Peace Monitoring Report 3: Launch Seminar
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An international perspective

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Thanks again very much to Tony, Peter and Paul for inviting an old friend to the project. Together with the invite to last November's seminar I have been here for the forth time in this context, I am afraid I am becoming a fixture -

Paul gave me 7 minutes this time.
I do not hope that this means time is running out for the PMR...., only for us Oldies perhaps being involved with it for too long already....

Allow me only a few very brief remarks, combined with some questions

I
This year's special

Special about this year's edition was that you had a remarkable media attention and coverage already before the launch seminr this time – which looking from outside, seems like they were dying to get fresh food and the news across, in particular the BBC broadcasting – which was picked up also in Germany by those who cared – indicates that monitoring peace in NI has gained considerable momentum: public interest seems on the rise, people are waiting for this now, and want to be woken up by a voice capable to explain the script and meaning behind the data.
This new nosiness in itself is a real achievement – congratulation to Paul and the CRC for pulling this through!

Second special this year, however, is:

The PMR No 3 appears to be the most critical one so far, listening to the report's author assessment... „2013 has been the most difficult year since a decade"...?

From an international perspective the first sentence of the Ten Key Points is obviously striking: Richard Haass warning that the model function which NI had gained in some circles of international peace builders could be ceasing.

I am actually not so sure about this. Haass would be right if we considered a model only a model when it looks nice and pretty dressed. I'd rather like to suggest that we work on an understanding of in-country peace monitoring which explains failures and downsides just as well as progress and success stories. The NI PMR into its third year is already pretty good at this. Which makes it a model, a model for monitoring.

And I do like to emphasize the analogy with a health check – i.e. the early warning capacity of monitoring and measuring peace.

It is only very recently that the international peace buiding community is coming to terms with the fact that we have to discover the **preventive capacity** of lessons offered by post-conflict societies. Again, in-country- monitoring on a case-by-case basis holds, in my view much more to pick from than the big overall pictures provided from external / global players perspectives, and as sometimes represented even by the solid work of the Global Peace Index (GPI). And we do not have enough examples yet of a monitoring concept like yours in NI. Bosnia and Kosovo, the post conflict societies on the Balkans, could urgently need a similar approach. Afghanistan, of course , and Mali and others.

What we need though for monitoring are not the one-offs, but the long term surveys to provide healthy and sustainable analyis. Three years is a great start – but not enough to count on properly.

To make best use in your own country, to have an impact on both policymakers and conflicting communities, but also to contribute to international comparative work: We have to do more than spending short term fancy and available funding: it may not

always be trendy to become a trendsetter!

What are the plans here in Belfast to continue the work started with the PMR? How is the impact on the side of the politicians, what kind of feedback do you get on community / grassroot level?

II

Further on the substance of the Report

On the surface of 2013, the flags protest, the marches, the imagined 'culture war' are the concerning issues which seem to lead to a negative reassurance of sectarianism, especially on the side of Loyalism. But if you go from description to analysis, in **which of the four dimensions** safety, equality, cohesion and political progress would you say, is the biggest whole, the highest degree of not living up to what would be a positive indicator for peace ? International perspectives – due to media performance - often get stuck on the surface, and so many easily panicked last year about the danger of relapse into violent conflict in NI. Academic debates on NI rather suggest – similar to what I understand from your report, that the lack of political progress evident in the power-sharing construction would, the longer it lasts be the most problematic among the dimensions (more than security, equality, or even cohesion?), correct? Because it is the agreed upon ambiguity, a calculated birth defect?

What would be the consequence for the **ranking of the different dimensions** in the report? Is their relevance still equally right, or should they become subject to modification over time?

The concept of the NI PMR – we could see that clearly at the November seminar organized with the Club de Madrid – is unique in many ways. For its international value I would like to highlight two things in particular:

1. The comprehensiveness of the four indicator dimensions, comprehensive in that they allow enough flexibility to monitor change and draw up trends, but confined enough not to dilute the facts and data.

2. The fact that the Report combines solid statistical data with surveing attitudes and opinions. In other cases it is rather an either /or. The challenge for the authors is obviously bigger this way but you are more likely to provoke the necessary debates about the subjective dynamics of a peace process.

III

Finally and very briefly on the future

I would like to suggest to continue working together on an international project agenda with a working title „Can we measure peace"? The seminar here last November was a good starting point. A lot of different approaches and experience is already out there, and should be subject to evaluation in methodological terms but also with respect to their political implications. Other conflict societies could benfit. I would insist that we do need the indepth local perspective, and NI is ahead of many others here.

In the Heidelberg institute wheret I have started working last week we have decided to take up an initiative for a project like this, where we want to test the value of peace monitoring for the international peace building agenda. In the advisory board we would like to see some of the colleagues who were present last November like the UNESCO programme for peace building, the GPI, the South African experience, and of course the NI PMR.

Thank you for your attention.