

Panel One: Instruments of reconciliation/retribution/peacebuilding

Kenneth Bush, Research Fellow, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University

Ronald Slye, Professor, Seattle University School of Law

The first panel continued from Madam Justice Arbour's comments and explored the different instruments used in peacebuilding activities as well as the selected application of truth and reconciliation commissions, drawing primarily from the South African experience.

Dr. Kenneth Bush provided an overview of the different instruments used by the international community in his presentation. Bush argued that there has been too much emphasis on the various instruments of peacebuilding which have been employed, and too little attention on other instruments not commonly associated with peacebuilding. These other instruments may actually contribute more to the establishment of a sustainable peaceful society. He raised the importance of asking the question: how do we determine if peacebuilding instruments worked. Part of the problem in addressing this question, in Bush's view, has been that the military instruments have tended to drown out the development agencies in determining the response to civil conflicts. Partly this is because these instruments are readily available, but the readily available instruments are not necessarily the most appropriate instruments. At times the instruments of peacebuilding may undermine the peace.

He noted the need to combine our instruments more effectively than we have done in the past.

Bush spent some time reviewing the concept of peacebuilding, defining it as an attempt "to foster and support sustainable structures and processes which strengthen the prospects for peaceful coexistence and decrease the likelihood of the outbreak, recurrence, or continuation of violent conflict." Peacebuilding involves both the deconstruction of violence and the reconstruction of a culture of peace. He continuously stressed the need to focus on impacts and outcomes instead of