

Peaceful Dialogues Over West Papua: the Design of a Way Forward

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Vision of a Society, Purpose of a Paper

A vision of a society in which policies to promote peace with justice contribute to and depend on relationships characterized by enjoyment of personal security prompts this paper. Such an interdependence of policies and relationships is inherent in the attainment of human rights in every walk of life. To achieve this goal would involve bolstering the status and security of women and children. It would include the promotion of an economy which recognized a right to work and in which employers

acknowledged responsibility for internationally acceptable workplace standards, as in the International Labour Organization's (ILO) core principles. These are a few of the specific issues which are itemized later in this paper and which, if addressed, would facilitate steps towards the attainment of peace with justice.

A statement of vision serves several purposes. It provides the picture which motivates those committed to peaceful dialogue. It foreshadows the issues which have influenced West Papua's recent past - such as transmigration and militarization - and which will affect its long term future - as in the promotion of a fair and appropriately resourced education system. Most important of all, this vision emphasizes that parallel to and long after the completion of negotiations about forms of government, it will still be imperative to maintain dialogue about quality of life, the tolerance of difference and respect for human rights.

Consistent with this vision of a society committed to peaceful dialogue to solve problems, this paper seeks to promote exchange of views regarding the conflicts within West Papua, between Indonesia and West Papuan leaders and between all groups who are motivated to facilitate the best interests of all the peoples of the Indonesian archipelago. It is a discussion paper. It is intended to be a catalyst. Following readers' responses it will need to be revised so that a way forward over West Papua can include the views of those with common interests but different perspectives. We start this process by outlining the philosophy of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, at the University of Sydney, where this 'West Papua Project' is located.

Towards A Culture of Prevention

Reactions to troubles in West Papua imply that Australia and Indonesia share a common policy, namely that the territorial integrity of sovereign States must always be respected and protected. Such a policy suggests an either/or approach to solving a problem: either a status quo is supported by diplomatic, police and military means, or chaos results. This implies that in the conflict over the future of West Papua there is little to negotiate other than respect for the sovereignty of a State, in this case Indonesia. .

There is an alternative to such a policy. It has been referred to as principled negotiation (Fisher & Ury 1988), or as a means of transcending differences by going beyond predictable incompatibilities and finding 'raw material for new acts of creation' (Galtung 2000, p. 51). In the case of a project designed to promote peaceful dialogue, the skills required to 'transcend' conflicts will be used in dialogue between parties with different interests. Promotion of dialogue will be dependent as much on a philosophy as on a policy. It will be nurtured by the theory and practice of conflict resolution (Burton 1990) and conflict transformation (Lederach 1995). By facing the humanitarian challenge of building a 'culture of prevention' - as advocated by the UN Secretary General and others (Annan 1999; Costy & Gilbert 1998)- it will also aim to prevent the enormous loss of life which has characterized recent political conflicts, as in East Timor.

Practicing Non-Violence

The philosophy and practice of peaceful dialogue has many strands and assumptions. A main assumption is that the philosophy, language and skills of non-violence are crucial not only to the conduct of principled negotiations but also to the implementation of any agreements. Non-violence refers to liberating and creative behaviour which contributes to understanding, influence and inspiration in politics and in interpersonal relationships

(King 1992; Suu Kyi 1995). Such conduct does not countenance the harmful use of force. It could be expressed through language and other symbols, through the solidarity of alliances, or through personal example. The more negotiators and implementers of agreements are familiar with the values and practice of non-violence, the more likely that peaceful dialogue can be initiated and sustained.

Insight into the philosophy of non-violence can be derived from Mahatma Gandhi's ideas and principles. 'I am convinced', he wrote, 'that a non-violent society can be built only on the foundation of harmony and cooperation, without which society is bound to remain violent' (in Brown 1989, p. 319). He encouraged his followers to be peaceful and courteous in their exchanges with opponents. He built understanding through the clarity of his communication and the influence of his example. Consistent with his emphasis on expressions of non-violence, he never failed to express gratitude, either for unexceptional exchanges or for hospitality and other acts of kindness.

The philosophy, language and practice of non-violence provides a foundation for the promotion of peaceful dialogue in relation to West Papua. The assumption that problems will need to be constantly defined and re-defined will build on that foundation. Little should be taken for granted. For example, what is meant by Indonesia, what is meant by West Papua? What are interests of different peoples and how do they conflict? Those questions pose others. In relation to the Indonesian archipelago, what is meant by 'international needs' or by 'Australian interests'? The task of defining the problem is beginning to look far more complicated than an either/or view which presupposes an alignment of forces to promote West Papuan independence, or to protect Indonesian sovereignty.

Practicing Conflict Resolution

A technique in conflict resolution is to ensure that participants do not perceive one another in terms of a stereotype image of an individual or of an organization. Identifying and confounding stereotypes is a significant step in conflict resolution, hence the importance of airing the stereotypes which proponents of peaceful dialogue over West Papua will have to address. Stereotypes which relate to the West Papua conflict are as follows:

- Members of the OPM (Independence Movement) only believe in armed struggle
- The West Papuan Project is a stalking horse for independence
- Papuans are Melanesians who have nothing in common with Indonesians
- Indonesians are only familiar with the language of force
- Javanese are inscrutable and cannot be trusted

- Papuans are primitive people who cannot manage their own affairs
- Papuan women have no experience of politics and therefore have no right to participate in development
- The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs is inflexible

In the course of meetings, other stereotypes will emerge. As dialogue occurs and trust is developed, those stereotypes will need to be identified and refuted. They can then be recalled as stereotypes and alternative, more nuanced understanding developed.

The acknowledgement that even experts may not know what the problem is, becomes apparent in another step towards peaceful dialogue: the task of identifying the main players and their interests. The analogy of theatre, stage and roles is appropriate. Instead of an either/or picture of two lead players and two ways to go, - a sort of death or victory drama - a more complex picture emerges. In this picture there are multiple players whose perspectives may have little in common. However, benefits usually come from a willingness to test uncertainty.

Identifying multiple perspectives is likely to produce different answers to that earlier question, 'what is the problem?'. The military representatives of Indonesia and the diverse Indonesian based non-government and human rights organizations can be heard. Within West Papua the perspectives of members of the provincial government may differ from the aspirations of leaders of the independence movement whose views are unlikely to be shared by West Papuans who have settled from other parts of Indonesia. Even corporate interests cannot be assumed to be the same. The mining interests of Freeport may not be the same as those of Korean logging companies. Corporate interests usually seek security in order to do business. Beyond that priority lie myriad operators and interests. Some take a short term view. They want to take resources and get out. The Freeport company and allied mining investors could have a different time span. There are other complications. Negotiations will not only have to address the culture of commerce, they often have to be conducted with interpreters and in different languages.

If we pause to consider the notion 'Australian interests?', the variety of stage sets and the apparent large number of major and minor players becomes apparent. There is a point of view in the Department of Foreign Affairs that West Papua should be referred to as Irian Jaya, its Indonesian name (Burchill 2001). People in positions of responsibility should use the politically correct name. Yet a policy of peaceful dialogue presupposes a test of the question, what does 'responsibility' mean? Who is responsible and by what principles will their conduct be judged.?

There are numerous players within Australia who could be consulted in the discussions about peaceful dialogue and in subsequent education and training about non violent conflict resolution. These will include numerous ex-patriate West Papuans, representatives of Australian NGO's and members of the Department of Foreign Affairs, in particular those who sit on the Indonesian desk. Whatever the outcome of the next Australian Federal election, representatives of all political parties should also be encouraged to participate in the dialogues about just and peaceful settlements in West Papua. Such participation will contribute to a growing awareness of the philosophy and language of non-violence and the enrichment which this knowledge provides in developing any aspect of a civil society.

Difficulties with Peaceful Dialogue

Commitment to the view that foreign policies are manageable in relation to the known boundaries of preferably large nation states, has also carried with it the notion that the participants to be consulted in any negotiations about boundaries should be limited to leaders and other key players, thereby excluding many valuable conferees. A strong commitment to a rational, 'realpolitik' view of international relations discourages the consultation of diverse interests. Such scepticism may be expressed in the bemused question, 'what has it got to do with them ??' or, more pointedly, 'what has it got to do with you' ??

In discussions about West Papua, the preoccupation with defending Indonesian boundaries makes it difficult to consider strategic and policy alternatives. Yet once the risk is taken of suspending assumptions about the inviolate rights of sovereign states, the attractiveness of diverse negotiations to promote peaceful dialogue becomes apparent. We are discussing another way of thinking, plus the language and skills that accompany any breaking of new ground. Yet experts on Indonesia have been somewhat dismissive even of the proposition that negotiation about the fortunes of all the peoples of West Papua merits consideration. In a recent (March 2001) Insight programme on SBS Television, a leading Australian foreign affairs journalist said that only 'dopey left wing academics' would countenance diverse groups being involved in discussions about the crises facing Indonesia. Several lessons can be learned from such a comment. The use of pejorative adjectives is not consistent with the philosophy and practice of non-violent conflict resolution. Respect for opposition and courtesy towards those who do not agree with you is a crucial part of the process. Nevertheless, awareness of the strong feelings provoked by any discussion about the future of Indonesia, will add to the political literacy of those who want to embrace peaceful dialogue.

Opposition to proposals about peaceful dialogue has also been expressed through the view that 'the West Papua project is merely a stalking horse for independence?'. That charge can be respected yet refuted. If negotiations for peace are to gain trust, in particular between people with opposing views, multiple participants have to be included and serious attention given to their perspectives. Negotiations with many parties will be initiated. For example, the question about the status and rights of women in West Papua merits attention even if West Papua remained a part of Indonesia for another century, or became independent tomorrow. Quality of life and associated human rights issues, in particular for the most vulnerable, should be an immediate focus for negotiations. The building of peace with justice in West Papua could be a model for other societies in South East Asia provided the relationships between men and women are characterized by non-violence in the interests of justice. Principles related to the human rights of indigenous Papuans are the same principles which apply to the rights of migrants to West Papua. Human rights principles also apply to controversies over the treatment of West Papuan refugees in camps in Papua New Guinea. The incidents reported on March 9th of PNG police beating up West Papuan refugees who then were hospitalized show an issue ripe for investigation and

problem-solving irrespective of longer term political questions about the status of a State.

Difficulties with the idea of peaceful dialogue are not confined to Indonesians and representatives of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs. Leaders of the independence movement in West Papua acknowledge having profound difficulties in speaking and acting as negotiators for peace. Their identity has been sustained for so long by the certainty of who they were against, that the idea of compromise may feel like betrayal. Atrocities committed against West Papuans, including the stripping of natural resources by foreign companies does make it difficult to countenance peaceful dialogue let alone trust in those once perceived as enemies.

These dilemmas have been experienced by West Papuan leader John Ondawame. He knows the wisdom of peaceful dialogue but is cautious about the full implications of such a policy. The language and skills to negotiate solutions to minor as well as major issues have not always been a priority for West Papuan leaders. However, workshops to be run by the West Papua Project in 2001 will provide opportunities for all the parties interested in the future of West Papua to become confident about the means and meaning of peaceful dialogue.

In terms of his perceived integrity as a leader, John Ondawame faces another problem. His colleagues at home in West Papua may think that the West Papua Project's emphasis on non-violent conflict resolution implies that the past is to be forgotten. That is not the case; memory can help in the design of a way forward.

As with an actor who must learn new roles and thus avoid being stereotyped as always playing the hero and never the villain, the adoption of new philosophy and the script that accompanies it is not easily learned. The proposition that years of no compromise can be replaced by an appreciation of the complexity of negotiations is easy to write about but seldom easy to adopt. It is as difficult for West Papuan leadership to ponder the merits of peaceful negotiation with many players over several issues as it has been for Indonesian leaders to make the transition to democracy. Without wanting to underestimate the personal difficulties of West Papuan leaders, it is important to emphasize that this transition has occurred before. Leaders for reconciliation ? such as Nelson Mandela, Xanana Gusmao and ? as reported recently ? Aung Sann Suu Kyi (Baker 2001) - have negotiated with their opponents. Such negotiation gives a chance to redefine problems and possibilities. It provides an opportunity to develop trust. The potential for so doing lies within the aspirations of the West Papua project.

Access to the Participants

Obtaining interest in training to develop skills of conflict resolution regarding issues in West Papua requires careful negotiation. Discussions about the merits of peaceful dialogue have to be placed on an agenda to which most of the major players agree. How to consult about that agenda is a question of obtaining access to different prospective participants. It is not too difficult to gain the interest and support of some. It remains very difficult to communicate with those who are not in Australia, or who oppose the idea that there is anything to be negotiated.

Gaining access is akin to building networks, a process which takes time. What is interesting about this process is that it is not merely about obtaining agreements to take part in a training programme on a particular time, day and place. To gain people's willingness to give up time to participate in training about peaceful dialogue, negotiation occurs over the phone, in face to face meetings and in correspondence. In conducting those discussions in the early months of 2001, other issues have arisen such as the need for Australian NGO's to be conversant with each agency's views. There also needs to be a resolution as to which Indonesian NGO could become partners in the project. With every respondent the point has to be stressed that peaceful dialogue is not a campaign for independence by another name.

Efforts to communicate with interested parties have uncovered various obstacles to the project's success. They include the high cost of bringing participants from West Papua to Australia or vice versa. In the case of travel from West Papua, there is the added obstacle of obtaining a visa, virtually the permission of Indonesian authorities to participate in a problem-solving workshop over which such authorities may have little control.

With those obstacles in mind it is still possible to identify prospective participants and the degree of difficulty of obtaining their interest and participation. Consistent with the theory of cognitive dissonance, there are participants already close in their understanding of the significance of peaceful dialogue, while others are far removed and may find it difficult to shift their views. In the following list, access refers primarily to knowledge and acceptance of the value of peaceful dialogue but also to the physical ease of attending meetings. In the list prospective participants are divided into three groups in terms of relatively easy access, not so easy and difficult. Such a division gives an idea of points of contact for negotiation which will differ over time.

Relatively Easy Access

- Staff from Australian NGO's
- Expatriate West Papuans living in Australia
- Representatives of the International Commission of Jurists
- Representatives of University based peace & human rights organizations
- Representatives of State/Federal Parliamentary groups for West Papua
- Representatives of the media

Not So Easy Access

- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs officials
- Representatives of the West Papuan Presidium in Jayapura
- Representatives of NGO and human rights organizations within Indonesia
- Australian company staff who have business interests in West Papua
- Representatives of OPM/ Free Papua movement

Difficult Access

- Staff from the Government of Indonesia
- Staff from the Indonesian military
- Representatives of Freeport mining company

- Representatives of logging companies based in West Papua
- Representatives of the Papua New Guinea police and military
- Financial agencies, the World Bank, the IMF and the Asian Development Bank
- Representatives from the South Pacific Forum
- Other interested governments: USA, Japan, New Zealand, Holland, Sweden, Norway Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland
- Representatives of the United Nations

This list is not exhaustive. It will be subject to discussion and amendment. Assumptions about the easy access group may prove to be false. Access to Indonesian government representatives may turn out to be easier than expected. The case for peaceful dialogue will be affected by the enthusiasm and clarity of those who communicate the message. In this respect it is significant to acknowledge the traits of the world's significant peace negotiator, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. He is regarded as someone who displays old world courtesies of exquisite tact and mysterious powers of persuasion. William Shawcross observed, "He (Kofi Annan) has this uncanny ability to get people to shift their position without feeling threatened or without any tension" (Shawcross, 2000, p. 192). The qualities of Kofi Annan as a peace negotiator will be raised in conflict resolution training.

Substantive and Specific Issues

Thinking of strategies requires anticipation of diverse interests and issues. When the idea of positive peace ? peace with justice ? is mooted, this throws up issues which would not have been on an agenda if negative peace ? the mere ending of hostilities - was being proposed. Positive peace means peace with justice. This would be a focus of peaceful dialogue between Indonesian, West Papuan and other parties to this dispute.

Visions of civil societies and the means of building them are another way to express the ideal of peace with justice. This is also a reminder that the language being used in dialogues for peace ? such as conflict resolution, positive peace, justice, non-violence, civil society ? affects perceptions and aspirations. Add to this point the reminder that the connotation of words varies not only from one language and culture to another but also from context to context at different points in time. The interpretation of words and other symbols would be among the topics to be addressed in conflict resolution training programmes.

Ideals of positive peace and civil society have produced the following list of substantive and specific issues. The substantive issues envelop the specific ones: the former are deep seated and can seldom be changed, at least not in the short term. Specific issues can be addressed on an almost daily basis. For example, an understanding of the history of West Papua (substantive issue) affects interpretations of current controversies (specific issues) over human rights. The process of militarization affects prospects for a policy of non-violent development.

This list is compiled on the premise that the building of trust and the due respect for human rights will continue to be a matter for negotiation long after controversy over West Papua's form of government may appear to have been resolved. We also

acknowledge that the distinction between substantive and specific issues may need to be challenged.

Substantive Issues:

- Militarization
- Transmigration
- History, including the 'denial politics of the 1960s'?
- Human rights
- Democracy
- Foreign ownership and development of natural resources
- Environmental protection
- Self determination
- Reporting by the media
- Territorial integrity

Specific Issues

- The status and treatment of women
- The rights and treatment of children
- The land rights of West Papuans
- The human rights of non-indigenous West Papuans
- The human rights of West Papuan refugees in Papua New Guinea
- Relationships between indigenous and non indigenous West Papuans
- Relationships between different West Papuan communities and foreign companies
- Environmental protection interests v. economic development proponents
- West Papuan independence leaders v. proponents of autonomy
- The role of the police and the military: is law and order the same as respect for human rights ?
- Reconciling different ? Christian, Islamic and animist ? religious allegiances
- Reconciling differences between ethnic groups
- The development of education resources for all the peoples of West Papua
- The availability of employment in a sustainable economy

Development Framework and a Time Scale

The means of promoting peaceful dialogue were originally conceived in terms of a series of educational events, as in workshops to train participants in the knowledge and skills of conflict resolution. The planning of those workshops indicated not only that training in conflict resolution was premature but also that the conception of this project as an education and training programme was inappropriate. It was politic to consult widely with a view to testing prospective colleagues' interest in and understanding of peaceful dialogue. As of April 2001, the importance of gauging interest before establishing any training workshops has been re-emphasized. Once that interest has been established, the responsibility for the objectives and content of training programmes can be shared. Such a process is consistent with principles of community development (Biddle & Biddle 1966; Jayasuriya & Lee M 1994; Marris & Rein 1973).

The adoption of a development paradigm or framework is both apt and helpful. For example, every exchange about the management of the project can be recorded and acknowledged as having the potential to affect the core staff's understanding of peaceful dialogue. Conversations about the meaning of self-determination have shown that this crucial concept is not as straightforward as may first appear. Peaceful dialogue has occurred in different cultures and contexts, but the adoption of this approach and the means of implementation need to be determined by the many peoples affected.

Making explicit the significance of the development framework has had two immediate effects.

(i) Bringing people together to share their views on the need for peaceful dialogue over West Papua and the means of achieving it. That coming together would explore the next steps, including the proposals for training in conflict resolution.

(ii) The mapping of a different time scale of events from that originally planned when the West Papua project was first mooted a meeting in International House in Sydney in April 2000.

In the last eight months of 2001, two different kinds of workshops will take place. These workshops will have common objectives but different participants. The workshops will aim to give participants the opportunity to express their interests in West Papua, their understanding of peaceful dialogue and their views of ways to achieve such a goal.

A first workshop will concentrate on *coalition building for peace within Australia*. It will include West Papuans resident in this country. That workshop - to take place in Sydney on June 1st - will build networks and explore whether consensus exists in Australia about the merits of peaceful dialogue over West Papua. That workshop will identify key people, key organizations and their resources.

Participants in the second workshop in November will include almost entirely West Papuan leaders and will focus on a *peace building capacity within West Papua*. It is proposed to bring those participants to Sydney with a view to giving them the opportunity to share their views of current events. Emphasizing respect for their grass roots views is as consistent with the nuances of conflict transformation as it is with a paradigm of community development. In this respect participants in this second workshop will be asked to identify the cultural context of conflicts and to consider the values and perspectives required to promote non-violence as expressed in different languages and cultures. It is assumed that a successful workshop will leave participants better equipped to build capacities for peace in West Papua.

The compilation of a report - in December 2001 - which would evaluate the process and outcome of these workshops forms the third event in the 2001 calendar for the West Papua Project.

Towards Peaceful Dialogue

As for the events of 2002, a lot will depend on the outcome of deliberations in those consultation stage workshops in 2001.

Building networks of understanding and influence will affect the evolution of this project. Processes of negotiation will involve representatives of all the peoples who must eventually live with the results of any settlement. It is not just elites in the halls of negotiation who will be making peace (Lynch 2000). Between Jakarta and Jayapura and beyond, lies a world of many perspectives and truths. The promotion of peaceful dialogues will include diverse peoples, pay respect to their ways of thinking and take seriously the issues which affect the quality of their lives. These participants will identify different priorities for negotiation. They will help to finalize a time scale and an idea of what could be achieved by what date with the involvement of which players.

Although careful attention to principles of development has been emphasized, this does not detract from commitment to the value of education about the philosophy and practice of non-violence and thereby the means of negotiating peace with justice. Coupled to this is the view of the authors of this paper that literacy about human rights and the means of attaining them remain an indispensable part of any process of building and keeping a peace.

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