Terrorism and Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

In this paper the author explores the relationship between current responses to terrorism and emerging theory and practice in conflict resolution. The paper begins with a recognition that both terrorism and contemporary conflict principally involve "non-state actors" and, as such, require a re-framing of the more familiar responses to international conflict. The paper then sets out three key elements in conflict resolution: understanding the roots and dynamics of conflict and its escalation; identifying the range of responses, timing, and agencies in conflict resolution; and identifying structural, economic, political and other means of breaking cycles of violence. The paper also explores the argument that violence - including terrorism - involves mobilisation around key perceived issues of injustice, and that mobilisation frequently involves the instrumental role of key leaders. The current state of practice in both conflict resolution and responding to terrorism reflects a blend of conventional and innovative, state-based and Track II interventions.

About the Author

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Comment from the Executive Director, CSS:NZ

The practice of conflict resolution and the methods by which such desirable outcomes can obviate the clash of arms or other pernicious engagements, is under utilised. This is a vital tool for strategists and the practice of statecraft. Conflict resolution is a mechanism that security specialists in particular, and those engaged in preventive diplomacy must necessarily acquire proficiency. It is more flexible and potent than mere brute force. The post-Cold War setting is one of many instabilities in a world of incalculable human misery and awful legacies. Injustice, lack of equity and deprived opportunity for many disadvantaged people has been part catalyst for the scourge of terrorism. Cooperation in resolving difficult and complex problems was notably absent at the beginning of the Cold War. Some might even suggest that a lack of working cooperation contributed to that seemingly intractable confrontation. Ian Macduff's thoughts and explanations about how the practice of "conflict resolution" and a cooperative approach to resolving differences are best applied, is a welcome addition to the capacities needed to make the world a happier and safer place for all. Those engaged in statecraft, security and peace operations are well advised to heed and use the lessons of this Working Paper.

Peter Cozens
Executive Director,
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Introduction

The burgeoning field of conflict resolution can scarcely be captured in the space of a relatively brief paper. It is therefore necessary to attempt to find some common themes from current work on terrorism and on conflict resolution in order to reduce the scope of the enterprise. Doing this is also consistent with the recognition in the practice of conflict resolution that, in order to reach practicable and realistic goals, it is necessary to take an incremental approach, and to address not the whole of a challenge but rather the constituent parts of it.

We may note, at outset, the contrast between the optimistic expectations, with the end of the Cold War, that we might anticipate a more peaceful era, with the pessimistic assessment of contemporary conflicts. As William Shawcross commented:[1]

> "In one way, at the end of the Cold War, the world went back to normal. For decades responses to international crises had been governed by ideology, alliance pressures, and nuclear stalemate. Now national and local interests came, once again, to the fore."

Shawcross's pessimistic assessment captures a number of familiar impressions of the nature of contemporary threats: they are shaped by age-old enmities; reflect the incapacity of the international community to act; and are - and likely to remain - intractable, unstable, and violent. The apparent rise of terrorism - and certainly the more dramatic recent examples of terrorism - might reinforce that pessimistic interpretation.

As I have noted elsewhere, "In particular, his analysis marks the sharp contrast between the putative power of the United Nations and the local world of child-warriors, warlords, and failed states. This is a world of incongruous agents and influence, where lightly armed youths with a bamboo road barrier can halt the progress of a UN authority. It is a world in which pessimism might seem the realistic stance, precisely because of the challenge to the international community of local conflicts."[2]

It is also commonplace to begin analyses of contemporary international conflict with the observations that, since the end of the Cold War, the patterns of conflict have changed; that most of the conflicts are internal (though not all are wars of secession); that civilians are now more likely to die than combatants; that the old "stability" of the Cold War has been displaced by a new, and violent instability of uncertain alliances, fragile states, and challenges to sovereignty.

Thinking about specific examples of violence and conflict, including terrorism, requires recognition of the new and emerging agenda of international law and relations, including the tensions between globalisation and identity politics, and the growing role of sub- and supra-state agencies – which, as I will suggest, illustrate the competing pivotal points for loyalty and mobilisation.

Following such prefatory comments there is typically a recognition that this new 'disorder' requires a new, post-realist analysis of conflict, and a new set of tools for engagement. In particular, it is recognised that we're dealing with - for the most part - non-state actors, with militia under the control of factional leaders and not subject to the final control of civilian government nor to the rules of engagement, and with massive humanitarian as well as security dilemmas.

This anticipates a key theme I will identify: the emergence of new, non-state actors on the international stage and the mobilisation of those actors around perceived causes or leaders. Equally, it can be suggested, the stage is also set for non-state actors of a constructive disposition to become engaged in the search for prevention and peace: to the extent that the challenge of internal and international violence is created by these new forms of mobilisation, it becomes necessary to explore the role of a complex of agencies in the pursuit of peace. Precisely because this is a world in which conflict involves this complex of actors, we are compelled to explore the multilateral, multilevel responses to the threat and consequences of conflicts which makes multi-track diplomacy and the work of Track II agencies in particular – regional organisations, NGOs, leading individuals – all the more relevant.

This paper is also written against the background of the now familiar United Nations initiative "The Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations."[3] The objective of that Report was to outline the concern of the UN Secretary-General with strengthening international capacity, clarifying the mandate of the international community in cases calling for intervention, and developing the resources for 'credible force' in such cases. Clearly, in the post-Cold War context, the conditions of conflict require both the credible and legitimate force of international control and the enduring contribution of participatory, reconstructive initiatives.

Notwithstanding those recommendations and the concern of the Secretary-General to move rapidly to implementing them, our collective response to contemporary conflict, whether it is terrorism, wars of secession, or factional fighting, remains partial and experimental. As the members of the panel themselves acknowledged, we are on a "learning curve" in this new world of conflicts.[4] The astonishingly disparate worlds of the advanced technology of warfare and of youthful warriors under the control of tribal leaders leave many of the conventions of high diplomacy and standard state-led warfare only partially effective.

In these conditions, it is scarcely surprising that "conflict is handled by disparate measures, rather than by a fully articulated system."[5]   That disparity of processes is, on the one hand, a reflection of the recognised limits – and dangers – of partial and partisan state-led interventions, and, on the other, a positive recognition of the ethos of conflict management and transformation that emphasises the complementary approaches to peace "from below".[6]

Against that background, my aim here is to attempt to say something about current themes and knowledge in conflict resolution.

The question as to what conflict resolution practice might offer in response to terrorism is either a very large question or a very specific one. At one end of the scale, it is a question about the fundamentals of [perceived] global injustice, about identity and recognition; at the other end, it is a question about actions to take in particular cases. I will try to allude to both ends of the spectrum of this question, and steer a path towards some basic principles for action rather than towards specific action plans and interventions.

There is also a temptation, when faced with what is clearly a pressing and dangerous problem, to seek the immediate solution. The task - for enduring solutions - is to seek to understand the nature of the problem and to approach its management and transformation incrementally, rather than dramatically.

Conflict resolution practice identifies two broad approaches to responding to conflict. On the one hand we may focus on interactions within any conflict, on the immediate challenge or threat, and respond with specific preventive actions, but, at the same time, risk one-off solutions and the possibility of further recurrences of violence. Alternatively, we may focus on underlying issues and causes and seek to do so through structural, relational, inclusive solutions, and, in the long term, focus on justice issues.

These approaches reflect a common concern in both conflict resolution and legal theory; that there is a distinction between the justice of individual cases and the justice of overall approaches and schemes. Both remain significant; both need to be pursued, but they are often likely to be in tension. The pursuit of immediate - perhaps punitive goals - might well be inconsistent with the pursuit of long-term goals. It might also be a distraction from those goals. What needs to be acknowledged here is the strategic and security implications of dealing with immediate challenges to public safety, and to then examine the current state of knowledge in relation to the 'transformation' of conflict-generating conditions.

Much of my thinking for this paper has been shaped by work on those internal conflicts typically regarded as "ethnic" conflicts, though this is a label to be cautious about. While I do not draw direct parallels between terrorism and ethnic conflict, I do draw on several salient features of these ethnic conflicts, in particular the role of "identity", the significance of a sense of injustice as the pivotal point of mobilisation, and the structural rather than primordial sources of conflict.

One related factor might be worth noting for the purposes of the regional focus of this meeting. Observers of ethnic conflict point to a decline in the scope and intensity of such conflicts towards the end of the 20th century, but also note that that pattern does not apply to Central and West Africa and to South and Southeast Asia.[7] The same conditions that mean that secessionism and insurrection remain a real threat in this Asian region may also lie behind acts of terrorism.

If we draw again on the field of ethnic conflicts to assist in thinking about terrorism and conflict resolution, one useful parallel idea is this: at the core of thinking about the causes and sources of ethnic conflict is the argument that the "cause" of conflict is not so much ethnicity but the fact that people use the past (identity, religion, ethnicity) to fight about the future (security, homeland, justice, political participation).[8] Drawing on this empirical idea, the question here is what it is that those drawn to terrorism mobilise around: *what fears for the future shape actions of the present in the name of the past?*

If, for the moment, we take this as a useful organising theme, the issues conflict resolution practice might address include:

i.   to what extent can terrorism be seen as a form of mobilisation around certain key issues, such as those of economics, religion, history, social justice, addressed in other presentations;

ii. what is the role of non-state actors in conflicts and violent action, especially "conflict entrepreneurs", factional leaders, and "shadow sovereigns"[9];

iii. what multilevel responses, especially Track II initiatives, are likely to be effective in addressing the sources of that mobilisation, diminishing the risks of escalating violence, and maintaining the integrity of civil society?

How, then, do we understand the dynamics of mobilisation (including the role of 'conflict entrepreneurs' and leaders); and how do we interrupt the pattern of mobilisation or to channel it into constructive mobilisation?

Themes and Issues

In what follows, I identify three themes from conflict resolution theory and practice, which are likely to be applicable to thinking about terrorism. These are:

i.   how do we understand conflict;

ii. how do we respond to conflict; and

iii. how do we break the cycle of conflict.

Several personal and professional lessons, each linked generally with the field of internal and "ethnic" conflicts, shape the framework I develop in what follows. First, my work in running a conflict resolution workshop (in Italy) for senior military officers from former Yugoslavia led to two elements receiving some attention: (a) the value of analysis of conflict and resolution even for people immersed in conflict; and (b) core need, even for opponents, to find a way of working towards dialogue.

Secondly, a British Council-UK/Italian military conference, in Taormina, Sicily in April 2000[10] emphasised the range of agencies involved in peace and humanitarian operations; noted that the 'international community' is often there ahead of the military; and that the work of such agencies is often complementary or overlapping, but that there is often also contested turf. The key implications of this are that security issues are increasingly too complex for single agency responses, or official, state responses. Where common ground is possible is primarily in the areas of crisis assessment and early intervention.

Third, over a period of three years I have been involved in the World Health Organisation programme, Health as a Bridge for Peace, designing and presenting conflict resolution workshops for medical personnel in Sri Lanka. A capacity building programme such as this underscores the imperatives of working with key personnel, typically at grassroots level, in restoring

confidence, providing key communication and conflict management resources, and establishing networks of people working constructively for the peace process.[11]

These experiences reinforce the three elements emphasised here: the importance (for conflict parties and for conflict resolution agencies) of understanding conflict dynamics; the potential role of multiple agencies, especially Track II agencies, in responding to conflict; and the conflict interventions that might assist in breaking the cycle of violence.

Understanding Conflict

This section of the paper will highlight three elements of conflict analysis: the identification of conflict causes; the process of conflict escalation; and the dynamics of conflict mobilisation. While these, together, do not tell the whole story about conflict or terrorism, they are offered as useful tools for thinking about the aetiology of conflict.

Violent conflict, whether terrorism or separatist insurrection, is not to be explained – or explained away – by single or global theories of causes. Assumptions as to the "primordial", embedded attributes of participants, or the inescapable pull of historical enmities, fail to address the complexities of conflict dynamics and emergence. Such explanations have, of course, the appeal of simplicity and the reassurance that such conflicts are less likely to break out where those primordial tensions do not exist. Equally, however, that reassurance tends to be counterbalanced by the fatalist conclusion that conflicts so deeply ingrained are unlikely to be resolved, leaving the way open for peacekeeping interventions rather than peace building endeavours as the principal option for the international community.

At the same time, those primordial explanations may well be reinforced by the language and perceptions of conflict participants themselves who express their grievances and aspirations in terms of fundamental injustices perpetrated by cultural or ethnic groups, and in terms of the more readily grasped antipathies of a history represented as a clash of those cultures. For that reason, both those engaged in conflict and those seeking to facilitate its ending need to seek another language for conflict.

Most discussions tend to identify a broadly common set of sources (not necessarily the precipitating causes) of conflict. In addition to providing a means of identifying and distinguishing conflicts, such classifications provide a starting point for the facilitation or intervention of external agencies. The classification of conflict sources presented by Dr Chris Moore[12] provides a good example. Conflicts can be broadly identified as –

- relationship conflicts;

- data conflicts (lack of information, misinformation, interpretations);

- interests conflicts (reflecting perceived or actual competition between the interests of parties in conflict);

- structural conflicts (behaviour of political or significant individuals or agencies; political or structural inequalities, including access to political participation; environmental degradation and impact on resources);

- value conflicts (for example ideology or religion).

Two points can be reiterated here: one is the importance of the analysis in trying to understand what lies at the heart of the conflict; the other is recognising that one's response to conflict needs to be directed towards that apparent cause.

In the context of contemporary internal conflicts, a larger classification of causes is offered by Dan Smith who suggests that: conflicts and violence are typically precipitated by:[13]

i. economic factors, including the perception or the reality of relative deprivation;

ii. environmental degradation, the burdens of which are perceived to be unevenly distributed across communities and the benefits of which are typically seen to reinforce the political and economic structures of inequality;

iii. political factors, including failures of inclusion and representation and the specific risks of transitional democracies; and

iv. identity and ethnicity (though, as will be suggested below, these are typically factors in the mobilisation rather than the precipitation of conflict).

As this brief summary indicates, there is no single precipitating cause of violent conflicts or of conflicts in general. One significant element to emerge from recent work in international conflict is our better understanding of the dynamics[14] of conflict: that it is not always susceptible to rational analysis; conflict likely to be used by parties as a preferred means; there are high risks of escalation unless there is early and effective intervention; interventions need to be matched to timing, readiness, intensity[15]; and, as a key thread of theory, the perceptions of parties as to their circumstance are significant – that is, economic or political conditions alone do not create conflict.[16]

To talk of the escalation of conflict is to emphasise the sense of conflict as movement rather than as single or complete events, and is also to recognise that there are likely to be a number of points of entry to a conflict for external parties, ideally before the process of escalation is too advanced. Before briefly commenting on the potentially destructive dynamics of escalation, it is also worth noting that escalation may have a constructive role to play, especially in asymmetrical conflicts, where there are substantial differences between the parties in power or access to resources. Adam Curle has noted[17] that escalation or, in his terms, confrontation may be necessary in such situations in order to precipitate the move towards constructive negotiation. Where there are significant disparities of power, information or resources, it is likely that the advantaged party will see little profit in negotiation. The "stability" of such political relations is likely to be illusory and, as Lederach has suggested,[18] more likely to be static than stable. In those circumstances, escalation – which might include acts of violence – is designed to precipitate a move towards an equalisation of power and a greater disposition to negotiate.

The risk, of course, occurs when the escalation fails to achieve that constructive aim and instead spirals into patterns of retribution and revenge. Equally, as will be suggested later in discussing the mobilisation of grievance, escalation and confrontation can be used cynically in order to precipitate retaliation and, therefore, a greater sense of grievance.

The 'basic mechanisms' of conflict escalation – in the destructive mode – can be identified by:

- a tendency by the parties to see the other party as the cause of their problems and frustrations; a perception of the other in negative terms; and, at the same time, a growing self-frustration with ineffective action;

- an increasing perception of issues in conflict, so that the number and complexity of conflict-related issues increases; but at the same time, a tendency to simplify the situation; thus a contemporaneous broadening of conflict issues and simplification of the cognitive perception of conflict;

- a tendency – by the parties – to a simplification of the explanations and causes of conflict, especially in the face of tension between subjective and objective elements;

- a tendency towards a personalizing of the conflict at the same time as there is a broadening of the social dimensions of the conflict;

- an escalation of threats of violence, contrary to the parties' expectation that such threats will cause the other side to retreat; parties under such threat, rather than retreating, respond with their own escalated threat of violence.[19]

What can be taken from this is, first, the power of parties' perceptions and misperceptions of each other; second, the incremental process of distortion of those perceptions and of the accounts of the situation; third, the reduction of the elements of the conflict or cause to its simplest dimensions; fourth, the diminishing options for peaceful third party intervention as the conflict escalates towards the point Glasl describes as "together into the abyss"; fifth, the need for

increasingly authoritative interventions as the conflict escalates; and finally, the importance of accurate conflict data and analysis at an early stage in order to facilitate constructive intervention and de-escalation of risk.

The discussion of escalation emphasises, in addition to those preceding points, the importance of two factors: first, the timing of responses to potentially escalating conflict; and second, the likely role of diverse state and non-state agencies in responding to conflict at different stages. This will be returned to below.

Escalation, as indicated earlier, captures the idea of conflict as movement towards destructive confrontation. This, in turn, is usefully contained in the analysis of conflict as a form of mobilisation. If we see terrorism as a form of mobilisation, we see it as a violent response to perceived conditions of grievance, whether directed at domestic conditions and politics or at political systems and ideologies externally. There are two key linked themes in this view of conflict:[20]

i. the process of mobilisation, that is, the eliciting – or manufacture – of discontent, giving voice or cause to undercurrents of grievances or injustice; thus emphasising the role of political, tribal, ethnic or other leaders; and

ii. the centrality of injustice, pinpointing diverse perceived and exploitable causes and attributing blame for these.

Mobilisation as outlined, according to Smith, is dependent upon economic, social and political conditions; tends to occur around theme of injustice and grievance; is dependent upon an "exploitable sense of injustice"; and is dependent upon the capacity of persons or groups to attract support and to mobilise fear and grievance.

Mobilisation also occurs often around the resurgent idea that identity (religious, linguistic, ethnic) and nationhood need to be unified. This is - right or wrong - in response to the post-colonial fusing of national identity around perceived common political values and citizenship. Where modern states have, in the interests of stability, subordinated ethnic identity to national identity, there is often a competing emerging ideology that political boundaries and ethnic identity need to coincide. To the extent that this is an ideology that relies on historical authenticity, what is stressed is the reunification of a people within a common polity.

The dynamic of this involves, however, more than simply the idea of unifying identity and nationhood. It involves the perception or the promotion of a sense of injustice resulting from the existing political arrangements and the availability of leaders around whom aspirations can coalesce. The present difficulty is that there are examples of civic identity in fact being closely tied to the predominance of particular ethnic elites, thus reinforcing the perception of identity-based injustice.

Mobilisation also provides for the degree of visibility required, either by ethnic insurgents or terrorist groups, to attract attention and, ideally, recruits to the cause.

Ironically, mobilisation might also be necessary in order to attract global attention to the issues of rights, which might be seen - by victims and observers - to be threatened by violent action. But the point of the mobilisation is not merely reactive: it is also to attract moral attention to the issues, even if these are not fully or coherently articulated. After all, mobilisation centres around claims as to the justice of a cause and the injustice of the target.

As Rajat Ganguly says of ethnic insurgent movements, they have tended to use a variety of channels - not merely violent - to attract attention to the issues, to gain political and financial support, to achieve recognition of their political claims (and perhaps even political status as legitimate claimants to authority), and to gain international support.[21]

Again ironically, the process of mobilisation relies on a number of practices, the mirror image of which will be required as part of the prevention of violence: the use of credible threats, the forming of strong and multilateral alliances, and a blend of pragmatism and ideology in the pursuit of political goals.

Where such insurgent groups have relied on terrorist tactics - which many have - it is because such tactics are cheaper than conventional warfare, are effective in inducing instability and fear, and - because of state reprisals - are effective in further polarising society. And, while terrorist activities might be cheaper than conventional warfare, it is also clear that terrorist or insurgent groups - such as the Tamil Tigers - have been very effective in tapping into the global covert arms trade - and are able to do so through the resources garnered from the international diaspora or through criminal activity, particularly the drug trade.

In this respect, the lines between ethnic insurgency, terrorism and international crime become blurred. But the issues relating to the dynamics of this process remain largely the same.

Responding to Conflict

The preceding section sought to identify three key elements in understanding conflict: conflict causes, the escalation of conflict, and conflict as a form of mobilisation. Ideally, these key ideas provide a framework for thinking about the range of responses that might be realistic and possible, depending on the level of escalation and degree of entrenchment in violence. One main point will be emphasised in this section: that effective responses to conflict depend on the integrated actions of a range of agencies, especially recognising the role of non-state agencies – such as regional organisations, key individuals, non-governmental organisations – in the reduction of risk and promotion of a "culture of peace".

The term 'conflict resolution' captures a range of possibilities and interventions. At the very least, there is a preventive aspect, minimising the continuation of violence and threat. But more than that, the distinctions are typically drawn between:

i. Conflict management: violent conflict as an inescapable consequence of differences in values and interests; violence arises through institutions and historical relationships and established distribution of power; resolution is unlikely and unrealistic; the aim is for sufficient compromise to allow political life to continue; and intervention is typically through powerful actors with resources and influence.

ii. Conflict resolution: the parties in conflict are unlikely to compromise communal values and identity; but they might be induced to 'transcend' conflicts by reframing interests, exploring issues in conflict; thus intervention is typically by 'mid-level', unofficial third parties, aiming to get parties to explore issues, and develop 'creative' solutions.

iii. Conflict transformation: the mere reframing of issues is insufficient; the structure of parties' relationship is embedded in patterns of conflicted histories; 'transformation' thus involves engaging with relationships, structures, histories, styles of discourse which maintain that conflict; conflict seen as having constructive, catalytic potential in long-term peace building; transformation as a wide-ranging and diverse approach which is especially reliant on resources within the society in conflict (rather than powerful outsiders or external mediation); transformation is an incremental process, through series of smaller changes; and it engages a variety of actors/agencies who play a variety of roles.

The point here is that the generic term "conflict resolution" alerts us to the range of

- agencies/actors
- interventions
- outcomes

and the degree of co-ordination necessary or possible.

The discussion of "resolution" necessarily involves more than the version shaped by peacekeeping - that is the management and control of conflict – or by peace making – involving the beginnings of negotiations for political solutions. Rather, it is shaped by the long term ideals of peace building, which addresses issues of political structures, power arrangements,

degrees of autonomy, recognition of minority and sectional interests, and - in the long run - the recognition of the ideals of justice and equity.

Any pursuit of resolution also acknowledges the short, medium, and long-term requirements of responding to conflict and violence, ranging from containment through to the creation of political structures that provide the security assurances required.

That spectrum ranges from forceful containment to the promotion of dialogue. It is only in part a law and order issue - though it certainly is that for the purposes of containment and protection. Resolution goes well beyond law and order, to the attempt to deal with the long term underlying causes of conflict.

In both international and domestic conflicts, it is usual to speak of a range of intervention or process options available to the parties in conflict or to external agencies. That range is characterised by variations in the role of authoritative rules and third parties, the extent of party autonomy in decision-making, and the likely durability of results. Added to that spectrum of processes is the point to be picked up below that - especially in the international arena - there is a growing diversity of agencies with some kind of role in responding to conflict, whether official or unofficial, sanctioned or not. A third variable here is that of timing of intervention (allied with preceding comments on escalation and mobilisation).

This developing understanding of conflict dynamics and possible responses leads to three linked questions:

- what stage has the conflict/threat reached;

- who might most effectively become involved; and

- using what kind of intervention or initiative?

Perhaps the most useful framework for thinking about these questions is one which emphasises the lessons of multi-track diplomacy[22] and the post-Cold War contributions of multiple agencies in conflict resolution.
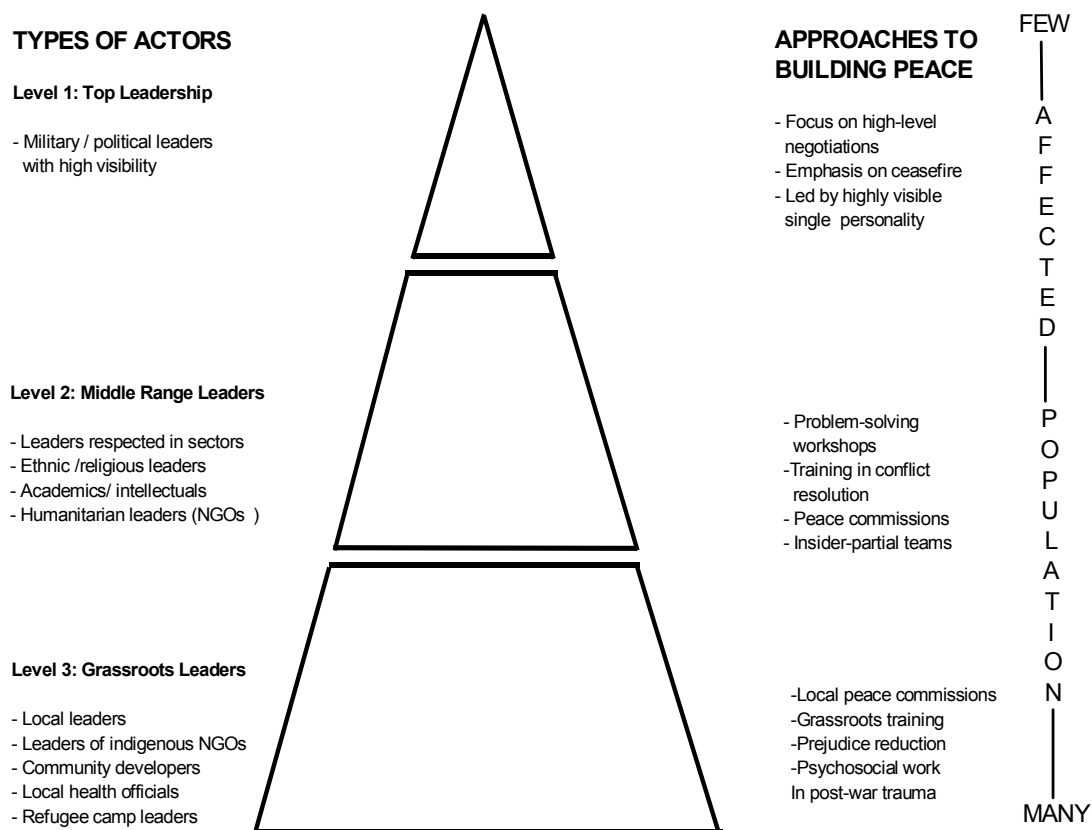
Multiple Agencies in Conflict Transformation

Professor John Paul Lederach, a widely experienced mediator and facilitator in intense inter- and intra-communal conflicts, has developed a descriptive model illustrating the range of agencies typically involved in contemporary conflicts (see Fig. I).[23] The value of this model seems at least threefold: first, it illustrates the reality of contemporary international conflict practice, that it is no longer the exclusive domain of Track I, state-based actors; second – despite the apparent divisions between each of the sections – it points to the need for co-operation between these levels and agencies; and third, it indicates that the actions or interventions of each of these agencies will vary according to timing and intensity of the conflict, the immediacy of threat, the availability of information and resources, and the credibility of the actors.

It may be, of course, that this simply illustrates what people "on the ground" already know, that such collaboration – and such a range of responses – are a part of what practical interventions require. The value of this as a heuristic device has been to acknowledge the range of non-state agencies in contemporary conflict and to appreciate that agencies at the "mid-level" in particular have a role in co-ordinating the flow of information and resources between the official and grassroots levels.

A model such as this also points to the linkages between the issues raised in the previous section – the level of intensity and escalation of conflict – and the kinds of actions that are likely to be more effective, and the agencies or actors more likely to be engaged in those interventions. "Grassroots" actors, for example, are more likely to be involved in community-level education and capacity building, in local advocacy and negotiations, at a point in the conflict where conciliation, information exchange and at least tentative co-operation are possible.

Fig 1:

TYPES OF ACTORS	APPROACHES TO BUILDING PEACE

TYPES OF ACTORS

Level 1: Top Leadership

- Military / political leaders
  with high visibility

Level 2: Middle Range Leaders

- Leaders respected in sectors
- Ethnic /religious leaders
- Academics/ intellectuals
- Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)

Level 3: Grassroots Leaders

- Local leaders
- Leaders of indigenous NGOs
- Community developers
- Local health officials
- Refugee camp leaders

APPROACHES TO BUILDING PEACE

- Focus on high-level
  negotiations
- Emphasis on ceasefire
- Led by highly visible
  single personality

- Problem-solving
  workshops
- Training in conflict
  resolution
- Peace commissions
- Insider-partial teams

- Local peace commissions
- Grassroots training
- Prejudice reduction
- Psychosocial work
  In post-war trauma

FEW — AFFECTED — POPULATION — MANY

On the face of it, this appears as a hierarchical pyramidal model of international actors. However, it is worth thinking of responses to conflicts less in terms of the hierarchies of conventional diplomacy than in terms of the increasing importance of networks of, say, diplomatic agencies, and also networking between the 'levels' of the pyramid.[24, 25].

The point to be taken here from current thinking and practice in conflict resolution – with parallels for responding to terrorism – is that our responses necessarily and constructively include a spectrum of actions, ranging from official diplomacy to non-official conflict management, together with military measures, economic and social development, political development and governance, judicial and legal measures, and capacity building and education programmes. In the same way that writers such as Glasl identify a pattern of escalating violence or threats of violence, analyses of responses to conflict illustrate a pattern of comparable escalation of actions and, finally, forceful interventions. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), for example, has in recent years explored such a range of options that it, as an intergovernmental organisation, might be part of, especially at the interface of aid and conflict management.[26]

At the risk of overemphasising the point made above concerning the complex linking conflict analysis, of timing of actions, and role of diverse agencies – especially Track II agencies - the summary provided by the OECD[27] is worth quoting here:

Before conflict flares:
Within overall efforts by the international community to promote peace building and conflict prevention, development assistance programmes will find their most important

role in promoting the democratic stability of societies. Where tensions have not escalated into violence, a great number of possible measures can be geared to help defuse the potential for violent conflict. These range from more traditional areas of assistance, such as economic growth and poverty reduction programmes, to democratisation, good governance (including justice and security systems) and respect for human rights. There is growing interest in innovative activities to strengthen mechanisms for enhancing security at lower levels of armaments and military expenditures.

In open conflict:
In situations of open conflict, other policy instruments such as humanitarian assistance, diplomatic initiatives and political or economic measures tend to move to the forefront of the international response. Contrary to many past assumptions, we have found that a sharp distinction between short-term emergency relief and longer-term development aid is rarely useful in planning support for countries in open conflict. Development co-operation agencies operating in conflict zones, respecting security concerns and the feasibility of operations, can continue to identify the scope for supporting development processes even in the midst of crisis, be prepared to seize upon opportunities to contribute to conflict resolution, and continue to plan and prepare for post-conflict reconstruction.

In fragile transitional situations:
Where organised armed violence has wound down but where it is still unclear if the situation will again deteriorate, it is important to move beyond saving lives to saving livelihoods, and at the same time help transform a fragile process into a sustainable, durable peace in which the causes of conflict are diminished and incentives for peace are strengthened. Where ethnic or even genocidal violence has occurred, concerted effort will be needed to help overcome the enduring trauma, promote reconciliation, and help prevent renewed outbreaks of violent conflict.

After conflict:
Post-conflict reconstruction is much more than just repairing physical infrastructure. When civil authority has broken down, the first priority is to restore a sense of security. This includes restoring legitimate government institutions that are regarded by citizens as serving all groups and that are able to allay persisting tensions, while carrying out the challenging and costly tasks of rebuilding. Efforts by developing countries and international assistance must fit within the context of a sound, even if rudimentary, macroeconomic stabilisation plan. Post-conflict situations often provide special opportunities for political, legal, economic and administrative reforms to change past systems and structures that may have contributed to economic and social inequities and conflict. Initiatives for participatory debate and assessment of the role of the military in relation to the state and civil society has been productive in post-conflict settings. In the wake of conflict, donors should seize opportunities to help promote and maintain the momentum for reconciliation and needed reforms.

A summary of actions such as this underscores the contemporary understanding that responses to contemporary threats to stability and peace involve structural, economic, capacity building, political, military and developmental actions. For the sake of clarity, these might be reduced to actions of two broad kinds: containment (of violence) and the development of constructive and inclusive programmes in response to perceived structural and political precursors to violence.

Breaking the Cycle of Conflict

In this section I propose to draw together some of the threads laid out in earlier sections and to do so by reference to a tool for thinking about conflict which I and colleagues have developed, in dialogue with people who have been in conflict or who live in conflict zones. That tool is set out as a diagram in Appendix I at the end of the paper. In brief, the point is this: in order to break the cycle of conflict it is necessary to determine the stage that the combatants or parties have reached, and to identify the kinds of interventions that are likely to be useful in assisting parties to return to constructive relationships.

As a way of thinking about conflict and the process of reconciliation or, as I call it here, the motivation for change, it is useful to recognise that the moves towards conflict and violence involve the rupturing of relationships, typically through the [perceived] imposition of injustice or injury, resulting in a retreat from constructive engagement (such as political participation) and – as seen in the Middle East – the emergence of a cycle of retribution and revenge. The containment of violence, through policing, peacekeeping, or forcible separation of the parties, serves certainly to disrupt that pattern of violence but does not necessarily provide the opportunity for the kind of dialogue and engagement that allows for the rebuilding of trust, the reconstruction of political relationships, or the confidence that interests and needs will be acknowledged.

The point of the preceding discussion has been to illustrate the range of interventions[28], which are now increasingly recognised as being useful. Whatever intervention or action is chosen depends on a prior analysis of the sources and intensity of the conflict and on an assessment of what kind of action is likely to be effective given that level of intensity. The model set out in Appendix 1 seeks to bring together, at the point at which violence, terrorism, or threatened insurrection are the manifestations of fractured political and civic relations, those resources which may break the cycle of violence. This model represents a threefold pattern of action, involving: the choice of or invitation to third parties to become engaged in responding to conflict; the determination of the appropriate level of action according to some of the analysis and criteria outlined earlier; and the pursuit of the goals of reliable information, credible commitments and the reduction of threat.[29] In situations of heightened tension, information becomes distorted and unreliable, or discredited, and it becomes a potential role of third parties to provide external sources of information. Equally, as conflict and enmity escalate, parties are less likely to either give or rely on commitments from those perceived as the opposition. Again, in order to de-escalate threat and to facilitate the move towards dialogue, it becomes the role of third parties – working with those in conflict and not solely as dominant intervening agents – to assist in the incremental development of credibility and reassurance (for example in relation to the security of movement, access to political and economic resources) for the parties. These actions, together with processes such as facilitated dialogue and confidence building measures may assist in the reduction of the "security dilemma" and the perception of threat. Drawing from the emerging knowledge of hostage negotiations by way of parallel, the concerns are to *contain* the threat, *communicate*, and *convince* the parties that there might be options other than violence - and it is the latter two actions that are important at this transitional stage of conflict management.

As the left side of the diagram illustrates, the objective of this facilitative action is to ease the passage from conflict to re-integration, which in many cases will involve some risk-taking for the parties – at the very least, the risk of appearing to both one's opponents and to one's own constituents to be offering concessions and appearing conciliatory.

Conclusion

The point of this model, and indeed the point of much of the preceding observations, has been to underscore the fact that conflict transformation and the reduction of violence involve *movement*. If, as suggested earlier, understanding conflict and violence includes an understanding of the process of mobilisation, responding to conflict and violence also turns on creating movement and mobilisation, away from confrontational positions and towards constructive engagement. Much of the discussion in the preceding papers and presentations will point to the same imperatives to address perceptions, needs, fears, identity; institutional, historical and structural issues, and to acknowledge that it is the distorted dimensions of each of these that contributes to the movement towards escalation of conflict

The objective in setting out three key elements – of conflict analysis, multilateral responses to conflict, and breaking the cycle of conflict – has been to illustrate the potential for constructive interventions (in addition to the necessary containment of violence) that serve to reduce the structural and perceived injustices that, in the end, are the causes around which combatants mobilise. What also emerges in this response to conflict is a distinction between the processes
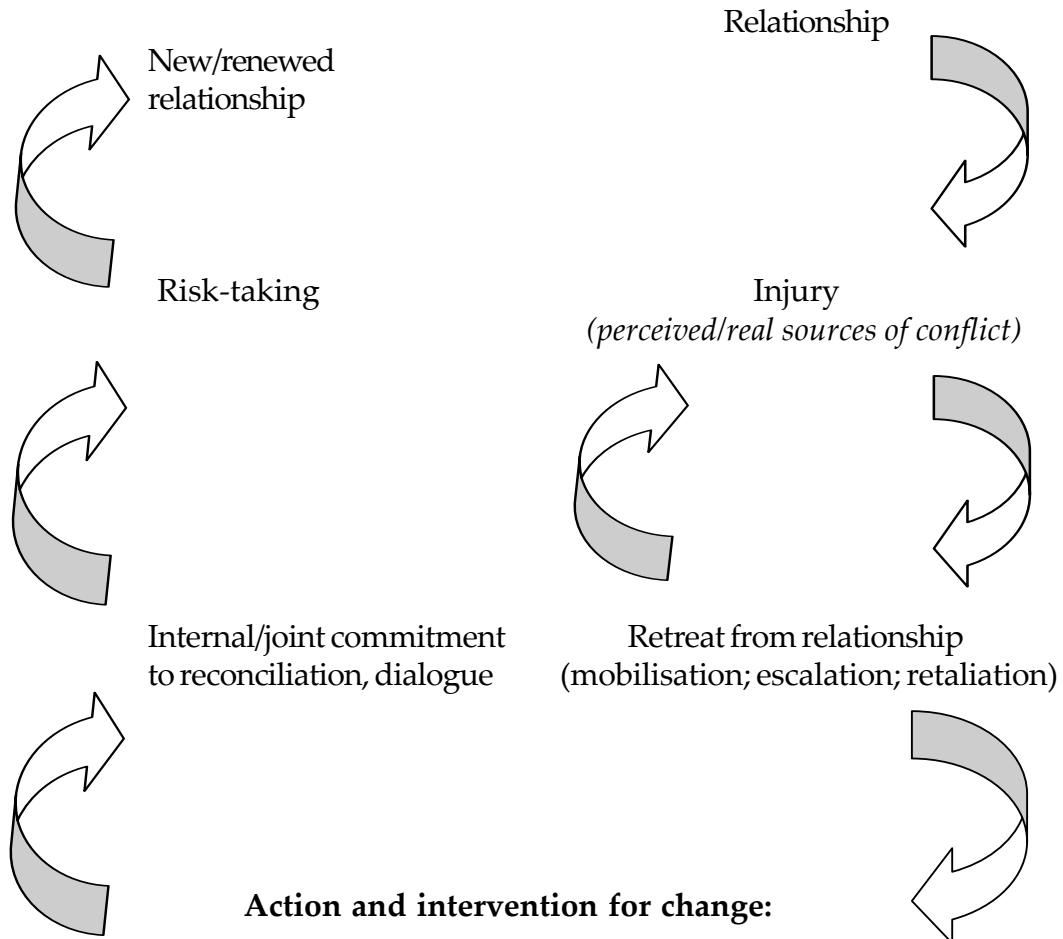
of conflict management that primarily operate at a state, military and diplomatic level, and those approaches to conflict resolution which increasingly focus on building the resources at a community and citizen level. It has to be said that this remains a field in which the experience and research are still developing; but it can also be said that the experience emerging in the field of conflict leads to at least a tentative conclusion that, without a process of enhanced participation and community capacity building, the options of containment of violence are limited. The shift in thinking and practice towards conflict transformation and towards a greater integration of agencies and all levels does not – and cannot – dispense with the resources of the international community and the influence of states. Rather, it becomes the objective of conflict resolution and civil society programmes to facilitate the interaction of state and sub-state agencies and, in the long run, to enhance the chances of stable peace and the reduction of risk of violent mobilisation. The risk is that conventional Westphalian thinking continues to prioritise state-based responses, with the likely result that these conflicts will continue to appear to be intractable, if only because they are typically not conflicts which arise and persist at that level. A predominant thread in the practice of conflict resolution involves a re-conceptualising of the prospects for containing violence and building peace, a reframing which places emphasis on the development of "indigenous" dispute prevention and resolution activities, a collaboration on building internal solutions, and a focus on understanding and facilitating those actions which contribute to de-escalation.[30]

* * * * *

Cycle of Motivation and Change

Relationship

New/renewed
relationship

Injury
(perceived/real sources of conflict)

Risk-taking

Internal/joint commitment
to reconciliation, dialogue

Retreat from relationship
(mobilisation; escalation; retaliation)

Action and intervention for change:

• **Role of external parties:**
- facilitation, negotiation, mediation, education, etc.,

• **Capacity and confidence building:**
– conflict resolution training; military and civilian exchanges; economic assistance

• **Pursuit of:**
- reliable information/education
- credible commitments (from parties, external agencies)
- security/reduction of fear/recognition of needs

[Based on the work of Professor Ron Kraybill,
developed by Suzanne Innes-Kent & Ian Macduff]

End Notes

[1] William Shawcross , *Deliver Us From Evil: Warlords and Peacekeepers in a World of Endless Conflict*, (London, Bloomsbury, 2000), p. 27.

[2] I. Macduff, in R. Ganguly and I. Macduff, (eds), *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and South East Asia: Causes, Dynamics and Solutions*, Sage, New Delhi, 2003, p. 257.

[3] United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305-S/2000/809 (the "Brahimi Report"), 21 August 2000.

[4] Ropers states in the same vein, "All in all, the conflict-training movement still finds itself at a highly experimental stage as far as implementation in this area is concerned." See Norbert Ropers, "Peaceful Intervention: Structures, Processes, and Strategies for the Constructive Regulation of Ethno political Conflicts," Berghof Report Nr. 1, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, 1995, p. 51. Available at: http://www.berghof-center.org/english/publications/pub_mf.htm#zeilsetzung

[5] J. L. Rasmussen, "Peacemaking in the Twenty-first Century: New Rules, New Roles, New Actors," in I. William Zartman and J. L. Rasmussen, eds., *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, (Washington, D.C.: US Institute of Peace Press, 1997), p. 38.

[6] See, for example, B. Evans-Kent, "Bringing People Back In: Grassroots Approaches to Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 5: 295 (2002)

[7] See Ted Robert Gurr, *People versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 200), p. xiii.

[8] cf Vesna Pesic, an opposition leader in the former Yugoslavia: ethnic conflict is caused by the "fear of the future, lived through the past." Cited in D.A. Lake and D. Rothchild, *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion and Escalation*, Princeton UP, 1998: 7.

[9] See Carolyn Nordstrom, "Shadow Sovereigns" Occasional Paper, Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Occasional Paper #17:OP:2, http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/ocpapers/abs_17_2.html.

[10] Robert Fox, "Framing Peace - The Practice and Principles of Humanitarian and Peace Operations" The British Council, Rome, 2000.

[11] See I. Macduff, **"**Capacity Building in Conflict Transformation: Integrating Responses to Internal Conflicts" *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, http://www.jha.ac/articles/a073.htm, 15 October 2001; Khadiji Reito, "Unconventional Peace Building: the World Health Organisation in the Face of Conflict"; a paper prepared for the WHO, August 2003.

[12] Christopher Moore, *The Mediation Process*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1992; 2nd ed, Ch 2, especially pp 60-61. It is worth noting that Moore's analysis of conflict sources is presented as part of the discussion of the mediation process, providing advice for potential mediators on the interventions most likely to be helpful in responding to conflicts and in assisting parties to understand the dynamics of their conflicts.

[13] Dan Smith, "Trends and Causes of Armed conflicts," *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, 2001, http://www.berghof-center.org/handbook/cf.htm.

[14] To talk of dynamics is often more helpful than to talk of causes, as it underscores the complexity of the process of the move towards violence.

[15] See Rasmussen, op cit fn 5 supra.

[16] See Smith, op cit fn 12 supra.

[17] Adam Curle, *Making Peace*, London, Tavistock Publications, 1971.

[18] John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1995, Ch. 2.

[19] See Macduff, op cit fn 2 supra; following F. Glasl, *Konfliktmanagement: Ein Handbuch für Führungskräfte, Beraterinnen und Berater*, 6th Edition, (Bern: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1997).

[20] Again, see Smith, op cit fn 12 supra.

[21] Rajat Ganguly, "Introduction", in Ganguly and Macduff, op cit fn 2 supra, p. 14.

[22] L. Diamond & J. McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*, West Hartford, Kumarian Press, 1996.

[23] John Paul Lederach 1997 *Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. (Washington, D.C.,: US Institute of Peace Press, p. 39). Also revised version in J.P. Lederach and J.M. Jenner, *Into the Eye of the Storm: A Handbook of International Peacebuilding* (San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 2002, p. 40.

[24] Recent work in the field of "virtual diplomacy" – Internet-based conflict management and communication – has especially underscored the presence and priorities of networking over the conventions of diplomatic hierarchies: see Chetan Kumar, in "The Internet, Transnational Networking, and Regional Security and South Asia". (http://www.usip.org/vdi/confpapers/asiakumar.html).

[25] See also Robert Fox, "Framing Peace", fn 9 supra, in which the point is reported from the Taormina military/NGO/media conference that effective interventions require constant collaboration between agencies. The point is also made that, given that range of agencies – invited or not – in contemporary conflicts, co-ordination is becoming an increasingly salient issue. It remains an open question, especially for NGOs, as to whether this co-ordination requires the creation of an umbrella organisation, a "mother ship" to which all such agencies are linked and, ultimately, accountable.

[26] Peter Uvin, "The Influence of Aid in Situations of Violent Conflict: A synthesis and a commentary on the lessons learned from case studies on the limits and scope for the use of development assistance incentives and disincentives for influencing conflict situations," Development Assistance Committee, Informal Task Force on Conflict, Peace, and Development Co-Operation, OECD 1999. See also Conflict, Peace and Development Co-Operation, Report No. I; "Civilian and Military Means of Providing and Supporting Humanitarian Assistance During Conflict", OECD, 1998.

[27] Development Assistance Committee Policy Statement, "Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century", May 1997, p. 3.

[28] It should have been noted earlier that this term is used here generically to refer to the actions which might be taken rather than referring specifically to intervention of the kind which involves the imposition of military, political or other forms of external control.

[29] See D.A Lake & D. Rothchild (eds) *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, Princeton, NJ; Princeton Univ. Press, 1998, Chapt. 1.

[30] See Macduff, op cit fn 2 supra.

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