

PEACE-BUILDING:

Breaking the Cycle of Violence and Preventing Violent Conflict

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Banda Aceh, Indonesia

August 8, 2016

Aceh has come a long way in the nearly twenty years that I have been involved. I visited Stockholm to provide negotiations training to the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in 1998. As part of Martti Ahtisaari mediation efforts, I helped establish a civil society task force linked to official negotiations. I visited Aceh in 2001 and was chased out of town by the military police (Kopassus). In public remarks, I encouraged civil society to demand peace from the Government of Indonesia GOI and GAM. Suraiya IT was my partner from the beginning. I am pleased to accept her invitation to speak at the Islamic State University of Banda Aceh today.

My last visit to Aceh was just one year ago. Columbia University organized training for Acehnese scholars and civil society on conflict resolution. We also held seminars for ex-combatants. Columbia was not only sharing information. Our team was also listening so we could adapt our curriculum to enhance local efforts at peace-building.

What is meant by the term “peace-building”?

Peace-building is a multifaceted term that addresses the needs of society emerging from deadly conflict. It encompasses the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, as well as security sector reform and economic development. The legacy of human rights abuses can be addressed through a truth and reconciliation process or a dialogue about historical events. Peace-building helps make citizens into stakeholders. It invests them in sustainable peace. In this era of radicalization, peace-building can also be a tool for de-radicalization and preventing violent extremism.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

Signing a peace agreement occurs on a specific date. However, peace-building is a process that requires a sustained commitment from parties in conflict and assistance from the international community. A peace agreement can end the war, but sustainable requires a plan for disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating ex-combatants. This is called DDR.

DDR seeks to remove weapons from the hands of combatants, take combatants out of military structures, and help them integrate socially and economically into the society.

- *Disarmament* is the collection and destruction of weapons in the possession of combatants, as well as civilians. It also includes the development of a responsible arms management program that may include sequestering weapons or a buy-back program, whereby ex-combatants receive a financial reward for handing over their weapons.
- *Demobilization* involves the dismantling of the command and control structures, as well as remobilization capacity. In the first phase, ex-combatants are typically grouped in camps to prepare for life outside the armed group.
- *Reintegration* into society works best when the ex-combatant has a job, and the community as a whole benefits from recovery and development. Peace requires incentives. Combatants will weigh the benefits of entering a DDR program to remaining in an armed group.

The “ripeness” theory of conflict resolution is based on the belief that peace can be achieved when combatants grow weary of war. The Aceh Tsunami accelerated conditions for peace. It reminded everyone, GAM and armed forces alike, that environmental catastrophe is out of one’s hands, while man-made problems can be addressed through resolve, creativity, and persistence.

Aceh was fortunate to have mediation by Marri Ahitissari, Finland’s former president and Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Marri’s team designed a DDR strategy based on good baseline data, political analysis, and cultural understanding.

I was involved in the civil society component. From Aceh and other conflicts around the world, we know that DDR works best when directly-affected communities are involved. Transparency is important. DDR participants must have

a voice to discuss what the process means to them, and how DDR should be implemented. Without a sustained commitment in the form of reintegration, there is risk of renewed violence. Stakeholders must be engaged.

Security Sector Reform

Security is the universal requirement for peace. Security sector reform (SSR) is needed when the security sector itself -- the armed forces, police, or intelligence agencies -- is the source of the conflict. SSR seeks to enhance the delivery of effective and efficient security and justice services by security sector institutions that are accountable to the state and its people. Security institutions should operate within a framework of democratic governance, without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law. SSR is part of broader transitional justice plan, which includes good governance and the rule of law.

Transitional Justice

Transitional justice is a process for healing the society. It seeks a balance between holding perpetrators accountable through prosecutions and fostering reconciliation through truth-telling. There is a trade-off between justice, truth, reconciliation, amnesty, memory, reparations, and recognition that can take the form of an apology.

A truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) is a body tasked with discovering and revealing past wrongdoing by a government as well as non-state actors in the hope of resolving conflict left over from the past. It focuses on the past by investigating a pattern of events that took place over a period of time. The TRC engages the affected population, gathering information on their experiences. It is a temporary body, with the aim of producing a final report. TRCs can be set up by the central government, provincial government, parliaments, civil society, or religious institutions.

Historical dialogue is a related tool for conflict resolution. Columbia's Institute for the Study of Human Rights established the Association for Historical Dialogue and Accountability (ADHA). It provides a framework for studying historical events in order to foster dialogue about the past.

Economic Factors

Countries emerging from a period of armed conflict expect a peace dividend. Ex-combatants need a job. Policies and programs can actively promote peace by

building economic relationships, addressing economic causes of conflict, and reducing economic incentives for violence.

Economic justice can help heal wounds from conflict. Members of the society must share equities. Aceh is richly endowed with forests and energy resources. Addressing economic inequality does not mean intensifying the exploitation of natural resources. Quite the contrary. Aceh's natural resources need to be carefully managed so that long-term sustainability is not traded for short-term economic gain.

Corruption has a corrosive effect on efforts to consolidate peace. I am concerned by reports that Indonesian officials own positions in Chinese companies, which are allowed to clear cut forests and develop palm oil plantations. Clear-cutting leaves a hole in the rainforest, which effects biodiversity. It causes a hole in the ozone, which causes global warming and effects humankind. It is criminal when a few benefit to the detriment of society. Your forests are a public resource. They should be treasured and preserved.

Education

Columbia University is in partnership with UIN Al-Raniry, the Islamic State University of Banda Aceh. We have adapted and transferred our "social harmony curriculum," which is a practical, hand-on, experiential course on empathy, active listening, collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution.

We have also sponsored seminars on "Islamic Teachings: Dialogue, Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution." The seminars interpret the social harmony curriculum, drawing on the Qur'an and Hadiths. Acehnese and other Indonesian scholars wrote chapters on topics such as human rights in Islam, women's rights in Islam, democracy in Islam. Their essays were published by UIN Al-Raniry and Columbia University.

There are plans to introduce the curriculum at UIN Al-Raniry as an intensive seminar and as a semester-long course. We have also reached out to other state Islamic universities and are exploring transferring the curriculum to Java and other parts of the country.

Preventing Violent Extremism

I was asked to speak about counter-terrorism. However, I wanted to frame this discussion in the broader context of peace-building. Terrorism is today's greatest threat to human security and development. U.S. and Indonesian officials are working together to prevent violent extremism.

Hard power is the use of military, security and law enforcement measures to prevent deadly violence. Hard power is an appropriate response if there is an urgent security threat. When someone puts on a suicide vest, the authorities are justified to use all necessary measures to stop the bomber from blowing himself/herself up and killing innocent civilians.

Sometimes the bomber is a lone wolf acting on his/her own. Other times they are part of institutionalized violence in the form of extremist networks, such as the Islamic State. There is no reasoning with the Islamic State. It is naïve to think you can have a workshop on democracy or social harmony and train the problem away. The Islamic State has a nihilistic worldview with a distorted and wrong interpretation of Islam that justifies sensational violence such as beheadings and mass rape. Islam is a religion of peace, which has been hijacked by a small minority of extremists to establish a false caliphate, which betrays the Prophet's teachings.

Hard power alone cannot prevent violent extremism. Soft power involves a multifaceted approach encompassing good governance, human rights, economic development, and education. Addressing the root causes of extremism can drain the swamp of support.

Aceh is called the "Veranda of Mecca." In Aceh, Shari'a law is a benign tool for social progress. Aceh's post-war experience is exemplary. Its integration of Islamic values into public life worthy of emulation. Aceh's experience should be studied and exported across Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and worldwide.

With humility, respect, and admiration -- I am pleased to share my views today. I look forward to discussion and your questions.