

S-CAR News

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Harold H. (Hal) Saunders (1930-2016)

By Kevin Avruch, Dean and Henry Hart Rice Professor of Conflict Resolution, kavruch@gmu.edu

"Governments cannot do the whole job themselves. Increasingly, change comes from the bottom up and not from the top down. Increasingly governments find themselves paralyzed to do what they ought to do. And the Arab-Israeli peace process is a very good example of a conflict in which political authorities seem paralyzed and unable to do what they need to do. Small wonder then that groups (of citizens increasingly) gather. . .to attempt to change that relationship from the inside out."

Hal Saunders died peacefully at home, on the morning of March 6, 2016. Since the 1980s, in what was then ICAR, Hal was a devoted friend and supporter. He taught for us, mentored students, graced our conferences, and in general lent to us his considerable reputation and gravitas.

Hal worked under six U.S. presidents. He joined the



Harold (Hal) Saunders.
Photo: Kevin Avruch.

National Security Council staff in 1961, serving through the Johnson and Nixon administrations as the Council's Mideast expert. During the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars he accompanied Henry Kissinger on the famous shuttles. He was appointed deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs in 1974, and in 1978, under President Carter, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs. He was the principle

architect of the Egyptian-Israel Peace Treaty and, with Carter at Camp David, of the Camp David Accords. According to the obituary released by the Kettering Foundation (where he had recently retired as Director of International Affairs), "In the early morning hours of November 4, 1979, a call was patched through to his home from Tehran, and over the next two hours he listened to the overrun of the American Embassy. For the next 444 days, Saunders worked tirelessly to free the American hostages, culminating in their release on January 20, 1981."

Hal left government service soon thereafter and worked for a number of institutes and foundations, including Kettering. But Hal saw his work there as beyond analysis and consultancy.

Like John Burton and John McDonald, also important figures in our School's history, Hal was among a number of high government officials who followed a distinguished career in Track One diplomacy with an equally vital one in Track Two.

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Commentary

Colombia's Protracted Social Conflict: Is it Time We Listened to the Fighters?

By Philip K. Abbot, MS Student, pabbot2@masonlive.gmu.edu

For over fifty years the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia- People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército Popular) or FARC-EP, have been locked in a vicious cycle of violence, mixed with sporadic negotiations. As the March 23rd deadline for a peace deal quickly approaches, Colombians seem poised for peace. Even a recent Washington Post article praises *Plan Colombia* - a United States military and diplomatic aid initiative aimed at combating Colombian drug cartels and left-wing insurgent groups with the goals of ending the Colombian armed conflict and creating an anti-cocaine strategy - for opening the way toward a peace settlement. And yet, this fractured society remains challenged by exclusionism, absolutism, and a persistent threat to human security. With this in mind, simply signing a peace agreement is not the same as building peace.

Regrettably, in developing a peacebuilding strategy, there were two questions that were routinely overlooked. The first is why does Colombia's protracted social conflict defy resolution and the second, what can be done to reverse this vicious pattern? Part of the answer can be learned by listening to all the voices from history. Thus, instead of trying to resolve this conflict using a dominant narrative backed by coercion, perhaps harmonizing differences through a multi-level dialogue may be the path to transformational change. As I listen to former FARC members and wounded Colombian soldiers tell their stories, it is not *Plan Colombia* that brings hope to Colombia, but rather cognitive change that succumbs to moral imagination.

In 2011, I was appointed by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta as the Defense Attaché/Senior Defense Official at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota. This allowed me the unique opportunity to sit down and talk with hundreds of wounded Colombian soldiers and voluntarily demobilized FARC soldiers. After listening for hours to their fascinating stories, what struck me most about these two identity groups was how very similar they actually were in nearly every aspect of life. Indeed, these two groups come from the same socio-economic background with the same dreams of raising a family, aspirations of finding a dependable job, the hope of one day really being able to fully integrate into Colombian society as productive citizens,



Left to right: Colonel Philip K. Abbott, U.S. Army (Retired), Jhon Jairo Solórzano, and Jose Ilver Anacona Ortiz (Colombian Soldiers wounded by FARC improvised explosive devices).

Photo: Lic. Nancy Liliana Bello Quintero.

and finally with the same wishes or assurances of someday being able to enjoy life happily ever after.

There is a striking consistency in the demographic profile of these two identity groups. Besides growing up in similarly impoverished and socially marginalized villages, their life's major decisions were influenced by social humiliation and rejection. In both cases, their futures would be sealed based on a decision made at a very young age. Their choices were simple; to join the Colombian military, FARC or one of the many Criminal Bands (Bandas Criminales – BACRIM) that are involved in some form of illicit activity. Their options were limited as they contemplated which career path they would pursue.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the recruitment strategies for the Colombian military, FARC, and BACRIM could easily persuade an individual to join their organization. But because many of these would-be recruits were still too young to officially join the military, this left them with few alternatives.

I met Fidelia Arevelo Velandia, alias “La Garza,” at one of the individual demobilization sites in the outskirts of Cali. Located in southwestern Colombia in Valle de Cauca Department, there are actually five demobilization centers managed by the Colombian Joint Command in different geographical locations throughout Colombia. Demobilization centers are permanent structures used to house and process former FARC members who escaped the guerrilla organization and through local contractors, the Joint Command processes individuals in three phases. The first phase is the voluntarily demobilization and disarmament of the individual, and this is followed by a psychological evaluation and basic education phase done in one of the demobilization centers. The final phase is the actual reintegration into civilian life and in theory, this is when individuals are supposed to become productive members of Colombian society, but reality suggests a less positive outcome.

Unlike the uniqueness of this all-female demobilization center Fidelia was transitioning through, her story was anything but unique. In fact, it was very similar to hundreds of other stories I heard previously. She was poor, had little education, and she came from a village left behind by the Colombian government.

Continued online at: scar.gmu.edu/newsletter-article/colombias-protracted-social-conflict-it-time-we-listened-fighters

The Shia Sentinel: Fighting for a Democratic Dream

By Mustafa Akhwand, MS Student, makhwand@masonlive.gmu.edu

Many years of authoritarian rule and grievances in Tunisia ignited a popular wave of protests demanding social and political change. These efforts, which later became known as the *Arab Spring*, quickly spread to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Spring usually renews, rebuilds, and brings a renewed sense of purpose. This was the case in Tunisia and Egypt, where long-time dictators resigned from their posts and the people achieved a sense of reclaiming their democracy.

However, not all such actions across the region proved to be joyous as the years progressed. It became clear that even spring could be categorized under discriminatory vocabulary. While the struggle for freedom (or democracy) was internationally proclaimed for nations such as Libya, for others the struggle for freedom was labeled under “terrorism.”

Like Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, the citizens of Bahrain also asked for democracy and equal representation, but their struggle was not recognized. Bahrain holds a majority Shia population that is ruled by a monarchy. The Khalifa monarchy has ruled the archipelago of Bahrain since 1783, with power passing from father to son, and for centuries, the citizens of Bahrain have been denied the right to make decisions on their government. Those who have expressed dissent have been detained unjustly, and many have even had their Bahraini citizenship revoked. As with the citizens of Egypt, Bahrain's people also rose in anger and asked for change but lacked sufficient representation and their efforts led to even more oppression and resentment.

At the time of the Arab Spring, I was working for a non-violent organization called *Freemuslim Association Inc*, that was operating in Iraq to bring peace and counter extremism in the Middle East by educating families against radicalism as a response to grievance. As I was following the events in Bahrain, I realized that their plight did not make the news like elsewhere. Bahrain is one of the numerous Shia majority nations around the world and I became interested in the situation because, although geographically small, Bahrain has a long standing trade history with western powers such as the United States and United Kingdom, yet it seemed their plight was not internationally recognized. Even before these wave of protests



Mustafa Akhwand (on the right) visiting Kuwait explosion victims.

Photo: Mustafa Akhwand.

started, the many human rights violations being committed in the country remained unaddressed by world powers.

In fact, it seemed as though whenever the Shia were involved, there was no action. Thus, the apparent media bias towards the Shia minority not only undermined the Bahraini struggle for democracy, but also minimized the fact that extremist groups were systematically targeting this population.

Shia Muslims worldwide constitute about 10 -13% of the Muslim population, representing a multi-cultural

faith, independent from any geographical and political region. Historically, Shia Muslims have been vocal in their criticism of injustice, which has led to them being widely persecuted.

I could not stand idly by as these atrocities were being perpetrated against Shia Muslims and that prompted me to start Shia Rights Watch (SRW), an independent organization dedicated to define and protect the rights of Shia Muslims around the world. SRW mainly conducts research in different countries, documents minority oppression, and formulates grassroots and government recommendations to ease and minimize these conditions. To date, we have issued more than twelve research publications in different countries analyzing the situation and shedding light on the violence endured. Examples of such reports are *The Lost Generation*, in which the over 550 Bahraini minors detained were disclosed, the *Untold Stories* of Pakistan, which investigated the lack of media coverage on Shia targeting. In addition, we also work with the United Nations, specifically ECOSOC, which granted SRW special consultative status, allowing us to highlight oppression towards minorities and promote change on an international level.

Currently, I believe that in order for SRW to continue to grow and be effective in its work, further education in the areas of non-violence, genocide prevention, gender, and conflict resolution is needed. I believe the mission of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) is similar to that of SRW, and this is why I chose to further my education here. My goal is to learn about different concepts to analyze conflicts, find ways of resolving different conflicting issues, and to be able not only to report minority rights violations, but also to work as a mediator in resolving matters of contention. ■

initiatives

South Caucasus Conflict Resolution

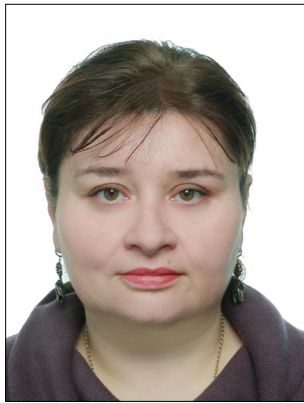
By Charles Crawford, MS Student, ccrawf14@masonlive.gmu.edu

S-CAR welcomed a new Visiting Fellow for the Spring semester, Ms. Dina Alborova, a Professor at the South Ossetian State University's Department of Political Science and Sociology. Dina is working with an APT Team on South Caucasus conflict resolution, learning about the pedagogy of conflict resolution and about religion and conflict resolution. According to Dina, she is the first person in many decades to have left South Ossetia for a fellowship in the United States.

S-CAR has a long history working with Georgians and South Ossetians in support of conflict resolution and reconciliation in the region. In August 2008, the Georgian, South Ossetian, and Russian militaries fought over the territory of South Ossetia. Georgia lost that war and continues to claim South Ossetia is part of Georgia, and most countries recognize Georgia's claim for territorial integrity. But Russia, Venezuela, and Nicaragua recognize South Ossetia as an independent country, and South Ossetia continues to seek broader international recognition. With Dina's help, S-CAR is planning a conference on the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict.

Barely four weeks into Dina's visit to S-CAR, I had the privilege of interviewing her. Dina expressed her profound thanks and appreciation to Christopher Joyce, UK Regional Advisor for the Caucasus on Conflicts and post-Conflict Issues, for graciously arranging UK sponsorship of her visit to S-CAR. She also lauded S-CAR for warmly welcoming her and for supporting the ongoing Georgian-South Ossetian reconciliation process. She said, "South Ossetians cherish S-CAR's peace initiatives and view the school's peacebuilding methodology as an opportunity to discuss issues between the two countries – Georgia and South Ossetia."

Dina is clearly a patriotic South Ossetian. In her opening comments of gratitude, she referred immediately to Georgia and South Ossetia as separate countries. Most Georgians would refer to South Ossetia as part of Georgia. This question of sovereignty is at the heart of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict.



Dina Alborova.
Photo: Dina Alborova.

Charles: What is the conference you are preparing?

Dina: The Cost of Conflict conference will be in Europe in April. It will bring together participants from Georgia, South Ossetia, Russia, the United States, and other European countries that will discuss this South Caucasus conflict, and recommend a road map for peace. I am writing an article that will be part of the collection I am co-editing on Cost of Conflict.

Charles: What do you see as constructive approaches to the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict?

Dina: One of the successful ways to end the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict is to give due recognition to the existence of South Ossetia as a nation state. The recognition of South Ossetia's statehood will eventually provide avenues for South Ossetia's representation in international organizations, and also set the stage for its participation in international conferences to discuss the issues and problems affecting the country and its people. South Ossetians exist and must be accorded all of the basic humans rights enshrined in international protocols.

Charles: What do you want Americans to know about South Ossetia?

Dina: I want to tell Americans that the small, beautiful country of South Ossetia wants to live in peace with everyone. Its unique traditions, culture, and history have been marred by bloodshed and destruction during the last 10 years of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. Secondly, South Ossetia needs access to the international community through such institutions as the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, etc. This is most important when the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict is discussed, including such issues as refugees, human rights, missing persons, etc. At these forums, there are only Georgian voices, and Georgian versions of events. There is no presentation of South Ossetian views. The argument that is offered to explain why South Ossetians are not invited to such forums, even when the forums are about issues that directly involve us, is that we are not recognized. So, when we want to discuss the problems of partial recognition, we cannot get to the forums to have that discussion because we are not recognized. These same problems can be seen in our lack of freedom of movement and lack of access to international mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

Charles: What has surprised you during your first few weeks at S-CAR?

Dina: I have culture shock. I was so surprised to see tax added onto the price of an item. At home, the price includes the tax. During my first week I wanted to visit a class, but I got lost and was 10 minutes late to the class. The professor was so surprised to learn that I sat outside the classroom for two hours, waiting for a class break so that I could enter the classroom without being disrespectful. Also, I've enjoyed seeing how classes are structured. The interactive classroom here makes students think critically and increases mutual respect between teachers and students.

Thank you to SCAR's PhD candidate Margarita Tadevosyan, who interpreted for the interview. ■

EVENTS

Upcoming S-CAR

Community Events

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Speaker Series on Peacebuilding

Around the World

6:30pm-8:30pm

Thursday, March 31, 2016

Annual Lynch Lecture: Implications for the Arts and Conflict Intervention

5:30pm - 9:30pm

For more, visit scar.gmu.edu/events-roster

Charles: What do you hope to accomplish during your time at S-CAR?

Dina: I will write about the conflict and meet with experts on the South Caucasus, the Middle East, Russia, and also prepare for the upcoming conference scheduled for April 2016. I am also excited to understand new approaches to pedagogy. Teaching methodologies here have a different teacher-student relationship. Experiencing the S-CAR ways of teaching will help me in my teaching at home.

Student Opinion: What Next After the Oslo Accords Collapse?

By Robert C. Vaughan IV, MS Student, rvaugh4@masonlive.gmu.edu

At the UN General Assembly meeting, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas declared that in light of Israeli breaches, Palestine would no longer be bound by the Oslo Accords - a series of agreements between Israel and Palestine. The intent of the Accords was not to directly establish peace between Israel and Palestine, but rather to create a framework and process which would build trust and eventually lead to a permanent settlement, with final talks to occur in 1999.

Abbas's declaration is only the most recent major blow to the long-suffering Oslo Accords, but we can hope it may be the last. The truth is that the peace process in Israel/Palestine, as designed by the Oslo Accords, has been deeply flawed, even untenable from the start. Those events which have been perceived as blows, or setbacks to the process are in fact only symptomatic of deeper flaws, most notably, the failure of the Accords to account for intraparty conflict amongst both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The first sign of this failure came in 1995, when Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist. The assassination showed that Israel is far from a fully unified entity, and exposed the failure of Rabin and the Labour party to effectively sell the agreement to the Israeli populace. The loss of the accord's chief Israeli sponsor was significant and magnified by a combination of missteps by Israeli President Shimon Peres and a series of attacks by Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Peres's first mistake was his misjudgment of the widespread support following the assassination. Peres appears to have believed that this support was both stronger and more durable than it proved to be. Instead of scheduling snap elections to quickly establish a new government, probably with a stronger parliamentary majority than before, Peres delayed elections and attempted to restart controversial peace talks with Syria. Complicating matters further, during Peres's interim government, he was given, and took, the opportunity to assassinate a major leader of Hamas. He likely hoped the assassination would cripple Hamas, and would restore faith in security ser-

vices shaken by their failure to prevent Rabin's assassination. However, Hamas responded with a series of crippling attacks which shattered Israeli confidence in both Peres's leadership and in the Accords. The combined effect was that the Labour Party that appeared unbeatable - at least one poll showed them with 76% approval to Likud's 22% - ultimately lost power to Likud in the next elections. The practical result was that Likud leadership was able to creatively reinterpret the Accords so that, while technically remaining within the letter of the agreements, they came to be used not as a means for Israeli withdrawal and trust building as originally intended, but rather as a means for consolidating control and expanding settlements.

Hindsight is 20/20, and while it may not have been possible to prevent the collapse of the Oslo Accords, we may be able to learn from their mistakes and increase the possibility of success for future efforts in the region. Most importantly, future agreements need to address intraparty conflict. Within Israel, efforts must be made to ensure that future agreements enjoy broad support, not merely the support of a leading party or coalition. As the events in 1995 and 1996 demonstrate, democracies are unstable and public opinion can be fickle. The success of any future agreement will be contingent on the ability and enthusiasm of its support from a substantial majority of Israel's political and civic leaders. The same is true of the Palestinians. The first step of the Oslo Accords involved an agreement wherein the Palestine Liberation Organization renounced violence and recognized Israel's right to exist in exchange for being recognized as the sole representative of the Palestinians. This extraordinary claim that Israel has the power to determine who represents Palestine, was inadequately contested, given, in part, that the UN had already taken the same step. The problems, however, were myriad.

First, the PLO had already split several times during its history, and would even split again as a result of these Accords. That Arafat proved unrepresentative of his whole organization was an ominous sign for his ability to lead an emerging Palestinian state.

Recent S-CAR Media

We can only hope that the cerebral will get the better of the visceral

Dennis Sandole, S-CAR Faculty

Financial Times 02/16/16

Interview with Oded Adomi Leshem, S-CAR PhD Candidate, and expert on hope

Americans for PEACE NOW 02/17/16

How Nevada affects Sanders

Solon Simmons, S-CAR Faculty

CTV 02/20/16

Conflict Analysts from S-CAR have appeared on 22 occasions since the last newsletter. These 3 represent a sample of those publications. For a complete list, visit <http://scar.gmu.edu/media>



Robert C. Vaughan IV.
Photo: Robert Vaughan.

PRESS

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Linda Kryvoruka, Graduate Certificate Student

By Kwaw de Graft-Johnson, Newsletter editor, kdegraft@masonlive.gmu.edu

Linda Kryvoruka, a soon-to-be retired nurse anesthetist, is currently enrolled in the World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution certificate program at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR). “The prospect of becoming a student in this field will fulfill my lifelong mission of always serving others, endlessly learning, and broadening my understanding of different religions, and cultures in regards to solving conflicts.” Linda describes this change not as an end to her nursing career, but rather “a blank canvas of opportunities for her to apply the experiences and training she has learned, and to build upon it to better help others.”

Linda started her nursing career in an open heart surgery unit in Philadelphia, where she worked with patients from many socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, who suffered from very serious and life threatening illnesses. She attributes her decision to pursue this career path to her inher-



Linda Kryvoruka.
Photo: Linda Kryvoruka.

ent personality trait of caring for people, which has been her drive to work tirelessly through many intense situations. Her love for her work led her to attain three degrees, the last one being a Master's Degree in Anesthesia in 1990. “My favorite aspect of being a nurse anesthetist was the care and level of trust that people who were deeply afraid of having surgery place in me. It is difficult at times knowing that you are the last person that a patient speaks to before they go to sleep, especially for a very serious surgery.”

Linda also credits her caring nature and value system to the role that religion played in her upbringing. As a life long Catholic schooler, she chose a Jesuit University with its emphasis on religion, philosophy, and moral ethics, because their philosophy was “men and women for others.”

While working as a nurse anesthetic, Linda noted how much the stories patients shared with her also helped to shape her life. “My 43 years in healthcare introduced me to many cultures and religions, most memorable were the many Holocaust survivors that I cared for that were willing to tell me their stories. This led to a lifelong interest in genocide, and other acts of violence on a race of people. My healthcare background gives me a unique perspective because all religions and cultures have one common denominator - they all have the same bodies and illnesses which require the same care, and they are all scared and grateful to the person who provides that care.”

Linda is also keen on social justice for all, especially with an emphasis on the sort of world that would be left for future generations. “I am passionate about the idea of embracing an education that emphasizes problem solving on a global scale and breaking barriers among adversity.”

For Linda, the graduate certificate program will be the perfect opportunity for her to combine her experiences in life and death situations in the operating room with the knowledge of political, religious, and historical contexts, to effectively resolve conflicts. “It is the top goal of mine to be able to combine all of my unique experiences, passions and skills to become an effective, open-minded, and expertly trained professional to continue my life’s mission of helping others in the setting of conflict resolution.” ■

Announcement: Grand Opening and dedication of Point of View, an international retreat and research center on Wednesday, April 6, 2016 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. To RSVP please email povevent@gmu.edu or call (703) 993-8615 by Friday, April 1, 2016.



Harold H. (Hal) Saunders (1930-2016)

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In Hal's case, this involved "citizen diplomacy." Since 1981, for example, he served as co-chair of the Dartmouth Conference, the longest continuing dialogue between American and Soviet, now Russian, citizens. Early work – literally "in the field" – took him to Tajikistan in the immediate aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union, where his continuing mediated dialogues were credited with averting the level of violence that bedeviled other former republics. He returned to his work in the Middle East when he participated in several of Herb Kelman's and Nadim Rouhana's Israeli-Palestinian workshops in the early 1990s, in parallel with the formal Madrid and informal Oslo processes. He also worked domestically, on race relations in Baton Rouge. Like all true "scholar-practitioners," he used his experience of practice to write, theorize, and publish, to contribute to the intellectual and conceptual growth of our field. In time, he came to theorize his sort of mediation and third party work as sustained dialogue, and building on this, he founded the Sustained Dialogue Institute, which is active around the world and on many college campuses. Meanwhile, the books testify to his evolving interests. *The Other Walls: The Arab-Israeli Peace Process in a Global Perspective* (1985) reflects his work, mostly Track One, in the 1970s and 1980s. *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflict* (1999), draws on case studies to begin developing a paradigm of conflict resolution that might address the sorts of wicked problems that were beyond the grasp (if not also the ken) of Track One approaches: racial, religious, ethnic ones – so called identity conflicts. These seemed to elude both simple interest-based (cost-benefit) and coercive solutions. Further developing his ideas of what dialogue can deliver, he wrote *Politics is About Relationships: A Blueprint for Citizen Diplomacy* (2005). We teach this book to remind our students that "politics" is about more than power and leverages that, in effect, "national security" is also very much about "human security." His final book, *Sustained Dialogue in Conflicts: Transformation and Change* (2011) is a mature statement of the theory and practice of sustained dialogue. "Resolution" is deepened to become "transformation," and peace is understood to necessitate change.

According to the New York Times (March 8, 2016, p. A19), Hal is credited by many with coining the phrase "peace process." The phrase has entered the vernacular of diplomacy, in both Track One and Two varieties. It has also entered the academic study of peace and conflict; for many years, Prof. Chris Mitchell researched and taught a popular course called "Comparative Peace Processes," which built on Hal's work as well as others'. What became clear to Hal, as the epigraph to this article indicates, is that whatever the process of attaining peace entails, it does not begin and end with top-down and government-only efforts.

I want to end on a note of personal pride, speaking as S-CAR's dean. Hal was a distinguished graduate of two preeminent American institutions of higher education,

Princeton and Yale. He served on the Board of Trustees at Princeton. When he decided to donate his personal papers, including notebooks and diaries from the first Camp David, he chose Mason's library and School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution as the repository. Hal told me he felt a special connection to S-CAR and the work we do. We certainly felt a special connection to him. In the future, we will strive to find ways to honor this connection and Hal's legacy. Meanwhile, I am using this gift as the cornerstone for a dedicated Special Collection in Peace and Conflict, archiving and highlighting the lifework of scholar-practitioners particularly. ■

Remembering Harold H. (Hal) Saunders

By Joe Montville, Director, Program on Healing Historical Memory at S-CAR, jmontvi1@gmu.edu

I was happy to see that the New York Times obituary on Hal quoted Henry Kissinger saying Hal was "an indispensable member of the Middle East team" who was "especially important in emphasizing the psychological and moral dimensions of problems." I worked for Hal as regional policy adviser in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, and one of my jobs was congressional relations. When President Carter nominated Hal for the post of assistant secretary of state in that bureau, I accompanied him for his hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and did a briefing memo for him recommending that at an appropriate point in the questioning, he express a strong personal moral commitment to Israel's security and survival.

In Secretary of State's Henry Kissinger's "reassessment" policy designed to exert pressure on Israel over the settlements issue, before 1976, Hal had been used to launch a trial policy balloon that was shot down immediately by Israel and its strong supporters in Congress. I knew that he would face a tough grilling by the committee which met in the quaint, small hearing room off the Capitol. It was remarkable that when Hal pledged his personal commitment to Israel's security how the tense postures of senators went into immediate relax mode when he made his commitment. The hearing glided to a happy ending after that. I worked closely for Hal as chief of the Near East division of the bureau of intelligence and research throughout his period as assistant secretary, and when he retired in 1981, I confess to having induced him into my work in Track Two Diplomacy while I was in active duty in the Department of State.

I invited Hal and Carol to Esalen Institute for a seminar with Erik Erikson on the psychology of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. And I invited him to come to an Egyptian-Israeli-Palestinian workshop in Austria organized by the American Psychiatric Association on ways to further the Camp David peace process. He even joined the International Society of Political Psychology of which I was a founder and won its prestigious Nevitt Sanford Award for "distinguished professional contribution to political psychology."

Throughout his post-government career, Hal Saunders pursued his mission of saving lives in political conflicts by using sustained dialogue to induce fellow human beings to pool their moral instincts to solve problems. He was my model in public service and my hero. I will be indebted to him until I see him again. ■

What Next After the Oslo Accords Collapse

Continued from page 5

Further complicating matters, Arafat, Abbas, and others in the PLO leadership were living in exile and had been for quite some time. The disconnect between the concerns of the PLO leadership and ordinary Palestinians was summed up by Edward Said in an article for the London Review of Books in October of 1993:

Neither Arafat nor any of his Palestinian partners...has ever seen an Israeli settlement. There are now over two hundred of them, principally on hills, promontories and strategic points throughout the West Bank and Gaza. ... An independent system of roads connects them to Israel, and creates a disabling discontinuity between the main centres of Palestinian population. ... In addition, Israel has tapped into every aquifer on the West Bank, and now uses about 80 per cent of the water there for the settlements and for Israel proper.

As Said observes, the Oslo Accords were largely silent on these issues. This silence is what ultimately enabled Likud and other Israeli factions to disregard

the intent of the agreement and convert it into one for expanded Israeli occupation. If the Palestinians had not been represented only by a single organization, operating from exile, it is possible that the Accords would have addressed some of these crucial Palestinian concerns, which the PLO seems, at best, to have undervalued. This disconnect between the PLO leadership and Palestinian concerns, and the exclusion of other Palestinian organizations from the negotiations likely also contributed to the previously mentioned attacks launched by Hamas, as they had no stake in the agreement. It is also possible that, with the engagement of a broader swath of the Palestinian population, Peres may have felt that he had more choices beyond the assassination of the Hamas leader which prompted those attacks. At this point, we are dealing with hypotheticals and counterfactuals. There is nothing this discussion can do to alter the unfortunate events of the last 20 years, but we can hope that their consideration will lead to more effective solutions in the future. ■



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