Ross Ryan

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The articles and reviews collected in this Fall 2009 issue of the Peace and Conflict Review cover a wide area within the field of peace and conflict studies, from theoretical discussions of development and environmental security to case analyses of reintegration programmes and mechanisms of transitional justice. This assortment is, to some extent, a reflection of the wider diversity of themes and approaches within peace and conflict studies, and the commitment to multiculturalism and interdisciplinary research at its heart. If a common thread can be seen to tie these articles together, however, it may be the concept of transition, as each author offers new insight into how we can move beyond experiences of insecurity and injury towards integration, justice, and peace.

Bosede Awodola begins the issue with a comparative analysis of reintegration programmes for child soldiers, drawing on the lessons learned and best practices emerging from a variety of post-conflict experiences, mainly on the African continent. Focusing particularly on Liberia, Awodola identifies the failures and successes of the 1997 and 2003 reintegration programmes and argues for context specific interventions informed by a careful consideration of international experiences.

Josh Cerretti furthers the discussion of transitional challenges in post-conflict societies with a critical analysis of existing development models for communities emerging from conflict, offering recommendations and principles for a flexible, conflict-aware model of development. Again, the balance of context-appropriate intervention and international/historical experience is emphasized, as are issues of gender and human security.

Virorth Doung and Sophal Ear offer a detailed analysis of transitional justice mechanisms in Cambodia, and discuss the wider implications of the Cambodian experience for societies recovering from similarly traumatic experiences of violent conflict. The authors show how formal, community-based forums for dialogue and alternative justice, such as truth commissions, are an essential part of social healing processes, alongside trials and other purely legalistic mechanisms. It is subsequently argued that such a public forum be established in Cambodia, in addition to the ongoing Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

Renée Gendron and Evan Hoffman remind us of the relationship between resource scarcity and violent conflict, and suggest that scarcity in various forms could play an important indicator role in the monitoring of post-conflict recovery or the escalation of potentially violent conflict. By paying attention to the availability of resources and their distribution, the authors argue, peace agreements can be strengthened and the chance of backsliding into further violence is reduced.

We are especially pleased to introduce a timely special feature in this issue of the Review on President Barack Obama’s Prague speech about the “moral responsibility” of the US to work towards the abolition of nuclear weapons, with responses and analyses from Kenji Urata, David Kreiger, and Richard Falk. Given President Obama’s recent acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize,
the international community is now investing, with cautious optimism, in his leadership to scale down the US nuclear weapons program and support the global movement for the elimination of nuclear arms.

I am grateful to all our contributors – including Kevin Avruch and Maria Keet for their thoughtful review articles – as well as our editorial board, for all of their work and support.

As always, submissions and feedback from our readers are highly encouraged, and should be directed to editor@review.upace.org.

About the Author

Ross Ryan is the managing editor of the Peace and Conflict Review.