

**GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE
PREVENTION
OF ARMED
CONFLICT**

GPPAC Media Training Manual

By Michael Shank

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Welcome to the GPPAC's Media Training Manual

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a world-wide civil society-led network which aims to build a new international consensus on peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict. GPPAC strengthens civil society networks for peace and security by linking local, national, regional, and global levels of action and provides an effective vehicle for engagement with governments, the UN system and regional organizations. The Global Partnership is structured through fifteen regional networks, each of which has developed an action agenda to reflect regional principles and priorities.

This manual was borne out of the recognition that GPPAC has a unique global capacity and global mandate to impact how conflict is represented in the media. While many GPPAC organizations and practitioners are already heavily engaged in using media in all formats, this manual recognizes that media opportunities remain underutilized in almost every environment and that more can be done. Consequently, this manual represents the beginning of a GPPAC-initiated global capacity building process wherein member organizations and individuals will participate in media trainings in both workshop and online formats, in addition to having this manual serve as an ongoing and ever-evolving resource.

As a starting point, this manual assumes that the practitioner comes with limited media experience and trusts that practitioners will build upon their existing knowledge as they work through the manual's activities and exercises.

If you're reading this manual, it likely means three things: you're a member of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, you represent an organization working globally to reduce and prevent

violent conflict, and you believe that media is a powerful medium for effecting social change. This last point is of particular importance as the peacebuilding and conflict prevention community, historically speaking, has not placed great emphasis or importance on engaging with the traditional media.

Mainstream Media

In response, this manual places primary focus on how to interact and work with mainstream media – be it radio, television or print media. This manual is not intended to look at media of the variety employed by Search for Common Ground – e.g. self-produced soap operas. While this media work is undoubtedly an important and effective form of peacebuilding, the focus of this manual is oriented toward empowering peacebuilding and conflict prevention practitioners in the mainstream media spotlight.

In coordinating with GPPAC, the following sections were selected because they represent the full range of topics from assessment to prescription – in other words, how do we first analyze the causes and conditions of conflict, understand the stage or phase in which a conflict emerges, identify the most appropriate conflict response, and construct the most effective media campaign to leverage the analysis and conflict response. The manual will be very hands-on and instructional, and encourages you to begin practicing immediately by writing draft op-eds and press releases, rehearsing television and radio interviews, and practicing conflict analysis.

The fastest way to learn how to interact with the media is through experimentation and trial and error. You learn how to write an op-ed through practice by actually writing an op-ed, and no amount of reading and intellectual preparation can teach you the skills of op-ed writing.

One additional word of advice: to be successful in producing and garnering media attention, you'll need to be persistent, patient, and persevering on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Some peacebuilders imagine that we can quickly garner a media hit without having established the media relationships and foundation necessary to bear fruit in the ways we want it to - a process which takes time.

Good Relationship

If you want to be successful in working with the media, you'll need to be ready to invest a substantial amount of time in the process. This is necessary for two reasons: media may not trust you or know of you until they see you time and time again, and you'll need time to really rehearse and harness your skill set.

There is a tendency among some peacebuilders to give up on the media after a few tries or to completely distrust them, so much so that they've shut their mind off to all potential. Resist this tendency. You can develop a good relationship with the media and use it effectively if you're willing to devote the necessary time to build relations and build your skill set.

A Final Note

The first few sections may be of less interest to some of you, as they deal more with the analytical and theoretical aspects of conflict and media discourse. However, we decided to include these sections in the manual as they provide a good overview and foundation for those who are interested in reviewing or learning techniques in conflict analysis, conflict response and media discourse.

Please approach this manual as the beginning of a conversation between and among GPPAC and its members. We recognize the need, for example, to add new sections that highlight the innumerable

international stories vis-à-vis working with the media, opportunities and challenges. We encourage GPPAC members to engage in dialogue with us about additional components that could be included and we certainly seek examples of media 'best practices' throughout our member countries and regions. Thus, this manual is a work in progress with an explicit goal of becoming enhanced and strengthened over time. We look forward to working with you to ensure that happens.

With that, we begin. The table of contents will guide you through the training manual. Good luck with the read and, more importantly, good luck with your efforts to reduce and prevent violent conflict by effectively using the media to communicate your message.

Box 1. Basic Human Needs*

- 1. Meaning:** Humans need to formulate worldviews, ideas, values, and morals. This need manifests itself most obviously within cultural and religious contexts and formats, where it helps us make sense of death/life, the world in which we live, and self-in-society. If this need for worldview-making is fettered, obfuscated, prevented or forced upon an individual – e.g. religious indoctrination of indigenous communities – conflict is likely to emerge, whether internally (violence to oneself) or externally (violence toward the real or perceived perpetrator).
- 2. Connectedness:** Humans need to love, share, cooperate, and live in community. This need is met through tribes, social networking websites, civic and community clubs and groups, and affiliations and associations. This connectedness provides for feelings of shared responsibility and accountability – thus, when an individual’s need for connectedness remains unmet, the support system as well as the communal oversight is gone.
- 3. Security:** Humans need to be secure: physically, emotionally and economically. This need, which must be met on a daily basis, includes everything from access to food, shelter, and health care, to the more macro security issues involving national security. This need is very real but maintains the potential to be exaggerated by leaders who prey upon the security fears of the populace.
- 4. Recognition:** Humans need to be recognized, respected, receive acknowledgement, and feel significant. Given how culturally nuanced and complex this need is, it is thus prone to misinterpretation or complete neglect and is perhaps most visible only when denied. In turn, this results in feelings of shame, humiliation, and guilt.
- 5. Action:** Humans need to have control over their environment, accomplish and achieve things, and be autonomous. Beginning at birth this need is evidenced. When this need is frustrated or prevented – in the case of physical control (e.g. abuse, detention, slavery, containment, occupation, prison) or psychical control (e.g. emotional or psychological abuse and oppression, absence of critical thinking curriculum, lack of democratic mechanisms, limited freedom of expression) – conflict is likely to emerge.

* *The author recognizes that these human needs vary based on environment – be it natural, cultural, political, economic, or social; that these needs are not necessarily inherent or innate to all; and that different theorists give them different names*

1. Analyzing & Mapping Conflicts

Basics in Conflict Analysis

First of all, it's worth noting that conflict is normal. Most conflict theorists agree that conflict occurs when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually competing goals or ambitions. When change occurs, it causes conflict and friction. If conflict is managed peacefully, it can be a positive process. But if managed poorly, it becomes violent. That's where the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict's work – and thus your work – comes in. There is much discussion over what the causes and conditions of conflict are. A general overview of international conflicts would likely assess that conflicts most often occur over resource scarcity or distribution, poor communication and misunderstandings between groups, imbalances in power, unresolved grievances, etc.

Before anyone can effectively resolve a conflict – the likely aim of many organizations and peacebuilders using this manual and the implied goal of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict – it is absolutely essential to thoroughly analyze the causes and conditions of the conflict. This is not always an easy task as symptoms are often confused with root causes. Additionally, the task of conflict analysis – as a necessary step prior to engaging a conflict response/ intervention – is not always undertaken due to lack of time, commitment or priority. Yet, conflict analysis is a critical first step in treating any conflict in order to ensure that the response/intervention addresses not the symptom but the root cause.

So what are the root causes of conflict? This manual elects to use a basic human needs approach to understanding the root causes of conflict. Another manual might choose a different theoretical assessment tool and it would be perfectly legitimate for that manual to do so. In selecting basic human needs as the point of departure, the author is not assuming that this

is the only way of measuring root causes of conflict, but merely one methodology that can be of use to peacebuilders. That said, let us proceed.

In understanding why, when and how conflicts occur it is useful to keep in mind that almost every conflict involves an individual trying to meet their basic human needs. When trying to meet those needs, people often come into conflict with others. When needs are unmet, pain emerges as well as the urge to behave in ways that people think, believe, or hope will bring the satisfaction of those unmet needs. Any attempt to resolve a conflict without recognizing and satisfying the underlying needs will not be long lasting or effective.

See Box 1. Basic Human Needs on page left

Based first on psychologist Abraham Maslow's work on human needs in the 1950s and 1960s, later on Vern Redekop's work in *From Violence to Blessing*, and undoubtedly many other human needs theorists, a useful overview of basic human needs can include, but is certainly not limited to, those listed in Box 1. Now that we have a basic overview of human needs that are pervasive throughout many or most social environments, in differing shapes and sizes, let us take a look at how basic human needs manifest themselves globally within everyday social, political and economic settings and their correlation with violent conflict. As an example of how basic human needs are related to violent conflict, some quantitative data provided by former World Bank economist Paul Collier, excerpted from *Turbulent Peace*, may be helpful here.

Example Data 1

A country that has ten percentage points more of its young males in secondary school – say 55 percent instead of 45 percent – cuts its risk of conflict from 14 percent to around 10 percent. The basic human need met? In the above data, the more equipped a young

1. Analyzing & Mapping Conflicts

male is enabled to meet his need for meaning (a meaningful career path with a more certain future), connectedness (the opportunity to be around peers in a constructive collaborative setting), security (education helps secure employment), recognition (the opportunity for positive reinforcement through legitimate means), and action (the feeling of accomplishment that comes from a diploma and the opportunity for autonomy that comes with education).

Example Data 2

A country that is in economic decline increases its risk of conflict; each percentage point off the growth rate of per capita income raises the risk of conflict by around one-percentage point. The basic human need that remains unmet? In economic recession or decline, individuals' ability to meet their need for security is particularly frustrated or arrested entirely. Concomitantly, the need for recognition and autonomy struggles to be satisfied as individuals' unmet security needs inevitably impact these other related needs.

Example Data 3

A country with one dominant ethnic group which constitutes between 45 percent and 90 percent of the population, enough to give it control, but not enough to make discrimination against a minority pointless, doubles its risk of conflict. The basic human need that remains unmet? The most obvious need-frustration experienced by a less dominant ethnic group in the above scenario is recognition, and to some extent autonomy, security, and meaning. The less dominant ethnic group will likely experience (or fear the potential to experience) marginalization and disenfranchisement which immediately inhibits need-satisfaction vis-à-vis recognition but also potentially undermines the individual's ability to provide security and remain autonomous.

Another example of how basic human needs are related to violent conflict is provided by the quantita-

tive data provided by Harvard psychologist James Gilligan, excerpted from *Preventing Violence*, may be helpful here.

Example Data 4

If a country experiences a one percent increase in unemployment it is often accompanied by a six-percent increase in homicides. The basic human need that remains unmet? Unsurprisingly, unemployment causes shame, guilt and humiliation (which undermine the individual's ability to meet their need for recognition), as well as fetters the possibilities for security and autonomy. Unemployment, in the case of adult males in some cultures, preys upon their understanding of what it means to be a man, to be able to provide for the family, etc.

Example Data 5

In a given country, the higher the percentage living in relative poverty, the higher the number of violent offenses. The basic human need that remains unmet is similar to the example immediately above; one could argue, however, that poverty makes all need-satisfaction, with the possible exception of connectedness, virtually impossible.

The purpose of the above examples – first from Collier, then from Gilligan – is to recognize that there are explicit linkages between basic human needs and violent conflict. Another purpose of these examples is for peacebuilders to begin making these correlations publicly so that when working with the media it becomes comfortable to identify the root causes of conflict and illuminate what can be done to meet the needs of stakeholders in conflict – as a way of reducing or preventing violent conflict from erupting or spreading. While this manual does not intend to prescribe policies and projects for peacebuilding organizations and individuals to attend to the basic human needs common to conflicts, it does aim to sensitize the reader to the potential within media to

further deny conflict stakeholders of their basic human needs – or conversely to begin to attend to conflict parties’ basic human needs by using more conflict-sensitive language.

Basic Human Needs & the Media

Media and communications work, then, requires a thorough understanding of the basic human needs which lie at the root of any given conflict so that the media initiatives undertaken by your peacebuilding organization or by you as an individual do not exacerbate or frustrate the needs-satisfaction process of stakeholders in conflict.

For example, if a peacebuilding organization is keen to coordinate a media campaign in response to a given country’s “war on terrorism” against “terrorists, evil-doers, and radical extremists”, neglects to transform this dehumanizing language within the context of their media campaign, they inadvertently reinforce and reify the language utilized within the aforementioned war instead of delegitimizing it. Thus, the organization precludes the opportunity to meet the basic human needs of the stakeholders in conflict.


Consider all the mainstream media discourse surrounding existing conflicts that fail to attend to

basic human needs. Within the media discourse on immigration, the language often refers to “illegals”, or the more obviously dehumanizing term “aliens”. Within the media discourse on the Iraq war, the language – at least within Western nations – demands that the Iraqi government, somewhat patronizingly as if Iraq is the younger child or sibling, needs to “stand up” and “take responsibility”. Within most conflicts, mainstream media discourse should be observed to determine whether or not the prevailing language further denies conflict parties of their basic human needs.

Peacebuilders choosing to use media will want to be extremely careful about their use of language lest they unintentionally reaffirm mainstream discourses that deprive stakeholders in conflict of their basic human needs. Mainstream media is generally less concerned about its use of language and the degree to which it meets the basic human needs of stakeholders in conflict. Peacebuilders therefore need to be extra vigilant to ensure that their media-based peacebuilding campaigns do not succumb to the same neglect exhibited by mainstream media.

The following chart identifies some of the discourse within mainstream media that undermines the opportunity to meet stakeholders’ basic human needs. Undoubtedly there are more terms, this is merely

Terrorists	Aliens	Extremists	Axis of Evil	Great Satan
Radicals	Evil-doers	Illegals	Enemy	Race-bias: Negative intimations associated with race (i.e. Gyped, Black-listed, Black-balled, Black-market, etc.)
Gender-bias: Sexist Language, Sexualized Language, Traditional Female Roles Assumed (i.e. Mankind, ‘Man & wife’, peace as a feminized venture, the feminization of one side in a conflict, etc.)		?	Militants	
		?	?	
		?	?	



representative of the myriad of ways needs are frustrated by the media. Feel free to, in the blank spaces, add terms appearing within your local, regional or national media that undermine the meeting of basic human needs.

So that we can improve our capacity to analyze when and how basic needs are frustrated or threatened within a conflict situation, how the media exacerbates the needs-frustration, and how we can begin to change and transform that dynamic with our own media-based peacebuilding, the following worksheet gets us started in this direction. In order to conserve space within this manual, the sample worksheet template on the next page asks you to do a needs analysis on only one stakeholder to a conflict, though admittedly there are many stakeholders in any conflict. This inventory analysis should be conducted for every stakeholder to the conflict, including state and non-state actors, perceived legitimate and perceived illegitimate actors alike.

The purpose of the worksheet on the right page is two-fold: first, we need to improve our ability to recognize – and talk about – frustrated basic human needs in any conflict situation, as well as identify appropriate peacebuilding responses to frustrated or neglected needs; and second, we need to improve our sensitivity to how and when the media uses language, narrative and discourse that further undermines or frustrates the satisfaction of the conflict stakeholders' basic human needs. On this latter point, this manual will suggest alternative narratives and language in subsequent sections. For the former point regarding conflict response, the next section begins to lay out appropriate conflict responses based on an assessment of the stage in which conflict resides and the intensity of the conflict.

Worksheet 1: Basic Human Needs & the Media

Basic Human Need	Meaning	Connectedness	Security	Recognition	Action
<p>NEEDS INVENTORY: For <i>Conflict Stakeholder 1</i>, which of the following basic human needs are not being met within the conflict situation? (Check all that apply and identify how the needs are not currently being met within the conflict.)</p>					
<p>NEEDS RESPONSE: For <i>Conflict Stakeholder 1</i>, how will you or your peacebuilding organization recommend that these needs be met and what are you or your organization currently doing to address and ultimately meet this basic human need for conflict stakeholder 1?</p>					
<p>MEDIA INVENTORY: For <i>Conflict Stakeholder 1</i>, how is the mainstream media discourse further denying this stakeholder’s basic human needs by using language that undermines or precludes the satisfaction of their needs? (Check all that apply and list examples of mainstream media language.)</p>					
<p>NEW MEDIA-BASED PEACEBUILDING: How will the new media language employed by you or your peacebuilding organization attend to the basic human needs of conflict stakeholder 1 (Fill in all that apply with examples of how new media will better attend to the basic human needs of conflict stakeholder 1.)</p>					

1. Analyzing & Mapping Conflicts

Basics in Conflict Response and Intervention

Now that basic conflict analysis has been conducted by you and/or your organization using the previous assessment of basic human needs, it is time to consider conflict responses and interventions. Again, much like in the usage of basic human needs analysis, peacebuilders have already articulated multiple frameworks and methodologies for conflict response and intervention. The following is merely one of many frameworks and is not presented as the only way of responding to conflict or the exclusive recommendation of this manual's author (though it is the author's preferred framework). Assuredly other methodologies may be more familiar and preferred by peacebuilders reading this manual. Stemming from the work of Lisa Schirch, republished most recently in an article coauthored by Michael Shank and Lisa Schirch in the *Peace and Change Journal* and excerpted for this manual, conflict response and intervention can be grouped into four distinct strategies:

Waging Conflict Nonviolently

In this conflict response and intervention strategy, your goal or your organization's goal as peacebuilding practitioners is to intensify the conflict and increase the stakeholder's power to address issues and ripen the ground for transformation. Waging conflict nonviolently is a peacebuilding approach to be pursued in conflict situations where power is unbalanced and there is little public awareness of the issues. In many conflicts, it is often difficult to get conflicting parties to negotiate; in such cases, it may be important to wage conflict nonviolently. Nonviolent action aims to raise public awareness and sympathy, increase understanding of how groups in conflict are interdependent, and balance power by convincing or coercing others to accept the needs or desires of all involved. In this peacebuilding approach, advocates and activists seek to gain support for change by increasing a group's power

to address issues and ripen the conditions needed to transform relationships and structures. Practitioners waging nonviolent conflict work to balance power by creating a platform that is highly imaginative and provocative and demands serious attention. Practitioners can raise awareness about latent local issues and conflicts (e.g. social injustice) through specific media, escalating the intensity of the conflict so that it cannot be ignored. Traditional examples include nonviolent protest and advocacy, whereas media-based forms could include a virtual march on the nation's capital (phone or email), an advertising campaign that highlights the conflict or a nationally coordinated op-ed and letter campaign.

Reducing Direct Violence and its Impacts

In this conflict response strategy, your goal or your organization's goal as peacebuilding practitioners is to restrain perpetrators of violence and prevent/relieve the immediate suffering of victims of violence. Efforts to reduce direct violence aim to restrain perpetrators of violence, prevent and relieve the immediate suffering of victims of violence, and create a safe space for peacebuilding activities. This category of peacebuilding processes includes state-based legal and judicial systems and military as well as civilian peacekeeping efforts and programs such as refugee camps and shelters that give people a safe place to live. These programs interrupt the cycle of violence and lay the foundation for further peacebuilding in three ways: preventing victimization, restraining offenders, and creating safe space for other approaches.

Transforming Relationships

In this conflict response and intervention strategy, your goal or your organization's goal as peacebuilding practitioners is to use conflict transformation, restorative justice, and trauma healing to transform conflict and do justice. For peace to replace violence, broken relationships are re-created using an array of processes that address trauma, transform conflict, and seek justice. These processes give people opportunities

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Map of Peacebuilding © Lisa Schirch 2004



to create long-term, sustainable solutions to address their needs. Transformation is a key principle of all peacebuilding programs.

Building Capacity

In this conflict response and intervention strategy, your goal or your organization's goal as peacebuilding practitioners is to enhance capacity to meet needs/ rights and prevent violence through education, training, research, and evaluation. Longer term peacebuilding efforts focus on cultivating existing capacities and skills in order to meet human needs. Efforts include education and training, development, and research and evaluation. These activities aim to build just structures that support a sustainable culture of peace. Beyond ending violent conflict, peacebuilding practitioners also seek to create the capacity for a culture of JustPeace (i.e. peace through justice). Sustainability is a key principle of this category of peacebuilding. It requires long-term thinking and

planning; constructive relationship patterns between people and their environment; and the human resources and abilities to oversee these processes so that human needs are met for many generations. Capacity building includes training and education programs, development, and transformation.

Summary

Now, how does media fit in with these four conflict responses? Unsurprisingly, media-based peacebuilding is needed in all four peacebuilding approaches articulated above. Whether in waging nonviolent conflict, reducing direct violence, transforming relationships or building capacity, peacebuilders can create a communications and media strategy that raises awareness about latent and direct violent conflict, highlights the potential and opportunity for transformation, and builds capacity among stakeholders.

Above, you will find a mapping of the circular nature of

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these four peacebuilding strategies. The circular nature implies need and continuity of all four strategies either in sequence or simultaneously. What is most important is to first assess what the conflict needs and then apply appropriate strategies. Below this map is a fuller description of each peacebuilding strategy, based upon the work of Michael Shank and Lisa Schirch in *Peace and Change Journal*.

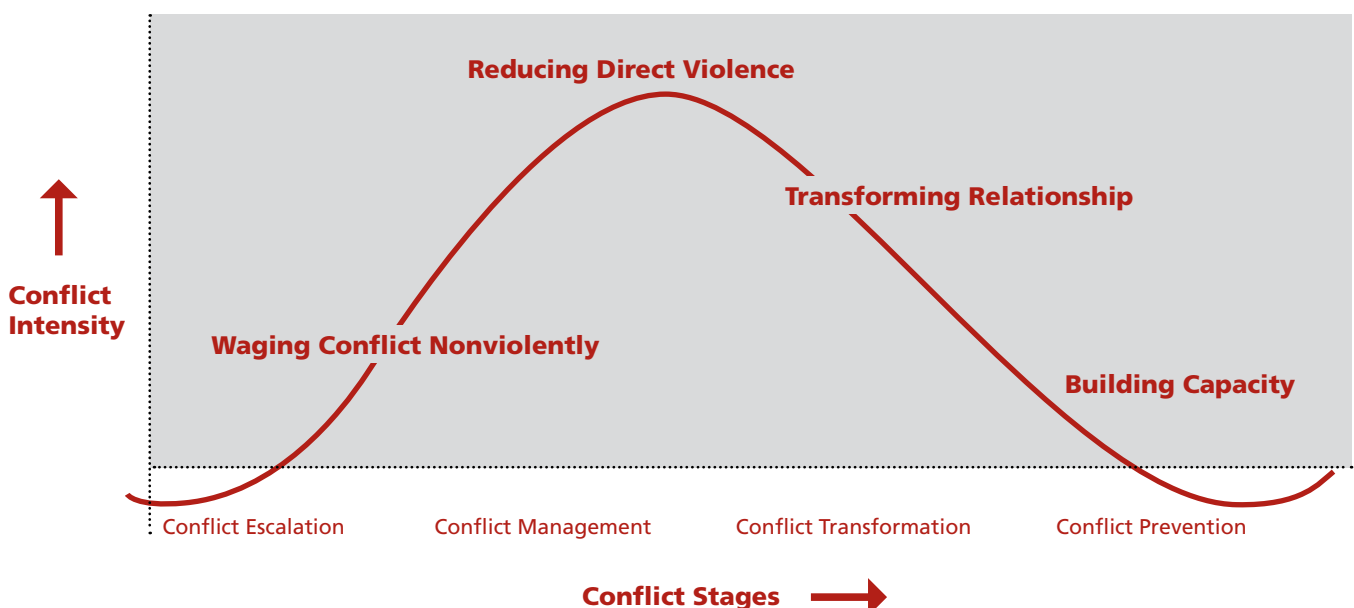
When To Use Peacebuilding Strategies?

In analyzing and assessing a conflict – an important first step prior to an intervention – peacebuilders should be mindful of the intensity and stage of a conflict. It would be inappropriate and dangerous for a peacebuilder to wage nonviolent conflict if the conflict already reached a dramatic climax. (Waging nonviolent conflict is helpful primarily when a latent or nascent conflict needs highlighting, lest the conflict be ignored or intentionally forgotten by the powerful social order that prefers the status quo.) Thorough analysis of a conflict situation prior to intervention helps to ensure that the peacebuilding approach is appropriate and

stage-sensitive. The intensity of a conflict, as well as the stage in which a conflict resides, dramatically affects the options afforded a peacebuilder. The diagram below is a useful visual for peacebuilders mindful of the importance of careful analysis and strategy, in all stages of peacebuilding.

The diagram below details how the four approaches fit into a phase-sensitive model that relates to the intensity of a conflict, moving from conflict escalation, to conflict management, conflict transformation, and conflict prevention. The terminology in the field of peacebuilding is often confusing, with organizations sometimes using all of these words to describe similar sets of activities. This diagram connects the terminology of peacebuilding with the stages and intensity of conflict. The purpose of this diagram is to encourage strategic analysis and implementation. The overall efficacy of peacebuilding improves when preceded by a thorough analysis that appraises the intensity of conflict and evaluates the current stage in which it resides.

Diagram of Peacebuilding & Conflict Stages © 2005 Michael Shank



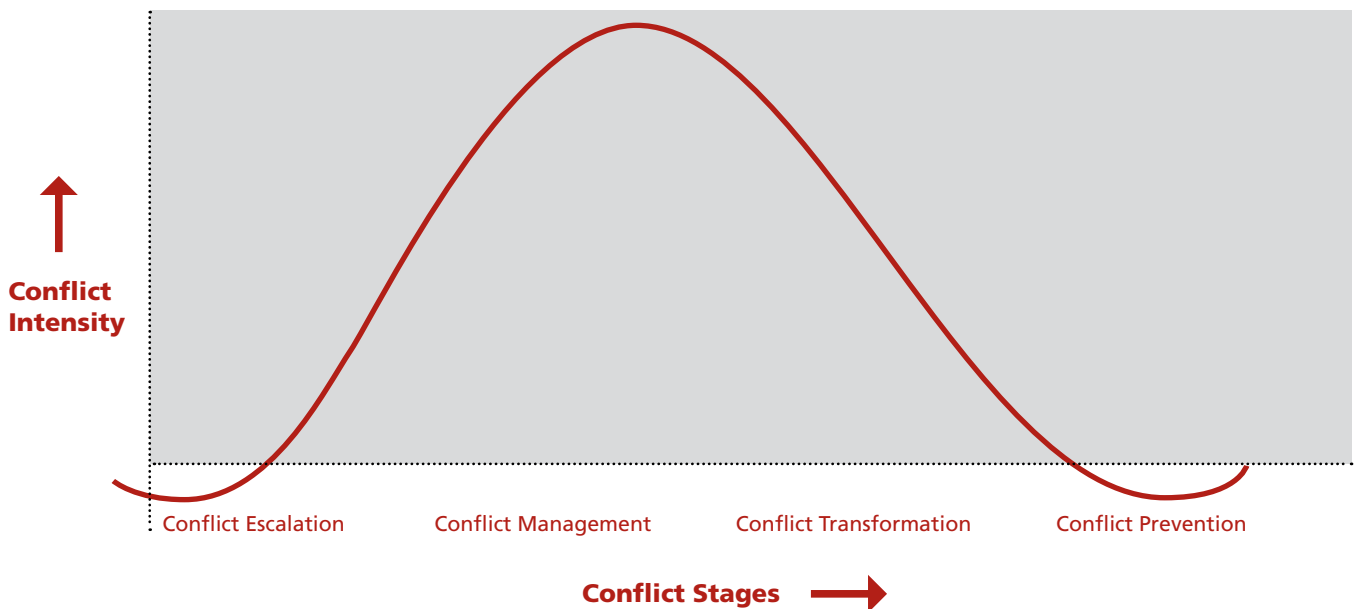
1. Analyzing & Mapping Conflicts

Worksheet 2:

Identifying Stages of Conflict

On the diagram below plot out the stage in which the conflict your organization is currently addressing or would like to address presently resides. After charting out the location (or locations) your conflict resides,

compare with the diagram above to determine whether or not the appropriate peacebuilding techniques are being employed. Use this diagram in the future to measure – on a weekly basis if needed – the stage of the conflict and whether or not the appropriate concomitant peacebuilding approaches are being employed.



Other Conflict Mapping Tools (Analysis and Response)

Human needs analysis, Schirch's peacebuilding approaches, and Shank's diagrams for mapping conflict intensity and phases are several approaches to conflict mapping. Undoubtedly there are other equally legitimate and useful conflict mapping tools. This section offers additional mapping tools which are useful in analyzing and assessing the root causes and conditions of conflict.

Tool 1: The ABC Triangle

This conflict mapping tool, excerpted from the book *Working with Conflict* and popular within the conflict resolution and peacebuilding community, works with the premise that all conflicts maintain three major elements: the context or situation in which the stakeholders are operating, the behavior of the stakeholders in the conflict, and the attitudes of these conflict stakeholders. The ABC triangle assumes that all three elements are not unidirectionally or causally related – in other words, it is not assumed that Attitudes first cause Behavior, and then Behavior causes

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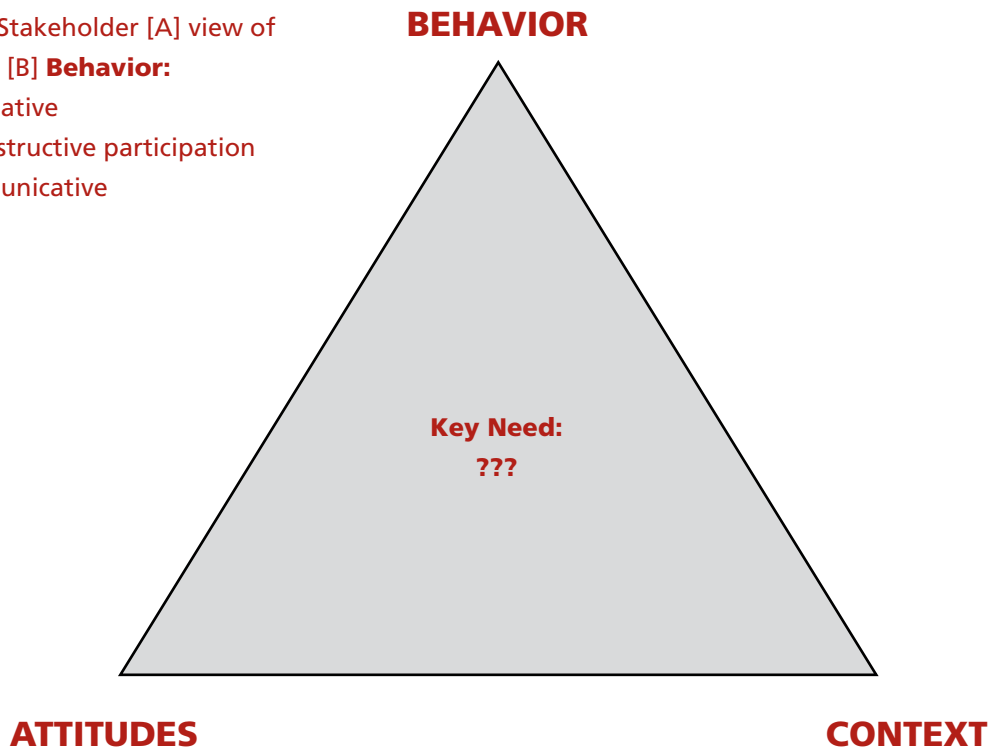
Context. Rather, the ABC triangle assumes that all three elements are mutually influencing each other at all times. The purpose of this conflict mapping exercise is to separate the various factors impacting the conflict situation as a way of informing the conflict response. For example, peacebuilders will have a different response to a Context then they will for an Attitude.

How do peacebuilders use this tool? First, draw the above ABC triangle for every conflict stakeholder that exists in a conflict situation – every single stakeholder.

Do not neglect even the most frustrating adversary. Stakeholders can perform their own conflict mapping if they are participating in this exercise. Each stakeholder group writes how they view the attitudes, behaviors, and contexts of all stakeholders to the conflict (see examples). After the triangles are completed, compare the entirety of stakeholders to observe areas of convergence and divergence. Use this mapping tool to begin the conversation among stakeholders and empower them to beginning identifying the various components underlying conflict.

Ex: Conflict Stakeholder [A] view of Stakeholder [B] **Behavior:**

- Lack initiative
- Lack constructive participation
- Uncommunicative



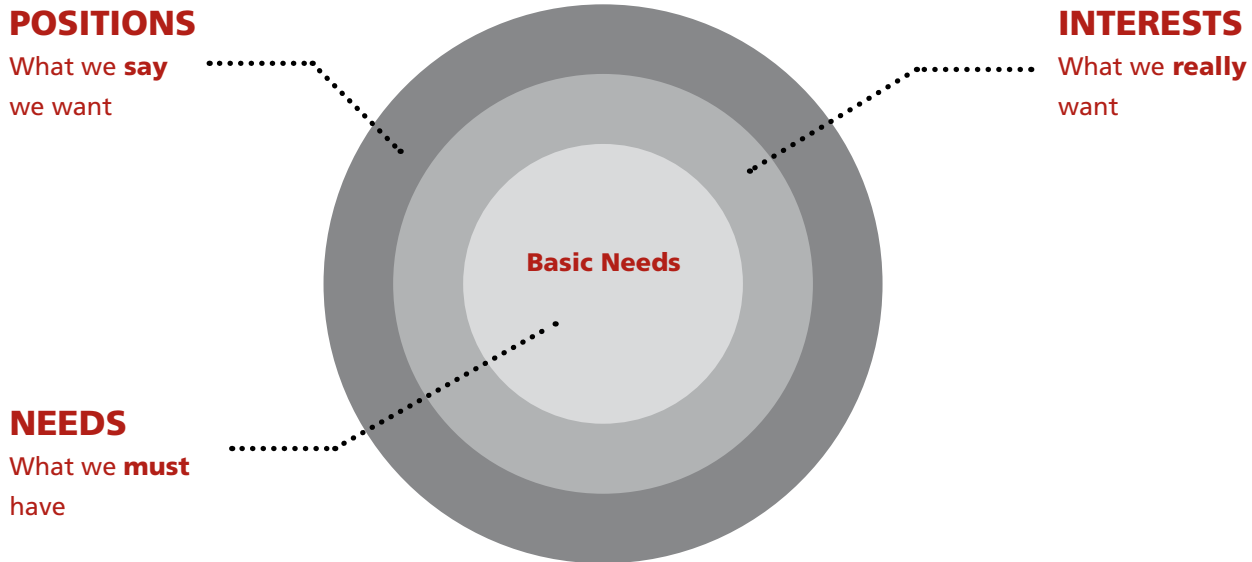
Ex: Conflict Stakeholder [A] view of Stakeholder [B] **Attitudes:**

- Reluctant to change
- Resentful
- Fail to see the big picture
- Close-minded

Ex: **Context** of Conflict Stakeholder [A]:

- Stakeholder A maintains government positions
- Higher standard of living
- Higher-tiered salaries
- Access to private schools
- Unemployment rate low

1. Analyzing & Mapping Conflicts



Tool 2: The Onion

This conflict mapping tool, excerpted from *Working with Conflict*, is quite common and quite useful for moving beyond the public statements of stakeholders in any conflict situation. This mapping tool encourages conflict stakeholders to separate out the varying levels and degrees of wants, desires and real needs in a conflict.

This tool is useful in helping groups understand the complex and nuanced dynamics in a conflict situation, appreciate the multi-layered communication that occurs in a conflict situation, and prepare the foundation for further negotiated and mediated

peacebuilding processes. Not surprisingly, stakeholders who are involved in their own conflict mapping exercise and use the onion will feel more comfortable revealing all layers of the onion when sufficient trust has been established. Peacebuilders may want to test the onion at several stages of a peacebuilding process to monitor how comfortable stakeholders have become in revealing positions, interests and needs.

For example, let's look at a conflict situation to better understand the multiple levels of positions, interests and needs. If you look at the US-Iraq conflict, for example, a mapping of that conflict situation might bring you the following analysis:

	United States	Iraq
Positions:	Terrorist Threats Must End	US Occupation Must End
Interests:	Sense of Victory/Success Reduction of Troop Attacks Access to Oil	Stable, Sovereign Government Sunni-Shia Co-existence Electricity, water, sanitation, oil
Needs:	Security, Meaning Recognition, Action	Security, Meaning Connectedness

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Tool 3: Balancing Power

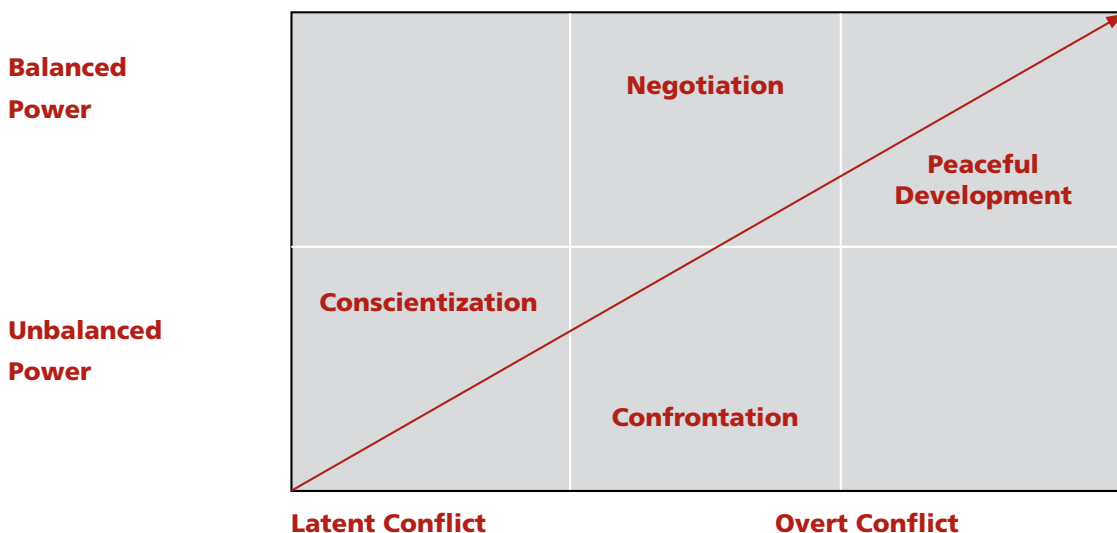
The purpose of this conflict mapping tool, excerpted from *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, and designed originally by Adam Curle (1971) and John Paul Lederach (1995), is to understand the multiplicity of ways in which marginalized and disenfranchised groups in conflict can work to balance the power, enabling them an equal voice in the negotiated peacebuilding process.

Initially, when the power remains unbalanced between stakeholders in a conflict situation and when the conflict remains latent, the proposed peacebuilding approach is through education, or conscientization, of marginalized groups (see Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). Once the marginalized group becomes aware of the unbalanced power the conflict is no longer latent, and direct (though nonviolent) confrontation can take place in order to equalise power and make the previously latent conflict overt. Through nonviolent confrontation, the marginalized group slowly gains power, which enables it to secure a seat at the negotiation table. Once the power has been balanced between stakeholders in a conflict situation,

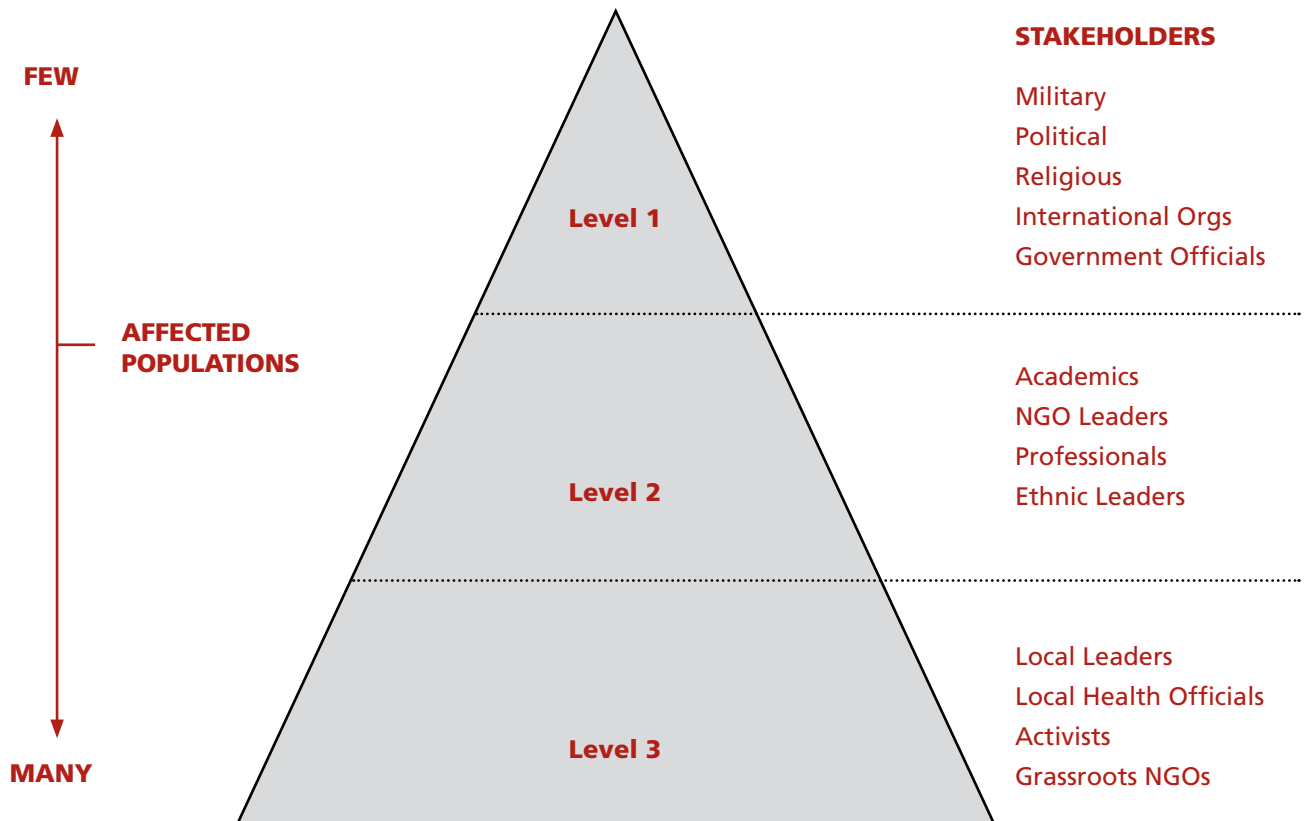
peaceful negotiations become possible as well as the beginnings of a developmental peacebuilding process that meets the needs of all conflict stakeholders.

In using this mapping tool, the peacebuilder can begin to plot out the peacebuilding processes, exercises and activities required in each category in order to bring the stakeholders from unbalanced power, where the conflict remains latent and the relations remain unpeaceful, to balanced power, where the relations are peaceful. For example, in moving from latent conflict to overt conflict, a peacebuilding practitioner may choose to use activities articulated above in the "Waging Nonviolent Conflict" section of Schirch's peacebuilding strategies. Other ways of balancing power through conscientization are through education and capacity building. "Waging Nonviolent Conflict" is also going to be useful in the confrontation phase, while "Transforming Relationships" (see Schirch's earlier section on peacebuilding) may be useful in negotiating the righting of past wrongs. Lastly, "Building Capacity" will undoubtedly be useful in establishing peaceful relations and enabling peaceful development between and among stakeholders.

Unpeaceful Relations / Peaceful Relations



1. Analyzing & Mapping Conflicts



Tool 4: The Pyramid

The purpose of this pyramid mapping tool, excerpted from *Working with Conflict* and adapted from John Paul Lederach's pyramid in *Preparing for Peace*, is to identify the tiered levels of peacebuilding opportunities and resources available to the peacebuilder. Change must take place on all levels of society for sustainable peace to be ensured and enacted. Therefore, this pyramid helps the practitioner identify in which segments of society change must happen and, correspondingly, which stakeholders will be able to make that change take place.

Now, once the peacebuilder analyzes the recourses and actors available within all tiers of society, what is the next step? The next step in utilizing this pyramid is to design peacebuilding processes that are appropriate to each level of society and to be constantly mindful of how to coordinate between these different levels most

effectively – work that is of extreme importance to GPPAC. It is important to note here that the pyramid does not imply a hierarchy of importance but merely a categorization of involved populations, from few at the top to many at the bottom.

For example, in addition to the activities outlined in the previous section by Lisa Schirch's peacebuilding strategies, appropriate peacebuilding processes for Level 1 might be high-level negotiations, peace agreements, back-channel diplomacy, etc. Appropriate peacebuilding processes for Level 2 might be problem-solving workshops, confidence-building measures, and cultural diplomacy or citizen exchanges. Appropriate peacebuilding processes for Level 3 might be local peace commissions and peace zones. The opportunities are boundless; the purpose of the mapping is to identify appropriate and feasible processes for each level of society.

2. Understanding Influence of Media Discourse on Conflict Situations

Having explored some basic elements in conflict analysis and conflict response, it is time to examine how the media impacts and influences conflict situations. Generally the media is reticent to acknowledge responsibility or culpability in this matter, but most peacebuilders will quickly recognize the powerful impact – both positive and negative – that media can and does have on conflict situations. It is helpful for peacebuilders to have a good understanding of why and how that influence exists. Once equipped with this new information, the result should not be an overwhelming feeling of impotence or inadequacy but rather a realistic appraisal of how the media world operates and how peacebuilders need to be appropriately oriented to work effectively within this world.

Media maintains substantial power to escalate or deescalate conflict, exacerbate or sooth tensions, and fuel or undermine hatred. The media, however, often claims impartiality and responds to critics by saying that it merely reports the news in a fair and balanced way. Peacebuilders know, of course, that media – whether in Rwanda or the United States – has the power to vastly influence a conflict situation. In worst-case scenarios, media influence can be evidenced in the most explicit of violence, in physical threats, government shut-downs of media, attacks on independent media agencies, etc. This section will dig deeper into media’s self-interest – whether in terms of profit or politics – and explore why media may report on a conflict in a particular manner to boost its own, or its country’s, self-interest.

Media Ethics

Before delving into media’s relationship to bias, profit, politics, censorship, and last, but not least, peacebuilding (through peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism), it is first worth touching on the important topic of media ethics. There is ample debate within the academic and professional communities about the exact parameters of media ethics and codes of conduct. Many owners and operators of private media think there are fewer parameters by which to abide given that it is a private corporation, whereas public media owners and operators are often exposed to more scrutiny, and rightly so given that they are funded by public tax dollars.

The issues of bias and profit, articulated below, pertain more directly to private media, whereas the issues of politics and censorship can pertain to both public and private media outlets. In either case, peacebuilders must be aware of how bias, profit, politics and censorship can impact and influence media ethics.

What is an example of media ethics? Good question. The Society of Professional Journalists’ ethical mandate, for example, dictates “that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist’s credibility. Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society’s principles and standards of practice:

- **Seek Truth and Report It**
Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.
- **Minimize Harm**

2. Understanding Influence of Media Discourse on Conflict Situations

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

- **Act Independently**

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

- **Be Accountable**

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other."

(<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>)

Most peacebuilders know, however, that media ethics are not abided by or implemented so simply. Media is a double-edged sword, with a propensity for positive and negative outcomes. Media maintains the capacity to quickly and dangerously escalate a conflict situation or, conversely, make a compelling case to the local/national/international community to resolve the conflict immediately. Questions often facing peacebuilders when considering whether or not to use the media include the following:

1. If I tell a story about a victim within a conflict situation – using photography, video, audio, print or online media – will it draw too much attention to the victim and eventually bring more harm to that individual and his/her family?
2. How much violence is appropriate to show in the media? Is it better to show all the violence that is happening so that the international community knows what is going on, or will that just make the situation worse by numbing the viewer?
3. Will the media harm a sensitive conflict resolution process that should remain quiet and confidential or will it help the conflict resolution process by keeping the public informed about what is going on?

This manual will not attempt to answer what is appropriate for you or your organization but rather encourage awareness of the potential harm which stems from media usage. The following sections on **media bias, profit, politics and censorship** look at the

potential breach of media ethics in both public and private media arenas and outlets, whereas the subsequent sections on **peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism** explore ways in which peacebuilders can stay within the bounds of ethical media.

Media & Bias

Does media bias exist? Most definitely it does. On a micro-level, reporters, editors and producers select which events will be reported and how they cover them. On a macro-level, government influence, including overt and covert censorship, biases the media in some countries. Media outlets are owned and operated by private companies. Therefore, the privatization of media results in a biased presentation based on the market, audience preference, advertisers' pressure, or reduced funding due to lower ratings or governmental funding cuts. The air time or print space available for reports, as well as the requirement to meet deadlines, can lead to incomplete and biased stories. The following sections illuminate how media is biased by profits and political influence and how censorship and agenda setting are commonplace activities in the media.

Media & Profit

As mentioned above, most mainstream media outlets are owned and operated by private corporations, with very few, comparatively speaking, operated by government or nonprofits. For example, the US is particularly corporate: According to the Media Reform Information Center (www.corporations.org/media), only 50 corporations controlled the vast majority of all news media in the U.S in the 1980s. There was, and remains today a "media monopoly" (in reference to Ben Bagdikian's book of the same title). According to Bagdikian, in the 1990s, "fewer than two dozen [media

2. Understanding Influence of Media Discourse on Conflict Situations

outlets]...own and operates 90% of the mass media". (By mass media, we're referring to US newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations, books, records, movies, videos, wire services and photo agencies.) Now, in the 2000s, there are roughly six media conglomerates owning most of the US media: Time Warner, Disney, News Corporation, Bertelsmann, Viacom and General Electric (The New Media Monopoly, 2004, Bagdikian).

Why are media-based conglomerates a profit-driven enterprise? As Bagdikian describes below, if you can control the entire market, from A-to-Z, you can drive the entire process and profit from all elements of the media industry. In the following quote, Bagdikian aptly described the financial incentives behind media conglomerates:

"A magazine owned by the company selects or commissions an article that is suitable for later transformation into a television series on a network owned by the company; then it becomes a screenplay for a movie studio owned by the company, with movie sound track sung by a vocalist made popular by feature articles in the company-owned magazines and by constant playing of the sound track by company-owned radio stations, after which the songs become popular in a record label owned by the company and so on, with reruns on company cable systems and rentals of its videocassettes all over the world." (Bagdikian 1990)

This glib outlook provides merely a rough assessment of media ownership within the US only (based on available information) but undoubtedly similar trends exist in many of the financial and political capitals around the world. The question is, how will the growing trend towards media conglomerates affect the reporting of global news and violent conflict? Since mass media outlets are almost entirely commercial, profit-making organizations that operate within a capitalist system, media outlets prosper by legitimizing

the political-economic system (Entman 1989, Gans 1979, Herman and Chomsky 1988, Qualter 1985). In reporting on conflicts, therefore, the media may be disinclined to report on the driving forces behind the conflict if it implicates corporate interests or advertisers involved with the media outlet.

Media & Politics

Media – in addition to being encumbered by bias and profit-driven enterprise – is not independent of government. The government endorses media by affording it constitutional and other legal rights to operate as an information system. Since the media relies on information provided by the government, its stability and economic welfare would be seriously jeopardized if it were denied access to these resources, (DeFleur, Ball-Rokeach 1989). Media outlets that are dependent on access to and information provided by official sources are too often unwilling to risk alienating these sources with critical coverage. Corporate media outlets are also generally uninterested in offending officials who have the power to regulate business.

Additionally, media outlets generally share the value system of the presiding government. In the US, media are participants in a symbiotic relationship with government and with corporations that results in a continuous affirmation that the state and corporate capitalism are legitimate (Bagdikian 1983, Bennet 1983, Fishman 1989, Herman and Chomsky 1988). Those owning and operating the main media outlets in any given country are likely to be mingling with the country's political elites and sharing the same socio-economic background. As an example of the symbiosis mentioned above, media companies routinely make large contributions to major political parties; the symbiotic reciprocation occurs when millions of dollars are returned in the form of political ads published and

2. Understanding Influence of Media Discourse on Conflict Situations

produced on the very media networks, which make political contributions.

Media & Censorship

Censorship certainly exists within the media as pervasively as bias. Often it is governmental censorship, but more often than not it is the private sector and corporations issuing the censorship. Why would either the government or the private sector be so interested in censorship? Both institutions – public and private – do not want the media to issue a report that frames a government policy or corporate product unfavorably. Advertisers are particularly powerful and particularly inclined to exert censorship rights so that no product earns a bad reputation from a reporter's investigation. But so is government. Think of the US media coverage of the Iraq war, which was particularly prone to various forms of censorship. The most egregious form of censorship was the practice of pooling. Prohibited from direct access to the troops and to certain geographic areas, media were corralled into US-military-escorted pools, taken to sites selected by the US military, and then permitted to interview troops and others or to make observations of military activity (Cockburn 1992, Cohen 1992, Cumings 1992, Fialka 1992, Kellner 1992, MacArthur 1992, Nohrstedt 1992).

Media & Peacebuilding

Beyond media bias, media censorship, profit-driven media enterprises, and media-government interdependency and coordination, what else undermines journalistic excellence? Are there alternatives to the media modus operandi that peacebuilders can practice and implement? Absolutely, there is another way. Peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism are two ways of describing the alternative. There are other terms for this type of

media-based peacebuilding but these terms will do just fine in articulating the possibilities. Take a look on the following.

Peace Journalism

Peace journalism uses media to explain the root causes and conditions of violence – be they structural, cultural, religious, political resource-related, needs-based, etc. – and their impact on people living in these conflict zones. In response to the fear-based problem frame pervasive throughout mainstream media (articulated in the next section), peace journalism frames stories in a way that encourages conflict analysis and non-violent response. Preventive journalism – which is related to peace journalism – encourages preemptive reporting on conflicts before they escalate, and a proactive prescription of peacebuilding approaches to deescalate the conflict before the situation worsens.

Conflict-Sensitive Journalism

Conflict-sensitive journalism encourages reporting, editing and producing media in such a way that the following criteria are considered and presented: all stakeholders' needs, worldviews, and interests within a given conflict (rather than presenting only one perspective); common ground, goals and interests among the stakeholders (rather than presenting only what divides the conflict parties); and peacebuilding potential originating within and among all stakeholders. Conflict sensitive journalism stays clear of language that associates the reporter, editor or producer with one side of the conflict, emotional or vague wording, subjective descriptions of stakeholders (use language to describe people that the people themselves use), and opinions presented as facts.

2. Understanding Influence of Media Discourse on Conflict Situations

Take the following report on Somali piracy by the Financial Times as an example of how conflict-sensitive journalism can offer an alternative. On 11 November 2008 the Financial Times published the following editorial. Examine the article's excerpts below for non-conflict-sensitive journalism that likely exacerbates the conflict situation, alienates stakeholders to the conflict, and does not establish a foundation for all stakeholders' interests to be accounted for (non-sensitive language underlined):

Pirates of the Horn

Published: November 11 2008, FINANCIAL TIMES

"Hardly a week goes by these days without news of yet another vessel being hijacked by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden. The roll-call of attacks and hostage-taking off the Horn of Africa is a cause for alarm. Piracy, of course, is hardly a new phenomenon. Criminal gangs have been exacting treasure on the high seas for centuries. But the lawlessness off Somalia – in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes – needs to be stopped by concerted international action."

Two international naval forces – one run by NATO – are enjoying some success in tackling the criminals. This week, the European Union finalized plans to send its own taskforce to the region at the end of the year.

The Somali gangs operate across a huge expanse of water, covering thousands of kilometers, and are hard to contain. Somalia, meanwhile, is a failed state, unable or unwilling to take action. Until it does so, nothing will stop these gangs engaging in lucrative crime.

Right now, naval forces operating in the region can disrupt an attempted hijack but some experts argue that they lack the legal basis on which to arrest and prosecute gangs. The United Nations Security Council should therefore look to pass a resolution that is far more explicit about the military action that can be

taken by governments against the pirates. Governments cannot ignore the crisis in the Gulf of Aden. The rewards for piracy are high and the problem will grow. One day this phenomenon will trigger a serious environmental disaster, and/or heavy loss of life. It is time to act.

Note how the underlined words portray violent stereotypes or violent action and do not allow for all stakeholders to have a voice at the table. It is very important for peacebuilders to be highly sensitive to the words they choose to use in media. Now observe the author's response to the Financial Times editorial, which attempts to draw attention to the root causes and conditions of the conflict, the needs of the pirates within the conflict situation, and some possible ways to respond or intervene in the conflict situation.

Poverty, Political Instability and Somali Piracy

Published: November 14, 2008, FINANCIAL TIMES

By Michael Shank

Sir, To assume that the pervasive and persistent Somali piracy off the Horn of Africa is sound and fury signifying nothing of political substance, and that the solution to the madness is simply a summoning and tightening of security, is to completely misread the problem ("Pirates of the Horn", editorial, November 11).

The war in the Gulf of Aden waters is merely a reflection of the war onshore. In the last two years, Somalia's war - both between Somali factions and against US-backed Ethiopian troops - has displaced 1m Somalis, generated the country's worst humanitarian crisis since the early 1990s, and killed more than 10,000 civilians. At the height of the chaos, with few incentives on land for Somali renegade entrepreneurs, piracy offered obvious lucrative economic opportunities. Why stay on land and fight Ethiopia's occupying forces (and for what?) when one can rule the seas for riches?

2. Understanding Influence of Media Discourse on Conflict Situations

The underpinnings of Somali piracy are Somalia's poverty and political instability. The key, then, to solving the seas is to promote a humanitarian agenda on land while ensuring good governance within Somalia's transitional federal government. On the former, the west must rally. It has resources; all it needs is the will. On the latter, this is up to Somalis - to be necessarily assisted by an immediate Ethiopian withdrawal and a hands-off approach by the US.

It appears that Somali leaders are headed in this direction. A recent Djibouti-brokered peace agreement between Somalia's government and opposition leaders and a commitment by the TFG to usher in a new unity government and cabinet show that democracy is on its way.

Find stability on land first, then order will return to the seas.

*Michael Shank,
Communications Director,
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution,
George Mason University,
Arlington, VA, US*

The key point and objective in all peace journalism or conflict-sensitive journalism is for peacebuilders to use the media to highlight the basic human needs of all stakeholders within a conflict situation. This will keep you accountable in your use of the media. How? It will encourage you to be mindful of the words you choose, lest they undermine the needs of any stakeholder to the conflict. Attending to all stakeholders' basic human needs ensure respectful language, analysis that illuminates the root causes and conditions, and prescriptions that rightfully attend to all needs, not merely those of one stakeholder.

3. Understanding Our Influence on the Media

When it comes to influencing and transforming the media writ large, beyond the basics and mechanics of peace journalism or conflict-sensitive journalism, what is needed from a macro-level change perspective is to change and transform the narrative which is pervasive within the media. This is no small endeavor, but can be worked at slowly, over time – on a micro and macro level – through coordination among peacebuilding practitioners. This section examines the problem frame propagated throughout the media and how the peacebuilders’ alternative problem-solving approach should be introduced and substantiated within mainstream media.

Media tends to showcase and highlight violence, conflict, and the “problems” in our every day life. Many peacebuilders are deeply troubled by this, and rightly so. Yet, some peacebuilders assume that the media is simply waiting for some good positive peace stories to come their way, or that the media must be in short supply. In some cases, media is interested in hearing alternative opinions and grass-roots insights; GPPAC members will want to be ready to offer opinion when those opportunities arise. Yet, while the media does broadcast constructive contributions from civil society, the media is generally not waiting for good stories. They prefer the problem frame (explained below) and it is within this frame that media-based peacebuilding – at least in the mainstream media – must take place. Worry not, as this does not mean that your peacebuilding has to suffer; simply that you must tailor your media frame to fit appropriately.

Media’s Problem Frame

Within the media, newspapers, television and radio stations present a story about fear – related to genocide, war, crime or other – which is produced and packaged in such a way that presents social complexities as simple problems. The effect of the

problem frame is to produce a discourse of fear that then becomes a resource for the audience to draw on when interpreting subsequent reports. Think of how the war on terrorism has produced a discourse of fear that has a subsequent influence on media discrimination, prejudice and bias. The following example shows how effective media are in promulgating a discourse of fear: an LA Times report (9/11/94) found that 78 percent of Americans felt they were more at risk today than their parents were 20 years ago, and that a large source of this perception is based on crime news coverage. Moreover, the problem-frame tends to be self-reinforcing – as fear of potential danger in the social environment encourages people to stay indoors, where exposure to more fear-based (problem-frame) programs reinforces their anxieties (Gunter, 1987).

Peacebuilder’s

Positive/Solutions-Oriented Frame

Given media’s problem frame peacebuilders must be extra careful about working within this frame. Many in media may think peacebuilders naïve when concepts like “peacebuilding”, “dialogues”, “track two diplomacy”, “confidence-building measures”, “civil society capacity building”, or “problem-solving workshops” are recommended by peacebuilders. Moreover, the language used by peacebuilders may not translate effectively within the parlance and discourse of media. The task for peacebuilders is to maintain the integrity of their recommendations while translating them to fit the current media frame. This does not mean that peacebuilders need to accept discourse that is marginalizing (e.g. terrorists, aliens, etc.) but rather it means that peacebuilders need to watch, observe and find ways to fit their message within the frame of their local, regional, national or international media.

3. Understanding Our Influence on the Media

Worksheet 3:

Redefining the Problem Frame

Step 1:

Select a story from the print media that presents a problem – or conflict – in oppositional terms, replete with fear and impossibility. The objective of this exercise is to begin to equip peacebuilders with a critical lens by which they can read and understand media.

Media's Problem Frame:

Fill in the space below with text from a published story in print media wherein the fear-inducing problem frame was exhibited. Take special care to identify the words or phrases that create or exacerbate fear within the reader. How is the problem frame being presented? Is it being presented by referencing religious frameworks or mythological stories?

Step 2:

Now, take this same story (referenced immediately above) and rewrite it including all the necessary facts, but write it as a peacebuilding practitioner might understand and articulate the story. This exercise is an essential first step in transitioning the media toward the type of media that can positively impact a conflict situation.

Peacebuilder's Solution-Oriented Frame:

In the space below, rewrite the above article using a peacebuilder's positive, solutions-oriented frame. Notice the difference in how the story is perceived and presented. How might this change the reader's mental framework? Will it reduce fear and encourage constructive engagement? Consider how this shift in media frames impacts conflict situations.

4. Responding to Conflicts

Using Print and Online Media

Now that you've got a solid theoretical frame for conflict analysis, conflict response, and the forces and frames that shape and influence media reporting, you're ready to learn how to work with the media to communicate your stories, your analysis and your prescription, starting first with the logistics of how to write for print media, then later in a subsequent section with the logistics of pitching news stories to television, radio and print media.

Why is writing for the media so important? It's listed first in this section and considered so important by the manual's author for the simple reason that you have the most power to control your message within written commentary. When you're being interviewed for print, television or radio media, the reporter, editor or producer may truncate, transform or take your words out of context, making it look like you said something that you didn't mean to say. With written commentary, you control the narrative and the exact wording and have the most control over the message. It also allows you to change the narrative and frame which is pervasive within the media, whereas when you're quoted, you're quoted within the pre-existing media frame (the problem-frame).

Writing for the Media

The following key criteria are the essentials to writing effective commentary for most newspapers worldwide. Most of the world's local, regional, national and international newspapers adhere to the advice below, with very little deviation. The advice below is primarily geared towards op-eds (which is short for "opposite the editorial" page, meaning that your commentary is opposite the commentary written by the newspaper editors). However, please note that the advice below is essentially the same for a letter to the editor, just whittled down to 200-250 words and in direct response to an article already published.

But for now, let's first start with this advice for a commentary op-ed that might run in your local, national or international newspaper.

Follow the news on a daily basis

Timing is critical. Peacebuilders will be most successful when they follow the daily news and respond immediately. News changes fast so even a few days will make a written response no longer publishable.

The article must be 700-750 words

Shorter is even better. Peacebuilders often feel that they need to show the nuance and complexity of a conflict situation and they'll spend 1000-1400 words doing it. Most newspapers have limited space and editors generally won't take the time to cut a long article down to size.

Choose one argument, and then prove it

As a peacebuilder – though you may want to do so – you cannot solve all of the conflict's dynamics in 750 words. Be satisfied with making a single point clearly and persuasively. If you cannot explain your main message in a sentence or two (the elevator speech), you're covering too much.

Introduce your main argument immediately

Editors are reviewing innumerable op-eds on a daily basis and will have little time to review yours. Moreover, you have but 10 seconds to hook a busy reader, so don't waste space with nuanced or esoteric introductions. Just get to the point and convince the reader that it's worth his or her valuable time to continue.

The "so what?" factor

Put yourself in the place of a busy person looking at your article. At the end of every few paragraphs, ask out loud: "So what? Who cares?" You need to answer these questions. Appeals to self-interest usually are

4. Responding to Conflicts Using Print and Online Media

more effective than abstract peacebuilding jargon.

Offer peacebuilding recommendations

An op-ed is your opinion as a peacebuilder regarding how to improve matters. Don't be satisfied with mere analysis. In an op-ed article you need to offer recommendations. How exactly should Virginia safeguard its environment or the White House change its foreign policy? Be specific. You'll need to do more than suggest that opposing parties work out their differences.

Tell stories if possible

Readers remember colorful details better than dry facts. When writing an op-ed article, therefore, look for great examples from the conflict zone (what worked, what didn't) that will bring your argument to life.

Use short sentences and paragraphs

Look at stories in your local or national newspaper, and count the number of words per sentence. You'll probably find the sentences to be quite short. You should use the same style, relying mainly on simple declarative sentences. Cut long paragraphs into two or more shorter ones.

Writing in first or third person

When it comes to op-eds, use the personal voice when appropriate. If you've just returned from a conflict zone, describe the plight of one of your colleagues. If you've worked with poor communities in the US tell their stories to help argue your point.

Remove peacebuilding jargon

When in doubt, leave it out. Simple language doesn't mean simple thinking; it means you are being considerate of readers who lack your peacebuilding expertise and are sitting half-awake at their workroom, lunch table or computer screen.

Be active not passive

Don't write: "It is hoped that [or: One would hope that] the government will..." Instead, say "I hope the government will..." Active voice is nearly always better than passive voice. It's easier to read, and it leaves no doubt about who is doing the hoping, recommending or other action.

End strong

Much like a strong opening paragraph, or "lead," is important because it hooks readers, so too is a strong summary of your argument within the final paragraph. Many casual readers scan the headline, skim the opening column and then read only the final paragraph and byline.

Relax and have fun

Many peacebuilders approach an op-ed article too seriously. Newspaper editors despair of weighty articles.

Author's note

Consistently, three of the main missing elements in the op-ed drafts of peacebuilders (and this manual's author has taught enough "Writing for the Media" graduate courses to witness this) is that the op-ed won't have a single, clear argument presented at the top, the op-ed won't have a clear structure to it, and the language will be too difficult to understand and not easily accessible.

Op-Ed Structure

Using the "author's note" in the previous section as the jumping off point, it is worth identifying and reiterating the ideal structure of an op-ed (as many times as necessary since it constantly eludes writers). The table on the following page identifies the basics of an op-ed structure, using the appended published Guardian op-ed written by Michael Shank and Shukria Dellawar and titled "Waking Up to Afghanistan's Realities", as a sample use of this structure.

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Table 1: Ideal Structure of an Op-Ed

Ideal Op-Ed Structure	Example
Review this structure as many times as needed until it feels normal to use.	Text excerpted from op-ed below by Michael Shank and Shukria Dellawar
Main argument It is best to identify and highlight your main argument in the first or second paragraph of the op-ed	If the US policy of “awakening councils” from Iraq will be mimicked in the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan - they will fail
First supporting statement Statement supports the main argument	First, the credibility of the council concept is dubious at best.
Second supporting statement Statement supports the main argument	Second, tribal dynamics in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions are hardly conducive for councils
Third supporting statement Statement supports the main argument	Third, and most importantly, something more substantial and sustainable than short-term council-queuing is needed to quell the violence in the South Asian hinterlands.
Specific Recommendations/Solutions	New political and economic strategies, then, are needed to curb growing instability...
Strong Ending It is best to have the ending, to the extent possible, wrap up the beginning or reference some theme introduced at the beginning of the op-ed.	Hopefully the only awakening that counsels Obama’s watch is the wisdom of wariness vis-à-vis America’s military modus operandi and a willingness to wage a softer form of US power.

Example Op-Ed

The following sample op-ed is appended to show good use of clear argument presented in the first paragraph (a single point made well), good structure (using “first, second and third”), offering of specific solutions, as well as other adherence to the op-ed recommendations listed above.

Waking Up to Afghanistan’s Realities

By Michael Shank and Shukria Dellawar

The Guardian, December 3, 2008

With Robert Gates remaining at the helm of the US defense department for another term, Barack Obama signals that the Pentagon’s modus operandi changes little. There are pros and cons to this. The good news:

4. Responding to Conflicts Using Print and Online Media

Lessons learned from George Bush's administration will be carried forth, resulting in efficiencies strategically and operationally. The bad news: under newly appointed Centcom chief General David Petraeus the oft-touted "awakening councils" of Iraq will be mimicked in the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan. If this policy is pursued - something former secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld recently discouraged - it will fail.

First, the credibility of the council concept is dubious at best. The creation of councils in Iraq, with the lauded Sunni Sons of Anbar Province, was pursued with the purpose of enticing Sunni insurgents away from the al-Qaida fold. Money and munitions were funneled directly to local leaders at Centcom's discretion. Unsurprisingly, as the US payroll was markedly more profitable, the Sons of Iraq offered loyalty to the highest bidder. The strategy was heralded in Washington by a war-weary Congress hungry for good news. But they misread the newfound allegiance as support for the American cause.

It was anything but. The councils severed ties with al-Qaida due to disputes over ideology, methods of fighting Baghdad's Shia government (attack civilians or officials?), the direction of the insurgency and concern about warfare's impact on civilians. For America, this mattered little. Instead, the US succumbed to short-term gain, neglecting the councils' long-term impact on an increasingly decentralized Iraqi leadership.

When Obama implements the Status of Forces Agreement recently brokered between the US and Iraqi governments, the concomitant American troop pullout of cities in 2009 and the country in 2011 leaves behind a non-inclusive Shia-led Baghdad as the central government and a militarily and monetarily bolstered Sunni-led provincial stronghold. Sadly, this is a reversal of pre-invasion ethnic dynamics, when Sunnis controlled Baghdad politics and Shias were left out. The councils only exacerbate this tension.

Second, tribal dynamics in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions are hardly conducive for councils.

The clarity of choice in Anbar - to fight for al-Qaida or America - is nonexistent in Afghanistan-Pakistan tribal regions. The border's ethnically heterogeneous population - native Pashtun and Hazara or immigrant Tajik and Uzbek - makes messy business if Americans want strict ethnic force formation. Moreover, given America's indiscriminate air raids and a history of imperialist agendas played out locally by US and British forces, many locals loathe America and foreign intervention. Neither money nor munitions will sway them.

Third, and most importantly, something more substantial and sustainable than short-term council-queuing is needed to quell the violence in the South Asian hinterlands.

The security solution requires much more than what military alliances alone can muster. If Obama is not careful, his brigade boosting in Afghanistan and planned pummeling of Pakistan will backfire as it did under the Bush administration. The primacy of hard power will proffer little but alienated Afghans and recruits for the Taliban. Keep in mind that the Taliban grew in number under the Bush administration with some elements allying with al-Qaida and foreign militants in the common cause of forcing foreign troop withdrawal.

New political and economic strategies, then, are needed to curb growing instability. In the short term, efforts to usher in security will need to focus on bringing moderate Taliban elements into the political fold. Robert Gates recognizes this. It requires a re-think about what a conservative "democratic Afghanistan" would look like in the interest of fighting terrorism and bringing peace to the region.

Simultaneously, robust soft power is needed to advance

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good governance, contain opium cultivation, increase reconstruction and focus on state building. Obama's pledge of \$1bn in non-military economic assistance for Afghanistan - equaling, hardly surpassing, secretary of state Condoleezza Rice's similar call - is simply insufficient. (Same too for the similar sum suggested for Pakistan.) The straits are dire in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, with unemployment as high as 80% and locals living on less than \$1 a day. Unless America is willing to focus on the roots of tribal insecurity - poverty, unemployment and illiteracy - the ground will remain fertile for Taliban recruitment and disdain for the near daily dose of American air raids.

Lest Obama continue the failed policies of the Bush administration in Afghanistan and Pakistan, either new blood is needed in the Pentagon or a new strategy is needed on the border. Since Gates and Petraeus are here to stay, hopefully the only awakening that counsels Obama's watch is the wisdom of wariness vis-à-vis America's military modus operandi and a willingness to wage a softer form of US power.

Michael Shank is communications director at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Shukria Dellawar is from Afghanistan and is a graduate student at the Institute. Guardian.co.uk
Guardian News and Media Limited 2008

Example Letter to the Editor

The following sample letter to the editor is appended to show good use of response to a previously published article in the Financial Times in which not all the facts were presented. This letter uses the previously published article as the starting point and then adds (or clarifies, rather) additional information in a very clear structure. The letter states its main argument very clearly in the first paragraph, supports the main argument in the second and third paragraphs, and then

supports specific solutions in the last two paragraphs. It also has a strong conclusion that incorporates a zinger at the end.

High-Level Engagement by US and UK is Needed vis-à-vis Iran

By Michael Shank

Financial Times, July 1, 2008

Sir, Let us for a moment consider the merits of engagement ("A very small step: Pyongyang's nuclear declaration is no breakthrough", editorial, June 27). Three successes in 2008 are particularly salient and worth citing.

US ambassador Christopher Hill's persistent diplomatic penetration of North Korea's notorious and noxious isolationism has finally unearthed some tractable - and previously conflict-ridden - landscape. Former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan's eleventh-hour emergency engagement in Kenya brokered a post-election agreement between the government and opposition parties thought impossible amid the din of violence. The current UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon's meetings with the obstinate military junta leadership in Myanmar opened the door to critical aid deliveries.

In all three cases, high-level engagement greased the wheels towards effective diplomacy if only because the intervening dignitaries offered mere recognition of equality and import to those whose hearts and minds needed winning.

The lesson for Iran is clear. The US, and the UK for that matter, has yet to send any official representative of high standing. In recent nuclear negotiations, David Miliband, the UK foreign secretary, sent his underlings while the US sent no one at all. Have we learned nothing from Mr Hill, Mr Annan or Mr Ban? And that is just in 2008. Forget the fact that many years ago US president Richard Nixon engaged the enemy China, or

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that president John Kennedy engaged the enemy Russia.

On Iran, recognition might just do the trick. And perhaps that is what scares the US most.

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Publishing in the Media

You may be eager to write your first, second or third op-ed right now but before you do so, you'll want to make sure you know which media outlet you'll approach and where you'll submit the final product. This is important because you'll want to figure out which audience you're writing for. Also note that some newspapers don't take unsolicited op-eds. For example, within the US, your op-ed would look very different (in terms of content and style) if you're going to write for a local newspaper or, conversely, if you're going to write for a nationally distributed one. So keep this in mind as you consider where you'll submit your op-ed as it directly impacts your writing style.

Most newspapers will want you to have a local tie-in, i.e. you work locally, live locally, have colleagues locally, etc. Remember, the editors of the newspaper want to make sure that your op-ed will be of interest to their readers. If you're local, it's far more likely that your op-ed will be of interest than if you have no personal or professional ties locally.

Submitting Op-Eds

You can find out through which email address (most newspapers require op-eds to be submitted via email, sometimes fax, and rarely by snail mail) the newspaper receives submissions by searching online. Most newspapers list their op-ed email submissions address on their website. For example, the email address is

often as simple as oped@washpost.com or oped@arabnews.com, etc.

Editors care a great deal about copyright and will only print your op-ed (or letter to the editor) if they are absolutely sure that you've not committed to print it elsewhere. Use this caution as you submit your op-ed around town. It is advisable to proceed from one newspaper to the next, instead of sending your op-ed out to numerous outlets at once.

Submitting Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are generally 200-250 words (newspapers vary in required length, so check with the newspaper). Letters are in direct response to an article already published by the newspaper. You increase your chance of publishing if you respond immediately (the day an article is published for example).

Each letter must refer to the article to which it is responding. For example: "Sir, your article on 1/10/08 titled "Gaza Crisis Unfolds" neglect to identify..."

The email address for submitting a letter to the editor can be found on the newspaper's website. If it's not immediately available, simply call the newspaper and they'll offer it to you over the phone.

A tip on Letters to the Editor: they can be truncated versions of your op-eds, provided you're not repeating yourself verbatim. So after you've written an op-ed and you're up to speed on the topic/conflict, consider writing a shorter version, in letter form, so you can make use of the current analysis you've gained from your op-ed writing.

Submission Follow-Up

After submitting an op-ed, feel free to call the op-ed editors (their contact information is available on the newspaper's website or available if you call the main newspaper phone number) to ensure that your op-ed arrived.

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Most newspapers have an email auto response that tells you how/when they'll respond to you. Be careful that you don't pester the op-ed editors too much as they likely have 100 submissions a day (depending on the newspaper of course), but occasional check-ins are certainly permissible.

Resubmitting op-ed

If your preferred newspaper declines your op-ed submission, plan to submit the op-ed elsewhere, with necessary tweaks and edits to reflect the latest news.

Blogs and Online Media

For many of you, online media is quickly becoming the preferred medium of communication because it is easy to access, affordable, and has an international outreach. Indeed, much of the print media community fears that it'll soon face its demise because of the rising influence and pervasive usage of online media. This is probably a good thing as online media is generally free or cheaper to publish than print media and because it turns the reins of media over to the people, preventing media control based on limited ownership (a practice common among print media). Online media can be used for multiple purposes. Here is a sampling of online media functions:

Blogging

Blogging (or web-logging) is a cheap – and most often free – way of communicating your conflict analysis and resolution prescriptions to and for the outside world. The benefits of blogging are obvious: in most cases (unless censored by the government), you have complete control of what you are posting and can do so whenever you want to. However, there are downsides to blogs that you should be cognizant of. Some blogs appear poorly maintained or give the

viewer the impression that an organization is not firmly established (especially if the blog is simply designed or maintained irregularly). You will want to be aware of what all is being communicated with your blog. Moreover, blogs make unedited commentary even easier to post, leading to unthoughtful, careless or even offensive commentary on occasion. If you do decide to blog, make sure you establish checkpoints along the way which ensure that the quality of conflict analysis and resolution fits with your organization's standards. Here are samples of free blog sites, some of which are geared towards particular media or particular audiences.

Free blogs (geared towards written blogging):

www.blogger.com/start
<http://wordpress.com/>
www.livejournal.com/
<http://blog.com/>
www.bravenet.com/webtools/journal/

Free blogs (geared towards video blogging):

www.blogcheese.com/
www.blogr.com/

Free blogs (geared towards educators):

<http://edublogs.org/>

Free blogs (geared towards text-messaging and camera blogging):

www.busythumbs.com/

Free blogs (geared towards networking):

<http://multiply.com/>
www.xanga.com/

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Archiving:

Print, TV and Radio Media

Archiving is what this manual's author uses online media for most frequently. If you go to www.michaelshank.net you'll see how the author posts all his op-eds and letters to the editor, as well as television and radio interviews. What is the purpose of this? Imagine the usage similar to a library that allows the author to retrieve previously written/televised analysis easily. It also allows the author to convey the message to a reader or viewer that he is an experienced analyst on a range of topics. This may be helpful for you or your organization as you are communicating with national or international donors. Archiving all of your organization's analysis on one website (print, television, radio) collects everything on one page and allows you to present the entirety of your analysis effectively and efficiently. Lastly, it ensures that your analysis is kept for the entirety of your organization's life. Many news agencies do not archive print, television and radio media so it is your organization's responsibility to do so.

Google.com and YouTube.com can host your video for free, whereas personal websites come at a cost.

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Now, for all other news and messaging that you cannot write an op-ed or a letter to the editor about, you'll want to figure out how you can pitch the story to your local, regional or national television, print and radio media outlets. If you can successfully sell the media on the story, then the reporter, editor or producer will cover your news story or event and you'll get "free" press.

This comes with advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that you earn some legitimacy and you gain some free media by having the newspaper, television or radio stations cover your story. The potential disadvantage is that you don't control how the story is being told or communicated to the audience and it is entirely up to the reporter, editor or producer – no matter how well you know or like them – to tell the story as they see fit. Thus, one possible outcome of a media outlet telling your story is that they may tell it or quote you incorrectly and thus compromise you or your peacebuilding organization's good name, reputation and standing within the community. As you work with the media, consider this seriously. It doesn't mean that we stay away from the media because of this risk but it does mean we proceed with caution and judiciousness.

Story Newsworthiness

We want to make sure that the media will consider your story newsworthy. If they don't find it newsworthy, they won't run with the story. Peacebuilders value their work tremendously (as they should) and thus think it is all newsworthy. In an ideal world, the news would be covering all of the peacebuilding work going on out there but unfortunately that's not feasible at present. So make sure you compare your story/event/conflict idea through the following criteria to see if it passes the test. Be somewhat critical of your own work as our

attachment to our own work often makes it difficult to determine its true newsworthiness.

What

Is your story/event/conflict unusual or unique in some way? Unfortunately, just because you think it's important (and given that it's peacebuilding work, it is likely very important) doesn't guarantee that the media outlet will also think it's important. How will your story be beneficial or of interest to the readers or viewers of the media outlet? Figure this out in advance, before calling the reporter or editor.

When

Is your story/event/conflict coordinated with or supportive of an anniversary event or a larger story that's running in the media currently? If the media hasn't been covering similar issues then they may be reluctant to cover your story. Determining the right timing is essential and will require some practice.

Who/Where

Who wants to know about your story? What readerships or viewerships are most appropriate for your particularly story? Which reporters or producers are covering the topics/themes/conflicts involved in your event/story/conflict? This will require research on your part but consider this research a long-term investment as it'll be useful to you in the long run.

How

How will you convey the story to the editor, reporter or producer? You'll want to share briefly, convincingly and concisely about your organization's work, its projects and its mission. You'll want to identify how your organization's work is benefiting the community and why the story is breaking news. You'll want to communicate all of this in non-jargon language that's understandable to the reporter. And you'll want to make sure that the "newsworthy" part of it is presented clearly and concisely near the beginning of

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the conversation or near the beginning of the email/fax text.

Earning media

Beyond these criteria above, how do peacebuilders “earn” media and what can an NGO do to attract media attention beyond producing your own? If you do you work well, you’ll be halfway there. In general, media are going to be attracted to you if you have access to information, individuals, analysis or locations that they cannot access on their own. Media will find you attractive if you are dependable and reliable (will you respond quickly to a story?), have something informed and up-to-date to share (have you been following the story?), and can appear to be a credible source for them to quote (remember their reputation is on the line). Media occasionally find “events” and “conferences” newsworthy but less often than NGOs think, so don’t rely on this. You will earn media if you’re committed to producing quality, informed opinion at a moment’s notice, based on your organization’s good work.

Pitching Stories

(on email, text, fax or phone)

Now that you ran your story idea through the aforementioned criteria, you’re ready to pitch the idea to the press. You or your organization wants the media to tell a specific story about an organizational event, project, success story, individual, conflict, etc. You want the story to be written up in the Nepali Times, Jakarta Post, Miami Herald, Arab News, Guardian UK, Sudan Tribune, or other newspaper and you’ve identified the reporter who would cover such a story (e.g. religion reporter, international affairs reporter, etc.). Or, you want the story to be covered by the local or national

television and/or radio station. What do you do?

If you don’t know who to contact at the newspaper or station, simply call the main phone number and ask who reports on your topic. Most media outlets are fairly good about providing you with the contact information you’re looking for. Once you’ve got their email or phone contact information (which also can often be obtained online), be prepared to do the following:

1. Be helpful and friendly

This is critical. You’re there to offer the journalist, editor or producer a news tip or story. Frame it as if you’ve got their best journalistic intentions in mind. If they don’t bite at the story, don’t get mad or upset with them as you may be working with them again in the future. Humor and small talk are helpful here. Media personnel want to enjoy their work and it’s much better to approach them with some levity even though it might feel strange to do so, given the seriousness of your peacebuilding work.

2. Be clear about the news hook

Imagine that this reporter gets innumerable calls and emails on a daily basis from well-intentioned people who have something equally compelling to offer. Detach yourself from your own news story from a moment. Naturally you think your news story is important, but will they? Run it by some of your friends (ones who can offer you impartial advice) to see if it’s newsworthy. For example, have you seen the newspaper, television or radio station run a similar story? This is one way of determining if your story is newsworthy – i.e. have you seen/heard something like it before in the same paper or TV/ radio station?

3. Go micro then macro

Media loves, first and foremost, the compelling story at a local level. Then, and only then, can you tie it

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into the bigger picture or story – either at a regional, national or global level. So be prepared to tell the local story that will appeal to local viewerships and readerships. Then, because you as a peacebuilder are interested in systemic change at the regional, national and international levels, be prepared to tie this local story into the broader call/need for change.

4. Know your media audience

Study up on the reporter's previous work so that you can refer to his/her articles or shows and make the case why your story fits in with her/his previous trajectory. Make sure you're contacting the correct reporter too. This will require some research on your part so that you know who is the religion reporter, foreign affairs reporter, etc. Also, make sure you're selecting the right media outlet. Some of you might aim for the most read, most popular media outlet while not considering the difficulty of media placement. The result will be discouragement if rejected by the top media outlet. Alternatively, you can start small with a more accessible paper/station that might offer story space that allows you to slowly build up your media portfolio which can later propel you into the bigger papers/stations.

5. Offer media access when possible

Media love access. For example, they want the interview with someone who lives in a refugee camp, who was an ex-combatant, who survived a natural disaster. If media access does not cause harm or undermine the integrity of your organization's work, consider ways in which you can offer the media special access to incentivize their reporting.

6. Practice, practice, practice

Practicing your pitch before getting in touch with the reporter, editor or producer is essential – and especially useful for phone calls. Make sure the story pitch falls easily from your mouth. You have

precious little time with this reporter and you don't want to lose an opportunity simply because you're tripping on your tongue or tripping over your words.

7. Be familiar to the reporter

Reach out to this reporter on a regular basis so that they remember you and are comfortable with you. They want to trust you. They want to know that you're a reliable source of information. Your consistency and familiarity will pay off at some point. The reporter may not run with your first, second or even third story but down the road they may eventually run a story on you. The key is to keep in touch with the reporter on a regular basis so you become a familiar and trustworthy name.

8. Be prepared to do the interview immediately

Sometimes the reporter will want to interview you then and will start asking questions immediately. You don't want to lose this opportunity by saying "can I call you back later so we can talk then?" You'll want to seize this opportunity. The following tips will be useful to you during this interview process:

- a. Prepare responses in advance. Imagine what the reporter might ask you about this topic/event/conflict. Imagine the full range of possible controversial questions and prepare answers to all of these questions.
- b. Prepare examples to illustrate your point. Concise and colorful stories or examples are exactly what the media wants. They love this. It gives the reader or viewer a very tangible example of what you're talking about.
- c. Stick to your talking points. Even though the reporter is interviewing you, it is actually you directing the interview. Why? Because no matter what question is asked of you, always bring it back to your 2-3 talking points.

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d. Answer with specifics and positive solutions.

When you speak in generalities it looks like you don't know what you're talking about. People are more likely to believe you and trust what you're saying if you're able to speak in specifics and offer positive solutions to the problems you're trying to address.

e. Conclusion is critical. Make sure you thank the reporter for their time and willingness to cover this issue. Also make sure the reporter has all the information correctly spelled – i.e. the names of the individuals and organizations you referenced, etc.

Pitching Press Releases

(on email or fax)

A necessary component for any press outreach is what's called the press release. As you prepare for an event or for a news story you'll want to write up a one-page (sometimes two-page) press release that gives a quick, concise and provocative overview of the story, what makes it a story, and all the important details to be known about the story. Press releases are not difficult to write but many organizations do not know how to write effective press releases. Once you get into a routine and habit with writing press releases, you'll be able to churn them out frequently.

The key components to any effective press release must include the following:

Title/Subtitle

Something catchy, something newsworthy. The editor reviews hundreds of press releases daily so you'll want to make sure you catch their attention in the title and subtitle immediately, lest they discard your press release because it didn't grab their attention.

Contact information

Your name with a cell phone and email address must be visible at the very top of the press release so they know who to contact and how to contact them. If this is not immediately visible at the top, they'll be frustrated that they have to hunt for it and may move on to the next story.

First Paragraph

In the first paragraph, you'll want to include ALL the very important information – i.e. who, what, where and when. The reporter or editor must have ALL the relevant information available to them in the first paragraph. Remember, the editor is skimming hundreds of press releases on a daily basis. If they can't assess what the event/story/conflict is about in the first paragraph, they will likely move on.

Second-Fourth Paragraphs

These paragraphs can be used for quotes from the event/story participants, your organization, important persons validating your organization's work, etc. Use these paragraphs wisely, don't simply fill them up to add space to the press release. Make sure the quotes are impactful and useful as the reporter may never call you but rather simply use quotes from the press release in his/her newspaper or radio story.

Final Paragraph

In the final paragraph or two, you'll want to share information about your organization, your accomplishments, and projects of a similar nature to the current project/event/story you're pitching in the press release. This is where you show to the reporter or editor how credible your organization is – how long it's been around, what good work it is doing, etc.

Distribution/Timing

How and when do you distribute the press release? Some media organizations prefer press releases to be faxed to them but in general, press releases can be sent

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out over email and followed-up with a phone call. If you have an event in 2 weeks, you'll want to send out a press release 2 weeks in advance, then again 1 week prior to the event, following-up with calls every time you send out the press release. Phone call follow-up is critical as many media organizations will receive a multitude of press releases every day. Then, a few days before the event, feel free to send out a reminder and follow-up with reminder phone calls. The more communication you employ here, the better.

Selling Stories

Using the September 21st, International Day of Peace, as an example of how to sell a story. Instead of simply trying to sell the story of the "day of peace", think carefully about how to contextualize it within that day's news, or that week's news, or that month's news. For example, perhaps a report just came out that said your city has the highest homicide rates nationally. Use this, e.g. "High Homicide Rates Make Day of Peace More Poignant".

Examples of Press Releases

So you can get a good understanding of how to write a press release, here are a few examples of press releases sent out on behalf of the GMU's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. These press releases pitched both conflict experts and conflict-oriented events.

George Mason University to Host Dialogue between South Ossetian and Georgian Representatives

Contact information: Name, cell phone, email address

George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution will host South Ossetian and Georgian civil society-based peacebuilders from December 16-19 at Point of View, the university's conflict resolution retreat facility at Mason Neck, Va. Susan Allen Nan, assistant professor of conflict analysis and resolution at

George Mason University will lead a group of conflict resolution specialists to facilitate the session. The meeting represents one of the first focused track two or citizen diplomacy initiatives since the August war disrupted Georgian-South Ossetian relations.

These exploratory discussions are intended to generate creative ideas for constructive progress in the overall peace process. During the meeting, participants will discuss the implications of the August war in rebuilding peace and security in the region, as well as assess where civil society initiatives could play a constructive part in improving relations.

"The official Geneva negotiations regarding Georgian-South Ossetian affairs have been plagued by issues of official recognition, with participants disagreeing over the status of individuals at the discussions," said Nan. "The individuals in this track two meeting participate in their own personal capacity and the positions of respect in their home communities offer them the opportunity to share ideas generated at the workshop with their leadership at home."

Mason and ICAR have been involved in several confidential and non-confidential citizen diplomacy initiatives over its 26 year history including talks surrounding conflicts in the Horn of Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

For more information about the meeting or to speak with Susan Allen Nan, contact Jim Greif via phone at (cell number) and via email at (email address).

Professor and Embassy Bombing Survivor Available to Comment on New Charges Brought Against Guantanamo Bay Detainee Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani

Contact information: Name, cell phone, email address

The U.S. Department of Defense announced this

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morning that charges have been sworn against Guantanamo Bay detainee Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani of Zanzibar, Tanzania. The charges, brought under the controversial Military Commissions Act, assert that Ghailani participated in the planning and preparation of the attack on the U. S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on Aug. 7, 1998.

Susan F. Hirsch, associate professor at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, survived the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, but lost her husband in the attack. She is available to comment on the charges brought against Ghailani and the need for justice to be secured under the U.S. Federal Court system, not military commissions.

"The constitutionality of Military Commissions Act proceedings has been questioned repeatedly," Hirsch said. "Whether or not evidence tortured out of Ghailani during the years he spent under interrogation in secret prisons is used against him by military prosecutors, the system itself has been built on coercion, secrecy and political manipulation."

Ghailani has been in custody for several years. Other accused embassy bombers have been tried and convicted in U.S. Federal Courts, and they are serving long prison sentences for their crimes.

The delay in charges has made Hirsch wonder why it has taken so long to bring Ghailani to justice.

"As an embassy bombings victim, I have waited a long time to hear the evidence against Ghailani, but I have little hope that a military commission will satisfy my need for justice," Hirsch said. "In my view, justice cannot result from proceedings that fail to preserve rights enshrined in American law, including the court martial system."

Hirsch is the author of "In the Moment of Greatest Calamity: Terrorism, Grief and a Victim's Quest for Justice," a personal account of her experiences during the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing in Tanzania, the loss of her husband as a victim of the attack and the subsequent trial of four defendants.

If you are interested in interviewing Susan Hirsch, please contact her via phone at (cell number) or via email at (email address).

Preparing for Television and Radio Interviews

Assuming that you've utilized the press release format and pitching recommendations mentioned above, and you've been able to garner a few television or radio interviews, how do you prepare for the interview? This is critical as you'll want to use the few minutes you'll have on television and/or radio as effectively as possible. So consider this prepping process a serious one and pay close attention to each step. The following recommendations will be critical in preparing you for the interview.

Regardless of the interview, your 2-3 primary goals in any interview should be the following:

First, prepare 2-3 talking points that clearly explain you and/or your organization's conflict analysis of and prescription for the situation. Practice these talking points as many times as you can until you feel comfortable so that when the television or radio reporter/host asks you any question, you can respond with your talking points that you have well rehearsed and nearly memorized. Make these talking points simple to remember and easy to understand.

Avoid peacebuilding and conflict jargon and employ

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the same language that is used by the viewership and listenership. Peacebuilders have a tendency to speak esoterically or reference concepts unknown to their audience. The goal here is to present 2-3 talking points that everyone can understand.

Second, deliver the 2-3 talking points in such a way that enables you to be asked back again to the television or radio station. This is important because it serves two purposes. It encourages you to present your ideas in such a way that their viewership and listenership appreciates (which means that you're presentable, clear and concise, understandable, cordial, respectable, etc.). Producers love this because they're mindful of what sells, what viewers like to look at and whom they like to listen to.

If you succeed in impressing the producers and viewers/listeners, it enables you to have a frequent platform for expressing your organization's analysis and to weigh in often with conflict analysis and resolution opportunities. If they like you, they'll add you to a short list of 'who to call' when a specific conflict arises. You want to be on this short list, so always be mindful of your presentation.

Third, remember that 65-93 percent of all communicated meaning, according to communication theorists, is nonverbal. Especially for television interviews, pay special attention to the messages you send to the viewing audience through the symbolic channels of facial expression, body posture, and eye movement. This is essential because these channels carry important information about emotions, energy, and thought.

People send and receive messages both verbally through the words that we choose, and nonverbally through the ways we hold our bodies, the direction of our eyes, the tone of our voice, and the expressions on our face. Peacebuilders often pay little attention to

this, so keep it in mind. Role-playing and mock interviews at home or in the office are good ways to rehearse the nonverbal communication as well as verbal talking points.

Television Interviews

The following recommendations direct you through each part of the interview process, from pre-interview preparation to the actual interview on-air. Make sure you read each point carefully, as each recommendation contains important information.

Pre-Interview

Develop 2-3 messages and talking points (more if necessary but remember to keep it simple and manageable – most audiences won't retain a long litany of messages anyway) and know how to deliver them effectively prior to your interview.

Watch the television show several times, if possible, before going on the show. That way you'll be able to get a sense of the host's style and show's format. Know the exact format of the show: debate, interview, call-in, etc. Is your host partial/impartial, combative/conciliatory, elicitive or suggestive?

Ask the producer or assistant (the one who called you to invite you onto the show) as many questions beforehand so that you come fully prepared for the interview. Do not be afraid to ask the assistant numerous questions, for it's better to come prepared than be surprised by something unknown a few minutes before you go live. For example, ask who the other guests may be and do some research on their positions so you can prepare appropriate responses.

Rehearse the interview in advance with your friends or colleagues. Make the rehearsal as life-like and real as possible. Have your friends constructively critique

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you and ask you the difficult controversial questions so that you can come back to your 2-3 talking points consistently. Remember YOU control the interview; you answer the questions with your own talking points, no matter what the question is.

Choose in-studio interviews over satellite interviews if you have an option. It's much easier to simulate a natural conversation when you're in the studio and much easier to build the relationship with the host and thus increase the likelihood that the host will like you and thus call you back into the studio more often.

Plan to get a recording. Most television and radio stations will record your interview for you if you remember to ask them to do so before the interview begins. If you wait to ask them for a recording until after the interview is over, it is likely that they will not be able to do this for you.

Why? Because most media do not keep archives of their shows, so make sure you ask before the interview begins. Once you have the recorded interview you can upload it to your organization's website (though make sure you ask about copyright issues and give credit to the production company), and thus broadcast your message further.

Studio Interview

Remember the power of nonverbal communication. People want to enjoy listening and watching the interviewee. So keep a pleasant disposition. Project confidence and positivity throughout the interview; this may feel awkward to do while talking about serious conflict issues but it is important nonetheless.

The viewer and listener want to enjoy watching you and listening to you and if you're heavy, morose, negative and upset, the audience may not like you.

Think about your hand gestures as well and use them constructively to illustrate a point but minimally so they're not too distracting.

Keep focused throughout the interview. The crew may be distracting as they'll be moving about throughout the interview. The host might also be distracting as they'll try to surprise you with a question or attack you with skepticism regarding your peacebuilding approach. This will be an exercise in focus.

Talk to the host by name. In prefacing questions, feel free to use their first name – or if you prefer to be more formal their last name w/ "Mr." or "Mrs." as the salutation – as a way of showing respect and deference to the host. This helps you build the personal relationship with the host, improving the likelihood that they'll call you back again.

Speak as if everything is on-record. Never assume that a host or reporter will respect an "off-the-record" comment. Media can be quite legalistic about this. Proceed with your talking points recognizing that anything you say can and will be attributable to you. Know that even verbal fillers like "well", "uh", "um" is being communicated to the audience as well.

Satellite Interview

Check your ears and eyes, first and foremost. What does this mean? Make sure your eyes are looking directly at the camera. This will feel weird but the audience is going to be looking directly at your face. So make sure your eyes are not shifting, moving, and looking elsewhere, distracted by the crew or noise. This reads poorly on camera.

With respect to your ears, make sure that your earpiece (connecting the audio so you can hear the host) fits properly. Move your jaw around as if you're talking to

5. Pitching Conflict Stories to Media

see if it slips out before starting the interview. Earpieces have been known to pop out of the ear during an interview. If this happens, just stay focused and push it back in your ear. Don't panic, be professional, and reinsert it immediately.

Messaging

Deliver your key messages immediately.

Sometimes an interview only lasts a minute or two because of breaking news elsewhere, so you want to make sure you address your key messages at the very beginning. Then, if the interview lasts longer, you can expound on your key messages by adding info/stories to make your key messages more robust. But don't worry about repeating your key messages in different ways; in fact, it is encouraged. Audiences need to hear something 2-3 times for it to sink in anyway.

Be cool and calm. You may make a mistake – folks often do – or you may be rattled by something the host said. This is where rehearsal and practice is so important (with your friends asking you surprising and controversial questions).

Stay collected throughout the entire interview; don't let the host unnerve you. Your message will be conveyed to the audience in a more believable, impartial, analytical and professional way if you're calm and cool. Take care to avoid satire and sarcasm, as it doesn't play well and your intended message may be misinterpreted by the audience.

Talking

Speak slowly and with tonal variety. Many people speak too fast because of nervousness or because of a desire to deliver all the key messages in the shortest period of time. Avoid this – especially if you're being translated simultaneously. If you're being translated simultaneously you'll definitely want to speak slowly

enough (it will feel awkward) so that the translator will be able to communicate all of your messages most effectively.

Additionally, make sure you use tonal variety instead of delivering the entire interview in one tone. Words can and should be emphasized appropriately so that the listener or viewer does not shut off because of monotone delivery.

Clothing

In general, wear clothes that are gray, blue and/or brown. Stay away from sharply contrasting colors like white or black; they don't read well in the light, they may be too harsh or absorb too much light. Stay away from striped, checked or other patterned designs. The camera will distort any design so avoid them. Stay away from other distracting items – you want the viewer to look at your face, not your clothing – including jewelry, earrings, brooches, buttons, etc.

Glasses are also distracting if they reflect too much light or provide glare. Be aware of this. Lastly, you'll likely sweat – which is also distracting – because of how hot the studio gets from the light. Dress accordingly, wear makeup if necessary and bring a handkerchief to wipe your forehead before the interview if necessary.

Radio Interviews

In general, most of the television interviewing mentioned tips above can be applied to radio interviewing as well. The following section on radio interviews will not duplicate the television section's recommendations and advice. What you see below is what is unique to radio. In preparing for radio interviews, make sure you read the relevant advice listed in the television section first before you read the remaining advice below.

5. Pitching Conflict Stories to Media

Pre-Interview

See television section

Tape yourself practicing the interview, that way you can replay the mock interview, hear your voice inflection and tonal variety, and rhythm, pace and cadence of speech patterns. Do this as many times as you'd like: more practice makes a better interview.

Prepare information sheets for reference within the interview. Unlike television interviews, the audience cannot see you, so you can use these sheets to note facts, stories, and statistics that will be helpful in your interview. Be careful about relying on these though because you don't want to sound like you're reading off a sheet. Use them only for quick mental reference.

Studio Interviews

See television section

Listen and learn. If you're participating in a call-in show where callers are phoning in to ask you questions, make sure you listen carefully to the question and refer to the caller – and the radio station's call letters – by name so that you can easily earn respect and credit from the listener and the radio station.

Phone Interviews

Secure a safe landline and a safe conversation place. Make sure you're not doing the interview by cell phone if at all possible; a cell phone does not guarantee good reception and risks the chance of interruption or a dropped call. Make sure that you do not have call waiting activated as that can disrupt a phone interview. Secure a quiet space for yourself where you know you will not get interrupted by colleagues, kids, friends, etc.

Messaging

See television section

Speaking

See television section

Articulate your words carefully. Radio is different than television in that certain words can resonate badly within a microphone. For example, if you say a word that starts with "P" the microphone might emit a popping sound which is annoying to listeners – so be careful about how you pronounce your words. It is also wise to do a vocal warm-up beforehand so your lips and mouth are ready to go.

Bundle concepts in short phrases or sentences.

With radio, all the listener is working with is your voice. And since most communicated learning is done nonverbal, it makes it doubly difficult to convey a message. So make sure you speak in short sentences and package your concepts in shorter sound bites. This is critical for radio.

In Sum

Finally, relax into the art of interviewing for radio and television. Over time, you'll feel more comfortable with the on-camera, on-air interviewing, and it will get easier and easier the more you do it. If you make a mistake or two in a radio or television interview, don't sweat it. Mistakes are normal. The key is to get back up and do it again as soon as possible so you don't get intimidated by the interview process. And good luck. Remember, we need the peacebuilding message out there in mainstream media and we're counting on you to pass along that message. It's an important task, and you can do it.

6. Passing on the Knowledge

Now that you've learned how to conduct basic conflict analysis, to determine appropriate conflict response, to assess media bias, frames and influence and to reach out to the media effectively, how do you pass on this knowledge and skill set to your fellow peacebuilders?

The key in any media skills-building training is to provide as many opportunities for peacebuilding practitioners to practice, whether it is writing op-eds or doing mock television and radio interviews. On media skills, the focus of any training **MUST** be on trial and error through experimentation. As a media trainer, spend less time on talking and more time on doing.

Finally, in workshop trainings, a read of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* book as well as John Paul Lederach's *Preparing for Peace* book would be helpful. Both books talk about how we can work most effectively with peacebuilders and the organizations and peoples we're trying to empower. A philosophical and pedagogical requirement in any workshop training is: 1) to see your participants as resources – not recipients – of knowledge and ideas, 2) to find ways to elicit ideas and solutions rather than prescribing solutions for them, and 3) to work together as a team to engage in constructive problem solving.

You'll notice that most of the exercises below enable the participants to generate location-specific and context-specific answers and solutions. This is because my manual composed in North America will have little ability or capacity to understand or articulate what is appropriate for a different context. The participants drive the process.

Manual I:

Analyzing and Mapping the Conflict

We cannot emphasize enough the need to map out a conflict situation first and foremost before taking on any media campaign or media approach. If the conflict needs transformation or healing and you haven't first conducted sufficient conflict analysis and proceed to wage nonviolent conflict through your op-eds and television and radio interviews, then you've applied the incorrect conflict response and will likely make the conflict worse rather than ameliorate it.

In mapping the conflict, encourage your peacebuilding practitioners to assess the following:

- **Human Needs:** Identify the basic human needs of all the stakeholders within the conflict. Use Worksheet 1 in the manual to identify all the stakeholders' basic human needs.
- **Stage/Phase:** Identify what stage or phase is the conflict in. Use Worksheet 2 in the manual to identify the stage(s) in which the conflict resides.
- **Peacebuilding Response:** Identify what response is needed: waging nonviolent conflict, reducing direct violence, transformation of relationships, or building capacity. Use Worksheet 1 to identify how the peacebuilding community is responding to the conflict.
- **Media Inventory:** Identify how the media is undermining the stakeholders' capacity to meet their basic human needs. Use the Worksheet 1 to identify the multiple ways in which the media is using language that threatens or frustrates the meeting of stakeholders' needs.

6. Passing on the Knowledge

- **Media-Based Peacebuilding:** Plot out possible ways your peacebuilding organization could use media to begin addressing unmet human needs of all stakeholders within a conflict situation. Use Worksheet 1 for this exercise.
- **Media & Politics:** Encourage your practitioners to identify and map out the relations between media owners and political representatives. Compare the value systems of the media with the value systems of the government – are they similar, different? Identify the laws – or lack of laws – guiding media freedoms. Have them answer the following questions: Does local media generally report favorably on governmental politics and decisions? What happens to media that report unfavorably on government? How closely aligned are media and political communities both socially and professionally?

Manual II:

Understanding Media Influencing on Conflict Situations

Since media's capacity to influence conflict situations will inherently differ in each situation, this manual's explication of media's relationship with bias, profit, politics and censorship was limited in scope and application. There is a need, therefore, for each region and locale to identify the forces impacting and influencing the media's ability to report on, and thus potentially influence, local conflict situations.

- **Media & Bias:** Encourage your peacebuilding practitioners, in whatever learning methodology appropriate to your training environment, to identify – through listing, small group exercise, or conversation – how pervasive media bias is within their community. Have them answer the following questions: Does bias exist, how strongly? Is media bias discussed within media and/or nongovernmental arenas? Or is it taboo? Are any nongovernmental organizations working on monitoring and managing media bias?
- **Media & Profit:** Encourage your practitioners to research and then identify all private sector forces driving media reporting. Have them answer the following questions: Are media owned privately or publically? Who owns the media in your context and do the owners own any other corporations that may only prefer favorable reporting?
- **Media & Censorship:** Encourage your practitioners to discuss whether or not they think censorship exists within their media. If so, how much and on what topics? Have them answer the following questions: Does the media withhold information or truthful reporting on some topics, if so which ones and why do you think they do so? Do you think the readership recognizes the censorship or is the media assumed to report truthfully without censorship?
- **Media & Peacebuilding:** Have your practitioners go through the previous four categories – media & bias, media & profit, media & politics and media & censorship – and brainstorm collectively ways in which their local peacebuilding community can address these obstacles to obtain optimal media reporting (reporting that helps not hinders conflict situations). Have your practitioners identify how each of the four (bias, profit, politics and censorship) impacts conflicts in their environment.
- **Peace Journalism:** Encourage your practitioners (in small groups or as a whole) to write their own definition of peace journalism. What would peace journalism look like in their environment and how would they describe peace journalism to their colleagues?

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- **Conflict-Sensitive Journalism:** Encourage your practitioners to list out all the language phrases/ words that are insensitive to stakeholders within a conflict situation. What would conflict-sensitive journalism look like? How would they describe or define it? As peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism is going to be differently described and manifested in every cultural context, these exercises are particularly important for local peacebuilders to do on their own.

Manual III:

Understanding Our Influence on the Media

Work with your peacebuilding practitioners to think critically about the frames within which current local media is being presented. What religious, economic (free market?) archetypal, or mythological frames dominate the media and the lens it uses to report the news? The problem frame is pervasive throughout most media (regardless of locale) so the goal of peacebuilders who are interested in transforming this media frame must be to present constructive alternatives that are oriented toward identifying positive solutions instead of accentuating the problem.

Using the Worksheet 3 in the manual, work with peacebuilding practitioners on several media articles to transform the pervasive media frame into a peacebuilding frame which identifies positive solutions. Do this with several articles to get good practice at it.

Manual IV:

Responding to Conflicts Using Print Media

Tip for this section: Practice, practice, practice. The only way to learn how to write is by writing and practicing over and over and over again. In working through the steps on the following page, you'll want to have the diagram listed under "Op-Ed Structure" (see page 30) available to you as that will support your step-by-step process below.

Step 1: Encourage the practitioners to pick a conflict they know well and that they are passionate about.

Step 2: First and foremost, discuss the conflict/story with the practitioners and help them identify what main point/argument they want to present within their op-ed or letter to the editor. They **MUST** be able to articulate their main point/argument within one sentence or two. Help them articulate it in front of the entire training session.

Step 3: Once they've identified their main point/argument in response to the conflict situation that both interests them most and the one they know most about, have them identify 2-3 reasons that back up and support their main point and argument.

For example, if their main point/argument is "the US should stop bombing Pakistan", then encourage each peacebuilding practitioner to identify the 2-3 reasons why they think the US should stop bombing Pakistan.

Step 4: Work with practitioners to identify a specific solution to present after they've articulated the 2-3 sub-points supporting the main point. For example, if the main point is "the US should stop bombing Pakistan" and the 2-3 supporting points are 1) because

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it'll increase extremism, and 2) it doesn't address the actual problem, then help the practitioners figure out what a positive peacebuilding policy solution would look like. For example, perhaps the positive solution is that we should offer economic development and democratic/civil society development instead.

Step 5: Once these key components are identified – main argument, supporting sub-points, positive solutions – and articulated easily by the practitioner in a workshop format, then and only then will you want to begin the writing process. But it is imperative that the steps above are followed before writing. It'll be much easier if pursued this way. Help practitioners decide where the opportunity lies for op-ed writing or letter writing (i.e. is the newspaper easy to publish in? Difficult? Is it better to submit a letter to a larger newspaper while submitting an op-ed to a smaller paper?).

Step 6: After practitioners draft op-eds or letters to the editor, review and compare them with the "Op-Ed Structure" found earlier in the manual. Have the op-eds peer reviewed by in the entire class, not just the instructor. Why? Because if the op-eds aren't understandable and accessible by fellow practitioners, they probably won't be accessible and understood by the general public. Peer review is essential.

Step 7: Help the practitioner go through the op-ed or letter submission process. It can be scary but once they do it a few times it becomes much easier. Share tips with the group based on your own experience and if good relations with op-ed editors exist, share them with practitioners where appropriate.

Manual V:

Pitching Conflict Stories to Media

Tip for this section: Much like the last section on writing for the print media, the skills and tools identified in this section must be practiced, practiced and practiced – only through practice will the skill be learned. That goes for writing and pitching press releases as well as television and radio interviews.

Step 1: The challenge of newsworthiness is no small challenge. Take this task very seriously as many peacebuilders believe their event or story is newsworthy when it's actually not. So in the manual where the "who", "what" "when" and "how" is being explored and scrutinized, encourage critical thinking among your workshop participants. Have participants submit "newsworthy stories" to the large group and have them peer reviewed for newsworthiness.

Step 2: Once the newsworthy story has been identified, have the participants write a press release to pitch to the press (based on the press release format described in Manual Section V above, or based upon a more context appropriate press release format that is preferred locally). Have participants practice several press releases so they get the hang of it. Many peacebuilders find this task very difficult to do as they don't know what to highlight or how to highlight it. So have participants write many press releases and have them peer reviewed each step of the way.

Step 3: Encourage a discussion of which media outlets are appropriate to pitch with the press releases now drafted. Which are the right media targets? How do participants reach out to those specific targets? This is an inherently localized conversation and cannot be directed by this manual. Only helpful hints are possible, which have already been identified above in Manual Section V.

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Step 4: Imagine that the media has positively responded to the press release and now wants a television or radio interview with the peacebuilding practitioner. The following must now be rehearsed in the workshop setting, as many times as possible with as many in the room as possible. Remember practice is the only way to learn.

First: Identify and rehearse 2-3 talking points for the television or radio interview. Have workshop participants do this for the conflict that they are going to address via television and/or radio. This is a must. Have them present these 2-3 talking points in front of the entire workshop group.

Second: Review all other television and radio interview advice and protocol articulated above in Section V – including what to wear, what to ask, how to present, how to move, what to know before going into the interview, etc.

Third: Practice television and radio interviews with workshop participants. Role-play the entire scenario with participants taking the role of the interviewer, the producer, the interviewee, the crew, etc. Do this as many times as possible until they feel comfortable with the format. Ideally, you're recording these interviews on a digital video camera or an audio recording device of some sort so that you can review them later and improve upon what you've reviewed. However, if you don't have a recording device, you can still practice, which is the important task.

Step 5: Retrieve a copy of the television and/or radio interview and post on your organization's website, share with networks, etc. The key is to spread the message far and wide so that the analysis and positive solutions go as far as possible and make the widest impact imaginable.

A Final Note from the Author

Good luck and blessings on your critical and important work with the media. Hopefully you found this manual useful in building your own skills as well as the skills of fellow peacebuilding practitioners. Remember, the key to successful penetration of the mainstream media is persistence and perseverance. One cannot realistically expect the media to run your op-ed or interview you on television or radio after one or two tries. Be ready and willing to work on this media outreach for the next few weeks, months and years. It takes and requires that level of commitment. This is not a one-off experience. Furthermore, peacebuilding needs our continuous and

constant engagement with the media. We recognize that the media has the capacity to create, shape, transform, exacerbate and alleviate conflict. If that is the case, it is incumbent upon us to know how to work with the media and be active within the media community. It is our shared responsibility. It is a long-term commitment. But then again, peacebuilding is a long-term commitment. Good luck with your media-based peacebuilding efforts. They are desperately needed. Let us carry this responsibility forward and change the world – one op-ed, one television interview and one radio interview at a time.

Resources

Journalism & Ethics Organizations

Committee of Concerned Journalists:

<http://www.journalism.org>

Journalism Values Institute:

<http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?id=3273>

Radio-Television News Directors Association & Foundation:

<http://www.rtnda.org/ethics/fepcg.shtml>

Society of Professional Journalists:

<http://www.spj.org/ethics>

American Society of Newspaper Editors Statement of Principle:

<http://www.asne.org/kiosk/archive/principl.htm>

Radio-Television News Directors Association & Foundation Ethics Guidelines:

<http://www.rtnda.org/ethics/ethicsguidelines.shtml>

Associated Press Managing Editors Code of Ethics:

<http://www.asne.org/ideas/codes/apme.htm>

Gannet Newspaper Division Principles of Ethical Conduct for Newsrooms:

<http://www.asne.org/ideas/codes/gannettcompany.htm>

Society of Professional Journalists:

<http://spj.org/ethics.asp>

Codes of Ethics of American newspapers:

<http://www.asne.org/ideas/codes/codes.htm>

European Media Codes of Ethics:

<http://www.uta.fi/ethicnet>

International Media Codes of Ethics:

<http://www.ijnet.org/code.html>

Academic Study in

Journalism Ethics

Ethics Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication:

http://www.jcomm.uoregon.edu/~tbivins/aejmc_ethics/LINKS/newsletter.html

University of Missouri Freedom of Information Center:

<http://www.missouri.edu/~foiwww/index.html>

University of Indiana Case Studies in Journalism Ethics:

<http://www.journalism.indiana.edu/ethics>

Dartmouth Institute for the Study of Applied and Professional Ethics:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/artsci/ethics-inst/>

International Center for Information Ethics:

<http://icie.zkm.de>

University of Minnesota Silha Center:

<http://www.silha.umn.edu>

Journalism Ethics by Dr. Sam Winch:

<http://www.medialaw.com.sg/Jethics.htm>

New York Times Learning Network:

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/weblines/491.html>

Journalism Ethics Course, Towson State University:

<http://www.towson.edu/~bhalle/ethics.html>

Guide to using the World Wide Web in Ethics Teaching and Research:

<http://ethics.acusd.edu/resources.html>

EthicNet:

<http://www.uta.fi/ethicnet>

Books on Media & Ethics

Books on Media and Journalism Ethics (links to Amazon.com):

<http://www.ethicsweb.ca/books/media.htm>

Books and documents relating to Media Ethics:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0401/ijge/gj10.htm>

Articles on Media Ethics, Privacy and Investigative Reporting:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/journalism/nwsethicsbib.html>

Abstracts of articles on Journalism Ethics:

<http://jmme.byu.edu/abstract2.html>

Articles on Media Credibility:

<http://www.webcredibility.org/literature.html>

Media Reform Advocacy Groups

Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting:

<http://www.fair.org/index.php>

Media Channel:

<http://www.mediachannel.org/>

Media Alliance:

<http://www.media-alliance.org/>

Center for Creative Voices in Media:

<http://www.creativevoices.us/>

Take Back the Media:

<http://www.takebackthemediacom/index.shtml>

Reclaim the Media:

<http://www.reclaimthemediacom.org/>

Media Tank:

<http://www.mediatank.org/>

Free Press:

<http://www.freepress.net/>

Media Matters:

<http://mediamatters.org/>

Action Coalition for Media Education:

<http://www.acmecoalition.org/>

Media Watch:

<http://www.mediawatch.com/>

Media Transparency: The Money behind the Media:

<http://www.mediatransparency.org/>

Rocky Mountain Media Watch:

<http://www.bigmedia.org/>

Media Geek:

<http://www.mediageek.org/>

Media Transparency:

<http://www.mediatransparency.org/>

Media Tenor:

<http://www.mediatenor.com/>

The Media Monopoly/Corporate Media Ownership

The New Media Monopoly:

<http://www.benbagdikian.com/>

The Big Ten:

<http://www.thenation.com/special/bigten.html>

Who Owns What:

<http://www.cjr.org/owners/index.asp>

Global Concentration:

<http://www.mediachannel.org/ownership/front.shtml#chart>

Networks of Influence:

<http://projects.publicintegrity.org/telecom/report.aspx?aid=405>

Well Connected:

<http://projects.publicintegrity.org/telecom/>

Mega-Media's Interlocking Directorates:

<http://www.fair.org/media-woes/interlocking-directorates.html>

Media Industry Efforts to Eliminate and Weaken the Ownership Rules:

<http://www.democraticmedia.org/issues/mediaownership/>

PBS's Media Giants Site:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/giants/>

Mega-Mergers in the Telecommunications Industry:

<http://www.cep.org/megamergers.html>

About the Author

Michael Shank is now the Communications Director for US Congressman Mike Honda (CA-15). From 2007-2008, Michael was the communications director at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. At the University, Michael advised the Institute's conflict experts on strategic media and policy initiatives related to domestic and international conflicts.

For the past decade, Michael has worked as an analyst-adviser to the UN, government and non-governmental representatives in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia and the United States on "Track II" diplomacy initiatives, energy, environmental and security policy. In 2006, Michael served as the Press Secretary for Citizens for Global Solutions - a Washington-based organization advocating on behalf of international

institutions, law and treaties - handling communications and media relations for the organization. In 2004-2005, Michael served as the Director of Public Affairs for World Culture Open in New York City. In that role he coordinated with UN agencies and Culture Ministers to develop culture-based analyses and frameworks for development and diplomacy initiatives.

As a doctoral candidate at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Michael writes regularly for the *Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *The Hill*, *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia), *International Herald Tribune/Daily News* (Egypt), *News International* (Pakistan), and *Foreign Policy in Focus*. Additionally, Michael is a senior analyst for Foreign Policy in Focus and is a frequent on-air analyst for CTV News, Al Jazeera, Air America, and Voice of America's Pashto, Dari, Urdu and Somali services.

