining that objective, CR assists local organisations in the development of indigenously-rooted, innovative solutions to short-and long-term social, economic and political problems related to armed conflict; wherever possible, involves previously marginalised or excluded groups in community and national peacebuilding processes; promotes organisational transparency and accountability as well as inclusive and participative decision-making; and finally, participates as fully as possible in the local and international development and dissemination of conflict resolution practice and theory.
Founded: 1994. The 7 Council members meet quarterly.
Staff: 12
Budget: 1996: £ 228 818. 1997 (estimated): £ 525 306
Geographical focus: Sirrea Leone, Fiji, Somalialand, Russia, Ukraine, the Gambia and Liberia.
Programmes/projects: 1. Fiji. CR is supporting a civil society initiative, the Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF), which is working as an advocate and facilitator of democratic social change. The CCF has sought to create a space for a dialogue on a number of contentious national issues that otherwise would not have been addressed. The multicultural makeup of the CCF cuts across Fiji's communal divide. 2. Sierra Leone. CR's programme is aimed at helping reduce levels of political and social violence by supporting the development of indigenous, inclusive social and political structures for handling conflict. 3. Somalialand. CR has been supporting the activities of the Peace Committee of Somalialand (PC-S), a group of concerned individuals drawn predominantly from the Somali emigrant diaspora. 4. Research project: The Constructive Roles of Civil Society in Sustaining Political and Constitutional Settlements in Divided Societies - A Comparative Study of Fiji, South Africa and the Philippines. 5. Media in Conflict. CR has carried out training seminars for working journalists in the Gambia, Fiji and Sierra Leone.
Networks/Co-operation: Numerous, ten listed in Organisational Profile.
Funding sources: 23, among them SIDA and EU, see Organisational Profile.
Publications: *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives* and *Newsletter.*

Conflict Management Group (CMG)

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Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
USA

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Email: info@cmgonline.org
http://www.cmgonline.org

Mission: Conflict Management Group was founded to place into public practice an innovative approach to negotiation developed at Harvard Law School. CMG is dedicated to improving the methods of negotiation, conflict resolution, and co-operative decision-making as applied to issues of public concern.
Founded: 1984
Staff: 30
Budget: Over $ 500 000
Geographical focus: Global
Programmes/projects: A wide range of projects ranging from negotiation training for executives from private companies to nationally reported and televised mediations among Canadians representing different viewpoints on Quebec secession, rights of aboriginal, and federal power sharing. Selected projects: Colombia: In the past several years, CMG has trained high officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Development, and External Commerce, as well as leading members of the business community. Cyprus: CMG has joined with the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD) and the NTL Institute to form the Cyprus Consortium. The Consortium is engaged in a co-operative effort to provide conflict resolution training to members of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. El Salvador: Conflict Management has provided advice and facilitation to members of the negotiation teams of the Frente Farabundo Martí de la Liberacíon Nacional (FMLN) and the Government of El Slavador on negotiating an end to internal strife. Former Soviet Union and Newly Independent States: CMG is engaged in ongoing work with the members of the Russian Federal Government and governments of former Soviet republics to improve their skills and processes for managing ethnic conflict. South Africa: For more than a decade, CMG professionals have worked with South Africans representing all sides of the national conflict, including labour leaders, church and community leaders, business leaders, political leaders and Government officials. At the local level, CMG has trained South Africans to bring negotiation and conflict management skills into communities to assist in the reconciliation process.
Networks/Co-operation: CMG retains a close working relationship with the Harvard Negotiation Project and the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. Works with the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy on the Cyprus project.
Funding sources: No data
Publications: Annual reports, Working Paper Series, Quarterly Bulletin (*Network on Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning of Conflict),* books.

Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)

P.O. Box 11027
Kampala
Uganda

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Email: FHRI@muklu.gn.apc.org
Contact: Livingstone Sewanyura, Executive Director

Mission: FHRI is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit making foundation established to enhance the knowledge, respect, and observance of human rights, and to encourage exchange of information and experiences through training, education, research, advocacy lobbying and networking. FHRI provides training to paralegals, undertakes research, publishes human rights literature, gives legal advice, counselling and legal representation; conducts workshops and seminars on law and human rights; and advocates for penal reform through prison visits, dialogue and policy analysis.
Founded: 1991
Geographical focus: Uganda
Programmes/projects: 1. Paralegal Training: The training workshops seek to create a pool of informed people, knowledgeable about human rights, the law. 2. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB): The main objective of CAB is to assist victims of human rights abuses and to provide them with remedies. 3. Penal Reform Project: The main objective of this project is to improve prison conditions in Uganda. 4. Popular Regional Education Conferences: The education project is designed to raise public awareness of human rights, constitutional provisions and available remedies through education of community leaders nation wide. 5. Radio Programmes: Information about basic human rights. 6. Drama: Education during conferences and training workshops.
Networks/Co-operation: National Organisation for Civic education and Election Monitoring, Development Networking of Indigenous Voluntary Association, Human Rights Network, Freedom House (New York), Centre for Governance and Development (Nairobi), Penal Reform International (UK) and others.
Funding sources: HIVOS (The Netherlands), The Ford Foundation (Nairobi), The National Endowment for Democracy (Washington DC), The Swedish NGO Foundation for Human Rights, The Westminister Foundation for Democracy (UK), Friedrich-Naumann Stiftung (Germany), United States Agency for International Development, The European Human Rights Commission (Brussels), The Norwegian Human Rights Fund, The British high Commission (Kampala); The Royal Netherlands Government and penal reform International.
Publications: Through its publications *The Defender, The Human Rights dateline and The Prison Update*, FHRI has tried to educate Ugandans on the internationally recognised human rights and to sensitise specific human rights group for lobbying and advocacy.

INCORE (Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity)

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Northern Ireland

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Fax: 015 04 37 55 10
Email: INCORE@incore.ulst.ac.uk
Contact: Prof. John Darby, Director
http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk

Mission: INCORE aims to integrate research, training, practice, policy and theory, and to provide an international focus on ethnic violence. In co-operation with international organisations, especially the UN and regional bodies, it is developing a systematic approach to understanding and resolving the problems of ethnic conflict. It complements existing expertise in training by encouraging new approaches. In particular, its programmes have a strong emphasis on comparative analysis and reflect the policy concerns of the UN.
Founded: 1991 as a result of an initiative coming from the United Nations University. Board of Directors chaired by Prof. Sir Trevor Smith.
Budget: Over $ 500 000
Geographical focus: Global
Programmes/projects: Main activities are research and training. Major research projects: 1. Coming out of Violence. A major study of "peace processes" which aims to analyse the mechanisms through which parties to ethnic conflict make contact and seek negotiate, put in place and monitor structures for regulating their future to relationships without recourse to violence (Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Israel/Palestine and the Basque Country). 2. The Cost of the Troubles Study is examining the effects of violence on the ground (Northern Ireland and South Africa). Other research projects include: The impact of ethnic violence on women's lives, The role of education in divided societies, Psychological aspects of ethnic violence and the intergenerational transmission of perceptions of ethnic identity, and The role of international human rights law in regulating ethnic conflict. Training is being developed with an eye on two main target groups: 1. Junior academics from areas of conflict 2. Officials and policy makers from the international community. INCORE offers short, practical and action-orientated training seminars on ethnic conflict which are tailored to the needs and action prospects of the participants. A Summer School for junior academics is organised every year.
Networks/Co-operation: Numerous, the UN is central.
Funding sources: Main funding from the European Union (Physical and Social Environmental Programme), the United Nations University, and the University of Ulster. INCORE's research and training programmes, fellowships, conferences and other events have been supported by a wide range of donors (16 listed on homepage).
Publications: ESN (Ethnic Studies Network) Bulletin.

Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD)

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USA

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Mission: The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy is a non-profit organisation which is dedicated to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Its mission is to promote a systems approach to peacebuilding and to facilitate the transformation of deep-rooted social conflict. The IMTD offers national and international programs of peacebuidling through training, education, and communication. Our projects put the skills of conflict resolution, intergroup relations, and systems change in the hands of local peacemakers and peacebuilders in conflict areas around the world.
Founded: 1992, by John McDonald, a former US ambassador in Europe and the Middle East and Dr. Louise Diamonds, a former psychotherapist who holds a Ph.D. in Peace Studies of the Union Institute.
Staff: 6
Geographical focus: Cyprus, South Asia, Liberia, Tibet, Israel/Palestine, India, Pakistan, and the Greater Horn of Africa.
Programmes/projects: Research, studies, seminars and workshops. 1. Cyprus: Training in conflict resolution skills for a variety of audiences, study group with policy leaders on the subject of intractability of deep-rooted conflicts. 2. Peace and Development: IMTD are examining the connections between the work of international development and conflict transformation through training programs with CARE and the World Bank. 3. Business and Peacebuilding: A project with business leaders in India and Pakistan to develop a course for Executive Management students at business schools in that region that explores the role of business in resolving conflicts, using the conflicts in Kashmir as a case study. 4. Peacebuilding in Africa: IMTD is pursuing several independent projects in Africa, including Tanzania, Kenya and Liberia. 5. Diplomacy Training: Training in conflict resolution and diplomacy skills for diplomats around the world, including for the Tibetan Government in exile. 6. Dialogues: Facilitating dialogues with members of several different communities embroiled in conflict, usually with local residents in the Washington DC area (Ethiopians and Somalis). 7. Professional Development Program: Extensive training program.
Networks/Co-operation: IMTD has collaborated with Conflict Management Group, Search for Common Ground, the Institute for Conflict analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, the Carter Center, CARE, the World Bank, OSCE, Clingendael, and Friends of Liberia.
Funding sources: Membership and donations.
Publications: Books, occasional papers and articles (see homepage).

International Crisis Group (ICG)

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Mission: The International Crisis Group is a private, multinational organisation which seeks to provide international policy-makers with an objective and informed source of information, analysis and ideas geared to help head off impending crisis in unstable parts of the world. ICG uses private high-level contacts and the media to disseminate its findings and mobilise support for a more robust and effective international response to crisis. ICG is chaired by the former US Senate Majority leader George Mitchell. Its board of trustees includes former presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers from around the world as well as prominent figures from business and the media.
Founded: 1995 by a Steering Committee comprising some fifty international statesmen, former parliamentarians, business executives, and civic and humanitarian leaders. Governance by board of trustees.
Staff: 17 (5 at head quarters, 12 in field)
Budget: $ 2.2 million
Geographical focus: Sierra Leone, Bosnia, Balkans, central Africa
Programmes/projects: Since its foundation, ICG has established major field assessment programs in two countries. 1. Sierra Leone: The organisation can claim to have played a significant role in Sierra Leone's transition to democracy, raising funds for national elections, bringing international media attention to bear on the country's leaders and establishing a locally run but internationally-backed campaign for good governance. 2. Bosnia: An ICG field team of approximately ten analysts has been monitoring implementation of the Dayon Peace Agreement. Over the last 12 months, the ICG Bosnia team have issued some 21 major reports and many other papers assessing the effort to build peace in Bosnia, identifying potential problems and putting forward practical policy recommendations. 3. ICG will be seeking to further increase its impact, first by significantly expanding its field operations in the Balkans and central Africa, and secondly by bolstering the organisation's core infrastructure, including, critically, its advocacy and media liaison capabilities.
Networks/Co-operation: No data
Funding sources: Donations are sought from the widest range of sources, including individuals, foundations, national and multi-national corporations and governments.
Publications: Crisis*brief*, on-line newsletter. Analytical reports (24 in 1996). ICG's reports have been read at the highest levels of international community, influencing a number of key policy decisions.

International Peace Academy (IPA)

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Mission: IPA is an independent, non-partisan, international institution dedicated to promoting the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts between and within states. IPA works closely with the United Nations, regional and other international organisations, governments and parties to conflicts.
Founded: 1970 by Indar Jit Rikhye with principal inspiration from UN Secretary-General U Thant. International board of directors.
Staff: 18
Budget: Over $ 500 000
Geographical focus: Africa, East/Central Europe and Former Soviet Union.
Programmes/projects: 1. Research program: Focuses on assessing the effectiveness of peacebuilding and preventive action. 2. Africa Program: A major regional program working with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), African Governments and civil society organisations to build indigenous capacities to respond more effectively to the dramatic situations of conflicts in Africa. These efforts have included the development of a new OAU mechanism devoted to conflict management in Africa., and a project to enhance the role and build the capacities of civil society for the prevention and management of conflicts in Africa. 3. Expansion of Training Program: Building on our pioneering role in conducting training seminars on peacemaking and peacekeeping for senior policy-makers and practioners from all over the world, IPA have launched three new annual training seminars since 1993. 4. Program for East/Central Europe and Former Soviet Union: In response to the incidence of conflicts in this region, IPA is developing a program to assist in the building of indigenous regional capacities for conflict prevention and management. 5. Outreach Activities: IPA has developed a wide-ranging program of activities - IPA Roundtable, IPA Policy Forum, IPA Internship Program, and the IPA home page on the World Wide Web - designed to build broader awareness and understanding of issues relating to peace and conflict.
Networks/Co-operation: United Nations Institute for Training and Research (1996), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1996), United Nations University (1995).
Funding sources: 15 organisations (see IPA general brochure), and the governments of Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.
Publications: IPA Occasional Paper Series, IPA Policy Briefing Series, Reports, Books (see home page for titles).

Life & Peace Institute (LPI)

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http://www.nordnet.se/lpi

Mission: The Life & Peace Institute is an international and ecumenical centre for peace research and action. LPI's principal aim is to support the work of churches in the fields of peace, justice and reconciliation. Inspired by the grass roots peace building initiatives developed by its Horn of Africa Programme, in recent years LPI has increasingly focused on "action research". Developed in collaboration with partners working in the field, notably humanitarian and development agencies, LPI's action research aims to increase theoretical and conceptual understanding of specific situations in order to inform advocacy work, policy-making and, where appropriate, decision taking by relevant bodies, both official and unofficial.
Founded: 1985 by the Swedish Ecumenical Council. Executive Council, (comprising representatives from the four Nordic countries) and an international Board.
Staff: 12 (2 of them at Nairobi office)
Budget: Over $ 500 000
Geographical focus: Horn of Africa, Israel/Palestine, and the Pacific.
Programmes/projects: 1. The Horn of Africa Programme: Combines traditional research projects and targeted action research with practical support for grass roots peace building initiatives in the region. 2. The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peace: Exploring the ways in which religion can and does contribute to the promotion - or hindrance - of peaceful solutions to conflict. 3. Human Rights and Economic Justice: Current projects include the role of NGOs in refugee repatriation, institutional racism and the churches, militarisation, economic penetration and human rights in the Pacific.
Networks/Co-operation: As a research institute LPI co-operates with a wide variety of structures ranging from academic institutions and church bodies to NGOs, national and international government/official bodies, notably the UN. rather than having a large staff in Uppsala LPI engages researchers from around the world, particularly from the South, to carry out specific commissioned projects within its four programme areas.
Funding sources: Core funding is chiefly provided by the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the Church of Sweden. Project and programme related funding is derived from a number of sources including international foundations, trusts and development agencies, notably the Swedish International Development Agency.
Publications: *New Routes* (quarterly publication), *Horn of Africa Bulletin* (a media review), Research Reports, Occasional Papers, Conference Papers.

Responding to Conflict

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Email: conflict@waverider.co.uk
Contact: Simon Fisher, Director

Mission: Responding to Conflict is a not-for-profit organisation, based within the Sally Oak Colleges Federation in Birmingham. In addition to the Working With Conflict course, the programme offers workshops, training and consultancy, primarily to organisations working in situations of instability, conflict and social reconstruction. The network of former Working With Conflict participants now covers 35 countries and is an invaluable, additional resource.
Founded: No data
Budget: £ 176 000 (1996)
Staff: 7
Geographical focus: Global
Programmes/projects: 1. Main focus is the 11 week course Working with Conflict. Course members analyse the forces at work in their own situation, and reassess their role in it; explore methods of building up organisations and groups, and of handling conflicts within and between them; evolve strategies to increase the impact of their work, and to limit the damage caused by social dislocation and violence; develop culturally appropriate skills in crucial areas, including mediation and negotiation, and focus on approaches to social reconstruction, rebuilding relationships and the prevention of violent conflict. In addition, programme staff are working with a variety of agencies and NGOs. Recent examples include: 2. NGOs and Peace in Afghanistan, planning an facilitating a major workshop on "NGOs and Peace-Building in Afghanistan". 3. Post-war rehabilitation in Central Africa: Consultants to Church World Action, assisting in establishing a programme to support local initiatives in Rwanda and Burundi to help and councel victims of violence and war. 4. Conflict-skills in Zaire: Facilitating in Kihansa a five-day course at the invitation of Projet Muinda, a local NGO. A follow-up programme supported by the national NGO co-ordinating body resulted in a number of further workshops being run, entirely by Zaireans, in other regions of Zaire. 5. Education and Group Conflict in Fiji: Planning and running a five day introductory course in Fiji for 32 senior staff of the Ministry of Education. 6. Support for Civic Organisations in Former Yugoslavia: Assisting with workshops and other peace-related initiatives organised by community-based civic agencies in Serbia and Croatia.
Networks/Co-operation: Participants have included: Oxfam, Christian Aid, UNICEF, British Council, World YWCA, World University Service, Norwegian Church Aid, International Fellowship of Reconciliation and CIDA.
Funding sources: The J. Rowntree and the Polden-Puckham charitable trusts.
Publications: Reports from courses, Annual Reviews, course material.

Search for Common Ground

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Contact: John Marks, President

Mission: Search for Common Ground is dedicated to transforming conflict into co-operative action and to building a more secure and peaceful world. Search for Common Ground believes in long-term commitment and aspires to permanent presence in conflict areas. The organisation has opened offices in Ankara, Luanda, Monrovia, Bujumbura, Gaza City, Sarajevo, Skopje and Donetsk, Ukrine. Search for Common Ground is convinced that traditional liberal-conservative approaches are increasingly irrelevant in dealing with today's conflicts. The organisation encourages a new level of thinking based on a non-adversial framework. The operational methods include mediation and facilitation, and less traditional ones like TV production, radio soap opera, and community organising.
Founded: 1982. A partner organisation in Brussels, called the European Center for Common Ground, was started in 1995. Separate advisory boards.
Staff: More than 100 for both organisations.
Budget: Over $ 500 000
Geographical focus: The Middle East, South Africa, Russia, Macedonia, Ukraine, Angola and Burundi.
Programmes/projects: Both organisations: 1. Macedonia: A television series, inter-ethnic team journalism, inter-ethnic environmental programs, capacity-building and training in the Macedonian educational system. 2. Burundi: The production of independent radio feature and news programming, organising women's peace initiatives, and systematic political dialogue facilitation. 3. Angola: Promoting dialogue, disseminating techniques of conflict prevention, resolution and reconciliation, and building the capacity of local and regional authorities and civil society to use these tools. 3. Ukraine: Working in partnership with local NGOs to build a network of conflict resolution centres. The local centres offer professional mediation and consulting services, and provide training. 4. Middle East: The various projects involve participants from throughout the region and from a wide array of sectors, including editors of top newspapers, high level political actors, retired generals, academics, and human rights defenders. 5. Turkey: The project attempts to build bridges between Turks and Kurds. 6. Common Ground Productions: An independent radio and TV production which has broadcaster in Liberia, the US, South Africa, Macedonia, Russia, Sri Lanka, Bosnia, Burundi and the Great Lakes Region.
Networks/Co-operation: 66 organisations (see 1995 Report and Table 3).
Funding sources: 29 foundations, 5 businesses, 9 governments, 5 government-supported foundations, UN and EU, 30 individuals (see 1995 Report).
Publications: The quarterly *Bulletin of Regional Cooperation in the Middle East.*

Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research

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Mission: TFF aims at conflict-mitigation, peace research and education to improve conflict understanding at all levels and promote alternative security and global development based on non-violent politics, economics, sustainability and ethics of care. The results which aim at decision-makers and citizens alike combine innovative thinking and theories with workable, practical solutions. After five years of academic research and the publication of comprehensive academic studies, the foundation since 1991 emphasises exploratory, in-the-field, solution-oriented studies in conflict-mitigation and let this experience inform new theory formation and educational programs in the future.
Founded: 1986 by Christina Spännare and Jan Øberg as an independent not-for-profit public charity under Swedish law. It reports annually to the local government authority for foundations. Authorised public accountant.
Staff: 3 at Head Quarter
Budget: $ 50 000 - 100 000
Geographical focus: Former Yugoslavia and Georgia
Programmes/projects: 1. World Images and Peace Thinking: Conflict-mitigation - theory and practise, Gandhi's contemporary relevance, World order, images and conflict-resolution. 2. Conflict-Analysis and Conflict-Mitigation: Focuses on Former Yugoslavia and Georgia. TFF is used as fact-finders and messengers, and offer courses and seminars in conflict understanding. TFF has served as informal advisers to ministers in Milan Panic' government and are consultants to the Kosovo Albanian leadership. 3. The United Nations and Global Conflict-Management.
Networks/Co-operation: Participation in several UN-related projects. Works in partnership with The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in Santa Barbara, California.
Funding sources: Operates on a year-by-year organisational grant from the Swedish government and on research grants, private donations, founders' contributions and donations by the TFF Friends. Among the grant-givers and donors are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stockholm; the Alva & Gunnar Myrdal Foundation, Greenpeace International, the Futura Foundation, the Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, England, Apple-Macintosh Sweden and SIDA.
Publications: Conflict-mitigation in ex-Yugoslavia since 1991 resulting in some twenty reports and books as well as hundreds of newspaper articles. Contribution to the United Nations 50th Anniversary Volume. Documentation, statutes and progress report available upon request.

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO)

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Contact: Orsaila Lambropoulou

Mission: UNPO is an international organisation of nations, peoples and minorities who strive for recognition and protection of their identity, culture, environment and human rights. These goups created UNPO to promote their aspirations through effective use of diplomatic and political means and to prevent or end armed conflicts. UNPO assists its 50 members, representing over 100 million people, in negotiations, establishing international contacts and in gaining access to international conferences and procedures.
Founded: 1991 by the leaders of non-violent movements such as those of Tibet, the Crimean tatars, Australian Aboriginals, the Baltic states and the Greek Minority in Albania. Highest organ is the General Assembly which elects representatives to the Steering Committee and a General Secretary.
Staff: 20
Budget: $ 100 000 - 500 000
Geographical focus: Global
Programmes/projects: 1. UNPO Missions: Fact Finding, conflict management and election monitoring. Responding to requests from members, UNPO organises fact-finding or diplomatic missions and monitoring missions to Members' areas. Often missions travel to areas which are remote and little known to the international community. Reports are broadly distributed to concerned international actors and action programs are developed as a result. Since 1991, UNPO missions have included those to: Abkhazia and Georgia, Albania, Macedonia and Greece, Batwa and Rwanda, Chechenia, Ingushetia and North Ossetia, Ogoni, Zanzibar, Hawai'i and Tibet. UNPO also sends missions to monitor elections and referenda, especially in controversial or highly tense situations. 2. Trainings. UNPO provides training programs and seminars on the skills and knowledge necessary to promote the Members' goals through peaceful means, including international relations and human rights, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, conflict management and negotiation and media relations.
Networks/Co-operation: Offices in Washington DC and Estonia.
Funding sources: Contributions from its members, grants from governmental entities and grants from non-governmental foundations and private donors. See information brochure for a list of the 36 major donors (including DANIDA, EU, Netherlands Foreign Ministry, Norwegian Foreign Ministry and SIDA).
Publications: *UNPO News:* a quarterly newsletter providing an alternative news source on Member situations, presenting their views. *UNPO Yearbook:* an overview of events in Member regions, including mission and conference reports. *UNPO Reports:* detailed reports of missions, conferences and seminars.

Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre

Letsema Conflict
Transformation Resource
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Mission: The Letsema Conflict Transformation Resource is one of four core programmes of Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre, an ecumenical, church-based NGO located in Johannesburg. Wilgespruit was born out of a vision that people should live and learn together as people and not as separated members of race groups. Over the years different programmes were established to support people and communities in their economic, political and social struggles. Letsema is committed to social transformation through education, development, and conflict resolution. The team has capacity and training expertise in principled negotiation, community mediation, facilitation, leadership, human scale development and victim-offender reconciliation skills.
Founded: Wilgespruit was established in 1948 by 6 visionaries from different denominations. Letsema was founded in 1991 in direct response to the increased violence occurring in the margins of society.
Staff: 7
Geographical focus: South Africa, Southern Africa
Programmes/projects: Letsema has been involved in conflict intervention, training, facilitation and development consultation primarily in the greater Johannesburg area, plus other communities in the Northern, North West, Kwa-Zulu Natal, and Cape Provinces. The organisation has also been involved with training and conflict resolution interventions on a regional level in Swaziland, Botswana, and Mozambique.
Networks/Co-operation: Letsema has helped to develop and work together with various other conflict resolution networks. These are Gauteng Provincial Community Policing Capacity Building Project, the North West Provincial Community Policing Capacity Building Project, the Survivor-Offender Mediation Network, and NetCross - the network for conflict resolution NGO's working in schools. Internationally, Letsema's work has brought them in partnership with the Botswana Orientation Centre, UNHCR of Swaziland, LINK -NGO Coalition of Mozambique, Nairobi Peace Initiative of Kenya.
Funding sources: Letsema has received its primary funding from SIDA since 1991 and also received substantial funding from the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) from 1990-93. SIDA has approved funding for 1997-98 also. Other minor funding sources have come from income generation through training, the Mennonite Central Committee and Gencor, a local corporate sponsor.
Publications: Course material, (proposal to SIDA).

Table 1. NGOs in conflict prevention and resolution: Activities

	Research	Training	Action/mediation	Lobbying/advising
African Centre for the Constr. Res. of Diputes, South Africa		x		
African Association of Political Science (AAPS), Zimbabwe	x			
Berghof Research Center, Germany	x			
Carnegie Com. on Preventing Deadly Conflict, USA	x	x		
Carter Center, USA	x	x	x	x
Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), South Africa	x	x		
Center for Preventive Action (CPA), USA	x	x	x	
Community of Sant'Egidio, Italy			x	x
Conciliation Resources (CR), UK	x	x	x	
Conflict Management Group (CMG), USA		x		
Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Uganda	x	x		x
INCORE, Ireland	x	x		
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), USA	x	x		
International Alert (IA), UK		x	x	x
International Crisis Group (ICG), Belgium			x	x
International Peace Academy (IPA), USA	x	x	x	
Life & Peace Institute (LPI), Sweden	x		x	
Responding to Conflict, UK		x		
Search for Common Ground, USA		x	x	x
Transnational Foundation (TFF), Sweden		x	x	x
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Org. (UNPO), Netherlands		x	x	
Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (WFC), South Africa		x		

Table 2. NGOs in conlflict prevention and resolution: Geographical focus

	Global	Africa	America	Asia	Europe	Former USSR	Middle East
African Centre for the Constr. Res. of Diputes (ACCORD), South Africa		x					
African Association of Political Science (AAPS), Zimbabwe		x					
Berghof Research Center, Germany					x	x	
Carnegie Com. on Preventing Deadly Conflict, USA	x						
Carter Center, USA	x						
Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), South Africa		x					
Center for Preventive Action (CPA), USA		x			x	x	
Community of Sant'Egidio, Italy	x						
Conciliation Resources (CR), UK		x		x			
Conflict Management Group (CMG), USA	x						
Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Uganda		x					
INCORE, Ireland							
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), USA		x		x	x		x
International Alert (IA), UK		x	x	x	x	x	
International Crisis Group (ICG), Belgium		x			x		
International Peace Academy (IPA), USA		x			x	x	
Life & Peace Institute (LPI), Sweden		x					x
Responding to Conflict, UK							
Search for Common Ground, USA		x			x	x	x
Transnational Foundation (TFF), UK					x	x	
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), Netherlands	x						
Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (WFC), South Africa		x					

Table 3. NGOs in conflict prevention and resolution: Co-operation

	ACCORD	AAPS	Berghof	Carnegie	Carter	CCR	CPA	C S' Egidio	CR	CMG	INCORE	IMTD	Int. Alert	ICG	IPA	Life & Peace	Res. Confl.	Search	TFF	UNPO	WFC
ACCORD																					
AASP																					
Berghof													x					x			
Carnegie							x														
Carter Center							x					x									
C. Confl. R.													x		x			x			
CPA.			x	x														x			
C. S'Egidio																		x			
CR																					
CMG												x						x			
FHRI																					
INCORE																					
IMTD			x							x								x			
Int. Alert						x												x			
ICG																					
IPA						x															
Life & Peace																					
Res. Confl.																					
Search			x			x	x	x		x		x	x								
TFF																					
UNPO																					
Wilgespruit																					

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Annex 3:

International Alert in Sri Lanka - a Case Study

Gunnar M. Sørbø

I Introduction[1]

For more than 15 years, Sri Lanka has been engaged in a protracted ethnic conflict. Where at first the conflict involved small groups of armed Tamil militants attacking targets associated with the state, it has escalated over time to deeply affect civilians of all communities, especially those living closest to the theatres of active confrontation.

Efforts to end the conflict - some emanating from within (1990/1995), others by outside intervention (Indo-Lankan Accord, 1987) - have all been stalled. The basic problems that gave rise to the conflict therefore remain unsolved, and appear to become increasingly intractable. As yet, the Sri Lankan political leadership has not been able to sustain the resolve, the generosity of spirit, and the political imagination necessary to overcome the legacy of distrust, and urgently forge a mutually recognisable consensus to shift the momentum of events from war to peace.

International Alert (IA) was established in 1985 partly in response to the unfolding developments in Sri Lanka. The aims of the organisation were to focus attention on group conflict which violated human rights, inhibited development and resulted in mass killings and even genocide. According to IA's own records (1997), the organisation's initial involvement with the country was essentially based on lobbying efforts, by its then Secretary General Martin Ennals, to raise awareness of the deepening ethnic conflict vis a vis politicians and policy opinion makers, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs. This perspective was to be expanded in 1989 when IA commissioned a report on the political killings in the Southern parts of the island. Still, however, the focus remained on documentation and reporting. This emphasis was significantly enlarged only in 1993/94, when IA instituted its Sri Lanka Peace Programme - paths to (political) negotiations; a relatively comprehensive document outlining the organisation's "planned intervention into the Sri Lankan situation" (1994; p.3)

In line with the Terms of Reference for the overall assessment of IA's ideal aims and operational activities, the present case study concentrates on the post 1993 period. With regard to its profile and activities in Sri Lanka, this coincides roughly with a strengthening of the analytic and bureaucratic capacity at Headquarters (1990), the appointment of a new Secretary General (1992) and the finalisation of the comprehensive work plan (1993), all factors contributing to a shift in IA's emphasis from primarily monitoring human rights to actively advocating conflict resolution. The organisation established a sub-office in the island in 1995.

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[1] I am grateful for all assistance provided me by Bente Bingen in producing this report.

II Methodology

The case study attempts at evaluating IA's performance based on the aims and objectives clearly stated and elaborated in their own documentation. This body of documents encompasses discussion papers, travel reports, comments on the unfolding political developments as well as papers pertaining to project design and agreements. In addition, the evaluation team spent six days in Colombo, Sri Lanka in early June meeting with people from the organisation's local branch-office, cooperative partners, political observers, representatives of other agencies that address similar issues openly or in a more oblique way, activists familiar with IA's programmes and persons critical of their modus operandi. Our assessment and conclusions are thus premised on an analysis of available written material and extensive discussions with a range of internal and external actors.

The study will aim at focusing on the parameters of IA's outlook or vision, its evolving analysis of the political developments in the country, and - based on the latter - on priorities and ramifications for active intervention. The interface between the various levels of conceptualisation will be accorded particular attention.

IA, in its documentation, frequently alludes to the fact that conflict resolution interventions is a **process**, and that much of the preliminary work input is **hidden** in the sense that efforts and time invested in e.g. networking, monitoring and trustbuilding is difficult to chart and 'measure' for an outsider with a mandate to evaluate effectivity and impact. To this catalogue, the problem of **confidentiality** could well be added. With regard to the latter, IA rightly underlines that confidential assurances often constitute vital ingredients in confidence enhancing activities. In the case of Sri Lanka, we believe this constitutes a peculiar problem that tacitly tightened the range of avenues available to IA for discretionary undertakings of a political nature. One salient feature of the Sri Lankan polity is the centrality of gossip and rumour-mongering. This renders it virtually impossible to keep intended discreet initiatives, strategies and/or activities within the country confidential over time. In addition, and partly based on the former, we consider that high-exposure interventions combined with more low key approaches, in itself involve considerable scope for effectively violating the necessity of secrecy in initially sensitive confidence-building.

The body of documents made available to the team could indicate that IA has sought to overcome this methodological problem through, i.a., the modalities agreed upon for progress reports. The initial agreement between IA and its funding agency, DANIDA, opened for oral reporting on critical or sensitive issues. While this format secures absolute deniability if information leaks on vital activities should occur, it also invites difficulties pertaining to transparency in programme implementation as well as strategy formulation and refinement.

On the level of a more principled discourse, however, the problems referred to above raises some pertinent issues concerning efforts to evaluate exercises in conflict resolution. Interventions invariably assume the form of technical activities, like sensitising individuals to, or training groups of people, in particular resolution oriented techniques. The larger mission, though - i. e. to end wars and avert future confrontations by transforming violent conflict into non-violent vehicles of social change - remains to influence wider social and political processes. How does such possible change come about? Is there a direct and functional technical link between institutional actions and the surrounding socio-political

environment? If tentatively answered in the positive, will the aggregation of such activities effectively mollify societal instability or entrenched group hostility? The case of Sri Lanka seems to suggest that changes pertaining to attitude and perceptions of the 'other' are crucial to **sustain** a peaceful solution. To **obtain** the same, however, a substantial redistribution of assets - like access to power, political 'space' and a recognition of 'voice' would be of the essence. This, again, points to the important questions of format, timing and scale of effective resolution focused initiatives. However, it leaves open the critical issue of impact, i.e. how to measure intangible results.

Internal war typically evolves from a wide or growing gap in political participation and economic distribution based on racially, ethnically or religiously determined forms of identity. In discourses on intrastate causes of violent conflict, therefore, it has become customary to distinguish between the structural background, on the one hand, and escalatory dynamics on the other. While the former factors generally encompass those which amplify societal conflicts over tangible or symbolic resources, like i.a. ethnic cleavages, governmental repression and corruption, escalatory models are usually concerned with assessing levels of polarization and/or mobilization and, in this process, identifying specific 'signs' or warning signals that warrant alert.

A cyclical conceptualisation of and approach to conflict and its resolution tends to focus primarily on the escalatory/de-escalatory dynamics referred to above, which constitutes a necessary but not always sufficient approach if the organisation is to reach its ultimate goal. In practice, i.e., in the 'field', this void could to a certain extent be overcome by the formats chosen for interaction and cooperation with the larger community of institutions and organisations working towards the same end. In this respect, the wisdom of IA's high-profile/high-level exposure - given the fact that its present Secretary General is himself Sri Lankan who, at one point in time, was politically active in the country - constitutes an associated issue. Sri Lankan politics is dominated by two political parties - the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP) - largely identified with two different political 'families'. The outlook of both is highly paternalistic, and allegiances with their respective constituencies often established along lines of patron-client relationships. In addition, political memory is often organised around individual politicians and family affiliations rather than political achievements. This issue consequently merits attention and will be discussed in a later section of this report.

The Sri Lankan context is complex and volatile. We therefore decided to outline the background to the present construction of the conflict in some detail. However, in line with what we consider the main premise and focus of IA's involvement, this presentation concentrates on the main articulation of violent conflict; i.e. the Sinhalese - Tamil configuration. We recognise - as indeed does IA - that this represents a simplified picture of the many actual and potential conflict lines in a tightly intertwined socio- political and cultural fabric.

IA stands to be commended for the assistance rendered to the evaluation team in our effort to come to grips with the modalities and constraints relating to its Sri Lanka programme. Although we are aware that confidentiality may have limited the overall transparency of the processes under scrutiny, we believe that the lacunas that may prevail in our knowledge of and familiarity with the work of the organisation in Sri Lanka, will not be of a too substantive

nature.

III Background

Until very recently, no area of Sri Lanka was completely mono-ethnic. Only when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by force drove all Muslims and Sinhalese out of the northern Jaffna peninsula in 1990, did the area become exclusively Tamil. To date, this constitutes a lone example of a successful politics of 'ethnic cleansing' in the island. In all other areas minorities continue to live interspersed with majority populations, although it seems safe to assume that the various post-independence armed insurgencies have influenced on the geographical distribution of the population at large, enhancing ethnic homogeneity.

There are several ethnic and religious communities in Sri Lanka. The last islandwide census, held in 1981, showed that the Sinhalese community formed 74% of the population, the Tamil roughly 18%, of which the Sri Lankan Tamils, who claim a long history in the island, constitute 12,6% and the Up Country Tamils, brought from India as labourers by the British in the nineteenth century, 5,5%. The Muslims, at 7,1%, represent the third major community. The census further confirmed that religious affiliation continued to largely overlap with ethnicity. In 1981, 69,3% of the population were Buddhist, all of whom would have been Sinhalese; 15,5% were Hindu, all of whom would have been Tamil. 7,6% were Muslim, a figure including the small Malay community, and 7,5% were Christian - Sinhalese and Tamil. As far as language is concerned, it is worth noticing that Tamils and Muslims generally have Tamil as their first language. Sinhalese speak Sinhala. However, the elites of all communities have command of English.

Ethnic identity, notably the conflict between Sinhalese and non-Sinhalese, especially Tamils, has been salient in Sri Lankan politics throughout most of this century, and has most pertinently taken the form of politics of legislative institutions. In 1948, one of the first acts of the newly independent government was to pass two pieces of legislation which rendered some 900,000 Up Country Tamils stateless and disenfranchised. This significantly reduced the future Tamil vote, and laid the foundations for the "Sinhalization" of the Sri Lankan state from the 1950s onwards. While in the 1947 general election the Sinhalese politicians won 67 percent of all seats in the legislature, in 1959 this percentage had increased to 78, and in the late '70s they held 80 percent of all seats in Parliament. The Sinhalese preponderance in the legislature made it easier for the constitution to be changed without regard for the aspirations and rights of the country's minorities.

Although parliamentary politics for the most part is conducted by peaceful means, communal tensions in Sri Lanka nonetheless often turned violent. The Tamils have been exposed to collective violence in 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983. The nature of the violence in 1983, however, was qualitatively different in its intensity, brutality and organized nature. The events of this pogrom are deeply etched in the collective memories of Tamils, and are usually held to demarcate the beginning of the present civil war.

Constitutional policies

By independence, Sri Lankan politics had a distinctly communal flavour. This partly derived from British colonial perceptions and practices. Also, during the first decade of indigenous rule, the politics of the governing party (UNP), differed little from the policies developed in the colonial era. Power continued to reside in the small English-educated, western-oriented elite who dominated parliament and the bureaucracy, and English remained the language of governance.

The Buddhist revivalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries encouraged new forms of organisation among Buddhists and fostered new ideas between Buddhism, the Sinhalese people, their language and culture and the nation. However, the granting of independence did not bring about the cultural transformation, power or status that Sinhalese nationalists had hoped for. Independence had brought few gains to the majority of people who knew no English and who remained excluded from the centres of power. Accordingly, there were signs of growing tension between the Colombo-based, English speaking ruling class and the rural elites; the Sinhala-speaking non-westernized village teachers, traders, students, monks and indigenous medical practitioners. Prior to the general elections in 1956, campaigners from these groups brought communal identity to the fore of electoral politics in a new wave of cultural revivalism, demanding that Buddhism be restored to its rightful place in the polity, that Sinhala become the official language of the state and that access to all levels of government be opened to all, i.e., Sinhala-speakers. The election victory of the then Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP), led by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, introduced, informed and legitimized a perception of the 'nation' in exclusively Sinhalese Buddhist terms. Later exercises in the politics of constitutional amendments entrenched and expanded this political vision, ignoring the aspirations and rights of minority groups, and leaving a legacy of bitter distrust.

The passing of the republican constitution in 1972 marked a summit in the politically motivated "Sinhalization" of public life. The most contentious issues in this legislation were the new provisions on religion and language, giving pride of place to Buddhism which the state was obliged to 'protect and foster'. It further defined Sinhala as the official language of the state specifying that all laws would be enacted in Sinhala, with a Tamil translation provided, and that Sinhala should be the language of the courts throughout the island, though again with provision for translations.

The Tamil response

Some scholars have identified four phases in the development of Tamil opposition politics. The first, from 1947 to 1956, they call a period of 'responsive cooperation' between the English-speaking elites of the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. The second, from 1956 to 1972, responded to the renewed Buddhist revivalist project and was marked by a strengthening of federalist demands backed by civil disobedience. Phase three coincides with the adoption of the republican constitution in 1972, which entrenched Buddhist ideology, and saw the emergence of violent militancy and the introduction of a demand for a separate Tamil state. The fourth became apparent in the early 1980s. The tragic events of 1983 triggered convulsive changes in the politics of the Tamil community and its method of struggle. As

mainstream Tamil politicians committed to constitutional means of agitation became marginalised, Tamil militancy gained ascendancy.

For many Tamils, the constitution of 1972 confirmed their feeling of being second-class citizens. Their sense of alienation was further reinforced by the simultaneous amendments to the university entrance system. While the changes introduced by the Sirimavo Bandaranaike government were also intended to broaden access to higher education for disadvantaged Sinhalese youth, the Tamils interpreted them as discriminatory and prejudiced. The notion of the Tamil people as a 'nation', rather than a minority community, emerged highlighting historical identity, tradition and culture. This would later take the form of a demand for a 'Tamil homeland'. The historization of the Tamil perceptions of self represents a mirror image of the majority community's increasingly aggressive Sinhalization of the polity. Although widely different in content, Sinhalese and Tamil nationalist histories - on a phenomenological level - share common ground. They both seek to demonstrate an inherent historical identity between a geographical territory, an ethnic group with its language and cultural heritage, and a right to rule.

The militants who took to arms in 1970s started by assassinating Tamils associated with the ruling party. Later, they tended to concentrate on attacking state targets. Various small groups were formed, including what was later to become the LTTE. The increased militancy both responded to, and was met with, growing ferocity by the security forces, whose powers were considerably enhanced by The Prevention of Terrorism Act (1979) and emergency regulations that facilitated violations like arbitrary killings and mass disappearances of Tamil youth.

By mid-1985 the militant groups more or less controlled the northern Jaffna peninsula. Relations between them were, however, marred by internecine conflict incited by differences relating to caste, class, strategy and vision. Gradually, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) emerged as the strongest of these groups. In 1986 LTTE attacked and killed hundreds of members of their rival Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO). Later, cadres of the Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) met with the same fate. LTTE has since not allowed political parties or other Tamil groups to operate in areas under their control. They do not tolerate dissent within the Tamil community, and seem to depend on intimidation and killing to maintain their hold.

Socio-political impediments to solutions

Several observers have remarked that despite forming a clear numerical majority in the country, the Sinhalese nonetheless perceive of themselves as a vulnerable minority in a regional perspective. These perceptions have contributed greatly to the repeated failure of various Sri Lankan governments to reach an acceptable political solution to the ethnic crises. Nationalist ideology, based on particular readings of history, is hence an important factor in the conflict. The teaching of history in educational institutions is deeply divisive. Its role in perpetuating prejudice and alienation as well as inciting violence has yet not come under systematic scrutiny by the concerned authorities.

Another major grievance underlying the ethnic conflict is the perception by the minorities that they are excluded from the benefits of development. Major government-initiated irrigation and

settlement schemes in the dry zone, i.e., including the north and the east of the country, have been seen by Tamil parties as a deliberate attempt by the state to alter the demographic balance of these areas and thereby undermining the Tamil political voice. This argument has been considerably underpinned by the fact that government publications on these projects frequently drew parallels between major modern irrigation development works and those built by Sinhalese kings in ancient times. The Buddhist constituency has also been quick to perceive of these initiatives as a reenactment in the present of the glorious Sinhalese Buddhist past. Land settlement and power over land allocation therefore remain major issues between Tamil political parties and the state.

The politicization of the economy represents a similar issue. Even after the UNP's liberalising of the economy in 1977, the state continued to be a key player in several major sectors, and thus still controls assets that could extend considerable influence on peoples' lives. The deep politicization of the administration and the economy has implied that access to land, housing and jobs depends on the patronage of the party in power. Given the fact that the two main overwhelmingly Sinhalese political parties - the UNP and the SLFP respectively - clearly dominate politics as well as polity, only rarely has there been a need for allocating such concessions to the minority vote. The channelling of public assets to building private political fiefdoms based on patron-clientship relations were, however, severely challenged during the latest (semi)rural sinhalese JVP (Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna) insurgency in the southern parts of the island (1987). Abolishment of the political patronage system remains high on the political agenda of the group, which in 1994 again joined parliamentary politics.

Efforts at negotiations

Parallel to the Sinhalese grand, exclusivist nation-building project, various attempts were made to negotiate between the Tamil parties and the government. Starting with the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1957 and the subsequent Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1965, such processes raised hope of progress through dialogue on substantive issues like devolution of power, language and the repeal of the discriminating citizenship laws vis a vis the Up Country Tamil. However, these expectations invariably proved to no avail as successive governments demonstrated no commitment to implement what had been agreed upon. In 1980, the recommendations of a Presidential Commission, in which the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) participated, to decentralize authority to District Development Councils (DDC) took a similar course. The DDCs were in the end inadequately funded, had no authority to initiate major development projects and were subject to unwarranted interference by the government. In 1987, the Provincial Council-design envisaged in the Indo-Lankan Accord echoed the same complaints.

When violence escalated in the mid-1980s, India - spurred by a strong pro-Tamil sentiment in Tamil Nadu - made several attempts to arrive at a negotiated solution to Sri Lanka's minority grievances. In July and August 1985 talks were held in Thimpu, Bhutan at the insistence of the Indian government. As the meeting failed to reach agreement, the Tamil delegates, that included representatives of the hardline LTTE as well as the moderate TULF, walked out.

Indian intervention in Sri Lanka culminated in the Indo-Lankan Accord (1987). This

agreement addressed many of the minority's concerns pertaining to a distinct identity, history and language. It further promised, inter alia, a cessation of hostilities and surrender of arms by the militants, a lifting of the emergency regulations in the north and the east, a return to normal law-enforcement methods in the same areas and a general amnesty to all detained, charged or convicted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. And it opened for the Indian army to enforce the cessation of hostilities at the invitation of the Sri Lankan president.

While most Tamil militant movements supported the Indian effort, the LTTE rejected the Accord. The Indian Peace Keeping Force arrived in Sri Lanka's trouble-torn north and east in July 1987. It rapidly got drawn into fierce combat with the LTTE. Also, its peace-enforcing image soon got tarnished by a wealth of reports on killings, disappearances and rape committed by its soldiers.

In the south of the island, however, the Indian presence fuelled historical fears of Indian imperialist intent and thus contributed to a major backlash. The ultra-radical JVP had by then started to mobilize. The Accord provided them with emotive focus for a renewed armed insurgency. As the uprising rapidly grew increasingly violent, challenging the country's economic stability by calling strikes and threatening those who disobeyed with death, the Sri Lankan army was deployed in the south. Towards the end of 1989, the JVP-insurgency was crushed after all but one of its leaders had been captured and killed.

When the Indian forces left in March 1990, the Tamil militants opposed to the LTTE joined with the Sri Lankan army in the ensuing battles of what has been labelled Eelam War II. After negotiations between the new government of president Chandrika B. Kumaratunga and the LTTE collapsed in April 1995. This was to be followed by Eelam War III - a war which is still raging.

The current situation

A newly-formed People's Alliance (PA), headed by Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, narrowly won the parliamentary elections in 1994, thus ending 17 years of unchallenged UNP rule. The PA came to power on a promise of negotiating a just peace that would safeguard the rights and dignity of all communities, and extensive constitutional reform. When Kumaratunga won the subsequent presidential elections with a substantial majority, this was interpreted as reflecting a strong public desire for peace. As president, she immediately announced her determination to resume the quest for a negotiated settlement with the LTTE.

In January 1995 the government and the LTTE agreed on a cessation of hostilities. This was followed by, in toto, four rounds of talks between the two parties, a process that soon got hampered by the inability of either party to agree on an agenda and a format for a continued process of dialogue. Meanwhile, the LTTE set a deadline for the government to implement its four demands; the lifting of the embargo to the north, the lifting of restrictions of fishing, the closure of the army camp at Pooneryn and freedom for LTTE caders to carry weapons in the eastern part of the country. Unsatisfied with the goverment's response, the LTTE in April announced its withdrawal from the negotiations as well as the cessation of hostilities in a letter to the president. Later the same month, the militant organisation resumed its targeted attacks on military installations. The government responded in July by initiating the

largest military offensive ever in the fifteen year armed struggle. In December the army took control over Jaffna, the emotive focus of Tamil lore and heritage.

In spite of the resumed war, in August '95, the Kumaratunga government made public its proposals for constitutional reform that would acknowledge the multi-ethnic composition of Sri Lankan society and thus seek to rectify previous discriminatory legislations. Under these proposals, Sri Lanka would constitute 'a union of regions', each of which would have considerable powers including law and order, education, the raising of taxes and land settlement. This 'Peace Package' has since January 1996 been discussed and scrutinized in the Parliamentary Select Committee, where progress in reaching a desired agreement on the substantive issues at present appears blocked.

The new proposals on constitutional reform and devolution of power have not officially been given to the LTTE for consideration. The government seems to insist on following what it calls a 'two-pronged approach to peace', i.e. weaken the LTTE militarily, while working towards obtaining a southern consensus on political reforms. Several governments, institutions, organisations and eminent individuals have offered to facilitate or lend their 'good offices' to overcome the present impasse in the communication between the government and LTTE. So far, however, the Sri Lankan government has publicly not responded to any of these, claiming that the conflict remains an internal affair that does not merit foreign intervention. In April 1997, hopes were raised for a softening of this position after the successful intervention of the then British Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Liam Fox, who brokered an agreement between the two major political parties - the SLFP and the UNP - to transcend partisan politics in the search for a political solution to the conflict.

The current situation, however, remains riddled with paradox. On the one hand a government is in power which has presented the most ambitious proposals for devolution of power to date; proposals that might have offered a real chance for a viable peace. On the other, war has been resumed on a hitherto unknown scale. The conflict appears again to generate its own momentum.

IV International Alert in Sri Lanka - An Outline

IA was founded in 1985. It emanated from the former Standing International Forum on Ethnic Conflict, Development and Human Rights and its subcommittee; The International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka - established in the wake of the pogroms against Tamils in Colombo in 1983. This event left between 2,000 and 3,000 people dead, thousands of homes and buildings burned or otherwise destroyed. Many observers were at the time particularly disturbed by the organized and systematic nature of the violence. Equally worrying, however, was the element of state complicity in the violence. Army personnel appeared to have encouraged arson and looting and - in some instances - allegedly participated in the rampage. Predicated on a deeply felt need among concerned individuals to coordinate the international community's response to such horrors, International Alert was, from its inception, mandated to focus on and closely monitor the unfolding of the tragically violent political development in the island. It also played a critical role in raising issues with the Human Rights Commission, interventions which, i.a., also probably contributed to the involvement of the ICRC. IA's interest in Sri Lanka has since been sustained.

In 1992, Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe, himself a Sri Lankan, was appointed Secretary General of the organisation. This shift in leadership allowed for an ambitious attempt at reinvigorating IA's scope, from influencing international policy making on human rights by sensitivisation and documentation of abuse, to a more active conflict resolution strategy. Following his appointment, Dr. Rupesinghe also transferred a substantial body of data-based documentation on the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict to IA, which in turn informed the basis for the development of a Peace Programme. This change in focus and strategic preoccupation called for organisational strengthening to translate the various components of this Programme into action, as well as an expansion of capacity. In 1995, at the peak of its activities, IA's Sri Lanka programme employed five persons in London and one at its suboffice in Colombo. The latter institution has later been strengthened with a full time officer to manage documentation.

Monitoring

Advocacy, i.e. influencing the global community to advance initiatives on preventive diplomacy, generate political will and build strategic alliances to enlarge the space for peace building efforts in internal conflicts, remains at the helm of IA's work. Succeeding in this endeavour, however, presupposes intimate knowledge of political developments, sensitivity to the possibility of changing scenarios and a good rapport with key players on the political arena.

In Sri Lanka, the organisation's continuous general reporting on the unfolding of politics, has over time achieved a fairly high standard. Its sensitivity to openings for major changes was evidenced, e.g., by the rapid assessment of possible political consequences of the UNP government's defeat in the 1994 elections to the Southern Provincial Council. Presumably, this information on political events stems not least from the frequent visits to the island of various IA Sri Lanka officers for discussions and updating. However, the very familiarity with detail also appears somewhat to hamper IA's ability to acknowledge and identify structural impediments to innovative political action - a factor that may serve to partly explain the non-implementation of some of the organisation's suggested ameliorating activities, and the slow fruition of others.

The diligence that generally marks IA's reporting on the southern political environment does not apply, at least on paper, to its descriptions of the circumstances prevailing in the northern parts of the country under LTTE control. While we acknowledge that this is partly due to IA's focus on the southern political scene, partly to the fact that accessing LTTE and the territories under its control is difficult for all involved in humanitarian or development related activities, it renders the organisation vulnerable to criticism by certain sectors.

The Peace Programme

The document: **Programme for Peace - Paths to negotiations**, was finalized towards the end of 1993. The development of this programme, that outlines the parameters of IA's "planned intervention into the Sri Lankan situation" aimed at "bringing about a negotiated peace", was initiated after discussions between IA and the funding agency, DANIDA. The terms of reference were that the process should focus on Sri Lankans, not on outside

mediators; it would primarily be a process supported by projects; it must be confidential if it were to succeed, and reporting on the programme would be ad hoc and primarily verbal.

The formulation of the programme was thus premised on the recognition that the transition from war to peace can be slow, and that local involvement and ownership in peace-building is of the essence. In the design presented to DANIDA in March 1994, it is further underlined that the programme did not advocate any particular school of thought on conflict resolution, and that the complexity and unpredictability of the Sri Lankan situation merit a high degree of flexibility. While conceptualised during President Premadasa's tenure (1988-1993) the programme continues in a formal sense to form the basis for the brunt of the organisation's work, which is still mostly targeting what IA calls the identification/ pre-negotiation phase.

Approach

IA's approach is based on the philosophy that establishing an environment conducive to negotiations and - ultimately - peace, is a process that characteristically moves through the following four stages or phases. The various activities considered necessary to underpin the momentum for a smooth evolution of this process, are hence designed to fit into these different stages. The various projects of IA in this respect, will be dealt with in the following paragraph. Suffice it here to briefly sketch the outline of the conceptualisation of this social dynamics, and what measures it may involve.

Phase 1; identification/pre-negotiation
- Identification of key individuals; identification of partners; building projects within strategic sectors; rebuilding war-torn societies in the east; lobbying the international community and working with the Tamil political groups and the diaspora.

Phase 2; mediation
- Political monitoring; working with 'partial insiders'; developing the free text communication; two-track diplomacy and creating a supportive infrastructure for negotiation.

Phase 3; negotiation
- Involvement of citizens and maintaining supportive political pressure.

Phase 4; post negotiation initiatives
- Election monitoring; rebuilding civil society; demilitarise society; eliminating small arms proliferation; trauma counselling; peace monitoring; rehabilitation; rebuilding infrastructure and human rights trials

As should be evident from the above, this represents a 'neutral' model that is designed to be generally applicable.

Another salient feature of IA's response to the Sri Lankan situation, is its choice of approach, seeking to combine high-level (SG), high-profile, high-exposure advocacy with more quiet

and low-key initiatives. As indicated above this priority can be problematic in the Sri Lankan context. Further, when the responsibility of executing such diplomacy is vested in an international NGO - headed by a Sri Lankan citizen - this provides a latently jealous mixture that could easily prove counterproductive. On the other hand, the high-exposure campaign has also contributed to both make IA known and positively informed its access to media, which is the strategic sector given pride of place in IA's "technical activities". It must also be added that IA claims that it has not deliberately sought publicity and high exposure, but that it was compelled to respond to adverse publicity .

The programme activities

Conflict resolution programmes and projects most often involve a plethora of initiatives ranging from mediation, confidence building, capacity strengthening and support to local organisations, to symposias and training activities. The model of staged interventions - as referred to above - is to some extent intended to catalogue the various initiatives that would seem appropriate at each and every phase in a conflict resolution process. In practice, however, the activities decided on will often overlap these borders. With regard to IA's engagement in Sri Lanka this fluidity is perhaps particularly evident, reflecting its longstanding relationship with the country. For instance, while monitoring above is prioritised in phase 2, in the Sri Lankan context this function was long the organisation's **raison d'etre**. As it continues to be. Indeed, the organisation itself constantly points to the primacy of adequate monitoring, not least because the desired flexibility to rapidly change focus, direction and priorities according to the need of the hour, depends on adequate reporting on developments.

In defining programme activities, IA cast its net widely. Initially, the intelligentsia, the military, the business community, press and other media, religious organisations, politicians and civil society at large were all designated strategic sectors to work with in enhancing a peace constituency. IA approached them all. Soon, however, some of these initiatives exhausted themselves, most notably perhaps with reference to the ambitions vis a vis the military establishment. Here, establishing a small secretariat - a Centre for Conflict Analysis - intended to support an 'eminent persons group' embracing several former as well as serving high-ranking military officers to "catalyse the peace process", was abandoned already towards the end of 1993, as "the dynamics of the group broke down and the enthusiasm for the project was lost". Thereafter, it seems that the military figure mostly as discussion-partners relevant to the organisation's continuous monitoring of the conflict.

Efforts to penetrate the business community, through, i.a., the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, appear to have had much of the same fate. By reaching out to business, IA initially hoped to create space for establishing a group of influential persons that would liaise between the two major political parties, the SLFP and the UNP, to forge a southern consensus on the necessity of political negotiations to end the war. This initiative seems fundamentally inspired by the South African liberation struggle, where commercial enterprise contributed significantly to the possibility for arriving at a new and positive political momentum. However, this idea did not 'catch' in Sri Lanka. Most probably for a variety of reasons. Still, IA does not appear to dwell much with why this initiative failed. It is reasonable to assume, though, that this owes not least to the structure of business ownership, where many of the larger business companies and

consortias are controlled by representatives of minority communities -Tamil and Muslim - who, based on recent experience (1983), may feel they walk a tight rope. However, IA maintains that the organisation continues to be involved with Sri Lankan business community associations in Sri Lanka and London.

The endeavour to map IA's technical activities, therefore, will basically focus on the organisation's targeting of the media, capacity building and politicians respectively. The processuality of IA's work, as well as its insistence on the paramountcy of 'flexibility', makes it difficult, however, to cluster these activities thematically. The wide range of ideas outlined, that never quite seem to materialise in project form, and the slow realisation of others, compound this problem. A diachronic reading moreover, exposed the difficulty of defining any synergy effect of the various initiatives. This strengthened the general impression that the identification of projects - although loyal to the organisation's general model for conflict resolution intervention - remains mostly ad hoc, and hence somewhat episodic.

Media

Already in late 1993, IA launched the idea of organising a peace exposure trip for a limited number of editors and experienced journalists to other conflict-torn societies. The idea was to inform the participants on conflict reporting and peace-building. The trip to Northern Ireland and South Africa, finally materialised in March 1995, comprising a limited number of journalists and peace activists. The objective of this initiative was by then outlined as mainly to expose the Sri Lankan participants to methods and problems of peacemaking, and to forge links between the delegation and IA, and the participants of the media and peace movements respectively. The exposure trip was later valued very positively by those who took part. The impact of this initiative, however, must be considered limited given the small number of persons - altogether 8 - that the project embraced.

In 1995, IA also initiated the production of a series of television programmes to introduce and advance concepts and formats for conflict resolution through staged discussions on contentious topics like ethnic relations, devolution of powers, impunity, media freedom, etc. The programmes aimed at demonstrating that agreement - or common ground - could be found on aspects of even the most violently opposing positions and, by identifying the highest common denominator, hence serve to transform the dynamics of perceived conflict. This project - the Search for Common Ground - was a joint responsibility of IA, Common Ground Productions (USA) and Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. In all 10 programmes were produced and broadcast in both Sinhala and Tamil. However, conflict evolved between the cooperative partners on various aspects of the production. In addition, the timing of the airing of the final programmes was not optimal, thus resulting in "the whole concept of imparting the message of being able to reach agreements in any conflict related situation, was lost", to quote an assessment made by a consultant commissioned by IA to review the project.

Similarly, a workshop organised in conjunction with the Sri Lanka Television Training Institute (SLTTI) and the Media Peace Centre (South Africa) on: Covering Conflict, in late fall 1995, was not a success either. The 3-week course, targeted on responsibility in covering conflict and producing television for change, aimed at senior tv-journalists but failed in attracting the desired participation. Of the 15 that followed this particular course, the majority

were not reporters. In addition, it turned out that the advance planning and research had not been adequate and communication between IA and SLTTI was poor. A follow-up measure with a new focused objective - i.e. to train trainers - was scheduled for 1996, but as funding proved difficult, was postponed to 1997/98.

In addition, IA in 1994 collaborated with the Free Media Movement (FMM) in organising a seminar on responsibility of the press that was widely attended. In December 1996, this was followed by a similar event focusing on human rights and conflict resolution. At the latter, IA participated under the aegis of the Sasakawa Media Project. As no report has so far emanated from this exercise, it escapes further consideration.

Capacity building

In the area of capacity building, and complementing more informal small-scale reach-out projects like the limited initiative aimed at Buddhist monks, IA seems to have prioritised two more important and possibly wide-ranging initiatives. These encompass firstly, the assistance rendered to the Centre for Policy Research and Analysis (CEPRA) at the University of Colombo and secondly, the support to the National Peace Council.

The discussions with CEPRA on establishing a post-graduate course in conflict resolution at the University, were initiated 1993. Such plans had by then been considered for some time within CEPRA. However, ideas on how best to format this programme and the elaboration of a relevant curriculum, did not really gain momentum until IA offered to provide international consultancy resources to assist in these efforts. Accordingly, in November 1995, a joint two-week seminar to identify a proper framework for an academic course, was arranged. The outlines of this course are now finalised, but not yet implemented, as the proposal still awaits the endorsement of the University Senate. It is expected that the Sinhalese nationalist student movement, which is well entrenched at this university, will strongly object to the introduction of this academic subject.

Based on the continuous quest for peace long voiced by, i.a., the Inter Religious Core Group, subsequently called the Peace Task Force, the National Peace Council (NPC) was formally launched in February 1995. It has since developed into the most prominent movement for peace in the country, covering all aspects of peace-building measures. NPC is organised as an NGO and based on membership.

IA supported NPC from its inception, primarily through an initial contribution to the core funding of the Council, and extended an invitation to three NPC officers to visit IA in London, and, i.a., attend a course on fund raising. NPC has also been actively included in the majority of IA's activities in Sri Lanka. While appreciating this generosity, the NPC is careful to underline that the Council is an indigenous initiative with its own work programme and set of priorities. Collaboration with IA and others may be invited when and if events and/or programmes coincide with the NPC's strategic targets, and provided the association with a foreign organisation will not be considered a possible liability in achieving the desired goal.

In addition to the above, IA in 1994/95, had planned two initiatives exclusively targeted at the Tamil community. This included a seminar on conflict resolution training in the Jaffna peninsula, and a conference on conciliation between Sri Lankan Tamils. The objective of the

latter was to help create a forum for Tamils of different political persuasions to discuss issues of common interest and to introduce a component of training in conflict resolution, human rights and democratic norms. However, the conflict resolution training at Jaffna University had to be postponed because of the military push to Jaffna and the subsequent lack of access. The conference in Singapore was cancelled for security reasons.

Politicians

IA's most ambitious project, though, was sending a cross-party group of parliamentarians first to Crete (1996), then to Northern Ireland (1996) and lately to the Philippines (1997), to learn about peace processes and discuss the lessons these could constitute for Sri Lanka. The intention was simultaneously to provide the parliamentarians with a wider set of options for a solution to their domestic conflict and to forge better contact between politicians of different parties. Sri Lanka has no tradition for lobbying across party boundaries, the party leadership's ruling is absolute pertaining to positions on major issues and the discipline with respect to the latter, in the major parties UNP and SLFP, considerable. IA seminars' cross-party approach was therefore new to many of the participants, and generally considered refreshing.

The composition of the group - identified with the assistance of NPC, who to begin with co-sponsored these arrangements - was largely the same throughout the seminar series. At the end of the meeting in Northern Ireland, the group made a joint public statement outlining measures perceived of as imperative to inducing new vigour in the domestic effort to end the ethnic conflict peacefully. These suggestions encompassed to; establish a process of negotiations that should include the LTTE; that a third party facilitator should be considered to move the process forward and that the deliberations of the Parliament Select Committee should continue with the active support of all parties. Statements which were leaked to the press were also made by most of the group at the end of meeting in the Phillipines.

While intellectuals and analysts already committed to a resumption of political negotiations generally welcomed the outcome of the two first meetings, the latest seminar, i.e. in the Philippines - generated a storm of criticism, not least among the respective participants' colleagues in Parliament, resulting in i.a. the SLFP whip calling his colleagues to book. The critics in the press this time portrayed the participants as having sold out to IA in return for overseas travels, and questioned the appropriateness of such foreign intervention in domestic affairs, particularly by an international NGO headed by a Sri Lankan who had played a part in the past in Sri Lankan political life.

Given the somewhat insular and authoritarian character of Sri Lankan party politics, this outcome could have been expected. The obvious overlap in IA's political vision for Sri Lanka and the grist of the parliamentarians' various statements should have alerted the organisation to the possibility of exploit by narrow chauvinist interests. A more careful strategic consideration therefore, e.g., by advising the group to make public their recommendations after returning to the island rather than before leaving the Philippines, could both have prevented the ensuing debacle and thus, perhaps, made the impact more tangible. This may, however, have been beyond the control of IA itself.

Despite the criticism bestowed upon them, the parliamentarians the team met with were

unanimous in their appreciation of IA's initiative. The exposure to similarly protracted conflict situations, as well as the realisation that a resolution is possible, was obviously a source of inspiration and reinvigoration for many of those involved. However, when asked to consider the possible short and long term impact of this process, it was generally held that the structuring of Sri Lankas politics was highly resistant to change and, hence, represented a serious constraint in this respect.

Mediation

As soon as general elections were called in 1994, IA started preparing for an 'accelerated Sri Lanka programme'. Drafted in September, the outline of this document aims at giving maximum support to the new government's quest for peace through efforts including negotiations. In October, IA's programme director approached representatives of the military and the initial negotiating team and handed over a compilation of various ceasefire and confidence-building agreements in preparation of the first round of talks. IA also began considering to develop socalled 'free texts', i.e. texts outlining former positions by the parties concerned on a number of expectedly contentious issues, for circulation to those involved.

While IA claims that its advice was solicited by those about to take part in negotiations from both sides, the organisation was not invited into the process of negotiation. If these initiatives were meant to impact on and assist in the process, the entrance should perhaps have been more considerate. As it turned out, IA presented the documents in question to "the highest possible level" on the government side, while they were "sent" to the LTTE. Also, none of the negotiators that the evaluators met with could recall any input by IA into this process, and - as some alleged - apart from the discreet services already provided by the ICRC, in the initial euphoria, outside association was anyway perceived of as unnecessary and superfluous.

The Sri Lanka Peace Foundation

The establishment of a Sri Lanka Peace Foundation has been proposed by IA. The Peace Foundation is designed with a two-fold mandate; as a documentation centre on the Sri Lankan conflict and an institution for research and analysis focusing on issues of peace and reconciliation. The Foundation will also assist with IA's continued work in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the London based programme team.

The Foundation's research outreach has two dimensions, i.e. to expand and sustain peace within Sri Lanka and to promote peace and coexistence throughout Asia. The primary objectives of the activities are outlined as, inter alia, to; promote peace and reconciliation amongst all communities; promote recognition and respect for collective and individual human rights and to foster a tolerant, non-violent multi-ethnic culture.

Based on the accessible documentation, it is difficult to establish how far preparations for this Foundation have come. While recognising IA's objective of expanding and, through the Foundation, institutionally strengthening its own programme, it should, however, be noticed that the above research outline overlaps considerably with a multitude of already well entrenched Sri Lankan policy research institutions - private and semi-public - like the Centre

for Policy Research and Analysis (CEPRA), the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) and the Regional Institute of International and Strategic Studies to name but a few. The local research scene is thus already relatively comprehensive, although perhaps somewhat fragmented, and the need for an additional institution with largely similar motivations could - from a donor point of view - appear redundant.

While IA now seems to envisage a more modest entity, the strategy of building new institutions in the countries where IA operates would seem to go against the frequently expressed objective that the organisation should support local efforts rather than work on their own.

V Assessments

IA claims that it enjoys excellent access to senior figures on all sides of the conflict. This is not easy to assess, both given the hierarchical structure of the LTTE and the conflicting statements experienced in Colombo regarding the IA's relations and contact with the present government. Nor is it easy to measure the impact of IA's efforts in Sri Lanka. Some planned initiatives were never implemented, some that were introduced failed, and others got aborted. IA itself appears from time to time tacitly aware of this state of affairs. In 1993, the lack of rapid progress is ascribed to the absence of commitment on the part of the new president, Wijetunge. In 1996, however, the responsibility is put on the "prevailing political and military climate". In other words, the blame for slow achievements is placed on a hostile environment, rather than flowing from a systematic and critical assessment of the adequacy of IA's own strategy, planning and priorities.

The high visibility of IA in Colombo is problematic, especially since IA's Secretary General is a Sri Lankan and has a political history in the country. Sri Lankan politics is above all characterised by an established and comprehensive national system of (two)party competition, and a political agenda oriented mainly to the question of who shall enjoy privileged access to publicly provided resources. Change is hence often restricted to the political sphere, and even at this level change is in large part cyclical. Political survival is thus largely premised on maintaining an organisational status quo. Radical ideas or initiatives are consequently mostly vied with suspicion. IA's advocacy of bipartisan approaches to resolve the ethnic conflict (which also in our own view are crucial) is, therefore, by many perceived of as a possible threat, i.e. to the prevailing system, and suspected of including personal political ambitions on the part of its Secretary General. To those nurturing a climate of such distrust, the fact that these allegations could be falsely construed, appears irrelevant.

Unfortunately, such suspicion occasionally seems to spill over also on IA's cooperative partners, and colours the perception of the nature of this collaboration. The Sri Lankan attitude to NGO's as well as international agencies remains largely ambivalent. While acknowledging the positive contribution of international assistance, several international, and some domestic, organisations have had to fend off charges of partisanship, and have experienced threats and overt expressions of hostility because of perceptions of their partiality. It is difficult to assess whether IA is particularly vulnerable in this respect. However, many of their partners were careful with underlining their own mandates and contributions to various projects, thus underplaying the possible significance or extent of IA's input. This

attitude, we assume, both reflects a general reluctance to be perceived of as stakeholders in any particular political project, and in part served to control what was by some referred to as 'agressiveness'on the part of IA.

A sense of urgency seems to have permeated much of the organisation's thinking pertaining to project identification and ameliorative interventions. This would seem to account for some of the apparent lack of patient planning and targeting of initiatives. Further, urgency could perhaps also help explain why IA does not seem to sufficiently emphasise and take into account structural resistance in prioritising sectors and the design of single efforts. As in its approach to the largely parochial Sri Lankan media that, in its reporting on the conflict, generally tends to reinforce the kind of stereotyped images and prejudices informed by nationalist assumptions. Few attempts are made to convey the reality of life for civilians living in the north and east. Even before censorship was (re)imposed in 1995, and access to these areas became constantly more problematic, hardly any journalist ventured to cover the ground conduct of the war. If this sorely needs to be redressed, it is unlikely to happen on the basis of sensitising a handful of persons on responsible conflict reporting. Nor will it be a realistic option to radically reorient the thinking of the all-powerful editors. Given the structure of ownership and control, as well as the hierarchical culture that prevails in the media, the impact of such initiatives is likely to be small both in a short and medium-term perspective.

Every internal conflict is based on a perception of gross injustice or violation of 'rights', has its winners and losers and its conflict entrepreneurs. Consequently, for some, continued conflict may constitute a willed and rational option. Unless these phenomena are also addressed, peace will remain an elusive proposition. The challenge for conflict resolution efforts in Sri Lanka and elsewhere is therefore to develop an attitude as well as a 'framework' that first, also acknowledge the existence of substantive political claims that may motivate conflict, and second, could assist or advise on how to address such issues above the level of rectifying mutual lapses in communication.

In the Sri Lankan context, the dispute on land is well suited to illustrate the case in point and the difficulties this entails. As indicated earlier, a major grievance underlying the Sri Lankan conflict is the Tamil community's perception of being excluded from the benefits of development. This pertains foremost to the major irrigation schemes opening the country's dry zone to more extensive cultivation, that allowed for the resettlement of poor Sinhalese peasants from the densely populated southern parts in sparsely populated areas. This policy was initiated already in the colonial era, and accelerated in the late 1970's. From the Tamil perspective, this has been seen as a massive state-engineered encroachment on their traditional 'homeland', demanding that the resettlement components be reconsidered. However, there is little empirical evidence to sustain the Tamil perception that this resettlement was achieved at their expense, as most of the land in question was formerly uninhabited. Still, land 'colonisation' remains a most contentious issue in the ongoing discussions on constitutional reform, mostly articulated along a just/unjust dichotomy.

While it may never be politically possible to solve this issue by undoing earlier arrangements at the 'local' level, the feeling that injustice has been committed could still be symbolically rectified at the national level. This, however, presupposes a major redistribution of power and institutionalised access to decisionmaking that ensures the minority community a voice in the

national polity, presently largely the prerogative and privilege of the majority Sinhalese. Again, this constitutes but one major and substantive political problem that has to be acknowledged and appropriately addressed in order to arrive at a viable solution to the continuing violent conflict.

VI Conclusions

Established in 1985, partly in response to the continued escalation of communal conflict, IA has a comparatively long history of commitment to political developments in Sri Lanka. The organisation was, from its inception, mandated to focus on and closely monitor the unfolding of the tragically violent political development in the island. While the initial purpose of the organisation was to focus attention on group conflict which violated human rights, its larger mission has later ideally been redefined as to contribute to ending the war and avert future similar confrontations by transforming violent conflict into non-violent vehicles of social change.

In Sri Lanka, the organisation's continuous general reporting on the unfolding of politics has over time achieved a fairly high standard. Nonetheless, the evaluation suggests that IA's sometimes impressive command of detail also appears to hamper its ability to acknowledge and identify structural impediments to innovative political action - a factor that may serve to partly explain the somewhat episodic identification of projects, the non-implementation of some of the organisation's suggested ameliorating activities, and the slow fruition of others.

To achieve its overarching goal, the organisation adopted, whether by design or default, a dual approach of high-exposure/high-level intervention by its Secretary General to inform and educate the Sri Lankan polity on the experience and achievements to be gained from the resolution of similarly protracted conflicts in other war-torn societies on the one hand, and a more quiet, low-key technical assistance to enhance the establishment of an inclusive peace constituency on the other. The study claims that this strategy is problematic as it - in the Sri Lankan context - provides a latently jealous mixture of political perceptions that could easily prove counterproductive. As we have outlined above, in Sri Lanka the prevailing attitude to NGO's as well as international agencies remains highly ambivalent. While acknowledging the positive contribution of international assistance, intergovernmental as well as domestic organisations have regularly had to fend off charges of partisanship, and have experienced threats and overt expressions of hostility because of perceptions of their partiality. When the responsibility of executing such two-track diplomacy is vested in an international NGO - headed by a Sri Lankan who was himself politically active prior to his leaving the country in 1982 - this concoction would prove particularly potent.

Consequently, as the study discusses, it is possible to understand IA's limited successes in Sri Lanka by referring to methodological weaknesses in the organisation's approach combined with bureaucratic constraints in the host country. In concluding, however, it appears pertinent to underline that the restraints on the organisation's potential contribution to the resolution of the conflict are also not least of a political nature. As we have outlined above, the Sri Lankan polity is dominated by two political parties largely identified with two different political 'families'. In addition, political memory is typically organised around individual politicians and family affiliations rather than political achievements. Thus, since IA's

Secretary General is a Sri Lankan with a political past that was once sharply articulated, his involvement was bound to be interpreted by some in cognitive political terms. IA's advocacy of bipartisan approaches to resolve the ethnic conflict is, therefore, by many perceived of as a possible threat, i.e. to the prevailing political culture, and suspected of including political ambitions on the part of its Secretary General. Hence, IA's vision has come to be viewed with suspicion by some sectors and its work ethos rendered vulnerable to exploit by narrow nationalist interest and conflict entrepreneurs.

Unfortunately, such suspicion occasionally seems to spill over also on IA's cooperative partners, and colour the perception of the nature of this collaboration. The reticence expressed by several of their local partners by underplaying the possible significance or extent of IA's input in their respective activities should be understood in this perspective.

In the future, therefore, IA should ensure minimal profile in implementing all aspects of their strategies for Sri Lanka to mitigate against the possible political costs of continuing the current approach.

List of persons interviewed

Ketish Loganathan, Centre for Policy Research and Analysis (CEPRA), University of Colombo

Neelan Tiruchelvam, MP, Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), former Director, International Centre for Ethnic Studies

Raja Dharmapala, Dharmavedi Institute

Joe Williams, CIDA

Thorvald Åkesson, Charge d'affaires, Sweden

Michelle Berenger, Sri Lanka Television Training Institute (SLTTI)

Lucien Rajakarunanayake, Free Media Movement

S. Balakrishnan, Movement for Interracial Justice and Equality (MIRJE)

Ajith Rupasinge, National Peace Council

Tyrol Ferdinands, National Peace Council

Jehan Perera, National Peace Council

David Tatham, UK High Commissioner, Sri Lanka

Jaydeva Uyangoda, Director Sri Lanka Foundation

Lakhsman Gunasekea, journalist, Law and Society Trust

Charles Abeysekera, Social Scientist Association (SSA)

Rohan Edirisinghe, CPA, CEPRA of Faculty of Law University of Colombo

William & Jennifer Ingram, Quaker Peace and Services (QPS)

Dikma Senanayake, MP, United National Party (UNP)

Mr. Yapa, UNP

Dilan Perera, MP, People's Allience (PA)

Trish Bartlett, International Alert, London

Frederica Janzs, International Alert, Colombo

Liz Phillippson, formerly with International Alert

Jeevan Thiagarajah, Colombo Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies,

P.P. Manikkam, National Language Commission

P. Saravanamuttu, Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA)

Suriya Wickremasinghe, Civil Rights Movement

Annex 4:

INTERNATIONAL ALERT IN BURUNDI - A CASE STUDY

Lennart Wohlgemuth

Background

There is no doubt that Burundi is, and has for some considerable time, been in a state of severe political crisis. There is an abundance of books, research reports and studies on different aspects of the remote and more contemporary history of recent developments in that country. An analysis of all this documentation does not provide easy explanations for the present situation of violent conflict and bitter political recrimination. On the contrary, one of the only safe conclusions that can be reached is that the recent events and the present crisis result from an accumulation of past events, with one factor forming a building block for the next, and all actors and factors interrelating and interacting in a complex manner. They are all important but one should be careful not to stress one more than the other. In the scholarly debate on Burundi, it is often the case that many are unable to resist the temptation to attempt to establish whether one or the other factor has been more important, but this has led to little conclusive result.

The causes of politicised ethnicity - involving the two major groups in the country, Hutu and Tutsi - are thus not easily defined. Suffice it here to say that a crisis has been built up in Burundi over a long period of time leading to a severely divided nation on the brink of self-destruction.

After the coup of October 1993 that resulted in the assassination of President Ndadaye, the international community has been following the development of the crisis in Burundi with keen interest. Following the genocide in Rwanda and the self critique among international organisations and the major powers, this interest has led to a great number of initiatives which are all aimed at preventing the escalation of the conflict in Burundi. The United Nations and OAU appointed Special Representatives to Burundi and a large number of international organisations, bilateral donors, and NGOs sent missions and observers to assess the situation and what they could do in order to alleviate the situation. International awareness of the crisis can, therefore be clearly established and there is no doubt too that there was willingness to contribute to its de-escalation.

However, most actors lacked previous experience on preventive diplomacy and thus a strategy on how to act in the particular situation. In this situation the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Burundi (SRSG), Mr Ould Abdallah, made an important contribution and, as far as his mandate allowed him, he assisted in the co-ordination of outside activities and in the assignment of specific roles to the different actors on the scene.

Recent development in Burundi

Since the short period of democratic rule was ended by the attempted coup, that resulted in the death of the president and several high-ranking government officials, followed by inter-

ethnic massacres that killed an estimated 50 000-100 000 people and produced 800 000 refugees and 400 000 internally displaced and dispersed people, the situation in Burundi has never really recovered. After extensive negotiations, the main political parties signed an agreement called the "Convention of Government", based on power sharing between the political parties. This compromise agreement was never accepted by the extremists on both sides and was, therefore, constantly challenged by words as well as by arms. This development culminated in an army coup that marked the return of former military President Buyoya as the new leader of the government - ending the democratic experiment for good for this time.

The international reaction to the Burundi coup, especially the suspension of the democratic institutions in the country, was very strong, particularly from the neighbouring states. The countries in the region immediately imposed sanctions on Burundi while major donors stopped or suspended their development aid to the country.

Although the expectations or hopes today have changed slightly towards giving Buyoya some benefit of doubt that he will work for a sustainable peace, including the restoration of democracy, according to the plan he presented at his re-inauguration, and although because of this hope, the sanctions were eased somewhat, the fact remains that very little improvements, if any, have been made in Burundi since October 1993 towards a long-term peaceful resolution of the conflict. However this does not preclude that international and national efforts made in the area of conflict resolution did not have any effect. The much feared descent into a genocide war of the Rwandan scale of 1994 has been avoided and it can be argued that international attention - in particular the conflict containment and crises management of UN SRSG Ould Abdallah in 1994 and 1995 - has had a preventive effect in this regard. The efforts of internal or external actors must, therefore, be evaluated against other criteria than the fulfilment of the ultimate aim of reaching a sustainable peace in the country.

Methodology

This case study of International Alert's activities in Burundi forms part of the overall evaluation of Alert. It aims at evaluating Alert's performance in Burundi based on the aims and objectives clearly stated and elaborated in their own documentation. These aims and objectives deal with the overall situation in Burundi. Thus, it is not sufficient to simply study whether the objective of each separate activity has been fulfilled or not according to its detailed short-term goals but also against the overall aims of Alert for establishing itself in Burundi in the first place. These overall objectives are also the *raison d'être* for the existence of Alert.

However, as has already been shown, the situation in Burundi as regards the internal conflict has not improved during the years of the presence of Alert in the country. The overall assessment of the performance of Alert in Burundi must, therefore, be judged in a more sophisticated way. The assessment of the "technical" performance of the activities of Alert must be complemented by assessing the attainment of the overall aim of Alert in Burundi. The relevance, impact and sustainability of its activities will thus be judged through:

—an evaluation of how International Alert has continuously assessed and analysed the overall political developments in the country;
—in what way the choice of activities has been made in accordance with that analysis; and
—the extent to which the performance of the activities relate to that analysis.

As a basis for the evaluation, the evaluator was supplied with a huge number of documents from Alert. These include all documented analyses made on political development in the country, yearly plans and annual reports and reports from every single activity such as study tours, seminars or workshops. The evaluator also visited Burundi for eight intensive days meeting many people from all walks of life inside and outside the activities supported by International Alert (see attached list of people interviewed in Burundi). Face-to-face interviews were conducted with over thirty people in Africa and Europe. Many donor representatives were interviewed and three visits were made at the Alert head quarter.

Context analyses by International Alert

The over-all aim of Alert's Programme in Burundi as stated by Alert itself is "to help prevent escalation of the conflict, and to contribute effectively to the process of a just and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi." In order to fulfil that aim, a deep knowledge of the situation in the country as it develops over time has to be developed and continuously improved and analysed. From the documentation by the Alert secretariat in Burundi and interviews with its members and other actors in- and outside Burundi, it is clear that a great deal of effort has been made by Alert to understand the situation in the country and to draw conclusions from that information. Initially, Alert relied heavily on the SRSG's office and in particular Mr Ould Abdallah. Today most other actors in Burundi seem to value the judgements of Alert highly and to think that the analyses of Alert are of great use.

It is not for this study to try, in detail, to repeat the analyses made by Alert. The analysis is based on the very complex historical developments which are rooted in the pre-colonial era and have been developed in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Rapid population growth and land scarcity, economic crises, the refugee crisis, the unresolved issue of impunity, a legacy of fear that exists as a result of the repeated mass killings since early 1960's and the often very destructive developments in the region have all added to the internal problems over the past ten years. All these factors, sometimes fuelled sometimes constrained by interventions from the international community, has led to a manipulation of ethnicity which has led to the very difficult situation of today. Suffice to quote one of the central theses of Alert which, in a nutshell summarises what many other analysts have needed book-length manuscripts to express:

> "On the majority side of the equation (Hutu) there is a profound sense of grievance at their long-standing exclusion and a determination that this must be corrected - on the minority side (Tutsi) there is a profound fear of exclusion/extermination and a determination to guard against it - all leading to a deadly competition for political power".

The analyses made by Alert seems thus to be as good as any analyses of a very complex political, economical, social, cultural development process can be. However, sometimes it seems to an

outside reader of the continuous assessments of the development in the country made by Alert that the closeness of the staff to the day to day situation may blur their views as analysts. Particularly, after the July 1996 army coup, this seems to have been the case, an assessment which is acknowledged by Alert itself in the preparation of the 1997 Programme. As the analyses are important for how to assess the ongoing programmes and since they affect conclusions drawn about the activities undertaken (both the choice of activities, the priority setting among the activities and the way the activities are to be implemented), this is an important matter and should be further discussed within Alert. One possible solution is that the analyses from time to time are reviewed and discussed by a panel of well-reputed analysts of the Burundi situation.

The International Alert Programme in Burundi

Following the attempted coup in November 1993 and the swift and violent reactions and counter-reactions, Burundi became the focus of international community attention. After the Rwanda genocide in April-June 1994 a great number of countries and NGOs all around the world concluded that all must be done to avoid a similar thing happening in Burundi. Alert also turned its attention to Burundi and, among other things, established contact with the SRSG, Mr Ould Abdallah. Mr Abdallah was very open for creating partnerships with outside actors and suggested that Alert use its comparative advantage to convene a meeting between all interested parties - particularly NGOs - to commence a process of co-operation between them and to work out a common agenda of action to help prevent an escalation of the Burundi conflict. Alert thus convened a "Burundi Colloquium" in London in February 1995 with some 80 participants from many organisations, where a programme of action was discussed and sketched out. A "Friends of Burundi Group" was established with a Steering Committee. Based on the programme sketched out at the meeting, Alert, in collaboration with the SRSG, prepared a more detailed programme during a visit to Burundi. This programme which contains a large number of activities must be seen as a collection of ideas agreed upon by many groups representing donors or NGOs and the Burundi authorities and as important building blocks in a strategy to prevent further violence - not only for Alert but for all actors involved.

After the programme was approved by the Steering Committee in April 1995, Alert started activities in Burundi by setting up a three-person team which was required to spend a lot of its time in Burundi. Before the team worked out its own detailed informed analyses on the situation in Burundi it relied heavily on the SRSG. The activities that dominated in 1995 centred around study tours to South Africa. These were included in the agreed programme and were left to Alert to co-ordinate, in close co-operation with the SRSG and other partners. All in all three such tours were arranged in 1995 leading to a number of follow-up activities such as return visits from South Africa, the CAP- project etc.

According to the staff of the Burundi Alert secretariat, these tours and other activities in 1995, provided learning time and opportunity whilst they were able to rely on the experienced guidance of the SRSG. This period also enabled the building of a degree of trust with the Burundian contacts, and consultation with them on programme ideas.

Based on the experiences gathered during this first year and the analyses made of the situation in the country, a strategy and programme for International Alert was defined for 1996 and later for the 1996-1999 Programme Proposal. The aim of the programme was now defined as: "helping to

prevent escalation of the conflict, and contributing effectively to a process of achieving a just and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi".

The strategy and programme build on the following conclusions made by Alert. It corresponds largely accurately with my own observations after discussions with Alert staff and extensive interviews in Burundi:

> "The goal of and for Burundians is **durable peace**. There are **no quick fixes**. The strategy (theirs and ours) has to be one of **process**. A primary mechanism for catalysing and sustaining the process is the encouragement and facilitation of **dialogue**".

With these orientations in mind the strategy and programme were built initially on two constructs:
—attention/intervention targeted at four levels: international, regional, national elite and national grassroots,
—attention/intervention on medium and short term time scales.

The programme comprised four parts:
—International information exchange and a capacity for facilitation and advocacy initiatives (INFA);
—an enabling partnership with the CAP Group that had emerged from the South African Study tours of 1995;
—a multi-faceted programme to strengthen the peace-building capacity of the Burundian Women's Movement; and
—a number of more finite projects: Political cohabitation support, Peace Radio support, Schools Peace Education support.

The different programmes will not be presented in detail in this study . In summary and with reference to the classification above:
—the INFA programme operates mainly at the international and regional levels and mainly in the short time frame;
—the CAP partnership operates mainly at the national elite level and in the medium time frame (although there were short term spin-offs, and despite a mistake of expecting too much in the short term);
—the Women's Programme operates at both elite and grassroots levels and in the medium time frame; and
—the political cohabitation project was abandoned. Preparations for the Schools Peace Education project and support for the Peace Radio project are both aimed at the grassroots level and in the medium time frame.

Included in all programmes are elements of training and discussions between and among selected groups of people.

Analyses of the strategy and programme of International Alert in Burundi

General strategy and programme aim

Although not always explicitly stated there seem to be a close relationship between the analyses made by the International Alert secretariat in Burundi and the strategy chosen for the actual interventions. There is an underlying sense of humility that runs through the Alert strategy and programme. This is evidenced partly by the explicit admission of the difficulties involved in understanding the situation and the constant need to learn and re-learn. A preparedness to reassess the situation and to make necessary changes when needed, can also be seen, for example, after the army coup in July 1996. In fact as was stated above, the closeness to the day to day developments sometimes might have created an almost excessive readiness to make reassessments and readjustments.

The aims presented seem to be well adapted to the specific situation prevailing in Burundi in underlining both the immediate short-term need for de-escalating the conflict and the importance of building long or medium term assurances and institutions for a real peace. It seems as if the bias of the programme over time leans toward activities more medium term in nature, an approach which seems to be the only feasible one in the present special situation.

Programme composition

The different activities of the programme ultimately accepted by Alert for implementation builds on the original proposals developed already at the Burundi Colloquium in early 1995. It was further developed in close co-operation with the SRSG and out of the learning process during 1995. Although many ideas were put forward at an early stage, it appears that Alert has been open-minded and receptive and has with great care, picked out what a small flexible NGO best could support. In as far it is possible to assess it seems that the choice of activities has been made in accordance with Alert's analyses on the overall situation and how to alleviate it. By being prepared to work with other partners, it has been able to act as a catalyst and supporter at an early stage before larger or more specialised actors have been able to take over or come in to help. The two major programmes CAP, and the Women's Programmes are cases in point where flexibility and patience have led to the development of two important activities (see below).

The INFA Programme

The information gathering and analyses made by the Alert secretariat in Burundi is, as discussed above, of major importance for the implementation of the programme as a whole and this part in particular. From the interviews made in Burundi, it appears that the analyses of Alert are held in high esteem and used by many others. The quality of analyses becomes even more important when it is used for deciding on what issue or in what area Alert shall act as a facilitator or to take advocacy initiatives. The major such initiatives have so far been:
- the facilitation of networking and collaboration between national NGOs of countries in the Great Lake region;
- support for the establishment of and advocacy for support to the "UN International Commission of Enquiry into the assassination of the President and other high level officials, plus the ensuing massacres in Burundi in 1993" which was considered by Alert and others to be a necessary part of the effort to address impunity in the country;
—advocacy for the acquisition of foreign legal assistance for the trials of prisoners accused of crimes associated with political violence again for advancing the case of impunity and justice;

—lobbying to draw international attention to the increasingly unstable situation in and around the refugee camps in Eastern Zaire; and
—advocacy in relation to the sanctions and negotiations. As regards the negotiations Alert advocated the acceptance thereof and at the same time it warned against the risk of polarisation of attitudes as a consequence of sanctions.

These activities are expected to meet the short term aim of helping to prevent escalation of the conflict and are far from being uncontroverted. It seems that with regard to the first three Alert has been successful in assisting to implement or start the implementation of important activities on the ground. On the last point, without wishing to take a personal stand on the actual question, it seems to me that Alert should have refrained from intervention. To take a stand in such a politically sensitive area as the sanctions, where an international (or regional) mediator is involved is unwise. For the future, it is recommended that the areas for advocacy and facilitation are chosen even more carefully than before concentrating on issues of high importance but which are less obviously political in nature.

Fulfilment of objectives

As stated above for each activity Alert sets out its aim, strategy and detailed objectives/action plan. From the available documentation and after meeting with people involved in all of the activities, it seems that the immediate objectives in most cases are being fulfilled with the necessary flexibility to make changes when ever needed. Whether each activity fulfils its overall aims depends more on overall developments than on the implementation of the activities themselves. An example is taken from one of the two major activities Compagnie des Apotres de la Paix (CAP).

The CAP Group emerged from a study tour for 25 influential Burundians to South Africa in 1995 which was arranged and facilitated by Alert in collaboration with the SRSG and a South African NGO. CAP is made up of Burundians drawn from the two main ethnic groups and who hold positions of influence in the political parties, the army, the parliament and the administration. Both moderate and more extreme tendencies of the conflicting political positions are represented within the group.

After having lived together through a common experience in South Africa on what people can do to work for peace they decided to stay together and form an NGO. The objective of CAP is to promote dialogue and peace building. By providing institutional support and training and acting as a discussion partner whenever needed, Alert assists the CAP to hold together. The list of activities of CAP in 1995-96 is long and impressive, fostering a dialogue between the 23 members who have no other forum for discussion among themselves and between them and other groups such those invited to its peace seminars. Some of the activities planned did not materialise. This was partly due to excessive ambitions both by CAP itself and by Alert and partly due to the prevailing circumstances. CAP tried, for example, on two occasions before the middle of 1996 to arrange meetings between army officers and parliamentarians which failed. Furthermore some peace seminars planned in the regions had to be postponed due to the deteriorating security situation.

However, measuring the number of activities or whether all activities planned did or did not take place is less relevant than other non measurable facts. For example, in view of polarisation and political attitudes brought about by events between June and November 1996 especially following the July army coup, the simple fact that the CAP still exists as a group is itself an achievement. Another such non-measurable factor is as the representatives of the different parties told the evaluator that this group is, the only forum which they at the present time can use to discuss various grievances with someone from the other side. Furthermore, as this group is well known and uses many opportunities to make itself known, the mere fact that a group consisting of persons with so many different allegiances exists and continues to do so is an extremely important example for others in Burundi.

CAP thus clearly illustrates the importance of not only evaluating the immediate objectives of the projects but also relating the performance recorded to the over-all aims of the Alert programme in Burundi.

Training

An important part of all the activities supported by Alert is the training component. To prevent escalation of a conflict and in particular to start the long term process of a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi, a new attitude leading to different ways of behaviour must be built up in the country. How this can be done and the pitfalls in the process of doing so is discussed more in the main report.

Again the fulfilment of the immediate objectives are easy to establish. Many seminars, workshops, briefings and also longer courses have been implemented according to schedule. Most of them are well documented and contain self evaluations and often follow-up activities to assist the trainees to keep up their newly attained knowledge and experiences.

Hardly any training activities supported by Alert have been undertaken as one-off events, but, rather, always as part of a clearly defined process with short and long term objectives. I will, below, use the second of the two major projects supported by Alert "Strengthening the Role of Women's Organisations", as an example to illustrate this. This project is based on the assumptions that women have been excluded in most work for peace so far and could make an important contribution to that work. In close collaboration with other partners, Alert and the representatives of Burundian women have developed a project with five components namely: conflict resolution training; institutional support to women's organisations and their umbrella organisation; support for women's peace networking; a research project into the traditional role of Burundian women in resolving disputes; and capacity building training. So far, work has been concentrated on the first three of which the first will be discussed here.

As regards the conflict resolution training with a gender perspective for a core group of Burundian peacemakers, three workshops were scheduled for 1996-97. The first took place in Bujumbura in June, 1996, the second workshop in April, 1997 and the third workshop will take place in July or August 1997.

The purpose of having three training workshops involving the same group of 25 women is to establish a network of Burundian women trainers to facilitate peace strategies at the community,

provincial, national and regional levels. The workshops were designed to include an important follow up component, involving the deployment of participants within the community and within refugee and displaced-people camps, where they would develop their skills in practice.

The 25 participants were selected from five of Burundi's provinces with the help of an Advisory Committee and two Burundian co-trainers. One of the main criteria for their selection was that they should be working with women at the grassroots level. They represent, as evenly as possible, the main ethnic groups as well as the various political tendencies.

Care had been taken to ensure that the training module was culturally appropriate and gender sensitive. The training methodology included: group work; plenary sessions; brainstorming; case studies; mini-lectures; role plays; songs; games; dances; and work in pairs. The issues covered included: gender and the social construction of gender; conflict analysis, looking specifically at Burundi; communication and listening; ethnicity; exchange of personal experiences; gender and conflict; conflict transformation; justice; communication; how adults learn; and development of an action plan.

Following the June 1996 workshop, the participants developed substantial follow up activities including:

— organisation of a training workshop with displaced and grassroots women (at least one was organised in each province);
— launching of awareness campaigns around peace issues;
— elaboration of peace messages delivered in churches, market places and to peasant women in the hills and displaced camps;
— search for strategic allies/partners within the community;
— in Ruyigi, a peace rally on African Women's Day celebrated at the end of August;
— in Karuzi, the participants collected money to buy school materials for children living in a displaced-peoples camp.

The important ingredients in this training programme are a) that it forms part of a wider programme of women's peace work and thus does not act as a one-off training activity and b) that the training forms part of a long term strategy where women who have been trained will build up their own committees and continue to work for peace. From the interviews and study visits, a number of very interesting follow up activities were identified.

The content of the training is extremely difficult to assess. In the interviews the evaluator has, however, tried to assess the impact of the training on the trainees to understand whether the training has avoided possible pitfalls. It appears that the outcome of the training performed with the support of Alert has been to make people aware of possible means of airing grievances and solving conflicts other than by violence, and this it has done successfully without making the trainees complacent or resigned to the status quo. This balance is however very delicate and the issue should be kept under close surveillance at all times. The ethnic divide and the educational imbalance in favour of Tutsi can easily affect this balance.

Cost effectiveness

As is further developed in the main report of Alert, it is very difficult to measure the cost effectiveness of such activities that Alert is supporting. However, two observations can be made: 1) the overall cost for the Burundi programme of £ 400,000 for the 1996 programme is small compared with all activities implemented by all actors during that year. The way Alert operates as catalyst and bridging financier means that it usually only pays a small but strategic portion of the total costs for each activity. It also seems that a certain degree of cost consciousness ensure that the staff choose simple and non-expensive solutions wherever possible. A case in point is that Alert's Burundi secretariat has not bought any new cars for its own use; 2) A point often made is that the cost for prevention should be compared with the cost for taking care of the people after a conflict has emerged. Any positive indicators that an activity really helps prevent the escalation of conflict makes the efforts and money spent worth while.

Summary and conclusions

International Alert has only been active in Burundi during a period of two years. It has in this short period of time succeeded in making itself well-established and found a niche for its comparative advantage of being a small neutral NGO with some experience from development work and preventive diplomacy from other similar conflict areas. By co-operating with other partners and in particular with the experienced SRSG and by an approach of listening and learning, it is today accepted and appreciated by all main actors on the Burundi scene, internal as well as external. From interviews with all parties (including extremists on both sides), no major critical voice was raised against Alert. This is not a small achievement operating in such a sensitive area as conflict resolution.

The analyses made by the Alert Burundi secretariat on the political developments in the country seem well worked through and generally accepted. The choice of activities seems to be in line with those analyses and as far as it is possible to judge, the results notably fulfil the immediate project objectives, but also the overall aims of the Alert programme in the country. However, the ultimate objective of the actors on the scene, namely, a major breakthrough in the efforts to reach a sustainable peace, is still far from being met.

A number of problems have been alluded to above, such as the risk of being too close to the actual day to day events and the way this makes value free analyses difficult. Most of them are however of a nature that can be rectified after internal discussions.

The reason for the relative success of the Alert Burundi Programme is, as so often, mainly due to the particular persons working for Alert in Burundi. Their humility, their willingness to learn before an action or decision is taken and their ability to relate to other people are important qualities for such an assignment.

Below follows a list of lessons which can be drawn from the activities of Alert in Burundi - most of which have been discussed verbally or in writing by Alert itself:

1) The importance of information gathering and exchange being built into the programme as a continuous process.

2) Peace building is best done in partnerships - both local and international.

3) For a small NGO it is important to act as a catalyst, facilitator and/or fund raiser in the implementation of a well defined programme of peace-building rather than keep the project for itself.

4) There are no quick fixes in peace-building. The strategy has to be one of process requiring a great deal of humility and flexibility.

5) Good development wisdom (and experience) offers relevant principles for conflict-related work (long-term strategy, importance of institution building, ownership etc.).

6) Increasing access and equity among all components of the population is integral to the process of building a durable peace. This implies i.a. improved and expanded education as well as the building up of political institutions.

7) The centrality of dialogue as a means to building peace.

8) Training is an important method in peace building, but it should a) be part of a long-term strategy rather than an activity on its own, and b) create space for further dialogue rather than making people accept the status quo.

9) Conflict resolution is best done quietly.

People interviewed by Lennart Wohlgemuth in Burundi during field evaluation visit, May 5–11, 1997

— H.E. M. Luc Rukingama, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Rector of the University of Bujumbura prior to the formation of the Buyoya government.
— H.E. M. Leonce Ngendakumana, President of the National Assembly and the most senior Frodebu representative presently holding office.
— M. Jan van Eck, unofficial envoy/mediator, retained by the American NGO *Search for Common Ground*, former ANC member of the South African Parliament and Associate of Capetown Centre for Conflict Resolution.
— M. Mirza Hussein Khan, UN Resident Representative and Director of UNDP.
— M. Cheik Tidiane Sy, UN Senior Political Representative.
— Mme. Späs Manirakiza, Independent Catholic Newspaper Editor.
— M. Gaspard Baisgane, Director of Schools' Peace Education Unit in Ministry of Education and President of Compagnie des Apotres de la Paix (CAP) (two meetings).
— Mme. Josephine Ndikumana, Coordenatrice of CAP.
— H.E. Bernd Morast, The German Ambassador to Burundi.
— Hon. M. Adrien Sibomana, Uprona MP and former Prime Minister.
— Mme. Marie Louise Sibazuri, Member of National College of Wise Elders, Dramatist and Script Writer of Radio Peace Drama Serial.
— M. Phillipe Dahindin, Acting Manager of *Search for Common Ground*'s Radio Training Studio.
— Maitre Maroufa Diabira, Director of UN Human Rights Centre.
— M. Phillipe Ntahonkuriye, Official in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, member of Frodebu and CAP member.
— M. Libere Bararunyeretse, Presidential Special Envoy, member of Uprona Central Committee, former Foreign Minister and CAP member.
— Lt. Colonel Isaie Nibizi, Director of Information for the army and CAP member.
— Mlle. Jocelyn Manirakiza, free lance consultant, former adviser to former President Ntibantunganya and CAP member.
— Hon. M. Pierre Barusasiyeko, Frodebu MP and CAP member.
— H.E. M. Eugen Nindorera, Minister of Institutional Reform, former Director of *Iteka Human Rights Group*.
— H.E. Major Pierre Buyoya, President of Burundi.
— Mme. Marie Goretti Nduwayo, Coordenatrice of the Collective of Burundian Women's Organisations (CAFOB).
— Several members of the Executive Committee of CAFOB including Mme. Domitile Barancira and Mme. Basillisa Baruriye.
— Members of the Women's Association of Kinama.
— Representatives of several of the member organisations of CAFOB at a special meeting gathering some 20 persons.
— Mme. Scholastique Harushayakira and Mme. Marie Goretti Ndacayisaba, Extension Coordinators of the Women's Training Programme.
— Hon. Mme. Victoire Ndikumana, Uprona MP.
— Several African lawyers working on the Foreign Legal Assistance Programme.
— M. Thomas Ridaeus, Sida Representative in Burundi.
— M. Bill Yates, Head of the Burundi IA Secretariat.

Annex 5:

International Alert in Sierra Leone - A Case Study

Joanna Macrae and Phillipa Atkinson

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Methodology of the Sierra Leone Case study

The Sierra Leone case study was conducted by Joanna Macrae and Philippa Atkinson. A total of 12 person weeks were spent on this study.

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with over thirty people in Europe, the USA and Africa (see Annex 1). Several informants were interviewed repeatedly, the average length of interviews was approximately one hour, although for some informants we have up to 12 hours of interview notes. In total, the team has collected the equivalent of more than one person week's worth of interviews.

Because of lack of time, it was not possible to interview all those who have been involved with International Alert's work in Sierra Leone. In the current political circumstances it was not possible to arrange to speak with Corporal Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF. The evaluators did not consider it appropriate to contact those RUF members working with the leaders of the army coup resident in Freetown after the May 25th coup. Other key RUF members have been held hostage since their attempted internal coup in March, and were therefore unavailable.

The timing of the evaluation coincided with the highly charged atmosphere surrounding the coup of 25 May 1997. This necessarily made the evaluation task more difficult as we could not travel to Sierra Leone itself. This is obviously of great regret to the Team.

The evaluators requested that International Alert facilitate only one meeting for them at the regional level, that with the Ivorian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Unfortunately, however, the evaluators were unable to meet with him personally. Later, a very useful telephone conversation between the Minister and the Team leader of the evaluation was held. A personal interview was also held with senior civil servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Limited resources precluded a visit to Addis Ababa to discuss the Sierra Leone case with the OAU. Unfortunately, despite repeated requests, OAU staff were unable to respond to the detailed questions put to them by fax in June in time for inclusion in this report. However, an informal conversation between a member of the evaluation team and a senior representative of the OAU proved useful in informing the evaluators' conclusions.

The evaluators had planned to visit Freetown and Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire) in early June, but were unable to travel to Sierra Leone because of the military coup. Instead, they travelled to Conakry (Guinea), to interview members of the Government in exile and evacuated UN officials, and to Abidjan to interview members of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra

Leone (RUF/SL), members of the Ivorian Government and of the diplomatic community. In addition, the evaluators visited Geneva to interview International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff.

The evaluators took the view that a key task was to define the "space" within which International Alert worked. This meant analysing three things:

- *The critical context.* The evaluators worked on the assumption that different actors' conceptions of the causes and dynamics of the conflict would influence their perceptions of the appropriate strategies to resolve the conflict.

- *The overall response of the international system to the conflict in Sierra Leone.* A definition of International Alert's role in Sierra Leone is in part dependent upon an understanding what other actors - the warring parties, other governments and inter-governmental agencies - were doing at the same time. This is particularly important in the sense that IA has defined its niche by arguing that it was playing a role that others either could not play or were not playing effectively.

- *Defining the quality of relationships between International Alert and other key actors,* including the warring parties, regional and Western governments, and international organisations such as the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Commonwealth Secretariat and ICRC. This was particularly important in the Sierra Leone case since IA's programme has comprised largely a *relational* approach, ie it has sought to strengthen relations between the warring parties, particularly the RUF, and the international community. Implicitly, the agency has sought to use the Sierra Leone programme to raise the organisation's international profile and to consolidate its links with the UN and other IGOs.

The evaluators have been mindful throughout that their task has been to evaluate International Alert and not to pass judgement on the performance of other international bodies or governments. While the evaluators have extensive, evaluative information (and indeed views) regarding the roles of other bodies, this has not been cited in the text.

There is likely to be considerable value in donors commissioning system-wide analyses of international conflict-management initiatives, in addition to evaluations of specific NGO interventions. By reviewing the performance of inter-governmental bodies, including the UN Secretariat and the Security Council as well as regional actors and national parties to the conflict, greater accountability and transparency could be achieved in the sphere of conflict management. Further, it would help to define more clearly the comparative advantages of NGOs working in this sphere.

Study II of the Joint Evaluation of the International Response to Genocide and Conflict in Rwanda (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996) was an example of a publicly-financed investigation into the performance of the international conflict management system. Following its work in Sierra Leone, the evaluators are convinced that such an approach should be encouraged in other contexts.

The evaluators are aware of numerous allegations made against International Alert, indeed the

organisation itself has provided considerable information on these issues. The evaluators have not sought to prove or disprove these allegations and so be seen to be acting as judge, jury and executioner. Rather, they have identified a series of issues, and, by building up a detailed picture of IA's work over the past 3 years, have sought to clarify these, focusing on the analytical and ethical framework within which International Alert works, and on its relations with other bodies The mandate of the evaluation obviously did not extend to a review of the allegations of criminal activity of IA staff members. The evaluators note however, that no evidence has actually been presented which supports these allegations.

1.2 Sources, rules of evidence and presentation of findings

International Alert provided to the evaluators a proposal for a code of conduct for the evaluation. One clause suggests that the evaluators should rely only on sources which are willing to be cited publicly. In principle, the evaluators endorse the principle of transparency.

However, it quickly became apparent that the world of international diplomacy does not function in this way. Confidentiality is the *sine qua none* of formal diplomacy. This has proved a major obstacle to the evaluation itself. The evaluators acknowledge that discretion is often a precondition for the establishment of trust between parties, to cite and publicise sources would arguably not necessarily contribute to improved international relations. However, the culture of secrecy and deniability also creates an environment in which unsubstantiated rumour and misinformation can flourish. Indeed, the evaluators have noted a number of occasions where information has been withheld or even distorted, in what may have been deliberate attempts to mislead the evaluation on key issues. Conversely the evaluators have been grateful to others who have provided thoughtful and balanced views to the evaluation.

Without the resources or authority of a public enquiry to call for full disclosure of confidential documentary information held in diplomatic and international security circles, the evaluators have been forced to rely upon extensive interview material (which has been carefully typed and archived), much of which is non-attributable, and some of which comes from sources who may arguably have vested interests in undermining International Alert's reputation. It must also be recognised that IA furnished the evaluation team with as much documentation and written reports as requested by the team.

The evaluators are aware that they could be accused of being unaccountable in terms of evidence given that many of the sources spoke on condition that their comments would not be attributed. The evaluators have therefore sought to base their work on the following series of rules:

- They have sought to identify, within the time- and political constraints, a wide and balanced range of sources;
- They have aimed to listen carefully, and to report accurately the views of different sources;
- Where there are marked differences in reporting of facts, the evaluators have sought

to explain these differences, recognising the particular interests of different parties;

- No substantive conclusions are drawn from the evidence of only one informant - at a minimum two reliable sources must confirm any version of events.

1.3 Structure of the remainder of the report

The remainder of the Sierra Leone report is structured as follows:

Section 2.0 Outlines the critical context for International Alert's intervention in Sierra Leone, providing an overview of the history of the conflict, focusing in particular on an analysis of the nature of the different politico-military forces which comprised the government, army and rebel forces in the 1990s.

Section 3.0 comprises the main body of the evaluation. It analyses International Alert's programme in Sierra Leone, focusing on the period from early 1995 to the present. *3.1* describes IA's analysis of the war and the rationale for its intervention. *3.2* reviews IA's programme in Sierra Leone, evaluating its activities in relation to three key phases: pre-negotiations; negotiations and post-negotiations.

Section 4.0 highlights the issues and implications raised by earlier chapters and provides a number of recommendations for future action.

2.0 History and Analysis of the Sierra Leonean Conflict

2.1 History of the Conflict

The outbreak of armed conflict in Sierra Leone is frequently seen to have been marked when a small group of fighters calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) began launching attacks in the south and east of the country around the Liberian border in March 1991. The initial group contained Liberian and Burkinabe mercenaries, and was generally understood as a spill-over from the Liberian war, promoted by Charles Taylor in retaliation for Sierra Leone's support of the ECOMOG forces in that country, and as an extension of his economic control into the key resource areas of Sierra Leone. Libya was thought to have a role in the conflict, with its earlier support for Taylor seen as evidence of Ghadaffi's destabilising influence in the region. However, the RUF was from the start essentially an indigenous movement, initiated and led by Sierra Leonean former army corporal Foday Sankoh. The RUF claimed that its origin lay in the long history of oppression and poor governance the country had experienced since independence, which had left is population among the most impoverished in the world, despite Sierre Leone's extensive mineral wealth.

The fighting spread quickly throughout the south-east, following a pattern of brutal attacks on rural villages, with key economic and political figures targeted by the RUF for harassment and killing, and forcible recruitment of especially young people. All attacks were accompanied by extensive looting, while the rebels proclaimed anti-corruption political messages to the villagers. The APC (All People's Congress) government deployed the Sierra

Leone Army, which was relatively ineffective against the rebels, although irregulars were recruited, including Liberian refugees from the Armed Forces of Liberia. In April 1992 a military coup led by young soldiers from the front brought to power the NPRC government, which promised among other things to make a serious attempt to deal with the rebel incursions. With support from Guinean and Nigerian forces deployed under bilateral security agreements, by early 1993 the RUF had been pushed back towards the periphery of the country, and key mining areas around Koindu and Kono had been retaken.

The second major phase of the war began in late 1994 when the RUF started a more tactical campaign involving hostage-taking and targeting of key economic installations. The conflict had continued sporadically throughout 1993 and 1994 with an increasingly blurred division between RUF activity, and raiding on villages and convoys carried out by moonlighting army members and other armed groups. The RUF itself broadened the range of its attacks, concentrating on covering ground rather than holding territory, and was able to operate nearer and nearer to Freetown, reaching its outskirts in January 1995. The government's response to the increased threat was to bring in foreign troops to supplement the unreliable defences put up by the army. Guerkas arrived in February 1995, but were replaced by the controversial South African firm Executive Outcomes (EO) in May. At the same time as the RUF was making military progress, channels of communication with the movement began to open, encouraged to some extent by some sections of the government.

The war reached its height in 1995 with RUF and "sobel" (a local term, aptly used to describe those who are soldiers by day, rebels by night) attacks affecting most areas of the country, ambushes a serious danger on major routes, and the humanitarian crisis at its worst. Executive Outcomes was able to secure some important economic areas, particularly around Kono town, where relatively large scale diamond activities are located. Civilians themselves organised civil defence units including the Mende *kamajors*, to protect themselves from "rebels", a term that is used locally to denote both the RUF and the army. Terroristic attacks continued over a wide area, with up-country towns containing hundreds of thousands of displaced villagers under siege, often inaccessible to humanitarian relief. Freetown also became host to large numbers of displaced, and the refugee population in Guinea and Liberia reached nearly 500,000 in 1995. The conflict has been characterised since 1991 by severe abuses against civilians perpetrated by both sides, which have caused massive population displacement. Total displacement by early 1996 was estimated by the UN at about half the population.

RUF contact with the international community during 1995 culminated in peace talks in early 1996 between the new Bio-led NPRC and the RUF, held in Abidjan. The process of negotiation coincided with the process of democratisation, in motion since the people had voted in favour of multi-party elections in a referendum in 1991. The NPRC government under Strasser, and then Bio from January 1996, had attempted in various ways to delay the elections, supporting the "peace before elections" debate initiated originally by those concerned that the peace and election processes should be linked. Delays were resisted, and the two Bintumani conferences representing various sectors of civil society voted to go ahead with elections, with the moral and financial support of the international community, particularly the UN. Concern was still expressed at this time in some quarters about the viability of holding elections when instability and displacement continued on such a scale up-country. The elections were held in February 1996, and resulted in a broad-based parliament, with Tejan Kabbah, formerly a senior UNDP official, and since 1995 leader of the long-time

opposition SLPP party, elected president in a run-off against Karefa-Smart of the UNPP.

Peace talks continued after the elections, with RUF leader Foday Sankoh meeting directly with President Kabbah in April 1996. The process of drawing up the agreement took only three weeks, with the government accepting many of the RUF demands. The accord appeared relatively well-designed, reflecting RUF concerns about welfare and government accountability, but there was no inclusion of *kamajor* and other irregular militias in the planned demobilisation process. The *kamajors* in particular were in fact greatly strengthened in numbers and arms after the Kabbah government took power. The signing of the peace accord was delayed until November over the issue of future roles for the RUF, specifically Foday Sankoh, and because of difficulties in Sankoh's return to Kailahun province to consult with his constituents. RUF members were not permitted under the constitution to participate directly in the government, as they had not registered to vote in the election, although representation in various post-war institutions was agreed. Implementation of most aspects of the accord was then also delayed, with the Committee for the Consolidation of Peace, or CCP, the only institution envisaged in the accords actually set up.

Many believe that implementation, particularly of the demobilisation process, has been obstructed primarily by Foday Sankoh himself, as the peace process was unable to provide him with what he judged a suitable role in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Members of the RUF external delegation attempted a coup against Sankoh in March 1997, accusing him of intransigence, but were subsequently kidnapped by field commanders who have remained loyal throughout to Sankoh. The commitment by the government to the peace agreement has also appeared questionable in the light of the military offensives carried out against the RUF by the *kamajors* with the support of powerful members of the new government. It has been suggested that following the democratisation, members of the government and international community have felt less concerned with tackling seriously the political content of the rebel movement, believing many of its grievances relating to governance to have been negated by the electoral process.

The recent coup, instigated by dissatisfied members of the army, has plunged the country into uncertainty. Once again civilians have been the main victims of the violence unleashed, with widespread looting of private homes in Freetown, and clashes involving the various militias up-country causing a high death toll among civilians. Political violence is also being used by the new AFRC-RUF coalition, with members of the former government and those associated with it being targeted for assassination and harassment. The option of external military intervention proposed by the Nigerian government initially received much support from other interested parties in the international community, including the OAU, which unanimously condemned the coup and called immediately for the restoration of the Kabbah government, as reflected in the Harare statement of late May. However, many observers have been worried by the unilateral nature of Nigeria's proposed action, especially given its own political system, and about the likely impact of any intervention on civilians and infrastructure. Some commentators have emphasised the need to use the opportunity presented to convene finally a government of national unity, encompassing all parties and sections of society, in order to attempt to address once and for all the deeper issues of distributive justice and good governance in Sierra Leone.

2.2 Analysis of the Conflict

During the early part of the conflict little information or analysis was available on the nature of the conflict or on the objectives or composition of the RUF. Prior to the hostage-taking of late 1994 and early 1995, the only widely circulated piece of literature on the conflict was Robert Kaplan's millenarian vision of chaos contained in his article "The Coming Anarchy" (Kaplan 1994, Feb.). Kaplan's depiction of the rebel activity as little more than criminal banditry was highly influential among those in the Sierra Leone government and those in the international community who wished to ignore the political aspects of the rebel movement (Richards 1996). Little was then known about the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, seen by many even within Sierra Leone as a mythical figure, and little attention was paid to the indigenous causes of the war, with the Liberian and Libyan connections being offered instead as a convenient explanation.

Following the hostage-taking in late 1994, press coverage and international interest in the war increased markedly, and the RUF began to be given some credence as a political movement. Although little research was carried out and there was little contact with the RUF at this time, the testimony of the hostages on their release, and the video footage taken by the Special Envoy of International Alert, confirmed that the RUF was a cohesive movement with military and civilian structures, led by the charismatic dissident Foday Sankoh. During 1995 the RUF leadership engaged in communication with the international community, issuing mission statements addressed to the UN, OAU and diplomatic community (Sankoh, 1995b). Their main publication, *Footpaths to Democracy*, containing a detailed statement of their history, objectives and composition, was also released during 1995 (RUF/SL 1995). So-called intellectual members of the RUF were appointed as spokespeople, forming by the end of the year an external delegation based in Abidjan.

From this period, academic as well as other commentators have attempted to make sense of the rebel movement by relating its claims to the long history of political corruption and distributive injustice in the country. Keen to counter the primitive essentialism of the "New Barbarism" thesis of Kaplan and others, some observers have taken seriously the radical messages of the RUF, which have reflected well the political realities in Sierra Leone (Richards 1995, 1996; Bradbury 1995). This understanding has been aided by the coherence with which the external delegation has been able to describe to the media and diplomatic community in Abidjan Foday Sankoh's vision of an equitable society providing services to its population through the redistribution of the country's vast mineral wealth. The focus of RUF literature and testimonies from members has been on the lack of education and health-care provision by successive governments, caused by the foreign exploitation of the country's wealth that has enriched only the elite political class.

While concern over the RUF's human rights record remained, it has been difficult to refute the basic validity of their political analysis. Literature on Sierra Leone has long focused on the illegitimacy of the state and its links with exploitative international business (Riley 1996; Reno 1995), and the conflict was understood by many in terms of these "root causes" in the long history of political exploitation (Richards 1996; Bradbury 1995). It was implied that the violence unleashed by the RUF insurgency in some way reflected these latent problems. As

Richards puts it :

> "..the rebel challenge will have had a seriously useful impact if it directs attention to the urgent issue of how a poor country .. can meet the demands being placed on it for social services, especially education and health (Richards 1996, p. 86).

This perception of the RUF as a just cause was reinforced by the illegitimacy of the successive NPRC governments, who extended the comprador relationships of their predecessors, particularly through their controversial deal with the security firm Executive Outcomes, involving the leasing of diamond mines to fund the security of other economic installations (Reno 1996, 1997). The NPRC government was seen increasingly as weak and predatory, with the national army playing an integral role in perpetuating the conflict (Keen 1995). The initial popularity of the NPRC, which justified the recognition of the new government by some sections of the international community, was quickly replaced with disillusionment on the part of the population, who saw familiar patterns emerging, of corruption, non-accountability and state violence against opponents. The RUF attributed the initial ability of the NPRC to take power to its own revolution, while denouncing its quick emulation of APC practices (Sankoh 1995a).

Extensive testimonies collected by Keen (1997) and in the evaluators' own discussions suggest that while Sierra Leoneans themselves have understood the 'just cause' of the RUF's political messages, they have at the same time recognised very well the individualistic economic and power-oriented motivations of the perpetrators of violence on both sides. Much of the violence of the war has been of a localised nature, used by individuals or groups to gain local advantages over rivals, and always associated with economic gain, whether through looting from civilians, or seen in the intense competition over diamond producing areas. Historical precedents exist for violent political competition, particularly among the Mende of the south east, where a number of families would compete to inherit Paramount chief positions, important distributors of local political power under the British administration (Keen 1997). Certain functions of traditional secret societies also reflect the violent elements of political competition. Violence has been used at state level to maintain the power of particular patronage arrangements, for example in the Ndogboyosoi incidents in Pujehun district in the early 1980s (Richards 1996), and through the use of state security to intimidate opposition by Siaka Stevens, in the form of the notorious special branch of the security services (Richards 1995; Riley 1997)

While elites in Sierra Lone have long manipulated political and economic processes for their own advantage, the majority of the population has however always been able to participate to some extent, and violence has rarely been used directly against those outside the political sphere. The extent of violence directed at civilians from the start of the conflict has thus been unprecedented and totally shocking to Sierra Leoneans affected, whose main reaction has been mass flight. Although the RUF would target political or economic figures within communities, civilians have been attacked indiscriminately from the start, and revered chiefs and popular traders have been killed alongside corrupt or greedy ones. RUF terror tactics have been matched by army fighters and irregulars, with both sides attacking and killing civilians, often

for economic gain, and both sides committing torture and rape.

It is apparent to all observers that the movement has gained no popular following in Sierra Leone beyond those captured and held in the RUF camps in the bush. Indeed, the RUF itself does not claim any following outside these zones. This population, concentrated in Kailahun district and, at the height of the war, in up to six separate bush camps, is unlikely to number more than 30,000 or 40,000, and consists mainly of villagers captured during raids around the country particularly in 1994 and 1995. An ambiguous picture appears of this population, with descriptions of socialistic life where teachers' fields are ploughed for them by labour groups (interviews), contrasting with recent emergences of badly-malnourished groups of civilians reporting their use as forced labour for various groups of "rebels" (WFP 1996, Oct.). It appears that different sections of the RUF and other militia use varying methods for controlling local populations, with some more brutal than others.

In Kailahun territory civilians are reportedly unable to move freely, and there is some underlying form of force or discipline in use, but many espouse the RUF philosophy, with a seemingly universal regard for Sankoh and his vision for Sierra Leone. Some at least are engaged in farming and there is relatively extensive cross-border trade (interviews). Many of these civilians are presumably making the rational judgement that co-operation is the safest tactic, and have expressed to their few visitors their desire to return home (interviews). The fighters themselves are drawn mainly from youth including many child-fighters, some of whom have been initiated into the conflict through violence, and many of whom become caught up in the conflict through a lack of alternative options (Keen 1997). Army fighters come from these same groups, with the NPRC recruiting from street children and Liberian refugees, who are easily drawn into the cycle of violence and short-term power.

The tactics of the RUF and the spread of general violence that their actions have unleashed, has meant that the major victims of the conflict have been the very rural villagers the movement claims to be liberating. This basic contradiction has prevented the RUF from gaining any support from within the country, beyond some agreement with its basic political analysis. The majority will of the people was demonstrated in their insistence that elections be held on the agreed date in Bintumani II in February 1996; and their resistance on election day to violence from both the RUF and the army. Although some have argued that the elections were not inclusive enough, and that the process was not well designed, the general desire for democracy itself is unquestionable. The universal disgust for the actions of all military forces, and military involvement in politics, was recently acknowledged by the RUF themselves, as they have begun to apologise for their part in the conflict (SLTV 1997, June).

Thus while the intellectuals of the movement have been able to engage with the international community in some way, most Sierra Leoneans have been unable to relate RUF actions with the liberation philosophy propounded by its leaders. Paradoxically, it may be easier for Sierra Leonean victims of the conflict to condemn the RUF outright. For the international community faced with the responsibility and necessity of responding to the conflict, a real dilemma has been posed in terms of how to engage with the movement, seen as the necessary first step towards a resolution, given these contradictions, and given the further complication of the illegitimacy of the NPRC government and predatory actions of its army.

2.3 Implications of Analysis

The ethical dilemma facing those seeking to engage in the conflict in Sierra Leone lies in the issue of legitimacy of political representation. International relations are by definition state centric, and historically governments and inter-governmental bodies have equated the legitimacy of regimes with sovereignty. Thus while the international community was compelled by these conventions to deal with the NPRC governments, whose human rights abuses have been well documented, and whose army has responsible for devastating violence against civilians, it had no such obligation to engage with the RUF. The legitimacy of the RUF movement has always been questioned, initially through dismissal and later in spite of attempts by outsiders to consider the real implications of the underlying conflicts. Its continued relevance, in both military and ideological terms, however, cannot be denied.

The failure to take the rebels seriously, and the dismissal of political conflict as crime, is reflected in the failure by successive Sierra Leonean governments and the international community to engage seriously with the war and address the political issues of distribution and representation that it has exposed. This failure was evidenced by the lack of concerted international action beyond the humanitarian sphere until late 1994, by when over half a million rural villagers had already been displaced by the violence. The UN eventually took a more overtly political, interventionist approach, but only after it had been invited to intervene by the NPRC government, prompted by the extension of rebel activity and threat to Freetown, and by the taking by the RUF of Western hostages.

The gradual engagement by sections of the international community with the rebel movement, and the coming out of the intellectuals of the RUF, served to undermine attempts to dismiss the RUF as disorganised bandits. However, elements within the government and UN still failed to acknowledge seriously the impact of the rebel movement, and pursued their different strategies accordingly, on the one hand trying to destroy the RUF by force, and on the other supporting the election process as a panacea for the conflict. The peace before elections debate, which attempted to address the option of establishing peace as a necessary precursor of democratisation, was not seriously considered by the UN for Sierra Leone. While In other post-conflict situations such as Cambodia or Mozambique the processes have been integrated, in Sierra Leone they were separated, the desire of the population for early elections being the justification used by the international community for the different strategy followed.

The dual role of the UN as the key designated mediator in the process of negotiation, through the office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General, as well as directly and personally involved in holding elections, has been seen by some as potentially conflictual. Some observers have maintained that the "civil society" in Sierra Leone who pushed for elections to be held, represented more strongly the interests of the middle classes and elites in Freetown, and failed to consider the realities of issues faced by the predominantly rural victims of the conflict. Refugees in Guinea and other displaced groups voted against early elections in Bintumani II (Parliamentary Human Rights Group 1996). In the post election period, the SLPP government has been criticised for the slow pace of its attempts to initiate political reform, and the lack of local level political representation, because of the form of the election, has also been seen as problematic (International Crisis Group 1997). That democratisation cannot in itself solve the issues of the distribution of power in the society, has been shown in the coup and subsequent developments. The impact of the election in terms

of its further marginalisation of the RUF from legitimate political processes was another factor in the peace before elections debate, which should have been considered in the search for a negotiated settlement.

It has been difficult for both observers and international players, as mediators in the peace process and overseers of the election process, to define and appreciate some of the complexities of these issues of political legitimacy and what they imply for policy options. The path of negotiated engagement between the warring parties was made by all the players, national and international, but a commitment to some of the actions this entailed, was lacking by elements of all sides. This has ultimately undermined the initial success of this strategy. The lack of linkage made between peace and elections, or the military and political processes, and the failure of both to be radical or inclusive enough, have been important contributory factors in the current breakdown in the country of both peace and democracy.

3.0 IA's Programme in Sierra Leone

3.1 Justification of Involvement

3.1.1 *Initial Engagement*

The initial engagement of International Alert in Sierra Leone came about through a series of complex and confidential contacts established by some IA staff with key political figures in West Africa, including Foday Sankoh. The strategy identified was to establish trust between the RUF and the GOSL, and between the RUF and the international community.

The approach was based on the premise that improved communication between the two sides was a pre-condition for resolution of the conflict. This belief has in turn rested on analysis of the RUF as a serious movement, with a political relevance unlikely to be destroyed by force alone.

3.1.2 The RUF's "Just Cause"

The early assessment of International Alert that the RUF was a cohesive political movement likely to be amenable to negotiation differed from contemporary analysis, as discussed above. IA saw as the first barrier to communication the fact that the rebel group was cut off from the outside world, unable to make real contact with the international community or government. They therefore undertook to facilitate this contact through literally walking into the bush to find the RUF.

IA's views on the conflict appear to have been based on personal contact with the region, and are implicit in its actions and expressed in various documents, for example, in the address of the Secretary-General to a meeting on March 12th 1996, when he states "...we know that the rebellion in Sierra Leone led by the RUF was for the stated goals of the elimination of corruption and injustice" (Rupesinghe 1996). Later analyses of the war which focused on its root causes in the unjust and inefficient distributive system developed by the APC government, supported the views of IA (e.g. Bradbury 1995, Richards 1996). However, at no time did the organisation produce any consolidated documentation itself analysing the war

explicitly, and there is little evidence that the very different assessments made by other observers have been fully discussed within the organisation. Rather, International Alert's analysis, while often rich in terms of its high level sources, often appears to have been hampered by the organisation's increasing lack of objectivity in relation to the dynamics of the conflict and claims of the respective parties.

The lack of a balanced assessment by IA of the RUF and the ambiguities of the movement's actions, has made it difficult for others to understand IA's position in ethical terms. It has further helped to feed the common perception, particularly in Freetown, that IA's relationship with the RUF has been more than that of a facilitator. Although these impressions have been strongly denied by IA, its actions did little to contradict this. Later analyses, particularly by Paul Richards, served to justify IA's early engagement, and the organisation has been credited by many for having taken the lead in "finding" the RUF. But, the fact that IA apparently had the trust and access to the RUF; that it did not find a suitable forum to adequately share the contents of their discussions with the RUF leadership with members of the international community; and that it seemed to lack an explicit appreciation of the difficult issues and potential dilemmas involved in dealing with a movement which lacked support within the country and had a record of human rights abuse, has given ground to accusations of partisanship.

3.1.3 Resolution through Negotiated Settlement

IA's basic conflict resolution techniques rest on the belief that the path of negotiated settlement is the best or only long term solution to political conflict. Although the organisation supports the multi-track approach, of using complementary work at different political levels to support this same goal, the role of "high political" negotiation between warring factions is seen as the primary and most direct facet of conflict resolution work, particularly in the Sierra Leone case. In Sierra Leone, the strategic objective has been stated as the facilitation of talks between the RUF and intergovernmental bodies, leading eventually to direct contact between the two warring parties (International Alert 1995e, 1995k). At various points IA professed a desire to follow the multi-track route in Sierra Leone, submitting project proposals for work with civil society, and presenting its involvement with the NGO working group in London as part of this multi-track strategy.

IA's strategy rested on its understanding of the conflict as caused, i.a., by a fundamental lack of communication between the two sides. It has pointed out that the NPRC came to power with "similar aims and objectives to the RUF", suggesting that common ground existed between the parties (Rupesinghe 1996b). The strategy has also been based on the premise that both sides in fact wanted to find a solution (Rupesinghe, interview). This method is relatively unchallenged in theoretical terms. In cases of protracted conflict in particular it is generally recognised that the only way forward is through negotiation and communication. However, it is important for conflict resolution strategists to be aware of the varying commitment of the various parties to this approach, and to recognise that powerful interests on both sides may in fact be served by the continuation of conflict rather than its resolution. This is crucial in the Sierra Leone case where control of valuable export resources and looted goods has been a major factor determining the course of the war (Keen 1997), and where sometimes violent competition over resource distribution has long been an important feature of the political

economy (Richards 1996, Reno 1995).

A further important factor in such high level work is the issue of the respective legitimacy of the warring parties. Where conflict is between a state and non-state entity, it is arguably necessary to attempt to strengthen the latter group in order to "level the playing field" between the two, the legitimacy of the former, as discussed earlier, being conferred on it by virtue of the code of sovereignty. The legitimacy that may be conferred on the rebel group by its relationship with an external facilitator can thus help to strengthen its ability and confidence in taking part in negotiations, increasing the possibility of reaching a successful outcome. IA explicitly recognises this aspect of their work, referring to it in a number of project proposals and appraisals (International Alert 1995k).

The difficulty in this type of work arises because the very process of building trust with one side can contribute to mistrust from other parties. In Sierra Leone, this problem was manifested in the perceptions of the GoSL and other mediators, of IA becoming too closely associated with the RUF. The close personal relationship between the Special Envoy and the RUF leader, has greatly contributed to this suspicion. This difficulty is reinforced by the fact that this type of intervention does in fact contribute to the strengthening of the group concerned, and thus has an impact on the development of the conflict itself. By working with the RUF, IA claims that it attempted to address a practical dilemma of conflict resolution work: how to engage partners involved in war situations to take responsibility for their actions. However, in the process, IA did also help in some way to legitimise a group still viewed by many as an essentially abusive and predatory force. The organisation should have expected criticism and controversy, and should have been well prepared to defend the moral choice it consciously made by engaging.

In Sierra Leone, IA has concentrated on high level activities to the exclusion of a more multi-track approach. IA has included activities relating to supporting civil society and building an international constituency for peace in its funding proposals and other strategic documentation relating to Sierra Leone up to the present time. Its 1995 project proposal (International Alert, 1995a) outlines a "multi-track" approach comprising three elements: facilitation of peace negotiations; assisting a national peace constituency and building an international support group, with only fifty per cent of the total budget to be allocated to the negotiations process. However, few other activities have come to fruition in practice, because of lack of funding and capacity, and a reliance on other organisations to carry out lower level peace building work in the country (interviews). Priority was given to the process of forging direct links with the RUF, because of the unique competence of the Special Envoy Addai Sebo (Rupesinghe 1996b).

3.1.4 IA's Mandate for Engagement

IA has claimed its mandate for engagement in Sierra Leone derived from a number of different sources. It claims to have been invited by various of the players in the conflict and negotiation process to play a key role. The different instances of this are discussed below :

* RUF - IA's primary claim to have a mandate to intervene beyond its own self mandate is that given to it by the RUF itself. IA's analysis of the necessity of

communication with the rebel group led it to seek a role in facilitating contact between the RUF and government side, concentrating on the former because of its inherent disadvantages as a non-state entity and inaccessible rebel movement. Interestingly, the RUF initially rejected the idea that IA could play any substantial role, writing "The RUF does not see a role for International Alert at this moment as the NPRC military option dominates our sense of security. The RUF has won the war...it would be an act of betrayal if the RUF dialogued with the military junta" (Sankoh 1995a). The RUF suggested only that talks could be facilitated with civil groups such as trade unions, and were worried about logistical aspects.

When the RUF later decided to initiate discussion with international organisations, it mandated IA to "facilitate all contacts that may be proposed by any international body, organisation or groups" (Sankoh 1995c). It still refused to talk directly to the NPRC government however, until Bio issued an invitation to peace talks on taking power. The RUF have publicly acknowledged the key role played by Addai Sebo in the hostage release, stating that "(he) is the only one we trust not to compromise the security of our locations to the enemy" (Sankoh 1995b), and have credited IA with having brought them to the point of meeting the international community (interview, video).

* Inter-governmental bodies - The linkage of the settlement of the Liberian civil conflict with that of Sierra Leone was discussed at a meeting on Liberia in Abuja in March 1994, facilitated by IA and hosted by the Lagos-based International Training Institute for Peace. It was from here that IA kept a monitoring brief on Sierra Leone alongside its work in Liberia. It appears that regional efforts to seek a solution to the conflict, minimal until that time because of the insistence of the GoSL that the conflict was internal and containable, later also supported the work of IA in the negotiations. The OAU also was prepared to work through the channel opened by International Alert, meeting with the RUF for the first time in Abidjan through IA.

* The Government of Cote d'Ivoire - The main mediator in the talks has apparently fully supported IA's work as facilitator, and has publicly recognised the key role played by the organisation (Essy, 1996, Nov.)

* The Government of Sierra Leone - IA emphasises in much of their documentation the importance of seeking and retaining the consent of both sides to their involvement. Although support of the NPRC government was sought and gained informally for the first visit of Addai Sebo into RUF territory, the government later accused IA of having entered the country illegally. This early loss of government confidence seriously undermined attempts by IA to claim to be working on both sides. Following this first visit, government representatives visited IA in their London offices, and agreed that the organisation did have a role to play in subsequent contacts with the RUF. IA later interpreted this as a specific and formal mandate given by the government for facilitation, leading to an exchange of letters as the Sierra Leonean Foreign Minister Abass Bundu sought to clarify for the record the limited nature of the government's support (Bundu 1995, May). Government support was then withdrawn, when in September visas were refused to an IA team planning to visit Freetown.

* The policy introduced by Bio's new government in January 1996 of direct engagement with the RUF recognised the special relationship between IA and the RUF, and the government dealt with IA accordingly. The Bio government received a delegation from IA in Freetown from 20-29 March 1996. It was also received by President-elect Kabbah at his home, as well as the president's personal representative to the summit talks in Yamoussoukro from 25-27 March 1996. The Kabbah government later became suspicious of IA and the objectives of the organisation, following the period of talks and negotiation in late April and May in Yamoussoukro (interviews). In January this year, following an exchange of letters between Addai Sebo and the Presidential Advisor to the talks, the government took a major step in accusing IA publicly of partisan and criminal engagement with the RUF.

  IA claims that it sought the consent and advice of three successive governments on how best to help facilitate the process and advance the possibilities for peace. However, the organisation failed to maintain the consent of the government side to its relationship with the RUF, without acknowledging this fully.

* NGO Working Group - IA has claimed in project proposals to be working in co-ordination with the activities of the UK NGO working group on Sierra Leone. This working group was set up in early 1995 following concern on the part of UK humanitarian agencies that some joint strategy be developed on how to address the escalating conflict. International Alert then held a Peace Forum at their offices, inviting other interested parties in the UK, including the Sierra Leonean High Commissioner, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Overseas Development Agency officials, to discuss issues about responding to the conflict (International Alert 1995a). The agenda at that meeting was set by IA, and included their plans for pursuing a negotiated settlement. Subsequent meetings of the group have however focused on humanitarian issues, such as recent plans to set up an NGO regional information system.

  The issue of potential funding for an IA secretariat for the working group, mooted by IA in one of the first meetings, was later glossed over by other NGOs, who were unsure at that time of the precise role of IA, and whether its plans coincided with the specifically humanitarian strategies of the other agencies (interviews). Later references made in IA literature to this working group often appear to overstate its role, and the role of IA within it (International Alert, 1995j, 1996h). For the humanitarian agencies, the Working Group has remained a forum within which to meet and discuss issues relating to the on-going conflict and NGOs within it, and it has no formal conflict resolution role.

3.2 International Alert's Programme: An Analysis

3.2.1 Overview and approach to programme analysis

This section of the report analyses the evolution of International Alert's programmes over time. It examines what International Alert did in relation to its objectives as stated in project proposals, and in relation to its claimed contribution to the peace process. Section 4.0

provides a comparative analysis of the issues and implications raised during the course of International Alert's programme in Sierra Leone.

3.2.2 Stated Objectives and Scope of International Alert's Programmes

To the Team's knowledge, the first public presentation of International Alert's approach to the conflict in Sierra Leone is laid out in a grant application in 1995 (International Alert, 1995a). Prior to this IA's programme was low-key, funded out of general funds and an anonymous donation. These early funds enabled International Alert to undertake two missions to the country in January and February 1995 (International Alert, 1995b).

The 1995 project proposal (International Alert, 1995b) allocates a total of £265,550 for the three aspects of the planned programme, being the facilitation of peace negotiations, building an international support group and establishing a national peace constituency. An "emergency grant application" was also prepared in mid-1995, it focused solely on the peace agreements. In mid-1996 a proposal was prepared which also focused exclusively on the facilitation of peace talks, while indicating that this was now part of a *four*-pronged approach, with post-conflict reconstruction added in as a further element (International Alert, 1996a). The cost of the first "prong" - facilitating the peace agreement - was then given as £363,134 for the calendar year of 1996. The total expenditure by International Alert on the Sierra Leone programme over the three years reached £481,000 (approximately US$770,000).

A variety of reasons have been given to explain why the scope of the programme was in practice reduced to focus almost exclusively on the peace agreement, which are examined in more detail below.

3.2.3 Pre-Negotiations: Initial Contacts to Yamoussoukro. January 1995-March 1996

An impact assessment prepared by International Alert for the European Commission evaluation team states that: IA (International Alert, 1997b), pp21-22:

1. Negotiated the hostage release, so clearing a fundamental obstacle to dialogue between the RUF/SL, the GoSL, and the international community;

2. Succeeded in encouraging the RUF/SL to come out of the bush;

3. Helped to build confidence between the rebels and the international community;

4. Established strong links and a good working relationship with the Government of the Cote d'Ivoire, which offered to mediate and host the talks;

5. Brought a balanced perspective to different phases of the negotiation, particularly with regard to the RUF/SL's handicap in communicating and negotiating with inter-governmental organisations;

6. IA supported the first direct contact between the RUF/SL and the ICRC, the Government of La Cote d'Ivoire, the OAU, UN, Commonwealth Secretariat and members of the diplomatic corps in Abidjan.

These claims are repeated in other documents, including reports to the Board (International Alert, 1995j), public documents (International Alert, 1996m), speeches by International Alert staff (Rupesinghe, 1996) and reports to donors (Munro, 1996; International Alert, 1996b, 1996c). In addition, a report to the Board Members of International Alert in July 1995 (International Alert, 1995c) also states that "A UK NGO working group on Sierra Leone was also established with IA as its Secretariat."

A more modest analysis of IA's achievements was presented in a paper to the Board meeting in July 1997. It stated IA's achievements as follows :

1. IA helped to initiate and facilitate the talks that led to the negotiations that resulted in the signing of the peace agreement;

2. IA helped to broker the preliminary prenegotiations that led to the cease-fire and the early communiques that prepared the way for the formal talks in March 1997 (sic);

3. IA contributed to the release of the hostages.

These claims in relation to IA's activities during this period are explored in turn.

Hostages

International Alert's involvement in the hostage-release process set the tone of its relationships with other international actors. For this reason, it is dealt with in some detail.

On 7 November 1994, the RUF captured two British aid workers and their radio equipment. These aid workers joined two other kidnap victims - a Russian and a Sierra Leonean. Over the subsequent five months, the British hostages were joined by a further eight hostages, including Italian and Swiss citizens. The RUF had also captured seven nuns.[1]

In taking hostages, the RUF had drawn international attention to the Sierra Leonean conflict, much to the embarrassment of the NPRC, and while Western citizens were captive, no international organisation could be seen to be engaging with the RUF on wider issues. The hostages were thus a means of establishing a dialogue, while their release was a pre-condition for NPRC-RUF talks and for international recognition of, and engagement with, the RUF. On

[1]The release of the nuns was negotiated separately from that of the other expatriate hostages by the relevant religious authorities in Sierra Leone.

the basis of this analysis, International Alert linked securing the release of the hostages with the wider peace process, and thus claimed a legitimate role in negotiating their release.

International Alert's contention is that it played a primary role in securing the release of the hostages:

> "It was..a demand IA made to the RUF that the hostages be released unconditionally to demonstrate its good faith and to show resolve to break the impasse. The RUF acceded to this request and issued a statement" (International Alert, 1995d).[2]

International Alert made the request for the unconditional release of hostages through its Special Envoy, who travelled to Sierra Leone in January, February and March 1995.[3] It is the Team's understanding that the Special Envoy had travelled in early 1995 to Freetown to seek the consent in principle of the GoSL to IA's proposed strategy. Formal consent, however, for the SE's mission into RUF-held territory was not given, allegedly because of a misunderstanding between International Alert and the GOSL regarding the precise timing of the visit. Whatever the particular circumstances which led to this misunderstanding, the interpretation of the GOSL at the time and subsequently was that IA's Special Envoy had entered the country illegally.

Since the capture of the hostages, their Governments, through embassies, police and security services, had been working to establish contact with the RUF to negotiate their release. The RUF was put in touch with ICRC by the Sierra Leonean Red Cross Society following a radio contact. ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary to secure the release of the Russian and Sierra Leonean hostages in early January 1995. ICRC therefore had experience in facilitating the release of hostages held by the RUF in Sierra Leone.

Despite the release of these two hostages, the number of other hostages continued to rise during late 1994-early 1995. There was a risk that too many different Governments would end up negotiating for the release of their citizens; it was therefore agreed that ICRC would act as the neutral intermediary to facilitate the release of all the hostages. As a result of ICRC's interventions and those of other actors, it is the understanding of the evaluators that an agreement had been reached for the release of the hostages *prior* to IA's intervention. A significant number of sources argue that International Alert's intervention actually complicated and may have delayed the release of the hostages.

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[2]The Statement to which they refer are letters sent by the RUF leadership to Kumar Rupesinghe and to the Secretary-Generals of the UN, OAU, and Commonwealth (Sankoh 1995a, 1995b).

[3]This latter the Special Envoy's third visit to Sierra Leone. During his second visit in late March 1995 he first met with the RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh.

This view obviously contrasts sharply with that of International Alert. IA points to the fact that it was their Special Envoy, not a representative of any other organisation, who accompanied the hostages to the border with Guinea. It is important to note that the RUF in a video taped in December 1995 is on record as accrediting IA, and specifically its Special Envoy, with playing a major role in the release of the hostages. Similarly, in a letter to IA's Secretary-General, Foday Sankoh states that International Alert is trusted by the RUF to act with discretion and not to undermine the RUF's security.

The Team was unable to reach a final opinion with regard to the positive or negative impact of IA on the *timing* of the hostages' release, because it was not given access to all the confidential information held by numerous governments and international organisations on this issue.

However, the evidence does suggest that at the very least International Alert complicated the negotiations which were on-going and allegedly far advanced. Numerous sources have reported that the RUF had mandated ICRC on 31 January 1995 to act as a mediator with regard to the hostage release in a press release, and that this was confirmed in a radio contact through the authorities in Freetown. The intervention of a small NGO, without previous experience in hostage release and without effective communications infrastructure, was clearly a high risk strategy which could have jeopardised the security of the hostages, and indeed of IA staff. While it is not possible to prove the counterfactual that without IA's involvement other parties would have been able to secure the release of the hostages, it does not seem improbable that this would have been the case.[4]

Perhaps what is most telling about the hostage release story is not the specific number of days by which International Alert may or may not have delayed their release, nor whether IA was primarily responsible for negotiating their release, but what it tells about IA's strategy, procedures and its relations with other organisations.

This breakdown in IA's relations with a number of governments and some international organisations around the hostage issue stemmed from the perception that International Alert was not transparent in its dealings with other actors; that it lacked the appropriate procedures and competence to carry out the role it had mandated itself to do; and that it placed undue emphasis upon its own institutional goals, potentially to the cost of others.

Of particular concern was the fact that International Alert was unclear with outsiders with regard to the role it was playing. By working outside accepted conventions, such as those with regard to the principle of consent and transparency of working methods, IA was seen to step outside the principles of neutrality and impartiality in its work. This is not to suggest that these principles should necessarily be inviolable nor represent the only legitimate way of working: what is of concern, however, is that no other framework for decision-making seems

[4]After all, two sets of hostages had already been released: the Sierra Leonean and the Russian in January 1995 through the ICRC, and the seven nuns through the religious authorities.

to have been in place, leaving the organisation vulnerable to accusations of being unprincipled and partial.

IA has also been somewhat disingenuous in the way it has described its mandate, and defined its comparative advantage. The evaluators were much surprised, for example, to see that on several occasions IA's Secretary-General has said publicly that ICRC has no mandate to negotiate for the release of hostages, that it arranges only the handover modalities (Rupesinghe, 1996) (see also briefing to Evaluation Team). Using this argument, IA claimed space to intervene and that its intervention complemented ICRC's more technical activities. Thus, it is argued by IA that ICRC in fact placed the sole responsibility of the face to face negotiations for the release of the hostages on the IA Special Envoy. In the view of the evaluators, IA's claims do not accurately reflect ICRC's mandate or modus operandi. International Alert appears frequently to try to define its mandate with reference to the weakness of others, which creates the impression that IA is competing with, and undermining the activities of, other organisations. The evaluators are of the view that there are legitimate concerns regarding the relevance of other bodies' mandates and the way in which these are executed on occasion. However, to criticise inaccurately other bodies' mandates and practice, while simultaneously claiming them as partners, may give some of these bodies legitimate cause for complaint.

In addition to revealing the organisation's lack of clear principles to guide its operations, the hostage incident also demonstrated IA's lack of capacity to follow through and manage a complex process. For example, IA claims that it could not travel to Freetown because the Special Envoy was ill, and that lack of communications systems meant that the Special Envoy could not keep others informed of his work while in RUF territory. Lack of relevant equipment is only part of the story: more fundamental is the fact that IA felt it legitimate to go ahead with its mission without informing the GoSL officially of the Special Envoy's visit. What is striking in the organisation's self-evaluation (International Alert, 1995d, 1997r) of the hostage incident is that the key issue of principle - ie consent, is glossed over, in favour of a more technical explanation of the limitations facing the organisation.

Facilitating pre-negotiation talks between the RUF and IGOs and GoSL

International Alert has claimed that it was responsible for 'bringing the RUF out of the bush' and encouraging it to participate in the peace process. As argued above, International Alert played an important role in counterbalancing the widely held view of the RUF as an undisciplined, semi-criminal group. International Alert was one of the few bodies arguing that the RUF had a significant political agenda and a unified command and control structure.

In terms of IA's role in bringing the RUF to the negotiating table, the evidence reviewed by the evaluators suggests that any "single-track" explanation of the rationale of the warring parties to seek a peace agreement is likely to be flawed. The evidence suggests that a complex configuration of political and military factors, nationally, in the sub-region and internationally served to create an opportunity for the peace process, and to place pressure on the warring parties to seek a dialogue.

International Alert deserves credit for recognising the opportunities for dialogue which were emerging in late 1994-early 1995, and for maintaining public and private pressure on respective parties to realise it. However, it is also important to emphasise that other organisations had recognised this opportunity, indicated, for example by the deployment of the UN Special Envoy to Sierra Leone in February 1995, the delegations sent by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the OAU to Freetown in March 1995, and the on-going, but discreet activities of the ICRC and of the Ivorian government.

When such a complex configuration of factors converge it is extremely difficult to isolate the impact of one variable, in this case the intervention of International Alert. The task is made more difficult by the fact that other bodies involved have particular interests in supporting or denying IA's claim to have played a significant and substantive role. However, there is consensus that IA, in particular its Special Envoy, did have a close relationship with Foday Sankoh, which offered the organisation important opportunities to influence the RUF, and to facilitate contacts between the RUF and the international community. Many informants have acknowledged implicitly the potentially positive impact that such as relationship could have had.

The first of a series of meetings IA claims to have facilitated between the RUF and the international community took place in Dakar in February 1995. This meeting was effected around an IA workshop in Dakar to which the RUF and members of the Sierra Leonean government were invited. In its public report *A Time of Hope and Transformation* (International Alert, 1996m), International Alert states that "..it was through this workshop that the Commonwealth Secretariat made their first contact with the RUF/SL (page 15)". Although carefully worded, to the casual reader, the phrasing creates the impression that IA facilitated this introduction. Similarly in a project proposal (International Alert, 1995a) it is reported that the "OAU, UN and CS also sought out and made contact with the RUF official. The assistant director of the political affairs of the CS, Dr Moses Anafu, flew over to Dakar to meet personally with Mr Alimamy Sankoh.

The evidence in fact strongly indicates that International Alert did *not* inform the Commonwealth Secretariat about the Dakar meeting, and that it was by other means that the CS heard about the meeting. Although International Alert brought the RUF to Dakar, it did not inform either the UN or the CS that they were doing this. To imply, therefore, that it was IA who facilitated the meeting is to stretch a point somewhat.

More generally there is significant confidential evidence that some senior IA staff were at best ambivalent in their attitudes towards inter-governmental organisations, and that far from actively seeking to cooperate with them, saw International Alert as being in competition with them.

Later in 1995, International Alert clearly played an important role in facilitating the logistics of the RUF delegation's travel through Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire to Abidjan. International Alert paid for the RUF's stay in Cote d'Ivoire for the period until late March 1996, and was sensitive to the delegation's need for appropriate clothes to attend high level meetings and

provided these to RUF members. IA also helped to provide the delegates with training in negotiation techniques.

Whether this could have been done without at least the implicit approval and knowledge of the Ivorian authorities remains an open question, however. In other words, International Alert's space to operate was determined in part by the actions of others - they were not operating in a political or historical vacuum.

Having exerted its influence and used its good offices to facilitate the RUF's travel to Abidjan, the question then emerges as to how this influence was used. In December 1995, the RUF met first with representatives of the OAU (Ambassador Daniel and Adwoa Coleman) and then with the UN Special Envoy to Sierra Leone (Ambassador Dinka). Considerable controversy surrounds the sequencing of these meetings and IA's role in facilitating them. In particular, it has been alleged that IA blocked the meetings of the UN with the RUF.

Evidence reviewed by the evaluators suggests that rather than a malicious attempt to undermine the UN, a combination of lack of capacity within IA, and poor communication and misjudgement of both parties, meant that seemingly trivial misunderstandings could quickly escalate into damaging conflicts. That such a situation could arise was the result of International Alert's failure to ensure that in addition to ensuring effective lines of communication with the RUF, it was building up simultaneously strong links with the GoSL and all the inter-governmental mediators.

From an early stage, there seems to have been a clash of personalities between senior UN and IA staff. This clash seems to have derived from a fundamental difference of opinion regarding the appropriate role for an NGO in the peace process, and to reflect a wider clash of institutional cultures.

On the side of the UN, a large organisation with considerable resources, some of its staff seem to have been surprised and confused by the prospect of a small NGO asserting that it had preferential access to a rebel movement and claiming a role in a high level peace process. Discussions with UN officials involved in the Sierra Leone case, suggest that in some quarters the UN view is that NGOs involved in peace processes should act very much as extensions and instruments of the inter-governmental system, and work within similar rules and conventions.

This view stands in stark contrast to that of International Alert, which asserts its autonomy and which derives its raison d'etre from a critique of the inter-governmental system and of formal diplomacy more generally in responding to internal wars. In the specific case of Sierra Leone, IA-UN relations were further complicated by the views of Foday Sankoh himself with regard to the UN. There is significant evidence that at times some IA staff in public and in private have reinforced these views.

Thus, relations between IA and the UN SG Special Representative, in particular, appear to have been characterised by competitiveness rather than cooperation. IA appears not to have

succeeded in overcoming the misunderstandings that came about during this period in the second half of 1995, a view confirmed by IA's own report to the Board in July 1997 (International Alert 1997r). Nor does International Alert appear to have ensured that it was well briefed on the efforts of other international organisations to contact the RUF, nor to have consistently briefed others on their own progress. This despite the fact that (as described in section 3.1) the RUF War Council had mandated International Alert to "...facilitate all contacts that may be proposed by any international body, organisation or groups (Sankoh and Rogers, 1995; Sankoh, 1995c).[5]

Because of the (mutual) lack of transparency and trust between International Alert, the UN and Commonwealth Secretariat at this stage, International Alert missed opportunities for constructive engagement with these IGOs, and so for contributing positively to their contacts with the RUF.

For this reason, the UN ended up relying on an alternative channel to contact the RUF. It is the evaluators' understanding that it was IA which had introduced the RUF-UN go-between to the RUF initially. It is also the evaluators' understanding that the conduct of this individual contributed substantially to the misunderstandings which surrounded the December 1995 meetings between the RUF, OAU and UN. However, it is also obvious that manipulation of the different parties by this individual was possible only because IA's relations with the UN were already so poor. This was not counterbalanced by good relations with the GoSL, the diplomatic communities in Freetown and Abidjan, Commonwealth Secretariat nor with other international organisations, with the possible exception of the OAU. IA's strong relationship with the Ivorian government did not appear to correct the otherwise widespread negative perceptions of the agency.

The evidence, then, reviewed by the evaluators suggests that IA was partially responsible for facilitating the first contacts between the RUF and the ICRC, the Government of Cote d'Ivoire, the OAU, UN, Commonwealth Secretariat and members of the diplomatic community. It was, however, merely one among others and an element among other factors that helped to encourage either of the parties to participate in talks. This is recognised also by IA.

3.2.4 Negotiations: 25 February - 30 November 1996

The first phase of the peace talks was held in Abidjan between 25 February and 3 March 1996. This coincided with the first phase of the elections in Sierra Leone, which was held on 26 February. The talks were chaired by the Ivorian Foreign Minister Amara Essy. The facilitators were the UN, the OAU, the Commonwealth Secretariat and International Alert. A joint communique was issued by the two sides, reporting the parties' agreement to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid to both sides, their acceptance of the OAU, UN and Commonwealth as facilitators, and a pledge to ensure as soon as possible a meeting between

[5]see section 3.1 for an explanation of the history of the mandate given by the RUF to IA

the Chair of the NPRC Ruling Council (Bio) and the leader of the RUF (Sankoh). Two major sticking points were outstanding, however. On its side, the RUF was unhappy about the timing of the elections. It argued that by holding elections prior to the peace agreement it was excluded from the political process. Meanwhile, the GoSL wanted a cease-fire.

During this period, there was considerable controversy regarding International Alert's position on the sequencing of the peace and electoral processes.[6] International Alert has stated that its position on the elections was that it had no position (briefing to the Evaluation Team) However, evidence indicates that some senior members of IA staff shared the view of the RUF that elections should be postponed until after the peace agreement had been signed. International Alert's position on the elections has been widely held against the agency by the elected government of Sierra Leone and by many in the international community, particularly the UN, CS and many Western governments.

In the view of the evaluators, as an NGO concerned with the peace process in Sierra Leone, International Alert had a legitimate right to express its concerns with regard to the sequencing of elections-peace processes. In particular, the question of whether and how the RUF might participate in the country's governance was left unresolved by the elections before peace format. However, in voicing its view publicly and being seen to endorse the RUF's position on this issue, IA's claim to be a neutral facilitator was undermined. The role of neutral facilitator precludes that of public advocate and critic. IA could have made a reasonable and public case for different sequencing, if it felt it to be appropriate, but by saying it had no position, while being seen to have a position contrary to the majority view, it made itself doubly vulnerable.

The peace talks were reconvened in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, on 25-26 March. President Bio and Foday Sankoh met for the first time, while the civilian government in-waiting sent a representative to the talks. A second joint communique was issued. On April 22-23 a meeting was held between the newly elected President Kabbah and Sankoh, again in Yammoussoukro, at which it was agreed to establish three working groups to discuss the details of the peace accord, demobilisation and encampment of soldiers on both sides. These working groups started work on 6 May and produced a draft peace agreement on May 27, to which the parties reached formal agreement on all but two points: the timing of the withdrawal of Executive Outcomes and the RUF's participation in the Budget and Debt Committee, the executive body charged with public expenditure. International Alert was present at all of these meetings. The main sticking point at this stage in the peace process was whether the RUF and in particular its leadership could occupy a place in the Government. There was a constitutional difficulty raised by the fact that only people registered to vote at the election could occupy places in the Government. *De facto* this excluded the RUF from positions in the Government itself, though not in the public administration and quangos (quasi non-governmental organisations).

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[6]See section 2.0 for comments on the pros and cons of the different sequencing scenarios and the positions of the different groups on this issue.

Throughout this period, Foday Sankoh, together with other members of the RUF delegation, remained in Abidjan. There is a major difference of opinion between International Alert and other members of the international community and the GoSL with regard to the reasons why Foday Sankoh did not return to his base to consult with the War Council. IA argues that he was *unable* to travel securely; others suggest that he was *unwilling* to go.

Throughout the period May to the third week of November 1996, when Foday Sankoh returned to his base in Kailahun, International Alert was active in writing letters to, and arranging meetings with, senior international politicians including the Secretary-Generals of the United Nations, OAU, Commonwealth Secretariat, requesting different parties to ensure the safe return of Foday Sankoh. International Alert claimed consistently that it was the security threat posed by Executive Outcomes, GoSL troops and the *kamajors* which precluded the safe return of Sankoh to his base. They appealed to the international community to prevail upon GoSL and to establish effective security arrangements to facilitate Sankoh's return.

Others point to Sankoh's continued intransigence. Allegedly the GoSL was offering Sankoh and his followers senior, non-ministerial positions in the administration - no response to these invitations were received. Attempts to explain why it was impossible to have non-government representation on the Budget and Debt Committee in order to preserve the principle of a unified budget allegedly failed, while attempts to persuade Sankoh to participate in a briefing on global experience of demobilisation were apparently met with his walking out of the meeting. Allegedly it was because of this intransigence, and its implications for the delay in implementing the peace agreement and thus releasing much needed development funds, the Kabbah government effectively condoned the *kamajor* attacks on the RUF, which by late October had made a significant impact on RUF positions.

Arguably the truth lies half way between these positions. It is common for warring parties to run military operations in parallel with peace agreements in order to consolidate territory and for the military to press civilian governments to persist in seeking a military solution. It is not unlikely that President Kabbah came under increasing pressure from the "hawks" in the government and the military through the summer of 1996 to step up the military offensive against the RUF. In the absence of progress on the political front, resisting such pressure must have proved increasingly difficult.

Either way, it was not until late November (22nd) that Foday Sankoh travelled back to Kailahun, escorted only by ICRC, for five days of consultation with the War Council. Three days after their return to Abidjan, on 30 November, the peace agreement was signed.

Telling in the long interregnum between the draft accord and the final signing is a growing weariness and impatience on behalf of several parties with the RUF leadership, and even perhaps the beginning of impatience within the movement with regard to the peace process. In its letters to international politicians International Alert claimed that it was the deteriorating security situation, not a political impasse which prevented Sankoh's return to his base for consultations on the peace agreement - a condition that had been agreed upon at the recess of the talks at the end of 1996.

This is not to suggest that the obstacles to the peace agreement were not potentially serious. It should be noted, however, that the Executive Outcomes contract was renegotiated in early September, and the position of the RUF on the Budget and Debt Committee was resolved and did not obstruct their signing the agreement on November. More serious flaws in the peace agreement, such as the absence of an agreed provision for the RUF in the political process, the non-mention of the *kamajors* as a serious military threat to the RUF, and the lack of detail regarding the sequencing of the demobilisation, which later became serious sticking points to the implementation of the agreement, were not taken up as major issues by IA at this time.

As time went on, therefore, International Alert was *seen* to be either unable to influence the RUF and therefore ineffective, or as unwilling to distance itself from the increasingly indefensible position of the RUF leadership. The evaluators are unable to form a view regarding to what extent security was a legitimate concern for Sankoh at this time. In particular it is unclear whether in return for returning to Sierra Leone and accepting a senior administrative post, GoSL would have provided Sankoh with the required security guarantees.

Regarding IA's substantive contributions to the contents of the final agreement, two points of view exist.One is that IA representatives at the peace talks made few substantive contributions to the plenary discussions, or that their contributions were made in the form of advice to the RUF. IA, on the other hand, argues that it prepared material which was regularly submitted to all the parties, especially to the principal mediator for circulation to the parties engaged in the negotiations. It likewise submitted to all the parties at the meeting on April 22, 1996 a possible framework for the talks outlining the elements of an accord in a document entitled "Towards a Just and Lasting Peace in Sierra Leone: Taking the Negotiated Path". While the evaluators were obviously not present and the majority of relevant RUF personnel were not in a position to contribute to the evaluation, the evaluators take International Alert's claim at face value. According to the chairman of the talks (Amara Essy), IA staff played a particularly important role in providing the RUF with advice during the negotiations. Further comment on this point is made below.

At the peace talks and subsequently IA also provided documentation to the warring parties on other peace agreements and on key issues such as demobilisation. This is an important role, and may have proved a valuable resource for the warring parties. However, it is important to note that other actors, notably DPKO and the World Bank also tried to arrange briefings for the RUF and GoSL on international experiences of peace-keeping in May 1996 and January 1997, in which the RUF delegation refused to participate. The extent to which the provision of materials by IA on these issues impacted on the RUF leadership with respect to demobilisation is not possible to judge.

A final point on the peace agreement. International Alert had repeatedly requested to be given the status of moral guarantor, in other words to be a signatory to the agreement. The IGOs and the GoSL argued that an NGO could not have this status as they did not have the legal authority to enforce adherence to the peace agreement. According to IA, the UNSGSR stated in a plenary session in May 1997 that the UN would not sign the agreement if IA signed as a moral guarantor. IA's Ed Garcia then responded on the floor that IA would not sign if this would be an obstacle or would delay the signing of the agreement.

It is the considered impression of the evaluators, however, that International Alert has been extremely preoccupied with the issue of recognition of its contribution to the release of the hostages and to the peace agreement. This is legitimate to an extent. As one informant pointed out, the principle of discretion is fine as long as it is signed up to on a multilateral basis. For International Alert, an agency dependent upon voluntary contributions it is important to secure due recognition of its work in order to maintain profile and so attract resources. It is unclear to the evaluators the extent to which the organisation's donors do consider visibility to be a major determinant of funding, or whether other criteria are more important. As more NGOs enter the field of conflict resolution competition is likely to increase and pressure to demonstrate results be enhanced. However, it is the view of the evaluators that at times IA's preoccupation with being *seen* to be doing, has undermined its capacity to effectively operate and negatively affected the organisation's credibility.

That this was the case is indicated by the fact that throughout 1996 International Alert had a number of meetings with the British government, GoSL and with the UN in New York to try to respond to the series of allegations regarding its Sierra Leone Programme. Senior IA staff, often with the support of trustees, met with James Jonah (GoSL's Permanent Representative to the UN), the UNSG and the Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs in New York in November 1996. In the same month they met with the FCO in response to rumours that senior UK officials were commenting negatively on the organisation. The persistence of many of the same allegations more than one year later suggests that attempts to assure these bodies regarding the conduct of IA were not successful.

3.2.5 Post-negotiations. 1 December 1996-present

Following the signing of the agreements the Trustees discussed the future of IA's Sierra Leone programme. Some Trustees argued for complete withdrawal to enable the organisation to refocus and concentrate more on other areas; it was also argued that following the peace agreement it was up to the moral guarantors to own and implement the agreement. Others argued that IA's Secretary-General should be asked to deploy staff to continue to monitor the process carefully and to approach the trustees if he felt that IA was needed to contribute to the process in anyway. The latter argument won out unanimously.

One month after the signing, the peace agreement was already in trouble. A team from the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO), led by the UNSG's Special Envoy travelled to Abidjan in January 1997 to meet with Foday Sankoh to discuss demobilisation. Sankoh refused to meet with them. Sankoh objected to the proposed size of the peace-keeping force and to the phasing of the demobilisation process, which, he and others saw as

threatening the RUF militarily, so compounding the RUF's political marginalisation.[7] However, others in the RUF, including its representatives in the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) based in Freetown, maintained that demobilisation represented the only way forward, and have reported that some members of IA's staff were advising Sankoh against accepting the UN peace-keeping proposal.

Again, it is important to emphasise that the evaluators are of the opinion that there were important arguments to be made regarding the implementation of the peace accord, and that an organisation such as IA had an important role in informing such debates. What is more problematic is that IA was not seen to be making a balanced assessment of the obstacles to implementation of the peace process, identifying what the different parties needed to do to overcome them. Rather, they appeared to have shifted to primarily being an advocate for the RUF, and specifically for its leadership.

This impression is reinforced by the correspondence between IA an the GoSL and others during this period which appears to place the blame for the breakdown in the peace process squarely with the GoSL. IA's Special Envoy's letter to GoSL dated 5 January (Addai Sebo, 1997) raises the issue of the *kamajors* [to the evaluators' knowledge for the first time] prompting the GoSL to complain that IA was reopening issues that were not discussed at Abidjan. International Alert also pointed out in letters to UK politicians that "...the RUF leadership feels marginalised and ..Cpl Foday Sankoh, in particular, is not being treated with the respect and dignity they [the RUF] believe the signing of the Peace Agreement confers on their leader" (Rupesinghe, 1997a).

In late February 1997, a discussion took place between one of IA's Trustees and the UN Secretary-General, at which it was agreed that International Alert would use its good offices with the RUF to attempt to get Foday Sankoh to meet with the UN on the peace-keeping issue. Following consultations with other Trustees, IA's Special Envoy was despatched to the region. However, by the time the Special Envoy arrived in Abidjan, Foday Sankoh had been arrested by the Nigerian authorities for allegedly trying to enter the country carrying a pistol and ammunition.

International Alert then made representations to the United Nations and others urging them to secure Sankoh's release, cautioning that

> There is a view prevailing in some quarters that the removal of Foday Sankoh would be the best way to establish peace in Sierra Leone. I am sure that you will agree that this view is misguided. Any perception by the RUF/SL military

[7]It is also reported that Sankoh wished the UNSG's Special Envoy and the DPKO team to visit him in Kailahun, but that the GoSL would not agree to this as it would have implied the existence of a state within a state. It is important to note that Sankoh was already in Abidjan and it was not clear when he planned to return to Sierra Leone. The time it would have taken for the international community to make the necessary appropriate arrangements for Sankoh's reutrn and for relevant meetings to take place in Sierra Leone is difficult to judge.

command that there is a plan to remove Foday Sankoh would lead to serious consequences (Rupesinghe, 1997b).

This statement transpired to be prophetic. In contrast to those who argued that the RUF would dissipate once their leader had been removed from the scene, instead, the RUF became involved in the coup which deposed the civilian government on 25 May 1997. The attempt by some within the RUF to overthrow Sankoh's leadership resulted in their being taken prisoner and condemned to death.

Strikingly absent from the International Alert letter to the UN dated 14 March, however, is any mention of the charges for which Sankoh was arrested. Nor was Sankoh's reluctance to meet with members of his own delegation to the peace-keeping team mentioned. In statements issued publicly by International Alert, blame for the failure of the peace process is placed first at the feet of the United Nations Special Representative who "..has failed to build cooperation with the OAU and International Alert", and was not trusted by the RUF/SL. No less than six allegations are made against the Kabbah government with regard to its lack of compliance with the peace agreement, while the language used to describe the three omissions of the RUF is, relatively, benign and perhaps somewhat ambiguously phrased.[8]

The agency's response to the coup has served to further reinforce impressions among the international community that International Alert is biased in favour of the RUF. In particular, the fact that the organisation did not unequivocally call for the reinstallment of the Kabbah government is taken to indicate the agency's ambivalence with regard to the electoral process.[9]

However, it is important to note that IA's analysis of the political situation since the coup has proved more accurate than that of many professional diplomats. For example, the emerging schism within the region regarding the viability and desirability of Nigerian-led

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[8]It states: "The RUF/SL on the other hand seemed to have undermined the process in the following manner. 1) Fraternising with the military and alleged coup leaders, and thereby arousing deep suspicion [sic] amongst the international community and within the government; 2) refusing to meet with a military assessment team sent by the UN Security Council; 3) Hindering the acceleration of the implementation of the Peace Accord by not naming representatives to the bodies such as the Joint Monitoring Group...(International Alert 1997b). These stand in contrast to the allegations against the Kabbah government which include: expanding the *kamajor* force; refusing Sankoh safe return to Sierra Leone; encouraging the factionalisation of the RUF; failing to emphasise the comprehensive character of the agreement.

[9]See, for example, a circular letter sent out to a wide audience from IA's Secretary General which states: "Following the coup in Sierra Leone on 25 May 1997, the trustees of International Alert condemned the coup and have stated clearly that military coups are an unacceptable way to bring about change in government. While condemning the coup, trustees noted that it was likewise imperative to ensure that the peace process is put back on track as a way of responding to the escalating crisis.

military intervention, outside the frameworks of either ECOWAS or the UN has served to question the apparent unanimity of the OAU statement in Harare. Similarly, pat calls for the reinstatement of the Kabbah government fail to take account of the political reality in Freetown, whereby the RUF has achieved by force an end it was denied through the peace process.

Supporters and critics alike would argue that IA's access to political information derives from its close links with the RUF. It is the view of the evaluators that the nature of these links is insufficiently transparent and has thus raised (legitimate) suspicions regarding the integrity of the organisation. In particular, it has served to reinforce the impression that while International Alert clearly has a unique influence with the RUF leadership, this influence has not always been used within the mandate of the organisation.

Thus, IA's continued involvement in Sierra Leone since the signing of the December 1996 peace accord has remained controversial. It is the view of the evaluators that whatever the truth of the allegations regarding IA's relations with the RUF, the organisation's continued involvement in the country has served to reinforce existing negative opinions at the highest political level. This of itself is a high risk strategy for a small organisation. The risks increase given the ethical challenges and problems associated with engaging with a rebel force which had signed but reneged on a peace agreement, and then actively aligned itself with a military coup overthrowing a civilian government, however frail.

4.0 Issues, Implications and Recommendations

4.1 Overview

As indicated in section 1.0, evaluating International Alert's work in Sierra Leone has not been straightforward. A wide range of allegations have been made by many different actors working in a complex environment in which sophisticated political analysis is all too frequently forced to sit side-by-side with rumour-mongering and ill-informed gossip. Any evaluation of International Alert's intervention necessarily implies analysing the interventions of other actors; however, the evaluators had neither the mandate nor resources to *evaluate* the latter. What follows therefore implies neither praise nor blame regarding the performance of other parts of the international conflict management system.

It is important to state at the outset that the evaluators believe that International Alert's work was conducted with the best of intentions, and that it demanded considerable courage and dedication from IA staff and trustees, and in particular from the Special Envoy working on Sierra Leone.

4.2 Defining Principles

4.2.1 Neutrality

The concept of neutrality is central to those claiming to play a role in the facilitation of peace talks. The evaluators understand the term "neutrality", as meaning not taking a position in relation to the conflict, nor judging the political position taken by warring parties. Neutrality is made not given: pre-conditions for proving neutrality are transparency of information and mutual consent of both parties. Neutrality is not an end in itself, but a means to *effective* facilitation of negotiations. Without the trust of all parties, the credibility of the facilitator will be undermined and therefore s/he will be unable to function in that role, and may further undermine the fragile process of confidence-building between the parties themselves. In other words, the lack of transparency or neutrality of one of the facilitating parties may result in more rather than less conflictual behaviour.

International Alert has consistently described its role in Sierra Leone as that of a neutral facilitator. Internal reviews conducted by the organisation of its work have emphasised that:

> There is no doubt in the minds of those involved in the Sierra Leone programme of the importance of the principle of neutrality to ensure the credibility of IA's work and to maintain the trust of the parties (International Alert 1995f).

In a speech in March 1996, IA's Secretary-General said:

> "In such situations of internal armed conflict, international organisations and outside third parties always face the problem of impartiality and neutrality. Whether it is the United Nations, the OAU, the Commonwealth Secretariat or International Alert, you can be seen by one side or the other as a party to the conflict. It is important that international organisations stand above these considerations. International Alert's own involvement in conflict is based on 10 years of field experience in conflict situations. We are impartial in our approach" (Rupesinghe, 1996b).

However, as described earlier, evidence collected by the evaluators suggests that IA's approach has been more like that of an advisor to the RUF, than that of a neutral facilitator. The evaluators accept that there is not necessarily a sharp dividing line between the two roles. Encouraging a party to participate in the peace process and assisting them in subsequent negotiations, entails having a relationship with them.

International Alert and others, further argue that in the Sierra Leonean case it was legitimate to "advise" the RUF in the sense of providing them with technical information on matters such as how to negotiate, and on legal issues. However, that IA was playing a more extensive, non-technical advisory role is reflected in terms of its overall approach to the RUF leadership, ie based on an individual relationship, and reinforced by its *modus operandi,* in particular by its lack of transparency. As a result IA lost the trust of successive governments of Sierra Leone and of key international organisations.

On a number of occasions IA has scrutinised the Sierra Leone programme and sought to analyse the threats to its neutrality. It has frequently pointed to both its own naivete and to unfortunate misunderstandings, as the cause of others' perceptions that it is not acting in a neutral manner.[10] However, there is substantial evidence that some senior staff at International Alert actively took on roles incompatible with those of a neutral facilitator, instead working as political advisers to the RUF. As described above (see section 3.2), this is particularly the case on issues such as RUF relations with IGOs, the sequencing of peace and electoral processes and the legitimacy of the RUF leadership.

International Alert has mooted various defences in relation to these accusations of its lack of neutrality. These have included outright denial of the allegations as "...total and absolute nonsense". In addition, more complex, sophisticated arguments have been presented. In particular, IA has pointed to the lack of neutrality of other facilitators, in particular that of the United Nations, and to the inherent partiality of state-centric international relations which places primary emphasis on sovereignty rather than legitimacy of national governments.

These are important arguments which merit serious consideration. Indeed, such questions have provided the focus of an extensive literature and high level political debate regarding the rights and responsibilities of states in a globalized world, where the legitimacy of state structures is more frequently questioned, and the concept of the *droit d'ingerence* in cases of illegitimate regimes has been placed firmly on the international agenda, at least in certain cases.[11]

Significantly, a number of key informants interviewed by the evaluators took the view that it would not have been inappropriate for International Alert to have played the role of advisor to the RUF. There was widespread awareness that a rebel movement may be in need of technical advice on issues such as protocol and strategies for negotiations with inter-governmental and governmental bodies; the actual drafting of the peace agreement; and demobilisation and demilitarization. In this context, IA was seen to have potentially important resources which could have been used to act in this role. Allegedly, the UN among others would have considered providing funding for such activities.

It is unclear why International Alert, given its potential comparative advantage in this respect did not publicly take the route of acting as an adviser to the RUF. It is unclear whether, for example, IA was concerned that if it did not present itself as a neutral party it might have been more difficult to secure funding, a view not supported by the evidence. Or whether by maintaining its claim to be a neutral facilitator it could make claim to equal status to act as

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[10]For example, an internal review in 1995, mishandling of the media, and in particular providing them with video footage was seen to be a primary factor responsible for damaging the organisation's's credibility and challenging its neutrality (International Alert 1995k). The recent report to the Board makes similar points (International Alert 1997r).

[11]See, for example, the review by Tomasevksi K (1994) The human right to food, in Macrae J and A Zwi *War and Hunger: Redefining international responses to complex emergencies*, Zed Books, London and New Jersey.

a moral guarantor, on a par with the IGOs and the government of Cote d'Ivoire, so enhancing its international profile.

What other actors found confusing was that International Alert has consistently and publicly *claimed* that it is working as a neutral facilitator, when its actions appeared the opposite. It is lack of clarity in terms of the basis on which IA was intervening, and the dichotomy between rhetoric and practice, which have served to damage IA's credibility with the international community and with successive governments, and indeed with sections of the RUF, in Sierra Leone.

It is of concern to the evaluators that at present only a draft policy paper exists on neutrality (International Alert, 1996d). This has been drafted by one of the Special Envoys, but does not constitute policy or provide staff with detailed operational guidelines. This, despite the fact that minutes of a Trustees meeting on 10 and 11 November 1995 report that

> "it was noted that IA's involvement in specific conflict situations such as Sierra Leone might raise questions as to IA's impartiality and integrity, and that there should *therefore be clear guidelines for actions in the field, both for internal and external purposes. Trustees requested that a draft document of principles for IA be presented for discussion at the next meeting* (International Alert, 1997a), (emphasis added)."

The draft paper on impartiality and neutrality does not refer to any of the international literature on impartiality and neutrality, nor provide a definition of terms.

At the Board meeting in July 1997, a paper was presented setting out IA's mission and values. The principles of neutrality and impartiality do not appear as core values listed. However, it is noted in the text that :

> "The problem of privileged access to parties in conflicts requires a clear conception of impartiality and non-partisanship. The problem of impartiality and the operationalisation of its mandate requires continuous reflection and formulation " (International Alert 1997s).

This statement is revealing. First it indicates that IA's draft paper on neutrality and impartiality has not been accepted as policy. Further, it is of concern that despite its mounting of extensive operations and claims of a position at the forefront of conflict resolution theorising, this central issue remains unresolved by the organisation.

Recommendation on Neutrality:

> *International Alert, in collaboration with respected human rights and international relations specialists should prepare a policy outlining its understanding of the principle of neutrality and how it applies to the organisations work. This paper should be adopted as policy by the Board, and provide the basis for staff training and induction. Key elements of these papers should be reproduced as a code of conduct.*

It may be that it is neither feasible nor desirable for IA to act in a neutral manner. If its comparative advantage lies in the provision of technical assistance, advocate or body more akin to that of a solidarity movement, this too is a legitimate position. However, this would need to be stated explicitly.

4.2.2 *Dealing with the Unlike-Minded: A conflict resolution or human rights agency?*

International Alert describes itself in its literature and letterhead as "The standing international forum on ethnic conflict, genocide and human rights". In addition to stating that it maintains a position of neutrality, it says that it is "...strictly bound to international standards of human rights and humanitarian law". In a speech in 1996, IA's Secretary-General stated:

> "We abhor violence. As a member of the Human Rights (sic) community, we condemn and abhor violence on either side....We have over the years tried to seek respect for humanitarian law in armed conflicts and in many occasions brought parties together to respect and adhere to humanitarian law" (Rupesinghe, 1996b).

International Alert also claims that it has a number of staff and trustees who bring with them an extensive background in human rights. As there are tensions between the role of neutral facilitator and that of advisor, so there are tensions between that of a human rights group and one concerned with resolution of conflict. In particular, the conventional strategy of denouncement used by human rights agencies is frequently seen as incompatible with the strategies required for facilitation of negotiations. One member of IA's staff perceptively described the dilemma facing IA when working with movements such as the RUF as "the problem of working with the unlike-minded". This issue is not one faced by IA alone: the UN and Commonwealth Secretariat among others, for example, had been engaging with successive Sierra Leonean regimes with known poor human rights records.

In the case of IA, however, a greater clarity must be expressed to show the relation between its human rights and conflict resolution mandates to ensure greater coherence in its work.

At a broad level, it is unclear to the evaluators and to others how the organisation interprets its human rights mandate. Specifically in relation to Sierra Leone conflict, the terror tactics used by the RUF, together with the activities of the GoSL army, have been characterised by widespread violence against civilians, torture and massive population displacement. To the knowledge of the evaluators, at no point in IA's documentation nor in the briefings and interviews with IA staff have these tactics been condemned by the organisation. The evaluators are not of the view that denouncement of human rights abuses is necessarily the only or most important way of responding to a concern for human rights issues. They are concerned, however, that unequivocally engaging with those who have a known record of human rights abuses sits uncomfortably with the agency's professed mandate. Engagement with violent groups - whether governments or rebel movements, undoubtedly raises complex dilemmas, which merit much closer analysis and definition of policy than has been the case to date.

IA staff report that they provided copies of Amnesty International's reports on Sierra Leone and copies of the Geneva Conventions to senior RUF officials and military commanders. Such work is extremely important, particularly given that other organisations do not appear to have been engaging with the RUF on these issues. However, the evaluators believe that such activities required greater emphasis so as to adequately serve as the basis for IA's broader strategy in Sierra Leone. The organisation does not appear to have explicitly acknowledged, nor dealt with, the problems which arise in ensuring that the human rights perspective fully informs conflict resolution work.

Recommendation on definition of IA's position on human rights

> *In consultation with relevant specialists, including members of the Board, International Alert should clarify its mandate on human rights, and in particular articulate the contradictions and complementarities between human rights and conflict resolution work. This policy should be disseminated publicly.*

Legitimation of warring parties: a key dilemma

Necessarily, International Alert is aware that by engaging with the RUF, the agency becomes part of the dynamics of the conflict. Indeed, the intervention is premised on this expectation of having an impact and aims to use this influence for conflict resolution purposes. However, there is no assurance *a priori* that IA's influence will necessarily contribute to that aim. International Alert has played an important role in Sierra Leone in attempting to improve international understanding of the RUF. In the view of the evaluators, this was potentially the most valuable element of their work. As International Alert has argued, while the RUF and its leadership remained unknown, the scope for mythologising and demonising the movement increased. While the RUF was perceived as a semi-criminal, dysfunctional or non-existent political movement, the opportunities for establishing a sustainable peace remained very limited. International Alert has therefore worked to legitimise the RUF as a political, and indirectly as a military force. Of itself this may not be bad thing. The question is how far should this go, according to what principles is such support given, and under what conditions should it be withdrawn?

IA has made the claim that its comparative advantage lay in the relationship between its Special Envoy and Foday Sankoh. It was through this relationship, based on mutual respect, that IA could gain access to information regarding the organisation and structure of the RUF and aim to influence it. IA had argued that this access on the basis of personal relationships was the starting point on which a broad institutional relationship could be built that would enable IA to raise issues and attempt to influence the RUF. The subsequent divisions within the RUF have highlighted the fact that Sankoh could not claim to be representative of the movement as a whole. While the military wing still looks to Sankoh, his influence over the intellectual, ideological wing was fading by early 1997.

The sincerity of the RUF leadership with regard to the implementation of the agreement has not been questioned by International Alert, either publicly or in discussions with the evaluators. To the contrary, the organisation has consistently sought to legitimise the RUF and its leadership. In persisting to engage the RUF leadership when the evidence was mounting against that leadership regarding its sincerity to the extent that there was a split in the movement, IA obviously faced questions about the political and practical effectiveness of its approach. It also became vulnerable to accusations that it was uncritically and unconditionally engaging with a leader with a questionable political agenda.

International Alert faced a genuine moral dilemma in its work in Sierra Leone. It (rightly in the view of the evaluators) rejected the view put forward by some that by ignoring the RUF and seeking to marginalise them politically and military they would somehow disappear. It therefore sought to engage with the RUF. Taking the RUF seriously is itself a political statement and contributes to the legitimacy and therefore political strength of the movement.

This is a dilemma which faces inter-governmental organisations repeatedly, but usually on the other side, ie in their dealings with illegitimate governments. It is noted by the evaluators that the UN and others recognised and dealt with the NPRC, perhaps one of the most violent and illegitimate regimes Sierra Leone had seen and that this was done without international condemnation for legitimising an illegitimate regime.

In a state-centric world the playing field is uneven. In trying to redress the imbalance between state and non-state actors, International Alert like other conflict resolution NGOs is breaking new ground and trying to address an obvious failing of existing formal diplomatic structures. In such circumstances, there are no clear maps or manuals, rather it is necessary to adopt an iterative approach and to use good management systems effectively. This is a view with which the evaluators are sympathetic in principle.

However, in the Sierra Leone case the evaluators are unconvinced that the absence of "maps" has been the primary problem. The dilemmas IA faced are new, but they are not that new. The Sierra Leone case study reveals an organisation which is claiming to work outside previously existing categories of human rights, humanitarian or development aid work, and outside the sphere of formal diplomacy. However, IA's critique of the modus operandi of other existing bodies does not of itself define sufficiently what *it* ought to be doing nor on what terms. The Sierra Leone case study suggests that IA has been working without effective frameworks or codes of conduct to ensure best practice in this critical field of work, and that it is this that has left the organisation exposed.

Recommendations on the legitimacy issue:

- *Recommendations to the donors:*

  i. NGO involvement in conflict resolution is relatively new. Donors should acknowledge that, although small, NGOs can exert a significant political impact on already turbulent environments. This impact may

contribute to, or undermine, peace processes. *Recognising this, donors should work to ensure that the risks of negative impacts are articulated fully at a policy level and in terms of the procedures in place to appraise and monitor specific projects.*

ii. *Donors should support empirically-based studies to investigate the continued relevance of IGO mandates and their effectiveness in responding to internal conflict. Such studies would shed light on whether there are gaps in international conflict management systems which NGOs might legitimately fill, or whether these gaps would be more efficiently filled by revising the mandates and operational strategies of the governmental system. It is clearly an insufficient basis for policy to argue that existing IGOs are not working, but to provide funds to NGOs in the hope that they can do the same thing but better.*

- *Recommendation to International Alert*

i. *International Alert and its Board should recognise the responsibilities implied by working to legitimise a rebel movement. In order to clarify that sufficient clarity exists on what terms such work is undertaken, further work on defining the principles of neutrality and in relation to human rights is clearly vital. Clear articulation of the conditions of the organisation's engagement with a rebel movement and so the conditions for withdrawal should be laid out at the start of any similar programme.*

4.3 Relations with International Organisations and Other Actors

International Alert has stated that the objectives of its programme were to:

> ....consult with the leadership of the RUF and explain to them the strategy for establishing relations with inter-governmental organisations; build confidence between the RUF and the OAU, the UN, the EU and the Commonwealth Secretariat through bilateral meeting between the RUF delegation and representatives of these IGOs, hold multilateral meeting between the RUF and IGOs to develop a negotiating framework for subsequent peace talks between the RUF and NPRC; provide appropriate technical assistance to the warring factions as per request (International Alert 1995e).

In April 1995 and again in September 1995, the RUF sent letters to International Alert requesting first their assistance in understanding the organisation and workings of IGOs, and subsequently to facilitate all contacts that "may be proposed by any international body, organisation or groups (Sankoh 1995c).

This implies that key criteria of its performance are:

a. The extent to which IA actually facilitated contacts between the RUF and the IGOs, and to which it added value, and was seen to add value to these contacts;

b. The degree of trust which existed between IA and these IGO bodies.

Evidence collected by the evaluators suggests that at least some members of IA staff did not actively support the efforts of all the international organisations and governments with which it had contact during the course of its work on the hostage issue and peace agreements. This is not to suggest that IA should have worked with such organisations uncritically nor presented itself as simply an extension and tool of the IGO system.

However, given that IA set itself the objective of working with these bodies, it is alarming to find that at times the organisation was actively working against the spirit of these objectives, and that this contributed to the breakdown of trust between IA and other bodies crucial for to its work. What struck the evaluators was the extensive distrust in the international community in relation to IA's work in Sierra Leone, and that there was consensus between many different IGOs, diplomatic and other organisations that this mistrust had arisen from the perceived lack of transparency of IA's working methods and in particular the lack of clarity with regard to its relationship with the RUF (neutral facilitator or adviser?).

What is surprising and disappointing about IA's relations with other international bodies is that while many of the latter hold strong views about IA's performance, and some persist in making allegations against the agency, to the knowledge of the evaluators, these organisations have not made written representation to the IA's Trustees. This is regrettable as it means that the organisation has to rely on informal channels to hear what is being said about it.

Recommendations with regard to IA's relations with International Organisations

Recommendation to international organisations and governments working with NGOs involved in conflict resolution

- *In the event of dispute between an international organisation, including ministries of foreign affairs, and conflict resolution NGOs, the parties concerned should express their views clearly and in writing to senior management, copied to the Board of Trustees. In the event that satisfactory answers are not forthcoming, correspondence should be forwarded to the NGOs' major donors and the NGOs informed of this.*

Recommendation to International Alert

The Sierra Leone case study suggests that it is neither feasible nor appropriate for an NGO to attempt to replicate the work of international organisations and governmental bodies. However, the evaluators are aware that International Alert had a potentially significant capacity to analyse the peace process and to alert the different parties - GoSL, RUF and the international brokers - to possible weaknesses in their approaches. IA's particular access to the RUF leader through its Special Envoy, gave the organisation real potential to influence positively events in the conflict. However, International Alert did not play this role effectively in Sierra Leone, because of insufficient clarity regarding its mandate, and because of its failure to analyse fully, and then to take into account the ethical and other implications of its work. It is recommended that:

> *International Alert review its mandate and define more clearly whether it sees itself playing the role of* ***advocate*** *for effective conflict management by warring parties and the international conflict management system, or as a* ***participant*** *in the conflict resolution process. It is suggested that the former role is relatively under-represented compared with the latter, where the proliferation of actors is arguably part of the problem.*

4.4 Internal Management

International Alert has been the subject of repeated allegations with regard to its Sierra Leone for over two years. Since that time, International Alert has conducted three internal reviews (International Alert, 1995d; International Alert, 1994) - two in 1995 and one in 1996. In addition, in July 1997 a brief paper was presented to the Board (International Alert 1997s). From the internal reviews examined by the evaluators, it is not clear who participated in them, nor what mechanism was used to ensure that the recommendations and learning points identified would be acted upon. The tone of the reviews is one of identifying some key issues, for example, regarding neutrality, and the tensions between confidentiality and free information flows. The first review states that:

> "The discussions ...were characterised by an honest exchange of ideas, rigorous attention to detail and to facts corroborated by the documentation accumulated by the programme team as well as minutes of meetings and reports of missions" (International Alert 1995f)

The evaluators do not agree, however, that the internal reviews have been conducted with sufficient rigour nor that they have offered a sufficiently robust and self-critical analysis of the problems IA was facing. The tone of all these reports seems to underestimate the gravity of the situation, and the extent of international mistrust of the organisation. There is a risk that the potentially complacent tone of such reports gets amplified as it passes through the management hierarchy, in particular up to the MAC and to the Board. The fact that the review was internal and did not include attempts to ask others how they saw IA at this time served to reinforce the rather introspective approach taken.

Similarly, in reviewing the relevant extracts of the minutes of MAC and Trustee minutes, it is clear that the Sierra Leone programme has been demanding of Trustees' time and energy and that at all stages pertinent questions have been asked by the Board to the staff. However, the extent to which the Trustees had access to sufficiently self-critical and accurate information seems open to question. Trustees, however, have acknowledged that they must and do share responsibility for management of the Sierra Leone programme.

For understandable reasons, the Sierra Leone programme has generated considerable emotions within the organisation. Also understandable is that under assault from a wide range of sources, sometimes unjustifiably and aware of the major interests operating against IA, it has been difficult (not to say time-consuming) for staff and trustees to critically review these allegations and to confront them systematically. Rather, the style has been one of defensiveness.

Recommendation

> *International Alert needs to develop a management style characterised by openness, and a willingness to be actively self-critical if it is to defend its interests. An ability to see oneself as others see us is an elusive, but necessary, skill to develop. Denial of others' perceptions risks reinforcing the impression of organisational insensitivity and lack of analytical capacity.*

4.5 Conclusions

In the Sierra Leonean case International Alert has been working at the highest political level and has therefore come up against major institutional and political interests, and been faced with complex ethical dilemmas. Depending upon one's point of view, it is either brave or foolish for a small NGO to attempt to engage at this level and to risk incurring controversy and the displeasure of powerful groups.

In the view of the evaluators, International Alert has an insufficient sense of its own identity underpinned by robust principles and effective management to be able to claim a legitimate role in peace negotiations at the level it attempted in relation to Sierra Leone. Although it gained an important role in the conflict resolution process through its unique access to one major player, this influence was not used effectively, either to contribute to genuine and lasting peace in Sierra Leone, or to defining a niche for conflict resolution NGOs involved in such work. IA identified a gap in the prevailing analysis and response to the conflict, but was unable to use the opportunity thus presented to the best effect.

For international aid bodies providing funds to conflict resolution work the implications of this case are considerable. There is an impression that Western governments, recognising the limitations of formal diplomacy and in particular of the inter-governmental system, are reaching to NGOs to address the problem of internal warfare. While the problem is in the diplomatic sphere, the resources to fund the work of groups such as International Alert derive

largely from aid budgets. It will be important therefore for donor agencies to review the skills and tools required by staff to appraise and monitor work in this area, particularly in the light of increasing linkage being made between foreign policy and aid policy objectives. The strengthening of tools for monitoring performance of such NGOs would assist both donor and NGOs encountering the types of problems which have been incurred by IA's programme in Sierra Leone. That such serious allegations against IA have been allowed to persist for such a prolonged period of time raises questions regarding the accountability not only of IA but of the donors too.

Conflict resolution is a complex business with very high stakes for all those involved, but particularly for those living in the conflict-affected country. While good intentions characterise the activities of International Alert and its donor supporters, the Sierra Leone case study suggests that this is insufficient. A much more robust analysis of the nature of conflict, the existing conflict management system and of the comparative advantages of NGOs is required. In the absence of such an analysis, rather than overcoming the many weaknesses of the international conflict management system, the introduction of still more players may serve to reinforce them.

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Annex 1: List of Interviews

Napolean Abdullah	Rapid Response Unit, International Alert, London, 5 June 1997
A. Addai-Sebo	Special Envoy, International Alert, London, 6 June
I.Anirthaniyagam	Second Secretary, US Embassy, Abidjan
Mustafa Alieu	Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone
Moses Anafu	Assistant Director, Political Affairs, Commonwealth Secretariat
R. Ahmed-Haque	Desk Officer, Sierra Leone, UN Department of Political Affairs
Mrs M Barrie	Sierra Leone
Amb. Diaby	Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Guinea, Conakry, 18 June.
Berhanu Dinka	UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Sierra Leone, Conakry, 17 and 19 June 1997
Mr Berewa	Attourney-General, Government of Sierra Leone, Conakry, 20 June
Madeline Church	Training Department, International Alert, 5 June 1997
Chris Edge	Equatorial Africa Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 6 June 1997
Carlo von Flue	Delegate, International Organisations Division, International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva
Ambrose Ganda	Editor, Focus on Sierra Leone, June 12th , London
Ed Garcia	Special Envoy, International Alert, June 5 1997
Marrack Goulding	Former UN Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, Southhampton
Ann Grant	Head, Equatorial Africa Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 6 June 1997
David Jones	Associate Director, International Alert, London, 5 June 1997
Kathyrn Jones	Department of Political Affairs, Conkary, 17, 18, 19 June 1997
Ahmad T Kabbah	President, Sierra Leone, Conakry, June 1997
Jan Naerby	Ambassador of Norway, Abidjan, 20 June 1997
Dagmar Nill	First Secretary, Embassy of the Rep. of Germany, Abidjan, June 1997
Milius Paliawaya	Programme Officer, International Alert, June 1997
Peter Penfold	Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Conakry, June 1997
Bertie Ramachan	Director, Africa I, UN Department of Political Affairs
Philip Rouse	Formerly, Equatorial Africa Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 6 June
Roger Ruffy	Desk Officer, West Africa, International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, 1 July
Kumar Rupesinghe	Secretary-General, International Alert, London, 5 June 1997
Mark Segall	Fundraising Manager, International Alert, London, 5 June 1997
Amb. Speekenbrick	Ambassador of the Netherlands, Abidjan, 20 June 1997
Amadou Troare	Head of Section, Africa, Asia and Middle East, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abidjan
Iain Whitting	British Embassy, Abidjan, June 1997

C A Zapella

West Africa Regional Delegate, International Committee of the Red Cross, Abidjan, 1997

Reflection Committee on Sierra Leone and Liberia, Government of Guinea

Annex 2 : List of Acronyms

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
CCP	Committee for the Consolidation of Peace
CS	Commonwealth Secretariat
DPKO	Department of Peace-keeping Operations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IA	International Alert
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGO	Inter-governmental organisation
MAC	Management action committee
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPP	United People's Party
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
WFP	World Food Programme

Annex 6:
International Alert's Response to the Evaluation Report Recommendations

The evaluation of the role and achievements of International Alert, the first of its kind to be carried out on the work of a conflict resolution NGO, has been a long and comprehensive process which we have welcomed and in which we have participated fully and vigorously.

Commissioned by the major government donors of International Alert, and carried out by The Chr. Michelsen Institute over a period of more than three months in 1997, the evaluation represents an assessment of IA's strategy, planning process and structure; and examines in detail three of its programmes: Sri Lanka, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

While inevitably there are points within such a wide-ranging evaluation with which we have differing views, broadly we welcome their results of the evaluation and the organisation is already in the process of implementing the recommendations of the report.

At a meeting of the donors on 11 September 1997, IA's Chair Lord Judd, and its Secretary General Kumar Ripesinghe reiterated their commitment to pursue the recommendations of the evaluation report, with full commitment to its implementation. The following recommendations will be implemented:

On the Importance of Analysis:
IA will strengthen the process of assessing analysis before beginning any project. This task is performed by the policy group, the composition of which includes all programme managers. They will consider and recommend acceptance or rejection of new proposals on the analysis presented, on the project's fit with our strategies, on its risks and on resources required. This will be a formal process, based on written submissions. Final decisions, of course, rest with trustees (Recommendation, p. 67).

On Ethical Issues and Principles:
As a matter of priority, International Alert will implement the following recommendations: (i) The development of a Code of Conduct, primarily for IA and of use for NGOs working in the field. (ii) The development of a policy on Impartiality in conflict resolution. (iii) The development of a policy of Human Rights and conflict resolution (Recommendation, p. 69).

On Relations with International Organisations and other Actors:
IA requires space, trust, confidence and credibility in order to operate in its field of work. In order to achieve this, IA will have as its priority building and

maintaining effective relations with the UN, with significant governments, and with donors. IA will clearly communicate how it plans to take recommendations of the evaluation forward and how it will effectively implement programmes which use IA's specific skills and experience (Recommendations, pp. 69-70).

On Management and Organisational Issues (i):
IA is developing a strategic plan which will be considered by trustees on the 7th and 8th of November 1997. Lessons learnt, programme focus and improved analysis capacity and procedures are elements of this plan (Recommendations, p. 70).

On Management and Organisational Issues (ii):
Clarity of primary objectives and priorities will be created by the new strategy plan. IA will further consolidate its work, narrow its focus, and build on the positive elements of the evaluation. To do this it will concentrate on creating space for dialogue and capacity building in the following regions: *Great Lakes Region, with country focus on Burundi and Rwanda, * West Africa, with country focus on Liberia and Ghana, * The Caucasus, with country focus on Georgia and Abkhazia. * It will continue to work in Sri Lanka and concentrate on low profile activities (Recommendation on clarity of objectives and priorities, p. 70).

On Management and Organisational Issues (iii):
Both internally (communications, staff development, management) and externally (relations, partnerships, communications) IA will self critically work towards a new culture (Recommendation on style, openness, and transparency, p. 70).

On Management and Organisational Issues (iv):
IA will convene a meeting of partners to consider: (i) The code of conduct and policies on impartiality and human rights. (ii) The establishment of a "referral system" (or the use of the "Farming out" principle) whereby work can be channelled to organisations based on their specific expertise (Recommendation on long-term programmes in partnership, p. 70).

On Future Directions:
"IA will incorporate in its planning the lessons learnt from the evaluation, particularly from field operations in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. As part of that process, IA will synthesize those lessons into a separate document (Recommendations, p. 74).

On Follow-up:
IA will monitor the progress of its implementation of this evaluation. This will be done in the following manner: (i) By building regular monitoring into the strategic plan. (ii) By inviting the donors to institute a process of regular monitoring over the next 18-24 months. IA will call upon an external institution to help in this task.

International Alert's Response to the Sierra Leone Case Study

Since there are few precedents for evaluating the work of conflict resolution organisations in the past, not only is this work ground-breaking but it is also of great importance and will be scrutinised carefully in years to come. However, it must be subject to the same high standards NGOs are held to: it must be analytically rigorous, it must be based on a comprehensive set of facts as much as possible verifiable by documentation, and must be seen to be fair and even-handed. If this exercise can be used as a precedent for future ones, it becomes a common responsibility to live up to the high standards evaluators and the evaluated organisation expect, and which donor agencies and other institutions have a right to and deserve. It is in this spirit, therefore, that IA produces this response, in particular, to the Sierra Leone Case Study conducted by the evaluators.

The Context of the Case Study

It is important at the outset to contextualise the Case Study since it took place during a most turbulent period in Sierra Leone's history. Although the Evaluation had been commissioned months earlier, the exercise did not commence until the second quarter of 1997. It must be noted that the interviews were conducted during the post-coup period after 25 May 1997, not in the aftermath of the signing of the peace agreement in November 1996.

IA had brought to the attention of the evaluators the inhospitable climate and the political sensitivity of this period. The exercise itself was subject to being part of the conflict, and was conducive to exacerbating tensions and further polarizing positions. IA believed that it was probable for people looking for convenient explanations to tend to overlook more nuanced factors as well as previous contributions that were possible to verify by more thorough research and a more careful reading of existing documentation. Evidently, the task required a painstaking, patient and rigorous approach that seriously examined evidence from a truly broad range of sources and materials before making judgments.

The odds were daunting but the fact is that what took place in the course of the Sierra Leone peace process from 1995-96 did create space to enable parties to the conflict to work towards the possibility of resolving differences in ways different from the past. There were numerous obstacles and at least three changes of governments, but negotiations were conducted which led to a peace agreement. The building blocks for these efforts took time to put in place, and many hands were involved in this undertaking. IA, in fact, assembled an experienced team for the task. It did not rely merely on one person or on "the personal" but rather on the institutional capacity to support the strengths of particular staff.

Undoubtedly, during a brief period the Sierra Leone peace process provided new opportunities where before few existed. Though seemingly distant now, there was a rare moment–few and far between in the region's history–where people considered ways to bring about profound yet peaceful change. Implemented wisely, the Peace Agreement though imperfect provided an opportunity–largely absent in the past -- for greater people's participation and the creation of credible institutions. The bitterness engendered by the post-coup period should not cloud the fact that perhaps a rare opportunity that represented several steps forward did indeed exist. At the very least, this context deserves mention in the introduction.

The Composition of Interviewees

What is important in a complex peace process such as that in Sierra Leone (and, in particular, the focused and intense undertaking that helped to make possible the outcome reached in the negotiations in the 1995-96 period) is not so much the quantity of those interviewed or hours employed but the appropriate balance to reflect the various points of views.

If one were to draw a conflict map of those involved in the conflict and in its facilitation there were at least 10 clusters of major actors: namely, the Government of Sierra Leone (NPRC I, under Capt. V. Strasser, NPRC II, under Brig. Gen. Bio, and their respective foreign ministers, Dr. Abass Bundu and Melvin Chalobah, and the elected civilian government of President Tejan Kabbah that took office in March 1996); the RUF/SL (RUF under Cpl. Foday Sankoh and the RUF leadership who broke away from Cpl. Sankoh); the Principal Mediator Foreign Minister Amara Essy of the Ivory Coast; the intergovernmental facilitators such as the UN, the OAU, and the Commonwealth; the ICRC and local NGOs or sectors of Sierra Leone society, particularly, those IA had met during its peace mission to Sierra Leone in March 1996.

The evaluation itself states "that because of lack of time, it was not possible to interview all those who have been involved with IA's work in Sierra Leone." However, besides IA staff the majority of those interviewed came mainly from the British Foreign Office Staff (5), the foreign embassies in Abidjan (4), the United Nations (4), the ICRC (3) and the Sierra Leone Government now in Conakry (3). Regarding the RUF, the Evaluation Team reportedly interviewed two of its members in Abidjan: one of them was Mrs. M. Barrie, wife of Dr. M. Barrie -- a leader of the RUF negotiation panel -- but who herself was not an RUF member; the second was a member of the RUF who disagreed with the RUF leadership and who himself was not directly involved with the negotiations.

Sources, Rules of Evidence and Presentation of Findings

The evaluators were aware that "they could be accused of being unaccountable in terms of evidence given that many of the sources spoke on condition that their comments would not be attributed." They therefore set rules such as "a wide and balanced range of sources"; reporting "accurately the views of different sources"; explaining differences taking into account interests of different parties; and a minimum of two reliable sources to confirm any version of events.

However, given the limited range of sources and the sensitive political climate–where it was not even possible to visit the country in question nor meet with all the major dialogue partners–it is probable that interviews could tend to reinforce each other making it difficult to reach a balanced view of events. Not to mention the fact that the highly charged post-coup atmosphere may have influenced the judgments of sources and therefore the findings.

Methodologically, one can also ask how standards were similarly applied. On the one hand, IA furnished the evaluation team with as much documentation and written reports requested by the team. On the other hand, as the case study itself states "the evaluators have been forced to rely upon extensive interview material (which has been carefully typed and archived), much of which is non-attributable, and some of which comes from sources who may arguably have vested interests in undermining IA's reputation." At the very least, IA could be provided with documentation that can be examined with equal rigour, that can be tested on the basis of other evidence and that can therefore stand dispassionate scrutiny.

I International Alert's Role in the Peace Process

In its presentations to and dialogue with the evaluators, IA always maintained that it pursued its programme objectives with commitment and professionalism. Nevertheless, IA recognised at the outset that it had its share of shortcomings in implementing its Sierra Leone programme. Contrary to the general view taken by the Case Study, however, IA believes that it made modest and at times significant contributions to the peace process in Sierra Leone.

A careful reading of the documentation related to the peace process in Sierra Leone demonstrates how significant players on various occasions viewed IA's role and contribution to the peace process–a fact that has been officially recognised and publicly acknowledged. Particularly, in the aftermath of the coup in May 1997, where attempts at re-interpretation of events are possible, it is important to rely on historical documentation so that events are not revisited or re-interpreted to suit a different context.

Based on official communiqués, statements and reports on the Sierra Leone peace process, the following give due cognizance to the fact of IA's role:[1] (1)

"The two heads of delegation expressed their sincere appreciation to the ICRC for providing valuable support for the peace process and in particular, for facilitating the presence of the leader of the RUF/SL and his delegation at the summit by providing them the transportation facilities. *Special recognition was also given to the role of International Alert who have played a great part in bringing about this historic meeting.*"[2]

"Consequent upon the signing of the Peace Agreement in Abidjan today 30th November 1996 by our two Parties and in recognition of the roles played by the International Committee of the Red Cross and International Alert, we hereby express our sincere gratitude to both organisations for their facilitation of the meetings between the Parties and their contribution to the entire peace process."[3]

1 A further references is the Joint Commumuniqué signed on 3 March 1996 at Abidjan, by Lt. Col. Charles M'Bayo on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone and Dr. Mohamed Barrie on behalf of the RUF/SL. Likewise, the following statements are relevant:

"A ces félicitations, j'associe intimement tous ceux qui ont travaillé a nos cotés pour aboutir a ce resultat. Il s'agît des Nations Unies, de l'OAU, du Commonwealth, de International Alert et également de la Croix Rouge dont la garantie morale et la logistique ont servie de passarelle indispensable entre les deux parties." (Discours du President Henri Konan Bedie–Cote d'Ivoire–á l'Occasion de la signature de l'Accord de Paix entre le Gouvernement Sierra Leonais et le RUF, Abidjan, le 30 Novembre 1996.)

"Initially, and as specified in the Yamoussoukro Communiqué, the negotiations commenced within the framework of three joint working groups dealing with the following subjects: the peace accord; encampment and disarmament of combatants; and demobilisation and resettlement of combatants. The joint working groups met in Abidjan under the Chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of Cote d'Ivoire, with representatives of both Parties in attendance. *The representatives of the International Organisations, namely the UN, OAU, Commonwealth and International Alert were present, in their capacity as Facilitators.*" (Annex to the Report of the OAU Secretary General on Sierra Leone to the Sixty Fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, 1-5 July 1996, Yaounde, Cameroon, -- CM/1945 LXIV.)

2 (2) Joint Communiqué signed on 26 March 1996, at Yamoussoukro, by the Chair of the NPRC and Head of State of the Government of Sierra Leone, Brig. Gen. J.M. Bio, and the Leader of the RUF/SL, Cpl. Foday Saybana Sankoh.

3 Statement by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh of the RUF/SL on the Roles of the ICRC and IA in the Peace Process of Sierra Leone read during the official signing of the Peace Agreement at the Presidential Palace in Abidjan, 30 November 1996.

II The Process and the Substance of the Negotiations: IA's Contribution

Whatever differences exist on other questions, it is clear that negotiations took place which led to designated cease-fire periods and the signing of the Peace Agreement on 30 November 1996. A permanent end to the hostilities was declared, and the opportunities existed for reconstructing a war-torn society.

A careful study of available documentation on the process and the substance of the negotiations at Yamoussoukro and Abidjan, the Ivory Coast, in 1996, can show IA's concrete contribution to the process and the agreements.

From Power-Sharing to a Comprehensive Peace

As the talks began early in 1996, the issue of power-sharing was initially a major stumbling block especially since the parties to the conflict took different positions regarding the national elections that had then taken place even whilst the peace talks were underway. The Peace Agreement sought to overcome this hurdle by means of a more comprehensive approach that looked at socio-economic reforms, political and electoral reforms, human rights and humanitarian law, and institutions to ensure people's participation. Admittedly, this approach addressed -- partially though not fully -- the central concerns of both parties regarding the contentious issue of power-sharing.

Nevertheless, the fact is although there remained two outstanding issues after the recess of the talks, the efforts in the third week of May 1996 resulted in a draft agreement that eventually became the core of the peace agreement signed in November 1996. IA somehow contributed to this shift, and the formulation of an acceptable framework.

Based on the OAU Secretary General's Annex to the Report on Sierra Leone to the Council of Ministers (64th Ordinary Session, 1-5 July 1996, Yaounde, Cameroon), the stalemate on the divisive political issues is overcome by a shift to a comprehensive peace approach. Initially, discussions focused on the issue of power-sharing in governance–which was the gist of the one-page proposal the Sierra Leone Government brought to the table in the May 1996 talks -- and which was reflected in the RUF's position on the need to establish a "neutral caretaker government".

As early as the pre-negotiations in February 1996 but more so after the elections took place, it was clear that the question of power-sharing was critical. Thus, when the RUF/SL raised the issue of a "neutral caretaker government" it had the potential of scuttling the talks especially since the new civilian government installed by the February and March 1996 elections had to operate within the premises of the Constitution.

It was for this reason that the IA team at the talks tackled the issue head-on and in a discreet manner–not in plenary. IA wrote a position paper on the issue and argued strongly against the concept of a "neutral caretaker government" and instead focused thinking on the requirements of future political participation. Fortunately, documentation exists and the IA paper is available. This 4-page paper (*"A Question of Strategy: On the Concept of a "Neutral Caretaker Government" and the Requirements of Future Political Participation," final draft 23 May 1996)* was submitted to the relevant members of the negotiating process (the Ivory Coast government–through For. Min. Amara Essy, the Sierra Leone Government–through Shekah Mansaray, the RUF/SL–through Cpl. Foday Sankoh). It recognised the concept as a negotiating position, but examined its political relevance in the current context, considered its viability and questioned its effectiveness as a strategy, concluding with an analysis of the requirements for any sound political formation or social movement to succeed.

A Comprehensive Peace Agreement

Together with this track, IA emphasised possible steps towards negotiations and the elements for a comprehensive peace agreement. It had earlier circulated material to all the parties in February 1996, followed up with a fuller version in the April 1996 Talks in Yamoussoukro, entitled *"Towards A Just and Lasting Peace in Sierra Leone: Taking the Negotiated Path,"* which dealt with a possible framework, and the consideration of elements towards an accord which included the following:

1. *General Principles Governing the Talks: Some Elements Towards a Proposed Agreement*, including cease-fire and its monitoring, humanitarian assistance, and possible ways of breaking deadlocks;
2. *Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Principles*, including internationally-recognised human rights principles, Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol II, as well as the Truth Commission, and possible indemnification to victims of human rights abuses;
3. *Political, Electoral and Constitutional Reforms*, including the setting up of a multi-partisan commission to look into necessary political and electoral reforms,

and to ensure that mechanisms of consultation are set in place, and the setting up of a Commission to Consolidate the Peace Process patterned after the COPAZ built into the El Salvador Peace Agreement and other such similar institutions;

4. *Socio-Economic Reforms*, including selected measures such as the creation of a Forum for Socio-Economic Issues, and the identification of crucial socio-economic issues vital for the reconstruction and development of the country;
5. *Police and Military Reforms*, including the exploration into the coverage and timetable of demobilisation, the integration of the RUF into the communities and civilian life as well as the reduction of the armed forces, and specific military and police reforms;
6. *Mechanisms for Monitoring and Verification.*

Together with this proposal, two other tracks were proposed both included in the modest volume circulated to all the relevant parties, *"Historic Opportunity for Peace in Sierra Leone: On Youth and Zones of Peace, On Negotiations and Contributions to the Peace Process,"* April 1996.

The first dealt with *"Some Proposed Steps to Strengthen the Involvement of Civil Society: Pursuing Peace in Sierra Leone,"* April 1996 dealing with four chapters suggesting people's participation in peacemaking and supporting this effort through capacity-building workshops, involving religious leaders and communities of different faiths in peacemaking, and exploring other windows of opportunity to make the momentum for peace irreversible.

The other dealt with *"Youth for Peace in Sierra Leone: An Accelerated Peace Programme,"* April 1996 that included a 10-point approach to the youth as well as an *"Open Letter to the Youth of Sierra Leone"* written on Easter Sunday, 7 April 1996.

Contribution to the Process and Facilitation

Third-party facilitators normally do not make their contributions–when required–in the plenary sessions; neither are they normally made in the sessions where the main players and the architects of the proceedings are the parties to the conflict themselves.

Good facilitation requires good preparation and experienced people, sensitivity to the requirements of the situation and the needs of the parties and the principal mediators. Facilitators can help provide material, submit thoughtful reflections papers, discuss contentious issues, raise questions humbly and discreetly make suggestions when requested. In the case of Sierra Leone, moreover, it must be

recalled that there were three other co-facilitators of the process as well as a principal mediator, who did have access to the main parties to the conflict.

In the course of facilitation, the task may at times require both advise and facilitation. As much as possible -- as in the case of the material IA prepared -- IA presented them to all the participants in the process. Moreover, given the fact that the other facilitators had the opportunity or the capacity to have access to different parties to the conflict, it was important to employ one's access to either of the parties to generally influence the forward movement of the talks towards a negotiated outcome.However, in the case study, the evaluators often alluded to the perception that IA was more of an adviser to the RUF rather than a facilitator. In the Sierra Leone situation, it is important to consider the total context of the talks as well as the fact that several facilitators had the possibility of working in tandem, able to employ both the traditional "outsiders-neutral" approach and variations of what John Paul Lederach would call the "insiders-partial" approach to facilitation in mediated efforts.[4]

In traditional diplomacy, "outside-neutral" third-parties gain respect necessary for third party peacemaking by reason of their impartiality, lack of involvement in the conflict and willingness to help. Literature on mediation and facilitation in Central America, East Africa and Southeast Asia suggests the equal relevance of the "insiders-partial" approach which makes use of privileged access to one of the conflict parties, having previously earned the party's trust and confidence.This can be a valuable asset for a third-party team, particularly, in the context of several facilitators and in the ability of the whole team to work together , in a way which generates trust, which makes the insiders-partial approach useful in the areas of conflict cited.

IA took its task seriously, and prepared well. During this entire period of pre-negotiations and formal negotiations, IA regularly had three people at the site of the talks and at times five, and counted on staff made available for the discussions. IA likewise prepared material which were regularly submitted to all

[4] Confer John Paul Lederach's *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* published by the United Nations University in Tokyo, 1995, and *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* published by the Syracuse University Press in 1995. Confer also Lederach's article on process and participants in *War and Peacemaking*, edited by Ed Garcia in 1994. Likewise, see the valuable experiences of others peacemakers in different regions cited in *Pilgrim Voices: Citizens as Peacemakers*, edited by Ed Garcia in 1994. In particular, the section on third party mediation led by Hizkias Assefa, Mari Fitzduff and Vasu Gounden.

the parties, especially to the principal mediator for circulation to the parties engaged in the negotiations.[5]

In particular, as early as February 1996, the IA delegation to the talks had provided a set of Peace Accords, Examples of Cease-fire and Confidence-Building Measures, Material on Human Rights and Truth Commissions which were submitted to the principal mediator, the Cote d'Ivoire Foreign Minister, and to the two delegations at the pre-negotiations in Abidjan, the NPRC, the Government of Sierra Leone, and the RUF/SL delegations.[6]

Finally, as mentioned earlier, IA submitted to the negotiating panels as well as to the principal mediator the text: *"Towards a Just and Lasting Peace in Sierra Leone: Taking the Negotiated Path" (April 1996)* which brings together ideas on possible steps towards negotiations as well as a consideration of elements towards an accord. If one compares this text with the final draft of the agreement (especially the reader-friendly version of the Peace Accord which is re-arranged according to themes together with headings and a glossary of terms), any serious

[5] During the course of the negotiations, IA produced public reports such as "Historic Opportunity for Peace in Sierra Leone," April 1996; "Paths to Peace in Sierra Leone: Breaking Ground and Advancing the Process," April 1996; "Sierra Leone Peace Talks: Reports and Reflections," June 1996; "A Time of Hope and Transformation: Sierra Leone Peace Process: Reports and Reflections," compiled by December 1996 and published in February 1997. It would be worthwhile to compare the accuracy and the in-depth coverage of these reports with those of the UN, the Commonwealth, the OAU, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF.

[6] During the IA visit to Sierra Leone from 20-27 March 1996, the Peace Accord compilation was handed over to the then Head of State, Brig. Gen. Bio, the President-in-Waiting President Tejan Kabbah, the Vice-President Demby, the President's personal delegate to the talks, Dr. S.S. Banya who was likewise briefed by IA before he went to Yamoussoukro, and members of civil society such as Fr. Brian Starker, then member of the Committee for National Reconciliation and the Catholic Relief Agency (Caritas), members of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, especially its Peace Committee, headed by Rev. D.H. Caulker and Hassan Bangura, secretary, and members of the National Coordinating Committee for Peace such as Victor Reider, then its secretary general, Mbum Kabo, president of the teachers' union, Daisy Bona, a member of the journalists' association and the women's group.

"A Compilation of Peace Accords, Cease-fires and Confidence-Building Measures, Material on Human Rights and Truth Commissions, and Related Issues," was also submitted which was finished with the assistance of Ms. Caroline Foster and Angel Acuna in April 1996.

Likewise, based on previous work done by Patricia Weiss Fagen, at UNRISD and PSIS in 1995, entitled, *"After the Conflict: A Review of Selected Sources on Rebuilding War-Torn Societies,"* IA submitted materials and documents mentioned in its six-page survey, *"International Resource Material on Rebuilding War-Torn Societies: A Survey,"* updated April 1996.

researcher will be able to identify how IA's contributions have been incorporated into the final text of the agreement.[7]

III The Promotion of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law: IA's Position

Since the founding of IA and inspired by its late Secretary General, Martin Ennals, who for more than a decade had served as Amnesty International's Secretary General, IA has established a track record on the promotion and protection of human rights and humanitarian law principles. To provide some concrete examples from IA's experience: at the international conference on conflict resolution in the Philippines, for example, IA helped to explore ways to ensure the compliance by combatants from both the military and revolutionary forces with international standards on human rights and humanitarian law, especially Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol II.[8] In discussions held with the Armed Forces in the Philippines and the National Democratic Front compliance with these standards were given priority. Likewise, Dr. Eduardo Marino (now convenor of the Colombia country campaign against landmines and an NGO delegate to the recently-concluded landmines meet in Oslo) was commissioned by IA to discuss compliance with these standards in Sri Lanka.

In the case of Sierra Leone, IA through Prof. Ed Garcia held informal talks with Amnesty International, in particular, a member of its International Executive

[7] Two other documents must be considered to see how IA perhaps made its contribution to the process of the negotiations:

1. The text of the outline prepared by Special Envoy Ed Garcia in his address at the final press conference before the recess to the talks in Abidjan, 28 May 1996.
2. The text of a Note submitted to the parties entitled, *"Negotiations and Positive Outcomes: Reflections on the Current Round of Talks between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone,"* 22 May 1996, while talks where in progress spelling out what negotiations cannot do and what negotiations can encourage. A fuller version of this was later published on pp. 122-124, *"A Time of Hope and Transformation."*

As to the process of the talks and the actual procedures, it must be said that at times the inability to agree on set procedures and clearly identify division of roles among the facilitators hindered rather than helped the process. It was in the midst of these deliberations, that two other brief papers were produced and likewise circulated: *"Suggested Ways Forward for the International Community to Contribute More Effectively to the Facilitation of Talks between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the RUF/SL,"* 21 May 1996 and *"Ground Rules for Negotiations.*

[8] Confer, *"Waging Peace in the Philippines, Proceedings of the 1988 International Conference on Conflict Resolution,"* co-edited by Ed Garcia, published by International Alert and the Ateneo Center for Social Policy, 1989. A text entitled, *"Towards a Code of Combat Conduct: Minimum Combatant Duties - Minimum People's Rights"* was moreover drafted and incoporated in this volume.

Committee and the Africa Programme Researcher responsible for Sierra Leone,Tessa Kordeczka. In the letter of AI's Ms. Kordeczka of 29 February 1996, she detailed AI's concerns as well as a number of recommendations on possible measures to improve the human rights situation in the country.

The AI reports, in particular, "Sierra Leone: Human Rights Abuses in a War Against Civilians," 13 September 1995, (it must be noted that a companion report on Liberia was also made available entitled, "Liberia: A New Peace Agreement - an opportunity to introduce human rights protection," 20 September 1995), were distributed to members of the RUF/SL delegation. Moreover, the importance of human rights standards, and the moral responsibility of the political leadership in the actions of their militants and combatants were discussed. In fact, the RUF leadership conveyed an invitation for AI to look into human rights practices in territories reportedly under their control.

Likewise, discussions on human rights issues were held with senior NPRC military officers and members of the NPRC delegation. The AI Reports as well as other documents were shared with them, including books on the role of the military in democratic transition. In particular, what struck some of the military men then were two slim volumes: "Back to the Barracks: The Role of the Military in Democratic Transition," edited by Ed Garcia, and "The Changing of the Guard: New Defense Policy in South Africa," written by Laurie Nathan of the Center for Conflict Resolution in Capetown, South Africa. Discussions on these themes were held with senior negotiators of the Sierra Leone government as well as with the Head of State, Gen. Bio, during IA's peace mission to the country in March 1996.

In earlier submissions to the negotiating panels in February and March 1996, IA provided material on human rights and Truth Commissions, including studies by Jose Zalaquett of Chile (who had been a member of Chile's *Comission de la Verdad y Reconciliacion*) and by P. B. Hayner, "Fifteen Truth Commissions -- 1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study," 1994. Moreover, discussions were held with the Government of Sierra Leone Minister of Justice, Attorney General Solomon Berewa, regarding the terms of reference for the setting up of a national human rights commission in line with AI's "Proposed Standards for National Human Rights Commissions" (AI:IOR/40/01/93).

The second section in IA's submission to the negotiating panels and the chair of the negotiations in April 1996 dealt with concrete measures on "Human Rights and Humanitarian Law: Some Selected Principles." A careful reading of the Peace Agreement of November 1996, in particular, Articles 19, 20, 21, show how the final document incorporates provisions dealing with human rights, an independent National Human Rights Commission, and international humanitarian law. (A subsequent AI document, "Sierra Leone: Towards A Future Founded on Human Rights," 25 September 1996/AFR51/05/96 in fact recommended that a human rights verification commission to monitor adherence to human rights standards be

set up even in the interim period, which should include the participation of local as well as international human rights observers and organisations. The importance of immediately setting up verification and monitoring had been argued by IA during a meeting between the two negotiating panels and facilitators at the Foreign Ministry in Abidjan on 1 December 1996, in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Abidjan Accord.)

Moreover, in the third to the last paragraph of page two of AI's Tessa Kordeczka's letter of 29 February 1996, it is recommended that "any peace agreement should place together all the human rights provisions in that agreement, summarized in a separate chapter, written clearly and fully understood." This was a critical injunction. Striving to stress the importance of the human rights provisions, IA argued for a draft text that was re-organised with headings so that the articles on human rights and humanitarian law could be highlighted and made clear to all parties to the conflict and especially accessible to the people of Sierra Leone, and thus more effectively enforced.

The peace agreement as it stood both in May and November 1996 was not reader-friendly. It did not have any sub-headings. Its provisions were not organised logically according to themes. Because of the haste in organising the signing ceremonies, IA's repeated request to work out a concordance, re-arrange the provisions with headings never materialized. Nevertheless, such a version exists and is available.

IV Conflict Resolution Work Objectives

Communication is not an end, it is merely a means. Improved communications represents a path to create the space for dialogue to take place. In so doing, the underlying causes of the conflict can eventually be addressed by the appropriate parties; the political struggles can be removed from the terrain of arms and if possible resumed in the venues of peaceful political debate, parliamentary contests, or mass mobilization where people are involved without fear and without the threat of the use of force. In some cases, this is not possible. IA's analysis was that in Sierra Leone in 1995/96 an opportunity existed for transforming the situation into one that could be less violent so that change could take place–if it must–in a manner different from that in the past.[9]

It was in IA's view that the possibility existed–at the time the negotiations took place–for the conflictive relations to be transformed into one that was less

[9] A word on IA's analytical framework. IA's understanding and analysis of the Sierra Leone situation, culled from numerous discussions within and outside IA, readings and reflections, is reflected in the *"Brief Background to War and Peace in Sierra Leone" (A Time of Hope and Transformation*, pp. 130-133).

destructive. It was IA's belief that the parties to the conflict could eventually work towards and engage themselves in peaceful political efforts to transform the structures of society. In sum, in Sierra Leone there was a chance–if certain conditions were met– to bring about profound social change (taking into account the political programmes of the different conflictants) without having to resort to arms.

In Sierra Leone, IA believed that it could make a modest contribution in advancing the peace by helping to create safe spaces for dialogue. First, so that those responsible for the human disaster can begin to put an immediate end to the killings that resulted in countless deaths and the displacement of practically one half of the population. Second, so that the guns could be stilled to enable humanitarian assistance to take place. Third, so that an agenda can be identified to address the underlying causes of the conflict that had raged in the country even in so-called times of peace under nearly two decades of one party rule and repressive military regimes. Fourth, so that the institutions can be built that would ensure that agreements reached can be enforced and the gains of the accord can be sustained. In brief, the negotiations were merely a first step in what admittedly was a long journey.

As IA had shared during the ceremonies marking the signing of the Accord: "Now the harder part begins: the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, the rebuilding of the war-torn economy, the reconciliation in society and the healing of the deep divisions caused by this war. The task therefore is to transform the situation so that it becomes less violent, the relations less conflictive, and the structures less unjust to construct a sustainable peace."[10]

V IA's Programme in Sierra Leone

1. Initial Engagement

IA's perspective on the Sierra Leone peace process was primarily shaped and guided by the UN Secretary General's "Agenda for Peace" in relation to Chapter 8 of the UN Charter which encourages regional solutions to regional problems. IA saw its role as contributing to the peace process while helping to enhance the capacity of the OAU and its sub-regional partners.

IA took early action (as reported in *"A Time of Hope and Transformation,"* pp. 14-15), by consulting with the Cote d'Ivoire's Foreign Minister in 1994 while he was still President of the United Nations General Assembly, consulting with the

[10] IA Remarks on the Occasion of the Signing of the Peace Agreement, 30 November 1996 in *"A Time of Hope and Transformation,"* pp. 48-51. Moreover, confer *"General Reflections on Peace Agreements,"* pp. 122-123.

OAU Secretary-General whom IA visited in Addis Ababa and who visited IA offices in London in 1995 to discuss possible collaboration, consulting with the NPRC Government in Freetown in January 1995 and subsequent contacts at the Sierra Leone Embassy in London.

Through discreet initiatives, the Cote d'Ivoire decided to host future mediation talks in Abidjan, after a tacit understanding had been reached with the RUF/SL leadership through the facilitation of IA. H.E. Amara Essy as principal mediator worked closely with the OAU Secretary General and the Sierra Leone Foreign Minister, Dr. Abass Bundu. A meeting in London between IA and Dr. Bundu in May 1995 set out possible approaches for a regional initiative to be created.

Likewise, meetings were held with Dr. Salim A. Salim, OAU Secretary General, and an understanding reached for IA to seek contact with the RUF to convince its leadership of the wisdom of working closely with the international community to reach a negotiated settlement. Between July to December 1995, IA managed with the consent and the assistance of the Cote d'Ivoire government to assemble an "External Delegation" team of the RUF in the Cote d'Ivoire with the objective of meeting with the OAU in Addis Ababa. Because of the practical difficulties encountered on the ground, the OAU decided to meet the RUF in Abidjan instead and sent the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, Dr. Daniel Antonio, to meet with the delegation in December 1995.

A multi-track approach, especially involving significant sectors of society had been contemplated and the Peace Mission to Sierra Leone in March 1996 had made initial contacts with local peace groups and Churches. However, the mission believed that the concrete conditions on the ground were then not favourable. It was felt that IA could be more effective if it focused its efforts and deployed its limited resources on helping to facilitate the negotiations knowing that other NGOs were involved in strengthening local capacities.

2. *The Ethical Dilemma, and the Issues of Legitimacy and "Just Cause"*

The precise *ethical dilemma* in conflict resolution work is this: since the majority of the victims of today's internal armed conflicts are civilian casualties -- mostly, children, women and the elderly, how does one take effective steps to save lives and prevent further atrocities? Put differently, how does one create conditions so that those associated with abhorrent regimes or those guilty of human rights violations can behave differently? How to undertake this task without condoning their atrocious behaviour?

Today's wars -- including those which claim to redress legitimate grievances or those which claim to advance social and political causes on behalf of peoples -- often result in atrocities affecting vulnerable victims. It is on behalf of these victims that IA's peace initiatives are precisely taken. The aim is to assist in a process which will put a stop to the atrocious behaviour on the ground by forces

from both sides so that the underlying issues of the conflict can be addressed in a less violent manner thus creating safe spaces for civilians and enabling citizens' to participate. To do so, conflict resolution work at times demands being involved with parties to the conflict charged with serious breaches of human rights or involvement in atrocities. The practical dilemma is: how to create the conditions that would change the abhorrent behaviour of the parties without condoning their actions? how to engage parties and people involved in war-situations to take responsibility for their actions so that the situation can be improved for the benefit of the vulnerable victims of war?

Making contact with people who carry responsibility for the suffering of others so that their behaviour can be influenced is a difficult undertaking, since it implies recognising them as potential dialogue partners. Helping facilitate processes where the conflictants can see alternative ways of redressing their grievances without their resorting to war-related actions that often produce atrocities is moreover a necessary undertaking, since a complex and viable process needs to be established. These efforts are undertaken to ensure that the relevant parties are recognised, and that these parties in turn recognise and assume responsibilities for their actions. Engaging parties in conflict resolution work is undertaken to ensure that moral responsibility is assumed, and action taken. To recognise who will assume responsibility is the *raison d'etre* of this undertaking, not to legitimise the parties nor their causes.

Moreover, in the period when the negotiations were considered in Sierra Leone both the NPRC which had come to power by means of a coup d'etat in April 1992 and the RUF/SL which stood accused of serious human rights violations were forces whose political legitimacy could definitely be questioned. Nevertheless, the humanitarian concerns in the country in the mid-nineties were both undeniable and urgent: the loss of countless lives, the displacement of nearly half the population. The damage to the country's future and economy was overwhelming. The difficult question was how to avert further human suffering. Another was how to recognise the accountability of those whose responsibilities for these sufferings were undeniable. To engage them in dialogue did not mean condoning their actions. It meant creating conditions so that responsibility is acknowledged, making possible effective action to stop the atrocities of the intractable war. To bring this situation about while engaging those whose legitimacy was questionable was admittedly a difficult undertaking. These were then the questions confronted by those committed to bring about peace while working with forces engaged in the ways of war.[11]

[11] The reflections of the experienced Quaker mediator, Adam Curle, is relevant to these discussions, in particular, his insights into his mediation efforts in Nigeria. Confer *Tools for Transformation* published by Hawthorn Press in 1990, *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence* published by Jon Carpenter in 1995, and *In the Middle: Non-Official*

IA does not espouse the justness of the cause of one or other of the parties to the conflict. It works towards the creation of a framework and a process where the parties to the conflict and partners in the peace process can together help address the underlying causes of the conflict in safe spaces for dialogue. As a friend of the peace process, this is a first step: enabling people to talk to address the problems that more often than not claim civilians as their first casualties.

3. The Promotion of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Principles in Conflict Resolution Work

A question raised in sections of the Report deals with the potential contradiction between human rights values and conflict resolution work. Precisely because IA was founded essentially by people from the human rights community who saw a gap in human rights protection in situations of internal armed conflicts, it is important to discuss this critical issue. Moreover, based on a decade's experience, IA can share its views on how conflict resolution work can promote and protect human rights and humanitarian law principles in times of war and peace.

Historically, the traditional functions of cataloguing or denouncing human rights violations, and campaigning against parties associated with these abuses are the task of conventional human rights organisations. In that sense, IA is not a conventional human rights organisation.

However, at the heart of conflict resolution work is the preservation of lives; and, the right to life is most fundamental to human rights. To ensure that people are further protected, sound conflict resolution work demands that combatants are likewise enjoined to observe minimum standards of human rights and humanitarian law principles in times of conflict -- Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol II. In that sense, IA is part of the human rights community without strictly being a conventional human rights organisation. (A few examples of IA efforts to advance adherence to internationally-recognised human rights and humanitarian law standards are previous work in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Colombia.)

In the case of Sierra Leone, gross human rights violations were perpetrated by both sides even as the pre-negotiations took place in late 1995 and early 1996. The first requirement then was to help stop the killings, to avoid escalation of the violence. The cease-fires agreed upon in the February 1996 Communiqués and reaffirmed in the March and April 1996 Communiqués were steps in this direction. The fact that the parties to the conflict reneged on their commitments to the final peace agreement resulting in renewed violations testify to the lack of will, the

Mediation in Violent Situations, 1986. See also the related articles of Adam Curle, *"New Challenges for Peacemaking,"* and Hizkias Assefa, *"Confessions of a Peacemaker," in Pilgrim Voices: Citizens as Peacemakers.*

inadequacy of monitoring mechanisms, and the inability of all engaged parties to ensure sustained implementation of what admittedly was a limited instrument. Nevertheless, the validity of this human rights perspective must be recognised.

VI IA's Programme: A Critical Analysis

1. The Hostages' Episode and the Principle of Consent

In his mission to Freetown in January 1995, the Special Envoy Addai Sebo held discussions with the Foreign Minister Abass Bundu and one of the NPRC leaders Gen. J.Maada Bio. On both those meetings the Special Envoy explained the mandate of IA and provided them with documentation. They then encouraged the Special Envoy to proceed with his mission of gaining contact with the RUF leadership. What was not then defined was the precise time and place, when and where he actually was to enter the territory. This factor could be examined as to how it led to the misunderstandings and charges of "the violation of sovereignty" in mid-1995.

If formal consent had not been given, why did the Sierra Leone government expect the Special Envoy in Freetown to brief them after he had returned from the trek related to the hostage release? The Special Envoy had intended to proceed to Freetown after the handing-over ceremony but was advised not to for security reasons among others by one of the ICRC representatives. Later in May 1995, when the Special Envoy offered to come to Freetown, Dr. Bundu instead proposed to come to London to have two meetings to explore possible approaches in the proposed negotiations.

2. The Release of the Hostages

At the outset, IA consulted ICRC and made contact with its regional office in Abidjan. Since IA recognised the ICRC's mandate, arrangements were likewise made for the ICRC to receive the hostages at a designated place. The safety and security of the hostages were of paramount importance. Thus, IA ensured not only that medical assistance was available for the hostages (a medical doctor was part of the undertaking) but that the ICRC was an integral part of the arrangements that would ensure their security and safe return.

In this context, if there indeed was a previous plan to release the hostages to the ICRC, it is important to establish whether such a pre-arranged plan existed and documentation made available. The reported press release wherein "the RUF had mandated the ICRC on 31 January 1995 to act as a mediator" can be produced and verified with the former NPRC leaders and the relevant RUF people involved. This would be a helpful effort to clear the air once and for all regarding this contentious episode.

3. Facilitating Pre-Negotiations between RUF, IGOs and Government

IA contributed and helped to facilitate these contacts which led to pre-negotiations. Obviously, it would be incorrect to state that it was IA which was responsible for bringing the RUF to the negotiating table. IA contributed its share and helped to build lines of communication. It could have built up better links with the government and the other IGOs. As the episode where IA Trustee Lord Judd was refused a visa to enter Sierra Leone suggests, however, it was not for want of trying that there were at times obstacles to this relationship. In as far as the UN was concerned, there may have been a clash of institutional cultures as well a personalities.[12]

4. Negotiations

In the area of negotiations, ample documentation exists to show IA's reflections and recommendations during the peace talks. For instance, one can confer IA's Report, *"A Time of Hope and Transformation,"* and in particular, *"Towards a Just and Lasting Peace in Sierra Leone: Taking the Negotiated Path"* -- detailing proposals for the talks in terms of a proposed substantive agenda, pp. 118-21, as well reflecting on the context in *"Now the Harder Part Begins"*, pp. 48-51.[13]

On the particular issue of moral guarantor, clarification is essential: In a plenary session during the May 1996 talks, the UNSG Special Representative stated that the UN would not sign the peace agreement if IA signed as a moral guarantor. IA Special Envoy Ed Garcia responded on the floor that if IA's signing would be an obstacle or would delay the signing of any agreement then IA would not sign as a moral guarantor. It was IA which offered not to sign so as to overcome what in fact was a minor issue in relation to the importance of a substantive agreement and its implementation.[14]

[12] There was also the "instructions" emanating from within UN authorities which contributed to the problem. In a letter dated 26 November 1996, the former UN under-secretary-general for Political Affairs Mr. Marrack Goulding wrote to IA Secretary General Kumar Rupesinghe: "This reply has been delayed as a result of the fruitless search for "the instructions" to which you refer in your letter. My own recollection, as I have mentioned previously to yourself and Lord Judd, is that I did send such a message, though referring to Sierra Leone only. But we can find no trace of it here, so I conclude that it must have been transmitted by telephone. I confirm that my earlier worries have been allayed and am happy to put that incident behind us. My colleagues and I look forward to working with you and International Alert in the future.

[13] Likewise, the following provide an insight into preparatory material put together by IA for the talks: *"A Compilation of Peace Accords, Material on Cease-fires and Confidence-Building Measures, Material on Human Rights and Truth Commissions, and other related issues,"* pp. 87-90, and documentation on international resource material on rebuilding war-torn societies, pp. 91-98.

[14] In this regard, verification can be provided by members of both Negotiating Panels then present at the cited particular session at Abidjan in May 1996, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, the OAU representative Adwoa Coleman, and the Ivory Coast Officials present during the plenary session where the exchange took place.

5. Post-Negotiations

In the letter of IA Secretary General Kumar Rupesinghe to H.E. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 11 February 1997, observations were made to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the peace agreement. A more comprehensive approach dealing in a parallel manner with other areas of the agreement such as the political, socio-economic, and human rights was suggested as a complementary way to overcome difficulties in enforcing certain aspects of the accord, in particular, demobilisation and disarmament.

Likewise, in this post-negotiations period, it is important to recount the fact that the UN Secretary General requested IA Trustee Lord Judd to use IA's good offices to persuade Cpl. Foday Sankoh to cooperate with the UN and meet a UN military assessment team. On the strength of this request, Dr. Addai Sebo was sent to the sub-region on 13 March 1997, upon consultation with H.E. Amara Essy, with a limited brief to persuade Cpl. Sankoh to co-operate with the UN and its military assessment team. The timing of this visit was such that while Cpl. Sankoh was already under house arrest in Nigeria–unknown to IA -- efforts were underway involving an RUF/SL leadership struggle.

In the charged atmosphere prevailing in Abidjan then, this led to misperceptions regarding IA's disengagement from the Sierra Leone process. Responding favourably to the UN Secretary General's request for assistance in turn was interpreted in a negative fashion. Ironically, this episode perhaps once more illustrates the countless challenges that had to be confronted in IA's Sierra Leone programme.

15 October 1997