1

Protracted Social Conflicts and Second Track Diplomacy

Edward Azar

Editors' Note

This chapter was compiled by the editors from Ed Azar's latest work (primarily unpublished: e.g., Azar, 1988). It elucidates key concepts that have contributed to the formative stages of an emerging interdisciplinary field (see Fisher, this volume) and still belong at its cutting edge. Drawing from political science, sociology, anthropology and psychology, Azar was able to reconceptualize the most troublesome and recalcitrant type of social conflicts and to clarify new avenues for their management and resolution. Because his seminal work shaped not only our approach to second track diplomacy at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management but also the broader field, we offer this new summary as a useful way to frame the contributions that follow.

In his conceptualization of protracted social conflict, Azar emphasized the role of human needs—and particularly the need for acceptance or recognition of identity—as the primary motivating factors in such conflicts. Human needs are universal and nonnegotiable, in contrast to the more specific interests or aspirations which derive from them. Any settlement that seeks to suppress human needs or trade them off for other interests not addressing those needs will not be sustainable. It is the progressive effort to satisfy human needs that sustains development (broadly defined to include political and human development as well as economic), which in turn sustains peace. Given the inadequacy of normal diplomatic processes for addressing protracted social conflict, which typically involves nonstate actors whose autonomy is not guaranteed in the state system, Azar argued that second track diplomacy is critical to their management, and he sought to demonstrate that facilitating forums for collaborative problem solving could lead to structural development supported by development diplomacy.
Protracted Social Conflict (PSC)

Conflict is an inseparable part of social relations. Perception of mutually incompatible goals among communities with limited coordinating or mediating mechanisms gives birth to conflict, which if not understood and addressed becomes entrenched and violent. We use the term "community" as a generic reference to politicized groups whose members share ethnic, religious, linguistic or other cultural identity characteristics. Most countries are not homogeneous; and in multicomunal societies, protracted conflicts are likely to arise unless pluralism is adopted and access to needed resources is extended to all.

Protracted social or intercommunal conflicts are breeders of crises and armed struggles as well as continued structural violence and underdevelopment. They have evolved as a result of factors such as colonial legacies of "divide and rule," communal rivalries, the impact of economic migrants and escapees from man-made or natural disasters, and unmet expectations for satisfaction of basic needs for security, communal recognition, and distributive justice.

The main characteristics of PSCs, as identified through a systematic analysis of our Conflict and Peace Data Bank (Azar, 1980) and fifty cases of PSC since 1946, are:

- Protracted hostility and insecurity characterized by periods of armed violence and crises with no clear cycle of genesis, maturity, reduction and termination; — No functioned "working through"
- Fluctuation in the intensity and frequency of interactions, oscillating between overt and covert patterns of conflict, while hostile attitudes continue;
- Absence of a distinct termination point, where war has become the status quo and the threat of peace may mean crisis (Cohen and Azar, 1981); and
- Conflict spillover in terms of both actors and issues, so that the conflict is no longer intrastate or one-dimensional but regional and multicausal, with blurring of the internal and external boundaries of the conflict.

Perspectives on PSC

My understanding of the nature and dynamics of PSCs has evolved through three different periods or intellectual orientations toward the subject:

The Behavioral Interactions Perspective

In this early period, influenced by the dominant realist paradigm, I focused mostly on the quantitative, analytical side of conflict behavior, emphasizing the dynamics of escalation and deescalation, the measurement of violence and of mechanisms for its reduction. The realist international relations research agenda was then focused on conflict behavior (power maximization, arms races, containment, balance of power, etc.), as a function of the anarchical nature of the international system, while peace building and the positive management of social change were not taken seriously. Toward the end of this phase, through my collaborative work on Middle East peace building with scholars like Herbert Kelman, Stephen Cohen and others, I became interested in the social-psychological content and ecological context of conflict events.

The Structuralist Perspective

I became sensitized to the negative impact of certain social structures and deformities in political and economic development, in matters of conflict, reconciliation and peace building. I came to understand "development" as the process by which a community organizes itself in coping with change in its physical and social environment. Organization, in turn, refers to the structure of interdependencies between the economic, political, technological and ideological/valutative systems which constitute the community. I began to study the linkages between physical and social, conflict spirals and victimization, overlooked in state-centered realist thinking. Studies on poverty, nutrition and the like helped me learn about the relationships between economic and social-structural factors and overt violence. Johan Galtung's (1969) concept of covert or "structural" violence was particularly helpful in this regard. However, while the structuralist perspective effectively pointed out that rank inequality and disequilibrium at domestic and international levels were necessary (not sufficient) conditions for the rise of PSCs, it was unable to account for process-level dynamics of PSCs. Economic reductionism (class analysis) and holistic determinism (dependency and world system theory) further weakened the approach. In this context, the pluralist paradigm emerged as a theoretical alternative.

The Pluralist Orientation

Linking peace with development was a shift toward a better understanding of the management of conflict. The presence of armed conflict in so many parts of the world appeared to be linked to ethnic identity, minorities and the differential integration and development of societies. I observed that in some parts of the world, the state retards, rather than enhances, development and the movement from war to peace. The smaller communities (religious sects, ethnic groups, linguistic groups, etc.) tend to be more relevant to identity and more responsive to human needs than are centralized national governments. By positing individuals and communal groups as important units of analysis, the pluralist paradigm allowed a more dynamic and realistic grasp of PSCs. PSCs are initiated by individuals and their associations, not by the state, state system or world system. In recognizing the value of the realist approach in understanding some PSCs, and the usefulness of structural analysis in elucidating the roots and ecology of PSCs, the PSC perspective attempts to synthesize, rather than falsify, the realist and structuralist paradigms within the pluralist framework.
Genesis of PSC

The key propositions of the PSC perspective have been formulated to allow continued empirical testing and refinement. The genesis of PSCs may be understood in terms of five clusters of variables or preconditions: human needs, communal context, governance and the role of the state, environmental factors, and international linkages.

- **Human needs** are the primary motivating factor in both development and conflict dynamics. Individuals strive to fulfill their basic human needs (such as security, access and acceptance—see next section) through the formation of communal identity groups. These needs are seldom evenly or justly met. Complaints of deprivation are expressed collectively rather than individually, and failure of the state to meet collective demands creates a niche for PSC.

- **Communal context** refers to the multicomunal composition of states that are vulnerable to PSCs, and the necessity of understanding communities (and individuals) along with states as primary participants in international relations and conflict dynamics. **Multicomunal societies** arise from the legacy of “divide and rule” in the colonial era as well as from historical patterns of intercommunal rivalry. Both the division of communal groups between states and the incorporation of distinct communal groups into one state can retard the nation-building process, fragment the social fabric, and breed tension.

- **The role of the state** or governing authority, as the regulator of social, political, and economic interactions, is a critical intervening factor in satisfaction of human needs. **States prone to PSC** tend to be parochial, fragile and authoritarian, lacking in competence, fairness, resources and policy capacity. Political authority tends to be monopolized by a dominant group or coalition of groups using the state to maximize their own interests at others’ expense. Modes of governance are distorted to block access by other groups, leading to crises of legitimacy.

- **Environmental factors** may further constrain policy capacity in dealing with communal tensions. They include depletion of natural resources and degradation of the environment through unsound development policies; rapid population growth and demographic imbalance (urban explosion and youth bulge) from rapid changes in health care, technology and mobility; and rising expectations and pressures for change arising from exposure to mass media and global comparisons.

- **International linkages** patterns may exacerbate the role of weak states in deprivation of human needs in two ways. The first is **economic dependency**, which may arise through a coalition of international capital with local economic and political elites to facilitate exploitation of existing natural resources or the evolution of newly introduced single-crop economies. Dependency not only weakens state autonomy but (as in Guatemala during the Cold War) often marginalizes the access and security needs of citizens by distorting the development of political and economic systems to sustain the power of the elite coalition. The second is political and military “clericy” relationships with strong states. In a clericy relationship, the patron provides protection for the client state in return for the latter’s loyalty and obedience. This involves some sacrifice of autonomy and induces the client state to pursue both domestic and foreign policies disjoined from, or contradictory to, the needs of its own public (as in Lebanon since the 1950s: Azar et al., 1984).

PSC Dynamics

The dynamics through which these preconditions are transformed into manifest violent conflict are determined by communal actions and strategies, state actions and strategies and the built-in properties of conflict.

Communal Actions and Strategies

When organizational and communication systems break down in an environment of mutual distrust between groups, a PSC can begin to escalate. Even a trivial event (e.g., an insult to an individual with strong communal ties) may become a turning point at which individual victimization is collectively recognized. Collective recognition of individual grievances or incompatible communal goals naturally leads to collective protest, which is usually met by some degree of repression or suppression. Leaders of victimized groups draw their constituents’ attention to a broad range of issues involving communal security, access, or acceptance needs (e.g., selective poverty and political inequality). The spillover of the trigger event into multiple issues increases the momentum for organizing and mobilizing resources, as groups attempt to formulate more diverse strategies (secessionist movement, armed struggle, etc.). When the state is more powerful and favors coercion over accommodation, groups often seek external military and economic assistance, often from kin in neighboring countries. Support from neighbors may involve regional hegemonic or other designs, manipulating communal tensions to destabilize and subvert the regime, so that communal conflicts spill over into regional ones.

State Actions and Strategies

A PSC can be averted if the state improves satisfaction of communal needs at an early stage. But accommodation strategies are seldom employed, not only because of the political and economic costs but also because of prevailing “winner take all” norms where any accommodation is perceived as a sign of defeat. The state (or the communal actor monopolizing state authority) usually employs coercive repression and co-optation designed to fragment or divert the opposition. This invites equally militant responses from communal contestants, and if co-optation fails, further coercion leads to a spiral of violent clashes. The state may seek to contain the conflict by severing groups’ ties to external
sources of support, and seek out its own; if dependency or cliency relationships exist, external powers may intervene, amplifying and protracting the conflict.

**Built-In Mechanisms of Conflict**

Once violence erupts, the cost of human life escalates the conflict into a spiral of acts and hostile communications that throw apart the parties even further, as “conflict begets conflict” (Gurr, 1970). In conflicts associated with communal identity, the worst motivations are attributed to opposing parties and are not open to falsification, leading to reciprocal negative images which perpetuate antagonisms and solidify PSCs. Political solutions become unavailable, being evaluated only in terms of relative power gains. Hostility gains velocity as the deepening deprivation of basic needs leads to stereotyping, tunnel vision, separation, bolstering and polarization along communal lines.

**PSC Outcomes**

The outcome of PSCs is negative sum. There are no winners or losers, for all parties are victimized. There is no clear end-point, each outcome being the possible cause of another conflict spiral. PSCs carry devastating physical, psychological, economic and political costs, as we have seen in Sudan, Sri Lanka and El Salvador.

Physical security deteriorates, with not only a tragic loss of human life but also destruction of physical and social infrastructure, as economic retrenchment to support excessive military expenditure leads to discarding of welfare and development programs. A vicious cycle of underdevelopment and poverty is institutionalized, depriving all groups of human needs and economic well-being.

Institutions become paralyzed and deformed, rendering government ineffectual, blocking satisfaction of access needs, and hardening communal cleavages so that nation building becomes impossible.

Even worse is the psychological disorientation of those trapped in a PSC situation, absorbed into a violent war culture where hostile mindsets are ossified, leading to high levels of frustration and depression. PSCs reinforce pessimism, demonizing leaders, and build a sense of paralysis that afflicts the collective conscience of the population. A siege mentality develops, inhibiting constructive negotiation for conflict management, severing meaningful communication among parties, and eliminating any chance for satisfaction of acceptance needs. In the long term, unmet needs lead to dysfunctional cognitive and behavioral patterns that are not easily remedied.

Fear of marginalization, which is at the root of PSCs, leads to alliances of convenience with external actors, encouraging dependency rather than reliance on domestic or communal abilities and resources. As external actors are drawn into the complexity of PSC, communities lose their access to decision-making institutions, entrenching them in cycles of dependency, conflict and despair.

**Human Needs**

There are relatively enduring human needs that must be fulfilled for individuals to grow and develop. Individuals strive to satisfy these human developmental needs through the formation of identity groups. A community is an identity group, constructed around common experiences, values and norms. Human needs may be grouped into three constellations: security, access and acceptance.

The most basic needs are those of physical survival and well-being. Survival and well-being are contingent upon the satisfaction of infrastructural needs for basic physical resources (food, clothing, energy, water), safety, and productive capability. In reality, the deprivation of such security needs per se does not give rise to conflicts, since the means of satisfying such needs is a function of access to the superstructure of society.

**Access to, or effective participation in, the social institutions in which allocation and exchange takes place is essential for fair and just distribution of resources and opportunities needed for security, and may thus also be counted as a human need. This includes participation in the political system, access to the market, engagement in the authority structure and decision-making machinery, and access to institutions which can act as honest brokers in allowing redress without retribution or discrimination on a communal basis. Deprivation of human needs may be exacerbated by unbalanced development strategies distorting equitable allocation of both resources and access. The ability of disadvantaged groups to correct such matters will in turn be influenced by their perceived level of acceptance and inclusion.**

**Acceptance or recognition of identity is a social-psychological or metastructural need essential to the psychological well-being of individuals and groups. Group identity is manifested in terms of values, norms, ideas and customs, often linked with more ascriptive factors, such as class, race, language or religion. When there is a refusal to accept or recognize the identity of a group, relative deprivation of physical needs and denial of access creates covariance among the victimized and facilitates the distinctive group dynamics of PSC. Satisfaction of acceptance needs, unlike those that depend on the distribution of scarce material and positional values, involves exchange of social goods. Social goods can increase in supply with consumption: groups who are accepted are more likely to accept others in turn.**

The satisfaction of needs for communal security, fair governance by ruling elites, and acceptance and recognition of cultural diversity are all fundamental to state building. The deprivation of security cannot be understood without reference to equitable access to the institutions of government, tolerance and
acceptance of the right to be different from the “other.” Deprivation of one form of developmental need usually leads to problems in other areas. Therefore, it is important to elucidate the complex relationships among these needs if we are to understand the causes of any protracted social conflict.

Needs can thus be tangible or intangible, and the combination of both tends to make PSCs intractable. Whereas it may be difficult to identify deep-rooted psychological needs, material needs tend to be more explicit. Intercommunal conflict is driven not only by hostility and distrust but also by political and economic impoverishment or gross exploitation of communities on the basis of their collective identities and historical misfortunes. Economic development is a key component of conflict management, and like other components, it must be explored jointly by all the parties. A development strategy cannot be imposed from the outside: it must harmonize with the broader process of societal development and reflect intercommunal effort and consensus.

In the conflict management process, a clear distinction should be made between interests that can be negotiated, mediated, subjected to judicial determination or bargained over, and those ontological needs and related values that cannot be compromised, traded or repressed as mere interests.

Track Two Diplomacy

We have advanced the use of the term conflict “management” rather than “resolution” because of our understanding that conflict is an inseparable part of social interactions among two or more parties. The more familiar approaches to conflict management can be grouped into two clusters (see Davies, this volume). Bureaucratic managers, on the one hand, aim at gaining control over events either by co-opting conflicting parties with material rewards or by punishing them through force or repression. They seek to contain behavioral (but not structural) violence and to arrest conflict spillover. On the other hand, legal-formalists aim to transform the conflict situation through judicial settlements, arbitration, mediation, conciliation, legal awards and direct bargaining. Both approaches are top-down and preoccupied with settlement or containment of overt conflicts, in which outcomes are “win-lose” or some zero-sum compromise in which several parties are to some degree losers.

Neither approach is adequate for the management of PSCs. Settlements or control strategies that do not address the deeper structural roots underlying the crisis tend to be nullified when unattended grievances held by isolated or victimized communal groups transform them into “spoilers.” Moreover, the intractable and entangled nature of PSC struggles over communal needs reduces the efficacy of third-party interventions: there are no “quick-fix” solutions to these problems.

An alternative approach for PSCs is to combine short-term efforts to arrest or contain impending crises with long-term designs to transform the entire conflict system by addressing its structural roots. It emphasizes an “underdog” rather than the conventional “top-dog” orientation, singling out the alienated and victimized groups in conflict as major parties for consultation and negotiation, so that all involved parties are engaged. It embraces not only settlement but also prevention, avoidance and resolution of conflict as potentially appropriate goals. It suggests problem-solving workshops to facilitate breakthroughs and promote self-sustaining structural development. These efforts can be supported by development diplomacy to alleviate external barriers to prevention or termination. It thus involves, as a necessary supplement to official diplomacy, the nonofficial, subnational and analytical problem-solving orientations which constitute track-two diplomacy (Montville, 1987).

“Track two” refers to processes that parallel and eventually link up with track-one (official) diplomacy. The participation of individuals in their personal capacities, and yet with access and potential to influence decision makers, is a useful supplement to the work of professional diplomats and political leadership, while also facilitating discussion at the grassroots level. Ultimately, all nonofficial processes are aimed (at least in part) at influencing official opinion, even though the link may at first seem very remote.

A growing number of experiments in alternative forms of diplomacy have been undertaken in recent years. Terms used to describe nontraditional diplomatic processes include citizenship diplomacy, supplemental diplomacy, prenegotiation, walks in the woods, face-to-face diplomacy, problem-solving workshops and back-channel diplomacy. In order to avoid confusion when talking about initiatives and processes which in practice may be quite dissimilar, it is important that clear distinctions between different practices be established on the basis of goals, structure and procedure.

For example, a “walk in the woods” between individual negotiators will enable them to explore options free from the large teams of negotiators present at official negotiations. Of course, agreements reached in this way may not be ultimately acceptable to the highest decision makers. To avoid this problem, “face-to-face” diplomacy attempts to facilitate the official process by bringing together individuals with real decision-making power.

Another approach involves the use of third parties. The idea behind the traditional use of third-party mediation is to induce warring factions or states to meet together, usually by offering mediation services. This approach is most useful in cases where parties to a dispute have ceased communicating with each other. This may occur when one or both parties is or are reluctant to suffer the negative political consequences associated with meeting with the “enemy.” In highly conflictive situations between parties of dissimilar military strength, the stronger party may be reluctant to grant “legitimacy” to the weaker by agreeing to negotiate with it. It is not uncommon that a government derives political capital by publicly refusing to negotiate with an adversary, even though the policy may be detrimental in the long run. It is possible in this case to “save face” (i.e., avoid the appearance of capitulation or legitimizing the opponent), while at the same time opening a useful channel of communication, by agreeing
to deal with a respected third party. Thus, legitimacy is granted not to the opponent but to the mediator, and little or no political capital is risked in what, given the volatility of such situations, may turn out to be a failed venture. However, traditional third-party mediation preserves the bargaining or negotiating framework within a power-politics environment, and third parties may bring their own agendas, influencing the outcome in several different ways. Mediators may inhibit frankness by placing a premium on concluding agreements rather than searching for options and nonbinding outcomes, so that a profound analysis of the sources of conflict is not achieved.

A third class of nontraditional diplomacy involves the use of “independent” or private third parties (such as academics, clerics, retired diplomats) who bypass official channels in an attempt to open clogged channels of communication or to propose, discuss or explore alternative solutions to a dispute. This type of effort, which has been called “citizenship diplomacy” or “problem-solving workshops,” can be useful for initiating contact between parties or for bringing to light possible new solutions. Its effectiveness is limited, however, as long as it does not induce the parties to educate themselves, explore, and recognize the underlying needs (as opposed to immediate interests) motivating the conflict.

**The Problem-Solving Approach**

The use of the term “problem solving” is intended to convey that conflict is not a contest to be won but rather a shared problem to be solved. Interactive or collaborative problem-solving workshops involve informal and unofficial face-to-face encounters in neutral settings. Key to these efforts is facilitation by a group of social scientists or other professionals knowledgeable about group process and conflict theory.

This approach goes beyond simple “process-promoting” techniques for achieving greater trust at the interpersonal level, whose primary aims are to influence the conflict in the long term and to work to improve relationships at the grassroots level. Problem-solving workshops, on the other hand, attempt to influence leaders and representatives of the parties to conflict in the near or medium term, through working with surrogates and “influentials” to address practical conflict issues.

Problem-solving workshops permit parties to sort out their grievances and hear one another in a nonbargaining setting. They allow exploratory discussions with a panel of third-party facilitators who invite participants, selected as credible representatives of the parties, to be open and frank about their needs and interests. While they possess no authority, facilitators are responsible for creating a climate of constructive dialogue where goodwill can prevail over cynical attitudes and for ensuring that participants do not turn prematurely to negotiation or bargaining.

The immediate goals of the workshop are to assess interactively what is at issue in a PSC situation and to differentiate needs-issues from interests-issues. Facilitators act as honest brokers to enable each side to appreciate and address the basic grievances and needs of the other. There is a tendency for afflicted groups to center their attention on their own concerns. Thus, it can be extremely difficult for one group to recognize that a competing group may also have been fundamentally wronged. Once the grievances and needs of the different communities have been identified (e.g., fears of marginalization or assimilation, need for recognition), and once each group can acknowledge the legitimate needs and aspirations of the others, a constructive process of accommodation can begin, and the groundwork for future negotiation can be established. An analytical assessment of the causes and nature of the conflict can help participants to define structural and institutional options. Breakthroughs occur when participants identify problems to be solved, co-explore new ideas and opportunities to reduce violence and hostility, and plan for further joint activities and workshops.

While conventional third-party mediation might be able to establish a cease-fire between conflicting parties, it often does so without addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. Innovative proposals for political solutions are rare, as parties to PSC tend to become closed-minded and tend to perceive proposed resolutions as mechanisms for gaining relative power and control. Therefore, it becomes essential to analyze, as part of the facilitated workshop process, the perceptions and cognitive processes generated through experience of conflictual interactions, such as premature closure, misattribution of motives, stereotyping, tunnel vision, bolstering and polarization. Only when these phenomena are recognized is it likely that the parties will trust each other, work together in good faith, and uphold understandings that may be reached.

From my own experimentation with this approach (in workshops focusing on Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Falklands/Malvinas, Israel/Palestine and other conflicts) I have developed a model suited for addressing PSCs called "problem-solving forums" (Azar, Davies and Shabibi, 1990). The framework is designed to establish a prenegotiation stage to encourage analytical breakthroughs by the disputants themselves. The approach is comprehensive, including successive forums as well as pre- and postforum phases. A workshop should not be a one-time event: in most cases, breakthroughs tend to happen after several workshops have been held. For example, in our Lebanon forums in 1984, participants from warring Moslem and Christian communities were surprised to discover that they shared a common value in Lebanon as an integral, independent state. In a subsequent forum, they were able to agree on a declaration of twenty-two principles defining a shared vision for Lebanon. These principles were used to draft a National Covenant Document that was incorporated into the 1989 Taif Accords, thus making a significant contribution toward the peace process.

In the preforum phase, serious attention is given to the choice of the forum environment, preparation of the setting and logistics, criteria for and selection of participants, and a clear definition of the role of facilitators. The forum process is not designed to resolve differences, tensions or hostilities within each party; if
these are too great, the forum process will not function effectively. Therefore, a thorough intracommunal needs analysis is essential to engage representatives of each party in a separate dialogue where their differences may be addressed in advance of the workshop.

The postforum phase requires a follow-up agenda, including further analysis and communication with decision makers, leading ultimately to negotiations and other appropriate official actions to manage the dispute and promote self-sustaining structural development. At this stage, there is a risk that those who reach agreement or even make contact with the adversary may be alienated from their constituents unless they are able to convince the group that its interests have not been betrayed. This is known as the "reentry" problem. Third parties can help by preparing participants for this and by remaining engaged throughout this phase.

The problem-solving approach is predicated on the belief that violent and prejudicial, or peaceful and cooperative, thinking and behavior are learned phenomena, and that what is learned can also be modified. Problems of communication in conflict situations obscure common interests and potentials for mutual benefit. Thus, the conditions for adaptive learning and conflict management will be enhanced if the parties are able to talk and approach conflict not as something to be won but as something to be resolved. This analytical framework allows the parties to explore their perceptions of the conflict and its roots, to discover that they are pursuing similar or potentially compatible goals through adversarial tactics. The "win-lose," zero-sum environment of traditional diplomacy can be transformed into one of "win-win," in which the possibilities for cooperation and mutual progress are maximized. An outcome beneficial to both parties may be found, for example, by cutting relative losses or by inventing new formulas for "expanding the pie" by going beyond deterministic perceptions of finite resources to include other benefits such as potentially abundant social goods—recognition, cooperation, safety, etc.—which may not originally have been perceived as significant. When no clear solution to an issue is found, the problem can simply be flagged and left open for future collaborative work.

Practitioners (facilitators) have a duty to the participants who invest trust in them, as well as to the process itself. The effectiveness of the process depends on the care, honesty and integrity of the individuals and organizations involved. If a participant's trust is betrayed, for example, by a failure to maintain the private, confidential nature of a forum, the political stature and even the lives of participants may be threatened.

We must be alert to screen out potential participants who may be searching for opportunities to score personal and intragroup gains through intelligence gathering or grandstanding, or who might betray the confidential nature of the process by publicizing the event. The perception that a problem-solving workshop may be suitable prey for exploitation should be minimized by adherence to clear guidelines for selection and by requiring advance commitments to

guidelines on confidentiality and respect. On the other hand, it is important to ensure inclusion of representatives from each primary group affected, providing they are willing to deal with the deeper dynamics underlying the crisis. We must be aware that settlements between conflicting sides are nullified when isolated or victimized communal groups become spoilers, and attempts at settlement or control of a crisis that do not tackle the underlying dynamics will be temporarily successful at best.

Facilitation

A key assumption is that only representatives of the parties can identify and address the substantive issues required to manage and resolve their conflict. However, their interactions in problem-solving workshops can be facilitated by a panel of experts who possess personal integrity and professional competence. The members of the panel are nonofficial and may be drawn from social science and/or other professional fields. Acting as a team, the panel should be able to operate in a nonthreatening, depoliticized and open-minded manner.

The expertise of the facilitators is a significant element for the success of a problem-solving forum. Facilitators evaluate or recruit credible representatives of the parties, formulate and get consensus on the ground rules, create a climate of constructive dialogue, ensure that participants do not turn prematurely to negotiation and bargaining, bring the participants to see each other's grievances, and assess interactively what is at issue, separating nonnegotiable needs from negotiable interests. This requires the ability to distinguish for the participants defensive, conflict-related cognitive habits such as premature closure, misattribution, stereotyping, tunnel vision, bolstering and polarization as they arise in the forum. Facilitation of constructive communication can then allow the parties to arrive at consensus over contending interests and to plan for further joint activities, eventually without the need for external intervention.

The training of professional facilitators had not been developed when we started to experiment with our approach, so I have advocated the creation of permanent, private third parties with the skills needed to pursue track-two diplomacy, or the training of individuals in already existing organizations such as the International Red Cross.

However, in our experience, participants expect facilitators to come to the workshop with a sophisticated understanding of their specific problems. If they are not established experts on the region or country concerned, they should learn the issues at stake, including not only the historical record but also the nuances of relations within and between the parties. Preparatory learning should include a systematic and thorough identification, tracking and analysis of the specific conflict, including its genesis, dynamics, consequences, and possible management strategies. We are convinced that the ability to inspire trust is closely related to the respect that participants feel for the facilitators' level of knowledge. Participants do not respect facilitators who display ignorance about
important issues and facts or those whose intense involvement with the dispute leads them to support any specific position.

A balance might be achieved that would benefit from both the professionalism guaranteed by a permanent body and the particular insights into a conflict that knowledgeable experts provide. Panels could be composed of both “conflict-specific” experts and experts in conflict management via the forum model. The best way to guarantee serious, professional and dedicated facilitation is through rigorous analysis, by the community of practitioners and students, of the proper goals and methods of track-two diplomacy and the dissemination of their findings.

Given the nature of the enterprise and high sensitivity toward third parties, it is imperative that facilitators guarantee neutrality. Of course, each facilitator will come to a forum with her or his own intellectual, professional, ideological and personal baggage. Individual perceptions, even those of trained facilitators, are influenced by their experiences. This is unavoidable, but not necessarily problematic, unless facilitators’ baggage impairs participants’ ability to arrive at solutions or to make analytical progress. When effectively managed, facilitators’ opinions may even be seen by participants as evidence that the facilitators have a good grasp of the issues at stake.

In PSCs, parties become adept at psychological warfare and make great efforts to enlist the support of outside powers, or those perceived as associated with them. Facilitators who are sensitive to this danger and who work well as a self-monitoring team can avoid this problem. We believe that practitioners should not be reluctant to abandon the process if the conditions necessary for success are not met, even if this means the loss of a great investment of time, money and effort. If it is susceptible to being taken hostage, private diplomacy will degenerate into just another form or tool of power.

At this stage, almost all practitioners of alternative-diplomacy processes come from Western political and economic traditions. We must strive to be aware of our own perspectives and keep our inclinations in check. This can be accomplished in part by making an effort to train individuals from non-Western societies and to include them in the facilitating process. We must also ensure that it is the participants who identify the needs, issues, and options for managing their own conflict.

Finally, a key aspect of the process is the peer chemistry of the facilitators. Given the intense environment of forums, facilitators must be capable of working well with one another, which requires, above all, the ability to communicate effectively in a group. This is a question both of training and personality. Much effort must go into figuring out the best mix, and into continuing analytical and empirical efforts to understand the preparations and process required for an effective routing of problems into shared solutions.

**Structural Development and Development Diplomacy**

Facilitation of problem-solving dialogue is only a beginning. Effective management of conflicts needs to go beyond problem solving. Breakthroughs from the forum process must be carried over into the management of PSC situations and prevention of their recurrence. These goals imply satisfaction of needs, but societies experiencing PSC tend to be characterized by poverty, inequality, authoritarian-repressive regimes, and acute problems of population growth amidst resource scarcity, all interacting in a vicious circle. Initiatives are needed to help ruling elites realize that uncorrected communal grievances can fester into destabilizing revolts that threaten not only their positions but the entire social and economic fabric of the country.

To respond to these grievances and satisfy communal needs, structural development is essential. This may include reducing structural inequalities (political, economic and social), altering development strategies to focus on correcting regional, sectoral and communal imbalances, and progressive reforms in sociopolitical structures to redistribute power through sharing and devolution while promoting institution and consensus building among groups.

This endogenous development process should be supported on both domestic and international levels by development diplomacy—i.e., assistance designed to reduce levels of structural deprivation in developing countries, to the long-term benefit of all parties. Such interventionist diplomacy should be based on a careful analysis of the idiosyncratic features of the PSC and its linkages to specific sociopolitical relations and economic policies. In order to reduce structural inequalities and related institutional deformities that act as barriers to sustained development, development diplomacy needs to focus on building responsive domestic institutions.

Internationally, development diplomacy should address global systemic sources of domestic structural deformities. It should promote multilateral initiatives to reduce the dependency and clienancy that exacerbate communal imbalances and distort domestic institutions. External development assistance should be directed away from fragmentary deployment of military-economic aid and toward innovative and comprehensive long-term policy packages that enhance authentic and self-sustaining economic development and political reform which respond to the needs and aspirations of all groups. Individuals and communities need to believe that their participation is assured and that it makes a difference: it is the sense of involvement that facilitates conflict management and stability.

Development strategies should aim not merely for economic growth but also for a more balanced distribution of benefits to address the basic human needs of deprived people. Development diplomacy can leverage the current short-term emphasis on meeting immediate needs through emergency relief by placing it in the context of planning for long-term, comprehensive structural reform efforts.
Concluding Remarks

The classical understanding of conflicts is one of zero-sum outcomes, of winners and losers. But protracted social conflicts result in negative-sum outcomes, because of their inherent behavioral properties. There are no winners: all parties to these conflicts tend to be victimized in the process. Outcomes (military victories, negotiated agreements, etc.), insofar as they do not begin to satisfy basic human needs, contain latent conflicts which cause further cycles of manifest conflict, often spilling over into new issues and actors.

In sum, the management of protracted social conflict cannot be understood without addressing the issues of economic development and communal pluralism. The long-term approach conducive to conflict management requires severing the causal chains between underdevelopment and structural inequalities, and between communal imbalance and institutional paralysis. Peace, as a sustainable end-process rather than a means of gaining influence or strategic benefits, requires balanced economic and political development.

Identity-driven conflicts cannot be resolved without grasping them at the level of both tangible and intangible developmental needs. Only working together can parties to a conflict determine the substantive ideas required to address their needs and thus to manage and resolve their conflict. Helping party representatives understand each other helps them realize that not all required resources are finite, that they can find ways for authorities to expand the pie to meet needs. In a needs framework, the notion of legitimacy is central: the degree to which authorities are valued by their electorates reflects the degree to which official structures and policies facilitate the pursuit and satisfaction of human needs. The processes of facilitation, structural development and development diplomacy represent a gradual, collective, and comprehensive approach to the management of PSC, as opposed to temporary strategic containment or partial legal settlement.

The problem-solving forums at Maryland have been useful, and we will continue to improve them in the years to come. As a field, conflict management is in the early stages of its development, but we cannot wait for increased theoretical sophistication before we attempt to contribute to peace-building efforts. We must research our approach at the same time as we apply it.

Taking a broad view, we find two competing images of politics. For many, "real" politics is about power acquisition and engaging in conflict over scarce goods and values. Within this framework, conflict is thought to be inevitable at all levels of human interaction, from the interpersonal to the international. However, there is an alternative view, to which we have been sensitized through protracted social conflicts, positing that politics is about collective security, community building and prosperity. As we see it, the goals of politics are the promotion of cooperation, the management of conflict, the pursuit of socioeconomic development, and the facilitation of peaceful interactions at all levels.

2

Dynamics and Management of Ethnopolitical Conflicts

Ted Robert Gurr and John Davies

This chapter provides, first, a brief review of factors which motivate or increase the risk of ethnopolitical conflicts; second, a look at recent trends in such conflicts, their management and outcomes; third, a consideration of nonviolent strategies as alternatives to war, and emerging norms for accommodating these conflicts; and finally, a framework for conflict assessment, as a basis for identifying possibilities for conflict prevention or management.

We define ethnopolitical conflicts as those involving, as a primary party, at least one nonstate group with distinct cultural, ethnic, or religious traits. It is a broad definition that includes nationalist conflicts aimed at greater autonomy or independence, as well as other forms of conflict aimed at improving or defending economic or political access, or promoting or defending cultural identity as reflected in the use of language, religion or other distinctive traditions (see also Azar, this volume, and McDonald, this volume). Two necessary conditions for social conflict are distinct collective identities and a perception by group members that their respective aspirations probably cannot be simultaneously achieved. These identities may be political or economic rather than ethnic or cultural. However conflict in turn strengthens separate identities, allowing greater opportunity for distinct cultures to develop (as between North and South Korea); hence protracted social conflicts tend to acquire an ethnopolitical character even when it was missing initially.

Risk Factors for Ethnopolitical Violence

The Minorities at Risk Project (Gurr, 2000a) has identified 275 politicized ethnic groups that are or have been subject to discriminatory or invidious treatment by other groups because of their cultural, ethnic, or religious traits, or which are mobilized for political action to promote or defend their common interests. Some have been victimized by past discrimination and repressive state