

6. Aceh

Anomie is a context for various phases of Aceh's long conflict. Acehnese never granted full legitimacy to the Dutch or Javanese who they saw as internal colonialists. Neither The Netherlands nor Indonesia ever established stable, legitimate rules of the game in Aceh—nor did the feudal Acehnese aristocracy and sultan or the *ulamas* who purged the aristocrats. The Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM) strode into this context of unsettled legitimacy in power relationships. Yet GAM overestimated how anomic the situation was; its leadership believed Indonesia would fragment totally. It did not. Some GAM leaders became perceptive enough to sense that the Indonesian anomie that enabled GAM's popularity was ending, closing their window of opportunity.

This chapter repeats many themes of the previous ones. An Acehnese identity evolved to resist the anomic order of the external and internal colonial powers. Anomie also gave rise to motivational postures of disengagement and gaming the disintegrating rules of politics. Transmigration fuelled Acehnese resistance, so did Indonesian military crimes. Revenge again took over from more ideological grievances as a prime driver of the war. Emulation—particularly of East Timor—was again important. Again, there was ultimately a hurting stalemate and capitulation that sustained a new commitment to the state through top-down power sharing and a more bottom-up planning and development process.

Grievance over resource politics fuelled the conflict. A shift in the share of the resources cake from Jakarta to the province was the response. There were many unsuccessful peace processes before one succeeded, and local indigenous reconciliation and religious leadership of reconciliation were important. The peace was not led by a few great men but by a large pool of peacemakers; redundancy in resilient individual leadership for peace was imperative. While wide circuits of civil society animated peacebuilding, it was necessary to narrow the parties to a moderate middle who signed a workable peace in Helsinki. A sequence of peacemaking that was widely diffused, then narrowed and then diffused again seemed to deliver. Yet, as in most of our cases, we are left with reconciliation without truth. Prospects remain, however, for moving on to truth and reconciliation in Aceh.

Background to the conflict

Aceh before Aceh

The great Buddhist trading state of Srivijaya, founded late in the seventh century (Ricklefs 1993:3), dominated Sumatra, though its influence progressively retreated to the southern half of the island. Islam also began to have a presence in Sumatra more than a millennium ago in the period when thousands of Muslim merchants established a foothold in Canton, China. An Islamic state of Aceh at the north-western extremity of what is today Indonesia was established in the early sixteenth century. Before 1500, Aceh did not exist, probably not even as a widely diffused Austronesian language group. What became Acehnese culture and language were shaped by Indo-Chinese emigration, particularly of Chams after the fall of the Champa capital to Vietnamese arms in 1471 (Reid 2006a:7). Aspinall (2009:20) goes so far as to argue that before 1900 there is 'little evidence' of 'a widely shared, conscious Acehnese identity, and there is even less to suggest that such an identity was a basis of mobilization, even during war'. Acehnese mobilisation for war against the Dutch before the twentieth century was more in terms of an Islamic identity. By the mid-twentieth century, revolutionary war against the Dutch—the identity that motivated armed struggle—had morphed into a fused Islamic, Acehnese and Indonesian identity (Aspinall 2009:20).

Anthony Reid's (2006a) collection shows that, in the pre-colonial period, Aceh was connected more with the world of the Indian Ocean than with the world of the Java Sea. Indianising influences were initially Hindu and Buddhist and later Islamic, but there were also early influences from Burma, Indochina, China and from the Arab world (McKinnon 2006). By the mid-late first millennium CE, 'Indonesian' spices were noted in ancient Roman markets and Aceh was a stop on one of the trading routes that connected the archipelago with Europe via Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu to the west coast of India and on to the Persian Gulf (McKinnon 2006). The great discovery here was of long-distance travel across the Indian Ocean using the monsoon. The monsoon meant, however, that traders from the west could not sail back in the same season. Tamil guild visits for long stopovers in Aceh resulted in permanent settlement that redefined the ethnic composition of Aceh (McKinnon 2006). Tamil settlers might also have brought Islam. Later the Tamils brought many great Islamic scholars from the Arab world on their monsoon stopover voyages to a landfall in Aceh. Chinese history records trade with Aceh from the third century CE (McKinnon 2006:24).

Uleebalang versus *ulamas* versus the Dutch

The Sultanate of Aceh quickly became militarily powerful. In 1518, it defeated a Portuguese fleet, capturing many weapons (Reid 2006a:11). A century later, the feudal sultanate had a navy with galleys that carried 600–800 men, substantial artillery, cavalry and an elephant corps (Ricklefs 1993:34). Acehnese power reached its greatest heights during the 1607–36 reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. Subsequent centuries saw Aceh weakened by internal divisions, with power struggles recurring through to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The key division in the history of Islamic Aceh was between the *uleebalang* (an aristocratic caste) and the *ulamas* (Islamic scholars). The *uleebalang* emerged over time as hereditary feudal rajas. Initially this was a result of land grants, often to local trading entrepreneurs in gratitude for their loyalty to the sultan. Over the centuries, the *uleebalang* gradually became more powerful than the sultan, paying little tribute to the sultan in return for the sultan acknowledging their local authority. Effectively the *uleebalang* came to define the rules of the game and to control trade, particularly in pepper. Pepper was exported out of ports in the mouths of rivers that flowed through fiefdoms controlled by one *uleebalang*.

Uleebalang were often far too pragmatic for the *ulamas*, especially when they played political games on the side of European powers against the Islamic state. The *ulamas* viewed the *uleebalang* as too exploitative of their flocks and insufficiently attentive to Islamic principles of governance and commerce. The *ulamas* began to cultivate an Acehnese identity based on pride in being an Islamic state that was the ‘verandah of Mecca’—the greatest outpost of Islamic scholarship in the Far East. Aceh in their view had been responsible for the spread of Islam further east. In some Aceh periods, Islamic law was taken more seriously in certain respects even than in Arabia. In many ways, it was more severe. For example, penalties for consumption of alcohol in pre-colonial Aceh included ‘amputation of hands and pouring molten lead down the throats’ of those found guilty and debtors being liable to enslavement (Riddell 2006:43).

Banda Aceh continued to be a commercially strategic trading port and, by the 1820s, Aceh produced more than half of the world’s pepper (Ricklefs 1993:143). The 1824 Treaty of London guaranteed some independence for Aceh and freedom of British trade with Aceh. This was, however, within the context of Dutch political control of the Sumatran side of the Strait of Malacca and British control of the Malayan side. To the immediate south and within what became the province of Aceh, the Dutch finally achieved victory over the non-Acehnese animist–Hindu ethnic Bataks in the 1872 Batak War. Batak resistance continued intermittently until 1895, by which time the Dutch were successfully

Christianising the Bataks and suppressing cannibalism. As Dutch power was moving north in nineteenth-century Sumatra, Acehnese power was moving south. A clash was coming.

Dutch nervousness about Aceh's power was fired by intelligence that Aceh had appealed to the Turks for protection in 1869 after earlier diplomatic overtures to French Emperor Napoleon III. This also affected British thinking. The straits were critical to peaceful trade between India and China and much more. British thinking shifted to the view that full Dutch control of Aceh would better serve their interests than its control by a more formidable power such as France or the United States (Ricklefs 1993:144). The Dutch and British also shared concerns about piracy losses they were both suffering along the Aceh coast in an era when Aceh had no effective central government control of that coast. Several Anglo-Dutch treaties ceded total Dutch sovereignty over Sumatra; in return, the Dutch yielded the Gold Coast of Africa to Britain.

Diplomacy in 1873 over the possibility of an Acehnese-American treaty was the pretext for a Dutch bombardment of the capital, Banda Aceh. The invasion force of 3000 troops that followed was, however, pushed back into the sea. A second, larger invasion was more successful in late 1873 and 1874, but at a loss of 1400 men for the colonial army—many from cholera and other diseases. The Acehnese retreated from Banda Aceh to the mountains from which they waged an insurgency against the beleaguered capital for decades. The guerrilla war came to be led by the *ulamas*, who saw their chance to seize power from the *uleebalang*. Some of the old aristocrats threw in their lot with the Dutch. Under the leadership of the *ulamas*, the war acquired the flavour of a holy war to defend Islam.

In the early years of their limited control of the capital, the Dutch were losing 150 men a month to cholera (Ricklefs 1993:145). It was an extraordinarily costly and partial victory, requiring significant tax increases in The Netherlands to fund it. By 1878, the Dutch had lost 7000 men (Reid 2006b:99). Significant losses continued at a lower level for more than 30 more years. They were higher on the Acehnese side. Between 1898 and 1908, 20 000 were killed (Reid 2006b:101). By 1914, The Netherlands' most costly colonial war in human and financial terms was estimated to have seen 17 500 killed on the Dutch side and 70 000 Acehnese (Alfian 2006:111).

It was not until 1903 that the sultan surrendered. Decisive pacification of Aceh was accomplished only after several leading *ulamas* were killed in battles between 1910 and 1912. A new revolt broke out on the west coast of Aceh from 1925 to 1927, costing 100 lives (Reid 2006b:103), and there were some other sporadic regional revolts. Decades after the collective provincial war ended, the Dutch continued to be afflicted with individual acts of jihad: 'at least once a week on

average' there was a suicidal attack on a Dutchman by an individual Acehnese, the so-called '*Aceh-mord*' (Reid 2006b:103). This was not a problem for the Dutch elsewhere in the East Indies colony. Alfian (2006:111–17) concluded that the Acehnese fighting spirit was inspired in part by a set of poetic tales called the *Hikayat Perang Sabil*, which was usually read before going onto the battlefield. Among other things, it promised everlasting happiness for martyrs, delicious food, eternal marriage of martyrs to 72 beautiful angels and forgiveness by God of all the sins of 70 family members of the martyr. Alfian (2006:113) concludes that the defiant Acehnese identity nurtured by these poetic tales helps account for the large numbers of suicidal attacks on Dutch forces during the war by women and children, 700 of whom were killed in battle in 1904 alone, according to Dutch sources.

The first story [of the *Hikayat Perang Sabil*] contained a narrative of Abdul Wahid, a saint who sat in a discussion with some of the elders concerning the holy war against the Dutch [sic]. Others joined the discussion, while somebody read verses of the Qur'an. When verse 111 ('Lo! Allah has brought from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs' S. 9 al-Taubah) was being read, a young orphan stood up before it was finished. The verse affected his heart so deeply that he asked Abdul Wahid for permission to trade his life for paradise through the holy war. He went home immediately to get clothes, not just for himself but also for all of his friends. He spent all that he had to buy horses and weapons, which were distributed to his comrades, and set off with them and with Abdul Wahid to the holy war. In a dream during the journey, the young man saw an indescribable Heaven, full of gold and pearls, lavishly described in the text. He met beautiful angels, and got into intimate conversations with the most beautiful one, Ainul Mardiyah. When he woke, remembering the wonders of Heaven, he tearfully told Abdul Wahid about his dream, and conveyed his longing for Ainul Mardiyah. Abdul Wahid urged him to go to battle immediately in order to meet the angel without delay. He jumped on his horse, killed many infidels with great spirit, and died in the battle as a martyr. The angels welcomed him and took him to his heart's desire, Ainul Mardiyah. More than 20 pages of text were taken up with the beauty of Heaven, and of Ainul Mardiyah. The beauty of her yellowish white skin could not be compared with that of any woman in the world. Her calf shone under seven layers of cloth, her legs were like pure gold, and one could not gaze at her face for long without arousing desire. Her voice was as beautiful as the sound of a Persian violin and like melodies produced by a mythical flute, irresistible to men. (Alfian 2006:115–16).

A conflict about economic exploitation as well as identity

In the late nineteenth century, new oil drilling in the contested hinterland—the first by the company that ultimately became Royal Dutch Shell—heightened the economic importance of the war. The company located its head office in East Sumatra and piped the oil out of Aceh for distillation and export. In the minds of many Acehnese, the war for independence never ended. A century later, in 1971, large reserves of liquefied natural gas were discovered in North Aceh; control of these exports became a proximate factor in the late-twentieth-century wave of Aceh's long war for independence.

A structural grievance of the conflict from the late nineteenth century was that capitalists from outside Aceh exploited the wealth of the province and took the benefits elsewhere. There indeed was a conscious Dutch colonial policy of building up Batavia and Medan as infrastructure nodes for capitalist development (Sulaiman 2006:122). The first of the rapidly expanding palm and rubber plantations established in Aceh in 1908 followed this pattern, under a Belgian company, Socfin, based in East Sumatra. Perhaps of even greater consequence after the conquest of Banda Aceh in 1874 was that '[t]he first strategic move of those who sought to rule Aceh from Batavia/Jakarta was to cut off the region from the countries which had been its trading partners before 1873' (Reid 2006a:2). This replicated the dynamic we saw centuries earlier in Maluku when Ternate was impoverished by cutting it off from the Malaccan trading system from which it had flourished (Chapter 3; see also Acemoglu et al. 2004). Like Aceh, Ternate was forced to submit solely to the circuits of trade monopolised by the Dutch. The difference was the timing; it took three centuries longer to (temporarily) bring Aceh to heel.¹ Another difference was the spices at issue—pepper and a diversity of other products—rather than cloves, nutmeg and mace in Maluku.

Like Ternate, Banda Aceh could no longer see itself after 1873 as one of the great centres of a global trading network that stretched from Europe and the Arab world to India, Malaya and China. It was now cut off from these circuits that had made it the 'verandah of Mecca' and an emerging trading node that might have become what Singapore did become. The historical counterfactual that Aceh could have become Singapore was mentioned twice in our interviews. Instead Aceh became part of Batavia's (and Medan's) periphery. Resentment of this became widespread.

¹ Dutch monopolisation of the pepper trade gradually spread, however, from a much earlier date. The Painain Treaty of 1663 gave the Minangkabau leaders of the west coast of Sumatra Dutch protection from Aceh in return for 'an absolute monopoly over the pepper trade' for the Dutch East India Company (Kell 1995:5).

The Dutch consolidated their control over Aceh by indirect rule through 102 *uleebalang* (Bertrand 2004:164). The Dutch and the *uleebalang* had a shared project of asserting their power—pan-colonial and local—over the militant *ulamas*. The *uleebalang-ulama* divide meant ‘the final consequence of the Dutch occupation of Aceh was a bitterly divided society’ (Reid 1979:31). The *uleebalang* were given a generous allowance, ‘sometimes worth as much as half of the income of their district’ (Reid 2006b:102). Dutch indirect rule thereby amounted to a re-feudalisation of an Aceh that to some degree had been on a trajectory of transition from a feudal sultanate to capitalist free trade:

The *uleebalang* were transformed by [Dutch indirect rule] into something like feudal potentates with sometimes arbitrary powers over land and judicial matters, whereas their pre-Dutch role had been primarily that of entrepreneurs and financiers who opened up a new area, and of leaders who mobilised the population in the event of crisis or war. (Reid 2006b:102)

The *uleebalang* were unpopular with ordinary people for practices such as appropriating land when its owners could not pay debts. When Dutch rule ended with the Japanese occupation of World War II, the Japanese also preferred stable indirect rule through the politically pragmatic *uleebalang*. They opted not to side with the *ulamas*, who had supported Japanese occupation through a campaign of sabotage and guerrilla attacks on the Dutch. The more politically experienced *uleebalang* persuaded the Japanese that the populist independence movement led by the *ulamas* would destabilise Japanese control of Aceh.

PUSA and Darul Islam

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, Aceh was the only residency the Dutch never attempted to reconquer (Ricklefs 1993:146, 220). The All-Aceh Union of Ulama (Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh, PUSA), led by Daud Beureu’eh, had become after its formation in 1939 the popular movement under the leadership of *ulamas* that the Dutch had always feared. By mobilising the youth it had educated in its schools to support the republic, PUSA seized political control from the unpopular aristocratic *uleebalang* who had been indigenous proxies of the unpopular Dutch and the unpopular Japanese. Many of the *uleebalang* and their families were killed. This meant Aceh experienced a social revolution as well as the national revolution experienced in other parts of Indonesia (Kell 1995:10). Whereas traditional Javanese elites continued to hold the reins of local power in Java, in Aceh, the old aristocracy was completely overthrown alongside the ousting of foreign elites.

Acehnese forces were vital in the republican revolutionary war and Aceh was a stronghold for the republic. The *ulamas*, however, wanted an Islamic

Republic of Indonesia with a high degree of autonomy for Aceh within it. They got neither when in 1950 Aceh was amalgamated with the province of North Sumatra. The new unitary state's Ministry of Religion withdrew recognition of Aceh's Islamic courts. Beureu'eh and PUSA rebelled openly against Jakarta from 1953, joining the Darul Islam rebellion that was also flaring in Sulawesi and West Java. Massed attacks of as many as 7000 poorly armed Acehnese against military units resulted in terrible losses. This quickly caused abandonment of Darul Islam's 'martyrdom or death' tactics in favour of a hit-and-run insurgency that characterised all subsequent fighting in Aceh (Aspinall 2006:154). In subsequent decades, insurgency was supplemented by hundreds of kidnappings, piracy, bombings of symbolic targets in Jakarta (for example, the stock exchange)² and Medan and of electricity pylons and natural gas infrastructure inside Aceh, and strikes to paralyse extraction of profits from the province. Again, Darul Islam was not secessionist; its program was to Islamise the Indonesian State and its legal and education systems.

An only partially successful cease-fire came in April 1957 amid talks to re-establish Aceh as a separate province with an ethnically Acehnese governor ruling from Banda Aceh. In 1959, Aceh was given the status of a Special District with virtual autonomy in matters of religion, *adat* (customary law) and education. Armed resistance to Jakarta finally but slowly began to grind to a halt in Aceh in the early 1960s. This virtual autonomy faded fast under the centralising bureaucratic pressures of the new unitary state in the 1960s. In effect, Aceh was allowed autonomy only when Jakarta agreed with how local elites proposed to exercise it. Jakarta maintained final veto over everything through its control of appointments and budgets. A residue of the 1950s was the first of several historical waves of resentment against the Indonesian military. '[I]ndiscriminate violence against the Acehnese population would become part of the repertoire of memories shaping the grievances against the state' (Bertrand 2004:167).

Indirect rule through Acehnese technocratic elites

McGibbon (2006a) argued that, like the Dutch, the new Indonesian state opted for indirect rule of Aceh through local elites. The *ulamas* were not an acceptable option to the secular Jakarta elite because of their Islamisation objectives and the *uleebalang* had been virtually exterminated. Jakarta therefore moved energetically in the late 1950s and 1960s to create state universities that would qualify a new technocratic elite with an Indonesian identity as technocrats of the unitary republic. The military had a prominent presence on these campuses training student paramilitaries (McGibbon 2006a:321). Many Acehnese

2 Though it has also been alleged that Tommy Suharto organised the stock exchange bombing.

technocrats were vertically integrated into prominence in Jakarta, including within the 'Berkeley mafia', architects of New Order economic policy (McGibbon 2006a:321) and into leadership of patron–client networks in business and the military. This was a level of elite integration never seen for the other province imbued with secessionist sentiment, West Irian (Papua). Increasing numbers of compliant *ulamas* were also coopted into the New Order by appointment to a religious bureaucracy, the Islamic scholars' council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), and by legislative positions in approved political parties, mainly the PPP (McGibbon 2006a:323). While the ruling elite in Aceh was more indigenous than in any other province remote from Jakarta, these technocrats were cut off from local affection and legitimacy by their Western education, their allegiance to Jakarta and frequent absences in the process of patron–client circulation between the provincial and national capitals. From 1998, the same state universities that created a collaborationist elite would also create the student movement the Centre for Information on Aceh Referendum (Senter Informasi Referendum Aceh, SIRA) that mobilised for an independence referendum.

Aceh enjoyed only a few years of complete peace (something people living then had experienced only in the 1930s) before it was consumed once more by the communist purges of 1965–67. This conflict became an excuse to settle other resentments that had little or nothing to do with communism. The Chinese were often innocent victims of the slaughter in Aceh, with at least 10 000 driven out of the province (Bertrand 2004:64), many fleeing to Medan, Malaya, Singapore or China. On at least two previous occasions in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, 'Chinese residents were explicitly banned on religious grounds' (Reid 2006a:5), but they always re-established during the flourishing periods of Acehnese commerce. In the 1930 Census, there had been 22 000 Chinese in Aceh; today there are only about half that number. The Chinese were not targets in the wars of GAM. The Chinese, after all, were part of the old global circuits of trade that had helped Acehnese entrepreneurs flourish by connecting them with the north, east and west before these were cut off to remake Aceh as a periphery of southern cities (Jakarta and Medan). Besides, by the time of GAM, the Chinese were numerically much less significant than they had been in earlier periods of Acehnese history, so it was hard to see them as a structural driver of contemporary grievances. There was less than a decade of peace in Aceh between the communist purges and the rise of Aceh Merdeka, which became GAM, from 1976. This post-1976 conflict phase is the one coded for Peacebuilding Compared. The military quickly became wary of the very religious fanaticism they had harnessed to purge communists. Military intelligence operations were mounted in pursuit of Komando Jihad in the early 1970s, some of whose members later became involved in forming GAM.

The population of Aceh numbered 3.4 million in the 1990 Census, and even after depletion by the tsunami, it was presumed to be more than four million today (Reid 2006a:4). Aceh is more than 80 per cent ethnically Acehnese, speaking various dialects of the Acehnese language. Education is, however, conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The largest of the ethnic minorities are Javanese immigrants, who make up 7 per cent of the population. Next is the largest of the six indigenous minorities, the Gayo, constituting 5 per cent of the population (Reid 2006a:4–5). Most of the population of Aceh live in villages dependent on rice cultivation, though Aceh's long tradition of cash-cropping pepper and many other commodities continues.

Describing the conflict

The toll

Estimates of the number killed across the several waves of pro-independence insurgency by GAM and state counterinsurgency between 1976 and 2005 range from 12 000 to 50 000 (Merikallio 2006:223–24) with some more grounded estimates³ at the high end of that range. There were a number of mass murders by the security forces that took dozens of lives. At least a dozen mass graves have been discovered. When GAM fighters could not be found, arrest, torture and rape of members of their families were common. The Banda Aceh Legal Aid Foundation records 625 cases of rape and torture of women (Schulze 2006:277; see also Coomaraswamy 1999). The national human rights commission documented 781 extrajudicial killings and 163 forced disappearances in 1999; other government and NGO teams documented 5000–7000 torture cases in Aceh (Drexler 2008:36). Hernawan (2008:56) reported 3266 extrajudicial executions between 1999 and 2002 and 728 forced disappearances.

While thousands of GAM members were tried during the insurgency, there were few trials of the security forces, even fewer convictions and none involving senior officers (Merikallio 2006:223–4). In the only major trial for mass murder—involving the killing of 57 at a religious school in July 1999—a lieutenant colonel who issued the order 'Let's kill them all' disappeared before the trial (Drexler 2008:137–49), though a captain, 23 lower-ranked soldiers and one civilian were convicted for the atrocity and received light sentences (Clarke et al. 2008:34). Rape victims often reported they were harassed by the authorities to whom they attempted to provide evidence (Drexler 2008:159).

³ Such as the 33 000 count of the Aceh Reintegration Agency (Badan Reintegrasi Aceh, BRA) (Aspinall 2006).

A Harvard Medical School victim survey in 14 conflict-affected districts for the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2007) found 35 per cent of respondents had experienced fleeing burning buildings, 46 per cent fleeing danger, 38 per cent a family member or friend killed, 24 per cent forced labour and 40 per cent confiscation or destruction of property (IOM 2007; Aspinall 2008a). Gender differences in physical violence were large: 38 per cent of men reported having been physically beaten (9 per cent of women); 32 per cent of men suffered head trauma (8 per cent of women); 19 per cent of men had been attacked with a gun or knife (8 per cent of women); 16 per cent of men reported being tortured (3 per cent of women); and 15 per cent of men had been taken captive (3 per cent of women). Twenty-three per cent of men were forced to fight against TNI or GAM and 15 per cent were punished for refusing to fight; however, 1 per cent of women reported having been raped (1 per cent of men) and 4 per cent of women experienced other sexual assault (2 per cent of men). Fear of stigma could drive considerable underreporting here. Widespread reporting of mutilation of genitals on corpses suggests a large proportion of rape victims might not have survived to participate in this survey. For men and women, levels of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms were at some of the highest levels reported for post-conflict settings worldwide. The strongest predictor of these symptoms was the total number of stressful events the person lived through (IOM 2007). Older men and women were less resilient than others in recovering from mental health problems.

A resource curse?

By the 1980s, Aceh accounted for 30 per cent of Indonesia's oil and gas exports (Bertrand 2004:170). There was limited trickle-down from this wealth to the poor agricultural communities of Aceh, but a great deal of trickle-up to the Jakarta bureaucracy and political and military elite and to multinational corporations such as Mobil (which became the largest corporation in the world as ExxonMobil in 1999). Acehnese elites became resentful over this, including Hasan di Tiro, who in 1974 attempted to supplant the US corporation Bechtel as builder of one liquid natural gas (LNG) pipeline (Ross 2005:41). Di Tiro, whose grandfather was a hero of Aceh's colonial war against the Dutch, became the driving force in forming Aceh Merdeka, which became GAM, between 1976 and 1979. Di Tiro had defected from the Indonesian Mission to the United Nations in New York in the early 1950s to support Daud Beureu'eh's rebellion. GAM's agenda was different from the 1950s revolt in three fundamental ways: it was not led by *ulamas*; it substantially sidelined the Islamic state issue; and it sought independence from Indonesia rather than the Islamisation of Indonesia. Acehnese ethnicity became more important than Islam, while the narrative of the broken promise (Birchok 2004) and narratives of sons vindicating the struggle

of their fathers connected GAM with Darul Islam. GAM sought to persuade *ulamas* and their supporters that Islamisation of Indonesia was an impossible project, while establishing an independent Aceh that took Islam much more seriously was an achievable one.

Tactically, di Tiro did not think an independence struggle to declare an Islamic state was something the West would support (Sulaiman 2006). During the Darul Islam rebellion, di Tiro had cultivated good contacts with the CIA—indeed he could even have been ‘a CIA asset of some sort around this time’ (Aspinall 2009:41). In the 1950s, the CIA did support regional rebellions in Indonesia with cash and munitions as part of its anti-communist strategy. With the arrival of the staunchly anti-communist Suharto regime, however, the reality was that there was never a prospect of Western support for GAM. The 1976–79 rebel army of at most a couple of hundred—probably 70 initially—controlled no territory. They did mount some minor actions against the LNG plant, however, stealing the payroll in one attack and shooting two American workers (one of whom died) at the plant in another. Di Tiro was forced to flee to Sweden and run GAM from there after 1979. As in later phases of the conflict, in the 1970s, GAM recruited by a method in which ‘[s]ons and younger brothers of DI [Darul Islam] were assigned by fathers and older brothers to help and join AM [Aceh Merdeka]’ (Mahmud quoted in Nessen 2006:184). Most GAM members in Aceh were either killed by the military or fled with di Tiro to Sweden or Malaysia.

After a decade of quiescence, during which only ‘a skeletal movement’ persisted on the ground in Aceh (Aspinall 2009:90), GAM was able to stage a comeback with training support from Libya. In the 1970s and 1980s, GAM espoused what Kirsten Schulze (2006:242) called a ‘world revolutionary’ anti-Western vocabulary—one that changed at the end of the Cold War to a pro-Western ‘democratic’ vocabulary. The anti-capitalist rhetoric of the 1970s and 1980s was about US imperialists keeping Javanese colonialists in power in Aceh so multinationals such as Mobil could ‘rape’ Aceh’s resources. In the 1990s, Mobil’s sins were framed in an internationalised discourse of human rights abuse (Schulze 2004:9). Syria and Iran had also been willing to help. According to Nessen (2006:190), GAM particularly did not want the Iranian help because it required a commitment to an Islamic revolution that GAM leaders did not want. While some Acehnese activists might have flirted with Al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) at the beginning of the present decade (Schulze 2004:24), GAM really did not. On the ground, GAM overwhelmingly followed the Swedish leadership in spurning overtures from global terror networks. Al-Qaeda number-two, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and its military chief, Mohammed Aref, visited Aceh in June 2000, but decided Aceh was not a fertile environment for Al-Qaeda’s work (Conboy 2004:235). The Acehnese population in Malaysia provided most of the 250–2000 GAM insurgents who were trained in Libya; 150–800 of these infiltrated Aceh

from Malaysia and Singapore (Ross 2005:43). Support also came from defecting Indonesian troops who followed at least 47 Aceh-based military and police officers who were dismissed, possibly because of involvement in the drug trade (Ross 2005:43). Or possibly not: as one commentator remarked, their alleged involvement in the drug trade could have been government disinformation to discredit them.

Another proximate factor in the rekindling of conflict in this period parallels incidents in Bougainville (Peacebuilding Compared, Working Paper 6, Bougainville). Indigenous Acehnese blamed transmigrants for prostitution, gambling, corruption and 'un-Islamic behaviour'. There were moments of high conflict associated with allegations of sexual assault against local women by migrants attracted by the LNG project and by the police and military (Ross 2005:43). The military was also blamed for sexual assaults and running brothels (McCarthy 2007:324). There were also occasional arson attacks on nightclubs and brothels clustered in the resource development and industrial zone around the LNG project (Aspinall 2009:55). Migrants were often simply blamed for getting jobs in the industrial zone ahead of Acehnese. Inequality between mostly migrants who benefited economically from the Mobil LNG development with the national oil corporation Pertamina versus locals who did not benefit was a resentment that fuelled a higher level of popular support for GAM in the late 1980s than there had been in the late 1970s (Bertrand 2004:172). Another parallel with Bougainville was wildly exaggerated accounts of how wealthy Aceh could be if only it controlled its resources. A common pamphleteering claim was that with independence Aceh would become as wealthy as oil-rich Brunei, a claim we also heard in our fieldwork from the leadership of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army. LNG production peaked in 1992 (Huber 2004:15) and was projected to expire in 2018, though new fields were possible. This claim therefore becomes less true every year. Also as in Bougainville, in Aceh, the Indonesian state rode roughshod over customary laws of land ownership, driving large numbers of indigenous people off their land (McCarthy 2007). Environmental destruction from the resource development also caused a wider circle of resentments and impacts on livelihoods.

The GAM push of 1989–91 was much more formidable than in 1976–79. The uprising began in 1989 in protests against the corruption, gambling and prostitution allegedly associated with the flood of transmigrants into Aceh (Robinson 2001:224). While fighters were chronically short of weapons, probably a couple of hundred factory-made weapons were captured or purchased from the military. GAM did kill a couple of dozen Indonesian military in hit-and-run attacks, but as in 1976–79, it was still not the kind of insurgency that controlled significant territory even in remote parts of the province. The Indonesian military response was disproportionate to the threat. Torture, arrest and arbitrary killing

were deployed against civilians who it was believed were GAM supporters. As in East Timor, in Aceh, 'fence-of-legs' tactics were used in which civilians were pushed forward as a shield ahead of soldiers flushing out insurgents. An estimated 2000 people were killed during the two-year campaign (Bertrand 2004:172), though some estimates go up to 10 000 (Ross 2005:44). Often their bodies were displayed in public places to intimidate the community. This was something older informants could not remember happening in earlier phases of conflict in Aceh, and in general the period from 1989 saw a level of military violence against the people of Aceh that had not been seen in the previous two decades (Aspinall 2006:165). By the early 1990s, this heavy hand had effectively crushed the insurgency—again, at the cost of another generation of children imbued with hatred towards a predatory Indonesian State that had terrorised their parents. Many Libyan-trained fighters, however, were back in Malaysia by the early 1990s, available for a more propitious time for deployment.

After Suharto

GAM returned as a much more formidable armed movement in 1999 after the fall of Suharto's New Order. Before the regeneration of GAM there was an awakening of a massive human rights movement in Aceh, demanding in the new environment of *reformasi* that the injustices the military had inflicted on the people of Aceh be exposed and punished. This human rights movement was built on the Acehnese contribution to university student protests across Indonesia in early 1998 calling for Suharto to be deposed. As early as August 1998, armed forces commander Wiranto responded to the human rights demonstrations by declaring an end to Aceh's Military Operations Region (DOM) status that had delivered impunity to the military. Wiranto also announced the withdrawal of 'non-organic' troops and apologised for past abuses. It became clear, however, that there would be no prosecutions of military torturers, murderers and rapists, which the people of Aceh had been hoping the fall of Suharto would bring. Demands for the release of political prisoners were also either waved aside or promised and not delivered during this period. Considerable rioting, arson and violence occurred at the official ceremony for the withdrawal of troops from the Mobil hotspot of Lhokseumawe—violence probably orchestrated by members of the military (Drexler 2008:116–17). The pullout also resulted in the assassination of many alleged military informers. It was widely believed military personnel were assassins of Acehnese collaborators they feared could turn into hostile witnesses against them. Ed Aspinall is cynical of the evidence for this and does not see it as a pattern of military conduct elsewhere in Indonesia. In some cases, there are GAM fighters who admit today to killings of informers in this period (Aspinall 2009:157).

Just weeks after President Habibie's announcement in January 1999 that East Timor would be allowed a referendum on secession, student groups and youth more broadly were organising in Aceh with demands for a similar referendum. SIRA was the key node of organisation for the Aceh students. In November 1999, hundreds of thousands of people—on some frequently cited counts, one million—attended a rally in Banda Aceh in support of an independence referendum. Drexler (2008) argued that only parts of the crowd were there because of a firm commitment to independence and only in part were they motivated by a sense of economic injustice; most fundamentally they were moved by a sense of indignity at the nation's indifference to their brutalisation by the military and by a want of appreciation for what Aceh had contributed to the nation. The Minister for Women's Empowerment put it this way when she visited Aceh in November 1999:

Maybe if I had experienced the oppression that the Acehese people have, I would do the same thing [advocate a referendum]. Even worms writhe if they are stepped on. I am certain that if the people of Aceh are offered money or dignity, they certainly will choose dignity. (Drexler 2008:155)

The level of participation in various strikes and rallies that this movement was able to mobilise during 1999 was remarkable.

Aceh was one reason why President Habibie's government enacted the decentralisation laws Nos 22 and 25 of 1999. Part of this package was that regional and local governments retained 15 per cent of the net public income from oil, 30 per cent from natural gas and 80 per cent from timber. For Aceh, rich in these commodities, this was a major shift of resources from Jakarta to the province. A law on implementation of special status for Aceh was also passed on 23 September 1999 that promised that elements of Islamic law and education could be reactivated.⁴ Aceh eventually acquired a green and white uniformed Sharia police that enforced Islamic dress, a ban on alcohol consumption and gambling and separate service areas for men and women in places such as beauty parlours, gyms and hotels to uphold day-to-day Islamic morality. They also caned offenders outside the mosque on Fridays (Miller 2006:306). The criminal convictions the Sharia police secured were overwhelmingly for gambling and alcohol consumption (Miller 2009:175). This enforcement activity was supported by some, but was very unpopular among others, especially among the urban young.

4 Much of the impetus for this came from Islamic PPP members of the MPR who (erroneously) believed Jakarta's failure to honour the longstanding promise of Islamic law in Aceh was the fundamental cause of the conflict (McGibbon 2006b:332). Military leaders then put their support behind the bill. GAM leaders alleged they did this to 'make Aceh look fanatical like Afghanistan' in the West.

Schulze (2006:260) concluded that the main change that occurred in Aceh's governance in this period was 'transition from a province governed by technocrats to one governed by kleptocrats'. Ross's (2005:46) argument was that the law reforms of 1999 did not bring peace because their limited implementation produced a further collapse in the perceived credibility of commitments by the central government. While this was the fundamental factor, it was also the case that the aspirations of politically active Acehnese had changed since the 1950s—few of them were any longer interested in the Islamic law and education parts of what was promised. We have seen that between 1949 and 1999 there had been a series of promises from Jakarta for autonomy over a variety of matters that were subsequently not delivered, or delivered and later reversed, or delivered and sharply eroded over time. The most recent were promises made by President Suharto to Aceh during the 1987 election campaign that were not honoured any more than President Sukarno's promises had been. Then when President Habibie came to power he promised to bring human rights abusers to justice in Aceh. Within a year, it was clear he had thought better of upsetting the military, who, according to one informant, warned that prosecutions could implicate very high figures in the military, even in Habibie's cabinet. Habibie could not survive politically without the support of the armed forces and Wiranto. Wiranto reversed his August 1998 promise to withdraw combat troops. The next president, Wahid, managed even larger reversal. He promised support for a referendum before and after becoming president, as well as prosecutions of human rights criminals even of the highest rank, and withdrawal of non-organic troops. None of this was honoured.

The 'narrative of the broken promise' (Birchok 2004) was fuel to GAM's fire. GAM trebled its fighting force between mid-1999 and mid-2001 to somewhere between 2000 and 3000. A (probably too low) 2002 estimate was 5326 (Sulaiman 2006:139). Its command structure was decentralised, though commanders remained overwhelmingly loyal to the political leadership in Sweden right up to the final peace. In addition, it could call on many thousands of supporters through whom it controlled possibly 70–80 per cent of Aceh villages (ICG 2001). While GAM recruited through force at times, as it spread its geographical influence to areas beyond its core base of support, its main motivational lever was recruiting the children of victims of previous atrocities of the military. On one human rights group count, 16 375 children were orphaned during the crackdown between 1990 and 1998 (Ross 2005:48). After 1999, several hundred women were for the first time recruited as fighters, continuing the nineteenth-century tradition of female commanders in Aceh's war against the Dutch (Siapno 2002). By 2003, GAM had 'grown from a small, armed organization with an intellectual vanguard into a popular resistance movement', controlling most of the province (Schulze 2004:viii, 2). GAM collected taxes from villages and roads it controlled. It also taxed international NGOs and managed to siphon off a large

proportion of the humanitarian assistance that flowed to Aceh between 2000 and 2003 and extorted a proportion of the profits of contractors (Schulze 2004:25, 2007a:91). It trafficked marijuana. Schulze (2004:27) reported that 30 per cent of all of South-East Asia's marijuana came from Aceh in 2004. Extortion was also used—in one case raising US\$500 000 for the release of a senior ExxonMobil executive. Pane (2001:114) reported that twice that amount was extorted from a fertiliser factory in 2000. The Acehnese diaspora, particularly in Malaysia, was also a source of funds. There were dozens of attacks on ExxonMobil LNG facilities and transport, though it was frequently questionable whether the attacks were perpetrated by GAM or by military officers seeking to increase ExxonMobil payments for their protection. GAM certainly got the ball rolling in 1977 by stealing the multinational's payroll and later in the year shooting two American workers in an intimidation campaign to set up protection payments.

GAM used the resources it collected to destroy Indonesian governance structures in the villages it controlled, even destroying many schools, and establishing its own parallel government.⁵ Intimidating Indonesian civil servants into deserting their posts was part of a post-1998 strategy of 'making Aceh ungovernable' (Aspinall 2009:170). GAM attacked Javanese settlers, driving many tens of thousands of Javanese who had lived in Aceh for decades out of the province (Schulze 2006:234–5). This was popular with many in the Acehnese majority who saw the military as Javanese and the Javanese as their oppressors and thieves of their employment opportunities. The second-largest ethnic minority after the Javanese, the Gayo, also became refugees in large numbers because they generally did not support GAM. Driving out Javanese and Gayo was also a way of thwarting military recruitment of anti-GAM militias among these groups.

Ross (2005:50) argued that it was a conscious GAM strategy to provoke military retaliation against villages to build resentment against the military. Schulze (2007a:107) similarly argued that GAM strategy 'included striking at Indonesian security forces in populated areas' in order to create civilian casualties at the hands of the military. Indeed one colonel with experience in East Timor and Aceh said in an interview that East Timor was more a jungle war and Aceh more a village war. He said this was because in Aceh there was more emphasis on tactics such as hit-and-run strikes on military personnel by GAM passing on motorbikes in villages so the military would react by firing inside the village, hitting civilians, or by reprisals in the village. The military was certainly willing to oblige with terrible repression in response to provocation—and this did build support for GAM. Ilias Pase, a GAM commander, said in an interview with a British journalist:

5 GAM Tiro field commander, Amri bin Abdul Wahab, in 2003: 'The crucial element is how to establish a GAM government so we can exercise control and society does not have to deal with the Indonesian structure. That strengthens our relationship with society and we can spread our ideology' (cited in Schulze 2006:231).

We know from experience how the security apparatus will respond [to our activities]. They will kill civilians and burn their homes. This makes the people more loyal to GAM. And the people in Jakarta and outside can see that we are serious about our struggle. This is part of the guerrilla strategy. (Ross 2002:28)

If it was a conscious GAM tactic, it was a different approach from the Free Papua Movement, who pulled back from provocations such as attacks on the Freeport mine infrastructure to avert the terrorising of the villages of the men who mounted the attacks (Chapter 2). Ed Aspinall, in commenting on a draft of this chapter, said that GAM also behaved in this way and that there was no central GAM tactic of provoking military retaliation, though some local commanders might have used such a tactic in some contexts. A strategy common between the Free Papua Movement and GAM was to mobilise concern and support from international human rights groups over Indonesian atrocities. This was linked to a strategy of drawing international mediators into the conflict, which ultimately succeeded in securing not independence, but something like the special autonomy for which di Tiro had joined Beureu'eh in the 1950s.

An ineffective step towards this final resolution was special autonomy law No. 18 of 2001 signed by President Megawati. This further increased Acehnese control of oil and gas revenues to 70 per cent for eight years, after which there would be a review. It differed from the 1999 decentralisation laws in strengthening provincial government control—as opposed to strengthening district government control—over resources. Like so much that had gone before, this law seemed more like a piece of paper than a reality to GAM and to SIRA, who at that time believed they could push on to achieve the independence result that had already been secured in East Timor. GAM's exiled leadership also believed at that time that Indonesia was 'a failed state about to implode' (Schulze 2004:ix; Aspinall and Crouch 2003:4). The likelihood that it ceased believing this by 2005 could have been one reason why a conflict that was not ripe for peace in 2002 had become so three years later.

Peace processes

GAM did not go into the peace processes between 2000 and 2005 in a particularly strong position. Its guerrilla warfare strategy was not succeeding especially well after 2003 and the internationalisation track of its two-track strategy was not succeeding before 2003. No nation at any time supported independence for Aceh. After 11 September 2001, Indonesia became so vital an ally in the war on terror that the United States—and the West generally—dared do little that might upset Indonesia. GAM legitimacy, while considerable, was eroded by the criminalisation of a substantial part of its armed movement (Schulze

2006:226) and by groups of gangsters who claimed GAM credentials to extort money from people (Aspinall 2000:7). The war had also been used as a pretext for ethnic and political victimisation of civilians and settling longstanding disputes over matters such as land. In the new climate of the war on terror, Indonesia was beginning to have some success in applying pressure on Sweden (and Malaysia and Thailand) to arrest GAM leaders as international terrorists (Schulze 2006:261). An irony was that this made Indonesia more open to the GAM strategy of internationalising the conflict. It also delivered Indonesia international respect as a new democracy that now opted into the diplomatic rules of the game (Schulze 2006:262).

The double irony, as Aspinall (2009:14) put it, was that '[i]n essence, GAM's success in internationalizing its struggle had the unexpected effect of domesticating it' (indeed, internationalisation 'tamed' GAM as well as domesticating its conflict). In the end, the GAM leadership concluded if they did not abandon armed struggle, the international community would abandon them and stigmatise them as terrorists. The United States did at least resist Indonesian pressure to list GAM as a terrorist organisation, even though GAM did fit the definition, so the door to peace negotiations with GAM could be kept open. One of the more terrifying counterfactuals to contemplate is what might have happened to Aceh if it had been placed into the international war on terror category (like Iraq, Afghanistan or Sri Lanka) rather than the category of domestic conflict resolution where 'persuasion and the promise of respectability can help pacify a rebel movement and bring about lasting peace' (Aspinall 2009) (as with Northern Ireland and South Africa).

As the decade proceeded, Indonesian counterinsurgency had become increasingly effective, particularly from May 2003 (Schulze 2006:226), leaving GAM forces greatly depleted and weary of war. They were not totally decimated, however, and indeed never diminished to their pre-1998 strength. Most major commanders were not killed or captured. Aspinall (2009:231) reports losses of 10–20 per cent of fighters among GAM units in some areas. While GAM membership had grown steeply up to May 2003, twice before its leaders had seen its fighting force grow only to be all but wiped out by 1979 and 1991. Indonesia was therefore succeeding in its strategy of using force and threat of further escalation to give the GAM leadership no better option than to give up on independence and settle for a semi-autonomy in which they shared power in Aceh.

This was, however, also a period of national weakness on the Indonesian side. Morfit (2006:14) argued that the political costs of failure of the Helsinki peace process for President Yudhoyono and Vice-President Kalla were great by the time the military had accomplished so much success with its counterinsurgency. Failure would have put the military and the ultranationalists back in the ascendency in Jakarta. Yudhoyono was mindful of the fact that the opinion polls showed strong support for President Megawati when she launched the largest Indonesian military operation in decades in Aceh in May 2003 (Morfit 2006:15).⁶ Morfit (2006:24) sees a “surprising asymmetry” between a remarkably disciplined GAM and a national government in Jakarta struggling to bring coherence and discipline to its own house’. When Aceh became a sustained focus of international media attention for the first time from December 2004, peace in Aceh became the imperative plank of the government’s program to create a new climate of security that would attract international investors back to Indonesia. In these circumstances, a negotiated settlement was on the cards that could leave both negotiating elites better off than they would be with continued conflict. The journey to this destination was, however, rocky.

President Wahid came to the office with a strong commitment to rule democratically and to push for peace in Aceh. His execution as a peacemaker was vacillation. Perhaps a fairer way of putting it is: ‘Wahid initiated talks during a brief window of opportunity when the TNI was on the political defensive; indeed a major cause for the breakdown of the process in subsequent years was the reconsolidation of the military’s political position’ (Aspinall and Crouch 2003:2). As it did in Papua (Chapter 2), the military acted in Aceh to undermine Wahid’s peace efforts. Wahid’s first initiative came three months into his presidency when he started discussions with GAM on what became agreement for a ‘humanitarian pause’, signed on 12 May 2000 with Hasan di Tiro. It occurred under the mediation of the Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (later rebranded just the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue), a Swiss NGO founded in 1999. Within weeks, the government launched muscular raids on GAM claiming they were normal police operations within the terms of the agreement. This led to renegotiations in Geneva and two further agreements that renewed the ‘pause’ until 2 December 2000. At first, there was some reduction of violence (Martin 2006:76), but then deaths rose steadily for the remainder of the extended pause. At least 39 people were killed attempting to get to a SIRA demonstration in favour of a referendum in November 2000 (Bertrand 2004:180) and human rights workers were killed during the pause (Aspinall and Crouch 2003:19), causing international humanitarian NGOs to withdraw staff and close

6 On the other hand, a senior Government of Indonesia negotiator of that time said in interview that polls also showed overwhelming majority support for continuing negotiations: ‘People are not consistent. But elite domestic support for negotiations was weak. [There was a fear] that we would lose Aceh like Timor...as with the US today [2006] we had an over-reliance on hard power.’

offices. GAM consolidated its position during the pause, just as the military leadership increasingly gained the upper hand over their president. In the face of repeated attacks, ExxonMobil shut down production from March to July 2001, thereby causing other businesses dependent on the multinational to close their gates as well. By then, Wahid had already reverted to the more repressive policy position favoured by most military leaders, perhaps as part of his attempt to avert an impeachment that the military supported (Sukma 2003:153). When President Megawati came to office, more troops went in and the military enjoyed an even freer hand with repressive counterinsurgency.

As part of an implementation package of the special autonomy law that promised Sharia legal institutions that GAM did not want,⁷ the Megawati government did manage to sign a new cessation of hostilities agreement (CoHA) with GAM on 9 December 2002. The CoHA was a cease-fire rather than a peace agreement; both sides exploited it to regroup. During the CoHA, GAM substantially increased its arsenal of weapons (Schulze 2006:227). This was more important than recruiting more fighters. One GAM commander told us they were turning away recruits who were lining up in droves because they needed ‘quality rather than quantity’ and in his district they had only one weapon for every 10 fighters. The CoHA did give the long-suffering people of Aceh respite from fighting for a few months. Then after some weeks of descent back into violence, the Indonesian Government declared martial law in May 2003. Hours before that declaration, a peace negotiation with GAM in Tokyo was foiled by the arrest of Aceh-based GAM advisors to the negotiators on their way to the airport. Forty thousand troops were thrown into the new Indonesian military campaign (Martin 2006:91) and military recruitment of anti-GAM militias was hugely increased. It was a rather successful military campaign over the next 18 months in crippling GAM capability to mount insurgency attacks and leaving its fighters extremely war weary. It was mostly unsuccessful, however, in capturing or killing the senior GAM commanders.

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue peace processes between 2000 and 2003 did open up lines of communication. They began to change the political discourse and opened alternatives to armed conflict for serious consideration for the first time. Harvard negotiation professor William Ury, who worked with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue’s distinguished team of experts, was credited with ‘prompting GAM participants to engage actively with the idea of pursuing their goals through a democratic process’ (Huber 2004:27). It could be said that the work of the centre helped GAM to understand their interests and alternatives better—in particular, to begin to come to terms more realistically

7 One interpretation was that the offer of Sharia law was an attempt to coopt the Aceh religious elite and split them from GAM (Sulaiman 2006:141). From 2002, district Sharia offices spread almost exclusively to areas of intensive conflict with support from the military (ICG 2006b:5).

with the fact that independence would not eventuate. We have seen that ‘reality checking’ still had a way to go with GAM leaders who still believed Indonesia would eventually implode, that Acehnese could become as rich as the people of Brunei and that international players such as the United States would eventually support them as they had East Timor.

Huber (2004) and Aspinall and Crouch (2003) also exposed a number of flaws in what the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue attempted. The sequencing of a negotiated cease-fire followed by demilitarisation measures and then by an all-inclusive dialogue to find a creative new solution that would do well by all parties was a difficult sequence to attempt. Normally, a political solution would *precede* demilitarisation. Why, in particular, would GAM agree to hand in its weapons in advance of seeing the political solution on offer? Once it did that, its key negotiating chip—the threat of resumed insurgency—would be forfeited. It was when GAM refused to relinquish its weapons, in response to a Jakarta ultimatum that this occurred by a firm date, that the CoHA collapsed. Most fundamentally, we have seen that by the time of the collapse of the CoHA, the parties were not ripe for peace, though the work of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue did help ripen them somewhat. In the difficult conditions of 2002–03, it was especially difficult for the centre to take responsibility for organisation, monitoring and enforcement of the agreement. As an NGO, it had no access to rewards or sanctions for non-compliance. It wanted a state such as Norway to take over peace monitoring, as Norway had done in Sri Lanka after the terms of peace had been negotiated with the parties by an NGO. Or, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue wanted UN peacekeepers, as had happened successfully in Mozambique after an NGO had mediated the peace agreement (Huber 2004:69–70).

In the aftermath of Indonesia’s humiliation at the hands of the United Nations in Timor-Leste, however, Jakarta insisted on no UN peacekeeping. There was also no nation willing to jeopardise its relationship with Indonesia by leading a peacekeeping force that most of the Jakarta elite did not want at that time. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue improvised by taking responsibility itself for a Joint Security Committee of GAM members, Indonesian military and military observers from Thailand and the Philippines collaborating to form local tripartite teams to monitor compliance with the CoHA. Huber (2004) detailed why this was not a sufficiently robust third party to deal with spoilers, of which there were many (but most especially powerful spoilers in the senior ranks of the Indonesian military). One strength of the next peace process was that not only was a more potent president pulling the military spoilers into compliance, a third-party monitor of greater logistical reach, with the formal backing of the European Union and a number of ASEAN states, had political clout that the CoHA Joint Security Committee lacked.

Ahtisaari and the Crisis Management Initiative

Juha Christensen, a Finnish businessman with interests in Indonesia, sought meetings with Deputy Minister for Social Affairs, Farid Hussein, and then with Minister for Social Affairs, Jusuf Kalla, who had already charged Hussein with opening up new lines of communication with GAM at the end of 2003. After a trip to Europe during which the GAM leadership refused to meet with Hussein, Christensen set up a meeting with former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari and his Crisis Management Initiative. This led to the Indonesian Government putting their trust in Ahtisaari (perhaps because Ahtisaari in turn had the trust of Javier Solana, EU high representative for foreign and security policy) and the European Union. Indonesia and GAM were at least willing to let him try to mediate peace negotiations between them. Secret contacts between GAM and Jakarta had been happening for more than a year, and more concerted back-channel talks since October 2004 (though not face-to-face meetings between the principals). The 26 December 2004 tsunami, which claimed more than 160 000 Acehese lives in one day, then energised the first fully fledged meeting in the aftermath of the tragedy.

In pre-negotiations before the tsunami, there was a clarity in Kalla's office that given that there was no way Aceh could be given independence, Indonesia had to have a clear commitment to peace based on other genuine concessions and on the principle that because GAM would be surrendering their arms and walking away from independence, 'GAM could not lose face' (ICG 2005a:2). This concern continued to be important through the work of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). For example, weapons surrender to the AMM had to be transacted without the presence of the Indonesian military, or at least not a large presence, and with careful media management, so that images were not created that gave an impression of proud GAM fighters surrendering to the Indonesian military.⁸

Ahtisaari adopted a different approach from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue mediations. He demanded tough discipline around the talks, especially on media statements from one side that the other had given up this or that. His philosophy was 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed', though he insisted that the agreement could not be expected to solve all the historical grievances the parties might have. In particular, he was insistent with GAM that independence was not on the table as a possible outcome of this process. He explained to them that this

⁸ The 'provokator' script was also a tool of stigma and face management. During the conflict, 'provocateurs' were in fact mostly agents of the military who stigmatised GAM for their violence (Drexler 2008). When the peace process became serious, however, elites increasingly blamed 'provocateurs' for violence that could have been perpetrated by GAM or the military. Drexler (2008:181) recounted one amusing episode when she was in the Jakarta office of a member of the Aceh elite close to the military. Anticipating an outbreak of violence, he said on the phone: 'whatever happens, it must not be from either the TNI or the GAM. Nothing should happen, but if it does, it will be because of the *provokator*.'

did not mean GAM had to give up its ambition for independence. Who knows, he told them, a path to it might eventually be found. There was, however, no practical path to it at this time and independence would not be discussed at any stage in the Helsinki talks. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue approach, in contrast, had been to shift focus away from the positional blockage of 'anything but independence' versus 'nothing without independence'. They attempted a shift to 'immediate concerns such as reduction in hostilities, disarmament, [and] reconstruction' (Aspinall and Crouch 2003:x) in the hope that confidence and trust would build and that unexpected, creative political reframing of impasses would emerge.

The Crisis Management Initiative team had the view that Aceh was too obscure a place to hold the attention of the international community for long. The tsunami had opened a window of attention that would close soon enough. 'International involvement was framed in terms of how a peace process would help the post-tsunami humanitarian relief' (Aspinall 2008a:13). Because Ahtisaari proposed to 'move very rapidly' to a 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed' settlement, the Helsinki accord would 'by necessity be a rather minimalist document' (Aspinall 2008a:12). One observer said that Ahtisaari 'often emphasised' that the agreement would not cover all the concerns of the parties: it was merely 'a commitment from both of you, a start of a process where two sides need to work together and implement it together' (cited in Aspinall 2008a:14). Powerful domestic players within the internationally powerful Indonesian state were utterly hostile to international intervention. One way of reading the failure of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue peace process was that the window of ascendancy of a new president who favoured an internationally mediated settlement over a military who opposed it was brief, and passed before military spoilers could wreck it. Ahtisaari was an assertive, even rude mediator who chastised the parties when he saw them as 'wasting my time'. If there were to be a peace, it would require GAM to accept the non-negotiable condition of the new President Yudhoyono, who supported international mediation against the wishes of his military. A train would be leaving Helsinki station soon in the aftermath of the tsunami and GAM would be forced to make up its collective mind whether to hop on (Stedman 1997:14).

The suffering of the people of Aceh from the tsunami put pressure on both sides to deliver a peaceful result amid a mood in the province and nationally of 'why are we still fighting in the midst of the wreckage'.⁹ GAM unilaterally announced a cease-fire two days after the tsunami. The military was quickly

9 While this represents the interpretation in our interviews, Aspinall's (2009:14) much more extensive fieldwork connects this mood with the wider mood of a hurting stalemate: 'Eventually even the most committed nationalists saw that their struggle for independence was, if not at a dead end, at least unlikely to succeed in the medium term. The December 26 2004 tsunami reinforced the mood of defeatism, giving rise to willingness by GAM leaders to accede to the Helsinki Memorandum and abandon the independence goal.'

awash with negative international coverage when it exploited this opportunity by killing many GAM in a step-up of offensive operations. It was also excoriated for extorting payments from humanitarian organisations struggling to get help to desperate people (Kingsbury 2006a). 'There was a feeling in the country that Indonesia was being punished by God. GAM [and TNI] were trapped by all of this' (Interview with Jakarta peace negotiator). Within the military itself, there were strong currents of the sentiment of 'why are we still fighting in the midst of all this'. The military had lost many more troops to the tsunami than to all the conflicts from Aceh to Papua in post-Suharto Indonesia and East Timor combined because, unlike GAM, who were mostly in the mountains, TNI had battalions on the coast, one of which might have been almost totally lost.¹⁰ Some military leaders quickly realised that a failure to devote their Aceh forces to the humanitarian effort would come at a large political cost. In the event, the military flipped that cost into a big benefit from some superhuman humanitarian work that established TNI as the people's army in Aceh for the first time. Nevertheless, they kept fighting to maintain pressure on GAM during the peace process.

The view of Sofyan Djalil, one of the key government negotiators at Helsinki, was that GAM was militarily defeated by 2005 and the tsunami 'gave GAM a face-saving reason to accept the realities of military defeat' (Morfit 2006:10). Both sides realised that hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian assistance for Aceh might be withdrawn unless the violence stopped. Former US President Bill Clinton said as much when he emphasised the importance of aid workers being able to get assistance through to people without danger.¹¹ Jakarta also wanted the United States to lift its arms embargo on Indonesia. The United States and the European Union made it clear that very large amounts of aid would be withdrawn from Indonesia if the peace process was not made to work and they made it clear to GAM that if they negotiated in bad faith they would cease to regard them as someone to negotiate with and would outlaw them internationally as an Islamic terrorist group. Some of our more cynical informants felt the lavish funding environment post-tsunami allowed key GAM leaders at a local level to be bought off with 'a nice car from the government' or an unusually 'big tsunami house', though this was post-memorandum of understanding largesse. The most important peacebuilding impact of the tsunami could have been to open up

10 Miller (2009:157) concludes that only 218 soldiers and marines were lost.

11 A number of informants, including the governor, said that Clinton coming out and saying that was influential. It was read in Jakarta as evidence of serious US pressure. In fact, what happened was that in a meeting with humanitarian, human rights and women's NGO leaders, Clinton was asked to make a statement to that effect. Clinton resisted for 10 minutes, saying that was a matter for President Bush and his people. As soon as he exited the meeting, the Acehnese civil society leaders had journalists arranged to corner him with the relevant question. Clinton relented to their trap and made a notable contribution to the peace simply by saying that peace was needed to make Aceh safe for international humanitarian workers to come in at the level needed. That really gave the peace journalists something to work with on their front pages.

the province to the international community (McGibbon 2006b:348). Indonesia realised it desperately needed the international community to help with such an extraordinary disaster. The international media spotlight that had failed Aceh so totally during a century and a half of near-continuous armed conflict was now focused on the desperate need for a new pragmatics of peace. The torture, rape and razing of homes of GAM supporters was a counterinsurgency strategy that would have been hard for Indonesia to sustain in an environment in which 350 international NGOs had staff roaming across Aceh (McGibbon 2006b:348). The large international NGO presence also made it difficult for spoilers to do their dirty work unnoticed once the central political factions on both sides had signed a peace agreement.

Across five tough negotiating rounds, a memorandum of understanding (the Helsinki MoU) was finally signed, which delivered many of the things that had been promised in previous special autonomy packages, but this time with the credibility of commitment of an unarmed joint EU and ASEAN¹² Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) that would monitor and certify implementation of the various clauses in the agreement. The Indonesian Government was responsible for their security. AMM would physically count the departing Indonesian combat troops to ensure that only the agreed number of 'organic' troops would remain in Aceh. They would certify the collection and destruction of the number of weapons GAM said they possessed and signed that they would destroy in the agreement. The AMM would ensure that the government disbanded and disarmed several dozen militias with many thousands of members (Aspinall 2005b:53), though doing so was not in the Helsinki MoU. The essence of the MoU was that once GAM was decommissioned as a fighting force, district and provincial elections would be held in which GAM leaders could stand. Moreover, the national legislature was prevailed on through the agreement to change Indonesian law to allow local political parties to contest elections—something that had been banned everywhere under a philosophy of preventing the fragmentation of the republic, particularly by ethnic parties.¹³ The upshot was that former GAM strategist Irwandi Jusuf was elected governor in 2006 and GAM-sponsored candidates became regent or mayor in eight of Aceh's 22 districts and towns (Aspinall 2007a). In 2007, this number rose to nine and former GAM members launched the Partai Aceh to contest the 2009 national elections, at which it was the most successful party in Aceh. The Helsinki MoU had an amnesty clause for combatants. Another role of the AMM was to rule on disputed amnesty cases, which it did with assistance from an internationally experienced judge. Schulze

12 In fact, there were five 'ASEAN contributing countries': Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. They participated in their own right as nations rather than representing ASEAN (Center on International Cooperation 2006:83).

13 Brancati's (2009) qualitative study and quantitative analysis from several hundred elections suggest there is something to this longstanding Indonesian policy. She finds that as regional parties win more votes, the likelihood of decentralisation reducing ethnic conflict and secessionism decreases.

(2007b:2) concluded that ‘an early amnesty process was crucial to building GAM’s confidence in the peace process’. The AMM also would monitor the reintegration of GAM members after their fighting units were decommissioned, monitor the human rights situation and more broadly investigate and rule on complaints of alleged violations of the MoU.

Ahtisaari’s strategy was that ‘[o]ne shouldn’t try to do all the dirty washing at once’ (Merikallio 2006:143). A human rights court would be established to deal with abuses after the signing of the agreement and the Indonesian Government would establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to examine the crimes of the past at a future date. In the event, these institutions for attending to the dirty washing that the negotiations deferred have still not been established.

By September 2005, 1789 GAM members were released from prison, but 65 whom GAM believed were political prisoners were still not released, with the Government of Indonesia arguing that these were serious common criminals (Center on International Cooperation 2007:49–50). Some of the latter were also released quickly on the recommendation of the international judge, but he recommended criminals such as those involved in the bombing of the Jakarta Stock Exchange that took 10 lives in 2000¹⁴ should serve their sentences.¹⁵

As was common following armed conflict, the level of violence declined little immediately, with murders running at 20–30 a month in the province during 2005 (Merikallio 2006:215). Decline to the low level of homicide normal in Indonesia was rapid, however, with only a couple of murders per month being achieved in less than a year. In the lead-up to the 2009 national elections, there were, however, some (probably five) murders of former GAM leaders. Most GAM people saw these as the handiwork of the military attempting to further widen antagonism between the two ex-GAM factions in Partai Aceh. This failed to undercut Partai Aceh success at the polls. Locals and visitors alike within a year after the Helsinki accord saw a palpable transformation from insecurity to security on the streets and from boarded-up businesses to flourishing commerce. The sheer joy of freedom of movement was a huge peace dividend for most people. The transition to peace was remarkably rapid with surprisingly few incidents. The World Bank counted a peak of 45 ‘GAM–Government of Indonesia’ incidents for the month of June 2005 in its newspaper data set, falling to an average of five a month by the last four months of 2005 and none and one in each month between January and May 2006 (World Bank 2006a:21, 2006c:1). The main kinds of reportable ‘incidents’ in the World Bank’s study, in descending order of frequency, were ‘firefights, kidnapping, ambush, murder,

¹⁴ Who were in fact serving members of the military, according to Martinkus (2004:37).

¹⁵ Aspinall (2009:171) interprets this terrorist bombing not as a set-up to discredit GAM but as a GAM decision motivated by the objective of hastening the collapse of Indonesia.

sweeping, extortion, beatings, riot'. The return of GAM fighters from the hills and prisoners from the jails to villages resulted in exceptionally few, almost no, incidents of serious violent revenge (World Bank 2006a:23). Only 2 per cent of 642 active GAM and 1782 released political prisoners reported even experiencing tension with the military and 1 per cent with the police (World Bank 2006a:24). None of the active GAM members mentioned tensions with anti-separatist groups being a problem. In our interviews conducted after the AMM departed, some informants said there was an upsurge of incidents in which military or intelligence officers assaulted ex-GAM—they believed as provocations intended to elicit violent retaliation from GAM. The major epidemic of piracy in the Malacca Strait also fell away quickly (Feith 2007:6; Gordon 2009:307–8) and terrestrial extortion from businesspeople engaged in trade also fell initially (World Bank 2006a, 2006b). Local-level incidents of violence, however, as opposed to 'GAM–Government of Indonesia' violence, counted by the World Bank (2007), increased markedly between March and December 2007 in the post-AMM environment.

One of the dynamics of the growth in security was a new willingness of citizens to report serious crimes and abductions to the police. A recurrent scenario during and immediately after the conflict was a group of armed men arriving at night at a home and taking away a person who was never seen again. The AMM encouraged citizens to make reports of serious crime to their local police station. If they were afraid to go to the police, rather than the AMM dealing with it themselves, an AMM officer would accompany them to the police station to make the complaint. The big problem remained reports to the AMM of disappearances from past years that were recorded by the AMM so they could be dealt with subsequently by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, when this commission was never established. Elites on the Government of Indonesia side and on the GAM side know that atrocities have been committed on both sides, so both sides so far have been happy to allow their agreement to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and human rights court to remain unimplemented. This could become a permanent non-outcome because the Constitutional Court declared the 2004 law mandating the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission unconstitutional in December 2006. One senior cabinet minister who had previously been a supporter of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission explained in 2006 why his support had shifted to a non-prosecutorial Truth and Friendship Commission model, which the government was then setting up with Timor-Leste:

We found then that prosecution justice was not that easy. Families of victims were not satisfied [and felt] that not enough were prosecuted or not senior enough people or the charges were too light or the sentences. The quality of the evidence was poor because of the nature of the

crimes. Families of convicted perpetrators felt why did our husband get prosecuted when the big fish got off. That is how we got to the Truth and Friendship Commission. East Timor, like us, found that prosecution justice did not work for them.

Post-conflict, many serious crimes, including murder, continued to be dealt with by *adat* (customary law) in the hands of village leaders.

The Law on Governing Aceh

There was anger in the Indonesian Parliament, particularly from Megawati's PDI-P (Miller 2009:166), that the Executive Government had signed an Aceh peace agreement in Helsinki that required a new Law on Governing Aceh (LoGA) without discussing the agreement with the Parliament. To get a watered down law through the Parliament, the Home Affairs Ministry resorted to paying bribes to legislators (Miller 2009:166).

In September 2005, the Governor of Aceh, Azwar Abubakar, forged a consensus in Acehnese civil society that included GAM to the effect that the people of Aceh would all get behind the same draft LoGA. Teams at three Aceh universities prepared drafts of parts of the law. There was genuine give and take. GAM did not want Sharia law in the draft, for example, but because many others did, GAM relented on the issue. In October 2005, there was an open seminar on the draft with widespread participation of civil society groups. While consultation with NGOs and other stakeholders in the capital, Banda Aceh, was fairly vibrant, it was not with respect to the rest of the province.

On 26 January 2006, disappointment across Acehnese civil society was widespread when the Indonesian Government introduced its highly diluted draft LoGA into the Parliament. GAM complained that it contained 37 passages that deviated from the Helsinki peace agreement. Distrust was acute on the proposed handling of the clause in the peace agreement that provided for Aceh to retain 70 per cent of natural resource revenues. The government draft provided for all revenues to go to Jakarta, with 70 per cent being subsequently remitted to Aceh. Aceh's draft gave the province the right to implement its own trade and investment policies, as long as the central government was informed and there was coordination with it. While the devolution of power was less than promised, Aspinall (2008b:8) pointed out that the effect of the law was to continue the trend in earlier special autonomy deals of solving a problem that Jakarta saw as driven by economic marginalisation by hugely increasing

the resources made available to be spent by Acehese elites. The government's revisions to the Aceh draft undercut devolution by requiring that trade and investment in Aceh must observe 'norms, standards, procedures and criteria operative at a national level' (ICG 2006a:3).

Requirements of the peace agreement that the central government had to make certain decisions only with the consent of the Aceh administration were diluted to a requirement for consultation with the Aceh administration. While the Aceh draft had the autonomous government supervising its own civil service, the government draft reversed this to the Ministry of Home Affairs coordinating supervision. The government's redrafting of the Acehese draft excised the phrase 'self-government'¹⁶ wherever it appeared. In the opinion of many civil society groups, and of the ICG (2006a:2), the provincial government of Aceh was granted 'even less authority than it had under special autonomy'. 'External defence' and 'national security' as central government responsibilities in the Aceh draft were changed to 'defence' and 'security'.

To grasp the enormity of the Indonesian Cabinet's betrayal of the peace agreement signed on its behalf, it is worth quoting in full the comparison of the two drafts on three clauses as prepared by the Aceh Democracy Network. Note in particular the complete reversal of Aceh–Jakarta authority in (3).

Article 6 of the Aceh draft says:

1. Aceh has authority over all public sectors, except in those areas that remain the authority of the central government.
2. These areas are foreign policy, *external* defence, national security, monetary and fiscal policy, and justice [emphasis added].
3. The authority of the central government as outlined in (2) can be turned over in part or in whole to the Aceh governments in accordance with laws and regulations.

The corresponding article in the government draft says:

1. Aceh and its districts have the authority to manage and take care of their own governmental affairs in all public sectors, except governmental affairs that are the authority of the central government.
2. Governmental affairs that are the authority of the central government are foreign policy; *defence, security, justice, monetary and national fiscal* [affairs] as well as certain issues in the area of religion [emphasis added].

16 There had been an impasse in the Helsinki talks over the expression 'special autonomy' being used in the text, an expression that for GAM evoked the narrative of the broken promise. Damien Kingsbury suggested 'self-government' as an alternative without the leaden historical baggage of special autonomy.

3. In addition to the authority mentioned in (2), there are other government affairs that can be designated as coming under central government authority by law. (Aceh Democracy Network quoted in ICG 2006a:2–3)

The law did not honour the provision in the Helsinki MoU that security personnel who committed crimes against Acehnese civilians must be tried in civilian courts (Miller 2009:167).

Nevertheless, the law provided a framework for peaceful elections to be held in Aceh on 10 December 2006 for the governor, vice-governor and district *bupatis* and mayors. Registration for the election proceeded well and 80 per cent of those registered cast a vote (Miller 2009:169). These elections were conducted with little political violence and their outcomes were granted legitimacy in Aceh and Jakarta, and by EU election observers, though they were transacted within a patrimonial style of electoral competition that continued traditions of corruption and weak accountability in Aceh (Clark and Palmer 2008).

The AMM goes to work

While the AMM had its shortcomings, it was relatively non-bureaucratic. Consequently, it was more nimble and responsively ‘can-do’ than most peace operations. Ninety per cent of respondents to a 2006 survey of 1015 Acehnese rated the AMM as having done a good or excellent job of keeping the peace (Diani 2006). The mission was established in 2005 with 222 monitors, a nine-person Swedish logistical support group and 125 local workers—a combined staff of 356. Experienced Dutch EU official Pieter Feith headed the mission, with Thai Lieutenant General Nipat Thonglek as deputy. EU support also involved an election observation mission. Two-thirds of the monitors had a background in either the military or the police. If an AMM patrol had a leader from an EU country (or Norway or Switzerland), the deputy patrol leader would be from an ASEAN country, and vice versa. Feith established a Commission for Security Arrangements (COSA) that met regularly with the highest representatives of GAM in Aceh and the Indonesian military in Aceh. Tripartite COSA—again without civil society representation—were also established in each district. Feith’s philosophy was to use COSA to make it clear that he was going to be open and responsive with the military players and would not do things behind their backs. We spoke with an AMM officer whose job it was to compile ‘to do’ lists with columns designating who would be responsible for execution of COSA decisions. This, as in a number of things, was modelled on Feith’s experience with NATO in Bosnia. Just as the Geneva and Helsinki peace talks had consolidated the control of the old Swedish successors to di Tiro over GAM, the COSA shifted control towards younger GAM leaders based in Aceh with

(now Governor) Irwandi at the forefront. A widespread criticism of the AMM was the same elitism criticism, albeit with different GAM elites, made of the Helsinki process: 'The AMM approach is elitist. It works with the leadership of GAM, leadership of Indonesia. These elites decide what is best for victims' (Acehnese worker with victims employed by an international organisation).

On 27 December 2005, GAM officially disbanded its military wing, the TNA. It was immediately transformed into the Komite Peralihan Aceh (KPA), the Committee for the Transition in Aceh. Each GAM district command was given a KPA office from which it could coordinate demobilisation, reintegration and rehabilitation programs for local ex-combatants. They in effect also became organising nodes for widely successful campaigns to elect ex-GAM leaders locally and provincially. The KPA structure 'replicates almost exactly the structure and terminology' of the old GAM military organisation. The scale of KPA post-conflict predation on contracting and commerce roughly increased in proportion to how high up the GAM pyramid the predator was placed (Aspinall 2008b:9).

The idea was that the AMM would stay until an election was in place under the new law on Aceh. There was delay in accomplishing this, so the AMM mandate was extended three times to mid-December 2006 (in total, a 15-month deployment).

The weapons surrender process was the most sensitive part of the AMM work. Senior AMM monitors believed that large numbers of weapons were not surrendered. Publicly, in order to sustain the momentum of the peace process, AMM and government leaders wilfully created the impression that they believed all GAM weapons had been surrendered, when they did not believe this was the case. There are good reasons for concluding that the method for counting weapons in Helsinki has produced a considerable undercount. GAM and the Indonesian Government agreed that after considering weapons lost during the tsunami and captured since 2003, only 840 remained to be destroyed. This number was destroyed, ahead of schedule, in a 'Last Weapon Ceremony' on 21 December 2005. Waszink (2008:7) points out that sudden prospects for peace can create a unique momentum to surrender weapons, 'which may be lost if the process is delayed and uncertainty about the benefits of peace emerge[s]'. She points out that in many peace operations, this window closes before peacekeepers are deployed or funding is provided for demobilisation and reintegration that includes incentives for weapons collection. This was not the case in Aceh, where the AMM gave weapons destruction priority and it was completed with focus, rigour and efficiency.

There was fear of a 'real GAM' equivalent to the Real IRA in Northern Ireland becoming a hold-out, so great confidence was built when the most likely hold-

out GAM groups returned weapons—not at first, but still quite early in the process. A lot of the AMM work has involved keeping the Indonesian military and government calm during the process, persuading them that in peace processes insurgents always try to hold back weapons, that perfection is not the objective. Rather it is maximising the effectiveness of weapons destruction. The AMM was tough in rejecting weapons that were barely serviceable homemade guns as counting towards the MoU's surrender mandate of 840. The Indonesian military had a right to contest which weapons should count towards the target, and naturally fought bitterly over AMM judgments that accepted weapons that they thought should have been rejected from the count.

The AMM also counted the withdrawal of 25 890 soldiers and 5791 police that were surplus to peacetime requirements as per the peace agreement. Some 14 700 soldiers and 9100 police were allowed to remain; and a head count was conducted of those left behind as well, which concluded that somewhat fewer remained than stipulated in the agreement (Merikallio 2006:199). Unlike the 1998 military pullout, now, in the words of one AMM leader, 'no-one booed them out', 'they got their share of flowers' and they 'looked relieved'.

Local GAM commanders continued to view themselves as custodians of the legitimate government of Aceh after the peace. In many areas, it was a delicate task for AMM patrols working with the GAM leadership to persuade local commanders that it was now illegal for them to collect taxes. For national governments such as Indonesia's, which is wary of compromising its sovereignty by allowing foreign peacekeepers a role in administering a peace process, the cessation of the parallel tax system is a good example of something better enforced by third-party peace monitors working with the military leaderships of both sides than by the state. It could be argued that the AMM made progress on this that was not sustained after its departure. The weapons surrender is another good example.

Initially, the intent was that there would be specialist human rights monitors. In the event, what happened was that all monitors were responsible for monitoring everything in the MoU. There has been criticism that one effect of this is that gender rights issues, for example, have never become a top priority for anyone (Lahdensuo 2006:25). The view was taken that the AMM should be demanding of local human rights capacity building, just as it demanded police responsiveness by referring complaints of crime to the police rather than handling them at the AMM (see Box 6.1). Hence, human rights complaints were normally referred to Komnas-Ham (the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights) or to local human rights NGOs. 'AMM did not intervene when local communities dug up mass graves in some locations, presumably destroying evidence of past abuses in the process' (Aspinall 2008a: 32). Aspinall (2008a: 32) quoted one

AMM monitor recalling a warning in their pre-deployment training that the 'EU was worried that the peace agreement would collapse if the human rights issues were investigated or pushed too hard'.

Box 6.1 Two AMM patrols observed

I travelled with two AMM patrols in the mountainous South of Aceh, first to the Gayo Loes District (Blang Kejeren) then to Aceh Tenggara District (Kutacane) in October 2006. These patrols were conducted after weapons had been destroyed but before most combatants had received reintegration payments. The big issue was unrest and distrust over failure of the promised payments to arrive. These are districts with large populations of non-Acehnese ethnicity. The second big issue here was movements for secession from Aceh province. An organized crime group led by a former police officer that was heavily involved in politics, ganja, and illegal logging funded by a prominent legislator were also local challenges.

Until recently, AMM had a regional office here, but as Mission numbers were winding down in late 2006, patrols spent a day and a half in each district checking implementation of the Helsinki MoU. There were six monitors on the patrol and three local drivers who also did odd jobs like taking photos, helping with translation and explaining aspects of local culture. Nearly all the time was spent chatting to elites. We had appointments with the bupati (but ended up being passed down to one of his staff), the local military commander, police commander, the BRA and the independent electoral commission office. We also met some local NGOs and with 17 former GAM members at the two KPA offices. While the organization for open meetings with members of the community fell through, we met and chatted with a lot serendipitously as we walked around town in the evening and as hundreds arrived to greet our helicopter in the middle of town. When AMM had regional offices they had regular socialization meetings in coffee shops, in which many Batak men in particular could spend two hours a day talking about politics.

The team treated the meetings with the two Dandims (both Lieutenant Colonels) and his senior staff as the key ones. Both Dandims still behaved as if they were the ones actually in political control of their district, rather than the civilian authorities, and they probably were. The team asked questions like 'Are you having regular meetings with your KPA?' But the Dandims paid limited attention to the questions asked and launched into lectures on the local security and political situation. There were karate-like hand gestures, punching the air with a fist, even cutting it with a baton and lots of jokes at which we all laughed. The team were much more respectful toward him than to anyone else, deferring to him as the military superior he was to most of them. One Dandim launched into a diatribe against the former AMM team leader for interfering too much in the sovereignty of the government of Indonesia. We all looked chastened.

The other Dandim said that he was working well with his KPA, so much so that the KPA leader agreed that if he caught an ex-GAM extorting money or 'taxes', he would bring him to the Dandim and they would beat him together (more karate-like body language of rule). The team looked uncomfortable. Clause 5.2 (b) of the Helsinki MoU sets the AMM the task to 'monitor the human rights situation'. The team leader confirmed with the interpreter that he heard right. 'Yes', said the interpreter, not seeing anything out of order, 'Dandim says they would both beat him'. A joking suggestion was made to the Dandim that of course you would not literally beat him but punish him in some way. The Dandim laughingly agreed. When we visited the KPA we recorded some specific complaints of beatings of ex-combatants by the police. Then at the meeting with the police commander one team member, without any specific reference to these cases, said some general things about how bad it is to beat suspects. The police commander agreed and said his officers never did that.

Later a written request from AMM to the police was sent asking for a response to the allegations of beating. The prediction was the police would write back saying the suspects were difficult and had to be treated firmly, but there was no beating. Perhaps this was inspectorial ritualism without point, or perhaps it was consciousness raising on human rights obligations. Hard for the observer to judge. The police commanders were also asked if their officers were doing human rights training and the AMM was satisfied with the verbal assurance that they were.

The team had a need to stop at a particular building for a meeting. Coincidentally half a dozen police had a check-point in front of the building at which they were stopping vehicles to collect illegal cash payments to let them pass. A member of our team said they might think AMM are stopping here to monitor the collection of these bribes. So he walked over to the officer in charge to assure him we were here for a meeting in this building. But the police were not the least bit worried about any appearance of lawbreaking in front of the AMM and smiled as I took a photo of them (imprudently, even so).

At the independent electoral commission we talked about complaints from GAM members finding it difficult to get the identity cards they will use to vote. Administration, budget and security arrangements for the election were discussed and some suggestions made for ensuring a peaceful ballot. The role of the EU election observers arriving soon was explained. It seemed ironic that this monitoring was led by our team leader from Brunei who had never seen an election in his own country. There was a sign outside the independent electoral commission acknowledging donor support from Saudi Arabia.

Our meetings with the ex-combatants were long. There was agitation about reintegration payments not received, but also about obstacles placed in the way of their right to vote and acceptance back into some villages. KPAs clearly needed training in how to run an office. Basic capabilities like maintaining files were not within the skill set of the combatants. The AMM monitors saw a problem here, but not a solution.

Basically what the patrol sought to do was to be visible and provide assurance to those who doubted that the obligations of the MoU would be honoured. The AMM acted to assure people that they would be honoured. They also educated people about obligations that those people did not fully understand. Others who did understand, but needed a tap on the shoulder to remind them of their obligations, got that reminder. They tried to caress and cajole MoU compliance with a lot of deference to local authority. If a need to enforce compliance arose, mostly they would need to persuade Indonesian authorities to deliver that enforcement.

Source: John Braithwaite's fieldnotes.

It is one thing to understand why European diplomats would be nervous about unravelling the mission by pushing human rights too hard in advance of their arrival. It is quite another in retrospect to conclude, as Kirsten Schulze (2007b:1) does, that the AMM's 'lack of focus on implementing the human rights elements [of the Helsinki agreement] made it possible for the AMM to complete its mission in the sensitive context of Indonesian domestic politics'. Our interviews with players on all sides suggested that once the AMM had started making good progress on disarming GAM and Jakarta had managed to get away with renegeing on large sections of the Helsinki agreement in the LoGA, it was implausible that some pressure from the monitors on implementation of the human rights aspects of the agreement would have caused the Government of Indonesia to prevent the AMM from 'completing its mission'. Jakarta was doing too well from the peace for it to scuttle the AMM over a bit of irritation about human rights implementation pressure. This would not have been pressure from the West to do things Indonesia was opposed to, but things it had agreed to do. It is necessary to think prudently about the sequencing of peace agreement implementation. 'Too early or too overzealous focus on human rights' (Schulze 2007b:14) can be a risk to peace operations. The AMM, however, made the mistake of being too late and insufficiently zealous on human rights. It therefore must share blame for the dishonouring, as of 2009, of these parts of the Helsinki

commitments. Two senior AMM members in our interviews were self-critical of the mission for failing to restructure their priorities when they began to accomplish their military objectives more quickly and cleanly than expected. One said he had learned this from his experience in Somalia: there, the UN peacekeepers went in with a mission based on an analysis of the environment that quickly became wrong when the environment changed. The other thought that instead of extending the mission in the manner that occurred, a new mission should have been established with a new mandate that gave higher priority to compliance with the Helsinki human rights undertakings. Another in mid-2007 saw evidence that the AMM had left at the right time in demonstrations by civil society over incidents of violence; she felt that, while the AMM was there, Acehnese would have sat back waiting for the AMM to fix the problem. Compared with some other peace operations, in Aceh, human rights breaches by the AMM itself did not loom large. There was one case of sexual misconduct by an AMM monitor that led to the dismissal of the monitor and a prompt apology for his behaviour from the AMM (ICG 2006a:9).

The AMM failed not only to push Indonesia to honour the MoU commitment for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Aceh. Many we interviewed were also critical that the AMM showed no leadership in encouraging bottom-up reconciliation based on *adat* or with *ulamas*. A women's leader said there were many women willing to testify about rape to a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was well designed in terms of giving them assurances of protection, but the AMM had done nothing to work through with them what the assurance needs of rape victims were.

Combatant reintegration

In the later stages of the conflict, GAM members who surrendered were offered literacy education, vocational training in skills such as farming, fish farming, mechanics and carpentry, plus a R2 million stipend (Schulze 2006:251).

Reintegration of combatants was the next major challenge for the AMM and the government. A World Bank/AMM survey of 642 GAM fighters six months after signing the peace agreement found 85 per cent of them hopeful or very hopeful with respect to the peace process (Merikallio 2006:204). Their economic futures, however, did not seem very hopeful. Most had missed out on high school education, but were generally not interested in education. Their fathers had been fishermen or farmers mainly, but most ex-combatants were not interested in returning to this. The AMM encouraged ex-GAM fighters to take the examination for entrance to the police force, but we do not know how many did this. Many wanted to 'chill' for a while and readjust, but only 30 per cent of them had houses to go to. Half had their family homes destroyed in the

war and of course many others had just lost houses to the tsunami. Six months after the peace, only 25 per cent of combatants in the survey had found work (World Bank 2006a:viii), with 40 per cent looking for work. Many of the rest had serious mental problems; 17 per cent had wounds or injuries they were struggling with and 36 per cent said they suffered from chronic disease. Four per cent were women.¹⁷ Very few, if any, had been child soldiers (World Bank 2006a:13). The GAM *modus operandi* was to use children as lookouts at watch posts on the edge of villages rather than as fighters.

Two years after the 2006 survey that found only 25 per cent of combatants were working, the World Bank found 75 per cent of GAM fighters under thirty and 88 per cent of those over thirty in full-time employment—higher than for non-combatants surveyed. Combatant employment jumped because of what Aspinall (2008b) described as the predatory peace economy under the control of GAM contractors kicking in to provide legitimate and illegitimate work to former fighters. It was, however, also about the analysis of the Indonesian Government that a war substantially about economic grievance could be quelled by buying off fighters, and especially commanders. So, for example, the BRR (the tsunami reconstruction agency) gave top GAM leaders high salaries for jobs in offices that they rarely frequented and gave hundreds of other jobs to more lowly GAM members (Aspinall 2008b:12).

A distressing aspect of the evidence from Aceh in relation to ex-combatant lethargy, reported to us from research by the Aceh Reintegration Agency (Badan Reintegrasi Aceh, BRA), was that two years after the signing of the peace agreement, half the children of GAM fighters were not attending school. This is extraordinary in the context of Indonesia, where school attendance is near universal. It was also partly a legacy of the destruction of schools; GAM destroyed hundreds of schools in their campaign to destroy Indonesian Government structures and replace them with their parallel government services (Schulze 2006:232);¹⁸ and the Indonesian military burned hundreds of schools in their retribution against villages they saw as supporting GAM. The tsunami then washed away hundreds more. In retrospect, a portion of reintegration payments targeted at education support for the children of combatants would have been a good policy, partly because it would have targeted a need that was vital to healing for a better future. Targeting a healthy portion of the assistance on children who were innocent victims of the war might have softened criticisms of

17 This survey estimate could be an underestimate. The senior GAM official who other informants told us was the most authoritative source on GAM statistics said 600 women had been through training as GAM fighters, though of course this was a different matter from really participating in the fighting.

18 GAM also saw Indonesian schools as places where children were indoctrinated into Indonesian ideology. Schools were also often used as billets for Indonesian troops. Burning Indonesian schools drove students into the rural Islamic schools that were mainly under GAM control (Schulze 2006:232).

rewarding killers and ignoring the victims of the killers. Interestingly, Clarke et al.'s (2008:20) study found a great deal of support among victims for prioritising justice as a better future for children:

I think the best way is to provide education for the children of victims, then help us victims economically.

There is justice if the family and children of those who were killed can go to school so their future is assured.

A major threat to the peace process between 2005 and 2007 was the slowness with which cash reintegration payments from the Indonesian Government were handed over (see Box 6.1). This was because of false starts by the new BRA with unworkable delivery strategies for payments that were abandoned before this aspect of the Helsinki agreement was finally delivered. The MoU between the Government of Indonesia and GAM in Clause 3.2.5(a) specified that '[a]ll former combatants will receive an allocation of suitable farming land, employment or, in the case of incapacity to work, adequate social security from the authorities of Aceh'. It was quickly agreed after the peace by all parties that the lower transaction costs of cash payments would make sense. Combatants could use them to acquire farming land if they chose.

Regional GAM commanders wanted the money for their troops handed over to them to distribute. The Indonesian Government and the AMM worried that some GAM leaders were morphing into organised crime leaders and might embezzle the funds. Or they might use them with political favouritism as they rebuilt GAM as a political party. On their side, GAM commanders did not want to provide lists of names of their members to Indonesian Government officials. If the war resumed, they or their families might be killed. Even if the war did not resume, they still might be victimised by the government. Female combatants were especially afraid of sexual assault by Indonesian security forces if their names were known. Many never allowed their status as GAM fighters to be registered and they missed out on payments. Three initial payments of about \$100 on each occasion were handed to KPAs (in effect to commanders) for distribution to their 3000 fighters by the AMM. The way they distributed this money varied from locality to locality with a lot going to widows and orphans, as opposed to the 3000 living ex-combatants (most of whom received \$10–30 out of each \$100 tranche). Some went to cooperative businesses from which whole villages might benefit in a sustainable way. The AMM staff felt some went into the pockets of their commanders, but that not a great amount was diverted from fair distribution. One fear that the money might be used to buy more guns did not seem to be realised.

Some GAM factions—for example, some who surrendered early and were therefore not in the decommissioning count of 3000—were aggrieved at missing out. At this point it also became clear that the number of 3000 fighters declared in the peace agreement was perhaps only one-third of the real number (Merikallio 2006:207). In July 2006, the issue of disclosure of the names of GAM combatants was resolved by passing the names through the AMM. Finally, a delayed final distribution of a cheque for R25 million (approximately \$2500) to each GAM combatant was made. By 2007, about the same total amount was delivered to the larger group of 6500 former members of anti-separatist militias at the lower rate of R10 million per member. Many members of these groups complained that their leaders had not passed on their share (Clarke et al. 2008:16). Earlier, Japan funded reintegration payments to almost 2000 amnestied prisoners and another 3000 combatants through the IOM. The IOM also rolled out a case-management approach with these 5000 former combatants and prisoners, strengthening existing skill sets, building new ones, ‘transforming a conflict skill set into a developmental skill set’ (IOM interview) plus psychological help with trauma and depression. Other NGOs concentrated on language skills for combatants who could not speak Bahasa Indonesia and skills in using computers, which were never learnt in the mountains. Even though accountability was weak with the payments funded by Japan through the IOM, the World Bank (2006a:29) concluded that most released prisoners used the money sensibly, with paying off debt (often accrued by their families while they were in prison) accounting for the largest proportion of expenditure of the Japanese payments, followed by ‘investment’ as the second-most common expenditure, followed by food, farming, health care, housing, education, then transport needs.

The World Bank (2006a:50–1) data showed 1782 political prisoners had worse wounds, worse chronic disease and much worse mental health than a sample of 642 GAM fighters. Political prisoner health outcomes of various kinds were twice as bad, or worse, compared with fighters living in the hills during the conflict. This is probably about torture. Though this result is not as robust, female combatant mental health outcomes are also more than twice as bad (World Bank 2006a:51). The World Bank interprets this in terms of Acehese women being more open than men about emotional problems, though we can also wonder if it might have something to do with sexual assault and domestic violence in the stressed context of warfare—about which Acehese women are not so open.

Even though Aceh is a case where ex-combatants have received more reintegration support than has occurred in other conflicts, including in other parts of Indonesia, an interesting perspective comes from the unusually systematic World Bank (2006a:27) survey data that ‘communities themselves have provided the most significant assistance to GAM returnees’. Families,

friends, GAM leaders who were better off, even village members who were not close to combatants and were not GAM supporters were generous to returnees. This is an interesting result indeed—that even poor villagers who were not particularly sympathetic to GAM would make personal sacrifices because they are sympathetic to peace. In other words, poor villagers donated to combatant reintegration for the same reasons as the international donors, only with more generosity:

I am afraid if they [GAM returnees] have no jobs to fill their time and to feed their families, they will resort to other things. I give them cigarettes and some rice not because they ask for them from me, but because I want to help them get back on their feet. My own situation is bad, but they need more support from the community. The peace is everybody's responsibility. (Village elder, Seruway, Aceh Tamiang; World Bank 2006a:40)

The Governor of Aceh established a peace and reintegration body called the Aceh Reintegration Agency (BRA). USAID and the UNDP provided financial assistance for the BRA. In 2007, after Irwandi Jusuf had been elected governor, he appointed former GAM negotiator Nur Djuli as head of the BRA. At times there was some confusion over what was the role of the reintegration agency concerning the conflict (the BRA) as distinguished from the role of the reconstruction agency (BRR), which was focused on post-tsunami reconstruction. The cash payments to combatants and *diyāt* (Islamic blood payments) to victims were only a tiny fraction of the cost of the \$260 million BRA had spent by September 2007 on 120 conflict-related projects. 'Many of these projects targeted ex-combatants with skills development and training. Others targeted women's groups to support advocacy and investment in small-scale initiatives' (Clarke et al. 2008:17). The European Union together with Japan funded the IOM's considerable reintegration programs.

The big picture, however, is of fewer GAM members being reintegrated into legitimate opportunity structures than into illegitimate opportunity structures. Many GAM leaders used their political clout post-conflict to gain favourable treatment as contractors for construction projects. Others became prominent in illegal logging. These kinds of enterprises created opportunities for lower-level GAM members that were partly in the realm of semi-organised crime and partly in the realm of legitimate employment.

GAM gangsterism and sham GAM gangsterism were problems during the war and continued to be problems of the peace. In one serious incident in March 2008, six people were killed in a gang conflict mostly involving ex-GAM on one side and Javanese ex-militia on the other over control of revenues from a bus station in Aceh's central highlands (Gade 2008). Some former GAM

commanders have transformed themselves into 'a parasitic business elite, enriching themselves by gaining favoured access to government contracts and licences' (Aspinall 2008a). Others partnered with the military in illegal logging businesses. A small number of lower-level ex-GAM members turned to common crimes such as armed robbery.

Aspinall's (2008b:1) research concluded that 'most key GAM commanders have moved into business. Specifically, most have become contractors working in the construction industry.' Building roads, bridges, houses and public buildings or providing materials for infrastructure work are the biggest part of this 'patrimonial peace'. Few of the former fighters have established reputable contracting companies; rather they use their political networks and threats of violence to deliver contracts to collaborating companies in return for a slice of the profits. Aspinall sees a transition from a predatory war economy to a predatory peace economy. In this transition, there is some continuity between extortion payments collected during the war as taxes to support GAM's parallel state, civil service and army and extortion payments justified as a community levy to support victims of the war, community development, local security or some such pretext. While some forms of post-conflict extortion could have a different justification and be less widespread, citizens and businesses in both contexts fear non-payment will result in violence to their families or destruction of their property and in both contexts believe not all the money goes to the stated purposes.

In other ways, post-conflict predation is different from predation during conflict in the way that white-collar crime is different from armed robbery. While guns might be in the background, money is taken at the point of a pen rather than at the point of a gun. It is predation by contract. Also, there were/are a lot of contracts to be had in post-conflict, post-tsunami Aceh. It has become quite widespread for donors to be required to pay 10 per cent of the value of contracts to KPA criminal entrepreneurs to get humanitarian work done in those large swathes of Aceh where KPAs effectively control access to the countryside. The same has been the case with the considerable largesse that has flowed to Aceh's provincial and district governments from public revenue as a result of the LoGA and prior special autonomy deals. Along different channels the gush of funds that flowed to Aceh from 2005 provided a flow, then a stock, of illegitimate opportunities for entrepreneurial criminal contractors.

Aspinall's interviews revealed that the slow and inept administration of reintegration payments for GAM combatants played into 'techniques of neutralization' (Sykes and Matza 1957) for the predatory peace economy. Government officials or donors who criticised extortionate demands for contracts would be responded to with the criticism that they had failed to deliver the

reintegration payments due to the ex-combatants and other promises in the Helsinki accord. So the techniques for neutralising responsibility of 'accusing the accusers' and 'blaming the victim' were both deployed.

Aspinall (2008b:5) argued that after 1998, when GAM 'for the first time became a truly powerful and mass-based insurgency', it also became for the first time 'a massive money-making machine'. In becoming a criminalised insurgency, GAM followed the pattern of its adversary as a criminalised military in extracting rents from economic activities, small and large. 'On the surface, GAM and state officials fought each other in a deadly conflict; below the surface they were locked in an intimate embrace of mutual economic advantage' (Aspinall 2008b:6). Aspinall (2009:165) concluded that even perhaps a majority of Aceh's *preman* joined GAM from 1999. As one GAM leader explained: 'Whoever was brave, even if he had a criminal background. We let them join; we needed people who were brave' (Aspinall 2009:165).

An interesting feature of Aspinall's (2008b:10) analysis of predation is that it is about status and power as much as money:

During the conflict, though few GAM fighters became personally wealthy, for many of them joining the movement was a way to earn respect in the gampong. Young men who were unemployed or poor and who were used to being ordered around by their social betters suddenly found themselves with weapons, at the center of an exciting political venture, and with new ability to tell others what to do.

After the conflict, Aspinall argued, it was visible affluence that was the path for ex-GAM members to be listened to as men of status and power, rather than the gun.

The worlds of 'government by contract' and 'predation by contract' come together in a pan-Indonesian pattern of neo-patrimonialism that sees large numbers of contractors to government who ascend to power in government. Through the practice of contracting, they acquire the political networks and trust to make the transition. Aspinall (2008b:18) reported that 20 of the 25 newly elected South Aceh Provincial Legislative Assembly (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD) members after the 2004 election turned out to be contractors, with his informants variously estimating 20–70 per cent of DPRD legislators across the province had a contracting background.

Refugee resettlement and rehabilitation

Large flows of people into refugee camps were at times orchestrated by GAM to mobilise international attention and concern (Drexler 2008:179), with GAM

even alleged to have paid civilians at times to flee to camps (Schulze 2006:238). For most phases of the war, no reliable numbers on refugees are available. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC 2006:4) saw mid-2002 as one high point, when there could have been 1.4 million refugees in Indonesia, perhaps as many as 150 000 of them in Aceh. At various phases of the 30-year war, there was considerable displacement and at one point or another certainly more than 100 000 people were driven from their homes (Aspinall 2008d).

In 1999, President Habibie announced that victims of military violence in Aceh would be given a special opportunity to become civil servants (Drexler 2008:66). The BRA paid a *diyot* of approximately US\$300 a year to war widows or other surviving relatives. Some 20 000 *diyot* payments had been made by June 2007 (Clarke et al. 2008:27). Three thousand houses destroyed in the conflict were rebuilt with money from the 2005 budget, though Clarke et al. (2008:29) reported that in 2005 and 2006 a combined total of only 4978 houses was built (with a R25 million grant for building materials) out of a total of 59 000 houses destroyed as a result of the conflict. In a mid-2007 BRA interview, we were told this number was up to 9800—still slow inroads, though given the magnitude of the rebuilding challenge in post-tsunami Indonesia, it did not seem to have performed any worse than the United States after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. The BRA identified 13 other kinds of loss, beyond the loss of a relative, such as permanent disability, destruction of a home or forced displacement, with a specified level of payment to be made to victims suffering each kind of loss. Few individuals, however, received these payments, at least directly. Former prisoners and civilian victims were entitled to apply for approximately US\$1000 for income-generating projects (Merikallio 2006:211). This was intended to assist many who were displaced from their homes to find a new niche in the Aceh economy and soften criticisms that all the reintegration help was going to GAM fighters. By July 2006, however, 48 485 applications (covering 500 000 individuals) arrived at the BRA for this assistance. The agency simply ordered a halt to further applications. Only 29 of the applications received start-up funding; it was not renewed to complete the projects.

The BRA launched a new assistance program in August 2006 designed in collaboration with the World Bank and dubbed the Community-Based Assistance for Conflict Victims through the Kecamatan Development Program (KDP). The KDP, which had existed in Indonesia since 1998, allowed villagers to decide which victims would receive what kind of assistance in their community. Larger villages and villages that suffered a higher intensity of conflict received proportionately larger sums to distribute to their victims. The KDP was expanded to cover all 5800 villages in Aceh through 12 000 village-level facilitators and 600 subdistrict facilitators. BRA delivery through the KDP ended in 2007 and the BRA moved back to an emphasis on tackling the backlog of housing

construction for homeless victims. A community-based scheme did not meet the political need pressed by GAM and the government to deliver direct support to individuals, so the *diyat* program and other ad hoc BRA programs to provide direct support to victims became the higher priorities, though the evidence was that KDP delivery was quite effective (Barron and Burke 2009:50).

Reconciliation

A great deal of reconciliation work remains to be done in Aceh. In the south and west of the province, there is a variety of mostly weak movements for secession from the province—some based on non-Acehnese ethnic groups, some mobilised locally around former anti-GAM militia leaders. Some elite Jakarta players, including 2009 presidential candidate Megawati in the context of her campaign (ICG 2008b:7), have encouraged the main separatist proposals for the creation of Aceh Leuser Antara (ALA) and Southwest Aceh (ABS). An International Center for Transitional Justice set of interviews and focus groups with 113 victims (mostly of murder or forced disappearance of a family member) from nine districts of Aceh found a feeling that the peace process had not recognised their suffering, had provided combatants an unfair share of the assistance, had failed to uncover the truth regarding particularly violent incidents that might for example identify the whereabouts of the remains of their loved ones, had failed to deliver justice through the courts and had failed to leave them feeling assured that abuses would never happen again (Clarke et al. 2008). In many cases, nothing has been done to assist the recovery from trauma of sexual assault victims, though as discussed above, the IOM has launched important work to support those with trauma symptoms. In one International Center for Transitional Justice focus group, all 15 female participants had been sexually assaulted (Clarke et al. 2008:7). Most reports are of sexual assault by the military, but there are also reports of rape by GAM fighters (see also Schulze 2006:277; Coomaraswamy 1999; IOM 2007).

A coalition of civil society groups, the Aceh Coalition for Truth (Koalisi Pengungkapan Kebenaran, KPK) (Clarke et al. 2008:41), has fingered the failure of GAM, the Government of Indonesia and the AMM to deliver the Truth and Reconciliation Commission promised in the Helsinki agreement as the fundamental betrayal of victims with respect to these concerns. The coalition is thinking more creatively about persuading the provincial government to deliver a legally acceptable provincial Truth and Reconciliation Commission in light of the December 2006 Indonesian Constitutional Court decision to strike down the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission law. It has responded by establishing a working party to draft a Truth and Reconciliation Commission law for consideration by the Acehnese Parliament (Clarke et al. 2008:41). The coalition wants the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be victim focused

and to include a community-based reconciliation process, as in Timor-Leste, though based on Islamic as well as customary law, with provision for traditional reparations to be paid by perpetrators to victims. Aspinall (2008a:30) reported that the Indonesian Department of Law and Human Rights announced that a new national draft Truth and Reconciliation Commission bill was being prepared for consideration by the national legislature, but that ‘it seems likely that there will be a long delay, even of several years, before a [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] in Aceh is established’.

A fully effective model would need national as well as provincial authority so that former military leaders in Jakarta could be subpoenaed. Perhaps the greatest cooperation that could be expected from this quarter would be, however, for a model similar to the Truth and Friendship Commission with Timor-Leste in which a certain degree of truth and reconciliation has been advanced, but without any recommendations for prosecutions of individuals. As Aspinall (2008a:10) puts it, ‘one unstated but central element of democratisation in Indonesia has been a political deal by which the military eased itself out of politics in exchange for effective impunity for past abuses’. With respect to the Helsinki process, Aspinall (2008a:15) quotes one insider as having the impression ‘even that peace was sought at the expense of justice’.

According to another observer: ‘At the beginning of the talks, there was a lot of discussion of the past. Ahtisaari asked them “Are you now ready to focus on the future and forget about the past?” They did this...’ Another added that: ‘GAM at the beginning tended to want to go back to the past more. President Ahtisaari tried to pull the parties back to the present time and encouraged them to forget the past, over and over again. He would tell them that the past has to be dealt with, but now is not the time.’ (Aspinall 2008a:17)

Local officials have encouraged former GAM members to participate in traditional reconciliation rituals—*peusijuek* ceremonies (Mallinder 2008:389). The International Center for Transitional Justice (Clarke et al. 2008:14) reported that *peusijueks* (welcome-home ceremonies) for amnestied GAM prisoners returning to their villages were attended mostly by AMM, military and police representatives and went off smoothly. One AMM officer interviewed for this study had attended one *peusijuek* ritual attended by 112 GAM fighters and another in which 25 GAM families stood with 25 non-GAM families who were victims of the war, many at the hands of GAM. The World Bank (2006a:25) found that almost all villages had experienced some form of *peusijuek* or *kenduri* ceremony and 77 per cent of active GAM members surveyed reported that they had experienced welcome ceremonies in their village—sometimes family *peusijuek*, sometimes village *peusijuek*. Often every member of the village attended these rituals. *Peusijuek* usually involves pouring sacred water, yellow

rice or powder on those blessed after reconciliation of a dispute, returning from the hajj and other important events. Separate processes before a *peusijuek* would normally work through the resolution of the dispute. For example, *suloh* is a more complicated process involving many people in reconciliation by negotiation and testimony, related to the Arabic (and Jewish) restorative justice practice of *sulha* (Braithwaite 2002:4). The *peusijuek*, in contrast, symbolises only the fact that the parties are at peace. It can also be a cooling down that prepares parties in conflict to subsequently sit down to talk. So these watering ceremonies are 'social practices, not discursive practices. It's actions. Not in the mind, it's in the practice' (Personal communication, Mustafa Arahman, State Institute of Islamic Studies, Banda Aceh). Watering 'cools people down', watering them as if they were plants. Widows and other conflict victims were often also blessed in these rituals.

Ex-combatants also widely experienced religious welcomes of reconciliation and forgiveness, as in sermons by imams in mosques and *meunasah* (village halls). *Peusikuek* is probably a pre-Islamic *adat* that has some elements widely interpreted as suggestive of Buddhist/Hindu influence. Sometimes people who have been in conflict shake hands (*peumat jarou*) in the presence of an *adat* leader who has worked on reconciliation between them, and selected prayers for peace and selected verses of the Koran for peace may be recited. Some of these were between GAM leaders and anti-separatist militia leaders who made commitments to each other in the mosque and hugged in front of the mosque afterwards, with important figures on both sides adding gravitas to the occasion—for example, a minister from Jakarta and the Governor of Aceh.

Since returning, there has been a *tepung tewar* held by my family and also by the community. This gives us returnees renewed faith in ourselves to be back in the communities. Some of us get emotional during the *perusikuek*, they treat us as if we are heroes that have just returned from the battlefield. (Former combatant quoted in World Bank 2006a:26)

Of course, reintegration into an old village power structure can be rocky for young men who are used to being the ones in charge:

You can see from their behavior, how they carry themselves with such arrogance. They never acknowledge the village elders, they never say *Assalamu'alaikum* (traditional welcoming phrase)...they have no manners, they think of themselves as better than us, as one of the elders here. (Female villagers in Aceh Timur describing ex-GAM, quoted in World Bank 2006a:26)

In the AMM interviews, we were told that a lot of reconciliation was done in civil society without the AMM knowing about it. The AMM would hear about

an incident of the police beating people. Then before they did anything about it they would hear that meetings had been held, compensation payments made and the problem ended as far as the stakeholders were concerned. In other cases, monitors would catalyse reconciliation with minimalist local interventions:

If you can just get people to sit down and talk, very often you can clear something up. Because there are so many little misunderstandings, so many beliefs based on false rumours, there's a good chance that *some* damaging misunderstanding will be clarified in any old conversation.
(AMM team leader)

Another AMM officer said he received many requests to engage in shuttle diplomacy to resolve something, to which he would reply: 'Hey, why don't you talk to them directly?' He believed that by catalysing personal relationships that solved problems directly, you dealt with distrust and transcended dependence on the AMM. On the negative side, we had a conversation with one old *ulama* who said he had attended a *peusijek* at the Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh followed by prayers for peace and reconciliation attended by Sukarno ministers and the governor at the end of the Darul Islam rebellion and again with GAM leaders, the governor and a senior minister in Suharto's time. He was critical that such a Grand Mosque, top-level *peusijek* had not occurred in association with the peace sealed by the AMM. Another informant said the military leadership was unwilling to participate in such a top-level *peusijek* with GAM leaders, though military officers had participated in less grand reconciliations.

Elizabeth Drexler's counter-narrative

Elizabeth Drexler's *Aceh, Indonesia: Securing the insecure state* (2008) has had a provocative impact, winning an award from the Association of Third World Studies. It amounts to a counter-narrative to the more conventional Aceh conflict narrative to which we have subscribed. The counter-narrative is challenging, based on a formidable fieldwork engagement in Aceh over a number of years, and has some resonances with things said by our own informants in Aceh and Jakarta. What Drexler contests is that the leadership of Hasan di Tiro in forming GAM from 1976 initiated the late-twentieth-century phase of insurgency in Aceh. Her alternative does not differ from our more conventional narrative that for di Tiro the battle in 1976 was fought initially with ideas rather than guns. His theory was that ideological foundations for resistance needed to be laid before conditions would be ripe for armed insurgency. Rather than seeing di Tiro as quickly capitulating to his colleagues' views that they would not make progress without moving more rapidly to an armed insurgency capability, Drexler sees GAM's insurgency as fundamentally a creation of the Indonesian military in Aceh.

The military (and indeed the New Order state), according to Drexler, were insecure in the face of ideological challenges of the sort posed by Aceh Merdeka. Moreover, military leaders in Aceh saw opportunities to accrue resources by playing this insecurity card in Jakarta and with foreign investors who paid them protection money. The conditions of insecurity also allowed many GAM groups and many members of the military to make large amounts of money from producing and trading marijuana, often collaboratively (McCulloch 2005:216–17; Drexler 2008:94, 99),¹⁹ and selling or renting weapons, sometimes under cover of fake ambushes to grab the weapons (McCulloch 2005; Drexler 2008:110). Military commanders ordered some of their men out of uniform to commit criminal acts of violence, which they blamed at first on Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan (GPK, Gang of Security Disruptors) and later on a separatist organisation that started with the idea of Aceh Merdeka, which the military and its intelligence leadership named as an insurgent movement for independence, GAM. GAM, in Drexler's (2008:90) view, was created by the military as part of the state's 'threat perception system' in a manner similar to the way states in the Western alliance invented 'Reds under the bed' in their efforts to legitimate their state as a bulwark against communism.

What is the most interesting difference between Drexler's narrative and our conventional narrative? Our standard narrative says GAM appears first as the fundamental fact of insurgency; then the state military adds a great deal of criminal violence to control GAM and its supporters and to mimic GAM, thereby vilifying GAM for violence it does not commit. The military burnt its Rumoh Gedong 'torture camp' to destroy evidence when the National Human Rights Commission opened an investigation into it, and accused GAM of the arson. Acehnese who were informers for the military were often murdered by them if they had inculpatory knowledge, and especially if they provided evidence to the National Human Rights Commission, with GAM being blamed (Drexler 2008:117).

Drexler reverses the causal sequence here, suggesting that criminal military violence could have subsequently constructed a GAM that was largely created by its agency. She dismisses the sequence of GAM as a product of the agency of *di Tiro*, a GAM agency that then provokes military criminality as a response. On some occasions, it suited those labelled as GAM to go along with the fiction that they committed violence that was in fact committed by agents of the military

19 It is necessary to say that Drexler (2008:224) goes too far when she says it is possible that 'the Indonesian military and GAM were as much collaborators as opponents in the protracted conflict that victimized the people of Aceh throughout the 1990s...If GAM were seen as a shadowy expression of the Indonesian military, its nightmare alter ego, with whom it was often exchanging personnel, weapons, and disguises, and with whom it collaborated in carrying out mass abduction, murder, rape, and torture, then the role of the separatist threat and the violence it justified in perpetuating the military's control of Aceh and its supremacy in the Indonesian state would be clarified.'

or by *preman* or personal crimes of violence that had nothing to do with them. A complex of disparate forms of violence was reified as separatist violence. One reason for GAM to step up and own responsibility for violence imputed to them was that if it were violence only the military had the power to deliver, owning it transferred that aura of power to GAM. There were other micro-dynamics in the categorisation of disparate disputes into a single separatist conflict. For example, Drexler (2008:89) described a businessman accused of being GAM by a competitor who wished to destroy his business. In a pattern often repeated, the violence of an interrogation in which he was forced to confess to being a member of GAM turned him into a GAM supporter. Some informers nominated random others as members of GAM simply because they could not endure torture (Drexler 2008:104). State violence unpredictably produced enemies when its intent might have been to eradicate them. The military systematically trawled for evidence of grudges, tensions and rivalries in villages (Drexler 2008:101), then sought to prise them open to secure cooperation with its various purposes. Thereby the military also created new crosscutting conflicts that could ultimately be categorised as part of the one big separatist conflict. One reason why the self-fulfilling prophecy of GAM becoming a formidable fighting force might have spun out of control was that when the military armed militias, sometimes it armed the very people it sought to eradicate (Drexler 2008:102).²⁰

Ultimately Drexler argued the fiction became convenient for the Indonesian State and for GAM. For the military and its state sponsors, the fiction of a GAM that was a severe insurgency threat throughout the last quarter of the twentieth century became an excuse in the twenty-first century for the military violence that had occurred in the past and would occur in the future. Military leaders admitted in the twenty-first century that their violence could have been excessive, but it was not criminal because these were acts of war waged to protect the nation from disintegration (as opposed to acts of greed or vengeance). For GAM, the myth of its long historical continuity as an insurgency legitimated its leaders as the saviours of Aceh, without whose decades of armed resistance the terms secured in the Helsinki agreement would never have been possible. It was convenient for the Indonesian State to help the myth of GAM as the sole protagonist and legitimate representative of the aspirations of the people of Aceh become a reality. This was because it could coerce GAM into abandoning any referendum for independence more effectively than it could the Acehnese civil society movement of a million-odd people and 102 NGOs coordinated by SIRA. It was also considered cheaper to prioritise reintegration payments to limited numbers of GAM fighters than to provide comparable support to all

20 One critic commenting on this paragraph said: 'One can observe all these things without leaping to the conclusion Drexler does.' Her conclusion fails to engage with the subject at the centre of her analysis: GAM. Instead, 'drawing entirely on rumours and speculation, she conjures an analysis from them'.

who fought and all who were victimised. For the GAM leadership, their seats at the table gave them an inside track to becoming successor rulers of semi-autonomous Aceh.

The mutually convenient myth of GAM's progeny was nefarious according to Drexler not only because it obscured the extent and causal priority of military criminality. It was also nefarious because GAM criminality became a self-fulfilling prophecy after 1999. For Drexler, the mediations of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and of the Crisis Management Initiative were culpable for reinforcing the fiction by privileging the two criminal organisations as the sole parties to the peace process. While the peacemakers realised there were various GAM factions on the ground, they chose to deal with the overseas contingent as the 'real GAM', with the historical legacy that connoted, combined with the practical advantage of ease of access to them in Europe. Drexler (2008:188) alleged that the exiled leader of one other GAM faction was the victim of an unsolved murder the day after the Humanitarian Pause was signed.

NGOs that had formerly spoken out against GAM violence were marginalized, blacklisted, and had little access to the funding that the Pause offered. Activists who suggested that GAM did not represent the only voice of the Acehnese people were frequently harassed and intimidated by members of GAM and by police and military officials. (Drexler 2008:190)

This is one of those points where the counter-narrative loses contact with a vivid reality that GAM supporters were being intimidated by the police and military with far greater excess than GAM opponents! GAM representatives did exercise leverage over the distribution of monies under the pause.

For the peacemakers as well as GAM, historical narratives were imposed retrospectively to secure stakes in the present, such as credit for getting a result, even a Nobel Peace Prize. As a sop to civil society aspirations for justice, the two armed parties agreed to establish a human rights court and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As soon as the ink was dry, however, a consensus quickly emerged between the military, its supporters in Jakarta and some in the GAM leadership that accountability for the crimes of the past could hurt and destabilise both sets of elites. Nobel Laureate Ahtisaari and the AMM failed to speak out against this slight of hand, again acquiescing in the mutually convenient elite deception. Drexler argued that the NGO community in Aceh was part of the climate that made this acquiescence easy. In 2006, they were saying the priority of the people of Aceh was not to unsettle the peace by pushing for accountability for the past. 'They spoke in terms of *eko-sok*, economic and social rights, distinguishing them from the individual political rights that they had

worked for previously' (Drexler 2008:210). For the people, on Drexler's account, GAM and its leadership that it voted for in the 2006 elections were the only log a drowning populace could grab onto for passage to a peaceful shore.

Drexler concedes that this pragmatism of the people might be rewarded because the elected GAM Governor Irwandi so far has turned out to be a hard-working campaigner against corruption and for efficient delivery of economic justice to ordinary people. Moreover, the governor wisely chose to broaden his appeal by teaming with former SIRA chairperson Muhammad Nazar as running mate for vice-governor. Challenging Drexler, one might argue that no peace process is perfect, and here the pragmatics are of an inheritance of power that delivers greater peace, development, sharing of wealth, commitment to fighting corruption and protecting the forests than existed in the past. So there is a case for emphasising the socially responsible selves of those who deliver these results and for conniving in putting aside (or forgiving) the considerable criminal aspects of the organisations that negotiated their path to power.

In the long run, Drexler (2008:11) sees this as dangerous because 'each repetition of a politically expedient narrative that does not align with past experiences can diminish the social legitimacy of new institutions'. Moreover, this particular kind of expedience subordinates law to violence in a pattern that is hard to break. It reinforces Indonesia's habit of national denial of the problem of the politically uncontrollable violence of its military, of a democracy more subservient to the military than the reverse. It leaves Indonesia with law and justice 'that are not even on speaking terms'.²¹ Hence, in the exceptional case when a trial for a massacre of 57 people in a school is convened, 'the masterminds of the massacre were not tried, even though the conspiracy was admitted...[T]he process by which the enemy is fabricated and overlaps with the TNI is inadmissible and corrupts the law' (Drexler 2008:229). Aceh's 'contradictions, complexities and complicities' cannot be cast into oblivion when they are scarred on the bodies of those who know who wrought the scars. One day, '[c]urrent institutions may be undermined by memories that fall outside the official narrations' (Drexler 2008:230).

In commenting on draft chapters of this book, wise old hands of Indonesia from time to time cautioned the authors to be wary even when the claims at issue in a rumour seemed to be triangulated from different sides, wary that 'Indonesia is full of stories like that'.²² While we always feel chastened, Drexler's is a

21 Goenawan Mohamad, at an ICG seminar on truth and reconciliation in Indonesia.

22 Or, in the context of allegations about conflict, Edward Aspinall (2008b) puts it this way in his review of Drexler's book: 'Separatist insurgencies, like many other internal conflicts, are difficult to study. The warring parties typically dissemble and lie. Sometimes, they deny responsibility for violence they commit. They spread propaganda and falsehoods about their adversaries, and often disguise their identities when they carry out their work. Frequently, there are hidden connections between enemies as they seek to gather intelligence about or manipulate one another, or strike deals to profit out of violence.'

liberating move for we sociologists who want to take subjectivities seriously. She analyses the dangers of rumours that 'circulate in the gap between knowledge and narrative' (Drexler 2008:232). And her analysis is that even when rumours have no value in truth, rumours, imagined threats and imagined enemies can be constituted as real by those very imaginings. If Indonesian institutions do not even allow a conversation between the law and the people's justice in the people's remembered truths (which outsiders call rumours) then Indonesian history could indeed be punctuated by explosions of felt injustice. Drexler is surely right that societies are not self-healing in conditions where legal institutions bottle up mistrust and declare out of order conversations between the law and the deepest sources of lived injustice.

There is a need for Indonesia to reform the politics and expediency that separate law from truth and justice. A somewhat speculative, yet evidence-based Hobbesian historical case can be made, and indeed has been made (Cooney 1997:390, 392), that a reason why England's homicide rate is massively lower than it was 600 years ago, and probably earlier, is that the improved institutionalisation of courts as forums for airing and responding to felt injustice has reduced vengeance killings by elites and their hirelings. It is hard to get misty-eyed about England's courts, given how captured they have been by legal professionals, relegating citizens to communication through legal mouthpieces if they can afford them. Likewise it is hard to get misty-eyed over Western democracies captured by large campaign donors and offering little engagement by ordinary citizens. Again, however, this impoverished democracy (compared with the ideals of a Jefferson) at least provides for regime change without bloodshed. Indonesian rule of law and Indonesian democracy are slowly improving as these values slowly erode in the West. In the Aceh case it was democracy more than the rule of law that played an impressive part in peaceful transition. Representatives of two different factions of GAM fought out the decisive battle for the governorship. This contest was resolved through the ballot box. The democratic outcome is delivering the first hopes of sustained peace since the mid-nineteenth century.

While Drexler does not make this case, even if the dynamic of military crime fomenting an insurgency (which then spins out of control) is broken in Aceh, impunity gives a green light to similar patterns of state crime in Papua. Drexler also does not make the following case, but for people recovering from a protracted war, their needs are at the bottom of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of human needs. They hesitate to support anything that might jeopardise their security, their children's safety to walk to school and the lifting of the terrible paralysis of fear and trauma they have endured. When peace is well entrenched, however, higher-order needs for justice can return to haunt a society as a new generation seeks redress for the unacknowledged atrocities that afflicted their

parents. This is the theme of the *longue durée* of reconciliation (Karstedt 2005) that we pick up in our first and last chapters. Some new historical moment of crisis when the rules of power unravel could give them that opportunity. The most optimistic reading Drexler (2008:212) can muster is ‘perhaps the most cynical’: ‘if the manipulation of those in power created conditions of possibility for violence that was enacted locally, then a top-down solution is an effective approach to resolving the conflict’. There is something to this cynical view: in an Aceh where so much of the impetus for the war came from out-of-control state violence and shameless breaches of promise, top-down compliance with the rule of law and with solemn undertakings could do formidable peacebuilding.

The biggest question is whether Drexler’s counter-narrative is really more plausible than the more conventional narrative we have opted for above. Marcus Mietzner (2008) thinks definitely not. Mietzner is right to censure Drexler for not attending seriously enough to the data of other scholars on the existence and coherence of GAM from the late 1970s until 2005. While Drexler is attentive to her own fieldwork notes in a very interesting way, Mietzner points out that she is selectively attentive to the data of others. We can value the work on her deconstruction site while questioning inattentiveness to the work of others on their construction sites of GAM, as in interviews with GAM members who trained together in Libya. While we are of the view that GAM was continuously organisationally real as an insurgency from the late 1970s, even if quiescent for long periods, we can still learn from the data that inform Drexler’s counter-narrative. We can have the view that part of the reality of the constitution of GAM as such a politically important organisation from unimportant beginnings in 1977 is that the military and the state ultimately came to impute to it much that was the handiwork of sham GAM. We do not have to choose between a causal path from a complex of violence (much of it military crime) to the consolidation of GAM, on the one hand, versus a causal path from the consolidation of GAM to military crime. The causal arrows almost certainly loop both ways.

We might therefore see such a recursive model in data such as the following from a Drexler interview with a retired general who had been responsible for intelligence in Aceh in the 1980s:

In our previous conversation he had been surprisingly open. Now he responded with outrage. He admonished me that the military was losing men; how could I think they were directing anything? He said that the situation was out of control; no one, especially not the military, likes the situation now, but no one could control it. Then I mentioned a recent newspaper article indicating cooperation between the military and the separatist rebels in Aceh (GAM). He visibly relaxed and affirmed ‘that... yes, of course, in the beginning...’ His voice trailed off, and he threw

his hands up in the air and reiterated that it is 'out of control now.' 'During the New Order,' he reminisced, 'we cultivated the rebels, it was profitable.' (Drexler 2008:6)

Drexler (2008:20) indeed herself suggests that a 'looping effect' of the following kind exists in Aceh when she cites Heryanto (2006:140–1) quoting an Indonesian intelligence agency director:

As intelligence officers we make up issues, and we disseminate them in the press, radio or television. We treat them as if they are real. When they are already widespread, usually people will talk about them and they tend to add to and exaggerate the issues. Finally the issues will come back [to the intelligence bodies] in reports. What is so funny is that these reports incline us to believe that these issues are real, hahaha. In fact, we get terrified and begin to think, 'what if these issues are real?' Hahaha. (Drexler 2008:20)

We had already completed the Papua Working Paper of Peacebuilding Compared when we read Drexler's book. We then went to our fieldwork notes to read what one old Papuan near Merauke said: 'There was never any such thing as OPM [Free Papua Movement]. Papuans never decided to set OPM up. The military created it. Then Papuans adopted it.'²³ Just as there were many liminal figures between the military and GAM—some GAM–TNI illicit business collaborators, some double agents, some sham GAM, some who switched sides—so there were many liminal figures between the military and OPM. This makes it as false to configure OPM–TNI as a polarised pair as it is to configure GAM–TNI as the polarised pair that counts, to the neglect of other complexes of violence, and to the neglect of non-violent complexes of resistance such as the human rights movement. So in Papua as well as Aceh, we need to take both paths of causality seriously. Military crime to nip in the bud imagined threats can create insurgency that the military names and makes more coherent. Equally, a real insurgency can provoke military crime as a control strategy that makes the insurgency worse. In different parts of Papua and Aceh in different ways, one—more often both—of these dynamics could have occurred.

Reading Drexler's book, our minds also went to the peace and justice activism of Australian academic Damien Kingsbury in Papua and Aceh. He managed to get himself involved with the projects of unifying GAM and OPM and advising on tactics for a negotiated peace. In the case of Aceh, he was in the room with the GAM negotiating team throughout the crafting of the Helsinki MoU. Kingsbury fits Drexler's model of a non-governmental actor seeking to collaborate in the forging of a 'pure GAM' distanced from its criminal elements. The objective was

23 For a more elaborate discussion of the possible Indonesian origins of OPM, see Singh (2008:128–9).

that such a ‘pure GAM’ could (and did) attract broad support from Acehnese civil society and could (and did) negotiate pragmatically with Jakarta. In a Papua Working Paper draft for Peacebuilding Compared sent to Damien Kingsbury for comment, one criticism was of a passage that said that even after the 2008 meeting of different OPM factions in Vanuatu, OPM remained far from unified. Kingsbury queried this, arguing that great unity had been accomplished at the meeting he attended in Vanuatu. We had to call that issue as we saw it in our fieldwork notes, while admiring Kingsbury’s support for Papuan initiatives to build a fiction of unity into a reality that might open a coherent path to international mediation towards peace and development.

This kind of symbolic work of unifying, then internationalising, then demilitarising in exchange for power sharing involves a different kind of non-truth and reconciliation to the kind discussed in Chapters 3–5 on Maluku, North Maluku, Poso, West Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan. What are most interesting in all these cases—for those of us who have been theoretically committed to truth and reconciliation (Braithwaite 2005)—are the considerable levels of effectiveness of different kinds of non-truth and reconciliation.²⁴ And it does intrigue a scholar such as the senior author that, after reading Drexler’s book, he does connive in his writing to a degree in a more coherent depiction of OPM and GAM and Laskar Jihad and Jemaah Islamiyah than is perhaps warranted. More intriguing still is to understand the conditions in which the connivance of a John Braithwaite or the contrivance of a Damien Kingsbury are oversimplifying moves with the truth that help analysis, that help discover paths to peace or that hinder those projects. In the long run of history, our hypothesis remains that non-truth and reconciliation, of whatever forms, run up against their limits. That does not mean non-truth and reconciliation cannot be stepping stones to truth, justice and reconciliation. In the case of scholarly analysis of Aceh, there is much silence on how a renewed peace process to grapple with a deeper reconciliation based on truth and justice might begin or unfold, including in the work of Elizabeth Drexler.

24 One reviewer said here: “‘non-truth and reconciliation’ is a straw-man argument—it assumed these were the key ingredients, which they were not. The key ingredients were truth around the reality of war, the tsunami and corruption, and democratisation with the civil qualities that implies.’ Perhaps, but we have shown there was a great deal of effort put into reconciliation as well, especially at the village level, to very positive effect. And a ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’ was part of the MoU, though we would agree it was not a ‘key ingredient’ to important players on both sides.

Interpreting the conflict

What structural factors were at the root of this conflict?

Ross (2005:51) sees Aceh as having many of the risk factors in the Collier and Hoeffler (2001) model of the onset of civil wars. Aceh was part of a semi-democracy as opposed to a mature democracy or an autocracy. During its long conflict, it was relatively poor by world standards, particularly measured against its comparative wealth before the 1873 Dutch invasion. On the other hand, Aceh was not a poor province by Indonesian standards and Indonesia was not one of the poorest developing countries. Aceh's fertile soil has high agricultural capacity, with traded crops such as rubber, coffee, palm-oil and coconuts producing well. In addition, there have been rich natural resources of fish, timber, oil and gas. Increased poverty has been more a consequence than a cause of war in the case of Aceh. While GDP increased dramatically from oil and gas wealth after the formation of GAM, poverty in Aceh increased by 239 per cent from 1980 to 2002, a period when it decreased 47 per cent for Indonesia as a whole (Brown 2005:3). Consistent with the Collier and Hoeffler model, Ross also points out that Aceh is mostly mountainous, has a low level of ethnic fragmentation (but with one dominant ethnic group), has suffered conflict previously and has a 'resource curse' of oil, gas and timber. North Aceh, where the ExxonMobil complex was located (and the concentrations of troops to secure it), suffered more violence than any of Aceh's 13 districts (Ross 2005:53). Military exploitation of these resource curses, and of the marijuana trade as well,²⁵ was a factor in military belligerence. Extortion—more from local contractors in the development zone around ExxonMobil than perhaps from ExxonMobil itself—also financed GAM, as did ganja. Aspinall (2007c), however, pointed out that Riau and East Kalimantan were war-free provinces that experienced virtually identical natural resource exploitation issues in the same nation during the same transitions.²⁶

Aspinall's (2007c:950) argument was that plunder of resources by outsiders, dislocation of villages, environmental destruction and disruption of fishing and agriculture from the natural gas development became salient only because they were 'entangled in wider processes of identity construction and...[were]

25 It is likely that this is less today—an outcome Kingsbury and McCulloch (2006:213) attribute to police enforcement after the separation of the police from the military. One police interception of 1350 kilograms of Acehnese marijuana in North Sumatra led to a fire-fight between the police and the military in which six police and one soldier were killed. One bystander was killed and 23 wounded (Kingsbury and McCulloch 2006:214).

26 See also Sulaiman (2006:121): 'Riau suffered greater exploitation of its natural resources by the government' than Aceh.

reinterpreted back to the population by ethnic political entrepreneurs in a way that legitimated violence'. A narrative of resource plunder was constructed as a grievance because of the way it was connected to the narrative of the broken promise (Birchok 2004), a narrative of Acehese sovereignty and a discourse of dispossession by Javanese successor colonialists to the Dutch. Ross (2003) concurs that the Aceh resource curse is more about grievance than greed in the Collier and Hoeffler sense. Grievance was low during the first GAM uprising (1976–79), higher in the second (1989–93) push when resentments had expanded against ExxonMobil and migrants and very high in the third push from 1999 (against ExxonMobil, Javanese migrants, the economic crisis and military brutality). Looting of resources did not support 'the onset of civil war, though it may have contributed to *lengthening* it once it began' (Ross 2003:33).

A widely hypothesised structural cause of the conflict was the reality and particularly the perception that Indonesian, like Dutch, colonialism moved Aceh from a market economy where the benefits of business development remained largely in Aceh to one where those benefits were channelled elsewhere through business headquarters in Jakarta and Medan. We have documented how the Dutch cut off the trade circuits to the west and north that had sustained the economic development of Aceh for centuries. In some ways, the Indonesian Republic took this further—for example, abolishing the barter trade between Aceh and the Malay Peninsula and designating Belawan (Medan's port) as the export port for North Sumatra (Sulaiman 2006:124). When logging concessions were granted to exploit the forests of Aceh intensively from the 1970s, they were licensed overwhelmingly to companies based in Jakarta and Medan and were protected by the military from the protests of aggrieved local landowners. Similarly, when foreign investors fled the plantation sector after the revolution, the plantations were controlled from Jakarta and Medan rather than devolving to local ownership (Sulaiman 2006:124–6). During the post-1976 conflict, fishermen were forced to sell into a militarised market, in which armed middle men 'offered' them much lower than the market price before on selling through a local military fish monopoly, and where they also paid 'protection' money to the police or military (Kingsbury and McCulloch 2006:216). As in East Timor, in Aceh, similar arrangements existed in a militarised coffee market—where Acehese farmers were forced to sell coffee to the military at half the market price (Kingsbury and McCulloch 2006:217)²⁷—and a militarised nutmeg monopoly (World Bank 2006a:65). Aceh, however, did not experience the level of control by 'legal' businesses connected with the Suharto family that East Timor did.

27 Ed Aspinall commented that this happened after GAM had taxed coffee. Military control of monopolies and all other aspects of life was also less totalising in Aceh than in East Timor.

What have been the proximate factors in the conflict?

Ross (2005:52) found the entrepreneurship of Hasan di Tiro important in the onset of a civil war that delivered a limited result to GAM. Likewise, Aspinall (2009:51) pointed out that many of the grievances of the Acehnese about indignities at the hands of the military and economic exploitation by Jakarta were felt in countless corners of Indonesia, but that what di Tiro's entrepreneurship managed to do was 'seize upon inchoate grievances in society', reinterpret them and weave them into a comprehensive nationalist ideology that 'explained them and promised relief in the form of national liberation'. Di Tiro and his leadership were bold and tireless. They were resilient in the face of early waves of insurgency mobilisation (1976–79, 1989–93) that crashed on the shore of Aceh without changing the landscape. They waited for the ripe moment for another mobilisation, having held back in Malaysia many of their Libyan-trained troops. That moment came with the instability in Jakarta as the New Order collapsed (what we interpreted as the onset of anomie). They waited for the ripe moment for the best peace terms they could ever hope to secure, which came in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. More entrepreneurial, tireless, resilient leadership that had a strategic sense of seizing the ripe moment for mobilisation for war and peace was a difference between the struggle in Aceh and the struggle in Papua, and a common element between East Timor and Aceh. Emulation (modelling) was another important proximate factor here. When East Timor demonstrated that a referendum for independence was achievable, the Acehnese push for the same demand was massive at the level of civil society mobilisation and credible at the level of military mobilisation.

A progressive and ultimately total collapse in the credibility of central government commitments was also a proximate factor in the conflict until President Yudhoyono was elected and re-established some credibility of commitments that issued from Jakarta with respect to Aceh. The structural fact of centre–periphery economic exploitation of Aceh was mediated by the proximate factor of a narrative of the broken promise that was extremely pervasive.

The unusually strong sense of identity that Acehnese had as Acehnese was constituted by Dutch, then Indonesian, military repression (Aspinall 2003). It connected back with Acehnese pride at being the 'verandah of Mecca'. The centralising uniformity of the Indonesian State was seen as a threat to Acehnese identity (Sukma 2003:150). Javanese were seen as denying Acehnese a dignified sense of their special history and distinctive culture, which could not be reduced to a variant of Javanese culture. Nevertheless, at no point between the 1940s and the 1980s (or since 2005) was there widespread support in Aceh for independence. That was built by the hatred for the Indonesian military that began to grow from the mid-1970s (Aspinall 2006:151) and then took off after the East Timor demonstration effect. Torture, rape and beatings were read into

more than just a rhetoric of revenge; they were connected into a larger narrative about the humiliation of the Acehnese by Javanese imperialists who stripped them of their dignity (Aspinall 2003). This sense of indignity was also about being 'treated like slaves' in many small ways. Just as Acehnese villagers had to stand aside, wait in the drain and bow as Dutch colonial soldiers passed along a path in their fields, likewise they complained that they had to stand aside in the drain for passing Indonesians soldiers (though without having to bow) (Aspinall 2009:50).

There were specific turning points that were akin to the 1991 Santa Cruz Cemetery massacre in Dili, even though the Aceh incidents were not as dramatic and nowhere near as vividly covered by the international media. A turning point after which violence and international concern escalated happened in May 1999. At a large GAM meeting in Cot Murong, North Aceh, a soldier was detected in the crowd and taken away. The local military responded by surrounding the village. A confrontation ensued in Krueng Geukeueh; soldiers fired on the crowd that included many women and children; 40 perished (Bertrand 2004:177).

Military violence against the people of Aceh was probably the most important proximate factor in the conflict. We have seen that this escalated in the decades after the initial rise of GAM in the late 1970s. We have also seen that elements of the military progressively made a great deal of money from the conditions of instability, which fuelled their belligerence. This was not limited to, for example, officers on the ground in Aceh who sold weapons and ammunition to GAM. Military anomie extended to insurgents apparently buying weapons directly from the military's PT Pinad arms factory in Java and bribing navy officers to allow deliveries of purchases of imported weapons for fees as high as R20 million (Kingsbury and McCulloch 2006:214). This means that GAM negotiators were partly wrong as well as partly right when they said that they did not have to win the war, only prevent Jakarta from winning:

We mainly resort to ambush and hit-and-run. We can't fight a frontal war. They have better equipment and more ammunition...From a military perspective there is no way for us to defeat them and for them to defeat us. We want to tie down as many of their troops as possible in Aceh. We want them to spend more money on this operation. We want to exhaust them financially. (GAM negotiators in 2001 quoted in Schulze 2006:228)

From the point of view of putting pressure on the President of Indonesia and his government's budget, this makes sense; however, that president in turn depended—and still does depend—for political survival on support from the military, and more troops in conflict areas meant more income for senior

members of the military. The reason for this is first, as we have seen, that war creates special business opportunities for the military. Second, since junior members of the military must pass up the chain a proportion of their business revenues, the more soldiers there are in conflict areas, the more money moves up the chain. Simple realist theories of deterrence are just too simple in this context because neither side has unified interests. We can read the peace agreement between Indonesia and GAM as an agreement between the central political factions of both sides, who wanted peace, against various combatant factions who often saw interests in continued war.²⁸ Only these central factions could enforce peace because they had strong support from Indonesian civil society (especially in Aceh itself) and from the international community, its donors and its peace monitors. What made the challenge difficult for the political elites was that both of them had tolerated a strategy of 'franchising' violence for a long time—to undisciplined militias whom the military armed, on one side, and to semi-autonomous district warlords whom GAM empowered on the other side.

One positive by the time of the peace was that the Indonesian military had learnt some things from the mistakes of East Timor: in 2002, the military and police started asking for the return of guns previously provided by them to militias when the latter were deemed to have become uncontrollable (Barron et al. 2005:25). In the end, unified pressure from both sets of elites that had created them, battle fatigue, pressure for peace from their villages and religious leaders and the lure of local political office and reintegration payments pushed them, in many cases reluctantly, to capitulate to the peace effectively monitored by the AMM.

One reason why the conflict surged forward at the end of the New Order was that statements by political and military leaders after the demise of President Suharto produced an expectation of prosecution of perpetrators of military atrocities. The upshot of near-universal and complete impunity for senior officers fuelled a surge of support for independence and for GAM (Sukma 2004:5). As of May 2003, military commander Sutarto reported that 57 soldiers had been convicted to prison sentences by military courts for offences related to the conflict, with another 372 lesser cases also being heard for breaches of military law (Clarke et al. 2008:34).

Corruption in the civil administration of Aceh was a proximate factor in the conflict, causing the failure of the second track of the two-track Indonesian strategy of reprisals for those who supported GAM and peace through

28 This is a simplification because the Indonesian Government earlier in 2004 made several attempts to negotiate directly with GAM field commanders and to marginalise the Sweden-based leaders, but the field commanders consistently insisted that final negotiating positions would be settled by the Sweden-based leaders. These efforts led the president and vice-president to conclude that a deal must be done with the exiled leadership (Morfit 2006:12).

development for those who did not. A Central Bank study in the high-water period of corruption in Aceh in 2001 suggested Aceh was the most corrupt province in Indonesia (Kingsbury and McCulloch 2006:211)—something that is probably no longer true even though corruption remains a huge problem. As in other Indonesian cases of Peacebuilding Compared, in Aceh, President Habibie's decentralisation initiatives increased opportunities for corruption at provincial levels of governance across Aceh. The corruption problem became less one of Suharto cronies in Jakarta and more one of the provincial governor and his wife and very local kleptocrats.

A World Bank (2006b) study of the amount in bribes required to move trucks on 59 journeys between Banda Aceh and Medan in 2005 and 2006 found that bribe payments were most reduced in those areas where the pull-out of Indonesian military and police pursuant to the Helsinki peace process was complete. Trucking firms had been spending an average of 60 per cent of total cargo revenues in payoffs at formal and informal checkpoints on this road (Consultative Group on Indonesia 2003:15).

New resource developments from the 1970s that were seen as producing far greater benefits for Javanese than for Acehnese, at a time when Javanese transmigration and voluntary migration grew and grew, created the opportunity for the political entrepreneurship that di Tiro seized. Resentment against Javanese was also fuelled by the fact that a higher percentage of them secured urban government jobs and jobs in the professions compared with Acehnese, while they had half the Acehnese unemployment rate (Brown 2005:4). In rural areas, Javanese migrants were twice as likely as the traditional Acehnese custodians of the land to own large landholdings (Brown 2005:6). These horizontal inequalities are explicitly referenced in key GAM documents that justify coding the conflict in this study as an Acehnese–Javanese ethnic war as well as a separatist war. GAM's founding 1976 Declaration of Independence of Aceh-Sumatra asserts freedom from

the foreign regime of Jakarta and the alien people of the island of Java... they have stolen our properties; they have robbed us from our livelihood; they have abused the education of our children; they have exiled our leaders; they have put our people in chains of tyranny, poverty and neglect.

What were the key triggering incidents?

Aceh boiled over after a slow simmer over decades and centuries rather than because of a spark of ignition. One might conceive of the tsunami as a trigger of the peace that doused all sparks that spoilers were lighting. There were no key triggering incidents of the three waves of conflict between 1976 and 2005. There

were turning points to war: the decision of Hasan di Tiro to recruit and lead his seemingly quixotic group of 70 fighters into the mountains in 1977; the training in Libya; the closure of ExxonMobil production in 2001. And there were turning points to peace: the election of President Yudhoyono; the acceptance of former president Ahtisaari to take on the mediation; the tsunami; the signing of the MoU; the arrival of the AMM; the completion of weapons destruction; and the departure of military and police. One diplomat who worked for the AMM emphasised the importance of turning points being visible. It was important that guns were destroyed in public places such as football fields—‘none of this putting them in a box with two locks’ (a reference to the unimplemented Cessation of Hostilities Agreement).

Who were the key war-making and peacebuilding actors?

The two leading war-makers were the Indonesian State (particularly the security forces and the militias they enrolled) and GAM. These same actors exclusively negotiated the internationally mediated peace. Throughout the two decades when Suharto’s New Order conducted the GAM counterinsurgency, while its strategy was brutal towards communities it saw as harbouring GAM, at every stage there was a two-track approach that also involved winning hearts and minds. The New Order state sought to educate communities about the advantages of peace within the Indonesian nation, particularly working through *ulamas*, and believed in a strategy of peace through development (Nessen 2006:187). The problem was that the violent repression track of the two-track strategy was executed with horrific vigour by the military, while a corrupt civilian government limply delivered the gentle persuasion track. Kirsten Schulze (2006:263) made the interesting conjecture (perhaps representing the perspective of military informants!) that this was partly an ‘attitude problem’ among the civilian leadership ‘who expected the military to do everything’.

McGibbon (2006a) concluded that from about 1960 Jakarta elites sought to rule Aceh indirectly through local technocrats trained at state universities. Precisely because of their allegiance to Jakarta, these technocrats enjoyed thin legitimacy. When President Habibie’s administration changed the opportunity structure through decentralisation, further legitimacy was lost when that technocracy morphed into a kleptocracy. This gave rise to anti-corruption NGOs that did influential work in exposing Acehese corruption (McGibbon 2006a:339). These NGOs coalesced with intellectuals and student leaders from the very universities that had given birth to the technocratic elite to form what McGibbon called a counter-elite. Pressure from this counter-elite eventually led to prosecution of Governor Puteh by the anti-corruption commission, though it was able to get a political green light only after President Yudhoyono replaced President

Megawati. The technocratic elite that had been a creature of the New Order did not survive it because instead of adapting to the challenges of peacebuilding, its leaders resisted a peace that would bring direct elections, as this would see them swept from power. Instead, they opted to milk the largesse of special autonomy for their personal enrichment for as long as they could hang on. McGibbon's (2006a) analysis was that an elite vacuum was created. The technocrats were discredited, the *uleebalang* were dead and the *ulamas* were weakened by decades of cooptation and support for Sharia police that were resented by an increasingly secular young population. Into that vacuum stepped intellectuals, anti-corruption campaigners, student and youth leaders of 102 NGOs who rallied for a referendum under the SIRA umbrella and, most importantly of all, a new generation of local GAM leaders who wanted peace and vowed to end the criminality and venality on both sides of the conflict. The governor elected from this new GAM leadership and the vice-governor elected from the SIRA leadership epitomised this coalescing of counter-elites that stepped adroitly into the authority vacuum.

The Aceh peace processes of the early and mid-2000s were among the best documented by writers who interviewed many of the key players (for example, Morfit 2006)²⁹ and by key players themselves who were in the room (for example, Kingsbury 2006b). What we learn from this literature is that many individuals have made important contributions to forging the peace—although almost always flawed contributions. Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari has been the one singled out to have books written about his contribution (Merikallio 2006) and to have it lauded with a Nobel Prize. Ahtisaari's forceful 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed' negotiating strategy worked much better in this context than the step-by-step confidence building of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue that in some ways undermined confidence, as trust was abused on both sides. GAM was, however, more ripe for settlement in 2005 after the decimation its troops had suffered in 2003 and 2004. Ed Aspinall commented that Ahtisaari's approach would not have moved beyond square one in 2000–01. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue played a positive role in internationalising mediation, opening channels of dialogue that gave the parties a reality check and a glimpse of possible paths to peace. In the years between the peace and the award of Ahtisaari's Nobel Peace Prize, there was much speculation in the Indonesian press as to who was most worthy of a Nobel Prize. President Yudhoyono was nominated for 2007. The feeling of many commentators was that Yudhoyono deserved more credit for Aceh than Ahtisaari, particularly for the strength of his leadership in insisting that the military make the peace work, but that Ahtisaari was perhaps more deserving of the prize overall because of his contributions to peace in Namibia, the former Yugoslavia and beyond.

29 We also were able to interview most of those present for the negotiation of the Helsinki agreement for this study, several of them on several occasions.

Michael Morfit's (2006:19) research showed convincingly that even though the president knew in his own words that he needed the support of the military, he was willing to take the calculated risk of threatening their jobs when they undermined his policies for peace in Aceh. Or, as Mietzner (2006:51) put it: 'Yudhoyono's success in enforcing military compliance in Aceh marked a watershed in post-Suharto civil-military relations. For the first time, the government was able to secure the military's support for a negotiated settlement with separatist rebels.' Many commentators also said Vice-President Kalla was the individual most deserving of credit because of the extraordinary persistence, initiative and flexibility he showed over a long period in searching for paths to peace (see also Morfit 2006:9). Alternatively, Kalla's energetic assistant Farid Husein could be given the greatest credit for keeping the peace process alive, tirelessly opening a broken path of dialogue, during the period when GAM remained intransigent and President Megawati was firmly committed to a military solution (Morfit 2006:11). Then there was the argument that Kalla and more so Husein were hands-on for longer than President Yudhoyono. Some commentators suggested that because of the impossibility of putting one of these political leaders of the peace ahead of the others, it would be a good idea to award the Nobel Prize collectively to the AMM, whose contribution we also found important on so many fronts in this chapter.

Finnish businessman Juha Christensen also showed extraordinary energy as a peace broker for a long period, joining forces with his long-time acquaintance Kalla in creative ways and enrolling the international stature of Ahtisaari to the peace process. Australian academic Damien Kingsbury (2006b) played a pragmatically significant role in assisting to bring coherence to the GAM negotiating team, drafting skills and clarity to the international presentation of the GAM position and focus on building out from 'common ground' at certain points when diametrically opposed positions were asserted. We would not want to exaggerate the importance of these two controversial Western advisers—Christensen and Kingsbury—who were in fact adversaries for much of the process. We also do not want to undervalue the contributions of other Westerners. We simply focus on these two very different players to say that what is interesting about them is that they both managed to make significant contributions without being stakeholders and without starting with an institutional base for their work. They were influential by enrolling (Latour 1986, 1987) and informing the power of institutions that did become key stakeholders in Helsinki, such as the European Union and GAM. They both felt able to take more risk-taking approaches than diplomats; they had less to lose reputation-wise from failure and had extraordinary personal commitment to secure the peace.

We also learned from the literature that the negotiation progress was a collective accomplishment of the teams who really did the face-to-face work. The task

of the GAM team was especially delicate given that its side had argued for 'nothing but independence' for so long. The old Sweden-based leadership and the younger Aceh leadership ultimately showed finesse and courage in the face of this challenge after a long period of being rather disorganised and quixotic. In this, the GAM negotiators drew on leadership resources that were not in the room. This is the civil society leadership that we discuss in the next paragraph and an international media that finally became a force for peace, as discussed further below. There is no great historical interest in documenting the negotiating errors all of these actors made, the moments, for example, when they lost their temper or set the process back for a period by some other miscalculation. What is historically interesting is to have this level of in-the-room and outside-the-room insight into the multiplex contributions to moving the peace forward. On the one hand, it shows that peace processes are fragile accomplishments,³⁰ that spoilers are many and resourceful, that persistent individual acts of leadership are needed to foil the flap of this or that butterfly wing that might cause a storm to crash down on the peace process. On the other hand, it shows that when the structural conditions for peace are present, weakness of one leader in failing to calm the storm is often compensated by leadership strength from another. It is, however, a mistake to read these events in a structurally determinist way wherein individual leadership does not matter. The fragility of the accomplishment is so clear from the historical record. The storm (which might or might not be in a tea cup) that leads to negotiators walking out can be a permanent setback that gives spoilers a space to unravel all that has been accomplished. What the record of the Aceh peace processes reveals is the importance of a redundancy of resilient individual leadership competence so that the storms unleashed by the weaknesses of one peacemaker can be covered by the strengths of other peacemakers before spoilers seize the opportunity to harness the storm.

The conclusion that the outcome cannot be simply read off from an understanding of the structural and proximate drivers of war and peace is well illustrated by GAM negotiator Nur Djuli saying that GAM went into the Helsinki negotiations reluctantly and sceptical about the government's intentions: 'At this point, we were not serious. We were just being polite, but we did not have any expectations that new talks would have any success and we were not really committed to the process' (Morfit 2006:11). If suing for peace was inevitable from a GAM that was militarily decimated, why was it that the Indonesian Vice-President and President were pursuing GAM to open a dialogue rather than GAM pursuing them (see Morfit 2006)? It was a combination of structural conditions for peace (present in 2005 but not in 2003), a redundancy of peacebuilding leadership competence (present more in 2005 than in 2003) and a taming of spoilers (executed with enhanced finesse from 2005 thanks especially to President Yudhoyono,

30 'Just getting to the next day became the main priority, and was a point to which we [the GAM negotiating team in Helsinki] retreated often' (Kingsbury 2006b:28).

the AMM and the emerging GAM leadership of Governor Irwandi). What the historical record shows to be facile is the cult of peacebuilding celebrity that surrounds the picking of Nobel Peace Prize winners.

During the conflict, commentators commonly saw SIRA and human rights NGOs as captured and cultivated by GAM to broaden support for their armed struggle. When the current vice-governor of Aceh and then chairperson of SIRA was arrested on 20 November 2001, police accused SIRA during his questioning of being 'GAM without the guns' (HRW 2001b:20). Today we might ponder whether it was GAM that was beginning to become like SIRA by destroying their guns. In retrospect, we can ask whether after decommissioning of GAM forces and destruction of weapons, it was the GAM fighters who were captured more by the educated younger generation epitomised by SIRA who wanted freedom for Aceh through peaceful means. At the time of the CoHA negotiations, many believed the mostly unemployed, uneducated young rank and file of GAM forces were more war weary and pro-peace than the educated older leadership in Sweden. The massive following attracted by the peaceful movement for change led from the universities could not be ignored by the Sweden-based leadership when the next opportunity for a peace agreement came in 2004. Aspinall (2008c) articulated this influence in terms of 'GAM leaders who began to use similar language to that of the students'. Once the GAM leadership in Sweden was ensconced as monopoly negotiators as a result of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Crisis Management Initiative peace processes, civil society groups became quite marginal to the shaping of the peace. Their access to the AMM during implementation of the Helsinki accord was quite limited (Aspinall 2008a:11; Lahdensuo 2006).

Religious leaders were particularly important elements in civil society. In November 2002, a delegation of Aceh notables led by the head of Muhammadiyah in Aceh, Imam Suja', travelled to Europe and seemed to exert influence over the Sweden-based GAM leaders in opening their minds to the advantages of a negotiated peace (Aspinall and Crouch 2003:30). Even former US President Clinton played a significant role in warning that post-tsunami, a truce was vital for international humanitarian workers to get help to people in safety.

Japan, with strong backing from the United States, the European Union and the World Bank, organised a conference of 38 donor countries in December 2002 to give the message that a successful peace agreement would unlock a generous flow of support from donors (Huber 2004:30). In the event, the aid that flowed after the CoHA was substantially embezzled and extorted by combatants. Nevertheless, in the longer term, the message of a peace dividend paid by donors became one that was helpful. Norway, Sweden, Finland, the European Commission, the United States and Japan all gave mostly backdoor support to the initiatives of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue or the Crisis Management

Initiative or both. Any potential effectiveness of the United Nations or Australia as peacebuilding actors was tainted by what Jakarta saw as their duplicitous roles in levering Timor-Leste's secession from the republic.

It probably needs to be emphasised that Japan and particularly the United States self-consciously played low-profile supportive roles in the various peace processes with funds and political support. One commentator who felt our account underplayed the backdoor US contributions said: 'Some US embassy staff members intervened personally to save lives of NGO activists and smuggled them out of the country (but that is probably not for the record).'

The fourth member of what became known as the Tokyo Four group of key donors in Aceh was the World Bank. When the BRA was collapsing under the administrative cataclysm of 48 000 applications for reintegration payments to conflict-affected people, it was the World Bank that came to the rescue with the strategy of integrating payouts into village governance through its Kecamatan Development Program (KDP). Village facilitators mediated grants ranging from R60 to R170 million to individual, group and village beneficiaries in 1724 conflict-affected villages to the tune of \$26.5 million, completed by June 2007. The purchase of seeds, cattle and village infrastructure was a common form of disbursement. The KDP operated 'small development on a large scale' in 40 per cent of the villages in Indonesia and all villages of Aceh (Barron et al. 2007:27). In some 28 000 villages, the program has sought since 1998 to develop 'context capacity' that is attuned to how governance, markets and welfare work very locally. Barron et al. (2006) found in an intensive evaluation of the program in 41 villages in East Java and Nusa Tenggara Timur that the KDP contributed to improvements in inter-group relations across a variety of identity cleavages and contributed positively to a reconfiguration of citizen-state relations at the local level, helping to democratise village life. Most directly relevant to the Peacebuilding Compared research agenda, the KDP helped improve problem solving and conflict resolution, though evidence of this was much more mixed. Villages mostly preferred to rely on more longstanding local institutions to solve conflicts, though the KDP had a role when these had lost legitimacy. The KDP sometimes induced conflict via competition between different projects put up for funding; sponsors of unfunded proposals often resented being losers from the local decision making—for example, when there was elite capture of it (Barron et al. 2007). Conflict also sometimes arose from poor socialisation of the program so that villagers simply misunderstood what its rules and limits were. For all this mixed performance, the KDP is advancing in an evidence-based way our understanding of how to build 'context capacity' with the ambition of enabling small development to work on a large scale.

Post-Helsinki, a joint forum to support peace of the World Bank, the European Union, the Japanese Embassy, USAID, the UNDP, GAM, the AMM and civil society organisations, among others, met fortnightly to coordinate the large numbers of post-conflict projects.

The international media took limited interest in Aceh and its protracted wars until the 2004 tsunami, after which the interest was formidable and useful in creating pressure for the peace to work. There had been momentary international media interest at the time of the Dutch invasion of 1873 and the Indonesian one of 2003, but when these degenerated into insurgencies that the international media was warned away from, it lacked the determination to cover them (Reid 2006a:2). This differed from the insurgency in East Timor where Australian and Portuguese media interest was sustained enough to feed into the wider circuits of European and North American interest.

Peace journalism became a factor in the peace. As in other parts of Indonesia, in Aceh, the BBC played a helpful role, along with other international media organisations, in peace journalism training. Journalists who attended the training said they had learned from it to avoid speculation about who might have killed or caused the disappearance of someone and to engender a 'sorrow focus rather than an anger focus' by writing about the effect of a tragedy on people. The Alliance of Independent Journalists promoted peace journalism, but did not see this as inhibiting truth seeking. The alliance also ran eight mediations in 2006 between journalists who felt they were intimidated and the military or other state powerbrokers whom they alleged were doing so. Acehnese journalists played an important role in the conviction in 2004 of Governor Puteh, who was at the heart of the corruption problems of the province in 2004. One leader of the Alliance of Independent Journalists in Aceh perhaps was not exaggerating wildly when he said, 'if there is no media story, there is no court case' (with corruption). Journalists have also played an important role in exposing illegal logging, including military and police involvement in it. When investigating illegal logging in Aceh, the Alliance of Independent Journalists promotes a policy of journalists never working alone, rather going into the field with other journalists in a group from different media companies (so neither individual journalist nor individual company can be targeted for violence or intimidation).

The AMM was a particularly important peacebuilding actor even though it did drop the ball on post-conflict justice, reconciliation and human rights and worked excessively through elites who were often perpetrators of the violence, to the neglect of its victims. The impressive thing about the AMM was the dispatch and openness with which it executed the most fragile first steps—essentially the military steps—of decommissioning, weapons destruction and

Indonesian military and police withdrawal. Because of the history of Indonesia not being credible in its commitments, the AMM put external backbone and vigilance into a number of the most critical commitments of the MoU.

Motivational postures of key actors

What do we see if we look at the Aceh case through the lens of Valerie Braithwaite's (2009) motivational postures of commitment, capitulation, resistance, disengagement and game playing? During the revolutionary war against the Dutch, few parts of Indonesia showed more *commitment* than Aceh to the ideal of the Indonesian state. In the decades that followed, few parts of Indonesia could compare with the collapse of *commitment* to Indonesia that occurred in Aceh. Between 1950 and 2005, the people of Aceh never recovered *commitment* to Indonesia, but cycled between *resistance* and *capitulation*. During this era, there was also much cycling between *commitment* and *capitulation* to Darul Islam,³¹ then GAM (with some popular *resistance* as well in areas where military-backed militias flourished). The big question at the time of writing is whether it is possible for anomie to be transcended post-conflict with *commitment* evolving among the Acehnese to the Indonesian state simultaneously with *commitment* to provincial and local governments led by former GAM leaders. This seems far from impossible.

What of the motivational postures of the most important player in this conflict: the Indonesian military? There are two ways of reading the commercial behaviour of the Indonesian military. One is that it is an organisation that receives less than one-third of its operational funding from the national budget (probably more today). Officers got involved in legal and, in the case of Aceh, mainly illegal, business ventures so they could fund their troops. That could be the primary motivation for many—a motivation of *commitment* to sustaining the military as a national institution and to paying its staff. The TNI is, however, an opportunity structure that provides a superb cover for state crime by officers motivated by maximising personal accumulation of wealth, of whom there are many, and of which their former president General Suharto was the most accomplished state criminal. Many persistently *played a game* of milking the Indonesian state and a game of extortion of the people and businesses of Aceh.

Game playing entered into the very constitution of who the peacemaking actors were. Neither GAM nor the Government of Indonesia wanted negotiations to be complicated by the inclusion of actors from Acehnese civil society. Hence, when the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue sought to engage and consult with civil society actors, regional military and police commanders, with their limited

31 Ed Aspinall comments that it is perhaps 'more like a mixture than cycling'.

experience of pluralised democratic engagement, publicly criticised mediators for conspiring behind the government's back (Aspinall and Crouch 2003:29). Authoritarian states perhaps always regard mediators who consult with citizens as bypassing its state prerogative to speak for them. Once both sides had forced the mediators to pare down the participants to the core factions of the combatants, the GAM leadership in Sweden used the negotiations as a weapon to consolidate themselves as the sole legitimate spokesmen for the aspirations of the people of Aceh. When meetings did occur between mediators and the breakaway MP-GAM faction leaders based in Malaysia, the Stockholm leaders who held sway over the largest number of fighters in the field threatened to boycott future negotiations (Huber 2004:51).

ExxonMobil was not a peacebuilding actor. It was aligned with the Indonesian Government and the two Bush administrations in the United States, being second only to Enron as a campaign contributor to George W. Bush (Martinkus 2004:17). The Bush State Department in 2002 wrote to a US court urging the dropping of a case against ExxonMobil by 11 Aceh villagers who alleged the company had contributed to their rape, imprisonment at company facilities, torture and the murder of their relatives (through paying and aiding the security forces who carried out the abuses) (Martinkus 2004:16). The court threw out the case. In the 1990s, before the merger with Exxon, Mobil's Aceh operation accounted for nearly one-quarter of the company's worldwide earnings (Martinkus 2004:16). This engendered an attitude that spending a few million dollars to buy a bit of peace and security was a small price. As a result, ExxonMobil contributed financially significant amounts to both sides of the conflict—on the GAM side, less directly than indirectly through contractors who were expected to respond to extortion payments. This gave combatants on both sides a financial incentive to prefer continuation to cessation of the conflict. ExxonMobil therefore was a quintessential *game player*, devoid of a long-term commitment to Aceh, the Indonesian military or the Bush administrations, just keeping ahead of the game of resource politics for the finite period before it pulled out of Aceh.

Finally, the kleptocracy that was the civil administration of Aceh, epitomised by imprisoned Governor Puteh, were also corrupt *game players*. One commentator said that this was 'largely because they couldn't do anything else: they knew their capacity to influence the situation was virtually non-existent, so why not make some money? Their kleptocratic character was more a product than a cause of the conflict.' Between them, the local military, the civil administration and the dominant national and international corporations *gamed* markets, not by competing in them but by turning them into monopolies and cartels. This *game playing* by the key elites has left a terrible legacy of corruption in public life, organised crime and cartelised illegal business structures that have supplanted Aceh's pre-colonial head start into vibrant markets and free international trade.

Sadly, many among the newly powerful ex-GAM elites in Aceh are contracting into the cartelised illegal businesses in logging (with the military), for example, extorting provincial and district contracts from corrupt political cronies or becoming organised crime players, rather than transforming this terrible legacy of their old enemies.

The amazingly widespread vibrancy of the political engagement of the people of Aceh as manifest in the massive pro-referendum rallies of a decade ago is not dead; in Banda Aceh, many NGOs continue to speak truth to power via varied forms of democratic *resistance*. As McGibbon (2006b) put it, the elite of kleptocratic *game players* gave birth to a *resistant* counter-elite of governance reformers. This was as democratically healthy as the morphing of some of the SIRA *resistance* to illegitimate state structures into *commitment* to legitimate, democratic ones. Sadly though, there was a third shift to widespread *disengagement*. A large driver of political and social *disengagement* in Aceh is the extraordinarily high level of poor mental health—post-traumatic stress symptoms, depression, anxiety—as documented by the Harvard Medical School research (IOM 2007). The data also show, however, that trauma increases participation in polarised forms of distrustful, us-versus-them politics (Shewfelt 2008:20). These data highlight the importance of trauma counselling to peacebuilding and democratic citizenship, especially for the elderly who seem to suffer most, and for the young who will suffer longest. Disappointment at slow progress by an honest governor in dismantling deeply entrenched kleptocracy also drives *disengagement*.

Peacebuilding strengths and weaknesses

A strength of the Helsinki peace process was that it seized a window of international pressure to push the parties very quickly to an agreement that covered many of the most important obstacles to peace. The AMM then moved smartly with the parties to deliver the threshold military aspects of disarmament and disengagement of forces. There were two weaknesses. First, these processes engaged a very narrow interpretation of who were the parties to the conflict. Second, the follow-through beyond the first-step MoU undertakings secured with the AMM in 2005 (or to issues on which the MoU was silent) was not impressive. A moment of considerable follow-through promise was the wide engagement of Acehnese civil society with the preparation of a consensus Aceh draft for the Law on the Governance of Aceh. The law that was finally passed in Jakarta then dishonoured the MoU in many fundamental ways. Among other things, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (itself a commitment dishonoured so far) is needed to take stock of what commitments have been and have not been honoured and to diagnose options for jump-starting the stalled delivery vehicles for these commitments.

One thing we must ponder is whether the early strength of the Aceh peace process was possible only because a narrow set of stakeholders participated. If the ultranationalists of the Indonesian parliament and military who really drove the war had been at the table in Helsinki, the process could well have stalled until the window of opportunity closed.³² A similar point could be made about having a more complex array of parties on the GAM side. It could be that an optimal peace process narrows the parties as much as they need to be to get a timely and workable agreement. A post-agreement broadening of participation in hammering out the details of the peace is then needed to improve it, to widen commitment to it and socialisation of its obligations. One might say that all these strengths were in play right up to the completion of the rather wide civil society participation (though with limited participation of women and rural people) in drafting the consensus LoGA text.

Politics is a messy business. If one has the view that the Helsinki MoU happened only because the Jakarta ultranationalists who were the most important actors in the onset of the war were kept away from the table, it should not surprise that these ultranationalists, who could not be kept away from the table in the Indonesian parliament (because they are elected to be there), would water down the MoU when they voted for the LoGA.

A widespread view in the corridors of the United Nations in New York, where fieldwork for Peacebuilding Compared has also been completed, is that peacekeeping has not worked in places such as Somalia because there was ‘no peace to keep’. If the parties are committed to a peace agreement, internationals can be helpful in monitoring or enforcing the agreement and bringing spoilers to heel in accordance with the wishes of the parties. Here is where Elizabeth Drexler’s work can be illuminating. ‘The parties’ can be a fiction, a reification. Recall Drexler’s argument that in Aceh a whole complex of violence was under way earlier in this decade—yes, fighting by GAM loyal to the leadership, fighting by other GAM factions who were not loyal to them, fighting by petty local warlords who saw themselves as supporting the aspirations of GAM (but who others in GAM did not accept as part of the movement), fighting by gangs who pretended to be GAM but who had not the least allegiance to a GAM ideology or leadership, fighting by proxy militias of the military and of GAM, criminal gangs cashing in on the disorder, military deserters running ganja businesses and even the military and police fighting each other.³³ There were,

32 Indeed, Damien Kingsbury commented on this that two representatives of the military were at the table at the beginning of the Helsinki process, they did obstruct progress and they were then dropped off the Indonesian negotiating team.

33 Aspinall (2009:189) also reported that Kopassus troops sometimes gave GAM advance notice of Brimob movements so they could be attacked and hopefully driven out of areas where the police were competing with the military for business protection rackets. In other cases, Kopassus gave GAM advance notice of their movements so as to avoid clashes, in exchange for not pursuing GAM in pacts of coexistence that prevailed in certain areas.

however, also lots of local agreements to avoid fighting between a military that would profit from protection rackets in one area and GAM, who would enjoy a similar monopoly in an adjacent area. For the purposes of peace negotiations, this complex of violence was reified as GAM commanded by di Tiro fighting Indonesia commanded by the president. Without such a fiction, however, would there have been a peace agreement to enforce? Yudhoyono and Kalla had engaged over a number of years in a search for the most useful fiction for who GAM was. Because they believed the Sweden-based leadership was more belligerent than GAM commanders in Aceh and GAM leaders in Malaysia, they toyed for a while with the fiction that those in Sweden were not the leaders of GAM. This proved an unsustainable approach in the search for the fiction that would be as supportive of peace as possible and command as wide a sway over fighters as possible. Then fighters who did not go along with the deal signed by the reified 'parties' could be labelled as spoilers and brought to heel. If the fiction is too fictional, it does not work. Peacemaking, however, will also not work if it requires Drexleresque spurning of oversimplification in the social construction of parties.

Our argument, on the contrary, is that one reason why the peace process has worked is that it embraced a useful simplification of what GAM was and what the Indonesian state was. A morally disturbing aspect of this was that the Indonesian military might have helped the fiction become both more useful and less fictional by killing some more belligerent GAM who might have been obstacles to the peace process. It is more than possible that GAM murdered some of those potential spoilers as well, though that is even harder to be confident about. In the Aceh case, the simplification worked well enough to quickly embrace most of those who were shooting into a peace that was disrupted only by criminal gangs and individuals whose violence involved no province-wide political project. No 'real GAM' equivalent of the Real IRA emerged; military leaders and ultranationalists were unable to push for the impeachment of President Yudhoyono in the way they had done with President Wahid. In a short space of months, the AMM and the police were able to do a good job of reducing the violence of criminal gang leaders who were candidates to become warlords, even though violence did increase after the AMM departed. We include the work of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue when we say the peace process embraced the most productive simplification of who was GAM and who was Indonesia. Here 'most productive' means most influential over fighters and most supportive of peace. While Geneva did not broker an agreement that held and Helsinki did, the Geneva process laid important foundations for constituting pro-peace actors of sufficient sway on both sides. The Geneva process delivered to the Sweden-based GAM negotiators much of the legitimacy of the mass movement led by SIRA. It also constituted the GAM leadership as more pro-

peace actors by challenging their assumptions that Indonesia would eventually disintegrate, that secession was the only way for them to achieve their objectives and that Aceh could be like East Timor or Brunei.

More broadly, one could say that a strength of the Aceh peace process was that many were pushing and contributing to it. When one player or one negotiator set the process back, others stepped in to push it forward. It is also interesting that some of these were politically insignificant and strategically and locally irrelevant actors such as Juha Christensen and Damien Kingsbury. It is also interesting that as powerful an actor as the United States was not among the most central players—nor was the United Nations. Nor was the most important regional body, ASEAN, even though individual ASEAN nations contributed very constructively to the AMM. Nor was the most important regional power beyond Indonesia itself, Australia. That is certainly not to say this was a peace created by marginal players such as an ex-president of a geopolitically insignificant European state and civil society non-entities. The most indispensable individual contribution came from the serving president of the most powerful nation in the region, Indonesia: Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. It was, however, an accomplishment of a networked plurality of contributors and cannot be credited to the diplomatic vision of any great man.

Over the longer history from 1976, the determination of the Indonesian military to undermine peace, provoke conflict through its brutality and make money out of the war was the primary peacebuilding weakness. It was compounded by the weakness of successive Indonesian presidents in failing to confront this until President Yudhoyono was willing to bring the military to heel on Aceh.

One grievance that drove the conflict in Aceh was that the province was not receiving a fair share of the wealth it generated. Today Aceh does not deliver the proportion of Indonesia's wealth that it did in the 1980s and 1990s. A succession of post-Suharto presidents has, however, delivered an increased share of revenues collected in Aceh back to be spent in Aceh, culminating in President Yudhoyono's concessions as part of the Helsinki MoU. By 2006, local governments in Aceh were receiving revenues five times higher than before the decentralisation reforms of 1999. In addition, massive extra resources have flowed to all levels of governance in Aceh as a result of the generosity of donors in the aftermath of the tsunami. The reversal of the outflow of resources to an inflow has been at such a level that the real problem now is the absorption capacity of the ravaged institutions of governance in Aceh. There is a serious capacity deficit in managing and effectively spending this vast surge of resources (Barron and Clark 2006). It was compounded by the fact that the provincial capital was hit particularly hard by the tsunami, devastating the ranks of capable civil servants. In Aceh, as in West Papua, perhaps we should be saying that a strength of the peace processes is that they have reversed a fundamental

driver of the conflict in centre–periphery economic exploitation. In the face of the corruption and extortion that are looting the reversed resource flow, it is, however, delivering only limited improvement to the livelihoods of ordinary villagers. Thus, this is a strength that is tempered by local governance weakness in delivery. On the other hand, this research has revealed much that is inspiring about local leadership from below, from the village level, for better stewardship of those resources, and much inspiring, even evidence-based leadership from above by the likes of the World Bank and Governor Irwandi to empower that leadership from below.

A vibrant civil society is a strength of peacebuilding as it moves forward in Aceh. The civil society capabilities of Aceh were apparent in the sheer scale of the demonstrations organised by SIRA calling for a referendum at the beginning of this decade. On the other hand, while the presence of NGOs is palpable in Banda Aceh, Sigli and Lhokseumawe, elsewhere it is not.³⁴ The exclusion of this vibrant sector from most of the peace process has been criticised.

GAM made a half-hearted attempt at being inclusive by holding a series of meetings with Acehnese civil society groups from the third round of talks onward. However, the groups invited were carefully selected and did not include those who disagreed with GAM. (Schulze 2007a:111)

Women and women's organisations were central neither in the peace process nor in the drafting of the LoGA (Crisis Management Initiative 2006). A positive development was the establishment of a Women's Peace Network of 26 organisations in December 2005. This network did not, however, manage representation or a direct influence on the elite decision makers who were in the room when deals were done. One paradox of the peace process is that Aceh received Sharia laws that the Government of Indonesia, GAM, the SIRA network of NGOs and even many *ulamas* did not want. In Aceh, like everywhere else in the world, women commit less serious crime than men. In Aceh, however, women suffer much harassment from the Sharia police over their dress and their relationships with men. Women have been targets for caning after Friday prayers at the mosque for breaches of Sharia law. Moreover, there are reasons to worry that it is a politicised, disempowering targeting of women. Women's rights activist Smita Notosusanto doubtless exaggerates, yet raises a genuine worry when she alleges: 'What is telling is that all women accused of immorality in Aceh were political activists. So now no one wants to stand for the elections' (quoted in Schulze 2007b:11). Ironically, there was no precedent for caning as a punishment for the three new Sharia regulations passed in Aceh criminalising alcohol consumption/sale, gambling and illicit relations between men and women (ICG 2006b). Public dissatisfaction with the Sharia police (*wilayatul*

34 See also Siapno (2002:179) on the limited footprint of NGOs in the early 1990s.

hisbah, the vice and virtue patrol) and the moral vigilantism it encourages among neighbours has been persistent. The poor, as well as women, are widely believed to be targets:

This public concern, combined with the incumbency of Governor Irwandi, a committed secularist, has clipped the wings of the Shari'a police somewhat, with a shift of emphasis toward guidance more than punishment. (ICG 2008b:4)

A number of ordinary people like our driver said rich men are never caned by the Shari'a police. This has been no easy matter for the governor to navigate. Aceh is probably still the most fervently Islamic of Indonesia's provinces and the Shari'a police are a bureaucracy committed to their own expansion who have many supporters and wield a certain kind of power on the religious right. (ICG 2006b:1)

The IOM in particular has probably managed a somewhat more systematic approach to trauma than we have seen in other Indonesian conflicts in relation to ex-combatants and refugees. Steven Shewfelt's (2008:20) research conducted in collaboration with the IOM and the UNDP in Aceh shows one reason why this is important is that 'wartime trauma brings with it decreases in social trust and increases in political polarization and perception of others' polarization'. On the positive side, however, wartime trauma is associated with heightened post-conflict political and social participation, though with this polarising baggage.

Local reconciliation seems to have contributed greatly to healing, even if a province-wide Truth and Reconciliation Commission has not happened. *Peusijek* and other reconciliation ceremonies have played a part in remarkably low levels of conflict associated with the return of GAM and militias to areas where locals worked on the other side of the conflict. Spontaneous generosity from poor villagers to help returning combatants get back on their feet and to help homeless, crippled and orphaned victims has also been very important to reconciliation, especially when given to former adversaries and their families.

Contests of principles

In the conflicts before the rise of GAM, the principles of the Islamic state and Sharia law were important, but they were not as central to the conflict we were coding post-1976, at least not to its latter stages. The principles of Acehnese identity, Acehnese dignity and Acehnese sovereignty (economic and political) were central. On the Indonesian side, the unity of Indonesia and Indonesian identity were central. To some degree, in the evolution of the peace we have

also seen a temporal shift in the principles of justice at stake, a shift from justice as righting past wrongs against Aceh to justice as a better future for the next generation of Acehnese.

Preliminary conclusion

Barron and Burke (2009:xii) contrast the narrow, brief mandate of the AMM with the ‘human security approach’ of more sustained, inclusive, multidimensional intervention, as in ‘peacebuilding failures such as Timor Leste’.

[T]he experience of Aceh, especially if contrasted with places like Timor Leste, appears to show that a limited role for international agencies can result in better outcomes if domestic commitment to peace holds and domestic government bodies are functional enough to put the commitment into practice. (Barron and Burke 2009:54)

Something important is being said here about the way ‘best practice’ in peacebuilding is overly influenced by successes and failures in shattered states such as Iraq and Afghanistan, non-states such as Somalia and weak states such as Sudan.

It is unclear whether international models for postconflict assistance—which tend to draw on a body of theory and practice largely developed from devastated postconflict states in sub-Saharan Africa—had much relevance for Aceh (or other conflicts in middle-income countries), where the state was still strong and markets were functioning. (Barron and Burke 2009:59)

In all but the Papua case in this book, the combatants themselves (including the military) worked with Indonesian civil society (particularly religious and village *adat* leaders) and the Indonesian state to rebuild peace, prosperity and democracy. This was done with limited international help or pressure in comparative terms; in fact, Aceh was the Indonesian case where international engagement was most intense. Our argument would be that even the failed Indonesian peacebuilding case, Papua, could be solved with a level of international, national and civil society engagement no greater than in the experience of Aceh. What we see today in intensive international peacekeeping interventions such as Liberia or Solomon Islands seems less relevant to what is needed for Papua.

Most people who we interviewed thought prospects for sustained peace in Aceh were good. A former governor of the province said that justice and prosperity were more important to Acehnese than political positions on autonomy and independence. That was one reason why he thought it important to honour

the Truth and Reconciliation Commission clause in the Helsinki agreement. He sees independence in Acehese thinking throughout its history as not an end in itself, but a means to dignity, justice and prosperity. Finally, he thinks that without a peace grounded more solidly in truth and promise keeping, trust between Aceh and Jakarta might break down in the heat of some future crisis.

The more negative view was that Aceh was like parts of the Balkans and the Middle East where a spirit of sovereignty and revenge for its infringement, a spirit of the honour and dignity of Acehese identity, was unusually resilient. Some GAM commanders spoke chillingly of seeing what they could 'get out of' the peace, what could be accomplished in terms of self-government in this period of peace; then when Jakarta betrayed the commitments of the peace deal, as they expected would happen, it would be up to their children to start preparing themselves for the next war. Some informants spoke of comparatively short durations of peace in Acehese history as merely incubation cycles for the next conflict. This was said to be reflected in the *modus operandi* of recruitment for the next war: targeting sons who lost their fathers to the last war, offering them the opportunity to honour their father's sacrifice. So the long cycle is seen as war, a hurting stalemate, ripeness for peace, recovery and demise of the hurting stalemate during which ripeness for war incubates, and on it goes. For other nations, slights to honour and humiliation can fade more quickly than the hurts of the hurting stalemate (and this leads to enduring peace). In Aceh, the reverse could be true: battle weariness is quickly forgotten, while the honour of vindicating Acehese indignity is not so easily forgotten. At the least, it sits there in waiting as a motivational resource to be harnessed by some future entrepreneur of conflict.

There is insight in the pessimistic analysis of the previous paragraph and the optimistic analysis of the paragraph before it. Their joint validity leads to a conclusion that it is possible to build on the hope one analysis offers to defeat the danger the second forebodes. This would seem to require a movement from the present dispensation of non-truth and limited reconciliation to a full flowering of truth, justice and reconciliation. Perhaps this is politically possible only in small historical steps, and therefore will take decades. It is not to say that every war criminal must be punished and no stone of truth unturned. It is perhaps to say that without high integrity truth seeking that leads to a shared sense of what should be forgiven and what should be prosecuted, insurgency could incubate again in Aceh. On the other hand, with a long-term commitment to truth, justice and reconciliation that allows the dignity of Indonesian identity to embrace the dignity of Acehese identity, perpetual peace at last seems possible for beautiful, long-suffering Aceh.

A theme of this chapter has been that fictions can be useful in simplifying who are the parties to a conflict who must be at the table of a peace process. A theme

of this book is that a great deal of effective peacebuilding in Indonesia has been crafted from non-truth and reconciliation. Fictions are, however, fragile things when analysis readily fingers them as such. However useful they are in starting a peace that is hard to start, fragile fictions that are never transcended might come to endanger that peace. Capitulation that does not mature into commitment to a new normative order, but instead shifts to corrupt gaming of the settlement, also risks a return to anomic violence. It also risks criminalisation of the state—something that is happening quite a lot in contemporary Aceh.

Appendix 6.1

Table A6.1 Summary of some codes, Aceh: 650 other variables are coded

Structural factors at root of conflict	Is this a 'consensus' factor among analysts or 'contested but credible' as a possible factor?
Dutch then successor 'Javanese colonialism' cuts off Acehnese trade networks to the north and west, extracts wealth via centres in the south (Medan and Jakarta) that also control monopolies in Aceh	Contested but credible
An Acehnese identity develops that venerates vindication of the sacrifices of past Islamic martyrs in struggles against Dutch 'infidels' and Javanese 'mercenaries'	Contested but credible
Transmigration/immigration; Javanese migrants get better jobs; migrants accused of un-Islamic behaviour, including sexual assaults that foment widespread scandal	Consensus
Mountainous terrain supports insurgency	Consensus
Diaspora supports insurgency, especially a large Malaysian one easily accessed by boat from Aceh	Consensus
Proximate factors	
ExxonMobil and other resource developments enrich Jakarta elites and cut Acehnese elites out of the action	Consensus
ExxonMobil and other resource developments displace villagers, destroy agricultural land, kill fish and pollute	Consensus
ExxonMobil and other resource developments increase opportunities for extortion by GAM and the military	Consensus
Tenacious and resilient leadership of Hasan di Tiro starting with just 70 fighters	Contested but credible
Intelligence and security forces exaggerate GAM as a folk devil that threatens the republic; military commits violence, then attributes it to GAM	Contested but credible
Libya trains di Tiro's insurgents	Consensus
Military reprisals boost GAM recruitment; GAM sometimes intentionally provokes military reprisals	Consensus
Collapse of New Order opens power allocations and the rules of the game to new forms of political competition (Bertrand 2004); GAM leadership comes to believe Indonesia will eventually disintegrate	Consensus
Modelling—attempt to emulate independence referendum as in East Timor	Consensus
Strategy of iron fist of the military and velvet glove of the civil government backfires because civilian government captured by kleptocrats and military deploys iron fist indiscriminately	Contested but credible
Expectations and promises that collapse of New Order will lead to prosecution of military abusers of human rights are not realised	Contested but credible
One broken promise after another to Aceh erodes the credibility of Jakarta's commitments; the 'narrative of the broken promise' (Birchok 2004) is felt with passion	Contested but credible

Broken promises, economic exploitation, rape, torture and beatings are read as assaults on the dignity of the Acehnese; sons should take to arms to right the humiliation of their forebears	Contested but credible
Key triggering incidents	
This conflict is a long, slow simmer of many structural and proximate factors that recurrently boils over; sparking incidents not crucial to starting new outbreaks	Contested but credible
Key war-making actors	
Indonesian security forces	Consensus
Militias, some ethnic, some criminal gangs, recruited mainly by military	Consensus
Military agents pretending to be GAM and other sham GAM	Consensus
GAM	Contested but credible
Key peacemaking actors	
President Yudhoyono, Vice-President Kalla, Farid Husein	Consensus
The GAM negotiating teams	Consensus
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Crisis Management Initiative	Contested but credible
Governments of Norway, Finland and Sweden, European Commission	Contested but credible
Aceh Monitoring Mission	Consensus
SIRA and civil society organisations, especially university student leaders, pushing for peaceful paths to self-government	Consensus
BRA and reintegration donor networks, especially World Bank, IOM, USAID, Japanese Government	Contested but credible
Village reconciliation leaders	Contested but credible
Religious leaders assisting reconciliation and delivering sermons for peace	Contested but credible
Peace journalists, investigative journalists exposing corruption	Contested but credible
Peacebuilding strengths	
Mass civil society movement for peaceful change through a referendum influences GAM; civil society strengths also support peacebuilding and monitor corruption	Consensus
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue process begins to impose a reality check on GAM beliefs that Indonesia will disintegrate, that Aceh could be as wealthy as Brunei, etc.	Contested but credible
A networked plurality of actors that run from Bill Clinton and Muhammadiyah leader Imam Suja to 'wise men' mobilised by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and local peacebuilding NGOs creates a redundancy of peacemaking competence that covers the mistakes of one peacemaker with the strengths and resilience of others	Contested but credible
Tsunami opens a window of international pressure for peace; need for humanitarian workers to be safe; international scrutiny on spoilers; media scrutiny on threats of aid withdrawal; tsunami also engenders empathy and creates a resource-rich environment to support peacebuilding	Consensus
Ahtisaari-led 'nothing agreed until everything agreed' mediation forces quick progress inside the window opened by the tsunami	Consensus

The AMM pushes on inside that window with quick completion of military aspects of the MoU and convening elections that allow GAM leaders to share power in a major way	Consensus
Combatant factions excluded from the peace process prevented from morphing into post-MoU warlords by a combination of civil society, the AMM and police pressure	Contested but credible
At the village level, local reconciliation works well enough to prevent significant amounts of local violence against returning combatants from different sides	Contested but credible
Peacebuilding weaknesses	
Belligerent military spoilers are resilient	Consensus
Military and GAM war criminals are effectively guaranteed impunity as long as they commit no new crimes after the peace agreement is signed; even a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that gives them amnesty is not yet established	Contested but credible
The AMM fails to follow through energetically in the window when the international attention cycle is on Aceh to deliver human rights, reconciliation and key governance aspects of the MoU	Contested but credible
Women are largely excluded from all stages of the peace process, even the most inclusive stages (such as the drafting of the consensus draft of the LoGA)	Consensus
Ultranationalist factions of the Indonesian polity fight back from their exclusion from the Helsinki process by securing a substantial gutting of the Helsinki agreement in the LoGA passed by the Indonesian parliament	Contested but credible
Corruption and embezzlement in government continue even after election of a governor with a strong anti-corruption agenda; he is part of the solution; other elements of GAM join in to become part of the problem	Consensus
Two years of delay and maladministration in delivering reintegration payments fuel distrust	Consensus
Homes destroyed by the conflict are rebuilt more slowly than in other areas of Indonesia afflicted with conflict because of the massive house-building challenge of the tsunami, yet they are eventually rebuilt	Consensus
Many local GAM leaders morph into crime bosses who extort contracts from local governments and humanitarian organisations assisting tsunami and conflict victims, collaborate with the military for illegal logging, have extravagant tsunami homes built for themselves, etc.	Contested but credible
Key contested principles of peacebuilding	
Acehnese identity, Acehnese dignity, Acehnese sovereignty (economic and political) and self-government	Consensus
Indonesian identity, Indonesian unity	Consensus
Temporal shift from emphasis on justice as righting past wrongs against Aceh to justice as a better future for the next generation of Acehnese	Contested but credible

Table A6.2 Numbers and types of people interviewed, Aceh case

Elected official, legislator/MPR/bupati	5
Civil servant	17
Political leader of oppositional group (GAM negotiators)	4
Military	6
Police	1
GAM combatants, commanders	20
Adat/indigenous/village leader	1
Religious leader	7
Women's NGO	3
Environmental NGO	2
Development NGO	7
Human rights/peacebuilding NGO	7
Other NGO	0
Journalist	5
Business leader	0
Student/youth leader	6
Foreign government (ambassador, foreign minister of another country, USAID, etc.)	7
Aceh Monitoring Mission	18
Other international organisations	9
Researcher/university academic	1
Victim/refugees	2
Other	0
Total interviews	112
Total people interviewed	128

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