

Patterns of Peacebuilding:

Part I: Conflict Types and the Demands for Peacebuilding

It is possible to identify three general types of conflict from the cases analyzed in this study. The first is the post-colonial conflict which has a variety of specific characteristics and problems which are uniquely associated with the process of decolonization and the transition or attempted transition to independent administration. The second type of conflict can be referred to as post-Cold War conflicts which find its origins and peculiarities in the end of the bi-polar order and the retrenchment of the superpowers' respective spheres of interest. The third and final type of conflict which can be identified from this study is the independent conflict which does not find its origins and characteristics in systemic or international causes, but rather is focused inwards and occurs in a predominantly national, unilateral manner.

It should be noted that the three typologies are not mutually exclusive. Some conflicts reflect characteristics of two of the types. Similarly, not all conflicts of one type will necessarily display all the characteristics that are associated with that type. The conflict in Angola, for example, has at times displayed various characteristics which suggest that it has both post-colonial and post-Cold War origins.

It is also important to recognize that the typologies and patterns of peacebuilding which are developed below arise from a relatively small sample of case-studies. The conclusions which emerge should therefore be considered as preliminary ones which suggest areas appropriate for further analysis.

Type I: Post-Colonial Conflicts:

The origins of post-Colonial conflicts lie in the decolonization process which occurred predominantly during the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. During this time, the main colonial powers, under pressure from the non-aligned movement and due to "imperial overstretch" sought to reduce their overseas commitments. This led to a series of former colonies being granted independence quite rapidly, and without sufficient training or domestic capacity to assume full responsibility for the administration of a new state. The problems of this rapid changeover in governance were compounded by the presence of significant development challenges facing these new states. Similarly, unfamiliar European administration structures were applied to people who were more accustomed to alternative, traditional administration mechanisms. In terms of this study the conflicts which fit into this category are Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia, and Cambodia.

In general these conflicts reflect certain characteristics. They are governed primarily by hardline military regimes which rely on force to keep order and ensure respect for the authority of the government. This then creates an environment in which there tends to be a high incidence of human rights abuse. The government structure is predominantly focused on the maintenance of its power base through force and this leads to neglect of other government ministries resulting in a low government capacity and low levels of economic development. These post-colonial conflicts also tend to stem from the power-seeking motivations of the government and opposition leaders. In general political motivations such as social justice or