

Foreword: From 1966 to a Different Lens on Peacemaking

The year 1966 was by all accounts a troubled one. Tensions boiled over in South Vietnam; civil rights protests escalated in the US; coups erupted in Nigeria and Togo; and the international community struggled to hold a consistent line of action in response to security force killings in Rhodesia. In Australia, the leader of the Labor Party, Arthur Calwell, was shot and injured, and Harold Holt became Prime Minister for a short time before tragedy struck.

Troubled times can generate innovations in peace making, but cooperation, commitment, generosity and further innovation are needed to sustain them. The innovation and labour of peacemaking and peacekeeping at state and supra-state level since 1945 has been much theorised and discussed. In her 1993 report for RAND, for example, Lynn Davis noted that successful interventions for peace need a shared concern about a situation, a desire to put aside vested interests, a commitment to concrete settlements and a recognition of the need for specialist help with elements of solution finding.¹

Peacemaking and peacekeeping are not just writ by nation states. Nor is the analysis of peacemaking and peacekeeping exhausted by including reference to popular or protest movements like those carefully documented in books like Kyle Harvey's *American Anti-Nuclear Activism, 1975–1990: The Challenge of Peace*.² National stances can also rehearse, adopt and adapt institutional voices that run within

1 Davis, Lynn E. *Peace Keeping and Peace Making After the Cold War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1993). www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR281.html, accessed 5 August 2016.

2 Harvey, K., *American Anti-Nuclear Activism, 1975–1990: The Challenge of Peace* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

and across state boundaries. Those voices may reflect the input of a relatively small group of people, but the impact of acting on them may operate at global scale.

The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC) stands out as one of the few lasting global innovations in peacemaking from 1966. That is easily measured not only in scholarly outputs, but also in government and government agency stances and actions on a wide variety of matters, from nuclear non-proliferation to regional tensions, and from the motivations of those who seek violence as well as peace to the boundaries of domestic security. I suspect, however, that reflection on what has made SDSC successful has understandably taken a back seat to these scholarly and policy outcomes. In cases like this, the view of an outsider can help to throw into focus that which is humbly placed aside in the desire to help others. To my view, advising on peacemaking, peacekeeping, non-proliferation of weapons, threat management, conflict and intervention strategy and non-state fighters requires many of the same skills that play out at state level. Arguably too, the SDSC boasts a record of outcomes that equal or better those of some nation states.

SDSC provides us with an exemplar of what results when we put aside vested disciplinary interests, when we realise that we need to look at complex, dynamic and unstable problems from multiple directions, when we see the power of collaboration across organisations, and when we acknowledge that innovations have to be communicated in multiple ways for multiple audiences. Most of all, SDSC reflects a shared concern in securing a better world.

These norms are in lamentably short supply both within and beyond the academic world. Contemporary funding, policy and scholarly settings tend to drive disciplinary splintering, safe innovations in thought and inward-looking communication. Our times are just as troubled as 1966 and, arguably, the world has more need now for concerted, collective action to ensure that people live with enough safety to access and take advantage of educational, economic, social and cultural opportunities. The stakes are high, and we need to bring the best of ourselves to solving the problems we face.

So while I think it is fitting that we celebrate the scholarly contribution of SDSC to research, policy and action, I also think a celebration of its role as a model in academic practise is 50 years overdue. We need to further our understanding of the forces and eddies in peace, war and tensions, and we need to continue to do that by combining the best of multiple, strong disciplines of theory and empirical work, of the expertise of people inside and outside of the academy, and of different communication styles. Yet there is a further challenge to ensure that academic peacemaking becomes a wider norm. Having reaped the rewards of peace in one place, we have an obligation to make peace in other places. The complex problems that we face domestically and internationally ask no less of us. SDSC has a key role to play in promoting this norm of academic peacemaking and peacekeeping, and I believe that the next 50 years will see it broaden its networks of influence in the pursuit of understanding, policy, and action.

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