

CHAPTER 2

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AS A COMPLEX PROCESS.

In Chapter 1 I explored the concept of "conflict resolution", asking what was meant by the argument that conflicts were all [potentially] "resolvable". In that Chapter I concentrated upon one of the major conceptions of conflict resolution - namely, that of conflict resolution as a condition or an end state, a situation in which parties have had their goal incompatibilities removed so that a new situation of goal complementarity exists, together with a new inter-party relationship.

In this Chapter I wish to build upon my previous argument to examine the other major common meaning of conflict resolution, that of a process or set of activities that enables parties to achieve the condition in which one particular set of their goal incompatibilities has, indeed, been removed - although this does nothing to guarantee that they cannot find themselves in the future facing major goal incompatibilities involving other issues or inter-related clusters of issues.

As I emphasised previously, the fact that the resolution of a particular protracted conflict is possible in theory is not meant to imply that such an end state is easy to achieve in practice. Plainly, there are immense practical difficulties in moving away from a situation in which parties possess mutually inconsistent goals and opposed and intransigent bargaining positions; have been using coercive [and frequently violent] strategies to achieve their objectives; have suffered major damage through the cost imposing activities of their adversary; and have developed an understandable hatred, fear and intense suspicion of one another. An alternative, in which the coercive behaviour has ceased, the hatreds and fear at least become muted, and the goal incompatibilities removed through the devising of an acceptable and self supporting solution that reconciles underlying interests and values usually seems an unattainable ideal.

1. A Traditional, Three Level Approach to Conflict and Peace.

My previous discussion ended with the suggestion that achieving a resolution of any conflict [which, by definition, meant finding a successful solution to the basic goal incompatibility] involved, as necessary but not sufficient conditions, putting the rival parties into circumstances where, having become convinced that there are alternative ways of achieving key interests and that there is a genuine interest on the other side in exploring these, they could jointly explore possibilities for new options leading to a win-win solution for what they now recognise as a mutual problem. This suggestion blithely skated over the question of how this might be achieved in practice - or what might need to follow such an exploration - but a moment's reflection will reveal that, at the least, success would involve;

[1] Persuading the adversaries to stop coercion and violence, even if only in a temporary truce, and de-escalating the level of the conflict;

[2] Getting the leaders of the parties in conflict to agree to attend or send representatives to discussions with an adversary whom they have customarily anathematised as irrational and implacably harmful;

[3] Providing a safe venue where such discussions might take place, and a process that maximises the chances of genuine discussion, analysis and exploration.

[4] Conducting discussions in such a manner that a productive exploration of a highly contentious past can occur, the fundamental sources of the conflict be revealed, and fresh options for fulfilling underlying interests and values developed.

[5] Initiating a process for subsequently investigating practical options and enabling actions that lead towards major changes in aspirations, beliefs, behaviour and inter-actions between parties.

It is hardly coincidental that this list of conditions echoes a trend in recent writings in the literature from International Relations scholars on the subject of making peace. Beginning with Galtung [1985], there has been much talk in Peace Research circles about the need for three inter-related procedures to be involved at three distinct levels; peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Traditionally, the peacekeeping component of international conflict resolution has primarily involved efforts to alter the behaviour of adversaries, usually at the point where they realise that coercion and violence are unlikely to bring success in the short term, and that the costs of continuing present strategies are likely to be very high. Thus, peacekeeping involves efforts to "...halt and reduce the manifest violence of the conflict through the intervention of military forces in an interpositionary role..." [Harbottle; 1979]

In fact, traditional peacekeeping has also often had another latent purpose in that, through providing parties with "a breathing space", it also provides an opportunity for emotions to lessen, attitudes to become less inflexible, and images and stereotypes to alter. The assumption is that such breathing space, combined with the prior realisation of the likely costs of continuing mutual coercion, will lead the parties towards efforts at peacemaking, although this usually takes the form of traditional negotiation and hard bargaining. (1)

Peacemaking, traditionally conceived, has involved efforts to reconcile differences or to find a solution to the "conflicts of interest" of the adversaries. Hence, the customary tools of negotiation, mediation, conciliation and [less frequently] arbitration or facilitation have been used to develop acceptable settlements, usually by getting elites and decision makers to accept compromise settlements on the grounds that these will prove preferable and less costly than a continuing violence and coercion.

As such, traditional peacemaking processes concentrate primarily on ostensible goals and public bargaining positions, rather than on changing aspirations, fears and behaviour, although it is often anticipated that there will be a latent effect on attitudes, at least at the elite level, through the process of bargaining and negotiation.

More recently, much attention has been paid in the Conflict Research literature to the necessity of accompanying - in certain cases of preceding - peacemaking activities with other processes aimed at "peacebuilding". It is frequently argued that, unless such efforts are made, all that will result from formal peacemaking will be what Shimon Shamir describes as the kind of "Cold Peace" that followed the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt (2). In other words, overt violence and coercion may have ceased, some goals may have been reconciled, some of the parties' underlying interests may have been achieved, and relations between the parties may be governed by a clear agreement. On the other hand, suspicions and distrust remain high, the relationship between the parties remains fundamentally negative, no overall reconciliation has occurred and attitudes and beliefs - frequently passed on to the next generation - have not altered greatly.

Peacebuilding procedures thus involve efforts to change perceptions and relationships between the parties on a very broad basis. Stephen Ryan (1990 p.61) argues that peacebuilding concentrates on "...the attitudes and socio-economic circumstances of ordinary people..." and that it tends to "...concentrate on the context of the conflict rather than on the issues that divide the parties..." [emphasis added]. The three key elements in this approach thus seem to be changing attitudes through reconciliation, material reconstruction and development, and rebuilding relationships between erstwhile adversaries on a more positive basis (3).

2. The Necessary Conditions for Achieving a Resolution of the Conflict.

Leaving aside, at least for the moment, any parallels between conflict resolution and traditional peacemaking, my argument so far has been that a process of successful conflict resolution needs to involve elements that lead to the parties admitting [to themselves at least] that their current course of action is becoming counter-productive; recognising not merely the need for, but the possibility [if only in theory] of a mutually advantageous solution; acknowledging the availability of a potential partner in a search for some solution to a mutually faced problem; halting temporarily or at least moderating their existing - usually coercive - course of action; allowing themselves to become involved in some process that involves joint exploration of their and their adversary's aspirations, concerns, values, interests and basic needs; exploring a range of acceptable solutions to their shared problem; and jointly examining ways of overcoming obstacles to the achievement of a mutually acceptable and durable solution and to its implementation.

Merely listing the initial requirements for a successful conflict resolution process gives some idea of how difficult the practicalities of setting up such a procedure are likely to be, whether or not the process involves significant third party assistance in any of these steps. Moreover, the apparent improbability of such a process taking place is emphasised when one considers the characteristics of normal conflict management procedures in which:

[1] Parties continue to coerce and damage one another even while negotiations take place, usually with the rationale that this accompanying violence will add urgency to the search for a settlement, particularly on the part of the damaged.

[2] Most pre-negotiation activities are aimed at providing one's negotiators, before they even commence discussions, with strategic and tactical advantages which can then be used to extract concessions from a seriously disadvantaged adversary

[3] The actual process of negotiation consists of "hard", positional bargaining, starting from publicly stated "minimalist" positions and aimed at giving away as little as possible in return for as much as possible.

[4] Parties see a "successful" outcome as one which achieves as many of one's own goals as possible, while frustrating those of the adversary.

[5] The underlying assumption shared by the negotiating parties is that they confront a zero-sum situation in which one party's gain axiomatically becomes the other's loss.

The contrast is stark between this traditional approach to compromising a conflict, seeking an acceptable solution of division or of substitution on the one hand, and on the other an approach that emphasises a joint exploration of underlying interests and a search for a mutually satisfactory solution. The practical difficulties of substituting a conflict resolution approach for a coercive bargaining inter-action are clearly considerable. Furthermore, while I would still argue that, as the essence of conflict resolution as outcome involves the removal of the goal incompatibilities that are the main source of the conflict, and that this can best be achieved through a joint analysis of parties' underlying interests and values in some form of analytical problem solving discussions, any view of conflict resolution as process must take into account a far wider range of activities and inter-actions than merely those discussions, however complex or difficult to arrange they might be.

For example, in protracted conflicts involving large ethnic communities, far more than elites and leaderships are involved. The views, beliefs and expectations of the embattled communities have to be taken into account, as they can constitute formidable barriers to any efforts to resolve the conflict. Similarly, the interests and activities of the military arms of governments and ethnic communities have to be dealt with in any comprehensive resolution process. Convincing elites through problem solving discussions of the possibility of a win-win solution is only one aspect of an overall resolution process.

The impact of these and other complicating factors is inevitably to make any effective conflict resolution process a highly complex one, especially if it is going to produce a long lasting solution, acceptable to all the parties involved. Central to the overall process of resolution will be some analytically searching discussions, but these are likely to comprise only one aspect of that process, which might usefully be broken down into a number of sub-processes or components.

[1] A Reconsideration component by which the leadership of one or both parties [or some key members thereof] admit to themselves that current unilateral strategies of coercion and violence are not succeeding and need to be replaced.

[2] A Reassurance component by which the party leaderships conclude that the adversaries are willing to consider searching for alternative means and outcomes; and for solutions other than outright victory.

[3] A Re-evaluation component through which leaders become aware of the possible existence of alternatives, options and other outcomes that might fulfil their party's underlying concerns and interests.

[4] A Relaxation component by which the adversaries might mitigate or suspend their efforts to win through damage and coercion, such that neither side would suffer irreparable damage to itself or its prospects by such suspension.

[5] A Risk Acceptance component which would result in the leaders of the adversaries being willing to permit or even sponsor some members to discuss openly with some members of the adversary underlying interests, aspirations, fears and concerns and which would result in the participation of representatives appropriate to such discussions.

[6] A Reconceptualisation component that would take place in a non-threatening arena, such that would permit the exploration of underlying interests, a joint search for mutually satisfactory solutions, and a joint analysis of existing obstacles to the adoption of such solutions and of ways of dealing with them.

[7] A Re-entry component that would enable the transferring of insights, ideas and options to parties' leaders and encourage their adoption as official policy and their implementation as official strategy.

[8] A Reinsurance component for minimising the likelihood that inter-party discussions and negotiations would revert to antagonistic hard bargaining.

[9] A Revisioning component for bringing about longer term, wide-spread change of attitudes, beliefs and images within adversaries

[10] A Restructuring component for ensuring that third parties play useful and appropriate roles in the resolution process such that outside interests and goals do not obtrude and complicate still further the search for durable solutions (4).

Simply expressed, the above argument amounts to saying that effective conflict resolution processes need to involve much more than success in "getting people to the table", or conducting an analytical workshop, or developing a number of mutually acceptable options which lead towards positive sum outcomes. However, until relatively recently, the literature on the process of conflict resolution has tended to be fragmentary (5) in the sense that different theorists [some of whom are also practitioners] have concentrated upon one or other aspect of the overall process, both to examine that aspect and - usually - to argue that success in this component of a conflict resolution process is key and will lead simply and directly to the achievement of a resolution of the conflict, however intractable. For example, much has been written about the most successful resolutionary formula for face to face meetings, discussions or workshops, starting with the writings of Burton

[1969, 1987] and continuing with such theorist practitioners as Kelman [1972] and Fisher [1972 and 1983] In terms of the components outlined above, this work concentrates on the reconceptualisation component and involves processes intended to facilitate the exploration of underlying interests and the search for mutually acceptable options and outcomes. Much of it has tended to concentrate on the inter-actions that occur once parties are facing each other across the table, and to deal with such topics as the role of the facilitators, the internal dynamics of the workshop, and the likely outcome from various types of discussion meeting - all admittedly essential elements of an overall conflict resolution process, but not the complete process. More recently, closer attention has been paid to how such facilitated, face to face discussions might fit into the wider conflict resolution process, and issues of appropriate links of such initiatives to formal negotiations and how they might affect official policy most productively have been discussed. [See Kelman 1993; Mitchell 1994; Diamond & McDonald 1992]

In the remainder of the Chapter I discuss a variety of recent - and some less recent - ideas about effective conflict resolution processes and their key components within the framework of the 10 suggested above. Some are examined in greater depth than others and, to some extent, this reflects the current balance of analytical attention paid, and knowledge available in the field regarding how such procedures and schemes operate to achieve an outcome of resolution.

I should add, however, that many of the procedures discussed below are intended by their practitioners to contribute to a variety of aspects of an overall resolution process. For example, many problem solving discussions are intended to contribute to the mutual assurance of erstwhile adversaries [Reassurance] at the same time as they enable an examination of underlying concerns and aspirations and also assist the parties involved to engage in more realistic calculations of the costs of continuing coercion [Re-evaluation]. Hence, it is somewhat misleading to consider many procedures as contributing solely to one component of a conflict resolution process rather than others. Wherever possible I have noted that particular procedures can perform multiple functions within the overall process and that others make a contribution to a number of components or sub-processes within the overall move to a durable outcome that resolves the conflict.

3. Components of a Conflict Resolution Process; Timing, Context and Contingency.

The last decade has seen a major effort to confront questions of appropriate timing for conflict resolution initiatives and of the circumstances that maximise the likelihood of an effective resolution process leading to a durable solution for the conflict. Part of this activity is clearly an effort to provide some clear answers to the question of what factors normally cause the leaders of parties in an intractable conflict to arrive at the conclusion that their present strategy is not working successfully, so that something else - possibly a search for some negotiated compromise and certainly a non-violent, even collaborative process - needs to be considered. Another part has led to broader consideration of finding a match between particular configurations of circumstances in protracted conflicts - often summarised as the "stage" a conflict has reached - and the most appropriate form of conflict management or conflict resolution activity for those circumstances. Three major themes have emerged in this search for generalisations about the circumstances in which leaders are likely to contemplate the start of some conflict resolution process - structural contexts, issues of timing and initiatives contingent on circumstances and staging.

3.1. Contexts for Considering Resolutionary Alternatives.

Empirical observation of protracted and intense conflicts clearly suggests that some circumstances are more conducive to leaders reconsidering policies and strategies of coercion than others, and that - if a key component of conflict resolution processes is one which involves decision makers in at least one of the adversaries starting to contemplate alternative ways of finding a solution to their conflict - then the factors that lead to such a reconsideration need to be clearly delineated. I have put forward an argument elsewhere [Mitchell 1992 and 1999] to the effect that decision makers in parties in conflict normally use an incremental continuation process of decision making when prosecuting the conflict, and will only switch to some form of comprehensive reconsideration mode when forced into this painful and costly process by major changes in their environment. In other words, it is change which brings about reconsideration and a recognition of the failure of current strategies to move the party any nearer success in achieving the goals in conflict.

At the present time, unfortunately, it is only possible to suggest a number of hunches about what kinds of change are likely to lead to decision makers to admit to themselves even the failure of existing strategies and the need to try some more collaborative process to achieve an acceptable outcome. Examples of changes leading to alteration of policy and the start of resolution processes - whether successful or not - are numerous. President Sadat's peace moves following the

ejection of the Soviet Union from Egypt provides one case. The impact of the New Labour Government's commitment to genuine devolution for the British Isles on the Northern Ireland conflict is another. Systematic findings, on the other hand, are another matter.

A tentative taxonomy of change I have used elsewhere suggests that three types are likely to be involved in bringing about some reconsideration of strategies by parties in conflict: structural changes in the conflict system itself; strategic changes in the patterns of interaction among the systems units; and short term tactical changes in the events, acts and behaviours of the adversaries. [Mitchell 2000] Of these, the most influential, if overly neglected, appear to be the major structural changes in the system itself - for example the influence of the collapse of the Soviet Union on intractable conflicts as different as those in South Africa, in Central America and in the Middle East.

At a more analytical level, I would tentatively suggest that there are a number of common types of structural changes that often provide a context for reconsideration, and increase the probability of leaders recognising - even if they find it difficult to admit - the bankruptcy of current coercion and confrontation, even when there appears to be no immediately obvious alternative:

- [1] Diminution of the number of core actors in the conflict system, which often narrows the range of issues in contention and parties to be satisfied with an outcome.
- [2] Increased involvement of adversaries in other issues, often other conflicts, which means that time, attention and resources need to be devoted to other - apparently more important - matters.
- [3] Increasing interdependence of adversaries, implying that solutions which involve total separation are recognised as no longer feasible.
- [4] Diminishing importance and number of original goals in conflict.
- [5] Greater agreement between adversaries on "what the conflict is really about."
- [6] Decreasing levels of violence and coercion.
- [7] Decreasing volatility in inter-action patterns.
- [8] Changing symmetry in the adversaries' capacity for prosecuting the conflict through coercive means.

While these suggested structural factors may not invariably produce a reconsideration of goals and strategies, and while the list is certainly not exhaustive, at least it is an attempt to start an investigation into what are commonly experienced contexts that cause decision makers to question - if only to themselves - the efficacy of their party's existing strategies. Other recent approaches to illuminating the same problem take a somewhat shorter term view, and suggest that more immediate considerations are equally if not more important in affecting decision makers' choice of continuing efforts to win through coercion, or quitting and seeking a compromise solution. These concentrate on the matter of the timing of changes.

3.2. Reconsideration, Timing and Ripeness.

Another set of ideas that have indirectly to do with the question of when and under what circumstances leaders of parties in conflict begin to admit to themselves that present strategies are not working and to consider the need for alternatives are those concerned with the whole issue of "timing" and what circumstances contribute to the success of "peacemaking" initiatives. [Kriesberg & Thorson 1991] To a large degree this enquiry has been a response to the existence during the last decade of violent, intra-state conflicts which have proved both protracted and intractable to outside efforts to bring them to a resolution. Clearly, in the case of the former Yugoslavia; Rwanda, Burundi and the Congo; Chechnya; and the Sudan, all efforts at conflict resolution and even conflict management have had little success, leading some analysts to suggest that there may be circumstances in which the only kind of initiative likely to have any effect are those aimed initially at conflict reduction through peace enforcement and then at obtaining a coerced, compromise settlement under the implicit slogan; "Stop fighting and make up or we'll break your bloody neck." Such cases of intractable conflict have thus led to questions about when the only means of coping with conflict involve either doing nothing until circumstances change, or attempting to halt or deter further violence in the hope that the breathing space will give hot heads a chance to cool and leaders an opportunity to reconsider at least the likely costs of renewal.

One of the best known approaches to such issues has been the work of a group of scholars concerned with describing and explaining the existence of "ripe moments" during intractable conflicts. Prominent among those considering this component of the whole conflict resolution puzzle have been Bill Zartmann [1989] and Richard Haas [1990], who have popularised the ideas of a "hurting stalemate", an "imminent catastrophe" or an "enticing opportunity" being necessary preconditions for moving a resolution process from the stage of overt coercive towards that of discussion, bargaining and

negotiation. Subsequent work by Stephen Stedman [1991] and Marieke Kleibor [1994] have added a number of intra-party factors to the conception of "ripeness".

While it was not the main focus of any of the "ripeness" scholars, it is the case that their work does provide some answers to the question of what makes it likely that leaders of parties in conflict will begin to recognise that present strategies are not "working". For example, the implication of decision makers confronting an imminent catastrophe, whether it will affect one or both parties, is that the approaching disaster is likely to suggest even to the most devoted advocate of coercion, that the time to consider an alternative policy might be near. Similarly, the unambiguous recognition of a stalemate, even though slowly dawning, is likely to raise internal doubts and queries even in the mind of intransigents and enrages. Hence, while not filling in all the details of every component in an overall conflict resolution process, ideas about "ripeness" certainly help to understand the mechanisms involved in recognising failure, and to link this work to a more diverse set of ideas about the "pre-negotiation" stages of a resolution process [Saunders 1985] as well as to notions of what constitute necessary preparations for fruitful discussions and the achievement of an acceptable agreement between warring parties. [Stein 1989]. The "ripeness" analysis also adds details to the third approach to the question of when leadership groups begin to "change their minds" and provide contingent opportunities for outsiders to push forward a conflict resolution process.

3.3. Contingent Approaches.

Both approaches mentioned above tend to deal with one aspect of the conflict resolution process, even though neither was originally intended to throw light solely on the issue of what triggers a process of reconsideration in the minds of decision makers facing an impasse or looming disaster. In contrast, some theorists have attempted to develop an approach through the construction of a general model of a coherent and integrated process through which conflicts might be resolved or successful peacemaking initiatives launched and carried through. A central theme of much of this work is that appropriate ways of coping with conflicts depend very much on the nature and state of the conflict itself, so that how a resolution process starts and proceeds will depend on the fact that all conflicts are dynamic and one approach likely to be effective at one stage will make no headway at others. Stephen Ryan makes this point when discussing the differences between conflict management and conflict resolution, arguing that management processes - by which he means processes that involve outsiders deterring certain categories of behaviour and enforcing compromise settlements - can, on occasions, be the only way of handling intractable and violent ethnic conflicts, while at other times resolution processes are possible and optimal [Ryan 1990 pp.60-5] I noted above one of Ryan's conclusions arising from this analysis, namely that it will be appropriate to involve different types of actor - warriors, leaders, followers - in different conflict handling activities at different times in a resolution process.

Probably the best known and to date the most comprehensive attempt to produce an integrated approach to conflict resolution as a process is the "contingency model" developed by Ron Fisher and Loreleigh Keashley. The basic idea underlying this model is closely parallel to Ryan's approach; that a variety of strategies are needed in any conflict resolution process, and that different strategies are appropriate at different stages of the conflict. It follows from this basic principle that there has to be some sequencing of activities to match the developmental stages of an conflict, and that conflict resolution components used "out of sequence" are doomed to failure and, indeed, may do more harm than good. The authors are seeking "...a co-ordinated plan of interventions..." [Fisher & Keashley 1990 p.425] and they have adapted some earlier work by Beres and Schmidt [1982] to suggest a model of a process leading towards resolution in which initiatives are "contingent upon" the stage the conflict has reached.

Analysing a conflict process very broadly, the contingency model posits four basic stages through which it will pass;

[1] A discussion stage, during which the parties have apparently incompatible goals, but a commitment to maintaining the relationship is strong, perceptions reasonably accurate and there remains a belief in the possibility of joint gain.

[2] A polarisation stage, during which goal incompatibilities increase in intensity and number, trust and respect diminish, and distorted, negative perceptions emerge.

[3] A segregation stage, in which the overall relationship has become characterised by competition and hostility, it is assumed that only individual gains are possible and the conflict is now perceived as threatening basic needs and interests.

[4] A destruction stage, in which "...the primary intent of the parties is to destroy or at least subjugate each other through the use of violence..." [Fisher & Keashley; 1990]

For Fisher & Keashley, the general principle of moving the conflict towards a resolution is to initiate tactics and

processes that shift the conflict to lower levels of intensity - for example, from polarisation to segregation and thence to discussion - so that the conflict can be more easily resolved. In this model, truces, disengagements and settlements are simply stages of a general "de-escalation" towards a final resolution of the conflict.

Fisher and Keashley suggest a variety of strategies that might be employed at the different conflict "stages" to help the process of moving towards a resolution. For example, they argue that at the segregation stage, third parties might be able to assist the adversaries best by providing incentives to discourage them from undertaking hostile, provocative or coercive actions, while encouraging them to explore the underlying sources and dynamics of their conflict. Hence, a third party with material resources and some "leverage" might be most appropriately active at this point in the process. In contrast, at the polarisation stage, a third party simply able to supply consultation skills - help in understanding the perceptual and motivational dynamics of parties in conflict and in developing trust building activities - would be appropriate.

Naturally, it is during the destruction stage that the goals of third parties become simplest in principle yet most difficult in practice, as the start of any conflict resolution process demands a cessation of violence at the very least. The fourth stage, therefore, involves the forced separation of the warring parties and efforts to control the level of violence. In traditional terms, "peacekeeping" is paramount. In the framework used in this paper, the issues are firstly what factors - apart from outside intervention - might persuade decision makers of parties engaged in mutual destruction that the strategy is not working; and secondly what procedures might be effective in re-assuring the adversaries that there are "potential negotiators" on the other side, and not just implacably hostile enemies.

Details of the "contingency model" can be found in Fisher and Keashley's work (1983; 1990). The model links the various strategies deemed appropriate to each level of conflict, and the stage at which they might best be applied. One might raise questions about the neat sequencing of conflict stages implied by the model [real world protracted conflicts seem far messier than this, cycling back through different stages in an almost random manner and, on occasions, passing through some stages so rapidly that they seem to by-pass them completely]; and about its very broad gauge, macro level approach [minor changes in circumstances rather than major shifts from one stage to another have been known to completely wreck promising conflict resolution procedures] (6). However, the model does represent a fruitful attempt to bring together some of the previously fragmented work on conflict resolution procedures into a coherent scheme, and to integrate them into a co-ordinated approach to [potential] intervention, even if it is hardly a co-ordinated plan. Moreover, it raises some key questions about the component of decision makers' reconsideration of particular strategies and the occasions when this is most likely to occur; about factors involved in the sub process of suspending coercion and directed violence; and also about how the transition from the fourth stage of mutual destruction to the third of continuing segregation might be affected by an increasing awareness that the other side might be willing to engage in some alternative process for finding a durable, mutually acceptable solution.

4. Components of a Conflict Resolution Process; Mutual Willingness and Tentative Engagement.

Practically it is difficult to separate the next two closely entwined components of any overall conflict resolution process. Once the leadership of one of the adversaries - or some key members thereof - have firmly concluded that current strategies are unlikely to gain the goals sought and that some other strategy is needed, the key questions for them will revolve around the issues of whether there is any willingness on the part of their adversary to search for alternatives and whether some low cost and non-threatening process might be available as an alternative to mutual coercion. The two issues are obviously closely connected, as the availability of an acceptable process - whether it be discussions, negotiations, explorations, or the use of some formal third party as mediator or arbitrator - is irrelevant without the other side's willingness to participate seriously, while even a mutual willingness to find alternatives would be fruitless without a process being available that at least offers roughly equal benefits to all participants.

Two basic processes seem to be relevant to this aspect of conflict resolution, which is usually considered as a major aspect of pre-negotiation and involves, in Herb Kelman's words, the search for and confirmation of there being a genuine "negotiating partner". The first of these involves a bilateral process of indicating to one another that both sides of a conflict are at least willing to consider alternative processes for reaching a solution. The second involves the organisation and conducting of various types of preparatory meetings by some third party at which participants from all the conflicting parties can explore one another's willingness to contemplate alternative means and commitment to goals, as well as the aspirations and concerns that underlie these goals and the possible existence of alternative solutions. There are a number of different methods that have been used in practising this second type of procedure, and I will discuss three of these below; process promoting workshops [Folz 1977]; sustained dialogue [Saunders & Slim 1994]; and the ARIA process [Rothman 1992 & 1997] However, I first need to make some comments on the process of de-escalation and confidence building.

4.1. Long Range Confidence Building.

A second component of a conflict resolution process involves leaders who have come to the conclusion that an alternative to coercion is likely to offer greater benefits than continuing coercion attempting to reassure themselves that there is a good chance that others in their adversary might also be interested in exploring this possibility. Frequently, this process of "searching for a partner" has to be carried out bilaterally, at long range, although the use of third parties in an informal "go-between" role, with the task of exploring the other side's "willingness to talk" is a variant on this model of this tentative exploration processes.

In traditional terms, the focus of this part of a resolution process is on de-escalatory processes and how these might be successfully initiated and maintained. Thinking systematically about the component had its origins during the 1960's when what remained a basic conundrum was first posed; how to indicate to an adversary [in most cases the Soviet Union] that one party to a conflict was willing to talk about peaceful alternatives to confrontation and conflict, but not willing to abandon its vital interests or make concessions under duress. At that time the puzzle was posed as a search was for an alternative to war or surrender, but one aspect of the thinking of that era was on the issue of how to reassure leaders "on the other side" that there existed a genuine interest in alternative means of achieving desired goals, or preserving essential interests. In the early 1960's two of the more interesting proposals were for a process of "gradualism" [Etzioni 1962] and a parallel suggestion for a unilateral strategy of Graduated and Reciprocal Initiatives in Tension-reduction [GRIT] originating in the work of Charles Osgood [1962] and analysed further in a series of studies by Stephen Lindsfold [1986]. The latter idea suggested a series of graduated steps which, if carefully prepared and executed, could signal to an adversary the existence of a set of leaders willing to engage in a new and more conciliatory form of inter-action, but ready to retaliate if the target of the strategy sought to take advantage of the range of concessions embedded in the overall GRIT process.

Since that time, work which dealt indirectly with processes of reassurance and re-evaluation has been regular, if not prolific. Kriesberg [1992] has made some interesting suggestions about the nature of successful concessions and concession making, Pruitt and his colleagues have analysed similar processes in both simulation and real world studies [Pruitt & Carnevale 1993] and I have tried to summarise this work and analyse the hazards of de-escalation under the label of "gestures of conciliation" [Mitchell 1991; 2000]

The 1980's saw a renewed interest in this question of reassurance through work on the whole issue of how to construct a military defence while at the same time lessening the sense of threat to others posed by such defence measures. This effort involved much discussion of processes of "confidence building" and of "tension reducing" methods [CBMs and TRMs], at the heart of which lay a central conundrum usually phrased as how to "build trust" between current adversaries to the point where both might be able to engage in an alternative relationship that permitted some efforts to find a durable and acceptable resolution of the issues in conflict. Given that this component focuses on how to start a resolution process between essentially mistrusting adversaries, it might be better to aim at reducing mistrust to the point where "...we believe that the other party will reciprocate rather than exploit our concessions..." [Pruitt & Olczak 1997 p.72].

Whatever formula is adopted, however, the issue of what methods might best be used to explore whether the other side is genuinely ready to begin still has not been settled unambiguously. Examples such as President Eisenhower's "Open Skies" initiative at the height of the Cold war in 1955, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977, or National Security Adviser Kissinger's trip to Beijing during the first Nixon administration suggest that the probability of success is enhanced if the conciliatory moves are unexpected, reasonably costly, made from a position of strength, and not reversible. [Mitchell 1991; Pruitt & Carnevale 1993] However, these particular examples may only offer a rough and ready guide to leaders of conflicting parties who wish to reassure themselves that there are some leaders on the other side willing to regard their initial moves in a positive light.

4.2. Preparatory Engagement

The second major approach to obtaining reassurance about an opponent's will to participate in a resolution process involves a still tentative but more direct and hence more perilous procedure -that of engaging in exploratory contacts which both confirm all parties' willingness to engage and - in most cases - model the optimal form of engagement for an effective reconceptualisation component of a conflict resolution process.

In the mid-1970's, when the practice of holding informal and unofficial discussions about intractable conflicts - Cyprus, Kashmir, Israel/Palestine - was becoming more frequent, the political scientist, William Folz [1977], suggested that an

analytical distinction could and should be made between those meetings or "workshops" that were primarily aimed at building contacts and removing misperceptions and misapprehensions between notables and opinion leaders from both sides, and those which, involving participants close to formal decision makers, aimed at dealing with the substantive issues in conflict and with possible ways of resolving these. To those who argued that the inevitable misperceptions, miscommunications and misapprehensions of leaders, warriors and followers were key issues, even the analytical distinction seemed far fetched and most accounts of unofficial workshops, inter-active conflict resolution and collaborative, analytical problem solving - what became known in the 1980's as "Track 2" processes - stress that dealing with the perceptual and attitudinal components of a conflict are intimately intertwined with the substantive issues that underlie intractability.

However, Folz's distinction can be a useful one in that it emphasises that some sub-processes in conflict resolution are mainly focused on relationship building, on correcting misperceptions, on diminishing mistrust, on demonstrating commitment to a non-violent outcome, and on removing at least some of the wariness even unofficial participants feel when dealing with "the enemy". In short, the main focus of what Folz called process promoting workshops was on reassurance - convincing both sides that the other was ready to engage in some serious and official conflict resolution effort and was not simply using the possibility as a means of disarming its adversary, practically and psychologically. Problem solving workshops, on the other hand, while still inevitably being concerned with removing some fear, suspicion and hostility, were intended to be more focused on analysing the issues in conflict, on exploring underlying interests and in devising possible solutions, some of which might prove officially acceptable to their parties' leaders and a basis for a solution.

Practically speaking it is still difficult to distinguish between Track 2 initiatives that are intended mainly to provide reassurance and those which are intended to facilitate analysis and to search for solutions, but there are clear emphases in most of the individual examples of Track 2 initiatives and in the types of procedure that have been developed over the last 20 years to form part of conflict resolution processes. The two discussed below both contain elements of what Folz would describe as "problem solving" but their main focus is clearly on relationship building and what I have earlier called "reassurance".

4.3. Sustained Dialogue.

The idea for a long term, "sustained" dialogue between influentials from opposing parties originated from the experience of the long series of meetings, starting at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in 1960 between leaders and opinion makers from the Soviet Union and the United States, a series which continued until 1992 and the break up of the Soviet Union. [Cousins 1977] From the original meetings arose other dialogue groups, most prominently the Regional Conflicts Task Force, which was originally established in 1981 through a joint concern over the tendency of the two superpowers to compete via proxies in regional conflicts. [Saunders 1999]. The Task Force continued to meet, usually twice a year, after 1992 as a joint Russian-US enterprise, and during its lifetime has held a series of continuing dialogues on such conflicts as Afghanistan, Tajikistan and on race relations in both Russia and the USA.

Two of the main participants have published analytical accounts of these exchanges, and argued strongly that intractable conflicts, by their very nature, are usually not ready for traditional negotiation or even mediation unless some preparatory process has been undertaken (7). Moreover, this should be a long term dialogue that is "...more than just good conversation and less than a structured negotiation..." and which is designed to change destructive and conflictful relationships over time. [Saunders & Slim 1994 p.43] The procedure - or "sub-process" in the terms used in this Paper - is designed to enable participants to "...probe the dynamics of even the most destructive relationship..." and thus it "...provides a context for developing and changing relationships..." [Ibid.]

Although Harold Saunders and Randa Slim stress that the procedure itself is both open ended and flexible, they describe five stages of a typical dialogue which provide a direction and sense of purpose to the initiative. The first stage is one whereby the parties and participants "decide to engage". The organisers emphasise that they aim to involve "...individuals who are respected in their communities and are listened to by top leaders..." [Ibid p.44], with the eventual aim of spreading "...the dialogue experience to the community to lay foundations for changing relationships..." [Ibid p.45]. The first is obviously one of the more difficult stages [none are easy] for at least some leaders in each party must be willing to explore the possibility offered by contacts with the enemy; some initial lessening of mistrust must precede initial reassurance.

If the organisers are successful in overcoming this resistance to dialogue, then the procedure can move into other stages. Saunders and Slim suggest that the initial stage of the actual dialogue involves jointly "mapping the relationship", getting the main problems onto the table, identifying the significance of the relationships responsible for creating these

problems, and determining which concrete problems should be discussed in depth at future stages. Once the procedural dynamics have led to a situation in which the participants "...can talk to each other, instead of just stating views..." [Ibid, p.49] , the dialogue can move onto the third stage, that of probing underlying relationships, examining the changes that would be needed to deal with the issues in conflict and analysing whether the will to change, and to overcome obstacles to change, exists. The fourth stage involves the participants trying out scenarios for change and the fifth a discussion of what practical moves might be undertaken to put certain of the scenarios into action.

It is at this point that Folz's distinction between process promoting and problem solving becomes most blurred as far as the sustained dialogue procedure is concerned. Saunders and Slim suggest that there are - broadly speaking - four possible options for the discussion group. The first option is that of personal use, which involves simply learning from, and perhaps sharing insights and experiences from the dialogue group with others within both parties - opinion leaders, notables, or local influentials on the one hand, officials on the other. A second option might be to enlarge the group by inviting to future meetings other participants, possibly officials and decision makers, possibly to use a similar procedure on other problems identified but not yet dealt with. A third is to use the initial dialogue to proliferate other such groups, with the aim of creating "...a critical mass of people who recognise the need for changing relationships and are committed to action for doing so..." [Ibid. p.55] Each of these might be viewed a mainly process promoting but equally, sustained dialogue participants might, according to Saunders and Slim, become an action group, lobbying decision makers on both sides to make sure that their jointly considered if unofficial recommendations are considered officially and, if possible, implemented. If the main benefit of the first three options, and their major contribution to conflict resolution, is the deeper insight participants gain into the obstacles and opportunities each party faces, together with the experience that they gain from working jointly and perhaps extending the use of the procedure, then the last option clearly involve practical and political problem solving, and makes a direct input into the search for a solution to the conflict at an official level. In our terms, it crosses the boundary between tentative reassurance and re-evaluation - a serious and influential analysis of issues plus an exploration of realistic options and obstacles thereto. As such, sustained dialogue clearly becomes a procedure that is being used to push the resolution process much further than initial engagement for reassurance -and it is, of course, none the worse for that. As Saunders and Slim emphasise, in this case "...Tangible impact is possible..." [Ibid p.56]

4.4. The ARIA Approach

A second procedure which can and has been used to provide reassurance and a sense of opportunity to decision makers through participation [if, usually, indirect participation] in a resolutionary interaction is the ARIA process, developed and used by Jay Rothman in a variety of protracted and often violent conflict situations, many dealing with problems of identity and other highly intractable issues. [Rothman 1992 and 1997] As with the procedure developed by Saunders and Slim, the ARIA process can be used as the basis of a pre-negotiation stage of any resolution process, either as an initial means of building contacts, providing reassurance and removing mistrust between members of parties in conflict; or as a Track 2 arena for analysing the conflict, for exploring possible alternatives, and then for having a direct impact on the official, Track 1 level of formal policy making and official conflict resolution. Which of these tasks is emphasised in a particular ARIA initiative depends to some degree on the purposes of the organisers and facilitators, but mainly on the nature and level of the participants. While Saunders and Slim aim at involving respected but non-official individuals, Rothman has been eclectic in his work, in some cases involving influentials, in others decision makers themselves, especially when the process takes place at a local, grass roots level as in the conflict over the future of Jerusalem

Briefly, and again like the process of sustained dialogue, the ARIA process involves four inter linked stages, which would probably also add up to five if Rothman included, as an initial stage, the process of involving inevitably suspicious and hostile antagonists as participants. The first is a stage of Antagonism, in which participants discuss the nature of, and reasons for the conflict in which they are involved, surfacing the suspicions, hostilities, attribution of blame and sense of outrage that attend most protracted conflicts. As in most resolution sub-processes this is invariably a painful stage of an inter-action, but one which is necessary if participants are ever to be ready to move on from the kind of "adversarial framing" that typifies parties in intractable conflicts. As Rothman himself writes, parties' "... conflict frames must be made explicit and thus available for scrutiny, evaluation and reframing..." [1997 p.21], and such frames later provide a bench mark of what, in future, must be avoided.

The second stage, Resonance, switches the focus of the discussion to why and how the conflict has reached the stage it has, and what are the underlying interests, values and needs that have produced the repetitive cycle of coercion and counter-coercion. Rothman argues that much of this stage is based on the principle of "reflexivity", in which participants are asked to stand outside themselves and ask about their own reasons for their past and present goals and aspirations,

and for their past behaviour. The objective of this stage is to bring participants to a realisation that their aspirations, concerns and needs can be fulfilled, but "...only with the cooperation of those who most vigorously oppose them..." [Rothman 1999; p.xiii]. If it is successful, then participants gain a greater understanding not only of the relationship of their own goals and public positions to their underlying interests and needs, but also to the inter-active nature of conflict dynamics and how their own actions have contributed to the others' reactions, and vice versa.

As with sustained dialogue, the last two stages of ARIA can be viewed simply as further confirmation and reassurance of interest in and commitment to the search for durable solutions, or as an integral part of a further sub-process of conflict resolution - the search for solutions and the confrontation of obstacles. The Invention stage involves participants in a process of exploration and creation, such that alternative outcomes and strategies are discussed in the light of the analysis and self analysis carried out in the Resonance stage. The Action stage, in turn, involves participants in the issue of what might be done, separately or jointly, to have insights, possible scenarios, alternative strategies and potentially durable solution recognised, reviewed and hopefully taken up by decision makers on both sides, if this, rather than simply providing a striking experience and an interactive model for participants, is the final objective of the ARIA initiative.

It can easily be seen that both ARIA and sustained dialogue are procedures that can be adapted so that they take the form of anything from efforts to explore whether both adversaries have a readiness to engage in some form of official conflict resolution through longer term efforts to build up constituencies in both parties that favour non-violent resolutionary outcomes to probably rarer cases when they directly pave the way for more formal efforts at conflict resolution dealing directly with substantive issues and possible outcomes. Other procedures are more singly concerned with this latter objective, and more expressly designed to be re-evaluation components of conflict resolution, focused on analysis of issues, exploration of options and transfer of alternatives to officials and decision makers.

5. Exploration, Analysis and Transfer; Workshops and the MACBE Model.

If the emphasis of some types of initiative is on promoting long term understanding between influential members of adversary parties and providing them with an experience of working with members of "the enemy", other types of meeting are designed to further a conflict resolution process more directly - that is by providing an input into official decision making circles that will suggest the possibility of a mutually beneficial solution and outline how such a solution might be achieved. In doing this, the form of discussions involved are directly intended to address the issues in conflict, the bargaining positions of the adversaries, the interests and values underlying these positions and then to explore possible mutually acceptable outcomes by creating new alternatives and possible means of arriving at one or more of those outcomes through practical, political activities to be undertaken by officials and leaders.

With this objective in mind, such procedures are clearly more concerned with political problem solving, in Folz's sense, a concomitant being that the participants, while still unofficial, are normally much closer to formal decision makers in both parties that is the case in many process promoting initiatives. Some writers have even referred to this type of procedure as being at the Track 1+1/2 level, to indicate its close connection with official efforts to find a solution for a conflict. Moreover, while most argue that the most useful circumstances for such quasi-official inter-actions are either before official level discussions occur [prenegotiation] or during the implementation stage of any formal agreement [post-negotiation], others - notably Ron Fisher [1997] and Herb Kelman [1999] - have made the argument that such activities can be highly useful even while formal talks are in progress [paranegotiation].

Whatever the validity of any of these arguments about the timing of the various types of problem solving procedure, most analysts writing about this form of conflict resolution process are agreed that such an informal arena does provide a unique opportunity for parties in conflict to engage in deep analysis of the problems they confront, the needs underlying public goals and positions, the availability of jointly managed and mutually beneficial solutions and the possibility of creating these, and of the steps by which these might best be achieved; and the best means of directly convincing unconvinced decision makers of the possibilities for creative solutions that do not involve compromise or the need for further coercion.

5.1. Interactive Problem Solving.

The chief method by which quasi-official problem solving contributes to conflict resolution processes is through a variety of similar processes that have come to be called inter-active problem solving by some of the major practitioners, the origins of which go back to some of the exercises discussed on the Introduction and carried out in London during the 1960's by John Burton and his colleagues, when the process was known as "controlled communication". [Burton, 1969;

1987]. Other familiar labels include "collaborative, analytical problem solving" and "inter-active conflict resolution" but whatever the formal title all of these processes share a number of things in common. To quote Herb Kelman, they all "...create opportunities for politically influential representatives of conflicting parties...to engage in a micro-process characterised by exploratory interaction, generation of ideas and creative problem solving..." [1999 p.3 italics added] Kelman makes the point that such interactions - "workshops" in the common parlance - should not be confused with official negotiations, as they are unofficial and nonbinding, but they should be closely linked to negotiations and can make a major contribution to the latter in that they "...provide an opportunity for sharing perspectives, exploring options and joint thinking that are not readily available at the official negotiating table..." [Ibid p.4] Interactive problem solving can produce ideas to be fed into the negotiating process and - because of the close linkages between the initiative and official decision makers - can be fed in persuasively and directly.

Kelman argues that effective interactive problem solving makes three major contributions to official efforts to resolve a conflict - and this point again emphasises the lack of a clear distinction in practice between process promoting and problem solving initiatives. Firstly, it fosters a "sense of possibility" - that a solution to the conflict is possible and feasible - the re-evaluation component of the process. It achieves this by removing a feeling of hopelessness and inevitability that frequently afflicts parties locked in a protracted conflict from which no escape seems possible, and in practice by constructing "best case scenarios" to counter-balance the inevitably pessimistic self fulfilling futures that arise from adversaries always believing the worst of all of each other [Kelman 1992 p.89]. Secondly, it helps to construct what Kelman [1999 p.23] calls a "...political environment conducive to negotiation..." a major component of which is mutual reassurance. Thirdly, the process can encourage or at least emphasise the need for "a shift in the nature of political discourse..." [Ibid p.24] and it is this change which - aside from any specific ideas and insights, alternatives and options, paths and procedures generated - can have the most effect upon those in each party officially charged with finding some solution.

The precise format taken by interactive problem solving initiatives varies somewhat - and there are clear connections between such initiatives and both the ARIA and "sustained dialogue" processes discussed above. However, its various forms all clearly play a major role in fulfilling most of the necessary analytical and creative functions that arose from the previous review of components and sub-processes of the whole conflict resolution process. With some justification the opportunity for a deep analysis of underlying interests values and needs is generally regarded as a key component of lasting conflict resolution, as are the processes of creativity in devising outcomes to fulfil those underlying needs, and of ingenuity in charting a course towards such solutions. Interactive problem solving at the quasi-official level offers a unique opportunity for indulging in these activities that are rarely practised during protracted and intense conflicts. Whether such resolutionary sub-processes can ever be incorporated into procedures at the official, Track 1 level remains a matter for debate. Can official negotiators ever treat a conflict as a problem shared, ever direct their efforts towards solving this shared problem, ever do more than produce minimally acceptable solutions of division or substitution, ever go very far into analysing each others' fear or concerns and see part of their task of providing mutual reassurances? The debate of this is on-going [Kelman 1999; Mitchell 1999], but what does seem clear is that interactive problem solving can produce goods that contribute to a resolution of intractable conflicts, provided these can find their way into the minds of decision makers, into negotiating rooms and, longer term, into the mainstream of diplomacy through an adoption of some of the basic principles underlying the approach.

5.2. The MACBE Principles.

One recent attempt to produce an integrated scheme for a conflict resolution process does lay out clearly a number of basic principles that might well inform conflict resolution processes, whether these are used at Track 1 or any other level. The MACBE "model" [Pruitt & Olczak 1995] also has some things in common with Fisher and Keashley's consultation approach, but abandons the implied linearity of their model, together with the idea of stages, in favour of a "multi-modal" approach, advocating different procedures at different times and in different situations.

The main principle underlying Dean Pruitt and Paul Olczak's approach is that all conflicts should be treated as inter-active systems, as should the parties in conflict. The latter, in turn, can be regarded as five interdependent sub-systems, so that any process which seeks to move the conflict towards a resolution will need to affect those five sub-systems and their inter-connections.

The five sub-systems under consideration for each party are that party's: [1] Motivation; [2] Affect; [3] Cognition; [4] Behaviour; [5] Environment. Hence, the authors' choice of the acronym MACBE to describe their model. They argue that, in relatively less intense conflicts, it is likely that only one or two of these sub-systems or modes [e.g. hostile or resentful feelings] will be involved, so that efforts aimed at affecting these may cause a "ripple effect" that spills over and corrects

minor difficulties existing in other sub-systems, so being enough to move the conflict towards resolution.

In contrast, highly escalated and intractable conflicts will need remedial action to be taken at all levels and on all sub-systems; none can be neglected. Pruitt and Olczak argue that only such a "multi-modal" approach can deal finally and completely with the durable "conflict inducing structures" that would otherwise remain to re-assert the patterns of conflict in the future. Such conflicts require a "broad assault" and they suggest seven components of a successful conflict resolution strategy ["classes of remedies" in the authors' words] that will deal with such durable structures:

- [1] Altering behaviour by developing negotiating opportunities.
- [2] Creating a "ripe moment" by changing motivations so that both parties wish to escape from the conflict.
- [3] Changing cognitions from a mistrusting to a trusting framework.
- [4] Developing problem solving, analytical and negotiating skills as an alternative to coercive and violent behaviour.
- [5] Providing opportunities and models for in depth analysis of the sources and dynamics of the conflict, and of the search for remedies.
- [6] Reducing aspirations and expectations.
- [7] Restructuring the socio-economic environment, especially by establishing conflict management systems which will be available to deal with future conflicts.

Pruitt and Olczak argue strongly that which activities are necessary to move towards a resolution are chiefly determined by the intensity and intractability of the conflict. The greater the severity of the conflict, the more a multi-modal approach is required. "...The parties must become motivated to escape their conflict, trust must develop, problem solving skills must be honed, perceptions and feelings must be uncovered and dealt with, unattainable aspirations must be reduced, divisive alliances must be eliminated, and the parties must negotiate a new mode of dealing with each other..." [Pruitt & Olczak 1995; p.81]

While the contingency model is clear about the order in which its various strategies and procedures are to be utilised, the MACBE model is more ambiguous. In arguing for flexibility, Pruitt and Olczark make the important point that intractable inter-communal conflict takes place between parties within which there are usually differences of viewpoint, interest and [hence] goals, so that there are usually some elements within each adversary ready to begin a search for a resolution of the conflict well before the bulk of the "realists" who would continue the strategy of coercion and violence. A start to many of their suggested seven procedures might well be made with these elements ["doves"] well before one can be made with party leaders or mainstream rank and file.

Another substantial gap in the MACBE model is the issue of when, whether and how third parties might be able to help in the tasks of creating a ripe moment, decreasing the levels of mistrust and hostility between the adversaries or constructing a conflict management system that will be available to deal with a recurrence of the conflict or other disputes that may arise in future. A role for third parties in a conflict resolution process has been implied in most of the above discussion of various resolution procedures, but not dealt with directly. It is to this last component of conflict resolution processes that I now briefly turn.

6. Third Party Contributions; A Functional Model.

Unfortunately, not much of the current literature on the role of third parties in conflict resolution tries to link traditional views about peacemaking with ideas about what might facilitate resolution as opposed to compromise. There is, it is true, a large and diverse set of ideas about the "peacemaking" activities of third parties, acting as facilitators, mediators or conciliators in protracted conflicts. Much of it has been concerned with a debate about the effectiveness of interested third parties with "leverage" [Touval 1982; Rubin 1981] compared to neutral third parties without significant influence or resources [Burton 1987]. The debate has revolved around the question of whether biased and powerful intermediaries can only produce temporary solution to a conflict, which "work" because they are supported by sanctions, either negative or positive; or whether such a power and resource dependent process might be able to produce a genuine resolution [or long term transformation] of a conflict which satisfies the underlying interests of the adversaries and removes the reasons for their antagonism. Analysts seem rarely to answer directly the question as to whether and in what circumstances third parties can help to facilitate any of the ten components of a conflict resolution process discussed in Section 3 of this paper - at least much beyond the point of suggesting that powerful third parties should be able to use military force to pressure adversaries, willing or not, into a temporary cessation of violence that will enable others to help the parties towards some compromise solution, deemed desirable in comparison with continued violence or the fate of being permanently peace kept by outsiders.

A full discussion of processes by which parties in conflict might be brought to the point of relaxing efforts to harm one another so that other forms of non-coercive or non-bargaining interaction can be tried must await a further Working Paper, as must a consideration of processes that bring about long term, widespread changes in attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes within adversaries. However, it is possible to sketch an outline of the kind of contributions that third parties can make to a conflict resolution process, and thus to fill in some of the gaps left in the discussion so far. In addition it should be possible to indicate, at least, where third party roles from processes such as ARIA, problem solving workshops, or confidence building might fit into a more general picture.

Starting from the original premise that any conflict resolution process is likely to be complex and long drawn out and to involve a number of component parts, there will clearly be many tasks and functions to be fulfilled before any intractable conflict can be moved towards a resolution. Hence, one way of thinking about a process of resolution is to ask what tasks need to be carried out, at what point in the process, and by whom might these best be performed. In a number of other papers, [Mitchell 1992 and 1994] I have suggested that answers to these questions, however tentative, point towards using an approach that maps out a sequence of activities in the form of a number of third party roles that need to be performed successfully if the process is to reach a successful culmination. The overall process starts with reconsideration and reassurance components, which can usefully involve third parties in exploratory contacts with the rival parties with a view to:

[1] ascertaining whether either or both have concluded that present strategies are leading nowhere and have any interest in an alternative to continuing coercion;

[2] reassuring the adversaries that the other side is not implacably against the exploration of alternatives to mutual coercion or the abandonment of "victory above all".

[3] exploring a range of alternative processes for de-escalating the conflict, initiating an exchange of ideas, and starting towards a resolution;

Following this, a number of other key functions will need to be performed successfully, each contributing differently to the development of the process by which parties can find themselves in some situation or circumstances in which a mutual exploration of reasons and options becomes feasible. Each of these functions can be seen as a necessary condition for the coming into play of subsequent functions in the sequence. [See Figure 3 overleaf]. Finally, following the achievement of de-escalation, discussion and analysis, the creation of options, and the transfer of insights to the official level, followed - hopefully - by effective and flexible negotiation, the conclusion of a mutually acceptable agreement that fulfils parties interests and values, and the implementation of that agreement [or series of agreements], I posit the need for a reconciler role to be carried out by one or more institutions, either from within the parties themselves or from outside. The functions carried out in this final stage involve long term efforts to alter attitudes and perceptions, to rebuild relationships and to restructure the pattern of inter-action and exchange between the previously warring parties. I discuss this last process, and the role of third parties therein in greater detail in Chapter 3 and then move on to some practical ways of doing this is the rest of the Handbook.

7. Conclusion.

I ended Chapter 1 by remarking that the road towards the resolution of any protracted and intractable conflict was long, difficult and unmarked for much of its length. What I have tried to do in this Chapter is to begin with the conception of "conflict resolution" as a process having number of distinguishable components or "sub-processes", rather than as an end state to be achieved, and then simply to review some efforts to map out a number of the better understood component parts of this complicated process. All of these efforts, approaches or models try, to some degree, to suggest appropriate principles or strategies to be applied at different points in the "life cycle" of an intractable conflict, or at different developmental "stages" of such a conflict. None of them is wholly successful, however, in providing more than a sketch map of a part of the conflict resolution "road", but they do indicate what a really helpful road map might look like, and what details need to be filled in before such a map can be of much use to policy makers.

Even when we have such a map, however, and we have some guide to the manner in which intractable conflicts might best be resolved the task for conflict research will not be ended. The whole point about conflict resolution, whether regarded as an end condition or as a process, is that it assumes that the conflict "resolvers" - whoever they are - have to deal with a problem that has already gone through at least one escalatory cycle to a point or plateau of sustained mutual coercion and violence - to Zartman's "hurting stalemate", Fisher and Keashley's level of "destruction" or Pruitt and Olczak's "high intensity". Contemporary conflict resolution thus resembles fire fighting, in that both wait until the conflict is

intense or the house is on fire.

It seems clear that the real challenge for conflict research remains in the realm of conflict avoidance or prevention - of "doing something" about conflict as it emerges or before it escalates. Clearly, part of the business of conflict avoidance will involve new maps and models - at the least the addition of an "early warning" or monitoring task to the functional model outlined in Section 6 above, and probably the provision of wholly new maps of conflict emergence. At the most, it will demand a new way of thinking about handling conflicts that involves anticipatory action and clear analysis of sources. I will try to begin a discussion of the nature of conflict prevention in a future Working Paper, but can close this one by emphasising that conflict research still has much to learn and we have much to think about as we and the discipline move into the 21st Century.

ENDNOTES.

(1) Given the current increase in the use of interpositional military forces, it is important to make a distinction between traditional peacekeeping and more recent peace-enforcement. The major differences are usually taken to be that the former takes place with the consent of the parties in conflict, while the latter can occur without such consent being sought or given but simply on the decision of some parts of "the international community", usually embodied in a regional or international organisation such as the CSCE or the UN. [In many cases, the conflict has resulted in the fragmentation of authority within the adversaries, so that there are no "centres of authority" that can decide to issue an invitation for military interposition.]

Behaviourally speaking, the crucial difference is more likely to be that the adversaries have not yet reached the stage at which both desire some kind of a lull in their mutually coercive efforts [one or both see that their goals might still be achieved through violence, or that the costs of coercive strategies remain bearable.] The end result is likely to be the continuation of the violence, with some of it being directed at the peace enforcing body, which is usually not strong enough to impose a cessation of the violence.

(2) Ambassador Simon Shamir; personal communication.

(3) Michael Harbottle, who originally used the term "peace servicing" rather than peace-building, emphasises the reconstruction and development aspects of the procedure, and talks about the "...practical implementation of social changes through socio-economic reconstruction and development..." [Harbottle 1979]

(4) An alternative, analytical approach might be to start with questions such as:

[a] What factors, circumstances or procedures lead parties to admit to themselves that strategies of coercion are not succeeding or are even becoming counter-productive. What processes are involved in arriving at that threshold ?

[b] What factors or circumstances are likely to lead parties to conclude that adversaries are willing to consider searching for alternative means and outcomes and for solutions other than outright victory ? What processes are involved at arriving at that turning point ?

[c] What factors or processes are likely to lead to parties' leaders being willing to sponsor or even permit some members of their party to discuss openly with some members of the adversary underlying interests, aspirations, fears and concerns ? What sort of a process would, by its nature, make them willing to participate; what sort of arena might be constructed to make such a discussion non-threatening and its outcome credible ?

[d] What sorts of participants would be the most appropriate for such meetings ?

[e] What would be the nature of the discussion that could take place within such an arena that would permit the exploration of underlying interests, a joint search for mutually satisfactory solutions and a joint analysis of the obstacles to such a solution and possible means of dealing with these ?

[f] What processes would have to be available for "selling" possible solutions to the remainder of the party [leaders, influentials and followers] and implementing any agreements reached at the discussions [They would have to be taken over by Track 1 people at some stage !]

[g] What might be the most useful roles played by third parties in such a process ?

(5) The bulk of this early work has been usefully summarised and evaluated by Fisher [1972 & 1983] and by Hill [1982]

(6) For example, Elmore Jackson reports how a punitive Israeli raid into the Gaza Strip in 1955 spoiled a promising initiative to restore communication between the Egyptian and Israeli governments following the 1956 Suez War. [Jackson 1983]

(7) Additional sustained dialogues of this type have taken place between notables representing parties from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and from the conflict in Tajikistan.