

International Relations

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Conflict Analysis and Resolution

This chapter presents a social-psychological approach to the analysis and resolution of international and intercommunal conflicts. Its central focus is on interactive conflict resolution (see Fisher, 1997), a family of models for intervening in deep-rooted, protracted conflicts between identity groups, which is anchored in psychological principles.

International conflict resolution can be placed in the context of a larger, growing field of practice, applied at different levels and in different domains, and anchored in different disciplines, theoretical traditions, and fields of practice. Despite this diversity, certain common threads run through most of the work in this field. Thus these approaches to conflict resolution generally call for a nonadversarial framework for addressing the conflict, an analytic point of departure, a problem-solving orientation, direct participation of the conflicting parties in joint efforts to shape a solution, and facilitation by a third party trained in the process of conflict resolution. Crosslevel exchanges are very valuable for developing general principles, but the application of these principles requires sensitivity to the unique features of the context in which they are applied.

In this spirit, this chapter begins with presentation of a social-psychological perspective on the nature of international conflict and the normative and perceptual processes that contribute to its escalation and perpetuation. This analysis of international conflict has clear implications for our approach to conflict resolution. The chapter then turns to a brief discussion of negotiation and mediation, the most common diplomatic approaches to conflict, which have been subjects of extensive research in political psychology. This review provides a useful reference point for our discussion of interactive conflict resolution itself. To illustrate the family of approaches subsumed under this rubric, we proceed to a more detailed description of the assumptions and procedures of interactive problem solving, as applied in particular to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Kelman, 1997a, 1998b). The chapter concludes with an identification of some of the challenges confronting scholar-practitioners in the field of conflict analysis and resolution.

▲ *The Nature of International Conflict*

A social-psychological perspective can expand on the view of international conflict provided by the realist or neorealist schools of international relations

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or other, more traditional approaches focusing on structural or strategic factors (Kelman, 1997h). Without denying the importance of objectively anchored national interests, the primacy of the state in the international system, the role of power in international relations, and the effect of structural factors in determining the course of an international conflict, it enriches the analysis in a variety of ways: by exploring the subjective factors that set constraints on rationality; by opening the black box of the state as unitary actor and analyzing processes within and between the societies that underlie state action; by broadening the range of influence processes (and, indeed, of definitions of power) that play a role in international politics; and by conceiving international conflict as a dynamic process, shaped by changing realities, interests, and relationships between the conflicting parties.

Social-psychological analysis suggests four propositions about international conflict. These propositions are particularly relevant to existential conflicts between identity groups—conflicts in which the collective identities of the parties are engaged and in which the continued existence of the group is seen to be at stake. Thus the propositions apply most directly to ethnic or ideological conflicts but also to more mundane interstate conflicts, insofar as issues of national identity and existence come into play—as they often do.

The first proposition says that *international conflict is a process driven by collective needs and fears* rather than entirely a product of rational calculation of objective national interests on the part of political decision-makers. Human needs are often articulated and fulfilled through important collectivities, such as the ethnic group, the national group, and the state. Conflict arises when a group is faced with nonfulfillment or threat to the fulfillment of basic needs: not only such obvious material needs as food, shelter, physical safety, and physical well-being but also, and very centrally, such psychological needs as identity, security, recognition, autonomy, self-esteem, and a sense of justice (Burton, 1990). Moreover, needs for identity and security and similarly powerful collective needs, and the fears and concerns about survival associated with them, contribute heavily to the escalation and perpetuation of conflict once it has started. Even when the conflicting parties have come to the conclusion that it is in their best interest to put an end to the conflict, they resist going to the negotiating table or making the accommodations necessary for the negotiations to move forward, for fear that they will be propelled into concessions that in the end will leave their very existence compromised. The fears that drive existential conflicts lie at the heart of the relationship between the conflicting parties, going beyond the cycle of fears resulting from the dynamics of the security dilemma (Jervis, 1976).

Collective fears and needs, though more pronounced in ethnic conflicts, play a part in all international conflicts. They combine with objective factors—for example, a state's resources, the ethnic composition of its popu-

lation, or its access or lack of access to the sea—in determining how different segments of a society perceive state interests and what ultimately becomes the national interest as defined by the dominant elites. Similarly, all conflicts—interstate no less than ethnic—represent a combination of rational and irrational factors, and in each type of conflict the mix may vary from case to case. Some ethnic conflicts may be preponderantly rational, just as some interstate conflicts may be preponderantly irrational. Furthermore, in all international conflicts, the needs and fears of populations are mobilized and often manipulated by the leadership, with varying degrees of demagoguery and cynicism. Even when manipulated, collective needs and fears represent authentic reactions within the population and become the focus of societal action. They may be linked to individual needs and fears. For example, in highly violent ethnic conflicts, the fear of annihilation of one's group is often (and for good reason) tied to a fear of personal annihilation.

The conception of conflict as a process driven by collective needs and fears implies, first and foremost, that conflict resolution—if it is to lead to a stable peace that both sides consider just and to a new relationship that enhances the welfare and development of the two societies—most address the fundamental needs and deepest fears of the populations. From a normative point of view, such a solution can be viewed as the operationalization of justice within a problem-solving approach to conflict resolution (Kelman, 1996b). Another implication of a human-needs orientation is that the psychological needs on which it focuses—security, identity, recognition—are not inherently zero sum (Burton, 1990), although they are usually seen as such in deep-rooted conflicts. Thus it may well be possible to shape an integrative solution that satisfies both sets of needs, which may then make it easier to settle issues like territory or resources through distributive bargaining. Finally, the view of conflict as a process driven by collective needs and fears suggests that conflict resolution must, at some stage, provide for certain processes that take place at the level of individuals and interactions between individuals, such as taking the other's perspective or realistic empathy (White, 1984), creative problem solving, insight, and learning.

Focusing on the needs and fears of the populations in conflict readily brings to mind a second social-psychological proposition: that *international conflict is an intersocietal process*, not merely an intergovernmental or interstate phenomenon. The conflict, particularly in the case of protracted ethnic struggles, becomes an inescapable part of daily life for each society and its component elements. Thus analysis of conflict requires attention not only to its strategic, military, and diplomatic dimensions but also to its economic, psychological, cultural, and social-structural dimensions. Interactions on these dimensions, both within and between the conflicting societies, shape the political environment in which governments function and define the political constraints under which they operate.

An intersocietal view of conflict alerts us to the role of internal divisions

within each society, which often play a major part in exacerbating or even creating conflicts *between* societies. Such divisions impose constraints on political leaders pursuing a policy of accommodation, in the form of accusations by opposition elements that they are jeopardizing national existence and of anxieties and doubts within the general population that the opposition elements both foster and exploit. The internal divisions, however, may also provide potential levers for change in the direction of conflict resolution, by challenging the monolithic image of the enemy that parties in conflict tend to hold and enabling them to deal with each other in a more differentiated way. Internal divisions point to the presence on the other side of potential partners for negotiation and thus provide the opportunity for forming pronegotiation coalitions across the conflict lines (Kelman, 1993). To contribute to conflict resolution, any such coalition must of necessity remain an "uneasy coalition," lest its members lose their credibility and political effectiveness within their respective communities.

Another implication of an intersocietal view of conflict is that negotiations and third-party efforts should ideally be directed not merely to a political *settlement* of the conflict, in the form of a brokered political agreement, but to its *resolution*. A political agreement may be adequate for terminating relatively specific, containable interstate disputes, but conflicts that engage the collective identities and existential concerns of the adversaries require a process that is conducive to structural and attitude change, to reconciliation, and to the transformation of the relationship between the two societies. Finally, an intersocietal analysis of conflict suggests a view of diplomacy as a complex mix of official and unofficial efforts with complementary contributions. The peaceful termination or management of conflict requires binding agreements that can only be achieved at the official level, but many different sectors of the two societies have to be involved in creating a favorable environment for negotiating and implementing such agreements.

Our third proposition says that *international conflict is a multifaceted process of mutual influence* and not only a contest in the exercise of coercive power. Much of international politics entails a process of mutual influence, in which each party seeks to protect and promote its own interests by shaping the behavior of the other. Conflict occurs when these interests clash: when attainment of one party's interests (and fulfillment of the needs that underlie them) threatens, or is perceived to threaten, the interests (and needs) of the other. In pursuing the conflict, therefore, the parties engage in mutual influence, designed to advance their own positions and to block the adversary. Similarly, in conflict resolution—by negotiation or other means—the parties exercise influence to induce the adversary to come to the table, to make concessions, to accept an agreement that meets their interests and needs, and to live up to that agreement. Third parties also exercise influence in conflict situations by backing one or the other party,

by mediating between them, or by maneuvering to protect their own interests.

Influence in international conflict typically relies on a mixture of threats and inducements, with the balance often on the side of force and the threat of force. Thus, the U.S.-Soviet relationship in the Cold War was predominantly framed in terms of an elaborate theory of deterrence—a form of influence designed to keep the other side from doing what you do not want it to do (George & Smoke, 1974; Jervis, Lebow, & Stein, 1985; Schelling, 1963; Stein, 1991). In other conflict relationships, the emphasis may be on compellence—a form of influence designed to make the other side do what you want it to do. Such coercive strategies entail serious costs and risks, and their effects may be severely limited. For example, they are likely to be reciprocated by the other side and thus lead to escalation of the conflict, and they are unlikely to change behavior to which the other is committed. Thus the effective exercise of influence in international conflict requires a broadening of the repertoire of influence strategies, at least to the extent of combining “carrots and sticks”—of supplementing the negative incentives that typically dominate international conflict relationships with positive incentives (see Baldwin, 1971; Kriesberg, 1982) such as economic benefits, international approval, or a general reduction in the level of tension. An example of an approach based on the systematic use of positive incentives is Osgood’s (1962) graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension reduction (GRIT) strategy. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, in his 1977 trip to Jerusalem, undertook a unilateral initiative, with the expectation (partly prenegotiated) of Israeli reciprocation, but—unlike GRIT—he started with a large, fundamental concession in the anticipation that negotiations would fill in the intervening steps (Kelman, 1985).

Effective use of positive incentives requires more than offering the other whatever rewards, promises, or confidence-building measures seem most readily available. It requires actions that address the fundamental needs and fears of the other party. Thus the key to an effective influence strategy based on the exchange of positive incentives is *responsiveness* to the other’s concerns: actively exploring ways that each can help meet the other’s needs and allay the other’s fears and ways to help each other overcome the constraints within their respective societies against taking the actions that each wants the other to take. The advantage of a strategy of responsiveness is that it allows parties to exert influence on each other through positive steps (not threats) that are within their own capacity to take. The process is greatly facilitated by communication between the parties in order to identify actions that are politically feasible for each party yet likely to have an impact on the other.

A key element in an influence strategy based on responsiveness is *mutual reassurance*, which is particularly critical in any effort to resolve an existential conflict. The negotiation literature suggests that parties are often

driven to the table by a mutually hurting stalemate, which makes negotiations more attractive than continuing the conflict (Touval & Zartman, 1985, p. 16; Zartman & Berman, 1982). But parties in existential conflicts are afraid of negotiations, even when the status quo has become increasingly painful and they recognize that a negotiated agreement is in their interest. To advance the negotiating process under such circumstances, it is at least as important to reduce the parties' fears as to increase their pain.

Mutual reassurance can take the form of acknowledgments, symbolic gestures, or confidence-building measures. To be maximally effective, such steps need to address the other's central needs and fears as directly as possible. When President Sadat of Egypt spoke to the Israeli Knesset during his dramatic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, he clearly acknowledged Egypt's past hostility toward Israel and thus validated Israelis' own experiences. In so doing, he greatly enhanced the credibility of the change in course that he was announcing. At the opening of this visit, Sadat's symbolic gesture of engaging in a round of cordial handshakes with the Israeli officials who had come to greet him broke a longstanding taboo. By signaling the beginning of a new relationship, it had an electrifying effect on the Israeli public. In deep-rooted conflicts, acknowledgement of what was heretofore denied—in the form of recognition of the other's humanity, nationhood, rights, grievances, and interpretation of history—is an important source of reassurance that the other may indeed be ready to negotiate an agreement that addresses your fundamental concerns. By signaling acceptance of the other's legitimacy, each party reassures the other that negotiations and concessions no longer constitute mortal threats to its security and national existence. By confirming the other's narrative, each reassures the other that a compromise does not represent an abandonment of its identity.

An influence strategy based on responsiveness to each other's needs and fears and the resulting search for ways of reassuring and benefiting each other has important advantages from a long-term point of view. It does not merely elicit specific desired behaviors from the other party but also can contribute to a creative redefinition of the conflict, joint discovery of mutually satisfactory solutions, and transformation of the relationship between the parties.

The influence strategies employed in a conflict relationship take on special significance in light of the fourth proposition: *international conflict is an interactive process with an escalatory, self-perpetuating dynamic*, not merely a sequence of action and reaction by stable actors. In intense conflict relationships, the natural course of interaction between the parties tends to reinforce and deepen the conflict rather than reduce and resolve it. The interaction is governed by a set of norms and guided by a set of images that create an escalatory, self-perpetuating dynamic. This dynamic can be reversed through skillful diplomacy, imaginative leadership, third-party intervention, and institutionalized mechanisms for managing and resolving conflict. But in the absence of such deliberate efforts, the spontaneous in-

interaction between the parties is more likely than not to increase distrust, hostility, and the sense of grievance.

The needs and fears of parties engaged in intense conflict impose perceptual and cognitive constraints on their processing of new information, with a resulting tendency to underestimate the occurrence and the possibility of change. The ability to take the role of the other is severely impaired. Dehumanization of the enemy makes it even more difficult to acknowledge and access the perspective of the other. The inaccessibility of the other's perspective contributes significantly to some of the psychological barriers to conflict resolution described by Ross and Ward (1995). The dynamics of conflict interaction tend to entrench the parties in their own perspectives on history and justice. Conflicting parties display particularly strong tendencies to find evidence that confirms their negative images of each other and to resist evidence that would seem to disconfirm these images (see chapter 9 for a fuller discussion of the image concept). Thus interaction not only fails to contribute to a revision of the enemy image but actually helps to reinforce and perpetuate it. Interaction guided by mirror images of a demonic enemy and a virtuous self (see Bronfenbrenner, 1961; White, 1965) creates self-fulfilling prophecies by inducing the parties to engage in the hostile actions they expect from one another.

Self-fulfilling prophecies are also generated by the conflict norms that typically govern the interaction between parties engaged in an intense conflict. Expressions of hostility and distrust toward the enemy are not just spontaneous manifestations of the conflict but are normatively prescribed behaviors. Political leaders' assumption that the public's evaluation of them depends on their adherence to these norms influences their tactical and strategic decisions, their approach to negotiations, their public pronouncements, and, ultimately, the way they educate their own publics. For the publics, in turn, adherence to these norms is often taken as an indicator of group loyalty. Thus the discourse in deep-rooted conflicts is marked by mutual delegitimation and dehumanization. Interaction governed by this set of norms—at the micro and macro levels—contributes to escalation and perpetuation of the conflict. Parties that systematically treat each other with hostility and distrust are likely to become increasingly hostile and untrustworthy.

The dynamics of conflict interaction create a high probability that opportunities for conflict resolution will be missed. Parties whose interaction is shaped by the norms and images rooted in the history of the conflict are systematically constrained in their capacity to respond to the occurrence and possibility of change. They find it difficult to communicate the changes that have occurred on their own side or to notice the changes on the other side, and to explore the possibilities for change that would serve both sides' interests. Conflict resolution efforts, therefore, require promotion of a different kind of interaction, capable of reversing the escalatory and self-perpetuating dynamics of conflict: an interaction that is conducive to shar-

ing perspectives, differentiating the enemy image, and developing a language of mutual reassurance and a new discourse based on the norms of responsiveness and reciprocity.

▲ *Normative and Perceptual Processes Promoting Conflict*

Social-psychological analysis can be particularly helpful in explaining why and how, once a conflict has started, normative and perceptual processes are set into motion that promote its escalation and perpetuation and create or intensify barriers to conflict resolution. By the same token, social-psychological analysis, in helping to identify and understand these barriers, can also suggest ways of overcoming them.

Normative Processes

A variety of interaction processes at the mass and elite levels within conflicting societies that influence the evolving course of the conflict are governed by a set of powerful social norms that encourage actions and attitudes conducive to the generation, escalation, and perpetuation of conflict and that inhibit the perception and occurrence of change in the direction of tension reduction and conflict resolution (Kelman, 1997b, pp. 212–222).

One such process is the *formation of collective moods*. With periodic shifts in collective mood, public opinion can act as both a resource and a constraint for political leaders in the foreign policy process. In principle, it can provide support for either aggressive or conciliatory policies, but under the prevailing norms in an intense, protracted conflict, leaders are more likely to expect—and to mobilize—public support for the former than for the latter. Apart from transitory moods, certain pervasive states of consciousness underlie public opinion in a society engulfed in a deep-rooted conflict, reflecting the existential concerns and the central national narratives widely shared within the population. In many cases—such as Serbia, Northern Ireland, and the Middle East—historical traumas serve as the points of reference for current events. Though these memories may be manipulated by demagogic leaders, they—and the associated sense of injustice, abandonment, and vulnerability—are part of the people's consciousness and available for manipulation. The effect of such collective moods is to bring to the fore powerful social norms that support escalatory actions and inhibit moves toward compromise and accommodation. When fundamental concerns about survival and identity are tapped, national leaders, with full expectation of public support, are far more ready to risk war than to take risks for peace—in line with the proposition derived from prospect theory that people are more reluctant to take risks to achieve gains than to avoid losses (see Levy, 1992). Any change in the established view of the enemy

and of the imperatives of national defense comes to be seen as a threat to the nation's very existence.

Public support is an essential resource for political leaders engaged in a conflict relationship, both in assuring the public's readiness to accept the costs that their policies may entail and in enhancing the credibility of their threats and promises to the other side. The primary means of gaining public support is *the mobilization of group loyalties*. Arousal of nationalist and patriotic sentiments, particularly in a context of national security and survival, is a powerful tool in mobilizing public support. It may evoke automatic endorsement of the policies the leadership defines as necessary and a willingness to make sacrifices that cannot be entirely understood in terms of rational calculations of costs and benefits. The nation generates such powerful identifications and loyalties because it brings together two central psychological dispositions: the needs for self-protection and self-transcendence (Kelman 1969, 1997c).

Group loyalties can potentially be mobilized in support of conciliatory policies. Political leaders may promote painful compromises and concessions to the adversary on the grounds that the security, well-being, integrity, and survival of the nation require such actions. Indeed, leaders with impeccable nationalist credentials—such as Charles de Gaulle, Yitzhak Rabin, or F. W. de Klerk—are often most effective in leading their populations toward peaceful resolution of conflicts, once they have decided that this approach best serves the national interest. In general, however, group loyalties are more readily available to mobilize support for aggressive policies than for conciliatory ones. Proposals for aggressive actions can more easily rely on the vocabulary of nationalism, which characteristically marks off the ingroup from the outgroup to the detriment of the latter. An appeal to defend the nation against an imminent attack, in particular, is more compelling than an appeal to seize a promising opportunity—as prospect theory might predict (Farnham, 1992; Levy, 1992). Such an appeal also elicits almost unanimous response among members of the population, whereas an appeal to take advantage of an opportunity for peace holds no attraction to that segment of the population that equates peace with surrender.

Processes of group loyalty create barriers to change in a conflict relationship. Group loyalty requires adherence to the group's norms—which, in an intense conflict, call for a militant, unyielding, and suspicious attitude toward the enemy. Militancy and intransigence thus become the measures of loyalty. Hence, particularly in situations of perceived national crisis, the militants exercise disproportionate power and often a veto over official actions and policies. They impose severe constraints on the ability of leaders to explore peaceful options. Dissent from the dominant conflict norms becomes defined as an act of disloyalty and is suppressed, thus further undermining the exploration of peaceful alternatives.

Decision-making processes in a conflict situation tend to inhibit the search for alternatives and the exploration of new possibilities, particularly

when decision-makers are operating in an atmosphere of crisis. These tendencies are by no means inevitable, and there are historical instances—such as the Cuban missile crisis—of creative decision-making in dangerous crisis situations (Allison, 1971; Lebow, 1981). Conflict norms do, however, impose serious burdens on the decision-making process.

A major source of reluctance to explore new options are the domestic constraints under which decision-makers labor. In an intense conflict situation, adherence to the conflict norms tends to be seen as the safest course of action. Cautious decision-makers assume that they are less vulnerable domestically if they stay with the conflict's status quo, adhere to a discourse of hostility and distrust vis-à-vis the other side, or threaten escalatory actions than if they take steps toward accommodation and compromise. The search for alternatives in response to changing realities is also inhibited by institutionalized rigidities in the decision-making apparatus. Decision-makers and their bureaucracies operate within a framework of assumptions about available choices, effective strategies, and constituency expectations, shaped by the prevailing conflict norms, which may make them unaware of the occurrence and possibility of change. Furthermore, they often rely on established procedures and technologies, which are more likely to be geared toward pursuing the conflict—by military and other means—than toward resolving it.

The microprocesses of action and interaction in crisis decision-making further inhibit the exploration of new options. At the level of individual decision-makers, the stress they experience in situations of crisis—when consequential decisions have to be made under severe time pressures—limits the number of alternatives they consider and impels them to settle quickly on the dominant response, which, in intense conflicts, is likely to be aggressive and escalatory (Holsti, 1972; Lebow, 1987). At the level of decision-making groups, crisis decision-making often leads to "groupthink" (Janis, 1982), a concurrence-seeking tendency that is designed to maintain the cohesiveness of the group. Decision-making under these circumstances is much more likely to produce policies and actions that perpetuate and escalate the conflict than innovative ideas for conflict resolution.

The norms governing *negotiation and bargaining processes* between parties involved in longstanding conflict strongly encourage zero-sum thinking, which equates the enemy's loss with one's own gain. Negotiation—even distributive bargaining in its narrowest form—is possible only when both parties define the situation, at least at some level, as a win-win, mixed-motive game in which they have both competitive and cooperative goals. While pursuing its own interests, each party must actively seek out ways the adversary can also win and appear to be winning. But this is precisely the kind of effort that is discouraged by the conflict norms.

At the micro level, negotiators in an intense conflict tend to evaluate their performance by the forcefulness with which they present their own case and by their effectiveness in resisting compromise. To listen to what

the other side needs and to help the other side achieve its goals would violate the conflict norms and might subject the negotiators to criticism from their own constituencies and particularly from their hard-line domestic opposition. At the macro level, the parties—even when they recognize their common interest in negotiating certain specific issues—tend to pursue an overall outcome that strengthens their own strategic position and weakens the adversary's. Such a strategy reduces the other's incentive for concluding an agreement and ability to mobilize public support for whatever agreement is negotiated. Zero-sum thinking at both levels undermines the negotiating process, causing delays, setbacks, and repeated failures.

Finally, conflict creates certain *structural and psychological commitments*, which then take on a life of their own (see Pruitt & Gahagan, 1974; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). Most obviously, in a conflict of long standing, various individuals, groups, and organizations—military, political, industrial, scholarly—develop a vested interest in maintaining the conflict as a source of profit, power, status, or *raison d'être*. Others, though not benefiting from the conflict as such, may have a strong interest in forestalling a compromise solution because it would not address their particular grievances or fulfill their particular aspirations. Vested interests do not necessarily manifest themselves in deliberate attempts to undermine efforts at conflict resolution. They may take indirect and subtle forms, such as interpreting ambiguous realities and choosing between uncertain policy alternatives in ways that favor continuation of the conflict.

Vested interests and similar structural commitments to the conflict are bolstered by psychological commitments. People involved in a longstanding and deep-rooted conflict tend to develop a worldview that is built around the conflict and would be threatened by an end to the conflict. Resistance to change is likely to be more pronounced the more elaborate the cognitive structure or ideology in which the view of the conflict is embedded, since changing this view would have wider ramifications. In an intense conflict, the image of the enemy is often a particularly important part of people's worldview, with implications for their national identity, view of their own society, and interpretation of history. This is one reason why images of the enemy, to which we turn next, are highly resistant to change and contribute to the escalatory and self-perpetuating dynamic of conflict.

Perceptual Processes

Perceptual and cognitive processes—the ways we interpret and organize conflict-related information—play a major role in the escalation and perpetuation of conflict and create barriers to redefining and resolving the conflict despite changing realities and interests. Two perceptual processes that characterize mutual images of parties in conflict can account for this effect: the formation of mirror images and the resistance of images to contradictory information (Kelman, 1997b, pp. 222–231; see also chapter 9).

Social psychologists writing about U.S.-Soviet relations (Bronfenbrenner, 1961; White, 1965) first noted the phenomenon of *mirror image formation* as a characteristic of many conflict relationships. Both parties tend to develop parallel images of self and other, except with the value reversed. The core content of mirror images is captured by the good-bad dimension: each side sees itself as virtuous and peaceful, arming only for defensive reasons and prepared to compromise. The enemy, by contrast, is seen as evil and hostile, arming for aggressive reasons and responsive only to the language of force.

A typical corollary of the good-bad images in protracted conflicts is the view that the other's aggressiveness is inherent in its nature (its ideology, religion, national character, or political system), whereas any signs of aggressiveness on one's own part are entirely reactive and defensive. In the language of attribution theory (see hereafter), the enemy's aggression is explained in dispositional terms and one's own aggression in situational terms. John Foster Dulles's "inherent bad faith" model of the Soviet Union (Holsti, 1962), with its counterpart in Soviet views of the west, illustrates this feature of mirror images. Another common corollary of the good-bad image—one that derives from the virtuous self-image—is the assumption on each side that the enemy knows very well that we are not threatening them. Our own basic decency and peacefulness, and the provocation to which we have been subjected, are so obvious to us that they must also be obvious to the other side (see the discussion of naive realism in Ross & Ward, 1995). Apart from such generic features of mirror images, which arise from the dynamics of intergroup conflict across the board, mirror images in any given case may reflect the dynamics of the specific conflict. Thus ethnic conflicts may be characterized by mutual denial of the other's national identity, accompanied by efforts to delegitimize the other's national movement and claim to nationhood (see Kelman 1978, 1987); mutual fear of national and personal annihilation; a mutual sense of victimization by the other side; or a mutual view of the other as a source of one's own humiliation and vulnerability.

The mirror image concept implies that certain symmetries in the parties' reactions arise from the very nature of conflict interaction and that they play an important role in escalating the conflict. There is no assumption that *all* images of self and enemy are mirror images; that images on the two sides are equally inaccurate; or that there is empirical symmetry in the two sides' historical experiences and current situation or moral equivalence in their positions. The dynamics of the conflict relationship, however, produce a degree of parallelism in some of the images developed by both participants in that relationship, arising out of the motivational and cognitive contexts in which they operate. Motivationally, each side is concerned with "looking good" when blame for the conflict events is being apportioned; political leaders, therefore, feel a strong need to persuade themselves, their own people, the rest of the world, and future historians that the blame

rests with the enemy. Cognitively, each side views the conflict from its own perspective and—painfully aware of its own needs, fears, historical traumas, grievances, suspicions, and political constraints—is convinced that it is acting defensively and with the best intentions and that this is so self-evident that it must be equally clear to the enemy.

Mirror images produce a spiraling effect (exemplified by the classical pattern of an arms race) because each side interprets any hostile action by the other as an indication of aggressive intent against which it must defend itself, yet its own reactions—whose defensive nature, it assumes, should be obvious to the enemy—are taken by the other as signs of aggressive intent. The effect of mirror images is accentuated insofar as the enemy's ideology or national character is perceived to be inherently aggressive and expansionist. In addition to their escalatory effect, mirror images tend to make conflicts more intractable because the sharp contrast between the innocent self and the aggressive other makes it difficult to break out of a zero-sum conception of the conflict. However, the concept of mirror images may be a useful tool in conflict resolution. In problem-solving workshops, for example, the parties' discovery that their own actions are perceived differently by the other side than by themselves may open them up to the possibility that the reverse may be true. Thus they may gain access to each other's perspective, insight into the escalatory effects of such two-directional differences in perception, and awareness of the need for mutual reassurance in order to set a deescalatory process in motion.

The second feature of conflict images, their high degree of *resistance to contradictory information*, inhibits the perception of change and the expectation of future change. A great deal of social-psychological theorizing and research has addressed the general phenomenon of the persistence of attitudes and beliefs in the face of new information that, from an outside point of view, challenges their validity but is somehow neutralized or ignored. Research has focused on several types of mechanisms that account for resistance to contradictory information: selectivity, consistency, attribution, and the self-fulfilling prophecy. The concepts of selective exposure, selective perception, and selective recall all point to the fact that our attitudes help determine the kind of information that is available to us. We are more likely to seek out and be exposed to information that confirms our existing attitudes and to perceive and remember new information in ways that fit into our preexisting cognitive framework. The various models of cognitive consistency—such as Heider's (1958) theory of cognitive balance and Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance—suggest that, in the interest of maintaining consistency, people tend to screen out information that is incongruent with their existing beliefs and attitudes. Though inconsistent information may also instigate attitude change, it is more likely to be resisted when the existing attitudes are strongly held and have wide ramifications—as is the case with enemy images. Attribution mechanisms (Jones & Nisbett, 1971) promote confirmation of the original enemy image, because hostile

actions by the enemy tend to be attributed dispositionally, thus providing further evidence of the enemy's inherently aggressive, implacable character, while conciliatory actions are explained away as reactions to situational forces, thus requiring no revision of the original image (for research in support of this proposition, see Heradstveit, 1981; Rosenberg & Wolfsfeld, 1977; Rouhana, 1997). Finally, interactions between conflicting parties tend to create self-fulfilling prophecies by causing our adversaries to behave in line with our expectations—to take on the roles in which we have cast them (Weinstein & Deutschberger, 1963)—thus confirming our original attitudes.

The mechanisms that account for resistance to disconfirming information are particularly powerful in a conflict relationship, for several reasons. First, images of the enemy and conflict-related self-images are central aspects of the national consensus, and resistance to disconfirming information is therefore reinforced by strong normative pressures. Second, in a conflict relationship, the opportunities and capacity for taking the perspective of the other side are limited, which reduces the impact of potentially new information about the varieties, changes, and signs of flexibility in the other side's views. Third, the resistance of enemy images to disconfirmation is magnified by strong beliefs about the unchangeability of the enemy, reinforced by the view that it is dangerous or even treasonous to propose that the enemy has changed or will change.

Despite all the reasons why conflict images are particularly resistant to contradictory information, they are not immutable. Social-psychological evidence suggests that they can change, and historical evidence shows that they do change. The challenge for scholars and practitioners of international conflict resolution is to devise the means to overcome their resistance to change. Interactive conflict resolution is specifically designed to address these kinds of resistances, along with the other social-psychological processes that contribute to the escalation and perpetuation of conflict. Before turning to interactive conflict resolution, however, we present a brief review of negotiation and mediation—the more traditional approaches to dealing with international conflict—and some of the social-psychological literature that addresses them.

▲ *Negotiation*

The most common approach to addressing international conflict within the domain of diplomacy is that of negotiation, an interactive process that appears to have a semblance of universality at a generic level, even though cultural differences in approaches and styles are a current focus of study (e.g., Cohen, 1997). Negotiation is typically defined as a discussion among parties aimed at resolving incompatible goals (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993), although a broader definition sees negotiation as a process by which parties

develop agreements to guide and regulate their future behavior (Sawyer & Guetzkow, 1965). The broader definition alerts us to the fact that all manner of issues at the international level are approached through negotiation, from trade disputes to financial arrangements to environmental problems, while the more focused definition places negotiation at the center of conflict resolution over territory, governance, and identity, with other methods and interventions playing a supplementary and supportive role. It is therefore essential to understand the processes, outcomes, and context of international negotiation, so that a range of efforts can be directed toward achieving mutually acceptable settlements that contribute to sustainable and largely cooperative relationships.

There are two important distinctions in considering expressions of international negotiation: bilateral versus multilateral and competitive versus integrative. The former distinction has gained importance since the end of the Cold War, with the shift away from a bipolar power struggle to a field of multiple actors attempting to forge a new world order. A concise treatment of multilateral negotiation by Touval (1989) covered the phases, impediments, facilitating factors, and the challenge of building consensus, all in comparison to bilateral negotiation. Efforts to understand the complexity of multiparty, multiissue negotiations seeking unanimity of agreement must go beyond the common concepts applied to bilateral negotiations (bargaining, information processing) to include additional concepts (coalition formation, role differentiation) in the context of a system perspective. Treatments of multilateral negotiation, it is hoped, will enable us to understand more deeply this increasingly common way of dealing with international issues (e.g., Hampson, 1995).

The second distinction has been central to the negotiation literature for some time, stemming from the differences between domination, compromise, and integration identified by Mary Parker Follett (1924), with the latter approach seeking to find expression of all parties' interests without sacrificing any essential ones. The distinction was crystallized in the organizational literature through Walton and McKersie's (1965) differentiation of distributive versus integrative bargaining, the former involving competing interests over resources in short supply and the latter engaging cooperative moves to increase the resource domain so that all primary interests can be satisfied. This duality has been represented in numerous treatments of negotiation to the point where we can speak of competing theories of negotiation (Murray, 1986), one concerned with hard bargaining and resistance to concession making in order to maximize one's gains, the other geared to joint analysis and problem solving yielding mutually high outcomes. This distinction is applied to the international level by Hopmann (1995), who contends empirically that bargaining is more frequent in international negotiations, even though problem solving produces greater flexibility and superior agreements. Part of the reason for this discrepancy between practice and effectiveness is that the more traditional, competitive bargaining style

finds support in the dominant paradigm of realism in international relations, whereas problem solving is more compatible with the assumptions and orientations of liberalism, and as such is only more recently gaining consideration by international diplomats and other negotiators. The primary thrust of theory and research on negotiation in social and political psychology has been to support the shift from a distributive, zero-sum mentality to an integrative, non-zero-sum perspective, the latter being expressed through a firm and cooperative orientation.

A number of approaches to the study of international negotiation have been taken. Fisher (1990) identifies general descriptions based on diplomatic experience, studies that draw on mathematical models and game theory, and comparative case analyses of a systematic nature. Carnevale and Pruitt (1992) note books of advice to negotiators that are largely prescriptive (e.g., Fisher & Ury, 1981), mathematical treatments of rational negotiation that are mainly descriptive (e.g., Raiffa, 1982), and behavioral studies in both the field and laboratory that are descriptive yet yield prescriptions that can be useful to negotiators (e.g., Pruitt, 1981). Druckman (1997) provides the broadest sweep of perspectives that have been taken to understanding negotiation, seeing it as puzzle solving directed toward making optimal choices, as a bargaining game in which concessions are exchanged, as organizational management requiring consensus building both within and between parties, or as diplomatic politics in which negotiation is one strand of multifaceted international relations. Social and political psychologists have made contributions to both the descriptive and prescriptive treatments of negotiation.

An early and influential model by Sawyer and Guetzkow (1965) cast the negotiation process as a temporal flow affected by antecedent, concurrent, and consequent conditions. Druckman (1973, 1983) has utilized their model to organize research in the field and as a base for elaborating the process of negotiation into a series of stages, turning points, and crises in which momentum can be built toward the final agreement. He also makes a strong case for expanding negotiation research to consider a range of contextual factors, a direction that later studies at the international level are taking seriously (e.g., Hopmann, 1996). Carnevale and Pruitt (1992) review behavioral studies of negotiation in terms of a motivational orientation, which predicts outcomes based on strategic choices rooted in negotiator motives, and a cognitive orientation, which predicts outcomes based on negotiator perceptions and information processing. The descriptive stance of the behavioral orientation shifts in the prescriptive direction in the theory and research on problem solving by Pruitt (1986), which identifies methods for attaining integrative agreements. In addition to the time-honored technique of logrolling to transform distributive situations involving multiple issues into integrative outcomes, Pruitt identifies expanding the pie, non-specific compensation, cost cutting, and bridging, wherein a new option is created to satisfy underlying interests. Such outcomes are achievable if it is

possible to inject sufficient flexibility into the negotiation process along with the essential amount of firmness (Druckman & Mitchell, 1995).

A common question in negotiation research is how elements of the negotiating situation (e.g., prenegotiation experience, constituent pressure) affect process and outcomes. Druckman (2001) adds the more challenging question of how the processes and outcomes affect the long-term, postsettlement relations among the parties, which has significance for conflict resolution. At the same time, we must also ask how other methods in the domain of conflict resolution can be directed toward achieving and implementing integrative agreements that work to improve relations among former adversaries and thus help to build a lasting peace.

▲ *Mediation*

When negotiation is nonexistent or unsuccessful in situations of destructive and protracted conflict, a common response is for a neutral third party to enter the arena, either by invitation from the parties or on its own initiative. There are a wide variety of activities that intermediaries can undertake, or more generally, a number of different roles they can enact in conflicts. Kriesberg (1996, 1998) identifies activities that range from providing a space for communication to saving face, helping invent new options, and adding resources and generating pressures to reach an agreement. Fisher and Keashly (1990) provide a taxonomy of third-party intervention, which describes roles approximately in line with traditional terminology found in the literature at both the domestic and international levels. Six roles are identified in terms of their primary functions and along a continuum of the control that the third party possesses over both the process and the outcome of the interaction between or among the parties. *Conciliation* and *consultation* are at the low power end of the continuum and are essentially defined as providing an informal communication link and facilitating creative problem solving respectively. At the high end of the control continuum, *peacekeeping* is seen as maintaining a cease fire supplemented by humanitarian and political activities, while *arbitration* provides a binding third-party settlement on the substantive issues in dispute.

At the intermediate level of control is the third-party role of mediation, which, like conciliation and consultation, is a noncoercive and nonbinding approach to managing conflict with the consent of the parties. Specifically, mediation is defined as the intervention of an impartial third party designed to create a mutually acceptable negotiated settlement on the substantive issues of the conflict. In addition, Fisher and Keashly (1990) follow the lead of other theorists in the field by distinguishing *pure mediation* from *power mediation*. The former works toward agreement through the use of reasoning, persuasion, the control of information, and the suggestion of alternatives. The latter goes beyond these facilitative functions to include

the use of leverage in the form of rewards and punishments and often involves the third party as a powerful guarantor of the settlement. This distinction can be connected to the primary functions of mediators identified by Touval and Zartman (1985) in that pure mediation involves the functions of *communication* and *formulation*, whereas power mediation goes beyond that to include *manipulation*. While this function can be seen as compatible with the world of power politics in which it operates, it does raise both ethical concerns over the use of coercion by powerful third parties and strategic concerns about the garnering of agreements that involve settlement but do not result in lasting resolution.

In the past 20 years, the method of mediation has witnessed a significant growth in theory, research, and practice at both the domestic and international levels (e.g., Kressel, Pruitt, & Associates, 1989). Moore (1996) provides a comprehensive coverage of the history and expression of mediation, which is found in almost all cultures in the world, practiced by a variety of individuals and institutions in both informal and formal roles. In Western societies, the last three decades have seen a profusion of mediator roles to address various types of conflict, often as an alternative to formal, legal processes of litigation or adjudication. At the international level, mediation has a history as long as that of diplomacy itself and has also received increased scholarly attention in recent times (e.g., Bercovitch & Rubin, 1992). Bercovitch (1997) provides a concise overview of this domain of study, indicating the unique characteristics of mediation as the continuation of negotiations by other means. He gathers empirical evidence that attests to the frequent use of mediation in international relations by a variety of individuals, states, and institutions, and he identifies a number of variables that have been related to mediation effectiveness (e.g., Bercovitch & Houston, 1996). It is clear that intermediary activities need to be a central component of conflict management and resolution, as the world searches for alternative mechanisms to deterrence, compellence, and warfare.

With the growth of mediation, attention is being given to the many difficult issues that arise through third-party interventions in the conflicts of others. Fisher (2001) identifies a number of these in relation to the identity, motives, qualities, and competencies of the intervenor and the timing, ethics, and effectiveness of intervention. The issue of cultural generalizability is especially salient when the third party enters from a different and dominant culture in relation to those of the parties in conflict. Power asymmetry between the parties and the entry of a powerful third party both raise questions about the limits of applicability of intervention methods. The traditional view of an impartial third party is being challenged by the proclaimed effectiveness of biased mediators whose interests may help deliver a settlement. The question of timing asks whether conflicts must reach a level of destruction and a point of impasse before parties are willing to abandon their unilateral, coercive measures to seek a mediated compromise. The effectiveness of mediation is an issue of considerable import, with stud-

ies of domestic interventions generally showing higher success rates than those at the international level, especially in protracted ethnopolitical conflicts over identity and governance. Finally, the ethics of intervention is a continuing concern, which can be addressed through the development of mediation as a form of professional practice, regardless of the forum in which it is practiced. All of these issues must be addressed for mediation and other types of third-party intervention to achieve their potential for reducing human destructiveness and facilitating social transformation toward greater harmony, equity, and justice.

▲ *Interactive Conflict Resolution*

Frustrations in achieving negotiated settlements and failures at mediation, particularly in intractable ethnopolitical conflicts, were part of the impetus for exploring alternative methods of conflict resolution that did not arise from a base in realist assumptions about international relations. John Burton is credited not only with challenging the dominant paradigm of realism but also with the creation of a problem-solving approach to international conflict analysis and resolution, which he initially termed *controlled communication* (Burton, 1969). Following Burton's method, high-level representatives of parties in destructive conflict are brought together in unofficial discussions with a third-party panel of social scientists, who work to build an open and supportive climate in which the antagonists can analyze their situation, examine their perceptions and evaluations, and create mutually acceptable options for conflict resolution. Herbert Kelman was a panel member in one of Burton's early workshops on the Cyprus conflict and went on to develop his own method of *interactive problem solving*, which is described hereafter with reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lennard Doob experimented with the application of human-relations training methods to destructive conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Northern Ireland (Doob, 1970; Doob & Foltz, 1973). A variety of interventions and studies applying these types of methods to intergroup and international conflict are reviewed by Fisher (1972, 1983), who also developed a generic model of *third party consultation* to represent the essential components of the approach.

Fisher (1997) has recently captured the work of Burton, Kelman, and others under the rubric of *interactive conflict resolution*, which is defined as "small-group, problem-solving discussions between unofficial representatives of identity groups or states engaged in destructive conflict that are facilitated by an impartial third party of social scientist-practitioners" (p. 8). Given the proliferation of interactive methods over the past decade, Fisher (1997) also provides a broader view of interactive conflict resolution as involving facilitated, face-to-face activities in communication, training, education, or consultation that promote collaborative conflict analysis and problem solving

among antagonists. In either case, the method is based in social-psychological assumptions about intergroup and international conflict that see the importance of subjective factors (attitudes, perceptions, emotions) alongside objective elements and that propose that meaningful interaction among conflicting parties is as necessary to deescalate the conflict as it was to escalate it. However, the method also takes a system perspective, knowing that any changes in individuals that take place in problem-solving workshops or other interactive fora must be transferred successfully to the level of political discourse and policy-making for any positive effects to occur. Interactive conflict resolution is therefore a form of unofficial or *track two diplomacy* (Montville, 1987), which initially gained its currency through complementary contributions that it can make to official peacemaking efforts. At the same time, interactive methods are becoming increasingly important in postconflict peace-building, to help implement settlements and rebuild war-torn relationships so that reescalating cycles of violence are prevented.

There are a variety of different forms of interactive conflict resolution, in addition to the classic problem solving workshop model articulated by Britton (1987), Mitchell (1981), Kelman (1986), Azar (1990), Fisher (1986), and others. Vamik Volkan and his colleagues have developed a psychodynamic approach to both understanding and ameliorating ethno-political conflict among contesting communal groups. Volkan (1991) contends that deeper psychological processes, such as projection and victimization, need to be addressed along with political and economic issues, and he has developed a workshop methodology for bringing together influential members of conflicting groups to establish workable relationships and develop mutually acceptable options. The approach has been successfully applied to the Arab-Israeli conflict (Julius, 1991) and to conflicts in the post-Soviet Baltic republics between majority populations and Russian minorities (Volkan & Harris, 1993). Although the psychodynamic underpinnings of Volkan's method are different from those of the social-psychological model, the design of the workshops and role of the third-party facilitators are remarkably similar.

Another form of interactive conflict resolution has been developed by Harold Saunders, a former U.S. diplomat and policy-maker, who has worked as a member of the third-party team in workshops organized by both Volkan and Kelman. For many years, Saunders was involved in the Dartmouth Conference, bringing together Soviet (now Russian) and American influentials to engage in citizen-to-citizen dialogue. He served as the American cochair of the regional conflict task force that examined superpower interaction in Cold War hot spots as a means of understanding the relationship between the two countries. Based on this experience, Chaffin and Saunders (1993) articulated a public peace process involving five stages of unofficial dialogue between conflicting groups. Following the end of the Cold War, Saunders and Randa Slim worked with American and Russian

colleagues to apply the dialogue model with considerable success to the civil war in the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan (Saunders, 1995). Based on this and other experiences, including a dialogue on race relations in the United States, Saunders (1998) has articulated a broadly applicable model of facilitating sustained dialogue between members of conflicting groups.

A number of scholar-practitioners have contributed to the development of methods for intercommunal dialogue that have useful application to ethnopolitical conflicts at the international level. These forms of interactive conflict resolution tend to involve ordinary members of conflicting groups or their diasporas, who are concerned if not influential in policy-making but who represent the modal sentiments of the conflicting parties. Such dialogue also tends to focus more on developing mutual understanding through conflict analysis rather than creating alternative solutions to the conflict. However, it may result in policy options that call for useful de-escalatory moves by involved or interested parties. Louis Kriesberg and his colleagues initiated the Syracuse Area Middle East Dialogue in the early 1980s to bring Jewish-American and Arab-American citizens together to increase mutual understanding and develop policy ideas for the U.S. government to improve Israeli-Palestinian relations. Richard Schwartz (1989) provides a useful description of the very challenging dialogue process and a valuable exposition of the rationale and procedures of the methodology that was developed. Another example of the creation of structured dialogue processes comes from the work of Richard Chasin and his colleagues, formerly at the Center for Psychology and Social Change and now at the Public Conversations Project. Based in family systems therapy, this approach follows a systematic process for increasing understanding between hostile parties and creating cooperation across lines of the conflict. The approach was initially applied to Soviet and American relations during the Cold War and has been further developed through application to a variety of other conflicts, including the abortion issue in the United States (Chasin & Herzig, 1993; Chasin et al., 1996). These and other examples of dialogue projects provide a rich source for developing a generic methodology of dialogue that is highly contributive to the field of interactive conflict resolution (Fisher, 1997).

▲ *Problem-Solving Workshops*

To illustrate the microprocess of interactive conflict resolution, we shall describe the problem-solving workshops carried out by Herbert Kelman and his colleagues with politically influential Israelis and Palestinians, starting in the early 1970s (Kelman, 1992, 1998b; Kelman & Cohen, 1976; Rouhana & Kelman, 1994). Kelman's approach, *interactive problem solving* (Kelman, 1986, 1998a), derives from the work of John Burton (1969, 1979, 1984, 1987; see also Kelman, 1972). It is an academically based, unofficial, third-

party approach to conflict resolution, anchored in social-psychological principles. It brings together politically involved and often politically influential members of conflicting parties for direct communication, facilitated by a panel of social scientists with expertise in group process, international conflict, and the particular region in which the conflict takes place.

The ultimate goal of interactive problem solving is to promote change in individuals—through face-to-face interaction in small groups (Kelman, 1997a)—as a vehicle for change in national policies and in the larger conflict system. The core of the work is a particular microprocess, best exemplified by problem-solving workshops, that is intended to contribute to the macroprocess of conflict resolution.

Relationship to Negotiations

Problem-solving workshops and related activities are not negotiating sessions. Negotiations can be carried out only by officials authorized to conclude binding agreements, and workshops—by definition—are completely nonbinding. Their nonbinding character, in fact, represents their special strength and is the source of their unique contribution to the larger process. They provide an opportunity for sharing perspectives, exploring options, and joint thinking. Such exploratory interaction is essential to negotiation at all of its stages, but it is usually difficult to arrange in an official context, especially around the negotiating table.

Even though workshops must be clearly distinguished from official negotiations, they can be viewed as an integral part of the larger negotiating process, relevant at all stages of that process. At the prenegotiation stage, they can help the parties move toward the negotiating-table by contributing to the creation of a political environment that is conducive to negotiation. At the negotiation stage itself they can perform useful paraneegotiation functions: they can contribute to overcoming obstacles to the negotiations, to creating momentum and reviving the sense of possibility, and to identifying options and reframing issues so that they can be negotiated more effectively once they get to the table. Finally, at the postnegotiation stage, workshops can contribute to resolving problems in the implementation of negotiated agreements, as well as to the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation in the aftermath of an agreement and to the transformation of the relationship between the former enemies.

Israeli-Palestinian Experiences

Kelman's and his colleagues' Israeli-Palestinian work has sought to contribute to all three of these stages of the negotiating process over the course of the years. All of the workshops in the 1970s and 1980s took place, of course, in the prenegotiation stage and were designed to explore the possibilities for movement toward the negotiating table. A variety of workshops

were carried out during that period—in different contexts and with different types of participants. All of the participants, however, were members (or were soon to be members) of the political elite. They included political actors, such as parliamentarians and leaders or activists of political parties or political movements; political influentials, such as journalists, editors, directors of think tanks, politically involved academicians, and former diplomats or military officers; and preinfluentials, such as advanced graduate students who seemed headed for politically important careers (some of whom did indeed become political influentials as their careers progressed). Moreover, all of the workshops during this period were “one-time” events: the particular group of Israelis and Palestinians who took part in a given workshop convened only for this one occasion—usually over an extended weekend. Some of the individuals participated in more than one such workshop, and the one-time workshops held over the years had a cumulative effect within the two societies and helped to inject new ideas into the two political cultures. But until 1990 no attempt was made to reconvene the same *group* of participants for another occasion.

In 1990, for the first time in this program, Kelman and Nadim Rouhana organized a continuing workshop: a group of highly influential Israelis and Palestinians—six on each side—who agreed to participate in a series of three meetings over the course of a year, and in the end continued to meet (with some changes in personnel) until August 1993 (Rouhana & Kelman, 1994). As it happened, with the onset of official negotiations in 1991, first in Madrid and then in Washington, this continuing workshop also provided the organizers’ first experience with interactive problem solving as a paranegotiation process. The political relevance of this work was enhanced by the appointment, in 1991, of four of the six initial Palestinian participants in the group to key positions in the official negotiating teams and, in 1992, of several Israeli participants to ambassadorial and cabinet positions in the new Rabin government. Some participants left the group at this point because they saw a conflict of interests between their roles in the official and unofficial process (Kelman, 1998b, pp. 19–20).

These workshops from the 1970s to the early 1990s, along with other unofficial activities, helped to lay the groundwork for the Oslo agreement of September 1993 (Kelman, 1995, 1997d). Such efforts contributed by developing cadres prepared to carry out productive negotiations; by sharing information and formulating new ideas that provided substantive inputs into the negotiations; and by fostering a political atmosphere that made the parties open to a new relationship.

After the Oslo agreement, Kelman and Rouhana initiated a new project: the Joint Working Group on Israeli-Palestinian Relations, which met regularly between 1994 and 1999. For the first time in this program, the group set itself the goal of producing written documents: joint concept papers on the issues in the final-status negotiations, viewed in the context of what would be required to establish a long-term peaceful and mutually enhancing

relationship between the two societies. The group thus intended to contribute both to the negotiations themselves and to the postnegotiation process of peace-building and reconciliation. Three papers, on general principles for the final-status negotiations (Joint Working Group on Israeli-Palestinian Relations, 1998), the problem of Palestinian refugees and the right of return (Alpher & Shikaki, 1998), and the future Israeli-Palestinian relationship (Joint Working Group, 1999), have been published. A fourth, on Israeli settlements, was close to completion but remains unpublished.

Dual Purpose

Problem-solving workshops can best be viewed as "workshops" in the literal sense of the term: as providing a specially constructed space in which the parties can engage in the process of exploration, observation, and analysis and fashion new products that can be exported into the political arena. Workshops thus have a dual purpose. They are designed, first, to produce change—new learning, in the form of new understandings, new insights, and new ideas for resolving the conflict—in the particular individuals who participate in the workshop and, second, to transfer these changes into the political debate and the decision-making process in the two societies. Depending on their particular positions in the society, individual participants can communicate their new insights and ideas through their writing, lecturing, and political activities, or the advice they give to political decision-makers. The participants in the Joint Working Group took a further step by shaping these insights and ideas into concept papers, which were made available to decision-makers, political elites, and the wider public as the two sides moved into the final-status negotiations.

An important theoretical and practical consequence of the dual purpose of workshops is that the two purposes may create contradictory requirements. The best example of these dialectics of interactive problem solving is provided by the selection of participants. *Transfer* into the political process would be maximized by officials who are close to the decision-making apparatus and thus in a position to apply immediately what they have learned. *Change*, however, would be maximized by participants who are removed from the decision-making process and therefore less constrained in their interactions and freer to play with ideas and explore hypothetical scenarios. To balance these contradictory requirements, selection has focused on participants who are not officials but are politically influential. They are thus relatively free to engage in the process, but, at the same time, any new ideas they develop in the course of a workshop can have an impact on the thinking of decision-makers and the society at large.

Ground Rules for Interaction

Problem-solving workshops follow a set of ground rules that are presented to the participants in great detail. The central ground rule is the principle

of privacy and confidentiality. In the early Israeli-Palestinian workshops, confidentiality was particularly important for the protection of the participants, because the mere fact of meeting with the enemy was controversial and exposed them to political, legal, and even physical risks. Confidentiality is equally important, however, for protection of the process that workshops seek to promote. The ground rules are designed to encourage the participants to talk and listen to each other, rather than focus on their constituencies, an audience, third parties, or the record. They are asked to think out loud, to experiment with ideas, and explore different options, without having to worry about how others would react if their words were quoted outside. This is why there is no audience, no publicity, no record, and no attribution. Focusing on each other enables and encourages the participants to enter into a type of interaction that is generally not feasible among parties engaged in a bitter conflict—a type of interaction, indeed, that deviates from the conflict norms that usually govern their behavior: an interaction that is *analytic* rather than polemical, that is, in which the parties seek to explore each other's perspective and gain insight into the causes and dynamics of the conflict; and an interaction that is *problem solving* rather than adversarial, that is, in which the parties sidestep the usual attempt to allocate blame and instead take the conflict as a shared problem that requires joint effort to find a mutually satisfactory solution.

Another ground rule is that in a workshop—unlike a negotiating session—there is no expectation that the parties will reach an agreement. As in any conflict resolution effort, there is an interest in finding common ground, but the amount of agreement achieved in the discussions is not necessarily a measure of the success of the enterprise. If participants come away with a better understanding of the other's perspective, their own priorities, and the dynamics of the conflict, the workshop will have fulfilled its purpose, even if it has not produced an outline of a peace treaty. The Joint Working Group was an exception in this respect, in that its purpose was to produce joint concept papers, although even these papers—while they explore different options and seek to reframe issues—do not necessarily come up with a single agreed-on solution. The Joint Working Group also differs from the earlier work in that the participants eventually went public with the issuance of the completed concept papers; up to the point of publication, however, the principle of confidentiality was strictly observed.

Yet another ground rule calls for the equality of the two parties within the workshop setting. Asymmetries in power, moral position, or reputation clearly play an important role in the conflict and must be taken into account in the workshop discussions. But the two parties are equals in the workshop setting in the sense that each party has the same right to serious consideration of its needs, fears, and concerns. Within the rules of the workshop, Israeli participants cannot dismiss Palestinian concerns on the grounds that the Palestinians are the weaker party and, therefore, in a poor bargaining position, nor can Palestinian participants dismiss Israeli concerns on the

grounds that the Israelis are the oppressors and, therefore, not entitled to sympathy. Each side has the right to be heard in the workshop and each side's needs and fears must be given equal attention in the search for a mutually satisfactory solution.

A final ground rule concerns the facilitative role of the third party. The third party in this model does not take part in the substantive discussion; it does not give advice or offer its own proposals, nor does it take sides, evaluate the ideas presented, or arbitrate between different interpretations of historical facts or international law. Its task is to create the conditions that allow ideas for resolving the conflict to emerge out of the interaction between the parties themselves. The facilitation of the third party, however, is an important part of the process. The third party sets the ground rules and monitors adherence to them; it helps to keep the discussion moving in constructive directions, tries to stimulate movement, and intervenes as relevant with questions, observations, and even challenges, relating both to the content and the process of the interaction. It also serves as a repository of trust for parties who, by definition, do not trust each other. They feel safe to participate because they trust the third party and its ability to maintain confidentiality and protect their interests.

Workshop Agenda

In the typical one time, free-standing workshop, the agenda is relatively open and unstructured with respect to the substantive issues under discussion. The way these issues are approached, however, and the order of discussion are structured so as to facilitate the kind of discourse that the ground rules are designed to encourage. A similar structure, with some necessary modifications, characterizes the agenda within and across the meetings of a continuing workshop.

The first discussion session of any workshop is usually devoted to an exchange of information between the two sides, which serves to break the ice and set the tone for the kind of exchange the workshop hopes to generate. Each party is asked to talk about the situation on the ground and the current mood in its own community, about the issues in the conflict as seen in that community, about the spectrum of views on the conflict and its solution, and about participants' own positions within that spectrum. This exchange provides a shared base of information and sets a precedent for the two sides to deal with each other as mutual resources rather than solely as combatants.

Following the opening discussion, the core agenda of the workshop consists of four parts. It begins with a needs analysis, in which members on each side are asked to discuss their central concerns in the conflict—the fundamental needs that would have to be addressed and the existential fears that would have to be allayed if a solution is to be satisfactory to them. The parties are asked not to debate the issues raised, although they may ask

for clarification of what the other says. The purpose is for each side to gain an adequate understanding of the other's needs, fears, and concerns, from the perspective of the other. Once they have demonstrated that they understand each other's needs to a substantial degree, the workshop moves to the second phase of the agenda: joint thinking about possible solutions. The difficult assignment that participants are given in this phase is to develop, through an interactive process, ideas about the overall shape of a solution for the conflict as a whole or, perhaps, a particular issue in the conflict, that would address the needs and fears of *both* sides.

As participants develop some common ground in this process of joint thinking, they turn to the next phase of the workshop: discussion of the political and psychological constraints within the two societies that would create barriers to carrying out the ideas for solution that have been developed in the group. This is a very important part of the discussion, because parties in conflict usually find it extremely difficult to understand the constraints on the other side—or even to recognize that the other, like themselves, has constraints. But it is best to leave the discussion of constraints to this later phase, so that it does not hamper the creative process of jointly generating new ideas. Finally, depending on how much progress has been made and how much time is left, the parties are asked to engage in another round of joint thinking—this time about ways of overcoming the constraints that have been presented. The participants are asked to come up with ideas about what their governments, their societies, and they themselves might do—separately or jointly—that would help to overcome the barriers to negotiating mutually satisfactory solutions to the conflict.

▲ *Challenges Facing the Field*

Conflict analysis and resolution from a social-scientific base with a professional practice orientation is a relatively new field of endeavor, which, in addition to the fundamental complexity and intractability of the phenomenon that it addresses, must also confront and overcome many difficult issues. This brief section will only be able to identify a number of the most important of these.

Culture and Gender

Scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution need to take the questions of cultural and gender influences seriously (Avruch, 1998; Taylor & Miller, 1994). It is not appropriate to assume the universality of concepts and methods, regardless of the societal environment to which they are applied. Each society has its "culture of conflict," which incorporates the beliefs, practices, and institutions relevant to managing differences and which affects what is defined as conflict and how it is addressed (Ross, 1993a). Culture

is important in how it affects negotiating styles and third-party roles, and representatives and intermediaries who work across cultural boundaries require sensitivity to their own culture and crosscultural understanding in order to interact appropriately and effectively. A first step is to carry out a cultural analysis of the situation, so that the effects of cultural differences on the etiology and expression of the conflict are clearly understood (Avruch & Black, 1993). Similar points can be made about gender differences as they are expressed in conflict, especially given the patriarchal and hierarchical nature of most societies, which incorporates significant differences in status and power. An analysis based on gender differences created by traditional socialization contrasts the dominant male, competitive, adversarial, rights-based approach with a relationship-oriented, cooperative, and caring female style. However, research in North America tends not to support these differences clearly in studies of either negotiation or mediation (Keashly, 1994; Stainato, 1992), possibly because the variable of biological sex is often confused with that of gender, which is socially constructed. Nonetheless, there are indications that the manner in which women versus men enter into conflict analysis and resolution may be different, with important implications for the focus and outcomes of the activity. For example, based on an analysis of interactive problem-solving workshops, d'Estrée and Babbitt (1998) conclude that women tend to engage in deeper self-disclosure, leading to empathy for the enemy, and a reciprocal acknowledgment of concerns, coupled with an orientation to build relationships and a capacity to surface emotional as well as strategic issues. This implies that women may be better equipped to build relationships in the pre-negotiation phase and to craft more integrative agreements that have increased sustainability following settlement. Continuing attention to both gender and cultural issues is thus warranted.

Professionalization, Training, and Ethics

Most people who come to the work of conflict analysis and resolution are professionals from a related field, such as international relations, law, psychology, human relations, diplomacy, or psychiatry, which enables them to analyze social problems and provide some form of service. Only recently have a small number of interdisciplinary graduate programs been established to train scholar-practitioners in the many intricacies of conflict and its resolution, a daunting task that involves the application of a variety of concepts and models from social science and the acquisition of a range of strategies and skills from various domains of social practice. Many practitioners begin their practice with only a modicum of the analytical tools and social skills they need and must learn through experience from more seasoned professionals. Thus there is a challenge to develop training programs, both at the graduate and midcareer levels, that will provide practitioners with the knowledge and capacities they require to engage successfully as negotiators,

mediators, third-party consultants, dialogue facilitators, or trainers of conflict resolution. There is also a need to provide continuing professional development opportunities for scholar-practitioners to broaden their conceptual knowledge and to enhance their strategic and tactical repertoire. Such offerings now exist, but there is no understanding of their quality or depth, or how some collection of them might coalesce toward an adequate level of professional competence. Thus it would be valuable to initiate activities that would assist in the professionalization of the field at the international level, so that knowledge bases and best practices could be shared toward the improvement of human welfare. Currently, many scholar-practitioners connect through existing associations, such as the International Society of Political Psychology, and have engaged in some useful networking activities in these fora. Such interactions need to be enhanced in order to provide an ongoing arena for the discussion of developmental issues, such as training and the ethics of practice, that affect the character and effectiveness of the field.

Evaluation

One of the key challenges confronting the field of interactive conflict resolution is evaluation of the effectiveness of its efforts in achieving the goals it sets out to achieve. As a field that proposes to introduce innovative, academically based forms of intervention in conflict into the larger diplomatic process, interactive conflict resolution has a special obligation to demonstrate its utility and success by way of systematic, empirical evidence that is consistent with scholarly standards. Writers in the field have increasingly moved to respond to this challenge (e.g., Ross & Rothman, 1999; Rouhana, 2000; Saunders, 2000; Chataway, in press; d'Estrée, Fast, Weiss, & Jacobsen, 2001). The ultimate goal of interactive conflict resolution is to *contribute* to the achievement of a negotiated agreement that is mutually satisfactory and lasting and that transforms the relationship between the conflicting parties. Since interactive problem solving—which is not in the business of negotiating agreements—cannot *produce* such an outcome but only *contribute* to it, the most relevant criteria for evaluating it refer to its success in achieving its intermediate goals rather than its ultimate goal. The intermediate goals constitute changes in the political cultures of the conflicting parties that would make them more receptive to negotiation with each other (Kelman, 1996a). Standard models of evaluation—such as the experimental field test—are not applicable to this problem. Furthermore, the use of obtrusive observations and experimental manipulations is often ethically or methodologically unacceptable in research on ongoing interventions. The challenge, therefore, is to develop evaluation models and research methods that are appropriate to the nature and purpose of the enterprise. Appropriate models have to be based on the gradual accumulation of pieces of evidence in support of the underlying assumptions of the

approach. These may involve identifying and testing the individual steps in the process of interactive conflict resolution that are hypothesized to account for its effectiveness, or testing some of the theoretical assumptions of the approach in other settings, including experimental analogs and laboratory simulations.

Complementarity of Interventions

There is a challenge to understand how variations in third-party roles contribute differentially and uniquely to negotiation success and sustainable resolution. The early proponents of interactive conflict resolution were clear on its potential as a useful prenegotiation activity (e.g., Burton, 1969, Kelman & Cohen, 1976), in line with a rationale more fully articulated by Fisher (1989) but it is now evident that it can make contributions at all stages of the negotiation and resolution process (Kelman, 1992, 1998b). Given that conflict, especially of an ethnopolitical nature between identity groups, is a potent mix of objective and subjective factors, interventions are required to address the latter, in terms of the misperceptions, misattributions, hostile attitudes, mistrust, hatred, and vengeance that fuel escalation and intractability. In fact, it is difficult to see how identity-based conflicts can be addressed without methods that focus on the human and psychological side of the equation (Ross, 1993b; Rothman, 1997). The question is how these methods can be related to and sequenced with the more traditional forms of conflict management. Fisher and Keashly (1991) developed a contingency approach to third-party intervention, proposing that different methods be matched to the stage of conflict escalation for maximum utility. They also propose that methods need to be sequenced in a complementary fashion, so that a lead intervention gives way to others designed to deescalate and resolve the conflict. There are two points of complementarity between interactive conflict resolution (represented by third-party consultation) and mediation, in both its pure and power forms. The first occurs where consultation serves as a premediation activity that improves understanding and builds trust in the relationship so that pure mediation can deal more effectively with objective issues. The second sees consultation as following power mediation, which has achieved a cease-fire or initial settlement on substantive issues, in order to rebuild the torn relationship toward a comprehensive agreement and a sustainable peace. While a limited amount of experimental and empirical research supports the contingency approach (Keashly & Fisher, 1996), it remains a skeletal representation of a complex set of relationships that may not play out as diagrammed in the complexity of real-world dynamics. Nonetheless, the contingency model and similar attempts (e.g., Kriesberg, 1996) challenge theorists and practitioners to think more seriously about the coordination and complementarity of interventions that may well be required to adequately address intractable ethnopolitical conflicts.

A Comprehensive Approach to Diplomacy

An intersocietal view of conflict, as we have proposed, calls for a complex mix of official and unofficial processes, complementing each other in the achievement of the overall diplomatic goal. While binding agreements can be signed only through official negotiations, other tracks—public diplomacy, people-to-people projects, media programs, curricular changes, non-violent action campaigns, along with interactive conflict resolution—can each make their own unique contributions to the larger enterprise. Interactive conflict resolution is particularly useful in providing opportunities for the parties to engage in the processes of exploring ideas, sharing perspectives, analytic thinking, and joint problem solving that are essential to the search for a mutually satisfactory solution to the conflict but that are often inhibited by the constraints that characterize interactions around the negotiating table. The microprocess of interactive conflict resolution thus helps to promote four components of conflict resolution that must take place somewhere in an effective macroprocess of conflict resolution: identification and analysis of the problem in the relationship that the conflict represents; joint shaping of ideas for a mutually acceptable solution; mutual influence through reassurance and other positive incentives; and creation of a supportive political environment (Kelman, 2000). The challenge is to make effective use of the potential contributions of interactive conflict resolution and other unofficial tracks in the official diplomatic process. Ideally, the products of problem-solving workshops and related activities can be used for exploring possibilities, formulating options, and framing issues in ways that can advance negotiations at its various stages. This has indeed happened on occasion, but it needs to be done systematically, while making sure that track two efforts maintain their integrity and independence and do not become—or come to be seen as—merely another component of the track one process. Official negotiations can also benefit from adopting some of the exploratory, analytical, and problem-solving methods of interactive conflict resolution in their own proceedings, insofar as they can be accommodated within the constraints of the official process. Practitioners of interactive conflict resolution, on their part, need to be well informed of the issues, problems, and progress of the official process so that they can provide input that will be most directly relevant to the status of ongoing negotiations.

Institutionalization

At the level of a particular conflict, it might be useful to institutionalize interactive conflict resolution as part of the peace-building process that must accompany and follow the negotiation of a peace agreement. An ongoing mechanism for conflict resolution is generally an essential component of the civil society institutions across the national lines that must be built to

ensure a stable peace and cooperative relationship between former enemies who must coexist in close proximity to one another. At the global level, the persistence and proliferation of deadly conflicts between ethnic groups around the world suggest the urgent need for a large, well-endowed, mostly nongovernmental organization devoted to monitoring such conflicts as they evolve and ready to intervene with efforts to help prevent and resolve them (Burton, 1983). The purpose of such an institution would be to supplement the work of existing governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations devoted to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and postconflict humanitarian aid by bringing together politically influential representatives of the opposing sides in an active or impending conflict for joint exploration, within a problem-solving framework, of steps toward preventing, de-escalating, or resolving the conflict. The institution might include a permanent staff to monitor conflict regions and provide the infrastructure for workshops as the need arises; a cadre of regional and conflict resolution specialists available to organize and lead workshops; and a cadre of local representatives to recommend appropriate actions or evaluate proposals from the staff and to assist by organizing and participating in workshops as needed. There is no direct evidence of how much a global institution organized along these lines and dedicated to the systematic application of interactive conflict resolution techniques to ethnic conflicts around the world could contribute to preventing such conflicts, defusing them once they have turned violent, and rebuilding the societies torn apart by violence. But research and observation suggest that the assumptions behind interactive conflict resolution are sound, and experience suggests that it has the potential for transforming conflict relationships. If the resources needed for a large-scale effort of this kind can be generated, there is at least the hope that it can begin to tackle the problem of ethnic violence that has been plaguing the international community.

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