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THE NATURE, STRUCTURE, AND VARIETY OF PEACE ZONES

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Introduction

Many times, in a protracted, intractable, and violent conflict, it is more useful to initiate measures to mitigate that conflict—short-term violence reduction—than to resolve or transform it. One of the most important methods of conflict mitigation is through what is called institutionalizing conflict, that is, allowing conflict to continue within rules. A concrete example of this is through the establishment of zones of peace (ZoPs) (Mitchell and Nan 1997).

ZoPs are usually defined territorially (although there are instances where the concept is more abstract, such as a whole community of people). Within them, by agreement, certain acts are prohibited and/or other acts encouraged. It is important to mention that while ZoPs are visualized in many different contexts, such as interstate border zones (such as the one between Peru and Ecuador), maritime trade zones, and nuclear free zones, the zones on which we focus here are those that are created within states in areas where there is or has been an armed, violent conflict. This excludes the intrastate contexts of intermittent, urban violence (such as gang violence or riots) and contexts in which the purpose is something other than a way out of the violence.

In this context of intrastate violent conflict, it is possible to create a typology of ZoPs on various dimensions—by whom they have been initiated, the degree of formalization of the zone, its geographical extent, or other criteria. We believe that another useful means of classification is to examine ZoPs in a temporal context. This implies that

we should examine the creation, implementation, and sustainability of these zones with reference to their relationship to the level of peace or violent conflict in the surrounding society. While this classification does not cover all instances of ZoPs, it does provide a broad overview through which most instances can, to some extent, be categorized.

Zones of Peace, before, during, and after Peace

If we think about a ZoP in this temporal fashion, it seems reasonable to examine three different time frames within which a zone might be created. The first is a ZoP created or maintained during a period of violent conflict. The primary purpose of this type of zone is to ameliorate or remove the effects of the conflict from the local population. The characteristics of this type of zone are, in general, marked by the goals of protecting noncombatants, attempting to establish policies and practices of neutrality with regards to both (or all) sides in a conflict, and seeking to prevent or restrict the types of violent activities taking place within the zone. Short-term versions of this type of zone may be established for the purpose of delivering aid or conducting humanitarian operations, such as administering vaccines.

The second temporal type of zone is one that is established during a peace process or its implementation. This type of zone may be used as a safe area for one or more of the combatant groups. It may also serve as a safe zone for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former combatant forces. Such a zone is often limited in duration, either to the period of peace talks or to the period intended for the demobilization of forces. One example that lasted for some time was the area turned over to the FARC in Colombia during its negotiations with the Pastrana regime—the Zona de Distensión.

The third temporal type of zone is one that is established in the post-conflict environment. This type of zone attempts to address a number of issues, including those created by ongoing civil violence short of the type of civil conflicts that engender the first type of temporal zone. Some of the issues that can be addressed by a post-conflict ZoP include continuing human rights violations, criminal and gang related activities and a lack of economic and social development. The Local Zone of Peace in El Salvador (LZP) briefly described below (and covered more fully in Chapter 6) is a prime example of this type of temporal zone.

Finally, we examine those zones that do not fit clearly into the three categories described above. While most of these “special” zones do

exist during violent conflicts, we have chosen to place them in a separate section due to their focus on specific elements and individuals affected by conflict, such as children, sacred spaces, or temporally limited zones used for aid distribution or provision of health care to affected populations.

Safe Havens and Zones during Violent Conflict

ZoPs during violent conflicts and civil wars are the main focus of the ICAR Local Zones of Peace project. This is primarily due to the incongruity of having a location or zone of nonparticipation in the midst of a modern interstate or civil conflict. This section focuses on the structure and some of the successes and failures of attempts to create these zones in recent conflicts.

The Failure at Bosnia: UN Safe Havens

The UN declaration of a number of “safe zones” in Bosnia-Herzegovina came about largely as a result of efforts by Bosnian Serb forces to “ethnically cleanse” Muslims from the Drina Valley as a part of their strategy of eliminating all such communities from Eastern Bosnia. The first safe zone was authorized for Srebrenica on April 16, 1993 (UNSCR 819), demanding that “all parties and other concerned treat Srebrenica and its surroundings as a safe area which should be free from any armed attack or any other hostile act.” Subsequent safe zones were created for Tuzla, Sarajevo, Zepa, Gorazde, and Bihac on May 6, 1993.

The UN safe zones were designed to be protected areas where civilian populations, largely Muslim, would be safe from attacks and “acts of genocide” by Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces. Unfortunately, like their counterparts in Croatia, the safe zones in Bosnia provided only limited safety for their inhabitants and, in the case of Srebrenica, failed to prevent the massacre of nearly seven thousand Muslim males in 1995. Another major failure of the safe zones was their inability to protect the inhabitants from the actions of Serb paramilitaries, who often shelled the zones from nearby hills or stationed snipers to shoot at civilians. The United Nations attempted to address the former problem by declaring “weapons exclusion zones” around each of the safe zones and by interning some heavy weaponry around Sarajevo.

The most notable failure of the UN safe havens started with Serb retaliation for NATO air strikes designed to force Serbs to return heavy weapons removed from their internment areas. In retaliation, Serb paramilitaries took UN peacekeepers hostage, in effect nullifying their

ability to protect civilians from Serb forces. Following this, the United Nations and NATO refused to reinforce the peacekeepers and, within weeks, Serb forces stepped up attacks on the safe areas. These attacks culminated with the July 1995 capture of Srebrenica by the forces of Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladić, who rightly believed that NATO would not use air attacks to stop him from brushing aside Srebrenica's Dutch UN peacekeepers. Following this, several of the other safe zones fell before the United Nations and NATO vowed to draw the line, protecting Sarajevo and Gorazde with more troops and air power.¹

The Philippines

For many years the Philippines has been torn by armed internal conflict, the roots of which go back to the exploitative policies of the colonial powers. Since independence, successive governments have succeeded in alienating entire populations by failing to respond to their needs, the result of which has been that the poor have gotten poorer while wealth and power continue to be held by the privileged few. Economic and social discontent exploded into full-scale armed conflict in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Although the government crushed the insurgency, the roots of the conflict were not addressed, and in the 1970s the conflict revived. In 1972 martial law was imposed throughout the Philippines, but the economic deprivation of the majority continued. In 1986 the dictatorship of President Marcos was brought down by a nonviolent people's revolution. Since that time the country has been making a difficult and painful transition to democracy. The new government of President Aquino launched peace initiatives, but there were many hurdles to cross on the way (Garcia 1989).

It is in this "people's power" experience that one can trace the beginnings of the idea of local ZoPs in the country. In September 1988 the first such zone was declared in Naga City. Later, in 1992, the Sangguniang Panlungsod (Legislative Assembly) of Naga City passed Resolution No. 92-169 declaring the city a peace zone. This was followed by a series of peace zones being declared from the north to the south of the country. Some of the better known ones are those in Tulunan, Maladeg, Barangay Bituan, and North Cotabato.

In many ways the Filipino experience in developing ZoPs has been a pioneering one. In the Philippines the concept of ZoPs has always been that of a geographical area that community residents themselves declare to be "off limits to war and other forms of armed hostility" (Garcia 1997). In most of the initial ZoPs, the church had a major role

to play in initiating and maintaining them. The church was powerful in standing up to the government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The peace zones succeeded in creating a space for dialogue and in keeping the violence out, but more important, they achieved some success as a link between local and national peace efforts. This was especially made possible with the support that the peace zones achieved during the time of President Fidel Ramos. However, over a period of time these "first wave" peace zones became more distanced from the peace process at the national level between the government and the leftist New People's Army (NPA) (Arguillas 1999).

The peace zone in Tulunan recently celebrated fourteen years of existence. The church in Tulunan was actively involved in its creation and is still active today. There are other peace zones in the Philippines that have been sustained by the community for long periods of time (Elusfa 2004). Clearly, the Filipino experience is something of a success in terms of how communities can negotiate peace for themselves and thus make an important contribution to achieving durable and general peace through the establishment of peace zones. However, this experience has also shown that care must be taken to ensure that the zones remain the property of their local inhabitants and not the government or other forces, which would use them for strategic or tactical gains.²

Colombia: Zones and Communities; Associations and National Movements

Like the Philippines, Colombia has been held hostage by more than fifty years of civil violence. Also like the Philippines, one of the responses of ordinary Colombians living in the countryside to the constant civil war and the endemic corruption that always seems to follow has been a movement to withdraw from the conflict by creating a host of ZoPs, municipalities of peace, and even communities of peace that focus more on the people than on their geographic location. In fact, the use of peace zones in Colombia has become so extensive that it is possible to discern and describe them on two levels. The first is a traditional zone, which is confined to one locality and serves the population of one community. The second is an outgrowth of the first, namely, the creation of associations of local zones, which then use their combined power to support and educate one another and to influence the processes of conflict and peacemaking on a larger scale. Within this second level are nationwide organizations that provide support to municipalities and zones.³

Zones and Communities

Colombia currently has over a hundred individual zones or municipalities, with more being formed. Two of the most notable examples of individual or local ZoPs are the Samaniego Territorio de Paz, first established in 1998, and the Mogotes Municipal Constituent Assembly, established in 1997. Although these two zones are more recent than some others, they are distinguished by their association with REDEPAZ (the Network of Initiatives for Peace and against War), discussed further below.

The Samaniego Territory of Peace came about as a result of a confluence of events. In 1998 the town of Samaniego was holding both mayoral elections and participating in a national voting process by which citizens could register their preference for a negotiated solution to Colombia's armed conflict—the Citizen Mandate for Peace. The newly elected mayor was kidnapped by the ELN (National Liberation Army), one of the main leftist guerilla groups, but the following outcry among the town's residents forced his release. The mayor then invited the citizens to participate in the creation of a ZoP and contacted the national body coordinating local ZoPs, REDEPAZ, for organizational assistance (Rojas 2000, 16).

Like Samaniego, the triggering event for the creation of a ZoP in Mogotes was the invasion of the town by leftist guerrillas, who intended to try the town's mayor on charges of corruption. In response, two hundred people from the town and surrounding area gathered to form a Constituent Assembly and requested that the guerrillas release the mayor so he could be judged by the citizens. The mayor was subsequently dismissed, and the new mayor, José Angel Guadrón, implemented a series of communal reforms suggested by the new Constituent Assembly (Rojas 2000, 13).

The creation of the Constituent Assembly in Mogotes and its plan for peace was considered innovative and successful enough so that this community received a number of national awards and some level of international recognition. In addition, the success of Mogotes inspired REDEPAZ to propose an initiative entitled "100 Municipalities of Peace in Colombia," a project funded by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. This initiative was designed to expand the number of different types of ZoPs *experiencias* across Colombia as a method for combating the long-running civil war.

Associations and National Movements

In addition to the many local ZoPs, those created both before and after the REDEPAZ initiative, there are areas in Colombia where

groups of local zones have banded together to create associations to share information, generate moral support, and address issues on a province-wide basis. One zone, the Asociación de Municipios de Alta Ariari, was established close to the Zona de Distensión and consists of the municipalities of Castillo, Dorado, Guamal, Frente de Oro, Lejana, Cubarral, and San Martín. Another is the Asociación de Municipios de Antioquia Oriente, comprising twenty-three municipalities, including Sonson, San Luis, Carmen, and El Retiro. This association has held meetings with representatives of FARC and the ELN to discuss issues like the release of the governor of Antioquia and safe passage for peasants through roadblocks to get their produce through to markets in Medellín.

At the national level, in addition to REDEPAZ, formed in 1993 to coordinate peace efforts throughout Colombia, a number of institutions exist that promote the development of peace zones. These include Justicia y Paz (Justice and Peace) and the government-sponsored initiative REDPRODPAZ (the National Network of Development and Peace Programs). With the exception of REDPRODPAZ, these regional and national initiatives are institutions that respond to the wishes of localities that want to either establish ZoPs or to request assistance with coordination or other peace-zone-related activities. They help to ensure that the peace-zone movement in Colombia remains rooted in the principles of citizen-based peacemaking.

Peace Implementation: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Zones

The creation of DDR zones may not seem at first to be a part of the focus of our original project. However, we observed that many of the characteristics of a typical ZoP created during a conflict also serve to describe these cantonment zones designed for military or "rebel" personnel.

El Salvador's Designated Assembly Zones

While safe havens or conventional ZoPs were not established during the implementation of the Chapultepec peace agreement, some actions taken by the UN monitoring force did constitute something similar to the creation of safe zones for the disarmament and demobilization of Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) combatants. These zones, known as designated assembly zones (DAZs), were monitored by UN observers and members of El Salvador's military forces (Fishel and Corr 1998).

The DAZs were established as a part of the Chapultepec Accords, which were signed on January 16, 1992. Fifteen DAZs were established to oversee DDR activities by FMLN forces and were matched by a number of UN observers assigned to monitor the cantonment and the demobilization of a number of the Salvadoran military units.⁴

The DDR component was envisioned as facilitating the complete reintegration of the FMLN into civic life. Successful aspects included the induction of former FMLN members into the new National Police, of which they would make up 20 percent of the total (de Soto and del Castillo 1995). However, the slowness of the land-reform program, designed to redistribute land to former combatants, seriously endangered the DDR scheme. By September 1992 the failure of land reform had caused the FMLN to suspend its implementation of the demobilization agreement.

Although this type of monitoring and designated assembly zones for DDR were not the principal focus of our study of peace zones, it is worth noting the varied uses of safe areas, havens, and zones of peace and development employed to promote peaceful solutions, implement peace agreements, and as we describe below—and discuss in more detail in Chapter 8—support some of the long-term peace-building necessary to ensure the survival of peace agreements.

Aceh: Peace Zones before Peace

The peace zones or disarmament zones in Aceh appear unique in our analysis. Instead of being created during conflict by local communities or as part of the implementation of a comprehensive and concluded peace agreement, the peace zones in Aceh were established as an integral part of the ongoing peace process and were designed to be a confidence-building measure to help ensure the success of that process. Aceh's peace zones were established as part of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) signed at the end of 2002 between the insurgent Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) and the Indonesian government. COHA, however, was mainly an agreement for a cease fire and a framework for further negotiations; it was much less than a detailed and final peace agreement.

Our studies indicate that in other cases in which the main goals of establishing peace zones have been disarming, demilitarization, and demobilization, a formal cease fire has preceded the establishment of such peace zones. In Aceh, in contrast, the peace zones were to be together with the cease fire, although their main goals were still demilitarization and demobilization. The peace zones in Aceh would, therefore, be a prelude to DDR, for all of these activities were to take

place after the establishment of the peace zones but within those zones before they were to occur elsewhere in the province. The COHA contained a whole section on the establishment and maintenance of the peace zones in Aceh. Representatives of GAM, the Indonesian government, and Henri Dunant Centre representatives were appointed to special committees to monitor and administer sanctions should either party break any of the provisions of the agreement (Iyer 2003).

In the period between the signing of the COHA and February 9, 2003, when GAM was supposed to begin a phased disarmament process, seven peace zones were established. They were announced with great fanfare, and in the beginning it seemed they had served the primary purpose for which they had been set up. The violence in the peace zones dramatically decreased. In the meantime, international donors pledged that they would contribute to reconstruction and development in the peace zones first. Thus there was every motivation to get the parties committed to maintaining the peace zones. However, closer to the day when the disarmament of GAM was to begin, violence once again erupted on a large scale. In the following months leading up to May 2003, the cease fire and every other agreement between the parties were broken. Neither side showed any commitment to COHA. The Henri Dunant Centre was attacked and international peace monitors were hounded out of Aceh. COHA had failed, and the peace zones had collapsed.⁵

Zimbabwe/Rhodesia's Assembly Points

The 1979–80 assembly points in what was then Rhodesia are another example of the establishment of safe areas within which armed insurgents could hand in their weapons. The Rhodesian assembly points were small, geographically concentrated areas whose main purpose was the cantonment of insurgent armed forces leading to a cease fire, a political settlement, and final disarmament and demobilization.

Toward the end of 1979 the British government, which at that point continued to be formally responsible for the governance of Rhodesia, chaired peace negotiations between the insurgent Patriotic Front (consisting of the Zimbabwe African National Union and the Zimbabwe African People's Union) and the white-settler-dominated Rhodesian Front, which had actually—if illegally—governed that country since 1964. Independence for Rhodesia was the chief issue, together with the movement of power from the ruling Rhodesian Front to the majority-supported Patriotic Front. Accordingly, the first two phases of talks were devoted to the issue of independence and the transition of political power. The third phase of negotiations focused on the issue

of a cease fire. Part of the cease-fire agreement was the decision to create assembly points (Ginifer 1995).

Assembly points (also known as rendezvous points) were to be the concentration points for all guerrilla groups.⁶ In the meantime, the security forces would withdraw to their own bases. A period of one week was to be given to the forces to assemble, after which the cease fire would come into effect. Sixteen assembly points were agreed upon (a few of them located in the heart of Rhodesia) and the Patriotic Front forces began to assemble at these locations. At the same time, Rhodesian security forces began to concentrate at forty different bases spread all over the country. The cease fire was to be monitored by the Commonwealth Monitoring Force, which was composed of British, Australian, New Zealand, Kenyan, and Fijian troops (Davidow 1984).

There were, of course, minor skirmishes in the assembly points (the troops were never asked to disarm there), the cease fire was broken on occasion and ZANLA (the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army—the armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union) seemed to have moved some of its troops into Mozambique. ZANLA fighters were also suspected of burying many of their arms and walking into the assembly points with just a few. However, the establishment of assembly points, the containment of troops within the assembly points, and the declaration of the cease fire all went according to plan. The goal of containment before the cease fire was relatively successful (Renwick 1997).

Thus, in Rhodesia, the success of the assembly points can be evaluated in the light of their being set up as short-term, localized ZoPs with very specific objectives. Most important was the fact that, unlike in Aceh, demilitarization and demobilization were not included in the objectives of the assembly points. In short, the assembly points in Rhodesia, unlike the peace zones in Aceh, were not meant to be a part of the confidence-building measures.

Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Development

There are very few examples of post-conflict peacebuilding efforts that explicitly call for the creation of a "ZoP." One example revealed by our research was the LZP in El Salvador. We treat this example briefly here (it is covered in depth in Chapter 6). However, we believe that the uniqueness of this zone holds promise for other countries attempting to recover from the ravages of violent and protracted conflict or—perhaps with some modifications—in zones of poverty and crime in advanced industrialized states.

The LZP, centered on the southern coast of El Salvador, was declared in August 1998 by the Foundation for Self-Sufficiency in Central America and a campesino movement, La Coordinadora, which works to address poverty, violence, and other social issues in eighty-six Salvadoran communities. The overarching goal of the LZP was to create a culture of peace throughout the zone. In order to do this, the organizers of the LZP developed a comprehensive program aimed at (1) restoring human rights, (2) promoting peace and indigenous methods of conflict resolution, and (3) fostering the transformation of the organizational culture to reflect the aims of peace and democracy (Chupp 2003, 96).

According to both Mark Chupp and LZP publications, there are two primary peacebuilding activities that take place within the LZP. The first consists mainly of training to create a culture of peace. Using elicitive models of conflict intervention, the culture-of-peace program has held a large number of workshops to provide training in conflict mediation, transformation, and prevention for local community leaders, women's groups, and numerous others (Chupp 2003; Foundation for Self-Sufficiency in Central America 2001).

The second peacebuilding activity of the LZP's program focuses on involvement in a number of direct conflict interventions. The most notable has been a series of interventions with members of two local gangs whose members had been "repatriated" from Los Angeles. These interventions, conducted by Chench Alas, resulted in an end to violent conflicts between the two gangs, community projects involving gang members, and a redefinition of those members as "youths" instead of "gang members" (Alas 2000).

Economic development activities are also one of the main foci of La Coordinadora's efforts, with the LZP having been created to foster the conditions in which economic and social development can take place. However, it also seems clear that the culture-of-peace program, instituted as a component part of the LZP, has had an effect on the types of development engaged in by La Coordinadora. In some sense the focus on green technologies and sustainable development may be seen as complementary to the grassroots, elicitive focus of the peacebuilding initiative.

Overall, the complementary nature of the peacebuilding initiatives and the economic development initiatives may serve to strengthen each process. A peaceful environment allows for economic development to take place, and the ability of La Coordinadora to provide resources for economic development may assist in bringing parties to the table for peacebuilding and to encourage "buy in" to the culture-of-peace program.

Specialized and Limited Zones

In addition to what might be described as conventional ZoPs, designed to mitigate the conditions of conflict for a particular geographic community or to assist in the implementation of peace or post-conflict reconstruction, there are a number of types of activity that resemble peace zones but have nontraditional foci. Although we cannot review all of these in this chapter, three that are interesting for our purposes include the ideas of *personal* ZoPs, centered on particular persons or categories of persons; *site-specific* ZoPs that seek to protect particular geographic locations rather than the communities that inhabit them; and *limited* ZoPs that have specific goals and a limited duration, just long enough to enable those goals to be achieved.

Personal Zones: UNICEF and Children

The phrase *Children as zones of peace* is over two decades old, and the concept extends to providing for a variety of children's rights and protections. However, these rights assume a special meaning in a war situation. Hence, on our temporal scale we would tend to locate these personal zones as an unusual occurrence in the violent conflict phase.

The idea of children as a conflict-free zone emerged in the 1980s. This concept was first formulated by Nils Thedin of Sweden in a proposal to UNICEF. Even if the idea seemed idealistic in the beginning, it caught on, and the idea of protecting children from harm and providing them with humanitarian assistance became part of negotiations in many bloody conflicts (Bellamy and UNICEF 2000, 42). Subsequently, UNICEF appointed a special commission to investigate the situation of children in regions suffering from protracted armed conflict. As a result of the report published by this special commission in February 2002, UNICEF's Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict came into force as an amendment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Optional Protocol addresses the issue of forced conscription in two ways:

1. Prohibiting armies and armed opposition forces from involving children under eighteen years of age in armed conflict.
2. Banning the compulsory military recruitment of children under eighteen (Lendon 2001).

The 1996 report and the Optional Protocol have spurred the creation of many programs for dealing with the issues of children in

armed conflict, but the ways in which they are translated into action differ from program to program. The ways in which the concept of children as a zone of peace is executed often fall into one of four broad areas: (1) as an abstract or general statement supporting the idea of protecting children during armed conflict; (2) as a part of short-term, temporary ZoPs; (3) as a type of activity or process designed to protect children during conflict; and (4) through the creation of physical sanctuaries for children during conflict.

Two practical examples of such abstract principles arise in Sri Lanka and Nepal. Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. Initiated by the UNICEF office in Colombo, the idea of children as a zone of peace was discussed with a wide range of actors—the LTTE (Liberation Tamil Tigers of Elam), the Ministry of Defense, religious leaders, teachers, NGOs, and people affected by conflict—and a coalition of NGOs and prominent individuals was formed. This coalition decided that the initiative should be promoted as a concept but not as a program. After five months of consultation a best-practices booklet was created to explain the concept. Published in English, Tamil, and Sinhala, the booklet was widely circulated, and in 1998, when the UN special representative on children in armed conflict visited Sri Lanka, the initiative was launched. Since then, there have been many advocacy campaigns to promote the concept. The objectives of this program are noble, but its activities have been limited largely to advocacy and dissemination of information (Lendon 2001).

Another initiative is Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN). This initiative too has a long list of objectives and dos and don'ts where children and child-related institutions are concerned. Its activities include information dissemination, campaigning for consensus among warring parties, negotiating days of tranquility and promoting peace education in schools. Again, its concept of children as a zone of peace remains somewhat vague, and there have been no concrete actions in pursuit of such a goal (CWIN Nepal).

CWIN's biggest problem is translating the concept of children as a zone of peace into action. Overall, the initiative has had little success in getting the commitment of all or any of the armed actors. Those who support the idea cannot articulate it, for it is still abstract. Many others have not heard of the concept. A best-practices booklet is distributed to parents, children, and teachers who may be interested in the topic, but they are hardly members of the target audience of government officials, military officers, or members of insurgent groups.

While most temporary ZoPs are created for humanitarian aid or for health initiatives—and are discussed below—a few have been

designed specifically to benefit children directly, and will be briefly covered here. As with temporary zones, most of these zones have been negotiated by UNICEF or some other international third party.

UNICEF's first experience was in El Salvador in 1985. Extended negotiations with the government and the rebels resulted in securing three days of tranquility—both sides agreeing to a cease fire—during which a campaign was conducted to immunize children. More than twenty thousand health workers immunized 250,000 small children. These three days of tranquility became a regular feature in consecutive months and were repeated every year until the end of the war, six years later. This temporary “zone” benefiting children was replicated in Afghanistan during its civil war; in Uganda during the conflict between the government and the Lords Resistance Army; and in Sudan as a part of Operation Lifeline Sudan.

Two other instances of activities for children, described as zones of peace, have taken place in the Philippines and in Sri Lanka. The general idea behind these activities was to provide for recreation and safe spaces where children could also express their feelings about the conflict and achieve some measure of healing. Workshops in a camp in Davos City in the Philippines have been held to provide such opportunities for children. In addition, UNICEF supports a program in Colombia known as the Return of Happiness program. In this program more than four hundred institutions support and provide access to communications media so that children can voice their ideas directly. Through recreation and play the program helps children express their feelings and analyze events.

The final type of “zone” for children—the creation of sanctuaries—is best exemplified by the Butterfly Peace Garden project in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. This project, initiated by McMaster University, developed a space where children could indulge in a variety of activities and still be safe. The concept was designed not only to provide a safe place to play, but also to use that play for trauma healing. Approximately fifty children—chosen by their schoolteachers as being in emotional distress—arrive each program day and take part in therapeutic play over a ninety-day period. A bus, known as the Butterfly Bus, picks up the children from the school and takes them to the Butterfly Peace Garden (The Butterfly Peace Garden 2005). The organizers of the project garnered support from all of the warring parties, who allowed the bus to travel free of harassment and security checks (Chase 2000). This helped to make the project a success in terms of the sheer relief and enjoyment it brought to the children of Batticaloa and the surrounding area (Senanayake 2001).

Sacred Sites and Localities

A second type of specialized peace zone stems from efforts by various groups and institutions, both local and international, to protect sites considered to be of significant cultural or religious value. Members of these organizations argue that conflict and civil war take their toll not only on the people in the region but also on religious and spiritual places that have historic value and cannot easily be rebuilt or replaced. One organization advocating establishing this type of zone is the Zones of Peace International Foundation (ZOPIF), located in the state of Washington in the United States. ZOPIF is a nonprofit organization with the long-term vision of an evolving global culture of peace and a strategy of working closely with local people and in partnership with religious and spiritual leaders and with government authorities, all of whom recognize the importance of preserving certain historic sites for the future. ZOPIF has been successful in promoting the creation of protected sites in Bosnia and has proposed creating others in Sri Lanka.

One interesting case is that of the Madhu sanctuary in the Mannar district of northern Sri Lanka. The Catholic church in Madhu had become a place of refuge and sanctuary for Tamils displaced from their villages. For a long time this church was a symbol of safety for the residents of northern Sri Lanka. Interestingly, the church was considered sacred not just by Catholics but by people of all religious faiths because of its historical and spiritual significance. However, during a fresh outbreak of violence in December 1999 the church was attacked and destroyed. The LTTE and the Sri Lankan government blamed each another for this attack. Over forty people who had taken refuge in the church were killed, and many others were injured. This is an interesting but tragic case, where all the warring parties and the local people had an unwritten commitment to maintaining the church in Madhu as a sanctuary and a ZoP. Unfortunately, that unwritten commitment eventually proved inadequate (Rajendran 1999).

Limited Duration or Purpose: Operation Lifeline Sudan

Among the most prominent examples of limited ZoPs were the days of tranquility fostered by the UN-sponsored Operation Lifeline Sudan (discussed in detail in Chapter 9). This program focused on the use of two types of limited peace zones—corridors of peace and days of tranquility—in order to provide humanitarian relief supplies and health services to refugee populations affected by the second civil war in Sudan.

The corridors of peace program was established initially for one month to facilitate the unhindered delivery of relief supplies to needy areas. At first, the United Nations asked for a month-long cease fire, but this was rejected by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which did allow, however, the creation of eight corridors through which humanitarian aid and food relief supplies could move unhindered. This effort was successful enough to be followed by another initiative in 1994 in order to establish new corridors to transport vaccines and medical supplies to children following an outbreak of polio and measles (Galli 2001, 67). These were modeled on earlier efforts designed to create periods of peace in the civil war in El Salvador during which children could be vaccinated against disease (Shankar 1998, 32–33). As such, the aims and goals were limited to ameliorating conditions in Sudan that could lead to famine or outbreaks of disease, especially among children. Although many of these conditions were no doubt exacerbated by the thirty years of civil war between north and south, it does not appear that the goals of these peace corridors and days of tranquility extended beyond an effort to address immediate needs.

Such temporary zones were created essentially by pressure from the United Nations and the international community, but they were not forced on the local political actors. Instead, these groups were persuaded by the focus on purely humanitarian purposes, especially the later effort targeting the health of children, and by the limited scope and duration of the zones themselves. Although some have thought that these zones might prove useful in promoting broader peacemaking activities, the evidence to date is that little if any transference has taken place (Galli 2001; Shankar 1998). Indeed, one critic of Operation Lifeline Sudan has labeled the effort an inadvertent accomplice to the conflict, arguing that both the Sudanese government and the SPLA have manipulated the flow of supplies to enhance their own strategic objectives (Martin 2002). The context of this argument is mostly moral, and it confronts humanitarian aid organizations the world over. Essentially, the choice is often whether to persist in the delivery of aid to relieve suffering in a war zone or to accept that lives will be lost and hope that the burden of caring for the civilian population will force embattled parties to the negotiating table.⁷

Factors Influencing Success or Failure

In looking at each of these different types of ZoPs, it is possible to discern some of the factors that have contributed to their successes—limited in most cases—or to their more obvious failures.

Sponsorship/Ownership and Commitment

In terms of failure, the UN safe zones in Bosnia-Herzegovina are notable for a number of reasons. That they were instituted by international political authorities rather than by the inhabitants of the zones themselves is notable, but the fact that the warring parties to the conflict—especially the Bosnian Serb forces—were uninvolved in the decision to institute the zones seems more than likely to have contributed most to their instability and eventual failure.

The creation of the UN safe havens was an admirable project, brought to fruition by the concern of the international community. However, if there are any lessons to be learned from the failure of the majority of these zones to provide the promised safety, it must be that a ZoP established by outsiders may suffer from either a lack of will on the part of the outside implementer or—just as important—a lack of respect on the part of local combatants. Without these, especially the latter, it is unlikely to survive for long.

By contrast, the peace zones established in the Philippines and in Colombia were largely, if not wholly, driven by grassroots processes, with some logistical, practical, and symbolic support from national and international NGOs or funding organizations. The contrast between this grassroots support and ownership as opposed to the externally mandated zones in Bosnia and some of the examples of limited disarmament zones discussed earlier seems significant in terms of success.

In summary, then, an important difference seems to be the level of “buy in” the organizers of these zones obtained from the various warring parties. It is clear that the lack of buy in in Bosnia was a key factor contributing to the failure of the safe zones there, while the high level of local support obtained in the Philippines and Colombia contributed to success in terms of the ability to create a peace zone and to maintain it over a period of time. While the buy in for these citizen-based zones was never complete, unwavering, or long lasting for all of the peace zones and communities, it was clearly a key element and something all those involved worked hard to achieve and maintain.

Some of the same issues that affected peace zones established in the context of an ongoing, violent conflict also had an impact on the disarmament zones set up during negotiation stages in Aceh, Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, and El Salvador. Most important, the issue of buy in by the affected armed actors was a component that distinguished failure in Aceh from successes in the other two cases. That this was a key factor involves two aspects. The first was the degree of completeness of the peace plan created *before* the setting up of the zones. The second

was the degree to which the zones attempted to fulfill their main functions of disarmament and reintegration *before* an overall political settlement was achieved (this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8).

Another aspect of the ownership/sponsorship question that we can point to with some certainty is that localized zones that are established as part of a general peace process require the fully engaged efforts of the parties to the conflict. By contrast, the localized zones created by grassroots efforts and separate from any general peace process only need the buy in of local-level armed actors, such as local guerrilla leaders or army officers, as is often the case in both the Philippines and Colombia. Given that the main goal of zones established as part of a peace process is to affect all the armed forces of each party to the conflict at a national level, this higher level of necessary commitment is not surprising.

In each of our cases of specialized zones with limited goals and duration, the major factor determining success or failure seems once again to be the almost ubiquitous need for buy in by the warring parties. This, in turn, is most likely to be influenced by the notion that these zones do not present a major threat, given their limited purpose or duration. Also influential is the level of local, indigenous participation in the creation of the zone. A third factor that apparently influences buy in by armed actors—exemplified in the case of the Butterfly Garden in Sri Lanka and some of the zones centered on religious sites—seems to be the degree to which local initiatives address local needs and values that are also held by the parties to the conflict. With this point in mind, however, it is difficult to say why there have been different levels of success attending efforts to immunize children in El Salvador compared with similar efforts in Sudan. While one can clearly say that on some level Operation Lifeline Sudan has been a success, later efforts have at times been blocked by both government and insurgent forces. We are unable to determine why either party to this conflict would see a benefit in stopping or redirecting this aid, except for the possibility that each side might want the aid to benefit its own military forces rather than the civilian population.

Goals and Duration

One major difference between zones that appear successful and those that are clear failures is in their overarching goals and, linked to this, the duration that each seeks to achieve. In terms of our study's primary focus on peace zones set up during the violent stages of a conflict, it appears that the most successful zones are those that seek to address not only problems of external violence, but also many of the

social problems that nurture violent conditions, such as corruption, cultures of violence, and lack of economic or educational opportunity. ZoPs in the Philippines and Colombia are notable for not only addressing the long-running civil conflicts but also dealing with some of the issues—for example, of corruption—that gave birth to those conflicts and that, at times, have invited intervention from armed actors. This focus on the larger social structure and its connection to violence is best exemplified by the LZP in El Salvador, where the link between socioeconomic well-being and freedom from violence is made clear and explicit.

These examples involve ZoPs that are designed to endure for some considerable time with the hope that the existing situation—consisting of either civil conflict or grinding poverty and crime—will be ameliorated and eventually corrected. To some extent we can say that some of the examples we have examined have been successful to some degree, certainly so in terms of their ability to endure as ZoPs. Moreover, when we compare such examples to the UN safe havens in Bosnia, we can see some interesting comparisons. While many examples of peace zones and communities from the Philippines and Colombia were designed to address a host of problems, it is clear that the UN safe havens in Bosnia were designed to address only the issue of sanctuary from the civil conflict. One similarity between the two was the open-ended nature of their creation. Both are examples of zones that had no expiration date; they would exist for as long as the conflict existed. However, while the ZoPs in the Philippines and Colombia attempted to empower their constituents by addressing a large number of issues, the UN safe havens were barely able to maintain security, much less address issues of empowerment or psychological well-being.

On the other hand, peace zones that were set up as part of peace processes with the limited aim of aiding disarmament, or which had other limited and specific goals during ongoing violence, also involved limited duration—and in many cases can be viewed as successful. The DDR zones in El Salvador and Zimbabwe/Rhodesia sought to provide a safe space for the limited goal of concentrating combatants prior to disarming them and beginning to prepare them to return to civil society. They had definite start dates and were designed to be limited in duration (usually existing for between six months and two years). And yet there is the hardly encouraging example of the peace zones in Aceh, which were a poorly designed hybrid of a conventional ZoP and a DDR zone, with an unspecified number of goals—many of them lofty—plus an extended duration time.

One conclusion seems to be that—with the possible exclusion of the Butterfly Garden in Sri Lanka—there is a direct connection between

the range of goals for a ZoP (limited or expanded) and the optimum duration for that ZoP (short term or long term). Practically speaking, one should try to match the goals with the preferred duration when attempting to create a peace zone, bearing in mind that it may prove more difficult to establish a limited zone over a long period of time or to promulgate expanded goals for a zone whose duration is by its nature short—such as days of tranquility for health programs or safe zones for disarmament.

Conclusion

Returning to our initial argument that ZoPs can be seen as one attempt to mitigate violence in an ongoing conflict or to assist in the process of ending a conflict, one can clearly see that the cases mentioned above have had varying degrees of success. Some have managed to mitigate the effects of the conflict over a short period, while others have had a longer effect.

However, it is also apparent that many of these zones have aimed to achieve more than just withdrawal from or mitigation of existing conflicts. Some of the more intensive efforts in places like Colombia, the Philippines, and Aceh attempted to create social change or social justice and to expand the principles of positive peace beyond their limited borders. It is in connection to these issues that we believe another set of questions becomes important for study—questions of who initiated the zone, who participated in its creation and maintenance, and what governance structures and leaders existed in these zones.

In addition, we conclude that these factors of creation, structure, and direction play different roles depending on the temporal context of a ZoP. It seems clear that in peace zones during violent and destructive stages of conflict, a high level of participation and ownership is required by the local population, while it appears relatively less important to have considerable government support or direction. In fact, government involvement may prove detrimental to the zone's goal of maintaining neutrality among warring parties. The situation for disarmament zones is quite different, with such initiatives requiring active governmental and/or insurgent support, and possibly less support from local populations. Finally, recalling our single example of a post-conflict peace zone, it appears that a coalition of governmental and local actors is required to make the zone viable and allow it to carry out its activities successfully.

Hence, in beginning to answer questions about what makes for a successful peace zone or community, we would propose a combination of factors such as the ownership, leadership, and goals of a peace

zone, combined with the temporal position of that zone in relation to conflict and peace processes. Temporal position helps to determine the extent to which one factor might be more important than others in determining likelihood of success, even though we recognize that each situation is likely to be somewhat different from others.

We believe that the idea of a ZoP where ordinary people can stand up against the violence that affects their lives is an idea whose time has come. From the earliest days of searching for sanctuary, people have understood and yearned for places where they might be safe from violence. It is to be hoped that our analysis of these zones can assist in creating a sense of how that sanctuary might be established in many places and even in the most unpromising circumstances.

Notes

¹ For more details on UN safe havens, see Chapter 7 herein.

² For more details on the Philippine ZoPs, see Chapter 3 herein.

³ For more details on the Colombian experience, see Chapter 4 herein.

⁴ All references to the Chapultepec Accords are to the English version available on the www.usip.org website.

⁵ For more details on peace zones in Aceh, see Chapter 8 herein.

⁶ The rendezvous points were temporary places; the assembly points were permanent ones.

⁷ For more details on Operation Lifeline Sudan and the debate among humanitarian aid organizations, see Chapter 9 herein.

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3

PEACE ZONES IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Introduction: Defining Filipino Peace Zones

Zones of peace in the Philippines—or peace zones, as they are known there—are among the first examples of the phenomenon in general and, as predominantly “bottom up” expressions of local activism and empowerment, have provided a model for similar undertakings in other countries. Officially, they date back to the declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Naga City in September 1988, closely followed by declarations of peace zones in Sagada (November 1988), Tabuk (April 1989), Bituan (November 1989), and Cantomanyog (February 1990). Each zone was triggered by different events, and each took its own form, faced different obstacles, and enjoyed varying degrees of success in implementing its goals (Jolob 2001). However, they share many features, and thus it is possible to say that a peace zone is defined by the following six characteristics:

1. A Peace Zone is a geographical area within which war and any other forms of armed hostility may no longer be waged, and where peacebuilding programs will address roots and manifestations of conflict in the community.
2. A Peace Zone is declared by an agglomeration of groups and concerned citizens in the community which organizes itself as a constituency for the peacebuilding agenda.
3. A Peace Zone ranges in size from the area covered by a “purok” or neighborhood block (*kapitbahayan*) to a province.