
PARENTS OF THE FIELD PROJECT

Interviewee: Dr. Asbjorne Eide

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Interviewer: Dr. Chris Mitchell.

Chris: It is 29 May 2006, and we are in Oslo, Norway, and we're interviewing our colleague, Professor Asbjorn Eide at the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights as part of our Parents of the Field project. Professor Eide, thank you very much for speaking with us. I know that you've got a busy schedule, as usual, I assume. What we're doing in this project is looking back on the beginnings of the field of peace and conflict studies, and looking at the '50s, the '60s, the '70s and how it all got started, where people came from, how it developed, what some of the important topics were.

So my first question is: looking back on that era, that time, people came into this field from all over the place, from different intellectual backgrounds, different sorts of social backgrounds, with different interests. What were yours and how did you get involved in the field of peace, peace studies, conflict studies - whatever we're going to call it?

Asbjorn Eide: I graduated in law. Matter of fact, they have law here in the University in Oslo. And then fairly soon after I graduated, I became a young university assistant professor at that time and teaching - of all things - rights and contract law and things like that. That's what I was doing for some time, but I then rather became more interested in international law, and within international law, my main interest was the United Nations and the United Nations Charter and the possibility which it had for regulating and limiting the use of force, and particularly prohibiting the use of aggressive force.

And also, this was a time when the peacekeeping notions were developed, in the time of [Dag] Hammarskjold. Well, Hammarskjold already was dead by the time I graduated, but his legacy on peacekeeping was very important. So I started to study the questions of peacekeeping from an international law point of

view and actually wrote my first book on peacekeeping operations. I did I think the first study, even internationally, on peacekeeping operations as a review of what had been carried out at that time.

So I started that from my point of international law and from that moved on to dealing with peace-related issues.

Chris: So this was during the early 1970s or the 1960s ?

Asbjorn Eide: Yes. I worked on this during the early '60s and published a book on that topic in '65, and at that time, I started to get in touch with what was then the budding Peace Research Institute, PRIO, Peace Research International Oslo. And after a while, I decided I might as well join them and I came there practicing for a while as Director of that Institute and stayed on with the work, which from my perspective was mainly the international law field, but it became more social science oriented as time went by.

Chris: So when you got into this field in the '60s, it was sometimes called "peace research" - as in "PRIO". People had started talking about peace studies as different from peace activism ? Yet there was another group that called themselves "conflict researchers" and were interested in conflict analysis. Were you conscious of this distinction and did it matter? Did it pose any problems, at all?

Asbjorn Eide: Conflict studies were, of course, important for peace research also at that time to understand the dynamics of conflict and its causes. However, I think there was a clear value-orientation. That the task was to identify conditions for a peaceful resolution to conflicts - a peaceful transformation or peaceful resolution of conflicts. The organization's aim was the peaceful management or solution for the conflict. The conflict researchers could, of course, share the same view, but it seemed they were more interested in the analysis of the conflict for its own sake. You might have all kinds of conflict studies - and strategic studies could very well be defined as conflict studies. Again, that term could stretch all the way to a fairly militant kind of conflict studies.

So there were certainly some meeting grounds, but the difference in emphasis was very much on the value-orientation as such.

Chris: So you would have put yourself sort of firmly in the peace –

Asbjorn Eide: We were on the peace side of that distinction. The name Peace Research Institute was quite deliberate.

Chris: I think Hakan Wiborg, somewhere or other, talks about there being four “tribes” associated with this whole field or discipline - or whatever it is. There’s the Security Studies tribe, then there’s the Conflict Studies tribe, then there’s the International Relations tribe, and then there’s the Peace Studies tribe. He says sometimes they’re in cooperation with one another, sometimes they work together, sometimes they’re at furious odds with one another. So there can be conflict among the conflict researchers.

However, in these early days you entered from a law background.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes.

Chris: In that time, there were a number of very major influences that started to turn what was a very heterogeneous set of ideas into a field or even a discipline. Can you think back to some of the other major influences that, for example, affected PRIO in those days? I recall that they weren’t all lawyers.

Asbjorn Eide: No, no, on the contrary. I mean it was early. I was an odd man out being a lawyer at that time. Yes, because the dominant figure at the PRIO in the early days was Johan Galtung and he was a social scientist - a sociologist basically, and there were other members from the social sciences; sociologists, and political scientists dominated the PRIO group, even though there were anthropologists and some others but I was really the only one who did systematic legal studies at the time.

Now with regard to the “four tribes”. Yes, there certainly were differences of view. In Oslo, there was the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, which at that time was very much involved in the study of the East-West Conflict and the role of Norway in that.

Chris: Now was that led by Nils Orvik ?

Asbjorn Eide: It was Nils Orvik - yes, yes !

Chris: They started the “Conflict and Cooperation” journal, I think.

Asbjorn Eide: Exactly, yes. And another key figure was Johan Jorgen Holst, who many years later became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was

very, very capable, but from strategic studies point of view - counting missiles. This was at that time when that was a very important question because you must take into account that this was during the Cold War. It was the East-West Conflict that was the major concern. The potential for nuclear war was still very present in our minds and I think that – well, for me and for several others, the major motivation was to find ways to avoid anything escalating into that kind of thing And I, for one, saw peacekeeping activity, as it was at that time, as a way of avoiding conflicts from escalating.

Chris: You mentioned social sciences a couple minutes ago, particularly in connection with Johan [Galtung]. Were you all trying to turn peace research into a social science? What was the intellectual hope that lay behind all of this work? Was it to produce a “science of peace” or something like that? Or is that to attribute to clearer vision to a very diverse group of people?

Asbjorn Eide: Well, we certainly tried - all of us - to have an understanding and conception of cultural dynamics and conflict resolution, and to develop methods for understanding that. But apart from that, we all wanted to use our own background to try to make a contribution. Maybe we were thinking, - or, at least, I was thinking - quite pragmatically about this. I had an academic career, but it was my interest to use it for peace-related purposes and to use my special qualifications to work on that. So at least I was not very deeply involved in trying to merge this into one discipline. I definitely considered it important that I had some methods I could use and the others had methods they could use, and we were all making use of them. And then we had communications. It was more interdisciplinary - maybe; to some extent, multidisciplinary but not really trans-disciplinary.

Chris: I had my own division of the field into “tribes”, which is a much simpler one, into those that count and those that don’t. In my memory there used to be a very clear distinction between those who thought that quantitative methods would be the key to everything and those who “pooh-poohed” that idea.

You mentioned communications and one of the impressions that we have had, talking to a lot of people, was that at this early time in the 1960s, there were a number of different centers growing up. We’re curious about how they actually communicated with one another and what were some of the important connection points,

communication points, such as other scholars in other countries. How did it look from Oslo? How did you reach out to the rest of the world and expect the rest of the world to become cognizant of what you were doing in these days? What were important for you and others at PRIO – conferences, personal contacts or what?

Asbjorn Eide: PRIO was very much involved in international cooperation and our scholars were coming and going from many parts of the world, from the United States, from the countries in Europe, Africa, and from Asia, and also - even though with some difficulties - from the then Eastern Europe.

Chris: Oh, you built bridges across –

Asbjorn Eide: Well, we were very eager to develop scholarly contacts.

Chris: Was it difficult at the time?

Asbjorn Eide: Not too difficult. It was, of course, more complicated than it is now, but it was not too difficult. We also worked through the “Pugwash” framework - which I’m sure you’re familiar with. Pugwash was able to develop contact between outstanding scientists on both sides of what was then the Iron Curtain. And through that we had outstanding contacts. So there was a lot of contact and you may know that there was in the association that was set up - a peace researchers’ –

Chris: I intended to ask you about IPRA. When did you get involved with that?

Asbjorn Eide: Well, I became familiar with it at the end of the ‘60s and then I was asked to be the Secretary General of the Association, which I think must have been in 1971, if I’m not now mistaken. And I had that function for, oh, until ’77. Yes.

Chris: I think we met at an IPRA conference in the 1970s. It was a long time ago.

Asbjorn Eide: Which one? Can you remember?

Chris: No, my memory’s not as reliable lately. but I think there was a meeting in London at one point.

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- Asbjorn Eide: Yes, there were probably some meetings in London. One was in India in Varanasi, another was in Mexico, but there were more meetings in London..
- Chris: I think it must have been at one of those. I remember at least Kenneth Boulding was there.
You were Secretary General in the 1970s, I remember, but I can't remember who you handed over to. Who became Secretary General after you? You took over from Bert Roling, then I can't remember the name of your successor.
- Asbjorn Eide: What was his name? His name escapes me. I'm sorry. Yes, so it was in the first part of the 1970s, I think until about '77, and certainly that was an effort to communicate quite widely, globally and on East-West relations - at least where that was really important. Of course, we had started being very concerned with East-West relations but we became more and more concerned with the North-South violence, and then we managed to develop considerable contacts both in Africa, Asia, and in Latin America. And these big conferences that we held were fairly well represented from different parts of the world.
- Chris: I think you actually took a deliberate decision not to hold the conferences in Europe and in North America.
- Asbjorn Eide: Yes.
- Chris: I know IPRA has made strenuous efforts to reach out to other parts of the world, but it still seems to me to be particularly difficult to involve scholars from Latin America and Africa and the Far East. Peace research and conflict research still seems to be very much a North American-European "game"- and rather "spotty" in Europe as well. Not every country seems to be involved in it.
- Asbjorn Eide: Yes.
- Chris: You had, I think, colleagues from Germany; you had colleagues from Poland, but nothing from France at that time, if I remember rightly.
- Asbjorn Eide: No, there was a sense of what I call "polemology," [which was the name they gave it] to start this peace and conflict study, but it was not a deep comitment – not very deep.
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Chris: Of course, there was the institute at Groningen which had adopted that name, [polemological] I think.

Asbjorn Eide: That was because of Hilke Trompe in particular.

Chris: You mentioned another word a few minutes ago, which was “multidisciplinary” or “trans-disciplinary”, which you think it [the discipline] wasn’t. A lot of people have always said; “Oh, peace research - conflict research, it has to be multidisciplinary !” Yet while we’re saying that, the implication is that we borrow a lot of ideas from other fields. Can you think of anything in the 1960s, early ‘70s, that was particularly useful to you at PRIO - and then at IPRA ? Ideas or theories that struck you at the time - or was it rather a pragmatic approach that you had ?

Asbjorn Eide: By and large, it was a pragmatic approach, but this effort to analyze conflict dynamics and conflict outcomes [which was developed, I think, by Galtung and his associates] I found that very useful. Also, his theories about structural violence. It seemed in all very, very important.

Chris: So he had a series of young men and women, I think, in the time before you took over. You were the second director of PRIO? You took over after Johan left?

Asbjorn Eide: Yes.

Chris: And I’ve always had the impression he left behind a set of very dedicated young men and women, which you must have taken over and found difficult to control. I’ve known some of them - I used to know Herman Schmidt reasonably well. It always struck me as being – well, I don’t know whether there is the expression “young Turks” in Norwegian, but that was the impression they gave me. It must have been an interesting experience taking over that particular group.

Asbjorn Eide: They had their own different views, and I think that was okay because I was not so interested in developing as strong, united discipline. I saw benefit in people having their own knowledge and capacity who could contribute, but having a dialogue and a discussion with them by which we could elucidate questions from different perspectives.

Chris: Looking for the moment at the field as it is now, rather than looking back, the whole thing seems to have taken off in all sorts of different directions. We term it peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, and we study conflict settlement, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, conflict management. I wonder, looking back, whether the people who founded the field, you included, ever imagined it would become so different and diverse and so – I don't know – complex, so heterogeneous. You probably would not have been surprised, but I think people who were trying to construct a discipline would have been a bit shocked at the way things have gone. What do you think the effects of this diversification are going to be, intellectually or practically?

Asbjorn Eide: I think at the time, we were young and we were looking at some overriding concerns, because the East-West conflict wasn't avoiding the possibility of a nuclear war. It was definitely an overriding concern that we had and we were also just starting to focus on the North-South dimensions of injustice and inequality. So we were having some overriding values, which guided us. Now the Cold War is over. It doesn't exist anymore. There is no apparent risk – at least if there is a risk, it is this new war on terror, which is a completely different animal altogether. So that basic parameter has fundamentally changed and I think it is quite understandable as a consequence. People are looking at different aspects of the problem of peace and trying to develop in that area in different ways. It doesn't worry me.

Chris: You've chosen to go in the direction of human rights.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes.

Chris: So you obviously regard that as an important aspect of the whole field.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes.

Chris: How did you come to take up that particular cause? You started off with peacekeeping - in what I think they're now calling "first generation peacekeeping" - and then went into peace research at PRIO and then IPRA, and you're now in the field of human rights. How did that come about?

Asbjorn Eide: Well, I was looking for something that was reasonably solid in terms of having a normative basis - where you could argue and articulate and have a common discourse, so to speak. You have global instruments, which in principle are binding on everyone, even though it takes a lot of effort to make them respected these things, but you have that and you have the possibility for a discourse. And if you take the human rights all together, not only the civil and political, but also economic, social, and cultural rights you see that there is a comprehensive package - which is what I do. (I put a lot of effort into that.) Then you have framework where you can discuss worldwide with people who have at least the same standards in principle – universal. Then through the advancement of this with **[inaudible]** help, let alone reduce the likelihood of serious conflict. That’s why I got into it. I think it was particularly during the Castro period in the United States that there was a lot of interest in human rights because we made that important; we had reacted very strongly against the military coups in Chile and in other places during the Nixon and the Carter periods, which seemed to be a very repressive reaction to all that. So that also spread widely the interest in human rights, including myself, and I became involved also with the United Nations. I became elected to one of the expert bodies and also a member for 20 years there, which made it possible for me - also at the level of the United Nations - to have considerable impact on a number of things. So that’s how I got into that.

Chris: This is not on our question schedule, but I’m interested in the effects of human rights law on civil wars because we’re doing some work down in Colombia at the moment. A lot of local communities are using human rights law in order to try to set up peace communities and peace zones and trying to keep the worst effects of the conflict out of their particular municipalities.

Asbjorn Eide: That’s very important.

Chris: How successful do you think you and the human rights movement have been in at least dampening down some of the worst effects of conflict? What are the ajor things you can look back on and think: “Well, that was a success” ?

Asbjorn Eide: I think we have had an impact on many places, but some were hopeless, if we take some of the conflicts which arose after the fall of the Berlin Wall and everything. If you look at the situation in the Balkans and the Baltics, of course we were completely taken

aback by the violence, first in Croatia and then in Bosnia. The intensity of that. However, there were also a number of other budding conflicts where the situation could have gotten out of hand but for the way they used human rights. The office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, with whom I worked a lot, helped to prevent some of those conflicts from escalating into something serious. So in some places, we were successful and in other places, we lost miserably. Now I think we have a role, and as I told you, I've now been for a number of years the President [of the Norwegian Council on Human Rights] and involved in the Council of Europe, whose task is to see to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Minorities. And there I think we are fairly successful in that many situations are calming down and under more control.

With regard to the situation in Colombia - well, I never was directly involved in Colombia, but I was for a number of years a member of the Norwegian Delegation - this is way back in the 1970s - and negotiating the two additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions, as you may know. Protocol 1 which was for international conflict, and Protocol 2, which was for non-international conflict; and it was our delegation's strongest effort. We wanted to have strong rules constraining the use of force in internal conflicts in terms of civic protection of civilian population, - in terms even of protecting the rights of guerrilla soldiers if they were taken prisoners and so on. We worked very hard on that. We didn't get as much as we wanted because there were some strong opponents, but we got some of it.

So definitely, this is about the humanitarian law and non-international armed conflict - which I consider to be extremely important - and also the application of the human rights in that connection, so I really wish you all good luck in that. I know how difficult Colombia is. A friend of mine who is now Under-Secretary General in the United Nations, Jan Egeland - he worked on Columbia.

Chris: That's right and I think he left, if I remember rightly, when the government objected to what he was doing and saying.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes.

Chris: So that was very insightful of you to think about this in the 1970s, of course, because you were almost anticipating twenty years earlier what was happening in the 1990s. But let me get back to my questions. You mentioned Johan Galtung, of course, as being a

key figure in Norway and, indeed, internationally. I think everybody would agree with that. But can you, looking back, think of other seminal figures in the development of the field, both here and internationally? Johan was obviously one of them. Who else was important on thinking in Oslo and on thinking generally?

Asbjorn Eide: In Oslo? At the Institute, we had Nils Petter Gleditsch – are you interviewing him?

Chris: We wanted to, but he's out of town this week, so we missed him. We'll do him the second round.

Asbjorn Eide: Okay. Helge Hveem, have you come across him? Are you interviewing him?

Chris: We hope to interview him on Saturday morning.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes. And, of course, Ingrid, the then-wife of Johan [Galtung].

Chris: We're interviewing her on Friday.

Asbjorn Eide: Good. And then there was an anthropologist, Arne Martin Klausen. He's now retired. He wrote a very interesting study on the impact of Norwegian development assistance on a fisher group population in the Kerala, India. It was quite interesting in terms of his assessment and analysis. It had some impact on further discussions on development assistance. This was in the very early stage of Norwegian Development Assistance, so that was him in Oslo. Who else. If you take Oslo outside of PRIO, we have already mentioned Nils Orvik and then I have mentioned Johan Jurgen Holst, who was quite an important figure. He's dead unfortunately - died very early.

Chris: Is Nils Orvik still around?

Asbjorn Eide: I don't think so.

Chris: What about the rest of Scandinavia? Who from Sweden or from Finland?

Asbjorn Eide: Peter Wallenstein - and he's very active still; that's a person you might find useful to interview.

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- Chris: I think he comes under the category of “uncles of the field” rather than “parents” - but we’ve got him on our list.
- Asbjorn Eide: Okay, yeah. As for parents at the time, [inaudible] got into it relatively early, but he may still have been an uncle in your terms. There was another one, but he died really early. I don’t remember his name.
- Chris: More generally, who helped out with IPRA? Bert Roling helped to start it up but he’s not with us any longer, unfortunately. We have interviewed Elise [Boulding], who is now living up in Massachusetts in a retirement home. Kenneth [Boulding], of course, isn’t with us any longer, but who else? Who do you remember as being important from those early days?
- Asbjorn Eide: As I mentioned, the Pugwash movement was quite useful in that it facilitated contact particularly with high-level scientists, including nuclear scientists and others. But also others - some philosophers even. Bertrand Russell was involved intellectually at the early stage, in fact. He wasn’t directly involved with our research, but he was kind of an ideal. I think you have mentioned the key person, Bert Roling, who was important, and since he was an international lawyer, he was particularly important for me. But then, of course, Elise, particularly Elise, but also Kenneth. Elise was a very, very important figure because of her commitment and energy.
- Chris: Both of them, towards the end of their careers, came to my university in Virginia, as visiting fellows. I think Kenneth then said, “We come as a set.” So we had both of them there. And they gave one of our earliest major public lectures, taking it in turns to speak.
- Asbjorn Eide: How nice. They were really closely attached to each other.
- Chris: Yes - and I’d forgotten, of course, that Elise was originally Norwegian.
- Asbjorn Eide: Yes, yes, she was born just outside Oslo – at Liset, which is just 30 minutes from here.
- Chris: Well, when we interviewed her, she was a little slower, but just as sharp and still working out of this study, which was completely surrounded by books. And just as interesting.
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Okay, let me go back to my questions again. I think that in peace research, and indeed, conflict research, the people who were involved in either of those “tribes” always argued that to be successful, the field had to be practical, it had to be applied, it had to be taken out to the real world. Even from the early days, that was a very important part for the people who were in the field. Do you think we’ve been successful in doing that, in having an effect on the world? How successful have we been in being “practical” as opposed to being “academic”? We were talking earlier about your own human rights impact, but anything else?

Asbjorn Eide: I think many of the peace researchers have been very active also outside the research field. **Ingly** was active in politics as he was a **[inaudible]** minister for a while as he was in Parliament. Helge Hveem played a very central role in a lot of research on North-South issues and had quite an impact - at least in the Nordic area where we added to conceptions and approaches to development corporations. So I would say that many other people have manifested through their life that they were not simply sitting at the desk doing their studies, but being active in many ways.

Chris: Well, you yourself exemplify that. Do you think it’s been a help being a citizen of a small-developed country?

Asbjorn Eide: Yes, of course, there’s many benefits to being from a developed country, firstly since we are having more possibilities, more resources available. And also in many aspects, it’s quite useful to be from a small country which doesn’t have a number of negative legacies that some of the bigger countries have. Generally speaking, Norway and the Nordic countries have a kind of a standing internationally, which makes it more easy to operate in many ways. Even during the Cold War, they were relatively neutral, even though I know we were a member of NATO, but not so manifested. We were trying more to build bridges.

And also, later on, it has kind of a peace in it, which it still tries to cultivate - the peace image, and I think this is partly due to peace research that Norway is trying to cultivate this image. We have the Nobel Peace Prize. And have you seen the new center which they have established?

Chris: Yes. We did the Peace Tour yesterday. We also went up the hill, of course, to Quisling’s old house.

Asbjorn Eide: Ah, yes, yes, which is now the Holocaust Center.

Chris: But Norway is still very active. I have a student who's writing a dissertation on Sri Lanka and, of course, the Norwegian initiative there is stalled at the moment. The place seems to be going to hell in a handcart, but at least the Norwegian government and the delegation there has been very, very important and influential in that situation.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes, we have come to have more or less successful engagement in quite a number of countries. Guatemala for a certain time period and then the recent road was quite significant.

Chris: It seems to me - and maybe I'm wrong in this - that Norwegian peace researchers [perhaps PRIO and your own organization] have been much more successful at interesting the national government in peace work than many other countries, where there's a big intellectual peace research or conflict research movement but their ability to influence the government is pretty limited. I don't think the President of any American government is particularly interested in peace research, but consistently, I think, you have been able to have an impact. How have you managed this? Have you any advice for people who are trying to influence governments - apart from be in Norway ?

Asbjorn Eide: It is difficult to say because part of the explanation, if you compare with the United States, is that the United States has more complex strategic interests than a small country. Jan Egeland, who I mentioned, wrote a little book, which is quite good in its title. It was a book about the effectiveness of human rights work of Norway and the United States. And the title of his book was *Important Superpower, Important Small State*. He wrote it during the Carter period and what came out of it and the Regan takeover, and he said that the conflicts of interests in the United States stultified even some of the best intentions of Carter because of conflicting interests with some. Whereas we don't have such conflicting interests in Norway, so it was more easy to be successful.

Chris: Interesting. My old boss, of course, was Australian, and always looked to the world from Australia and always used to say it looked very different if you came from there. He always argued that there was a very important role for what he called "middle powers" - and he didn't mean middle-sized or middle wealth but countries that were "in the middle" in the sense of not being on one

side or the other of the Cold War or the North-South divide. He was always joking with me about Britain and about British pretensions to remain “a great power”.

Asbjorn Eide: Now what do you think about British pretensions to remain that?

Chris: I wish they would give it up. Many years ago a group of us in London wrote a book – I think it was called *A New Britain; A Concerned Independence*. We were arguing for trying to take up some kind of a role like Sweden. This was before Britain went into the European community, when the choices were often posed as either to go fully into Europe or stay with the Atlantic Alliance, which, of course, is very important to the British, but not very important to the Americans.

Having lived in America for 20 odd years, I’ve found that the only time that Britain appears in *The Washington Post* is when there is a royal scandal or when the tennis tournament is on, and that was what Britain meant to most people in America..

But the reason for my pushing you a little bit on how did you manage to influence Norwegian policy was that we as “conflict researchers” had very little success in influencing British policy over 20 years of work and I think for the same reason as in the United States

Thinking back again to those early days, many people in the field had hopes and dreams and expectations. The research, the field was going to affect the world in major ways. I think we all hoped. Certainly, that was the way that we thought about it in London. Do you think we’ve fallen short of those aspirations, those hopes and dreams in any particular way?

Asbjorn Eide: Certainly, we cannot be wholly satisfied with part of the things which have happened which may or may not have any relationship to the themes of peace and suchlike. But, you know the Helsinki Accords, which contributed to the end of the Cold War, were very much the work of Willy Brandt, who was at that time the Chancellor in Germany, and – I don’t whether you know – he had a strong Norwegian link. He fled Nazi Germany before World War II. He fled to Norway and he became a refuge in Norway. Of course, when the Germans occupied Norway, he, like other – also, many Norwegians – fled to Sweden, and he stayed on in Sweden with the Norwegians. And then when the war was over, in his first period he was very closely tied up with Norwegians and he was a journalist in one of the Norwegian newspapers in that first period

after World War II. Then he went back to Germany and became a politician and ended up as the Chancellor.

I knew him personally and [I'm not taking any credit] but the way in which he developed this framework of communication with the East European countries fits right with our thinking about peace research. That developed ideas of what would be reciprocal interest. On the Eastern side, they were very interested in collaboration in the scientific and technological fields and wanted very much –

Chris: Rather like Pugwash ?.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes, very like Pugwash. I mean peace research, Pugwash - these were all things that mingled together for us at that time. And the communication and the dialogue which developed in that and which in my opinion, facilitated that transformation without any armed conflict - except those local conflicts, which were, of course, extremely brutal, but not completely unexpected but not related to the Helsinki process.

So that was a positive development. I'm not able to point to very particular ways in which we influenced it, but ...

Chris: Any disappointments?

Asbjorn Eide: Yes. Yes, generally speaking, disappointment in the declining interest of young people and in value-oriented research, particularly in academia. I think there was more enthusiasm, more interest at least, but maybe old people think that way. But I don't see so much interest among young people – they want to have a career, they want to have money. So that's a little disappointment.

Chris: We must invite you over to George Mason University at some point and I can show you some really very interested, very motivated students. The interesting thing is, I don't know whether it's also happening in Europe, but the number of courses in peace and conflict research that are opening up in the United States is just astonishing.

Asbjorn Eide: Oh really? Is that something coming up now in the background of the Bush administration or is it unrelated to that?

Chris: I think it's possibly been accelerated by that. It was certainly happening beforehand. Being slightly cynical for the moment, I think it's partly that universities have discovered that this is a "sell-

able” product and young people are interested in conflict analysis courses and peace research courses, whereas they’re not interested in subjects like sociology so much any longer. In the Washington, D.C. area, I think ten years ago, George Mason was unique in the fact that it had a Master’s degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Then American University started up a Master’s program. There’s now one at the University of Maryland, which is just north of Washington, and last year, Georgetown University - which as you know is pretty conservative - actually started up a Master’s program. So the end result is that we’re all struggling for an increasing pool of potential students, but the pool is there. The interest is there.

Asbjorn Eide: That is encouraging.

Chris: I certainly think that the present regime has so outraged a lot of people in the States that this is also a contributing factor. But interest was certainly there before and now I think there are something like 200 Master’s programs throughout the country. Conflict competes, certainly in the United States and it’s also spreading into Latin America. We’ve actually helped start some programs down there, so maybe the next big push is going to come from Latin America.

Asbjorn Eide: That’s very, very good.

Chris: Again, looking back, as we must do, was there anything in the development over the last 30 or 40 years that surprised you - that you hadn’t anticipated?

Asbjorn Eide: You mean in terms of research or in terms of political developments?

Chris: In terms of research and in terms of political developments looked at from a peace research viewpoint. Either - take your pick.

Asbjorn Eide: On the positive side, as I already have said, we had not expected that the end of the Cold War would be so simple and so non-violent in its overall demise. We were, of course, deeply concerned with what happened in former Yugoslavia, particularly because we had a lot of contacts there. There were many, many people we knew very well. We had seminars very often in Dubrovnik. So we couldn’t really understand that it would turn so violent as it did. But overall another disappointment was at the

kind of transition that took place, particularly in what is now the Russian Federation: it's not the kind of transition we had hoped for.

During the last years of the Soviet Union, during the Gorbachev period in the late 1980s, I was several times in Moscow attending seminars where they were discussing the future. And then the people around Gorbachev were looking for entrances into something comparable to the Nordic countries, which would be a combination of a welfare system and a market welfare system. Of course, we tried to encourage this and we tried to show that what the communist program had portrayed as the evilness of the Western system was not true because they were protectors of the world and all this kind of thing.

But then what actually came out of that transition was a fairly raw capitalism and so that wasn't what we had in mind.

Chris: Yes - encouraged by "the Harvard Boys", as we called them.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes, absolutely. So that was, of course, a setback then.

Chris: And that was a political surprise. What about any surprising intellectual developments?

Asbjorn Eide: Well, of course, as you also indicated, people went in different ways, but since some of the basic parameters changed so fundamentally, I'm not surprised. Once that happened, I'm not surprised that this led to a variety of the directions that people went into.

Chris: Going back to PRIO again, we were talking about people pursuing their own interests. What happened to the group of "young Turks" - young men and women you inherited when you became director? Did they go off in their different intellectual directions or did you manage to preserve the core group at PRIO for a while? What happened to all of them?

Asbjorn Eide: Gradually, they have moved to different places, but Nils Petter Gleditsch has remained. He is the stable person at PRIO. Others have come in. I don't think you have the same coherence as we had. They are applying for project money and it depends a little bit on what is up for the time being. I think that, generally speaking, the overall impact that Johan Galtung had gradually declined when he had left, so people drifted out and followed their interest, but several of them became university professors. I set up

the Human Rights Institute and Sverre Lodgaard, who was also a director for a while, he became director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. He might be a person to interview, even though he came in somewhat later, but he was quite an important figure. So most of us followed our own interests - carried forward many other things that we were interested in during that period, but separately, now in separate places. And then new people came in and now there is, sadly, a lot of internal conflict going on.

Chris: Not that surprising, I guess. And Johan became a peripatetic intellectual, traveling the world.

Asbjorn Eide: Ys. he did.

Chris: Why, having created PRIO [which I think it's clear that he did - he's very responsible for it] why did he leave Norway? Because he seemed suddenly to become a world traveler. He'd travelled before, of course, but he always had a base here. But he seemed quite happy to leave his "child" to grow up and become an adolescent and then a fully-fledged human being. I was always surprised that he managed to do that.

Asbjorn Eide: We probably need psychological insight to find out why he did this - I don't know why he decided. It was, in a way, too limited for him. The world was his platform and he had so many places where it interested him. Hawaii and Japan and so many other places - so maybe it became too limiting.

Chris: He taught for us [at George Mason University] for one semester a few years ago now, and while he was there, he bought an apartment.

Okay, last few questions. We're forgetting the past and the present for the moment and looking into the future. What do you think are going to be likely fruitful lines of development for peace research over the next few years? Or alternatively, where would you like to see it developing? What would be a good development from your point of view?

Asbjorn Eide: I think the best one can hope for is more communication between different people who may be following their own respective. Maybe this is reflecting my own path. I don't see a very strong consolidated peace discipline, which is methodologically very, very coherent. But what I hope and expect is that there will be good communications between people who have these different

contributions to make to the field. If you can provide a framework for multidisciplinary work, for the way you look at projects and programs, and facilitate communication with different people - that is what I think one can hope for.

Chris: Anything specific – what would you like to see as the subject of that kind of work? Do you have any preferences?

Asbjorn Eide: We certainly need to more work on understanding and how you can transform these local conflicts into something constructive and useful. Then we need to know and understand much better how to deal with the negative consequences of globalization, how to empower those who are presently the losers in that big game.

The whole globalization process in itself is the major transformation that's going on and there are so many unclear implications. There are many positive consequences in that we facilitate communication globally in a completely different way from what we could do before. But there are also many, many complicated tensions arising from it. So to chart out the research that is required to study globalization and the way to address it - that's the big thing of the future.

Chris: That's a tall order.

Asbjorn Eide: Very tall.

Chris: A couple of final questions and then Jannie will remind us of things that I've missed. At the end, I always ask two questions, one of which you've already partially answered, but I'll ask it anyway. Who else ought we to talk to for this project as part of that initial generation, that era?

Asbjorn Eide: You mean here in Oslo?

Chris: Here in Oslo or anywhere else.

Asbjorn Eide: Anywhere else.

Chris: Anywhere to the east of the former Iron Curtain. Are there still people there who were part of the connections you set up that we could talk to? It's a generational question, not a specifically Norwegian one.

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- Asbjorn Eide: I understand. You have Vincent [Holkavvee](#), but then you talked to him, I assume.
- Chris: We haven't but we're compiling a list.
- Asbjorn Eide: Yes, he's worth talking to. Peter Wallenstein, who may be, as you said, a little bit younger than the others, but he has been very active and he's really worth talking to. You could try to talk with Sverre Lodgaard, who is now the director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. He's here in Oslo. He came in during in the early 1970s. You probably know yourself the names in the United States.
- Chris: We've talked to a lot of them, but it's always possible to miss somebody.
- Asbjorn Eide: Bruce Russett. Is David Singer alive?
- Chris: David? Yes, we talked to him a while ago. He's living in Michigan, but he's still just as I remember him.
- Asbjorn Eide: Who else? Raimo Varynyen, who is in the United States.
- Chris: I think he's at Notre Dame in Indiana – he could give a point of view of the developments in Finland.
- Asbjorn Eide: Exactly.
- Chris: Who was at Tampere?
- Asbjorn Eide: I wonder if Raimo Vayrynen is still there - he would be a person that you could look at.
- Chris: Raimo Vayrynen ? Yes, I remember the name. I don't remember having met him.
- Asbjorn Eide: I wonder what happened to Ulrich Albrecht, the German professor. I know he was ill. And the other important figure in Germany, Dieter Senghaas.
- Chris: Yes, we have him on the list - and there was Ernst Otto Czempiel, though I heard he'd been very ill.
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- Asbjorn Eide: One person who was maybe not so much focused on peace, but she was involved - we wrote a book together, Ulrich Albrecht and herself. Mary Kaldor.
- Chris: We spent a very long time trying to find time for Mary Kaldor to talk to us. Jannie and I have just come from London...
- Asbjorn Eide: She didn't want to?
- Chris: No, no - she wanted to, but Mary, as far as I know, is constantly on airplanes. She's always traveling and we were only there for a week and she just wasn't available. We have her on our list, very definitely.
- Asbjorn Eide: We wrote a book on the World Military Order with her and with Ulrich Albrecht. It was a quite interesting project.
- Chris: Well, we were looking particularly for women to interview, of course, but my impression is that in those early days - with the possible exception of here in Norway - there weren't that many women involved in the field.
- Asbjorn Eide: You're right, there weren't. There were certainly more men than women. But the women that were, they were quite active and there were Elise and Ingrid.
- Chris: Yes. We're talking to Ingrid, I think, on Friday.
My last question is again a fairly open-ended one. Supposing you had been sitting here, interviewing Asbjorn Eide, what question would you have asked him that I haven't asked - one that would have been an opening for you to talk about something that was important, but that we had missed?
- Asbjorn Eide: Good question. Well, here's one. You could, for instance, ask how do you now assess Johan Galtung.
- Chris: And what would you have said?
- Asbjorn Eide: I would probably have said that he was a fascinating person, a lot of ideas, but not a very realistic person.
- Chris: Not realistic. That's an interesting way of talking about him. I mean I've always found Johan a very optimistic person.
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Asbjorn Eide: He's very optimistic, incredibly optimistic, and he's still believing, I think, in this notion of the small communities.

Chris: Yes. I think you could almost place Johan in – I'm trying to remember the name of the book, but there's a very well known book about "utopian" communities. And I think Johan would have had a section in that book.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes, indeed, absolutely.

Chris: I think it's by Edmund Wilson - *To the Finland Station* - where he's talking about 19th century Utopian communities, and there should be a little footnote at the end there on 20th century Utopian thinkers.

Okay, we have come to the end of our questions so thank you very much for your time, your patience and your courtesy.

Subsequent, follow up questions – some repeated - to obtain reaction shots:

Chris Mitchell: Going back to the early days of PRIO again, I've always had the feeling that PRIO was almost a unique creation, but were there other organizations around at that time in the peace studies field. Was PRIO a unique creation or were there others around?

Asbjorn Eide: In my recollection, it was quite unique. There were other people, - individuals - who were doing relevant work, but to set up an institution to deal with this question was pioneering.

Chris: Several people have said to us that there was difficulty in using the word "peace" in a title for what you were doing. It had negative connotations. Was that the case in Oslo and in general? I mean it was called the Peace Research Institute.

Asbjorn Eide: At least it was controversial, and it was also politically controversial at the time. It had to do also with the East-West conflict and the Norwegian membership in NATO, which itself was a controversial matter because Norway had traditionally been very neutral, like Sweden – non-partisan in international affairs.

The decision to join NATO was controversial in Norway, which means there were many people who were against and they saw this "peace research" as a way at least to discuss alternatives. But that

also meant that those who were strongly in favor of NATO membership looked upon it with some suspicion. So the word “peace” and “peace research” was controversial. But it was deliberately used in this case, but with a strong aim.

Chris: Then it was acknowledged to be something of a problem to use the word.

Asbjorn Eide: Yes, you could say that.

Chris: The other implication of it has always been – and I’ve had people say this to me – “Peace research, conflict research, you’re really just a set of Utopian dreamers !” I guess it’s the idea that we’ve always had wars and there will always be wars, so what do you think you are doing? So there has always been this “dreamer versus realist” aspect to things. Was PRIO a set of dreamers?

Asbjorn Eide: There were a mix of people with some - maybe - slightly more on the dreaming side. Others were much more realistic in the sense of looking for the things that could be done, but with a hope and a view and a vision - and some of the things became possible. By now, the word “peace” is very popular.

Chris: Well, nowadays throughout the academic world and elsewhere, it doesn’t have the “left wing”, “communist front” air that it carried in the 1950s and 1960s.

I want to go back to Hakan’s idea of four tribes because you started to talk a little bit about one of the tribes and then we got diverted. Do you think it’s an interesting division of people who worked in this field, or is it misleading ? How do you react to the idea of being a member of one or the other of these tribes?

Asbjorn Eide: No, I don’t know where or how he goes so far as to see four tribes, but he probably has studied that more than I have, so he may be right. But there was certainly a divide between what we can call “strategic thinking” on the one hand and “peace research” on the other. That’s very clear. So I can identify at least two tribes.

Chris: And was that a clear distinction in Norway at the time of the Cold War?

Asbjorn Eide: Yes, it was.

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- Chris: We were talking earlier about policy effects and whether the field has had any major effects on policies. I think you were arguing that it had, in some sense, been “successful”. Could you say more about that? Say a little bit more about where you think the field has made a difference.
- Asbjorn Eide: I think that the analysis of peaceful conflict transformation has at least had the impact on Norwegian policy in many areas, so at least in so far as Norway is concerned, it has had an impact.
- Chris: More generally, do you think the same is true in other countries?
- Asbjorn Eide: Yes, I think so – I believe so. There are better ways of thinking about these questions now than there was when we started.
- Chris: So you’re cautiously optimistic about what effects it will all have.
- Asbjorn Eide: Yes.
- Chris: I have to admit I’m cautiously pessimistic, but then living in and near Washington, D.C., it’s difficult.
- Asbjorn Eide: Yea, that’s true. It must be hard. It must be hard to live under the present administration of the United States, but hopefully, it won’t last much longer.
- Chris: Well, it has another three years to run. Is it three years? Whatever it is, it seems like an awfully long time.
- Asbjorn Eide: Two and a half years.
- Chris: Talking about Johan again for a moment, I believe his first post as a professor of peace studies at the [Oslo] University was actually funded by the Norwegian government. In many parts of the world - including, I think, the United States - anything that is funded by the government is automatically taken to be (perhaps) a little undesirable because the government is seen as buying you. But there seems to be a very different attitude in Norway - and possibly Europe - on that.
- Asbjorn Eide: Yes.
- Chris: Obviously that wasn’t a problem for Johan, but is there this difference in government funding?
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Asbjorn Eide: I think there is a clear difference. Not only was his post funded by the Government, but a lot of PRIO's projects came from the Government, even though there were many times when what came out of PRIO was very, very controversial - including in the Parliament. But there is a different attitude because we don't have this kind of bipartisan approach to the government. We have - of course, governments change, but the administration remains by and large, and the administration is probably all Norwegian. So it's indeed a policy to make sure there is money available for a plurality of purposes and it is not looked upon with any particular suspicion. We look with much more suspicion at money which comes from multinational corporations. That we look at with considerable suspicion, so there's an intriguing difference. Or from nations which have been established by multinational corporations. Government we see as safe - because it's neutral, it's impartial.

Chris: That is a very different attitude. Again, you've already mentioned Johan Galtung as a major influence on thinking in those early days. Who else was important at that time in developing the thinking at PRIO and in Norway?

Asbjorn Eide: In Norway? Nils Petter Gleditsch came in at a very early stage. He was a hard data sociologist who played an important role. Helge Hveem who was a political scientist with a degree of economic orientation and he played an important role. And of course, there was the wife of Johan Galtung, who was also a sociologist - his former wife, that is. Then I mentioned the anthropologist Arne Martin Klausen who did very interesting work on the impact of the Norwegian Development Assistance in the North-South perspective. These were among the Norwegians that could be mentioned. There are some others that I may not have mentioned earlier - a sociologist by the name of Wilhelm Aubert, who was a sociologist of law. There was also Professor Eckhoff at the Faculty of Law, who was a very supportive person for the development. These are some of the Norwegians. Then internationally - Dr. Raimo Vayrynen, who was my predecessor as the Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association. He was in Groningen in the Institute there. And there were emerging institutes in Sweden - at Uppsala - and in Finland - at Tampere - but a little bit later than this.

End of Audio Duration: 94 minutes.