



International Centre of Excellence for
Conflict and Peace Studies

FROM WARLORDS TO PEACELORDS: Local Leadership Capacity in Peace Processes

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INCORE's vision is of a world with an increased understanding of the causes of conflict; improved methods of resolving conflict without recourse to violent means; and advanced reconciliation processes

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INCORE REPORT

DECEMBER 2004

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INCORE

INCORE (International Conflict Research) is an international centre of excellence for peace and conflict studies. INCORE is a joint project of the United Nations University and the University of Ulster. Combining research, education and capacity-building, INCORE addresses the causes and consequences of conflict in Northern Ireland and in other global conflict zones and promotes conflict resolution strategies and peace-building processes. It aims to influence policy-makers and practitioners who are involved in peace and reconciliation issues while also contributing to academic research in the broad international peace and conflict studies area. INCORE works in partnership with a variety of institutions and organisations at local, national and international levels. Partner organisations include community groups, civil society organisations, peace and conflict-oriented NGOs, think-tanks and academic institutions. INCORE's work is interdisciplinary in nature and is comparative in focus.

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Responsibility for the content and presentation of the work presented here, however, rests with the authors.

Gordon Peake
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SELECTED QUOTATIONS

'...large scale conflict between groups – like conflict between states – requires the deliberate mobilisation efforts of determined political leaders. Without such leadership, members of ethnic, communal or religious groups who find themselves in adverse circumstances – for example profound socio-economic inequality, political oppression and even deep intergroup animosity – do not spontaneously resort to warfare to retain redress. They tend instead to seek out non-violent means for improving their condition and resolving disputes, yet incendiary leaders can readily subvert such efforts and mobilise their followers for violence and hatred'.

Hamburg, D. Axelander, G. & Ballentine K (1999)¹

'You can call me a peacelord, not a warlord. Now I am a man of peace. I am against fighting. But I was a warlord when it was necessary to be a warlord... I fought to liberate Afghanistan from foreign invading forces, from foreign puppet regimes. I fought against the Taliban and their collapse began here, in the north, because of me'.

General Abdul Rashid Dostum²

'The most powerful weapon that the international community has is aid money. Eventually that aid will have to be given to the Afghan chiefs to distribute. It may even have to go towards bribing warlords to turn them into peacelords'.

Dmitry Trenin, Deputy Director of the Moscow Carnegie Centre³

'As we move forward to help Iraqis build a free nation, there are some guidelines that the Coalition is following: first, while our goal is to put functional and political authority in the hands of Iraqis as soon as possible, the Coalition Provisions Authority has the responsibility to fill the vacuum of power in a country that has been under a dictatorship for decades, by asserting temporary authority over the country. The Coalition will do so. It will not tolerate self-appointed 'leaders' '.

Donald Rumsfeld, US Defense Secretary⁴

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

INCORE	International Conflict Research
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDI	National Democratic Institute of International Affairs
OHRA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian assistance (Iraq)
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Kosovo)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNMIK	United Nations Interim administration Mission in Kosovo
UNU	United Nations University

PREFACE

Since this research was first commissioned in 2002, the international landscape has changed very dramatically, not least with the intensification of the ‘war against terror’ and the toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, raising general questions about the leadership capacity in Iraq and specific questions regarding who might eventually become the leader of a ‘new’ Iraq.

This notion of ‘leadership capacity’ has been the subject of intense focus for many international organisations. The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a Washington based international organisation has paid increasing attention towards the development of leadership capacity in transitional societies. Their International Leaders Forum and the Emerging Democracies Forum both focus on the development of political leadership skills of individuals. NDI, however, are not alone in their drive to promote their particular brand of ‘good’ leadership. The World Bank’s Post-Conflict Fund has recently hosted an event on ‘Leadership Capacity Building for Post-Conflict Reconstruction’⁵; USAID’s Office of Democracy and Governance implemented a series of political leadership programs in 2002⁶; and the Project on Justice in Times of Transition, in association with the J.F.K School of Government at Harvard University has been engaging with leaders on issues of conflict and peace building since 1992, through conferences and roundtable discussions. Equally, the United Nations University’s International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA) has, too, focused on such issues. A full list of the international NGO’s and governmental agencies currently engaged in similar work would be too exhaustive to reproduce for the purposes of this report but those that have been cited demonstrate that policy makers seem to place the role of local political leadership very highly, on their respective agendas.

That such a sheer number of organisations are devoting attention to leadership is significant. However, understanding the rationale behind why leadership is considered important seems rather more opaque. Increasing policy attention has not been sufficiently complemented by academic attention and it is against this particular backdrop that our research has taken place.

Leadership is an intangible and elusive concept. While almost everyone will have their own sense of who leaders are and what they do, honing that into a set of ‘off-the-shelf’ features is a perplexing task. The characteristics of leadership are ambiguous, malleable, contingent upon circumstance and potentially employable for multiple intents. In societies beset with conflict, leadership has been used malevolently to split a populace further. At the same time it can be channeled for more noble purposes: as a force for good and a quickening of reconciliation, co-operation and harmony.

This potential to be both placid and volatile makes leadership a highly prized attribute and perhaps explains why ‘appropriate’ local leaders are so keenly sought. Iraq presents a telling example of the importance accorded to leaders, while simultaneously illustrating the difficulties in achieving an aptitude of leadership necessary to assume the burden expected from them.

The extent to which a new Iraqi leadership improves on the old is a significant yardstick by which *Operation Iraqi Freedom* will eventually be judged. Although power and sovereignty had been vested in the US-led occupiers following the toppling of Saddam, there was no shortage of Iraqis clamoring for position as ‘potential’ future leaders. They hailed from a swathe of ethnic, tribal and religious backgrounds that were as diverse as the country itself.

Local elections were held in towns and cities throughout Iraq in the immediate aftermath of the regime; these new leaders assumed the practical deeds of day-to-day administration. In July 2003 an Iraqi Governing Council comprising a diverse range of leaders was appointed. In their titles and portfolios, they mimicked a government. Under an accelerated timetable, authority was transferred to that body in June 2004, which then became known as the interim Iraqi Government (IIG). Many of the members of the Iraqi Governing Council became Ministers in the IIG. The IIG has been responsible for governing Iraq since that June 2004. However, this is only another interim measure until the elections for a National Assembly which are due to take place in January 2005. This election will allow Iraqis to vote for a 275 member Transitional National Authority. Beyond the election, the Assembly should be able to choose the government and to make laws for the country, including a draft constitution which will be put to a public referendum towards the end of 2005. At the time of

going to press, the election has not yet been held though it is likely that the various Shia parties will dominate in the election since the Shias make up about 65% of the Iraqi population.

Whether in their capacity as administrators, or figureheads of a new political order, it is clear that the newly leaders will occupy a central role in the reconstruction of Iraq. Their need is particularly acute in a situation heavily stained with traditions of past leadership, where so many central issues are undecided, and the potential for internal disenchantment, criminality and politically motivated violence to wreck the process is huge. It is no task for the faint-hearted. Iraq's new cadre of leaders operates under a trio of pressures: the need for international approval, their lack of capacity and the demonstrated personal danger of politics as a career.

Iraq's new political classes operate within the structures of a political system defined and overseen by their international occupiers. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) that has filled the power vacuum following the crumbling of the Saddam regime made it clear that 'it would not tolerate self-appointed 'leaders,' and in creating the conditions for handover in June 2004, they had also defined the parameters of how Iraq would be led in the future, thus choking off from office many potential claimants to leadership and their constituencies.⁷ Those CPA-approved leaders ran the risk of being perceived as flunkies, and consequently risked losing legitimacy and provoking popular unrest. Iraq's new leaders also do not have the luxury of time. Subject to the pressure caused by knowing that they are not the sole - or even dominant - source of authority, these leaders have had no settling in period and had to establish their capabilities immediately, often without the funding, equipment, training or personnel necessary to do a credible job. Their short record has been decidedly mixed so far. Although some have assumed the titles, many others lack either the administrative capacity or desire to make an impact. They are also desperately short of the financial resources with which to carry out an effectual reconstruction program. Oil revenues will not reap enough financial gains to empower the new state. It is also personally hazardous. Some of those touted as alleged leaders had their careers quickly cut short by assassins. Given that, already evidenced public disenchantment is scarcely surprising.

Iraq's post-conflict leadership finds it extremely difficult to meet the burden of expectations weighing down upon it. They are prey to something of a classical catch 22 situation. Effective leadership is essential because of the myriad of problems confronting the country but is difficult to achieve for precisely the same reason. That these leaders often seem not to reach the mark is perhaps less a function of their own failings and every bit as much reflection of the multiplicity of demands coupled with inflated public hope placed on them. Their difficulties are a salutary prologue before our consideration of leadership in other states emerging from conflict.

Gordon Peake, our primary research associate for the project, undertook extensive field research in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo, while Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Mari Fitzduff worked alongside him in analyzing and preparing the results. We anticipate that this report will contribute to the debate about local leadership capacity and international intervention in peace processes. We are certain that much more attention needs to be paid by both academics and policy-makers alike in unravelling the potential of a local leader's role, capacity and effect in peace processes, and how this potential is realized or constrained by the influence of international leaders.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The starting point for the research upon which the report is based has been our interest in the phenomenon of political leaders in conflict and peace building. In particular, this report has considered leadership in three countries that have attracted infamy for the protracted nature of their brutal conflicts – Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone. Each country is now considered to have emerged from conflict and to be at formal ‘peace’.

The research sought to explain something of a bitter irony that holds true of many conflicts: why many of the local political leaders who played such a central part in perpetuating conflict remain a public feature in the subsequent peace processes. How does such a transformation from ‘warlord’ to ‘peacelord’ take place? What influences can be attributed to their apparent changes of heart and willingness to engage in processes of reconciliation and renegotiated constitutional arrangements? Is it the influence of constituents or followers? Is it the influence of other local leaders? Or is the true source of pressure more exogenous in nature?

The study aimed to explore how these leaders emerge, how they are sustained and what sparked their change from a seemingly *negative* to a more seemingly *positive* style of leadership. The research showed that while leaders were adroit at dragging their countries and followers into conflict they were not so adept at pulling them out of it. The key force for change was not so much local leadership per se, but instead international leaders and their states and organisations which are ever increasingly becoming a fixed part of the transition process.

The relationship between local and international leadership is fraught with difficulties – for the international community, there is the desire to stabilize a region (for whatever motive); for the local political leaders there is the desire to hold on to the ‘spoils of war’ and the benefits accrued through the perpetuation of conflict. This amounts to something of an oxymoron, given that to create much-needed stability in a region, the international leaders need to work with those very actors that were deemed to be the cause of much of the instability of the past.

As the research shows, a feature of many peace agreements is an international presence. It is seldom that peace agreements are not negotiated and mid-wifed by an international actor, whether a state or international organisation such as the UN. Their weight and consequential influence is so extensive that it affords significant levels of influence over both the process and the local leaders. International leaders can utilise their positions of influence to ‘encourage’ local leaders to accept terms that they might not otherwise do on their own as well as creating mechanisms that reward, sanction and regulate their behaviour. For those who seek to find strategies or the means to effect or change leadership behaviour, the international involvement in pushing forward a peace process affords great potential. Its force can compel ‘negative’ leaders to be infinitely more positive. Clearly, international interests are never exclusively angelic.⁸ However, even so, the intrusion of international behemoths – whether that be the United States, the United Nations, regional organisations of nations, or NGOs – can have positive effects on the behaviours and mannerisms of local leaders.

The study shows that this potential is already being utilised over local leaders but it has yet to be systematized. The three case studies demonstrate that different combinations of carrots and sticks are adopted by the international community towards political leaders. This has yielded three different consequences. In Afghanistan, minimal pressure has been exerted, meaning that leaders continue to behave in as divisive and selfish a manner as before. The international overlords of Kosovo have restricted the powers of local leaders, erecting new political institutions whose powers and responsibilities are tightly tapered. In Sierra Leone, the international community is sanctioning local leaders by creating a special criminal court to prosecute those deemed responsible for crimes during the civil war.

It seems that international leaders at the helm *matter every bit as much* as local leaders: the presence and potential pressure affords a better chance at getting leaders to alter their behaviour than the leaders would ever do on their own. That is not to say that local leaders are not important. They are much more than princelings or satraps in an internationalised order. Although they may not have been the starting motivation in the move toward peace, not least because most leaders are unable and unwilling to transcend the ethnic or national constituencies that they represent, their interest

remains resolutely in their own group. Leaders continue to combine the traits of charm, ruthlessness, and the ability to marshal resources in such a way so that they can preserve their own ascendant position.

The issue of 'motive' is one which holds much resonance for this research. Often held assumptions of the existence of 'transformational' models of leadership – or Mandela like figures – do not always mesh with the reality of violent conflict and the road towards peace. Motives for engaging in peace processes are rarely altruistic, seldom for the greater good of conflict reduction or resolution, and are almost always 'transactional' in nature – a system of give and take with the international community and to a much lesser degree, if at all, with a leader's constituency base.

To summarize, our conclusions therefore are as follows:

1. In looking for 'positive leadership' academics and policy makers may be searching for a chimera and hence will inevitably be disappointed. The reality is, perhaps, that this particular model of leadership rarely exists in this context of violent conflict. That is the reason why a Mandela figure tends to stand out so sharply.
2. In an ever increasingly internationally overseen world, local leaders have actually very little power over grand issues of conflict and peace. Despite innumerable attempts in each of the three case studies, leaders themselves were apparently unable to make progress towards a resolution. Each conflict was punctuated by accords, plans, resolutions, understandings, agreements, ceasefires and yet not one of them was sustainable. The glue that has held them together has been the international interest and pressure to bring the parties to the table. So, although leaders may have played a large part in getting their countries into conflict they are often unable to get their countries out of it. In none of the countries studied did leaders provide the momentum to begin a process; they were either coaxed into settlements, or catapulted along as part of a process over which they have little agency or control. Put simply, too many expectations are put on leaders conjuring up change while nothing in their past experience indicates that they are likely to do so.

3. Local leaders tend to be bereft of both administrative capabilities and administrative capacity. Well versed in the politics of conflict, they are less familiar with the rules of the humdrum practicalities of basic administration. Compounding this, the new administrations of which they are part lack many of the basic building blocks of effective governance. Again, leaders cannot conjure up a new dispensation if their box of tricks is strictly limited.
4. There is, sad to report, little influence that followers have over the actions of their leaders. In large part this is because each of these countries have both unstable histories of democracy as well as a 'distance' between a leader and his followers. Instead there appears to be the glum acceptance by many that they can do little to effect change. To be sure, there may be other case studies in which the international hand is less obvious and the relationship between leaders and followers in terms of the clout that followers actually hold may be different but we are not optimistic about the actual ability of followers to challenge the current orthodoxy, given our research findings.

Consequently, the research findings suggest we should not concentrate exclusively on local leaders as the means to end conflicts and build peace. Instead, we should focus every bit as much on the potential influence of the international leaders and organisations, not least in terms of how to use that potential to effect change and influence local leaders. They have demonstrated their ability to bring about positive change. As one can see, they have done so in Kosovo and Sierra Leone. The question is how their potential can be further harnessed and encouraged. That is an infinitely much more difficult question but we offer a number of possible avenues below.

Some Recommendations

Such is the nebulous nature of this research area, it often provokes more questions than it answers. The relevant literature is somewhat deficient in failing to duly examine the influence of international actors upon local leaders, therefore our recommendations for further research centre upon suggesting further ways of explicating this relationship.

1. Further research should be undertaken into the interplay between local leaders and the international organisations that play a part in conflict resolution and peace building. We have clearly shown that there is some relationship but mapping its exact contours in a greater number of case studies would provide further detail and clarity.
2. International responses towards local leadership has yet to be systematised. All too often international organisations work in a muddled milieu with lack of co-ordination among each other. A detailed audit should be undertaken that will clearly set out approaches, and attitudes among international organisations towards local leaders and the relationships therein.
3. In policy terms, there could be more emphasis and efforts to train a cadre of acceptable and representative leaders in areas that are considered likely for conflict. This should be seen as something of a preventative measure, as opposed to solely accepting the necessity of dealing with the belligerents already in place. Such training should also include technocrats who are vital in the development of appropriate social, economic and governance processes.
4. One feature in many of the post-conflict societies is the return of both an émigré business class and technocrats who left during conflict. These individuals tend to have more of the basic building block skills that are necessary to turn a post-conflict society around, skills that many of the 'big name' leaders in these societies manifestly lack. Efforts should be concentrated upon harnessing this particular cadre of relatively untapped potential.

1. THE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICTED SOCIETIES

1.1 Introduction

The international community is growing more intimately involved in both trying to resolve conflicts and steer those affected societies towards peaceful futures. Outside states and international organisations bring political weight, financial influence and technical capacity that dwarf their local equivalents; this comparative advantage affords them considerable potential to influence the trajectory of events. Some scholars assert that the outcome of a peace agreement is ‘linked to the quality and level of support given by third parties to the peace process, especially during implementation of the agreement.’⁹

The literature on ‘conflict resolution’ and ‘post conflict peacebuilding’ have generated a towering body of research that has examined this international role from a multiplicity of angles. Surprisingly absent, however, has been an examination of their engagement and interplay with local political leaders. This omission is somewhat surprising given that these leaders - often the most recognisable personifications of the conflict themselves – appear crucial to piecing together a durable form of politics and ensuring that the aftermath to one conflict is more than a prelude to another. Local leaders, therefore, bear an important role in determining whether these internationally supported endeavours will be judged as successes or failures. Thus, it is imperative for international actors to have as thorough an understanding of these leaders as possible.

This study builds on previous research conducted by INCORE into leadership and conflict.¹⁰ Specifically, it looks at three cases—Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone—and examines how leaders emerged in each of these societies, traces their role in the transition away from conflict, and assesses the strategies adopted by international actors towards the leaders in question. In doing so it hopes to draw lessons for future instances of co-operation when intervening international organisations co-operate with local leaders as part of peacebuilding efforts, as well as raising possible issues that may come between them.

In each case examined in this study, international actors work with leaders more associated with inflaming conflict than with ending it; some have even garnered the unwelcome alias of 'warlords'. Neither that particular label nor their lack of involvement in peace processes readily inspires confidence about their wish to engage in and their ability to sustain a conflict resolution process. Although these leaders had agreed to ceasefires and initialed accords in the past, their actions (and those of their followers) ran contrary to the conciliatory words spoken at signing ceremonies. Given their past records in failed peace initiatives, it could be regarded as somewhat comic to hear some of these former 'warlords' describe themselves as 'peacelords' and talk in the idioms and language of 'peace'.

A significant international political and military influence appears to be a major factor in propelling this linguistic makeover. The formal end to conflict in each place was, in large part, wrought by international interveners. Subsequent peacebuilding has taken place under a watchful international gaze. On the surface, this international influence appears to have compelled leaders to accept political architectures that it is hard to imagine they would have adopted on their own. Following the US-led ouster of the Taliban in 2001, traditionally cantankerous Afghan leaders were coaxed into trying a more co-operative form of politics. It has been a process overseen by a wide range of international actors, most significantly the United States and The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Leaders from Kosovo's different ethnic traditions share increments of power devolved from a UN transitional administration (UNMIK) that has governed the province since a NATO-led war against the regime of Slobodan Milosevic in 1999. Sierra Leonean leaders built upon an opportunity hewed by a British military intervention in 2001 to end a brutal civil war. It is an effort supported by a large UN peacekeeping operation (UNAMSIL). Leaders also work under threat of prosecution from an internationally sponsored criminal court empowered to investigate offences during the civil war.

Three uniquely calibrated combinations of carrots and sticks have been used over Afghan, Kosovar and Sierra Leonean leaders, yielding three different outcomes. Each poses potential peril for the sustainability of these embryonic political entities. A consequence of the somewhat soft approach taken towards local leaders in

Afghanistan has meant politics remains fragmented and internecine. With the entity's future status still blurry, the sluggish devolution of authority to Kosovar leaders risks retarding political development and extending international administration for longer than may be considered healthy. Meanwhile, the selective prosecution of Sierra Leonean leaders is potentially divisive, and the factors which could jeopardize any prospects of exiting from conflict are the absence of sufficient administrative capacity and the continuance of poor leadership traits that mired the country in the first place.

1.2 Literature Review : Leadership and Conflict, International Influence and Warlords

1.2.1 Leadership and Conflict

The literature on leadership and conflict is surprisingly light. There has been little head-on exploration of the motivations and calculations underpinning leadership decision-making in such circumstances. The literature has also failed to keep pace and acknowledge the ever-increasing role played by politically significant states and international organisations in conflict resolution and peace building. Little attention has been devoted to how their presence impacts on their relationships and connections with local leaders.

Scholars do recognise leadership as a significant factor in stoking trouble. A 'negative' brand of leadership has a combustible capacity to create violent conflict in a deeply divided society as noted by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict

‘...large scale conflict between groups – like conflict between states – requires the deliberate mobilisation efforts of determined political leaders. Without such leadership, members of ethnic, communal or religious groups who find themselves in adverse circumstances – for example profound socio-economic inequality, political oppression and even deep intergroup animosity – do not spontaneously resort to warfare to retain redress. They tend instead to seek out non-violent means for improving their condition and resolving disputes, yet incendiary leaders can readily subvert such efforts and mobilise their followers for violence and hate’.¹¹

Despite (or perhaps because) it is so seemingly obvious, academics have devoted little attention to the role of leadership in conflict. An extensive trawl of leadership literature by INCORE in 2001, for example, revealed that surprisingly little has been

written on the topic. Similarly, slim pickings are to be retrieved from a search through the literature on post conflict reconstruction: ‘...at most political leadership is referred to in scant detail as one of the many variables at play when deciphering why conflicts escalate, de-escalate and transform’.¹² There appears a curious reluctance to address the topic. For leadership author Barbera Kellerman this disinclination is attributed to an implicit assumption espoused by scholars ‘that to lead is to do right, and those outside this narrow band make no such assumption....the divide that we have created between leaders who do good and those who do not will, if not narrowed, constitute a fatal flaw’.¹³ In other words the subject has not been broached because the implications of the relationship between leadership and conflict do not want to be acknowledged.

What literature there is offers useful analytic and practical nuggets, suggesting fertile ground for further research. Often it breaks down common assumptions about leadership and peacemaking. Chiozza and Choi showed there to be little obvious corollary between democratically elected leaders and peacemaking.¹⁴ Indeed, they found that non-elected leaders are slightly more inclined towards finding a peaceful solution whereas their elected equivalents are slightly more likely to opt for a military solution. ‘Good’ leaders are not necessarily elected ones.

A useful dichotomy of leadership was offered by James McGregor Burns. He boxed leaders into two categories: transformational and transactional.¹⁵ The former are leaders able to transcend the confines of their own community and act positively in the interests of a wider community. The latter have a less selfless decision-making calculus. They come to their political choices based upon whether it will reap benefits and achievements for themselves and their followers.

A small number of historical leaders whose individual actions enabled the transition from conflict (or possible conflict) to peace have been dubbed ‘transformational leaders’. Nelson Mandela is often held out as a prime example of this philanthropic band along with Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.¹⁶ Their leadership is recognized as having significantly altered conflict dynamics. Some scholars regard the transformative leader as an essential part of the jigsaw of necessities required to make a peace. The overall transformation of a conflict is sometime said to require a

‘change of character, a change of leadership, a change in the constituency of the leader or adoption of its goals, values or beliefs’.¹⁷

Understandably, the reason why these figures stand out so starkly is because they are so atypical. Few ‘transformational’ leaders could be identified in any of the numerous states afflicted by conflict in the last decade. Perhaps the reason why they have garnered a great deal of attention is because, extending Kellerman’s point, that this is the type of optimal leadership desired/yearned by some leadership researchers. The reality differs however. The modus operandi of many leaders is predicated on more pragmatic concerns of political survival and maximum positioning than altruism. Most leaders, therefore, conform much closer to the ‘transactional’ model than transformational. Decisions are made, and their potential implications weighed, by reflection through a prism of political, organisational, cultural, historical, personal and interactional factors. Understanding their strategies and behaviour – and the logic that underpins it- duly requires thorough knowledge of both current context and the historical circumstances that shaped it.¹⁸

Previous research by INCORE researchers indicates far more transactional attributes than transformational aspirations among leaders in conflict-ridden societies. John Darby and Roger MacGinty suggest that ‘during peace negotiations the primary function of leaders is to deliver their own people’ in a peace process; assisting opponents in the process becomes a secondary condition.²³ Leaders are usually more concerned about cementing their own positions than in any altruistic aspiration. Cathy Gormley-Heenan found that leaders are much less flexible in their core positions than is often imagined or desired. Occasional demonstrations of pragmatic political behavior do not necessarily effect any diminution of core political beliefs, she discovered.¹⁹

1.2.2 International Influence and Warlords

Largely missing from the literature is a comprehensive examination of the relationship between international actors and local leaders. This absence is peculiar given the extent to which international actors are involved in everything from the midwifery of an accord to steering its development. Their involvement has increased exponentially in the last fifteen years to the point where they assume full reins of

governance over an area.²⁰ Despite their influence over (and interplay with) local leaders, the international community has gone undocumented as a prime area of study.

Overall, this dearth of writing and research is not only an academic oversight but one that has profound 'real world' consequences. As Michael Brown has observed.

'Scholars have paid comparatively little attention to the roles played by domestic elites in instigating ethnic and internal conflicts. ...under appreciating the importance of elite decisions and actions hinders conflict management efforts and fails to place blame where blame is due'.²¹

It also leads outside interveners to be manifestly unaware of the calculations, thought processes and decision-making principles of the local leaders that they engage with in the daily course of their intervention.

In the three cases in this study, one word has emerged to connote leadership that traverses the geographic distance between them: warlords. It is almost a cliché to refer to many of the current crop of leaders in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone as warlords. An evocative term, it conjures up a series of cinematic images of leadership in societies beset by protracted, violent conflict. With positions of power and authority organised around ethnic, tribal, sectional and clan lines, it is a type of leadership that emerges when the structure, power and authority either lacks legitimacy or has shriveled up altogether. Instead, emerges a personality-based and charismatic form of leadership.

The literature characterises warlords as leaders who control and police specific areas of territory. Their political ascendance is inextricably linked to military power and the ability to marshal followers. Through either trade in resources or the levying of taxes and duties in areas under their 'control', they can maintain a support base and exercise degrees of power which exceeds that of the country's central government.²² It is an autocratic one with little formal consultation with followers.²³

As a description, the term carries negative connotations. A representative opinion comes from John MacKinley, who describes warlords as 'a wholly negative phenomenon. There is no ...mitigating Robin Hood tendency which might show him to be a redresser of global inequality'.²⁴ Others argue that they should not be painted

as stage villains with which one can do little but rather accepted as distinct and legitimate political leaders in their own right amidst states that, through war and conflict have little or no functioning political institutions.²⁵ The very manner in which they conduct politics is a telling sign of the intractable and rough political cultures in which the warlords must operate and survive and the international interveners must navigate. Understanding ‘warlord leadership’ is another issue that has ‘real world consequences’. In anomic, institutionally bereft states and entities – those that tend to be most prone to conflict - the influence of leadership and its capacity to effect political change is increased significantly.²⁶ Consequently, there is a clear need for a detailed understanding of the leadership techniques and behaviors of these new leaders.

Ironically, the leaders who are often blamed for inflaming conflict have had a central role in ‘keeping the peace’. Helping usher this process along is often a large international presence, and in the current political climate a nuanced understanding of the motivations and strategies of the local leaders in question is critical. Sadly, and in no way reflecting the attention lavished upon it in the literature, the vast majority of leaders do not necessarily act out of benign benevolence. Leadership decisions are, for the most part, arrived at after a process of calculating what is most advantageous for the leader and his group. The brief example of Iraq also indicated the pressures that leaders face in a post-conflict environment. Navigating leadership amidst conflict and its aftermath emerges as no easy task.

1.3 A Note on Methodology

In choosing case studies for further analysis, the project team was aware that many conflict related areas are now considered ‘over-researched’. The conflicts in Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine and South Africa have been well trodden by researchers, both as individual stand-alone case study analyses, and in comparative contexts.²⁷ In this study it was decided to move off the beaten track and consider conflicts that, while perhaps less studied in comparison, are more reflective of conflict dynamics.

Thus in choosing case studies for further analysis, we chose to study Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Sierre Leone as these appeared to be conflicts that were beginning to draw towards a close, and where the changing nature of leadership was an apparent

factor of importance. We felt that a study of these more recent conflicts would prove to be of greater utility, given the changing nature of conflicts and international interventions in the world today.

We were also conscious of the fact that while, of more recent times, researchers have addressed questions of conflict and peace processes using a thematic approach, rather than a case study or regional approach, we were interested in combining both approaches.²⁸ We thus decided to study cases from conflict-ridden areas with a thematic emphasis on their political leadership. Our initial desk-based research looked for countries which displayed the following traits to varying degrees: those with seemingly intractable conflicts which had resulted in near state collapse; those where the leadership had behaved in highly questionable terms during the conflict; and finally those which then still afforded scope for political agreement as a consequence of international administration or interest. In finally choosing Afghanistan, Sierre Leone and Kosovo, we were convinced that we had found a suitable mix of geographical and cultural distinction, and different degrees of international involvement.

Using political autobiography as a main research tool, interviews were conducted with two sets of actors: local political leaders and international administrators. These were conducted in Kosovo (September & October 2002), Afghanistan (November 2002) and Sierra Leone (January 2003). Whilst secondary sourced data would also prove to be invaluable during the course of the research, it was necessary to put the questions of the relationships between leadership and war and peace to the different leaders directly. Such a task is easier said than done. Pinning down political leaders for interviews can be a difficult task in even the most developed context. As an approach, interviewing elites 'requires a great deal of preparation on the part of the interviewer, not to mention confidence in interviewing individuals with a higher status than oneself'²⁹. It is however an inordinately more difficult undertaking in societies recovering from conflict that are bereft of organisational procedure. Interviews cannot be organised using the conventional mechanism of a cover letter detailing the nature of the research and request for an interview, followed by a courtesy follow-up call within the next few days to arrange an interview date. In these cases, the interviewer has often to first make the trip, and then try to gain access to the elites through a

process of luck, persistence, contacts and no small degree of bluster. However, in the end, more than 30 interviews were conducted with political leaders in the three countries. Interviews and discussions were also held with a number of international administrators and officials in each of the case studies examined. A list of these is attached in Appendix I; these interviews form the primary empirical data of the research.

While the aim of this research did not focus on the particular difficulties of engaging elites in discussion, there is a multiplicity of methodological issues that warrant mention. In addition to actually gaining access there arose the issue of keeping the interviewee engaged on the research topic, which was particularly problematic in the cases we studied. Bryman suggests that ‘in qualitative interviewing, ‘rambling’ or going off on tangents is often encouraged—it gives insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important; in quantitative research, it is usually regarded as a nuisance and discouraged’³⁰. To a large extent, the problems we faced in keeping leaders focused on the questions they were asked may have been due to the fact that the leaders were not in the group that one would consider over researched. Certainly, political leaders in Northern Ireland and South Africa, for example, have had ample time and opportunity to reflect upon the defining moments of their political careers in terms of making the shift from war to peace; it is reflection time afforded to them as a result of the multitudes of academic researchers and journalists seeking their time. In the case studies considered here, there was only a limited amount of evidence to support the same degree of reflection. Those interviewed rarely spoke in terms of the larger concepts and ideas of war and peace and their own particular role therein, tending instead to focus on the minutiae of their role in the transition from conflict to peace building processes. This, although initially surprising, was very revealing. What could have been conceived as rambling, deviating from the subject area or even seemingly missing the point of questions, actually uncovered the very essence of the peculiarities of political leadership in these societies. The fact that they tended not to dwell on abstracts concepts of war and peace may have been because the peace processes in which they were engaged were seen to be a reflection not of their desires, but of the international community, as opposed to the actual desires of the local political leaders and their constituency-based followers. In a way, what became apparent during the interviews was that in many cases they felt their fortunes had been

pre-determined by external influences. Consequently, attitudes of local leaders towards the influence and capacity of international leaders was decidedly mixed. What appeared to be disjointed comments about the presence of the international community in secured compounds, driving 4x4 jeeps and eating in upmarket restaurants highlighted the nature of their opinions of the international community and how this community had changed their roles as local leaders. While most of the local leaders interviewed did not seem very enamoured of either the peace or the presence of the international leaders, they tolerated their presence on the basis of the benefits they were reaping from them. Many of the local leaders reflections on the role and capacity of the international community were made only when the researcher gave assurances of confidentiality, and many of their remarks were 'off record'. Indeed, on numerous occasions the interviewees stopped the tape recorder while discussing the topic of the international community, which was a perpetually recurring theme.

The elicitation of information from the international administrators and organisations who were involved in the case studies was immeasurably easier to find, and relatively straightforward to collect. Much of this has to do with the openness and accessibility of the international presence. In each place, we spent a large amount of time with international personnel while they were both on and off duty. We found great candidness in their views and opinions, and they were often readily prepared to self-criticise the organisations of which they are part. In both headquarters and local field offices, international personnel gave freely of their time, never hesitating to offer their apparently unhindered views.

Once the empirical data had been collected, there were many issues that needed to be taken into account when rationalising the potential use of such data. Primarily, there was the issue of the language barrier between the field researcher and the majority of the local interviewees. This raised two points: In the first place, there was a possibility that the interviewees may have misunderstood or misinterpreted the questions asked, or failed to grasp their nuances given the convoluted nature of the subject area. Secondly, the translators may have glossed over or condensed the answers that were given in instances where the interviewees' understanding was actually quite clear. Consequently, the primary empirical data was then complemented by a series of country and leader based chronological histories using both academic

texts and media coverage of events and personalities. The material was then analysed in accordance with the various questions that had been articulated at the outset of the report. It was hoped that some generalisations could be made about the role, capacity and effect of leadership in geographic and culturally divergent places of conflict in tandem with the role, capacity and effect of leaders at an international level. The results have been presented as a series of individual case study analyses, while a more general analysis is offered by way of a conclusion.

2. CASE STUDY 1 – AFGHANISTAN: HAVE THE WARLORDS BECOME PEACE LORDS?

2.1 Meeting the Leaders

The ceremony involved in going to meet any leader in Afghanistan encapsulates a number of the features that underpin leadership in the country. Bypassing phalanxes of armed guards, one is led through a series of atria, each filled with followers who have come seeking arbitration, judgment and adjudication on a series of issues ranging from property disputes to business. The longer the queue, the more important the leader. Entering a large receiving room, one is then ushered in to meet the leader, normally found holding court among a coterie of advisers, followers and petitioners. The message is clear: A force of arms, allied with the cultivation and maintenance of followers and dependents are the key features of what makes a prominent leader in current Afghanistan.

2.2 A Warlords' Peace

Afghanistan has been at a formal peace since December 2001. New government structures were crafted in Bonn, Germany to replace the Taliban administration, ousted as part of the American-led war against al-Qaeda and its supporters. A broad-based administration was devised to incorporate leaders from all of Afghanistan's many ethnic groups. Hamid Karzai, a hitherto obscure member of the country's largest ethnic groups, the Pashtuns, was selected to head the new government. As part of the Bonn Agreement, many of Afghanistan's most powerful regional commanders—often described as 'warlords'—would have portfolios in the government. In the absence of viable alternatives, these leaders were designated as the base to begin the hewing of a civilian form of politics.³¹ Ignoring the country's historical tradition of a feeble centre and strong periphery, the agreement aspired to re-establish and empower long-dormant state institutions. Subsequent initiatives, mostly significantly, the loya jirga³² of December 2003, have reinforced this commitment to a strong presidency. The first Afghan Presidential elections of October 2004 confirmed Hamid Karzai as President with 55.4% of the vote. Karzai

will now serve a five-year term and will implement Afghanistan's new constitution, which was adopted by the Loya Jirga.

Retrospectively, the initiative which began in Bonn was an ambitious plan, and substantial international involvement was pledged to help local leaders implement Bonn's blueprint. An international security assistance force (ISAF) would help provide security in and around the capital, Kabul.³³ A United Nations mission (UNAMA) would be mobilized to assist the transitional administration in reconstruction. Aiming to leave an institutional 'light footprint,' the UN would assist but could not dictate the direction and shape of change.³⁴ The United States would also have a prominent role. Its troops would continue operations against supporters of the al-Qaeda network, requiring the intelligence support and assistance from local leaders. A welter of international aid donors also arrived in the country, charged with rebuilding the basic building blocks of the shattered country.

For a country devastated by decades of war the administration faced a momentous task, made even more arduous by making a large part of its success dependent on local leaders supposedly undergoing the profound transition from 'warlord' to 'peacelord'. At this point, their progress has been fitful. In a country with a deep tradition of localized and personalized rule, the prospect of a central government—the fulcrum around which reconstruction efforts were to be harnessed—remains distant. Instead of becoming peacelords, many Afghan warlords are now closer to 'peacemongers.' They have taken the benefits that suit them in the process of their country's reconstruction, such as national title and financial rewards, but failed to fully contribute to the achievement of lasting peace. They retain control of their own areas in order to reap the large economic benefits. The international presence in the country has done little to alter embedded traditions and strategies of leadership and their approaches towards local leaders has done little to embed leaders that practice any other form of politics.

Most long-standing leaders in the country derive their political prominence from their history either as commanders of the Mujahideen (holy warriors) in the war against the Soviet-backed government or as leaders of militias. At the end of the war, they retained their existing positions of authority by maintaining a loyal corps of fighters

and distributing patronage through wages. By controlling security, a leader controls the flow of trade and goods in and out of the area under his control. Allied with personal charisma, a client base was built up, in turn helping accumulate the resources and funds required to cement a position of leadership and authority. Through the intertwining of security and business interests, local networks of dependence, influence and allegiance developed, bound together by loyalties to family and tribe. In an area where the concept of the state as provider has traditionally been absent, allegiance and dependence has been to local leaders rather than to the idea of an abstract nation state.³⁵

The localised nature of leadership and absence of state authority have thus been mutually reinforcing in Afghanistan. Over time, the powerful regional interests that are created militate against the creation of national institutions. Political calculations are made in light of local issues and their ramifications, while the principal incentives and causes for leaders to act are primarily rooted in their locality.³⁶ Traditionally there have existed few reasons to bring ‘national’ concern into one’s reckonings: in Afghanistan, all politics is local.

2.3 Leaders and Endemic Conflict

The first experience that many in positions of leadership and authority had of governance did not bode well for their second try. Many of today’s ascendant leaders were abject failures during their previous incumbency as components of the mujahideen administrations that governed from 1992 to 1996 following a decade long campaign against a Soviet backed administration.³⁷ The conversion from rebels overthrowing a government to leaders administrating as part of one did not prove easy for these leaders; it proved impossible to create an agreed national government.³⁸ Although they were able to unite against a common foe, the leaders of the resistance groups were unable to pursue a joint strategy for administration, and the country broke up into essentially autonomous spheres of local leadership. No one could resolve the squabbling over carving up national posts between the leaders—a combination of personal rivalry heightened by ethnic and tribal differences—and they resorted to violence for settling their disputes. The capital fell under heavy shelling; its shattered cityscape continues to bear witness to the ferocity of the fighting. While estimates vary, some put the number of citizens who died during the period 1992-

1996 as high as 50,000.³⁹ Utilising violence has thus been a common strategy adopted by those who have reached a high leadership position.

Governance was much lower down in a leader's list of priorities. During the fighting, the capacity of the supposed 'national' administration to govern was very limited. Beyond the capital, local power wielders continued in the tradition of autonomous control over the outlying cities, towns and regions. The norm continued to be local administrations (which were run at various degrees of competence) over national governance. In some areas of the country, however, particularly in the south, disorder flourished as former allies in the resistance fought local quarrels for ascendancy.⁴⁰

With large swathes of the country pitched into disorder, the Taliban movement emerged as an alternative. Comprised mainly of Afghan refugee students and receiving large-scale financial and logistical support from Pakistan, the movement took Kandahar in 1994, spreading throughout the southern portion of the country, eventually taking Kabul in 1996. By year's end it had effective control over nine-tenths of the country. It was led by a village cleric, Mullah Mohammed Omar, who had an obscurantist leadership vision. While the Taliban restored security and order to the area, theirs was a bleak and harsh regime. Enforcing an austere, anti-modernist interpretation of Islam, it banned women from employment and education.⁴¹ A draconian catalogue of policies and prohibitions were imposed that ran the gamut from banning kite flying to public executions.

In the wake of the arrival of the Taliban, Afghanistan's former leaders effectively faced two main choices: to fight or to flee. Some leaders left the country, mainly to Pakistan, while others moved to the Gulf and Europe. Those that stayed organized themselves under the banner of the Northern Alliance, an edgy coalition of forces consisting of leaders from the Tajik and Uzbek communities.⁴² While succeeding in holding a northern sliver of the country from the Taliban, the Alliance found it more difficult to recapture any territory. Barring the occasional territorial transfer, the map of Afghanistan changed little between 1996 and 2001. Formerly in the ascendancy, these leaders were essentially sidelined. It appeared that their chance to govern had passed.

2.4 September 11th, The War against the Taliban and a New Political Administration

The attacks of 11th September 2001 and the ensuing American-led war against the Taliban provided an unexpected opportunity for the warlord leaders to reassert their prominence. For many, it was yet another chance to be in government. As the only coherent local force operating in Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance proved to be the natural partner for international operations against the Taliban.⁴³ Infused with new supplies and cash, and backed by a mammoth air bombardment, Northern Alliance troops swiftly captured city after city. Kabul fell in mid November, and with it, symbolically, the Taliban regime itself.

The country and its leaders thus found themselves part of a new political landscape that they could not have shaped for themselves. These leaders played little or no part in engineering the pace or nature of the transition from conflict to 'peace'. While the Afghan leaders were the principal local beneficiaries of the change, the decision to make the change had been taken by leaders of a country far more powerful than their own. It was the forceful will of an American led coalition to dispel the country's al-Qaeda presence that brought, as an important side consequence, the opportunity for a fresh start.

Following the toppling of the Taliban regime that supported al-Qaeda, the question turned to what form of administration should replace it. Merely allowing the Northern Alliance to install themselves as government leaders was not a viable option. Not only were they wholly unrepresentative of Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, the Pashtuns, but also there was the risk that allowing them an untrammelled second try at government could potentially be as fractious and disastrous as their first attempt. Under the auspices of the United Nations, it was decided to bring together representative groups in an attempt to forge an agreement on a new political architecture for the country. Thus were the Bonn agreements constructed.

Local leaders in the country were not the only ones to staff leadership positions in the country. Hamid Karzai, who had played little role in Afghanistan's wars, emerged as international choice to lead the country. Also supplementing the administration would be returning technocrats, such as the finance minister Ashraf Ghani. In the main

though, the leaders would be the same as those who had figured large in Afghanistan's history. Beyond public professions of loyalty, and speaking in the argot of the new dispensation, many of the leaders appear to have changed little. They have assumed ministerial titles without deviating from their personal agenda of working towards cementing positions of local ascendancy. As a result, over a year after its inauguration, the concept of a central government remains largely phantasmal outside of the capital. Power continues to be localized, resting with a range of local actors. The majority are 'warlord' leaders who 'backed the right horse' in the months after 11th September 2001, namely those militia commanders who allied with the American forces during the war against the Taliban. With their militias controlling local security, these leaders run civil administrations, levy duties and keep taxes. The political and economic power that autonomy over large tracts of the country affords them, means there is little incentive to join the central administration: if they did, the consequent loss of independent revenue streams would weaken their local position.

Securing local dominance remains foremost in warlords' calculations, and their willingness to use violence to achieve their goals has resulted in clashes throughout the country.⁴⁴ That these quarrels continue without reference to the central government is a telling sign of the government's quintessential weakness. Although President Karzai has, in public statements, grown increasingly vociferous in his calls for regional leaders to desist, rein themselves in, and sign up to be part of the government, his admonitions ring hollow.⁴⁵ They cannot be backed up. He has no army or coercive apparatus to speak of at his behest. Although one is in the early stages of creation, it will take at least three more years to take shape. Even then the question looms large as to where the ultimate loyalty of many of its recruits will lie, as they are likely to be drawn from the ranks of fighters from the warlord's militias. The writ of the Afghan 'national' police does not extend beyond Kabul. The weak government thus has little with which to appease or threaten regional leaders to induce their support; because of a lack of regional support, the central government remains weak. Regional leaders are the key to strengthening the government, but have little incentive or obligation to do so. The government seems to be growing ever weaker and the local leaders ever stronger

2.5 The International Dimension

In order to rein local leaders in and alter centrifugal forces, continual application of pressure from the international community is necessary. Currently, the manner in which international leverage is being used serves only to maintain regionalisation. Much of the power and authority that many regional leaders currently enjoy is a side effect of U.S. anti-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan. United States troops and intelligence agents initially distributed cash and weapons to the leaders in order to enlist their help in overthrowing the Taliban, and still use them in the search for al-Qaeda leadership, foot soldiers and local supporters. Strengthened by new supplies, the benefits of controlling their own areas are much greater than those of joining the central government. Patronage in return for utilization of local knowledge continues to sway local leaders away from signing up to be part of the central governmental structures.⁴⁶

The dispersion of power into regional tracts has had profound implications for the country's recovery from conflict. It is a direct obstacle to coordinated reconstruction efforts. International aid agencies are torn between dealing with powerless employees of the Afghan government and regional leaders, upon whose acquiescence they depend to get anything done. The power of local leaders, coupled with the absence of any meaningful alternative, means that international agencies are forced to liaise with them, thus strengthening their hold. The United Nations, charged with aiding Afghan reconstruction, does not have the authority to dictate to local political leaders. As one senior official said:

'What we have just done is we have gone against the tide of history. You know, only Monty Python could think of a script that would actually involve making these people in charge of the process when the whole reason for the rise of the Taliban was them. And this is a historically unique phenomenon. You will find that there are plenty of civil wars when you go through the stages; main struggle, achieve the goal, get into system of anarchy and vacuum and then somebody arises to fill the vacuum. Nobody gives these guys a second chance, no one ever gets a second chance, it is once only. It's an even more difficult task to rebuild now, and they made a hash of it the first time around. The Americans had a clearly limited agenda, a military agenda, which was to topple the Taliban but there's been no thought of getting capable for the even more difficult task of what comes after'.⁴⁷

The aid money that needed to flow into the country has trickled rather than flowed in. Promises of generous aid endowments have not been matched. A conservative

estimate of what was required was \$1.33 billion⁴⁸; so far the amount disbursed is barely half that. With the deteriorating security situation, it becomes ever more difficult for aid organisations to work.

International governments have also constricted the remit of ISAF, the international peacekeeping force. Despite a clamour from some quarters, its area of responsibility is still not beyond Kabul, even though the capital is relatively stable. It is beyond there, especially in the south of the country where most of the violence continues. The 'peace' won in 2001 has not been secured. Instead, it has frayed. With their restricted ambit, ISAF are thus in a difficult position to affect change. It further contributes to the belief that the international community has not done all that it could have to entrench any new strain of leadership in the country.

2.6 Conclusions and Lessons

More than two years after the creation of a central administration sought to bind historically quarrelsome local areas and usher in the country's reconstruction, most of the country remains outside of its effective control. The actions of many leaders run contrary to public professions of loyalty to a central administration. In Afghanistan, centrifugal forces remain far stronger than centripetal ones. Rather than becoming 'peacelords', many of Afghanistan's 'warlords' have thus become 'peacemongers'—taking what benefits suit them from the process but not fully contributing to the achievement of lasting peace.

Following the decision at Bonn to press for the creation of a strong central administration, the lack of commitment to shoring up that government is concerning. It has certainly not brought stability. In the mid-1990s, the Taliban filled a power vacuum left in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion. Given the lessons of history, there is a significant possibility that Afghanistan will once again descend into disarray. While some efforts are underway to resurrect key national security institutions, such as the army, it will take years for them to show progress. By that time, any chance for embedding a sound platform of governance and knitting regional leaders into that government in Afghanistan may have already been lost.

There has been sparse international pressure exerted upon these leaders to transform their questionable behaviour. In some ways the strategies implemented by the international community have entrenched this behaviour further.

3. CASE STUDY 2 - KOSOVO: ON A TIGHT LEASH - LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONALLY ADMINISTERED KOSOVO

3.1 Meeting the Leaders

The dissimilar flags in the offices of Kosovo's leaders are starkly illustrative of the different political philosophies and objectives they represent. In the room of one, a leader from one of Kosovo's Albanian parties, hangs the Albanian national flag of a double-headed eagle on a red background. The standard in the office of one of Kosovo's Serb leaders bears their national colours of red, white and blue. Attempts by the international administrators, who have run the province since the conflict's end in 1999, to impose neutral symbols acceptable to all Kosovo's communities have proved unsuccessful. The basic question of what will be the ultimate nature of the constitutional state of the province and what flag will fly over it remains as indeterminate now as it was in 1999. That said, the political changes in Kosovo over the past five years are significant and the territory rests now on a much more even keel than the lawlessness bequeathed to the influx of international troops, police officers and administrators in the summer of 1999.⁴⁹ Although the situation is by no means ideal, some credit for what progress has been made must rest with decisions and policies adopted by both Kosovo's international administrators and the local leaders.

When the war in Kosovo ended in 1999, no responsibility was given to local leaders. In the aftermath of a scarring ethnic war, they were neither trusted nor thought capable enough to evenly discharge even the most basic administrative task. Powers of government were vested in a United Nations administration (UNMIK) headed by an international civilian administrator (SRSG). Incrementally, responsibility has been devolved to local politicians beginning with municipal elections in 2000 and continuing in 2001 with elections for the province wide assembly. After further elections in October 2004 Parliament re-elected Ibrahim Rugova as President and elected former rebel commander Ramush Haradinaj as Prime Minister. Mr Haradinaj's party had entered into a coalition with the President's Democratic League. Power is now shared among politicians from different ethnicities; an elaborate system of checks, balances and oversight was put in place in order to ensure that it could not be abused. The political and economic weight of the international presence means that

they are in a position of profound influence over how politics is conducted and defining the parameters of what local leaders can do.

Ultimate responsibility for bridging deep ethnic divides largely rests with local politicians—many of whom have long histories of involvement in the conflict. The tasks they face are challenging in the extreme, but achieving anything requires constituting a workable political culture amidst the context of a divided society. Even reaching agreement on day-to-day political issues is difficult because each issue is infused with the wider national question and requires negotiating awning chasms of distrust on each side. Four years on, local leaders remain resolutely divided over the main issue: the future status of the region. However, with a combination of international support and pressure, they have crafted working political arrangements and manage to make day-to-day decisions.

The ostensible changes to the manner by which politics is conducted are remarkable. All too recently, political differences were literally fought over. Although rancorous and difficult, politicians from Kosovo's divided communities now cooperate together in an legislative assembly and across committees. While the final status question remains unresolved, Kosovo's leaders have carved out enough space to have fitful co-operation. Few do so out of a desire to transform the conflict. They, and those they represent, remain as wedded to their respective (and antithetical) national objectives as ever. However, given the depth of hostility and distrust that needs to be surmounted even to achieve some normalcy of politics, political co-operation and toleration is significant progress itself.

The international administration deserves some credit for shepherding this process. In many ways their task has been a thankless one. With inflated burdens of expectations, the job of steering a median course between competing and seemingly irreconcilable national objectives is a tricky one, exacerbated by their lack of clear road map for the province's future. Although their *ad hoc* approach has brought a uniform frustration among all of Kosovo's parties, the international overseers, by shaping and controlling the parameters around which debate is allowed to occur, have succeeded in creating a setting where leaders can, at the very least, work together.

3.2 Who are the Leaders?

Politics and leadership in Kosovo are divided firmly along ethnic lines and dominated by a single issue: the territory's status. All of the Albanian parties are committed to ensuring Kosovo's complete severance from Yugoslavia.⁵⁰ As one Albanian leader observed: 'it remains the ultimate objective. There are many reasons why one chooses to enter politics but behind them all there is this one.'⁵¹ In contrast, many Serb leaders are vehemently opposed to territorial separation or independence. Other minorities within the province are also represented by discrete, ethnically-centred parties and 'all or nothing' goals that are aimed at their own ethnic preservation, as opposed to the preservation of the nation at large.

Leaders have emerged from an assortment of backgrounds. Some Albanian leaders cut their teeth, not in the debating chambers, but as leading figures within the Kosovo Liberation Army. Following the end of the war, they built up a political support base, developing their existing positions of authority and forming their own parties. One commented that 'a lot of being a leader is hard work but experience plays a part too; the hard experience of before definitely helps.'⁵² The military route is not the only avenue by which significant political leaders have emerged in Kosovo. The leader of Kosovo's most popular party, Ibrahim Rugova, is a university professor whose leadership strategy of non-violent resistance during the 1990s failed to garner international attention.⁵³ By contrast, the most prominent leaders from Kosovo's Serb community were largely uninvolved in politics until recently. Leadership among the Serb population appears to have been personified by Slobodan Milosevic, a communist functionary whose policies have been blamed for leading the province down the route to conflict. With the arrival of UNMIK, a new cadre of leaders has emerged. Trying in some way to distance themselves from leadership traditions of the past, they emphasise rights of a community that has suddenly become a net minority, given Kosovo's distension from Serbia.

3.3 A History of Conflict

The province's political status has long been the subject of competing claims by local Albanians and Serbs; it lies at the heart of their opposing national narratives.⁵⁴ 'Kosovo has two histories,' remarked Bieber and Daklovski, 'often mutually exclusive and frequently antagonistic.'⁵⁵ Modern historians generally trace the terms

and language of the dispute to the creation of national identities in the late nineteenth century, and more recently to the resurgence of nationalism in the Balkans after the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s.⁵⁶

Kosovo became a formal part of the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1918. Constitutionally, it is considered a constituent province of Serbia, one of the six republics that made up the original Yugoslav federation along with Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia.⁵⁷ It has enjoyed fluctuating degrees of autonomy since 1918. It was accorded a degree of administrative autonomy, had it taken away, restored and then taken back again. During its most recent autonomous period, lasting from 1974 until 1989, Kosovo ran most of its own affairs. But with the rise of Slobodan Milosevic, a previously obscure Communist party official who skillfully manipulated the nationalist symbols to assume leadership in Serbia in the late 1980s, Kosovo's autonomy came to an end.⁵⁸ Under Milosevic's direction, the provincial assembly in the regional capital, Prishtina, was dissolved and power returned to the Serbian parliament in Belgrade.

3.4 The Search for Peaceful Secession and the Rise of the KLA

While the Republics of Slovenia, Macedonia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were breaking away from the Yugoslav federation in the early 1990s, leading in the last two cases to a prolonged Balkan war, Kosovar Albanians adopted a strategy of non-violent opposition to effect eventual secession from Serbia.⁵⁹ In 1990, a year after the termination of provincial autonomy, Albanian politicians came together to organise a shadow political system for the province and lobby for a peaceful transition to independence. Although their self-organised referendum was boycotted by the Kosovo Serbs, an overwhelming majority endorsed the constitution of a new political entity, the Republic of Kosovo.⁶⁰ Officially recognised only by Albania, the shadow republic had its own elected president, Ibrahim Rugova, and its own parliament and ministries which levied voluntary taxes to run health, education and other services.⁶¹ The Albanians boycotted official Serbian and Yugoslav institutions

Rugova's approach was peaceful and low key. Unlike other leaders in the former Yugoslavia, the poet president did not mobilise around physical force- whether real or threatened - to gain publicity for his cause. Instead he concentrated on diplomatic

channels to advance Kosovo Albanian demands. As a strategy it was unsuccessful. The Republic of Kosova garnered little international attention throughout the decade. Amid the violent upheavals in other parts of former Yugoslavia, and despite numerous unheeded warning signs, the international community mistook the absence of war in Kosovo for the presence of peace and stability. Kosovar Albanian demands for independence, and an interim transition period under international supervision went largely unacknowledged. The leader who advocated a non-violent approach to change, went totally unheard amidst the din of war drums beating in other parts of Yugoslavia.

With the failure of Rugova's leadership approach to gain any tangible benefits, rumblings of discontent grew. Some Albanians reacted by organising self-defence groups to mount a more violent form of resistance to the Serbian dominance. A self-styled Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) began striking at Serb security forces and targets in the mid-1990s. The KLA's political platform was much more radical than that of Rugova's party, the Democratic League of Kosova. Their leaders demanded immediate and complete independence from Serbia. The new movement grew quickly in popularity; flush with increasing membership, and some initial successes in guerrilla attacks on Serbian government targets, the KLA began to pick larger targets. By the beginning of 1998 it had even managed to overrun some outlying Serbian police stations and outposts. The KLA declared to the media that areas of western Kosovo were 'liberated.' They soon emerged as a serious rival to Rugova for control of the country's leadership. In response, Serb police and paramilitaries increasingly turned to oppression and intimidation of the civilian population. A low-level internal war raged through much of Kosovo during 1998 and 1999.

3.5 Peace Plans: Enforced Co-operation Between Leaders

The international community paid little attention to the simmering unrest in Kosovo in the early and mid-1990s. Distracted by more immediate problems elsewhere in the Balkans, international mediators did not appreciate the potential threat posed by the steadily deteriorating situation in Kosovo. Some have credited the international community's inattention as a crucial factor in the slide towards war.⁶² Nevertheless, by 1998, the worsening situation in Kosovo began to generate some diplomatic activity. For the first time, international negotiators became directly involved in

discussions about Kosovo's future, tabling a series of proposals to bridge the gaps between Kosovar and Serb claims. But by this point in the conflict, the chasm the negotiators were trying to address was too deep: Kosovar Albanian parties, pressed by militants in their own ranks, would settle for nothing less than a promise of independence, while the Serb government stubbornly held to the position that the province remained an inseparable part of Serbia. All of the plans drawn up during this period attempted to establish some form of autonomy or self-governance for the province, and all stopped short of offering full independence. Each mooted settlement was of a pointedly interim nature. In freezing the main issues at the centre of the dispute until some yet-to-be-determined point in the future, the framers of the settlement believed that the central issues were so intractable that tackling them head on would doom the chances of reaching any agreement at all. A number of common themes ran throughout the various drafts and plans. These included a separate, autonomous regime for Kosovo and an international role in their autonomy. Governance formed a key part of these plans with elaborate schemes devised to compel leaders of different ethnicities to co-operate together in shared institutions. Local politicians would play a significant role in making them work.

Although the threat of NATO-led attacks hung over the negotiations, an agreement still eluded the parties. Divided among themselves, the Albanian parties were unable to accept a plan that appeared to draw back from independence; as their followers were antithetically opposed to an accord, the leaders believed that they would not be able to both accept the agreement and retain their positions of leadership.⁶³ Local Kosovo Serb leaders had little to do with the process. Negotiations were handled from Belgrade, and the leadership appeared unwilling to yield to any settlement that could be construed as altering Kosovo.

NATO's position was clear: Belgrade's failure to reach an acceptable settlement would impel them to take military action. On March 24 NATO launched a sustained bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. Almost as soon as the air strikes began, Serb military and paramilitary forces launched a widespread campaign of terror and intimidation against the Albanian population of Kosovo.⁶⁴ During the war, more than 90 percent of the province's Albanian population was either internally displaced or became refugees in neighbouring states.⁶⁵ In many ways, the decision to opt for war

resulted from a failure of local leaders to come to an acceptable compact over Kosovo's institutions.

3.6 An End to War and a New Political Architecture for Kosovo

The United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was endowed with the broadest executive and administrative powers of any previous peacekeeping operation in UN history. Endowed with primary political and administrative responsibility for Kosovo, which it was expected to transfer to local politicians after a suitable transition period.⁶⁶ The new administration was precedent setting for the United Nations, marking the first time that the UN assumed complete and open-ended control over a disputed territory. Resolution 1244 did not attempt to resolve the central issue in the conflict and deal with the competing claims by Serbs and Albanians over the territory of Kosovo. Instead, it aimed to postpone the discussion of Kosovo's future, while putting an end to violence in the province and reaffirming the international community's continued support for the territorial integrity of the Yugoslav federation.⁶⁷

In the initial phase, no powers were accorded to local politicians, as they were not trusted to discharge themselves in an acceptable manner. Gradually however, power dripped down to local leaders. In November 2000, elections were held for municipal polls; this was followed a year later by elections to province wide polls.⁶⁸ UNMIK has consistently adopted a policy of co-opting local leaders and providing incentives to induce them into the process.⁶⁹ Leaders continue to work amidst an international aegis. Bills are scrutinised for perceived inequity and legislative positioning on the national question.

Other problems confronting leaders are more prosaic. The funding tap is often too dry to run these institutions effectively. The practical challenges of administration facing the often-nascent politicians have also been difficult.

'This is our first experience dealing with ourselves as legislators, of being members of Parliament. We had some difficulties in the beginning to organize ourselves, to plan and make functioning, but those difficulties come a lot from ourselves and our inexperience.'⁷⁰

They have received help along the way. Some leaders have been inspired by visiting with politicians from other deeply divided, conflict-torn societies, who are now co-operating with one another. One leader cited co-operation between Northern Irish politicians as a motivation for them.⁷¹ For others, it was less about change moments but rather the appreciation of a political reality: some form of co-operation is inescapable in order for an administration to function.

3.7 The International Dimension

Kosovo's peace remains overseen by extensive international involvement. It is policed by an international police force, while an international peacekeeping force guarantees its security; an army of international bureaucrats of varying ranges of capability runs the entity. Although some powers have been devolved to local figures, ultimate authority still rests with the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG); he has, for example, the sole authority to annul or amend legislation that has already passed. Compared to local leaders, the administration has overwhelming political and military resources at its disposal.

Local leaders have also observed a lack of cultural sensitivity from the international administrators. This manifests itself most obviously in an inability to speak local languages, or demonstrate a willingness to learn them. One noted:

‘You know, internationals sometimes are pretty strange from my point-of-view. To be honest, they are coming with their attitudes, which I respect fully of course, but we have a different mentality here.’⁷²

What international administration has provided, however, is the ability to marshal the direction in which politics is shaped. The intractable sensitivity of the issue has significantly limited the international community's capacity to exact change. Indeed, some have argued that the ‘paper-thin compromise that saw the United Nations follow NATO into Kosovo is likely to become a permanent substitute for a solution’.⁷³

Some observers have noted that UNMIK's desire to elongate the period of time before a decision can be made has caused its own problems. The UNMIK strategy of ‘standards before status’ is an example of this. As part of the plan put forward by SRSG Michael Steiner, UNMIK has imposed governance benchmarks that must be met before the question of status can be discussed. Kosovo must meet international

norms of tolerance, the rule of law must be upheld, and its people must be given true freedom of movement before its future can be settled. Whatever the motives, these benchmarks impose stringent obligations upon leaders and serve as another means of regulating and policing leadership behaviour.

At the same time, political considerations dictate that leaders are not always held accountable for their actions; in other words, the international administration at times does not discharge the full policing capabilities it has because of wider political considerations of calm. One of the leaders of Kosovo's largest Albanian parties has been indicted for war crimes, yet little pressure has been applied to deliver that indictment. Political calculations of the potential fall out and repercussions no doubt inform that decision. The continuing support of 'Haradinaj the political leader' rather than prosecution of 'Haradinaj the war leader' indicates the influence that international organisations have in shaping and determining the path politics takes in the province.

3.8 Conclusions and Lessons

More than four years after a divisive war, Kosovo's leaders remain as far apart as ever on the national question. There remains near hermetic segregation of communities which leaders appeared not to prioritise as an issue. Nevertheless, leaders have shown a capability and capacity to co-operate with each other. Although jostled by local leaders for lack of cultural awareness and dithering during decision-making processes, there is no doubt that the international administrators have been architects of this enforced co-operation. Although they work imperfectly, that they work at all is an achievement in and of itself. None of the leaders have involved themselves in the process; their decision-making and practical co-operation is borne out of the pragmatism of necessity. They have much more to gain by being within the system, with all its constraints, than by remaining outside it.

Kosovo demonstrates the latitude that the international community has over local leaders. By being in the position to design the institutions, frame the procedures that they work by, determine the players and regulate the manner in which politics is conducted, and playing the resources at their disposal, they cannot develop good

leadership per se but can contribute to forcing greater civility in how politics is conducted.

4. CASE STUDY 3 – SIERRA LEONE: COURTING LEADERSHIP

4.1 Meeting the Leader

‘I admire myself. Having come from all that I have been through, some of which took me to the condemned cell and then brought me back again to be a minister. It is a good record to have survived and then to have become what I am.’⁷⁴

So said Chief Sam Hinga Norman, the leader of the pro-government militia Civil Defence Forces during Sierra Leone’s conflict (1996-2002). Norman’s career has hurtled back and forth between extremes of fortune; now he finds himself back in a jail cell, this time indicted for serious war crimes by the internationally-sponsored Special Criminal Court. Norman was arrested in March 2003, and his trial began soon after. It is being held in secret, motivated by a fear that his supporters could disrupt the trial process. He has pleaded not guilty. His trial began in June 2004 and at the time of going to press, it is still ongoing.

Norman has been an influential figure in Sierra Leone’s recent politics. Militarily educated in Britain and appointed deputy defence minister amidst the tumult of civil war, Norman was responsible for an army which, instead of following an assignment to fight the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), mutinously fissured into disconnected factions. Thrown out of office following the military coup in 1997, Norman leveraged his lineage as a traditional ruler to mobilise ‘young men to fight to protect our peasants in the countryside from the onslaught of the rebels, and whom the Army was not protecting.’ His organisation, the Civil Defence Forces, was a loose amalgam comprising traditional hunters and self-organised self-defence forces.

To his supporters he is a hero; without his marshalling of a rag tag soldiery, the RUF rebels could have overran the country. To others however, he stands accused of being personally complicit in the actions of his followers. The militia’s alleged human rights abuses include torture, summary execution, rape and the recruitment of children as fighters. The stark differences in opinions about the man are emblematic of disparities of opinion over other leaders in the conflict. It also indicates how potentially risky it will be to direct a process of criminal investigation without accentuating division further.

Discounting these allegations, Norman described his leadership style as thrust upon him amid the exigencies of his state's dissolution:

'Leadership generally is having the knowledge and the wisdom and the ability to lead. Any man who is void of any one of these is only going along thinking that he is leading, but he does not have the qualities of leadership. It also depends on the situation. Our situation demanded leadership. We were seeing a situation where the people, for whom war was being waged, became the victims, rather than the system that the war was being waged against. They were also devoid of leaders; the government was incapable, the army was splitting apart. I thought that we traditional rulers should use control of the peasants of the land, as it was their own peace that was being dissolved. It was better for us to encourage the youngsters to form themselves into a situation where they could look after themselves, having been betrayed by the army. This was the situation; it is difficult to understand if you were not part of it. We were in an extremely vexatious situation, especially when the international peacekeepers arrived in 1999. We thought they were our saviours, but only we found them prisoners in the hands of ragamuffins, children with guns. The Civil Defence had to look back and say, 'Ah, we have to do something for our own land. If we depend on these people keeping the peace, we will not get out of this situation.'

The eventual decision to prosecute Norman was a divisive one. For some in the tribunal it was an indication that 'victory' should not be a cloak to evade judicial scrutiny. For other senior Sierra Leonean however, it was believed that the indictment would deprive the country of an able minister who had the ability to direct operations in a horizontally diffuse conflict.

It also raises the wider question of what to do with leaders who may, at the very least, be stained by association, with brutal misdeeds. The court is likely to face charges of selective justice if it does not also prosecute the leaders of other groups responsible for atrocities. In prosecuting with the best of objectives, could one be inadvertently retarding development? The question remains a moot one, not just for Sierra Leone, but also for many other countries also trying to achieve justice, reconciliation and a durable peace in the aftermath of a war.

Few of the leaders in Sierra Leone are new; the history of many is intimately bound up with the country's politics over the last two decades. Many claim that they hail from a lineage of leadership. Leadership is thus not a skill that they achieve, but is more a mantle they are likely to assume because of high family background. It was

deep-seated disenchantment with that form of inherited leadership that seeded conflict in the country.

4.2 Di War Don Don

During the 1990s Sierra Leone had earned the unwelcome reputation as the worst place on earth to live.⁷⁵ It had one of the world's lowest mortality rates and the highest rates of deaths in early childhood. Journalists, authors and aid workers painted the country in garish terms: a Hobessian dystopia, a dissolved society, a place divorced from hope.⁷⁶ The failure of the country's political leaders were cited as a cause for its descent into bedlam. Its leaders stood accused of either fomenting divisions or being too hapless to contrive a means of ending the mayhem in their midst. One author, writing about a visit to the country in 1992, records a belief shared by local politicians and foreign aid workers, that the only means of rescuing the country from its morass would be large-scale international intervention.⁷⁷

Such intercession did come, but not immediately and conflict in Sierra Leone continued as a footnote to world politics for another decade. Since 1992, there were five changes of governments, two coups and four peace accords that derailed almost as soon as the ink had dried. The final agreement, signed in Lomé in 1999 between a beleaguered government and the leadership of the main rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), created a new governance framework, but did not end the violence. The accord's portioning of ministerial offices was not enough for RUF leader Foday Sankoh. His forces besieged the capital, Freetown, in an attempt to capture unfettered government control. Their offensive, codenamed Operation No Living Thing, was as brutal as its appellation. A grave catalogue of offences by Sankoh's advancing forces included beheading, gouging, hacking, skinning, raping and the use of children as combatants. The rejoinder of the rag-tag amalgam of pro-government defenders stooped to similar lows.

United Nations troops sent in the wake of the agreement to keep the peace found themselves in an almost antithetical environment to that which they expected. Their mandate disempowered them to respond with force. The capture and public parading of blue-helmeted UN troops were symbolic of apparent international powerlessness. It seemed that the situation was beyond redemption: both local and international

leadership seemed unable to stem it. However, against a background of such bleakness emerged hope. The major element in shoring up the city's defence, and restoring a semblance of order in which implementation of the agreement could begin was the arrival of troops from the country's former colonial power, the United Kingdom. Although not a formal part of the peacekeeping mission, this symbolic and practical support quelled the advance. Sankoh was arrested, and a form of normality restored.

After playing a large part in bringing it about, Sierra Leone's peace continues to be extensively overseen by the international community. Peace is kept by 14000 international military troops who are part of wider United Nations peacekeeping force—UNAMSIL—that provides political support and capacity building assistance. Britain also retains a major role. A former British police officer now leads the national police; British troops are retraining and re-equipping the national army. A host of international aid organisations are also extensively involved in programming ranging from the countries physical to psychosocial rehabilitation. It is a mammoth effort. One observer has claimed that, if peace holds, 'outsiders can claim most of the credit.'⁷⁸

That said, the role of local leaders whose actions have been assigned blame for seeding conflict in the first place, is vital. After all, (and unlike Kosovo) responsibility for national governance rests with them, and the large international presence will not stay around forever. Ultimately, it will be the local leaders who assume the duty for setting Sierra Leone's long-term course. Their strategies and practices of leadership will determine whether the current period will be remembered as building on a peace that was largely delivered by an outside intervention or as an abeyance in conflict and an opportunity squandered.

Understanding how leadership emerges in Sierra Leone is necessary in order to estimate whether local leaders actually have the potential to develop peace and political stability. Many leaders emerge from a restricted lineage of traditional leadership; it was deep-seated disenchantment with that form of inherited leadership and the politics it brought with it that triggered a decade of conflict in the country. And, although leaders now speak fluently in the language of peace processes, it is still

too early to state whether this indicates any change other than changes in the language used. The question, therefore, is whether leaders have fundamentally changed or have morphed into what appears to be a new, temporary form of leadership, only to revert back to old methods and practices once the international gaze diverts elsewhere.

Local leaders now work under close scrutiny. A unique aspect of Sierra Leone's peace has been the creation of an internationally empowered and supported Special Criminal Court that has a wide-ranging remit to pursue those individuals who are deemed most responsible for the war. The court marks an innovative new international hold over local leadership. Ministers currently serving in the government have already been indicted and await trial. The targets of the court are not the foot soldiers in the conflict, but the leaders they followed. The court, a new departure in international law, follows on from tribunals that were set up to try leaders in the Balkans and Rwanda. It is composed of judges from a mixture of international and local judges. It is invested with an extraordinary responsibility and has demonstrated its wide remit. As well as arresting leaders of rebels, the court has also included leaders considered 'winners' in the conflict. Indeed, many of the leaders who were instrumental during the conflict and supported the resolution process have been indicted and arrested. Although it may be too early to gauge its impact, the court seems a very real means by which leadership behaviour can be policed and held accountable. Its sheer presence has already presaged the departure from office of a neighbouring leader, Liberian President Charles Taylor, fearing seizure by the court. Evaluation of how effectively the court works could serve as a future template for international policing and sanctioning of leadership.

4.3 The Roots of Conflict

During the past decade, governance in Sierra Leone has been a roller coaster of one-party rule, military rule, democratically elected government, its overthrow and reconfiguration to incorporate rebels groups. After the incumbent Sierra Leone People's Party boasted a large victory in the May 2002 elections, there is an elected government once again at the helm. The origins of the country's conflict go further back. They are a tangled set of issues that include poor governance, exclusion, poverty, ethnicity and the inequitable distribution of resources. Together, they constitute an easily ignitable conflict tinderbox.

The traditions of leadership have their lineage in colonial times. When Britain bequeathed independence on its colony in 1961, it left behind a pyramidal structure of governance that remains largely intact. Politically and economically fixated on the capital, the colonialists devolved substantial autonomy to the heads of leading families in the hinterland beyond. They grouped small rural settlements into political entities and called them chiefdoms, headed by local chiefs. The paramount chief was the highest in the hierarchy and was recognised as such by the government's representatives in the area. Through this controlled hierarchy of middlemen, the colonialists were able to govern with relatively minimal effort and outlay. Although it was less costly than imposing direct rule, it bestowed tremendous amounts of concentrated political power into the hands of a relatively small group of people. Chiefs duly leveraged their politically influential position to their own economic advantage.⁷⁹

So interdependent was the relationship between the capital and the chiefs that it continued seamlessly following independence. With power concentrated into the hands of local chiefs, the new administrations—even if they had wanted to—had limited capacity to change the system. Once the pattern of strong intermediaries had been established, it limited the capacity of national leaders to exact change. One scholar has noted that:

‘the range of ways in which ethnic differences, the position of the chiefs and the maintenance of the colonial era’s economic relations each affected other areas, thus curtailing dramatically the range of possible options open to a leader.’⁸⁰

With diminishing aid budgets throughout the 1970s and 1980s—most of which had been used to lubricate positive relations with chiefs—the national leader’s capacity for influencing change was limited still. As the system was well embedded at that point, leaders or those succeeding them, found it difficult to break out of the established pattern of governance.⁸¹

As the system aged, it began to atrophy and decay. Although some were run effectively, cronyism and exploitation of position for economic opportunity seeped into the running of many chiefdoms. Frustration and feelings of exclusion among

many ordinary people were exacerbated by the fact that the chiefdom system was an autocratic cabal with no opportunity for entry into it and change from within. If one had a bad ruler, one had him for life. And even then, primogeniture meant that a member of the chief's family would later assume the mantle of leadership.

Local prominence was a pre-requisite for the development of national political aspirations. Most of Sierra Leone's early post-independence rulers leveraged their local leadership credentials to establish parties. Although their names implied a national reach—the Sierra Leone People's Party and the All Peoples Congress—they were, in reality, based upon regional and tribal affiliations. Democracy was tenuous. From 1968 the country was run as a one-party state, which further entrenched the clientelist and patrimonial manner in which politics was conducted. It was an autocratic regime that rewarded sycophancy, institutionalised corruption and marginalised all those who were not members of the ruling party. Even when its leader Saika Stevens stood down, an army commander, Joseph Momo, whose methods of leadership deviated little from his predecessor, replaced him. The vast swathe of society remained barred from the political process. Wholly disenfranchised, they had no way of influencing change. If an individual was not a part of the local leadership, there was little or no means available to them to effect change and their frustrations became fertile grounds for the mobilization of angry groups. In some areas, chiefdoms collapsed after the ruler died, leaving a leadership vacuum.

4.4 Liberation Eats its Own Children: The Rise of the RUF and the Wars of the 1990s

National and local politics in Sierra Leone were therefore a narrow concern constructed to suffocate alternate sources of leadership; there existed no constitutional mechanism to effect change. The leadership in place did not seem to be effective. Sierra Leone plummeted to the bottom of human development indexes.

Amidst the welter of political grievances emerged a group posing as an alternative. Known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), they berated the shadiness of the system and its inability to percolate benefits down to the people. Based in the rural east, they drew their ranks from the excluded and garbed their arguments in Marxist

rhetoric. The leadership of the group was nebulous but eventually marshalled by a former major in the army, Foday Sankoh. Exploiting a rough and ready charisma, he berated the ineptitude, exclusion and corruption of the Freetown elite with his firebrand rhetoric and touched a chord with the public. Let loose, his sentiments often assumed an intense and violent form. Against the background of a political conflict, revenge was often taken on localised grievances. Strikingly, a group that bore the brunt of some people's fury were local chiefs, a blameable face for their own political and economic impotence. Their rebellion, however, quickly lost the ideological justifications it was once rooted in. Initial ideas evaporated and the conflict settled into a cycle of banditry and exploitation; their own tactics were every bit as bad as those practised by the people they had been criticising. The people for whom the war was supposedly being waged quickly became its victims. Writers have blamed leadership of the RUF for merely deepening and perpetuating the problems that their revolt had ostensibly set out to eradicate. Idealistic rhetoric faded, and the rebellion appeared increasingly centred on control and exploitation of the nation's major source of wealth: the diamond mines in the east. As one local academic observed of the RUF: 'It is so easy for any movement to get up and talk about the evils of the country, corruption, bad governance and so on, but it is not easy to do. But they really never had any suitable alternative in place; they did not have the mechanics and structures that could have any meaningful and positive change.'⁸²

Pitched against the RUF was a medley of forces. Theoretically it was the army's job to repulse the rebel's offensive, but, enfeebled by a lack of equipment, sporadic pay and internal divisions, it did not proffer a unified response. Some units aligned with the rebels, exploiting the chaos to leverage financial gain from the conflict.⁸³ Disenchanted at apparent military incapacity, others formed parallel militia structures dedicated to fighting for the government. Sam Hinga Norman, a deputy defence minister, used his influence as a traditional chief to amalgamate bands of fighters to fight against the rebels. During the war, foreign mercenaries also became involved, hired by the government to protect diamond areas of the country.

It is hard to tell a linear story of Sierra Leone's decade-long conflict. It was not a war fought by organised fighters in uniform, but rather locally mobilised bands, often

more akin to street gangs operating in loose bands with little hierarchical control and few participants.

The absence of a distinguishable platform among the parties is equally difficult. It is both forlorn and misleading to paint the conflict in terms of good or bad leadership. Doing so excuses the ‘continuing corruption and the neglect of rural grievances’ that started the conflicts in the first place.⁸⁴ Another author has observed that such was the nature of the conflict, ‘it hardly matters to what faction a combatant belongs: all tend to share membership in an excluded and educationally disadvantaged youth underclass.’⁸⁵

4.5 Rewarding Bad Leadership? The Lomé Accord and International Intervention

Against the background of conflict, leaders tried, and failed, to come up with some form of concord. The last decade in Sierra Leone has been one of conflict punctuated by accords, agreements and plans negotiated and agreed upon by leaders. Rhetorical commitments to peace, voiced by leaders at signing ceremonies, have been discordant with the actions of their followers on the ground. Ceasefires came and were summarily broken.

The war dragged on, and moved away from the glare of the international media and the pressures of international mediation. Both the UN as well as the former metropolis played little part in West African initiated efforts to broker a concord. The final attempt at political agreement took place in the Togolese capital of Lomé. Negotiated between President Kabbah and Sankoh, its proponents argued that it was a pragmatic agreement borne out of the necessity to end a brutal conflict. For its detractors, it rewarded bad leadership and appeared to reinforce the perception that violence works. Lomé was a form of forced power sharing as, under pressure, the elected leadership yielded to join hands with the RUF. Sankoh would assume the vice-presidency as well as portfolio for Sierra Leone’s most valuable export, its diamonds. His fighters were granted amnesty. It was a case of all carrots and no sticks and was heavily criticised: ‘the Lomé accord is thus repugnant to good conscience because it enthrones injustice over justice and it puts moral wrong over right.’ The accord, with all its terms was welcomed and supported by many of the world’s

governments and the United Nations—which authorised deployment of a large peacekeeping mission to support it. RUF leader Sankoh even received an emboldening phone call from then U.S. President Bill Clinton, as well as a visit from Secretary of State Madeline Albright. ‘What rebel leader gets called by the president of the United States? I only got that call because I fought in the bush for so many years,’ he boasted.⁸⁶

The accord proved an abject disaster. Rather than presaging peace, rewarding bad leadership prefaced a new round of fighting. Once they were in the government, there was neither incentive nor pressure on the RUF leaders to disarm their fighters and deliver on their obligations. With their fighters holding on to their weapons and entrenched in the gold and diamond mines, the RUF leadership could return to the bush and resume fighting if things did not work in their favour. This is what happened. A new offensive was launched on Freetown in an effort to topple the government. It was an overt calculation. Toppling the government by force exposed the extreme weakness of the UN peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone and prompted the military intervention of a British expeditionary force that helped orienteer a stemming of the tide. They freed UN peacekeepers, arrested Sankoh and shored up the tottering government.

4.6 The International Dimension

International organisations played an important role in developing Sierra Leone’s peace. They have a diverse range of responsibilities that run the gamut from reconstructing tattered rudiments of law enforcement (police and military) through programmes that aim to psychologically and socially rehabilitate a populace deeply scarred by the privations they suffered during the conflict. rough the whole process, the international organisations have intimately associated themselves with local leaders, The contrast between the resources at their respective disposals is stark: workers at the UN headquarters grumble if their internet connection is of sluggish pace while in the offices of Sierra Leone’s government there is often no electricity.

The difference in equipment at their disposal reveals the wider disparity in resources available to local and international leaders. When a local official must traverse Sierra Leone’s rutted and hole-filled roads, for example, his international counterpart can be

whisked quickly to their chosen destination by helicopter. It is also indicative of the practical problems that beset leaders. Unversed in governance, they are also profoundly bereft of the administrative capacity to effect political change. Government offices are sparse shells, often without any of the equipment to communicate their decisions. Given the myriad and diverse range of challenges of resuscitating a withered, detached and degenerated state, how can they be effectively dealt with by a minister who is without the basic administrative infrastructure and equipment?

4.7 Conclusions

During the last decade in Sierra Leone, leaders have surfaced, voicing an alternative vision to the every day privations of the vast majority. Their proposed ways out have served only to plunge the country deeper into the mire however. For over a decade, leaders and followers were locked in a hopeless cycle they were unable to break from. Although peace in Sierra Leone was eventually internationally constructed, ensuring it lasts is, in large part, contingent upon local leaders who have been held complicit in propelling conflict and continually providing its momentum. When the international gaze is directed elsewhere it will be up to local leaders to act, or not, on the opportunity presented to them. It is still too early to examine whether they will succeed. Local leaders, who were part of the problem for so long, will share a large part of the responsibility for being part of the solution.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study has considered three cases of local leadership in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone, three societies whose high international name recognition is attributable in large part to the conflicts that have raged in them over the last decade. Slowly and hesitatingly, each country has emerged from their respective conflicts and is now considered to be at formal peace. A shared feature among each transition was that local leaders who appeared to play a central part in perpetuating their country's conflict remained prominent figures in the subsequent peace processes. The study explored how these leaders assumed their positions of power and then traced their evolution from being instigators of conflict to crucial participants in eventual peace processes.

The study found that a major reason for the ostensible shift in leadership posture was not something intrinsic to the leaders themselves but the result of changed circumstances. 'Peace', when it finally came, was not inspired by local leaders but ushered in by international political and military strength. In none of the three cases did leaders provide the momentum to begin a process; they were either coaxed into accepting settlements, or catapulted along as part of a process that they ultimately had little agency or control over. Often out of the absence of viable alternatives, the intervening international community was obliged to deal with leaders whose very divisive actions fuelled conflict in the first place. This relative disparity does not mean that local leaders are any less crucial in the process. Indeed, their role is absolutely integral to ensuring that an internationally led initiative beds down and develops in a sustainable manner. Without their involvement and 'buy-in' to the process, there runs the risk that the aftermath of one conflict becomes little more than the prelude to another. To make any transition work, local leaders need to be roped into the process. Doing so requires a nuanced appreciation of leaders' motivations.

5.1 The Literature

The analysis presented here argues that there are two major gaps in the literature on: it is too fond of assigning dichotomous labels of leadership and not cognizant enough of the influence that international actors have over local leaders. Inclusive and transcendent leadership rarely emerges within the context of violent conflict. Indeed,

the literature fuels too many expectations of leaders being able to positively change their orientations, despite the fact that nothing in their past experience indicates that they are likely to do so. In the cases we studied, most of the local leaders were unable and unwilling of their own volition to transcend the ethnic or national constituencies that they represent. Leadership is not monolithic but a complex mosaic of interactional political, organisational, cultural, and historical factors. The literature has also yet to adequately consider leadership in instances where ‘peace’ is internationally inspired. Few peace processes now take place without international assistance. This paper has considered three such cases where, in relative terms, the sway of international actors appeared to dwarf those of local leaders.

5.2 The International Role

Most peace agreements today are often nurtured by an international actor, be it a state or an international organisation like the United Nations. As detailed in the case studies, the international actors use their influence to encourage local leaders to accept terms that they might not otherwise do on their own by creating mechanisms that reward, sanction and regulate their behaviour. For those who strive for strategies or means to affect or change leadership behaviour, the evidence of our study appears to suggest that international involvement in pushing forward a peace process often affords great potential for change, as its force can persuade or compel ‘negative’ leaders to be more positive. However, our research also showed that this leverage has yet to be regulated. In the three cases we studied, we observed that differently calibrated combinations of enticement and leverage were adopted by the international community towards political leaders, yielding different consequences in each of the situations. As this relationship between international actors and local leaders seems likely to continue, this can no longer remain a thinly researched topic. A detailed audit should be undertaken of the various approaches taken thus far to engage local leaders. This would significantly cut learning time and ensure that only the most effective parts of previous experiments are replicated.

5.3 The Need for Leaders to see Benefits

In the cases we examined, leaders changed only when they saw tangible benefits from the new system primarily for themselves and for their constituency. The leaders we

studied were not interested in conflict or in peace as abstract entities. Their choice to ultimately embrace the latter was directed by very pragmatic interest and concerns. Only when they could be persuaded to see the potential benefits from supporting a new, more peaceful system for themselves and their followers were leaders more likely to embrace it, internalise its vocabulary and encourage their followers to do the same. It was essential that the leaders perceived a palate of future benefits from the process in order to be encouraged to remain part of it.

5.4 Administrative Capacity

What also made any transition difficult for such local leaders was the fact that most local leaders tend to lack administrative capacity. While many were well versed in the politics of conflict, they were much less conversant in the rules of the everyday practicalities of basic administration. Compounding this was the problem that many of the new administrations face: the absence of basic building blocks of effective governance. If such foundations fail to emerge, the lack of continuing benefits from the development of peace may well discourage local leaders from continuing to support the transition to peace. Efforts should be made to work with existing and emerging leaders as early as possible in the peace process in the development of governance and administrative skills. They should be afforded more comparative opportunities to encounter and learn about the various possibilities for governance in other diverse and conflict-ridden societies. This is likely to be made easier by the return of both an émigré business class and technocrats who left during conflict and have subsequently returned. These individuals tend to have more of the basic building block skills that are necessary to turn a post-conflict society around. Thus, efforts should be concentrated upon harnessing this particular cadre of relatively untapped potential.

Our hope for this study is that it will help inform this scarce debate on local leadership in conflicted societies and to elucidate the possible conditions that enable a leader's transition from war into something that begins to resemble peace. We hope that the gaps that have been unearthed in the literature by this study will spur future research by others on issues of local leadership in conflict societies, and the capacity of the international community to work with, and influence, local leaders.

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APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

AFGHANISTAN

Atta Mohammad, Head of Jamiat-I-Islami Militia, Mazar-I-Sharif

Sardar Syedi, Head of Hizb-e-Wahdat Militia, Mazar-I-Sharif

Sayyed Ishaq Ali, Head of Hizb-e-Wahdat Militia, Mazar-I-Sharif

Syed Abdul Wahad, Head of Harakat-I-Islami Militia

Sayyed Nasrullah, President of Foreign Affairs of Northern Region and political adviser to Jumbesh (second largest party)

Zelmay Younisi, Political Adviser to Jamiat-I-Islami, (largest party) Mazar-I-Sharif

Haji Ishaq Rah Gosar, Governor of Balkh province

Gul Karim, Head of Security, Nengarhar Province

Abdul Ghani Hedayat, Director of Education, Nengerhar Province

Beverley Eighmy, Political Officer, US Embassy

KOSOVO

Bajram Rexhepi, Former Prime Minister of Kosovo

Oliver Ivanovic, Leader of Kosovo Serbs, former Member of Presidency

Ramush Haradinaj, Prime Minister of Kosovo, Former KLA leader, Head of AAK

Hyjdet Hyseni, Former Member of Presidency

SIERRA LEONE

Chief Hinga Norman (former head of civil defence militia), Former Minister of the Interior

Sir Randolph Koroma, Resident Minister, Eastern Region (equivalent to first minister)

Dr. Sheikh Ummar M Jah, Resident Minister, Southern Region (equivalent to first minister)

Osman Yansaneh, Head of All People's Congress (second largest party)

Joe Alie, former vice president, chief adviser to the president

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⁵⁴ Vuchinich and Emmert 1991; Drezov, Gokay and Kostovicova 1999.

⁵⁵ Bieber, F. and Daskalovski, Z. (2003) *Understanding the War in Kosovo*; London: Frank Cass: p.3

⁵⁶ Malcolm, N. (1998) *Kosovo: a short history*; London: Macmillan. Vickers, M. (1998) *Between Serb and Albanian: a history of Kosovo*; London: Hurst; Mertus, J. (1999) *Kosovo: how myths and truths started a war*; Berkeley, Calif. London: University of California Press; Judah, T. (2000) *Kosovo: war and revenge*; New Haven; London: Yale University Press: p. 4-9.

⁵⁷ Kosovo had a different constitutional status from that of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnia was one of the six republics that made up the original Yugoslav federation whereas Kosovo had the lesser status of an autonomous province within Serbia. In theory, the constitutional difference – between Bosnia as a republic and Kosovo as an autonomous province – denies Kosovo the authority to decide its own future

without reference to Serbia. Hence, while Bosnia had a right as a republic to secede from the federation, Kosovo had no such right.

⁵⁸ Judah, T. (1997) *The Serbs: history, myth and the destruction of Yugoslavia*; New Haven; London: Yale University Press; Doder, D. (1999) *Milosevic: portrait of a tyrant*; New York: Free Press.

⁵⁹ By 1992 Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia had seceded, leaving only Serbia and Montenegro within the Federation.

⁶⁰ Voter approval for the Kosovo constitution was 99% on a total turnout of 87%. *Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2000*: p.44.

⁶¹ Clark, H. (2000) *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*. London: Pluto.

⁶² International Commission on Kosovo 2000: 55-64.

⁶³ 'Kosovo's Elusive Peace' *The Economist* February 25 1999

⁶⁴ Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe 2000.

⁶⁵ International Commission on Kosovo 2000 304. The commission compiled their figures from published and non-published information given to them by some two dozen sources, including the Humanitarian Law Centre, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, the International Organisation for Migration, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). For a complete list see Ibid: 301-02.

⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, Paragraph 10.

⁶⁷ Ibid: Paragraph 11e.

⁶⁸ Subsequent municipal polls were held in November 2002

⁶⁹ Besnik Pula 'The UN in Kosovo: Administering Democratization' Bieber and Daskalovski eds (2003): p. 204-6

⁷⁰ Author Interview, Prishtina, October 2002

⁷¹ Author Interview, Prishtina, October 2002

⁷² Author Interview, Prishtina, October 2002

⁷³ International Peace Academy *Kosovo in Limbo: State-Building and 'Substantial Autonomy'*

⁷⁴ Author Interview, Freetown, January 2003

⁷⁵ According to the United Nations Human Development Index

⁷⁶ Kaplan, R.D. (1996) *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century*; London: Papermac: p.32-47.

⁷⁷ Kaplan 1996: p.46

⁷⁸ 'Soldiers of Mercy', *The Economist*, 16 May 2002

⁷⁹ Reno, W (1995) *Corruption in State Politics in Sierra Leone*; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: p. 37-44

⁸⁰ Cartwright, J (1978) *Political Leadership in Sierra Leone*; London: Croom Helm: p. 276

⁸¹ Ibid: p. 279

⁸² Author Interview, Fourah Bay College, January 2003

⁸³ One academic has coined a memorable phrase to describe the formless allegiance of many of the military and militia units involved in the conflict. He hybridises two words describes some actors as ‘sobels’ – soldiers by day, rebels by night.

⁸⁴ ‘Blair’s Good Guys in Sierra Leone’, *The Guardian*, 7 November 2001

⁸⁵ Richards, P (1996) *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone*; Oxford: James Currey: p. 174

⁸⁶ ‘Foday Sankoh’, *The Guardian*, 31 July 2003



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- <http://www.unu.edu/capacitybuilding/foodnutrition/cornell.html>

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