"Generic peace" and "The peace": a discourse

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Abstract

The study of peace as a concept, and in practice, has gained momentum since the end of the Cold War. Studying peace and teaching peace has become almost a fashion with a number of people identifying themselves as *peace workers, Students of peace,* and *peace researchers.* This implies that there are others who are *peace employers, peace instructors, and peace funders and donors.* In the process, the word *peace* has tended to lose its true meaning because perpetrators of violence have managed to expropriate the jargon of *peace* and have subsequently justified their atrocities in the name of *peace.* Mercenaries, for instance have been portrayed as *peace* enforcers or *messiahs* in chaotic situations. At the same time, there have been developments in the intellectual arena as to the meaning of *peace* or the varieties of *peace,* meaning that *peace* can be plural rather than simply singular. Whether one talks of *peace* in singular or *peaces,* there are levels of *peace* in terms of conception and practice. It is the question of levels that creates the distinction between *generic peace* and *The Peace.* This distinction is political and has a class base, separating the rulers from the ruled or the subjects. This separation can be applied at the domestic or local political level or at the international level when it comes to dealing with matters of states. This brings up the notion of *four peaces* lumped into two categories of *generic peace* and *The peace* with each category having an international and a domestic dimension.

Introduction

The study of peace as a concept, and in practice, has gained momentum since the end of the Cold War. Studying peace and teaching peace has become almost a fashion with a number of people identifying themselves as *peace workers, Students of peace,* and *peace researchers.* This implies that there are others who are *peace employers, peace instructors, and peace funders and donors.* In the process, the word *peace* has tended to lose its true meaning because perpetrators of violence have managed to expropriate the jargon of *peace* and have subsequently justified their atrocities in the name of *peace.* Mercenaries, for instance, have been portrayed as *peace* enforcers or *messiahs* in chaotic situations[1].

At the same time, there have been developments in the intellectual arena as to the meaning of *peace* or the varieties of *peace.* Johann Galtung talks of *positive and negative peace* and Vincent Martinez-Guzman of Universitat Jaume I (UJI) advances the idea of *peaces* instead of *peace*[2]. Whether one talks of *peace* in singular or *peaces* in plural, it

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[1] Doug Brooks, "Messiahs or Mercenaries? The Future of International Private Military Services", in Adekeye Adebayo and Chandra Lekha Srirma, editors, Managing Armed Conflicts in the 21ˢᵗ Century, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001, pp. 129-144; "Introduction" in Eeben Barlow, Executive Outcome: against All Odds (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 2007), p.11.

[2] Johann Galtung, Peace by Peaceful Means; Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1996), p.3; Vincent Martinez Guzman, "Knowledge for Making Peaces: Epistemologies for Peace Studies," Filosofia Para Hacer Las Paces (Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, s.a), pp. 75-116 as translated and reproduced in the course reader, "Master of Peace and Development Studies 1-100, Introduction to Peace Studies, Winter Term , 2002," Univeritat Jaume I, Castellon Spain.

is impossible to study the phenomenon without taking into account what can be termed as the intellectual *relatives* of peace studies. These intellectual relatives include *conflicts*, whether structural or not, *wars* whether old or new, and *security* whether state centred or in its broad context.

The term *conflict* tends to embrace the other "relatives" and it appears to be in competition with the term *peace* as to which of the two is a more natural condition than the other. Francisco A. Munoz of the University of Granada claims that *conflicts* are intrusions or circumstantial to human existence and that *peace* is the norm or the natural order[3]. And this is probably correct. The other side of the argument, however, is that conflicts are natural and that the distinction is that some conflicts are positive and others are negative. To Makumi Mwagiru of the University of Nairobi, a conflict is simply an incompatibility of goals, or objectives and ideals, and that it is natural to have conflicts[4].

Taking the argument that conflict is the natural order and that it is essentially the incompatibility of objectives and ideals, it is then possible to correlate this to notions of peace based on the type or level of incompatibility. Incompatibilities can be either positive or negative. Negative incompatibilities lead to negative conflicts and are harmful and generate hostilities that can end up in violence. Positive incompatibilities are stimulating, entertaining and lead to progress and can be seen to be part of the *condition of peace.* It is difficult to study peace, therefore, without paying attention to varieties of conflict or levels of incompatibility and how they are or can be managed.

This is because the levels of compatibility or incompatibility can mean either peace or conflicts. High level incompatibility of interests and objectives implies adverse friction and hostilities while low level incompatibility means peace, ability to tolerate, stimulating, and progress. Similarly, high level compatibility of interests and objectives means peace while low level compatibility means hostilities and negative conflicts.

If conflict is the incompatibility of objectives, interests, and ideals, and if it is natural, then *peace* is a derivative of conflict. As a derivative, peace is therefore not a natural condition of humans, it is something that people have to work at and achieve in order to minimize the amount of incompatibility. It does not exist in itself, it is attained. In this sense, *peace* is successful management of conflicts to ensure that the incompatibilities are both low level and positive. The level of success in managing particular conflicts determines the amount and type of peace that is experienced in a place or at the international level.

This in turn leads to types of *peace* in terms of conception and practice. It is the question of the types that creates the distinction between *Generic Peace* and *The Peace.*

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[3] Franscisco A. Munoz, "la Paz." In Beatriz Molina Rueda and Francisco A. Munoz, editors, Manual de Paz y Conflictos (Granada: Instituto de la Paz y los Conflictos, Universidad de Granada, 2004) p. 29
[4] Makumi Mwagiru, Macharia Munene and Njeri Karuru, Understanding Conflict and Its Management: Some Kenyan Perspectives (Nairobi, Centre for Conflict Research and Women and Law, 1998), pp. 4-5; Makumi Mwagiru, Conflict: Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management(Nairobi: Watermark, 2000)

This distinction is political and has a class base, separating the rulers from the ruled or the subjects. This separation can be applied at the domestic or local political level or at the international level when it comes to dealing with matters of states. This would easily tally with Martinez-Guzman´s notion of *peaces* which are limitless because he does not say how many they are. In addition, his *peaces* tend to be cultural rather than political or class based.

While accepting Martinez-Guzman´s notion of *peaces*, there is need to go beyond the cultural dimension and delve into the world of class and politics at the international and domestic levels. This brings up the notion of *four peaces* lumped into two categories of *Generic Peace* and *The Peace* with each category having an international and a domestic dimension. Whether international or domestic, failure to manage negative incompatibilities results in extreme outcomes in the form of revolutions or civil wars within a state or war amongst states

Revolutions call for overthrowing and re-organising constituted order both at the institutional and at the personal level. This happens because the subjects are presumably so pressured that they think that only a structural overhaul rather than institutional reforms can have redeeming value within a given place. By then any one who talks of institutional reforms to remove abuses is dismissed as a counter-revolutionary or a reactionary. Ideologues then emerge and some of them jump on revolutionary rhetoric reminiscent of Locke, Paine, Jefferson, Marx, Lenin, Mao, Fanon, Che Guevera, Cabral, Nkrumah, and Kimathi. In the process, different types and levels of revolution come up and leave behind an assortment of results. There are those that become excessively violent and tend to lose their sense of direction or the original purpose. There are 'revolutions' that are simply the products of professional mischief-makers or 'revolutionaries' who are uncomfortable where *Generic Peace* exists. Manufacturing 'revolutions' becomes a profession.

Professional revolutionaries rarely want *Generic Peace* and so they do their best to disrupt it where it exists. In a lot of ways, they represent incompatibilities within the political class rather than the absence of *Generic Peace.* The result is a perpetual effort by one group to dislodge the other through unacceptable means, some times violently. Such members of the political class then masquerade as champions of the *Generic Peace* (that they do not want) as they seek to replace their rivals in order to impose their version of *The Peace.* In doing so, they often assume that they will be in control.

The assumption is wrong and the revolutions that they fan can lose direction. One of the best examples of a revolution losing direction was the French Revolution that has over time become influential politically and ideologically. It started as a political and social reform or search for *Generic Peace*, issued the *Rights of Man* and then succumbed to the Jacobins' Reign of Terror and Napoleon Bonaparte. Subsequently, the French search for G*eneric Peace* got lost in the imposition of *The Peace* by the Jacobins and Bonaparte.

The French Revolution also inspired two intellectual protagonists to advance influential but opposite positions on the French Revolution. Edmund Burke, in his Reflections Upon the French Revolution, attacked the excesses of the revolution and gave ideological rationale to conservatives, that there are institutions worth conserving in the process of reform. In response, Thomas Paine, in The Rights Man, pointed out that oppressive and rotten institutions are not worth conserving, they should instead be wiped out[5]. The debate between Burke, representing advocates of *The Peace* and Paine, the champion of perpetual revolutions in search of *Generic Peace* was a response to the fact that French revolutionaries had disturbed *The Peace* and had caused a *breach of the peace* in France and the rest of Europe and had annoyed the 'international community' of the day.

The domestic peaces

Discussions of the domestic *peaces* refer to the type of socio-political and economic environment pertaining to a particular state. The level of conflict or incompatibility of objectives and the intensity of the conflict accounts for the two types of *domestic peaces.* For the ruling political class, what is of paramount importance is *The Peace* but not *Generic Peace.* In this context, *The Peace* means order, stability and compliance with statutes that favour the political class.

It is the political class that talks of *keeping the peace* meaning not challenging the order as designed by the political class. As a result, labour strikes, social strife, and political agitation are considered to be *a breach of the peace.* The said breach of the peace is nothing more than the underclass or the deprived creating disorder by disturbing the comfort and well being of the political class and other elites in a polity. Because of this disturbance or creation of disorder, the political class then feels that it is justified in being brutal in order to restore *the peace.* Restoring *the peace* means restoring the status quo *ante* the disturbances.

Where as *The Peace* refers to maintaining the comfort of the political class at the expense of the subjects or the ruled, *Generic Peace* is what the underclass would want and it means justice, fairness, and the absence of exploitation[6]. While waiting for fairness and justice, the underclass tends to have an amazing capacity to tolerate injustice, seem to have been well acclimatized to their lot through the "pedagogy of the oppressed" as Paulo Freire would term it[7], and to have a lot of respect for the exploiters as long as they receive some crumbs from the dining table of the political class. They go through the motions of changing masters within the political class all along hoping that one segment of the political class would be more just and fairer than the other one. And they do that in search of *Generic Peace* but not *The Peace* which they tolerate. They tolerate *The Peace* in the hope of getting *Generic Peace.*

[5] Adrienne Koch, *Jefferson and Madison: The Great Collaboration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 88 -91, 116-141

[6] Macharia Munene, "Despite Revolutionaries, Kenyans Keep the Peace," Business Daily, Kenya, April 27, 2007, p.23

[1] Paul Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Penguin Books, 1972)

In most cases, it is the failure by the subject people to get *generic peace* after tolerating *the peace* that leads to disturbances and a *breach of the peace* that bothers leaders and can lead to one of two consequences, one desirable and the other not so desirable. First, it can produce reforms or semblances of reform that are meant to strengthen existing institutions by removing egregious abuses that annoy the populace. In this instance, reforms tend to come from above and are the elite answers to serious challenges to the political class. By doing so, the elite often succeed in appeasing the populace without substantial change in the governance structure. Elections, in which voters are given an opportunity to choose from competing members of the political class, is one of the most effective tools that the elite use to placate unhappy citizens. Reforms, therefore, is a tool for keeping *The Peace*, and it is the unheeded calls for reforms that lead to revolution.

The second consequence is a revolutionary one. This implies that the leaders had failed to keep *The Peace* by properly handling *the breach of the peace.* It means leaders lost ability to control events and had thus allowed disturbances to pass the reform stage. To get to that point, the ruling elite would have lost legitimacy in the eyes of the ruled; in turn, the ruled transfer their sense of legitimacy to new centers[8]. Many are the revolutions that start as reform movements, then get out of control and become violent. In a lot of ways, however, the changes in the sense of legitimacy remain extensions of reform movements especially if the elite find ways of regaining control.

Often, some violent reforms develop an ideology that becomes a kind of creed to guide the participants and even find articulate defender. Among those that got out of control and disturbed *The Peace* within the colonies and internationally were the anti-colonial movements in the 20th Century that led to the Algerian and the Mau Mau Wars in the 1950s as well as the liberation wars in Southern Africa in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The Algerians wanted *Generic Peace* which meant stopping the French from claiming that Algeria was a province of France and once they started fighting, they had Franz Fanon, in his The Wretched of the Earth, to articulate their grievances[9]. In Kenya, Mau Mau rejected *The Peace* of British colonialism, demanded political independence and land, and made it impossible for Europeans to continue ruling Africa politically. The Mau Mau had Mbiyu Koinange, in his An African Speaks for His People,[10] as one of the earliest defenders.

The Mau Mau War probably induced US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, worried about *breach of the peace* in the European empires, to rethink Western position on territorial colonialism. As a way of restoring *The Peace* in the colonies, he advised Winston Churchill of Britain to think of an honourable way out of colonialism because, he wrote, "Colonialism is on the way out as a relationship among peoples. The sole question is one of time and method. I think we should handle it so as to win adherents to Western aims" and to diffuse the colonial debate in which "we are falsely pictured

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[8] Macharia Munene, The Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1995-1998 (Nairobi: Quest and Insight, 2001), pp.49-52, 54, 94-96
[9] Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press, 1965)
[10] See Koinange's Comparison of Dedan Kimathi with the Government in Mbiyu Koinange, The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves (Detroit, Michigan: Kenya Publication Fund, 1955), pp. 72-75

as exploiters of people, the Soviets as their champion." Although Churchill rejected the advise on "bringing forward the backward races and opening up the jungles,"[11] *The Peace* that Eisenhower wanted was clearly under threat because there was no *Generic Peace* in the colonies. Anti-colonial violence and the ideologues that defended them were essentially products of failures by the colonial ruling elite to accommodate perceived grievances.

The Europeans settled their problem of maintaining *The peace* in the colonies by making a few concessions and recruiting selected people into the circle of elites. This way, *the peace* was restored through reforms after a violent experience. The problem of maintaining *the peace* was craftily passed to the new ruling recruits, people who were properly schooled to be products of Western ways and were sure to imitate the West. What was more, these elites received artificial structures that were meant not work well. They therefore had difficulties addressing the question of *Generic Peace* and this became a constant disturbance in independent Africa.

International peaces

International peaces refer to the intercourse amongst various states, strong and weak, each claiming to be sovereign. The weak states consider *peace* to be an adjustment in the international order so as to ensure that their concerns are given a fair shake and are justly treated. In this category are to be found not only states but also transnational forces that consider the existing international order to be unjust. These tend to equate international *peace* with a sense of international *justice*. This would be *international generic peace* that tends to take a moral high ground in shaming the powerful states and forces that act capriciously at the global level.

The strong states, however, conceive of *The Peace* as international law and order with themselves as international policemen protecting specific interests[12]. In the process, they treat the rest of the world as 'lowlife'[13] that should not be allowed to jeopardize the interests of the powerful states. It was the strong countries of Europe, after they killed each other for decades who came up with what became the basis of International Law on how, according to Siba N Grovogui, to grab the wealth of the non-Europeans[14]. The agreement at Westphalia created a kind of *The Peace* for Europeans to exploit the rest of the world and destroy whatever *Generic Peace* that existed in those places.

In grabbing other people's lands and wealth, and taking up what they claimed to be "the White Man's Burden" of ruling people who were not white, they operated, and still operate, on the philosophy of being right because they have "the maxim gun"

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[11] Quotes in Macharia Munene, "Promotion of Democracy as a goal of US Foreign Policy: African Responses," in Makumi Mwagiru and Okello Occulli, <u>Rethinking Global Security: An African Perspective</u> (Nairobi: Heinrich, 2006), p. 45

[12] Eric George, "Private Security Companies and Postmodern Colonialism in Africa," M.A Thesis, 2003, Peace and Development Program, Universitat Jaume I, Castellon, Spain

[12] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Hyper power Exceptionalism; *Globalization the American Way,"* *New Political Economy*, Volume 8, Number 3, November 2003, p. 314

while the weak are wrong because they have none. With the "maxim gun," they make the rules to be obeyed by the weak but not by themselves.[15] They portray the conquered as lowlife, mentally depraved, a security risk, and a sickness or what British premier Tony Blair termed a "scar on the conscious of the world" that needs treatment.[16] With this kind of logic, those without the 'maxim gun' can be deprived of the right to determine their own fate. When the weak accept their deprived status and obey rules imposed on them, the strong then believe there is *The Peace*. If the weak challenge that status and the rules, however, Hedley Bull's <u>Anarchical Society</u>[17] comes into the minds of the strong; they then seek ways of restoring 'order'.

In restoring 'order' among the lowlife, international moral niceties are thrown out of the window and brutality is the norm. The practice of democracy, for instance, is limited to what powerful countries can control in order to avoid 'democracy' in such places turning against perceived national interests of the strong. This position was well articulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who argued that 'irresponsible' voters in a country like Chile should not be allowed to jeopardize American interests[18]. Samuel Huntington agreed with Kissinger and asserted that a "value which is normally good in itself is not necessarily optimized when it is maximized …. There are … potentially desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy."[19] Restoring *The Peace* or order at the international level means forcing the 'lowlife' to do as ordered.

And *The Peace* of the strong powers has been imposed with mixed success. Territorial colonialism was one such effort to impose *the peace* and it eventually collapsed only to be followed by a new variety. This new variety was witnessed in the Congo when the Americans and Belgians decided that Patrice Lumumba was becoming 'anarchic' and was disrupting their version of *The Peace* by asserting that Congolese resources would be used for Congolese benefits. They then created *The Peace* by overthrowing Lumumba and imposing Joseph Mobutu who proceeded to loot and destroy the country and did what he was told, until he outlived his usefulness. As long he was useful, Mobutu represented *The Peace* to the big powers but there was no *Generic Peace* for the Congolese.

The same can be said about the attitude of the West towards apartheid in South Africa as symbolized by President Ronald Reagan version of what keeping *The Peace* in Southern Africa was. Claiming that South Africa's apartheid system was similar to racism in the United States and that South Africa had been on the same side with

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[15] W. A. Swanberg, Pulitzer (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1967), pp. 205-211, 246-255; Fredrick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Vantage Books, 1966), pp. 248-258; Macharia Munene, *The Truman Administration and the Decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa* (Nairobi, Nairobi University Press, 1995), pp. 16-17

[16] Rita Abrahamsen, " Blair's Africa: The Politics of Securitization and Fear," <u>Alternatives</u>, Volume 30, 2005, pp. 55-80

[17] Hedley Bull, *Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

[18] Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York, 1992), p. 290; William Blum, Killing Hope: *US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (London, Zed Books, 2003), p. 209

[19] Quote in Michael Kearney, "Politics, Utopia, Emancipation: A Review Essay," *Critical Sociology*, Volume 27, Number 1, 2001, pp. 133

the United States in the World Wars, Reagan had problems understanding demands for *Generic Peace* whose absence so many people complained about. He lamented, "Can we abandon a country that has stood by us in every war we've ever fought, a country that strategically is essential to the free world in its production of minerals we all must have and so forth?"[20] With such a defense of apartheid, Americans appeared to be more concerned with *The Peace* as opposed to *generic peace* for black people.

More recently, there has been a big debate as to whether big powers have inherent right to ignore international law when it suits them or to impose their version of *The Peace* against the expressed wishes of the other countries or the United Nations. The debate hovers over a belief in the United States that it has right to invade countries and effect 'regime change', to 'un-sign' international treaties, and to demand exemption from complying with international law. In this, as P.Godfrey Okoth claims, United States believes that "legality are mere decorations" in "international relations"[21] because it has the physical might to violate *generic peace* while imposing *The Peace*. And in the process it has tried, with some limited successes to force other countries to accept its version of *The Peace.* The limited success is because its military might is not accompanied by moral might.

Kenya has been a victim of this effort to impose a Western version of *The Peace*. The imposition is a form of punishment because in the last four or so years the Kenya Government has had problems doing what it is told by forces called *donors* and *international community*. As a result, the British High Commissioner in Nairobi, Edward Clay, concluded that Kenya under its current leadership had lost its ability to have "valuable and civilized relations"[22] with big powers that are necessary for *The Peace*. Subsequently, an assortment of strange pressures appeared to have been mounted to disturb *generic peace* in Kenya in order to promote the big powers version of *The Peace.*

Kenya's catalogue of offences that annoyed the big powers were many. They included failure to endorse pre-emptive invasions of other countries, reluctance to pass laws that are not acceptable to Kenyans, and inability to understand why potential international criminals should be exempted from international law. It also irritatingly ended procurement monopolies that had existed for decades, was not receptive to advise on who it should trade with or award contracts, and even dared to lead a trade rebellion at WTO in Mexico against the expressed wishes of the *international community*[23].

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[20] Quote in Schraeder, <u>United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.220

[21] Pontian Godfrey Okoth, "The Dishonest Broker in America: A Diplomatic Historians Tour of US-African relations since 1945," Inaugural Lecture Series No. 1, September 17, 2003, Maseno University, Maseno Kenya, p. 20

[22] See Clay Interview with Nation TV's Louis Otieno, in <u>Sunday Nation</u>, June 29, 2003

[23] Macharia Munene, "Expectations and Disappointments in Africa-US Relations," <u>The International Journal of African Studies,</u> Vol.5, Number 2, 2006, pp. 132-134

What was worse, it was setting a bad example to other African countries of daring to think when it should not be thinking. One of the bad examples is the introduction of Constituency Development Fund as an instrument for rural development that has the effect of reducing the need for many *donor* driven NGOs that are agents of external control. Another bad example is the decision not to factor 'aid' in annual budget estimates which meant that *donors* cannot anymore derail implementation of government projects by withholding or threatening to withhold 'aid'. Other African countries are considering introducing CDF and keeping *donors* out of their budget projections. An African country setting examples for others to follow on how to protect self interests appeared to be a threat to *The Peace* of powerful international forces. This explains the declaration by the son of a former District Commissioner in the *Crown Colony and Protectorate of Kenya* that independent Kenya had problems having "valuable and civilized relations"[24] with the powers that matter in maintaining *The Peace.*

Kenya is just one little country trying to promote international 'generic peace' for its own interests. Other countries seemingly doing the same include India, Malaysia, South Africa, Venezuela, and Brazil. They all face the wrath of the global forces of *The Peace* that include powerful countries as well as what Richard Rosencrance calls 'virtual states', often based in powerful countries.

Conclusion

The discourse on *Generic Peace* and *The Peace* raises questions of how polities and international entities handle various incompatibilities. It was inspired by the proliferation of 'peace studies' and 'peace workers'. Given that some 'peace workers' have been promoters of wars so that they can have 'work' to do, the whole concept of peace needs recasting. In the recasting, 'peace' or 'peaces' become relative to the position that one adopts whether domestically or internationally. Studying peace, however, cannot be done in isolation. It has to involve its intellectual relatives of conflicts, wars, and security. In doing so, a question arises as to which comes first, peace or conflict and the conclusion is that conflict is the natural human condition and that peace is a derivative of conflict. As a derivative, peace is nothing but a successful management of conflicts or negative incompatibilities. That management can be in the interests of the political class and it produces *The Peace* or be in the general interest and produce *Generic Peace.*

It turns out that in many ways the conception of *peace* is a political and class issue as to who should be kept comfortable at whose expense. The weak, people in a country or states in the international arena, would like to create a semblance of *Generic Peace* in part because that is the way they believe their interest can be protected. On the other side are the strong or the advocates of *The Peace* meaning maintaining constituted order that favours them.

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[24] Clay Interview with Nation TV's Louis Otieno

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