

# WAR, PEACE AND THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT

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## CONCEPTS AND PRIORITIES

### The Character of Armed Conflict Today

Systemic violence up to and including war is a chronic development problem. A development agenda that fails to address violence is dealing with only part of the needs of Third World countries and will probably not enjoy much success.

- During 1993, there were 52 wars involving 42 war-torn countries.
- In a further 37 violent countries, political violence was widespread and even endemic without quite meriting the name of war.
- Of this total of 79 conflict countries, 65 are in the Third World.[1](#)

Almost all the 52 wars are civil wars. Wars that in 1993 were fought between two different states began as civil wars in Yugoslavia and the USSR before their disintegration. In recent years there have been few inter-state wars, though direct and indirect external intervention in internal strife continues.

These wars do not conform to the prevailing western image of war. Of wars that have received saturation coverage in the western news media in the past three decades, it is only the two in the headlines during 1993 - Bosnia-hercegovina and Somalia - that accurately exemplify modern war. Wars such as those in Vietnam or in the Gulf in 1991 are exceptions - and not only because they became "media wars". The misery of Bosnia-Hercegovina and Somalia is much closer to the norm. Though suffering there is on a larger scale than normal, it is, sadly, not unique. Less noticed by the western media in 1993, the wars in Tadzhikistan and Angola, in Liberia and in Sudan, were all causing

death and suffering on a Bosnian or Somali scale. In previous years, the wars in Mozambique and Sri Lanka have also had horrific effects without attracting much western attention.

Most wars, however, are smaller. The suffering they cause is a slow torture, sometimes limited to one region of a country. These smaller wars, some of them destined to become bigger wars, do not have clean outlines. It is, for example, normally difficult to know when a war has really begun and when it has really finished. Most wars today take the form of a rumbling conflict that, from time to time across a decade, erupts viciously into action. They tend to last a long time: more than half the wars active in 1993 have lasted more than a decade. In these characteristics, they do not conform to the new values of the western media. Therefore, they do not get covered with any consistency. They do not make good stories; they offer no peerless triumphs; only rarely do they produce disasters that take a whole nation to despair and destruction. They simply continue.

Most of these wars are fought with relatively low technology weapons. The laser-guided, video-recorded weapons of the Gulf War of 1991, the cruise missiles that turn right at the traffic lights - these are the weapons of a completely different kind of war from what is happening in Jammu and Kashmir, in Myanmar, in Nagorno-Karabakh, or, for that matter, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While, as in the latter war, long-range artillery may be used to bombard and terrorise civilian areas, the general pattern is for war to be conducted at much closer quarters. The violence is not as depersonalised as in high-tech video-age warfare, but it is no less brutal.

It is another typical feature of wars today that there is no reliable information about the scale of death and suffering that they cause. The reason is that nobody has the job of counting most of the dead, injured and displaced.

There are, of course, many claims and counter-claims about the casualties of wars. Seeking sympathy and solidarity, the contending parties' press and information offices release figures that may be taken up and printed in an obscure corner of the international press. No great credence can be placed in these figments of propaganda. In most wars, however, each side probably has a reasonably accurate figure for its own casualties, which it may or may not release. But neither unreliable propaganda nor the secrecy surrounding the true figures is what really prevents the world from knowing with any certainty or precision how many people die in wars today. The real problem is the predominance of civilian casualties.

It is generally accepted that at the beginning of this century some 85 to 90 per cent of war casualties were military, the remainder being non-combatant civilians who were caught in the cross-fire or killed in atrocities. During the twentieth century, war has been taken to the civilian population. In World War II, including all theatres of warfare, estimates of civilian fatalities as a proportion of all deaths range from a half to two-thirds; all estimates include victims of death camps and massacres as well as civilians killed in bombing raids on cities. Today, it is generally reckoned that about three quarters of war-deaths are civilians. If refugees and wounded are included, some estimates indicate that

about 90 per cent of war casualties today are civilian.<sup>2</sup> This reversal of the proportion of ninety years ago is an unpleasant indicator of twentieth century regress.

These figures are generally accepted by scholars and experts on modern wars, although it has to be stressed that they are only estimates. A major difficulty with them may lie in distinguishing between civilians who are completely uninvolved in the war except as victims and those who, for whatever reason including both compulsion and commitment, participate in it not by fighting but as part of the infrastructure of supply, communications and intelligence.

If the estimates are reasonably reliable, they indicate the problem of getting accurate casualty figures. Civilians who get caught up in war will, if they survive, bury their dead if possible and then seek safety. They have every reason to try to be invisible to the contending forces. Relief agencies will care more for those who survived than for those who did not; they are often the source of information for how many people died in a particular locality or an especially terrible atrocity. They have little interest in putting resources into the work of getting an accurate overall tally. Armed forces - whether regular government forces or irregular guerrilla forces - move on quickly, whether out of necessity in defeat, or to press home an advantage, or simply because their tactic is to hit and run. As a result, we have a broad outline of the scale of human suffering, but no reliable details.

Most estimates suggest that, in all, rather more than twenty million people have died in war since 1945. Wars active during 1993 may have killed a cumulative total of four to six million people. In all, counting internal displaced persons as well as international refugees, as many as thirty million people may have been forced to flee from their homes through the impact or the fear of war. In recent years, the worst famines - Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan - have all been caused or exacerbated by war.

It is possibly a by-product of both the close-quarters violence and the predominance of civilian suffering that one feature of today's wars is a striking ethical deterioration. This is not simply a question of atrocities, which have always happened in war and presumably always will. However brutal war may be, some will always see some justification for it, if not for its excesses, in the cause for which it is fought. Today it is common for warfare to cease to be a means and to become an end in itself. The insurgents lose sight of their goals and begin to focus on group survival. Violence starts to reproduce itself by parthenogenesis. One writer on guerrilla war explained the process this way: "Once the banner of rebellion has been raised and blood has been shed, it is no easy matter to give up. The rebels begin to fight for whatever reason: they continue because they must."<sup>3</sup>

This is a common pattern:-

- In Colombia in 1990 and 1991, the main guerrilla groups abandoned war; the smaller, less effective ones fought on.
- In Liberia in 1990 and Somalia in 1991, victory by the insurgents was followed by fighting among them.

- The Mojaheddin insurgents won in Afghanistan in 1992 and began a war with casualty levels as high as at any time in the previous twelve years.
- In Uganda, rational war aims have been a contradiction in terms for a decade; war continues in the north where it has become banditry - as it has in parts of India and as it has long been in parts of Myanmar.
- Perhaps the most surprising example of longevity is in Malaysia where the guerrilla war that was at its height in the 1950s - the "Emergency" - only ended in December 1989, a year after joint Thai-Malaysian air strikes against the Communists' camps in southern Thailand.

Any guerrilla force needs a constant supply of new recruits to replace its dead, its seriously wounded and its deserters. They get their new recruits by a variety of means. Some guerrilla groups terrorise peasants into joining them; Sendero Luminoso in Peru and Renamo in Mozambique have been notorious for this, but not alone in it. In 1990, it was estimated that the fighters in the world's wars included some 200,000 children below the age of fifteen.<sup>4</sup> Many of them are effectively given to guerrilla forces by villages as a form of protection payment. Others are terrorised and brutalised into joining. From the war in Mozambique comes a particularly harrowing account of Renamo guerillas cutting off a boy's fingers one by one until he obeyed their order to shoot his father. Then they forced him to join them.<sup>5</sup> Guerrilla forces also draw on political idealists. And they almost all also recruit from the impoverished, the miserable, the starving, the people with no other prospects, with no hope and no reason for hope - casualties of development.

When the conditions of life are a violence, a violent response is hardly surprising. The form it takes will vary depending on many factors - such as personal psychology, familial circumstance, social pressures and inhibitions, national history and political opportunities. Each individual's choice to join the guerrillas is made for individual reasons, in a context of desperation that leads to desperate choices.

## WARS TODAY: Data and Definitions

Table 1 shows the war-torn countries. It lists those wars that were identifiably active at any time during 1993. In compiling Table 1, war is defined as open armed conflict in which all the following criteria are met:

- regular government forces are involved on at least one side;
- there is central organisation on both sides (or, in multi-party conflicts, all sides);
- there is some continuity (of parties, actions, issues and objectives) between clashes; and
- more than 25 people are killed in a year, in a conflict in which cumulative deaths total at least several hundred.

The casualty threshold is set so low because of the large number of conflicts that are quiescent for periods; it is arbitrary to declare that a war has stopped when what has happened is that one party is keeping quiet while it renews its strength, reorganises and

prepares for the next offensive. The threshold is also deliberately vague because of the unreliability of data on casualties.

This is a qualitative rather than a quantitative definition of war. It is designed to be flexible and thus to catch the widest possible range of conflicts. It is occasionally necessary, even so, to stretch the terms of the definition, to include, for example, some cases where there is no involvement by regular government forces. Two very different examples of this are Somalia, where there is no government, and the ANC-Inkatha war in South Africa, where if there is government involvement, as has been alleged, it is not by regular forces and may be carried out by a secret "state within the state" that the government does not and cannot fully control.

Because the data on casualties are so unreliable, the table provides no estimates of how many people have been killed in these wars. The figures are so heavily politicised and so contradictory, it is only rarely that they can be regarded as useful. Of the wars shown in Table 1, those that have been the most lethal are, in alphabetical order, Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, East Timor, Guatemala, Mozambique and Uganda. Those which are currently the most lethal are, in alphabetical order, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sudan and Tadzhikistan.

There is also a shortage of reliable data with which to compare the incidence of warfare in the early 1990s with preceding periods. A convenient period for comparison would be the late 1940s when the modern development era began for the Third World as decolonization began. Such data as do exist indicate that war is considerably more widespread now than four and half decades ago.<sup>6</sup>

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the number of wars declined. This was associated with the end of the Cold War, which aided the settlement of wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador, in Namibia and, more recently, in Mozambique. The long-lasting wars in Ethiopia also ended in 1992 with victory for the insurgents and the Iran-Iraq war had ended in 1988. Exhaustion of one side or both led to various wars either ending or entering what may later seem in retrospect simply a quiet period. Examples are Iran, Lebanon and Western Sahara. In other cases, as we have noted already, victory for the insurgents led to renewed fighting over the spoils, as in Afghanistan, Liberia and Somalia. And there have been the particularly tragic cases of wars that seemed to have been settled only to erupt again, for example in Angola and Burundi.

Peace-making at the end of the Cold War, though real, has not inaugurated a new era of world peace. The relief that greeted the end of some wars must be balanced by awareness of new wars breaking out, not only in ex-Yugoslavia and the ex-USSR, and by old wars returning. It appears that the annual incidence of warfare may be slightly increasing as we approach the mid-1990s.<sup>7</sup>

## SUB-WAR VIOLENCE: Data and Definitions

Table 2 lists the countries in which there was systemic violent conflict short of open war during the early 1990s. In a few cases, countries are listed in both tables, because the war shown in Table 1 is highly regionalised and the violence shown in Table 2 lacks apparent connection.

Systemic violent conflicts are repetitive outbursts of violence in which some people are killed. Types of violence include terrorism, military unrest including coups, death squad and similar activity, riots and demonstrations made violent by the authorities' response. The government is involved as the target of protest or as an instigator of conflict. In compiling Table 2, no requirement for continuity of clashes or actions was included, but one-off explosions of violence were excluded as was traditional criminal violence unless it had a clear connection to fundamental political and social deficiencies.

Four general points emerge from Table 2:

- Violence is widespread. One should not tire of repeating this, or it may be possible to forget how serious are the problems that still beset the Third World.
- In many countries, systemic violence is very close to war both quantitatively and qualitatively. That is, there are chains of violence in which
  - -- the number of deaths is touching the level at which most people intuitively feel that the term "war" is appropriate; and
  - -- there appears to be a pattern of activity and organisation on the anti-government side that is not far from that of war-time guerrilla organisation.
- There are several countries where,
  - -- war has stopped yet seems on the verge of returning; and/or
  - -- where opposition to dictatorship has been politically successful yet the social and economic conditions remain chronic.
- The three common themes in Table 2 are
  - -- economic demands, especially resistance to austerity measures;
  - -- constitutional demands; and
  - -- ethnic rivalries.

## PEACE, WAR AND DEVELOPMENT

### Development & Peace, Poverty & Conflict

Since 1945 there has been a general expectation - or at least a claim - that social and economic development in the Third World would bring peace. These hopes have not so far been borne out by the general experience of development. As noted above, war

appears to be more widespread today than at the start of the development era in the late 1940s.

On the other hand, if development is viewed solely in terms of per capita wealth, it is certainly true that there is a correlation between prosperity and peace or, viewed in darker terms, a link between poverty and war. No countries are immune to systemic violence but poorer countries suffer more and the poorest suffer most:-

- Taking the Human Development Index in the 1993 Human Development Report, of 126 developing countries listed, there was war in 32 and sub-war violence in an additional 33.[8](#)
- Of this total of 65 conflict countries (just over 50 per cent of Third World countries on the HDI):
  - -- 10 are among the top third of Third World countries, measured by the HDI
  - -- 24 are in the middle third;
  - -- 31 are in the poorest third.

Differentiating between war and sub-war violence produces the same pattern, in the sense that the greater degree of violence is associated with the poorer countries. Of the 32 war-torn countries:

- -- 4 are among the top third of Third World countries, measured by the HDI
- -- 12 are in the middle third;
- -- 16 are in the poorest third.

So countries that do relatively well at economic development are less prone to systemic violence than those that have so far lost out in the development race. The most significant dividing line appears to be roughly between the top one-third and the bottom-two thirds. Of course, these broad statistical generalisations do not explain causality. Yet it does seem clear that, while viewed as a global process, Third World development has not generated peace, if viewed as a series of separate national processes, success in development does indeed breed peace.

A slightly more subtle variation of the same basic insight that links poverty and war would look for a connection between particularly sharp economic inequality and war. In the early 1990s, there is no way to substantiate this view. Comparing the Human Development Index for 1993 with the data on war and sub-war violence, indicates that countries that do well at spreading available wealth among the population are neither more nor less prone to war and sub-war violence than countries that do badly at it.[9](#)

The poverty/war connection identified above is a broad, tenable generalisation. It indicates the importance of a wealth-generating development strategy for Third World countries. However, the absence of other clear findings at this broad statistical level

should not be taken to mean that, if the aim is to minimise systemic violence, all wealth-generating development strategies are equally sound.

## The Problem of Causation

Crude statistical correlations do not indicate causality. Poverty may cause war yet war may also cause poverty. Identifying the causes of conflicts is complicated. An enterprise as full of risk, destruction and costs as warfare is not normally entered lightly, yet the contending parties themselves may not fully understand the causes of war. There is a difference between the causes for which they fight and what it is that causes them to fight. Moreover, causation regularly includes more than one major element.

For example, conflict that began in 1989 in the Senegal River valley, is often taken as an example of conflict caused by environmental factors or, more precisely, environmental degradation and resource depletion.<sup>10</sup> This category of conflict causation has only recently been identified. An internationally financed dam on the Bafing River tributary in Mali and a barrage near the mouth of the Senegal River, on the Mauritania/Senegal border, were intended to promote hydropower and protect agricultural production and river transport from the effects of drought. The massive project had unintended consequences: land values in the river valley rose in the expectation that profitable intense agriculture would be possible. The Mauritanian Arab elite passed new laws on land ownership, denying black Africans the right to continue farming, herding and fishing on the Mauritanian river bank. Violence began when black Senegalese farmers were killed by Mauritians. Some 70,000 black Mauritians were declared Senegalese and expelled from Mauritania and thousands of Arabs were likewise driven out of Senegal. In each country, several hundred people were killed. The two governments were on the brink of full-scale war.

Environmental conflict is one way to define the causation here, but not the only way. There was a long history of violence and conflict between blacks and Arabs in both countries. This was an explosion of ethnic conflict in which the environmental issue was but the trigger. In addition, this is a class issue: it was the interests of the Mauritanian elite that brought the new legislation into being, directed against a section of the Mauritanian rural population. That the rural population in question was black was secondary to the basic profit motive of the elite. More than a class issue, however, what was at stake in this conflict was simply the power that derives from the ownership of land - one of the most commonly recurring causes of conflict throughout recorded history. Finally, the conflict issue was not simply land as such but economically exploitable land: this was a matter of taking land out of traditional agriculture and bringing it into the new, modern market system. In that sense, this is a classic modernisation conflict, a familiar theme in nineteenth century European history, in the history of colonialism and in Third World development of the past four and a half decades.

It is possible, then, to identify five fundamental issues in the Senegal River valley conflicts - environment/resources, ethnicity, class, land and modernity (which could equally be called the advance of the market system). Each one of these is a real issue and



each is well capable of causing or triggering violent conflict. It is extremely difficult to identify any of these five as the dominant issues. The causes of conflict are often like light refracted in a prism.

In its multiple causation, this conflict is not unique. Other conflicts taken as examples of environmental conflict include the massacre of Moslem immigrants in Assam in 1983. They were migrants, accused by some sections of the local population of stealing the region's richest farmland. Moreover, they had migrated because of shortages of arable land in Bengal. For most of the 1980s, there was an insurgency and civil war in Tripura over an almost identical set of issues - the displacement of Buddhist and Christian farmers by Hindu immigrants from Bangladesh (and, earlier, East Pakistan). In both cases one can note land shortage as a factor behind migration, while both land ownership and ethnicity are factors in causing the conflicts.

Moving away from conflicts in which environmental issues have a role, the war in Afghanistan is an example not of multiple but of evolving causation. Today it is a war between different Islamist groups to determine the social, economic and political contours of a country that has yet to emerge from an extraordinarily destructive war that produced some six million international refugees. Before that, it was a war between political Islam and a secular view of national government and development. Before that it was a classic war of intervention - a prolonged effort by the USSR to stabilise a southern neighbour and hold it within the Soviet sphere of influence - the modern version of "the great game" of British empire-building in South Asia. As always, the other side of the coin was that the war was also a battle to retain/regain independence. There were other external players as well as the USSR. For the USA, the strategy in Afghanistan, by supporting the Islamic Mojaheddin whom it would otherwise have spurned, was to inflict a slow torture on the USSR, bleeding its strength and its resolve away. Its main local ally in this was Pakistan, itself under the Islamist dictatorship of General Zia, for whom Afghanistan offered a threefold opportunity: to strike out at the abhorred Soviet regime, to make a bid for regional power and, by being the USA's good client for a while at least, to receive military and technological aid which would strengthen it in its bitter rivalry and border disputes with India. The third major player was Iran. Like Pakistan, it accepted refugees and guerrilla camps and gave various forms of direct and indirect aid to the Mojaheddin groups it supported. Its motives were similar to Pakistan's, without the element of rivalry with India and without the relationship with the USA. Before the Soviet invasion in December 1979, the conflict in Afghanistan could largely be understood as a classic modernisation conflict, in which the Kabul government, leftist and modernising, sought to alter social patterns including land ownership and was resisted by the traditional village and rural leaders.

This analysis can be repeated in case after case. To it, we must add an element already mentioned: wars can, in time, come to be about themselves. The cause of war can be war itself. Violence tends to be self-reproductive.

The multiple causation of many conflicts does not mean that, even in those cases, it is wrong to isolate a single factor and attempt to assess its importance in causing conflict.

Especially, it does not mean it is wrong to identify those conflict factors that appear in many different cases. It simply warns against believing that an activity as complicated and as lethal as war is ever likely to be one dimensional. Since most conflicts are multi-faceted, solutions to them must also be multi-faceted. Below we explore the possibility that the choice of development strategy can be influence the likelihood of conflict. In doing so, however, it must be clear that this is an exploration of one actor in any given conflict - not necessarily the sole cause.

## Conflict and Development Strategy

There are very few real development choices available today. For most of the modern Third World development era, the attractions of market capitalism were counter-balanced by the claim that there was a radically different and more successful model based on central planning and state socialism. This model failed but, while it existed, encouraged a range of so-called "Third Way" options that lay somewhere between central planning and free market capitalism. Though the success of these options has been arguable, they prevented any single model gaining an ideological monopoly. Today, there is really only one development model available to most of the Third World - free market capitalism.

The pressure to adopt it comes from two sources. One is the demise of the USSR and the corresponding need in Third World countries that require foreign aid to turn to the West. This is both an ideological - even a cultural - pressure and a practical matter of power: the governments of the West are increasingly unlikely to use development aid, which is itself subject to heavy budget pressures at home, to support a development model they long opposed. Nor will they even support variants of it. The second source, however, is more important.

Extravagant borrowing and spending from the late 1960s through the 1970s took many Third World governments into a spiral of debt which, by the early 1980s, they could not afford to service. The management of debt and organisation of debt service and repayments has now been largely shifted from commercial banks to the multilateral financial agencies - the International Monetary Fund, the World bank and its various off-shoots. The conditions under which the IMF and the Bank will reschedule debts and make new loans for new development projects essentially boil down to a particularly pure form of free market capitalism. Best known under the label of structural adjustment, the package of required measures is familiar:-

- Cut the welfare state, reduce public spending, privatise or simply eliminate public services;
- Liberalise trade, particularly to permit imports so that, according to the theory behind the measures, domestic production is forced to be competitive;
- Structure economic policy towards the needs of entrepreneurs and especially to exports;
- Thus continue and even accelerate the process of drawing all economic and social sectors in the international market economy.

Increasingly, then, the idea of various development options between which a choice can be made according to the needs and conditions of a given Third World country has become anachronistic. For good or bad, development today means following the economic recipes of the IMF and World Bank.

## Debt and Conflict

Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide some suggestive evidence about linkages between debt and war. They bring together the war and violence data from 1993 presented in Tables 1 and 2 with the latest available information, dating from 1991 and 1992, on Third World countries with heavy debt burdens.

In these tables, a heavy debt burden is defined in two ways. Table 3 lists countries that have received Adjustment Loans from the World Bank. These are conditional on economic reforms and indicate that the recipient has got into some degree of difficulty over debt repayments. Table 4 lists the top 25 Third World debtors, by two different measures: gross external debt and debt service ratio. The latter is the proportion of export earnings spent on debt service. In each case, the table also shows whether the countries listed were involved in war or in sub-war violence.

Table 5 looks at the issue from the other side. It lists all the Third World conflict countries - i.e., all those listed already in Tables 1 and 2. It also shows whether they have received an Adjustment Loan and, if they rank among the top 25 debtors by either measure, what their rank is.

Taken together, these three tables indicate the degree to which debt is associated with war and the degree to which war is associated with debt. The evidence is as follows:-

Of 71 Third World countries that have received Adjustment Loans,

- -- 50 are conflict countries (70 per cent), of which
- -- 19 are war-torn and
- -- 31 are violent.

Of the top 25 Third World debtors, whether measured by gross external debt or debt service ratio,

- -- 22 are conflict countries (almost 90 per cent).

Of the top 25 measured by gross external debt,

- -- 10 are war-torn and 12 are violent, while

Of the top 25 measured by debt service ratio,

- -- 9 are war-torn and 13 are violent.

Of 65 Third World conflict countries,

- -- 51 carry major debt burdens (almost 80 per cent), in that 50 have received Adjustment Loans and there is one additional major debtor.

Of 32 war-torn countries in the Third World,

- -- 20 carry major debt burdens (just over 60 per cent). and

Of 33 violent countries in the Third World,

- -- 31 carry major debt burdens (over 90 per cent).

In its findings of a very strong association between debt and conflict, this evidence is both consistent with and expands on the evidence presented by a study published in 1992.<sup>[11](#)</sup> It used data on debt from 1988 and data on war from 1990 and early 1991. The definitions of war and debt burden were very close to those used in this study. It found that of the 25 Third World states with the largest gross external debts, 12 were involved in war. Of the 27 Third World states with the highest Debt Service Ratio, 12 were war-torn.<sup>[12](#)</sup> Looking at the issue from the other side, of the 38 war-torn countries for which debt data were available, 25 (approximately two-thirds) had heavy debt burdens.<sup>[13](#)</sup>

Revisiting this study, it is interesting to bring the war data up to date and to add those top debtor states in which there is systemic violence below the level of war. This allows us to assess the effect of the passage of time as well as broadening the focus to include sub-war violence. The result is striking:-

- Of the top 25 debtors of 1988 measured by gross debt, 22 were conflict countries in 1993.
- Of the top 27 debtors of 1988 measured by Debt Service Ratio, 23 were conflict countries in 1993.

In other words, five years on, whichever way the debt burden is measured, 85 per cent or more of those with the heaviest burden of debt also carry a heavy burden of violence. There has been no recent progress in breaking the close association between debt and conflict.

The arguments above about the complexities of identifying causality are important here. The high statistical association of debt and conflict is only an association. It suggests an important issue to explore but more work is required before causality can be uncovered. The double fact that many conflicts have an identifiably multiple causality and that many also have a causality which changes over time means that statistical analysis is not an attractive way to explain causes.

The historical record is clear that war creates debt; the question is whether debt can also lead to war. In pursuing that question, we should not focus on finance but on economic

and social policies. Financial decisions of, primarily, the 1960s and 1970s brought Third World countries to a point where they had to accept the dominant development strategy based on market liberalisation and a small public sector. Our question is whether this trajectory is related to trends in peace and conflict. Taking on board all the reservations about the difficulty of identifying causes, our survey indicates of a range of conflicts does indicate that the market development strategy is often an important element in causing conflict.

**1. Of the other fourteen two are in western Europe (Spain and the United Kingdom); six were once part of the ex-USSR (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Tadjikistan and parts of Russia); four are parts of ex-Yugoslavia (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, which is counted twice to include Kosovo as a separate entry); the remaining two are Israel, which is regarded as industrialised, and Romania.**

**2. Christa Ahlström, Casualties of Conflict, Uppsala University, Sweden, Department of Peace & Conflict Research, 1991; Ruth Leger Sivard, World Military & Social Expenditures 1985, World Priorities Inc., Washington, DC, 1985.**

**3. Robert Taber, The War of the Flea, Paladin, Stalbans, 1970, p45.**

**4. A UN report, cited in "Child warriors", Time, 18 June 1990.**

**5. Ahlström, Casualties of Conflict, p19.**

**6. Using a much narrower definition of war that excludes most modern armed conflict, one estimate indicates that in each of 1949 and 1950 there were six wars whereas in 1989 and 1990 there were 13 and 15 wars respectively: Ruth Leger Sivard, World Military & Social Expenditures 1991. The definition of war in this compilation is 1,000 war - deaths annually, a definition that many researchers reject both because of the difficulties in casualty data and because it is hard to identify any basis for deciding that armed conflict with 900 dead per year for many years is at a lower level of violence than armed conflict that lasts for a single year and causes 1,000 deaths.**

**7. Peter Wallensteen & Karin Axell, "Armed Conflict at the End of the Cold War", Journal of Peace Research, vol. 30, no. 3, August 1993.**

**8. Cf Tables 1 and 2: there was also sub-war violence in four war-torn Third World countries.**

**9. Human Development Report 1993, Table 1.2.**

**10. Thomas F Homer - Dixon, Jeffrey H Boutwell & George W Rathjens, "Environmental Change and Violent Conflict", Scientific American, Vol. 268, No. 2, February 1993.**

**11. Dan Smith, "Conflict and War" in Susan George, The Debt Boomerang, Pluto Press, London, 1992.**

**12. In the earlier study, three countries had the equal 25th highest debt service ratio; thus the statistical association had to be based on 27 countries.**

**13. In that earlier study, there was a total of 41 war - torn countries.**

