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Interviewer, Chris Mitchell, Male Speaker, Male Speaker 2, Pushbee, Susan, Female Speaker

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PARENTS OF THE FIELD.

Interviewee; Dr. Chris Mitchell

Date: 13th May 2006.

Venue: Arlington Virginia.

Interviewer; Dr. Jannie Botes.

Interviewer:	It is Friday the 13th of May, 2006. We're at ICAR in Fairfax, Virginia talking to Christopher Mitchell, one of the co-researchers of this project, but also deemed by many to be a real parent of the field. So Professor Mitchell, I want to start by asking you about it all ? What do you think you learned that you didn't know… And so far, what kind of experience was this, in terms of learning about the field as someone who has been in it yourself for many, many years?
Chris Mitchell:	For start, don't call me Professor Mitchell. Call me Chris.
Interviewer:	Thank you.
Chris Mitchell:	I think both of the idea… that there is a history there, which is not being recorded. And it is an interesting history because what's happened [in the project] is very much insurance for what happened in the previous 40 years - perhaps longer. And I wanted to get that on record. And I wanted to get on record some of the people who were my friends and colleagues over the years and who are now mostly old and some of them are [dead]. And… people are beginning to write some articles and some books about them. For example, as you know there is this book about Morton Deutsch, there's another one about Johan Galtung but there are a lot of other people who contributed to this field that I didn't want the field to forget them and so that was one of my motivations. I mean, what I've got in return is confirmation of stuff that I half knew and it is very interesting to hear the stories from their point of view. And a lot of things that I found, interestingly enough, echo my own experience in trying to develop a new field - often in the teeth of opposition.

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So listening to people's struggles and troubles and efforts that somehow parallel my own experience is… comforting. What is … discomforting, of course is seeing a lot of my old friends getting older. Of course, it's not happening to me, but they're getting older !! And seeing some of them having been… young Turks in the field… combative, aggressive, and very, very bright - and very determined to make something of this field.

And they're now, some of them - their memories are going inevitably so… in a strange way, it has been kind of a sad experience for me, and that's something I didn't expect.

Interviewer: We will talk for a time of some of the names that you have mentioned much deeper into our interview and ask you about the history of the field in a broader sense in a question or two, but I'd like to start with you. The people that we've interviewed were mostly - as we've just heard with the death of Adam Curle - if they're 90 today, they were born in the late teens or early [nineteen] twenties. If we think of the field we also think back to, for instance, the peace movements before even the First World War - but how did you get involved in this.

Chris Mitchell: Long story or the longer story?

Interviewer: The longer story.

Chris Mitchell: All right. People came into this field from all sorts of different histories - with different histories, with different backgrounds. As you know from the [interview] work that we've done, we have had people who have been [newspaper] columnists, lawyers, etc., etc. I have been thinking about what my background was and what were the things that influenced me before I came into this field. And I came up with… four disciplines if you like. Four things that always influenced me.

One was history; the others were education, economics, and international relations. That is where I'm from, intellectually speaking. And… if anybody were to ask me what I think of myself, I …come back to where I started, which is - I think I'm a historian. A historian will attempt to provide accurate stories about past conflicts, past events - to tell an accurate, produce an accurate "narrative" - which is a very modern word. And then to move on to why did these things happen as they did. So that was very much a formative part of my background.

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How I came to it ? Go back to the point at which I came out of the [Royal] Air Force, which was the beginning of 1955. I came out of the Air Force and I hadn't got a clue what I wanted to do - but I knew what I didn't want to do. I did not want to get a job in an office because I'd had two years of working in an office and it was a lawyer's office, so I knew I didn't want to become a lawyer….

And around at that time the country - Britain - was desperately short of schoolteachers. The teachers that had actually been trained before the Second World War were now getting old and they were retiring and so there was a desperate shortage on the "supply side"…and this was the mid 1950's so there was a huge increase in the number of kids - which happened in Britain as it happened in the United States after the second World War. I don't know what they called it in this country, but we called it a "bulge." The "bulge" was… coming through into the schools.

And so the Government, [was] actually terribly short of teachers and so they started to offer courses - two year courses - at what we called Teacher Training Colleges. Now, they weren't Universities.   They weren't technical college.   They were specifically geared for turning out schoolteachers. So I decided that I would give this a go… as a two-year teacher. And you did basic courses in educational theory and you did… courses in how to structure a lesson and one thing and another - and then they threw you into a school in south London amid all the toughs and hobos down there.   And if you survived two years, then you graduated as a teacher.

But the other thing they did was…, if you were going into the secondary level, which is, roughly speaking, the equivalent to the American high school….   then you specialized in a particular subject. And I specialized in History, which I had always enjoyed, and English [Literature],.. Also at the time, [I fell in love with] the scholarship of learning so that for the next five years - I think- I taught in a secondary school [for] six, seven years. And I did five years of evening classes at London University to do a Diploma in History. [You took] a four-year course and you got a diploma in modern history - starting around about 1500 with the Renaissance and the Reformation. And I did an extra year on a course on paeleography, so at the end of this I got the certificate.

Round about that time, the structure of the [teaching] profession was changing. I had gone into it in 1957 with a… two- year teaching certificate - a very impressive looking document.

 [A hell of a lot more impressive than any of my other degrees ! I think there is an inverse relationship between the sort of

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prestige…you get and the size of the piece of paper they give you. I can't actually remember what you get for a Ph.D.]

So I was teaching in a secondary schools just outside London. The structure of the profession started to change and we started to get a whole lot of people who actually had university degrees and they were beginning to get all the plum jobs - the heads of departments and the head teachers in the school. And it struck me that if I actually wanted to make a career out of being a schoolteacher and make my way up the ladder and try to get my own school, which is what I wanted… And so I started look around at possibilities of going back to college… This was the beginning of the 1960's.

British academic life was pretty conservative in those days - and it still is. And so there were only three places that offered… places to what they called "mature" students, Oxford, Cambridge, and London. So I applied to all three of them to go back for three year degree and…Oxford and Cambridge turned me down, and London accepted me, but with a proviso. Because, of course, what I wanted to do was go back and do a degree in history and the University authorities said, "Well, unfortunately you can't do that." And so I said, "Well, why not?"

And they said, "Well, to do a degree in history you have to have had some training in a classical language." In other words, you have to have done four years Latin at school or four years Greek, or presumably classical Sanskrit or something like that. And I hadn't. I had actually been given the choice [in school] and I had actually done Spanish because I thought it would be more useful to me. I hadn't… any Latin at all. And I said, "I don't want to study medieval documents. I want to study early modern history." And it didn't make any difference. Obviously, to understand Bismarck's foreign policy, you had to understand Latin.

So they said, "Oh well, we wont let you into a history degree, but we'll let you in to do an economics degree." And so I ended up going back to University College London at the beginning of 1963… to do an economics degree - which is where I sort of picked up my economics.

Now, the thing was that the London University Economics degree was… a sort of strange creature, because it actually wasn't just an economics degree – it was a sort of general social science degree. You had to do economics all the way through the three years and the first year you didn't get any kind of a choice at all, you did five… basic courses. I won't bore you with what they were.

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But then, at the end of that year, you got to make a choice and you could specialize a little bit. If you wanted to go on to an economics you could do economics. But if you wanted to do sociology, for example, you still did some economics for the next two years, but you could specialize in sociology - or anthropology, or psychology. You still ended up with a Bachelor of Science in Economics, but it was then with a specialization in whatever it was.

So at the end of my first year I was going to go and do the economic history specialization. That was the sort of thing that I was thinking of doing from the start. 'Okay, you won't let me do history, so I'll do economic history." And then - it must have been the beginning of the first summer term. We were sitting in the student lounge in the college talking about what we were going to do [next year] - there was a group of us there. And a fellow called John Simpson, who subsequently became Professor of Strategic Studies at Southampton University - he was a year ahead of us - he was listening to us and he said, "Well, look, why don't you think about doing international relations ? There is this very interesting guy who has just been appointed to the International Relations sub department [which was in the Law School.] He's worth going and talking to and seeing whether, in fact, this would be interesting to you."

And so we said, "Okay, we'll… give this a go." And this person was the only professor in that whole program who would bother to give a one-hour talk about what he was doing and what an international relations degree was and what it was worth and what it could actually set you up to do and what his ideas were and how he was actually going to structure the thing. So we went and listened to him. And I think about a third of that particular year's cohort actually decided to do international relations. So for the next two years we did international relations and the professor in question was an Australian, a former diplomat called John Burton. And that was how I got into the international relations "game".

It wasn't "conflict" [analysis] at that particular point in time, but the way John taught it, it certainly wasn't classical international relations. It was certainly not looking at the balance of power or… I remember one of the other professors - I think from the LSE - saying at that time, "Oh really, the only book that you need to know, that you need to read, [in order] to understand international relations is …Thucydides *The Peloponnesian War*. And that will teach you everything about international relations." And John had a slightly different angle on things. So that is how I

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got into international relations and that was how I first came into contact with John Burton at University College.

Interviewer: So what was it called? Was there a field? Peace and conflict studies? How was it framed or understood at the time, or was that before you could even say there was a recognized field framed as a field?

Chris Mitchell: Oh, I think it was well before that. There were… stirrings and little seedlings growing up, here, there and everywhere. Very isolated and looking at this very much from a British point of view.

Interviewer: Because 1957 was also the year that things happened in the U.S. and [in Scandanavia] for instance, with Johan Galtung and PRIO.

Chris Mitchell: Yes, and it was the year that the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* first came out and people in Michigan started work there. But we knew about them. But it was still   if you had asked me in 1966 when I graduated what I had been doing, I would have said, I was doing a degree in international relations. And international relations at that time, as a field had its own… conflicts and dynamics going on within it.

It was a time - at least in Britain - when what you could call the "behavioral revolution" [which started over here] which was an attempt to apply scientific approaches to the study of politics, generally, and international politics in particular. It started out of here in the 1950's. It got to Britain in the 1960's.

And back to the… decision that we made as undergraduate students, we were going to do this "International relations" - so we started in our second year having lectures in classes on international relations. And we suddenly found ourselves in the middle of the most unholy row about what was the nature of "international relations". Could one be scientific about this and what… did being scientific mean?

And… "political science" - well, it wasn't even called political science in Britain. It was usually called Politics or Government or something like that. And International Relations were unbelievably backward. I mean, I rather liked the classes, because it was very much this [question of] how did you study international relations. Well, you've got history and you studied institutions like the United Nations and that was the way you did it…This business about "behavioralism", and about "being scientific" and "being comparative" and - God forbid - using numbers ! Using statistics, which… was this new fangled… American thing which some

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people had fallen for !! [Including my old colleague, Dennis Sandole, who was, at this time, up at Strathclyde [University] doing his Ph.D.]

So there was this… row going on - or if you like, intellectual debate - between those who were of the old [school] and who were… defending traditional British International Relations, and these new, young American-influenced people.

And it actually boiled down, in our experience - and again, I am talking about and thinking back to being an undergraduate in the mid 1960s - to this tremendous difference between International Relations that was taught at University College and International Relations as it was taught in the London School of Economics. And the two establishments [were] a quarter of a mile from each other in the middle of London, but as far as intellectual background was concerned, they were on different planets.

And so there was this constant tension between the traditional international relations - the "classical approach" as it was called. As a wonderful example of this, a scholar from the London School of Economics called Hedley Bull - who was also an Australian - wrote a piece in *World Politics*, which was the main, very prestigious journal for International Relations, called "International Relations Theory: The case of the classical approach", which brought an avalanche of responses from American scholars saying, among other things… "It is no secret that British political science is hardly rigorous." You know, nasty things one can say about "your colleagues".

And… John [Burton] and the rest of the people at University College, particularly a younger scholar called John Goom, were in the thick of this sort of this debate. So nobody, in that sense, bothered about "conflict" or "conflict resolution" or anything like that. They were too engaged - in the case of John Burton, for example – [in] trying to undermine the "realists" who were the dominant school of international relations theory - you know, the use and manipulation of power, etc., etc. - as being the central idea of international relations theory that if you wanted to understand what was going on then you started off reading books by Hans Morganthau. It starts off with a statement something like, "The search for power is universal in time and space…" If you want to understand anything about politics, that's what you have to understand.

So, it was very confusing for us to start with, because John never made any concessions to our lack of background. He would go straight into the opening lecture of his class talking about the shortcomings of pathological theory and we didn't have a clue

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what the hell pathological theory was about. And so, on the one hand we were trying to read up on the stuff that he was attacking so that we understood on what ground he was attacking it.. At the end of the second year, I think, I came up to one of my friends and said, "Do you know what we've just done?" Dick said, "No, I'm utterly confused." And we *were* utterly confused at the end of the second year. By the end of the third year, I think, we could get some kind of a handle on what was happening.

And then there were also things that were going on at the same time that we didn't know about as undergraduates. We got… little echoes of what was happening. For example, round about this time the International Peace Research Association was being started up.

Interviewer: And the time you're referring to now?

Chris Mitchell: I think 1964 was the date it started. Very many people were involved [in its beginnings – for example not just] Kenneth Boulding and Elise Boulding, but [Bert] Roling, the Dutch former diplomat. There were a group of Dutch scholars at Groeningen, the Scandinavians – Johan Gatung, particularly, to be specific. And [the Peace Research Institute Oslo which had been founded by Galtung. And all of this was… beginning to have an effect on international relations… thinking and people who were interested in "doing something" about conflict. I mean, you've got to remember we're talking about the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s - the height of the cold war.

It was the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the beginning of the thaw that… followed that and the beginning of "peaceful coexistence" etc., etc.

It wasn't all "swinging London" ! All sorts of things going on. And so people were beginning to get interested in: "Well if you can be scientific about international relations, surely you can be scientific [about the nuclear threat] - at least, you can get out of this…simple mindset as regards doing something about conflict. Many of the people that we have talked to already have… given you the idea - which I think is a quite accurate – [that] was one of the things that pushed them into thinking, " I'm a psychologist, can I think about ways in which my field will throw some light on avoiding nuclear Armageddon."

It was very much… a common feeling among scholars in various parts of the world, so we were coming at this from an international relations perspective. Others were coming at it from social psychology perspective. Others were coming at it from a…

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there were anthropologists. You know, you mentioned Anatol Rapoport a little while ago and Anatol was a mathematician. So there was this whole stream of thought and ideas that came from an interest in mathematics and statistics to try to understand conflict situations…

Interviewer: I would like to bring you back to something.

You've given like a quick run from your interest in the field up to the mid '60s, but I want to take you back to something you said. Many of the people we interviewed talked about the impact of the Second World War on their psyches. Also the people around them, the impact that that had. During the Second World War, if I counted correctly you were a child, you were a teenager.

Chris Mitchell: Right, almost.

Interviewer: All right. You also referred to the Peloponnesian Wars.

Chris Mitchell: I wasn't at that one.

Interviewer: Correct, but there's a whole stretch of history between the Peloponnesian Wars – which people are going to refer to as "the first conflict" that we should be aware of in this field - and then our awareness of the previous century with its wars – the First and Second [World Wars]. As a South African, I'm aware of the wars between Britain and South Africa - of the first and second Anglo-Boer Wars. I'm also aware of Emily Hobson and her work in South Africa in concentrations camps and how unwelcome she was in certain sections of the British society after that.

So what should we see the field as, or how should we think of it, in between the Peloponnesian Wars and the First World War and Second World War. That's my first question.

And the second one, which I'll remind you of… Say a little more about… the atmosphere just after the Second World War.

Let's start with if we want to talk about this as a field, how far should we go back? The Peloponnesian Wars, the Anglo-Boer War, the Crimean War, Opposition to the First World War… How would you frame all of that?

Chris Mitchell: Well I think – obviously - as a historian would. One of the things that I try to do in my teaching - and I tried to do it when I was teaching in London to undergraduates, but I've also tried to do it over here to teaching post-graduates - is to say that, although people did not think about themselves of being part of a "field" of conflict analysis and resolution, it's perfectly possible to trace back

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the ancestry of our field to the Peloponnesian War and then forward again through the centuries by talking about people who have firstly put forward schemes and ideas for the peaceful resolution of conflict - or the peaceful control of conflict. And secondly that it's perfectly possible to look back throughout history [and I think particularly in the 19th Century] to a very strong influence in our field - which is peace activism.

In fact, if you look back at the first strand, which is… thinking about dealing with peace…there's a whole series of people, starting… with the poet Dante [Aligheri] for example [who] is one of the people who actually started to produce a plan… for the peace of Europe. And then again… you could branch off into some of the Spaniards like Vittoria who were interested in the application of legal remedies to wars, and started the development of international law, part of which is the international law of armed conflict and that… strand…comes right up to date

And then there are a whole series of people working in the 19th Century - but the 19th Century, I think, was very, very much an era of peace activism. You know, there were an astonishing number of peace movements - people actually banding themselves together to prevent war and violence. One of the things that one… remembers about the 19th Century was that it was a very long period of so-called peace.

All right, it was peace in Europe, but it certainly wasn't peace on the American frontier, for example, but we tend to ignore that…

It was a long, long period when there were really no major wars as there had been in the Napoleonic period - and as there was going to be from 1914 to 1918… So there is this lull, but it was also a period of enormous hope, and enormous organization. If you think back to some of the [19th Century] organizations, there was a wonderful one, which actually… was a forerunner to the thinking about setting up the League of Nations after the First World War. It was very strong in the United States and it was called " A League to Enforce the Peace".

Hundreds, thousands of members joined that League and it had a very profound impact on the thinking of President Wilson.

So that if you're asking; "When does our field start ?"… I have always said, it started as a self-conscious field in the 1950's. But if you add in peace… activism then you go back to the 13th Century in Europe - and I'm sure that if we knew more about … Islamic culture that there were people who were writing about peace and conflict in that [culture] as well.

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Interviewer: So my second question, as part of this, was; "When thinking of what… you've just called the "modern" history or the conscious history, of the field being the early 1950s, what was it about that period (and to what degree was it the Second World War) that provided the seeds… the atmosphere in which all that became possible or needed or the fact that people wanted to "do something" about war - and wanted to talk about peace.

Chris Mitchell: I think my answer has to be a very Eurocentric answer. It is where I come from and that is what I know about.

One of the things that struck me about talking with some of the people that we've interviewed - who are from a generation slightly older than me… people who actually served in that war… You remember talking to Morton Deutsch, who was a navigator in a bomber squadron in the war. Roger Fisher was a meteorology officer with the [US] Air Force. Dave Singer was in the Navy and some of the others we haven't actually talked to… their background was that war.

And they all, more or less, say the same thing. That they came to the conclusion, at the end of that war, that this was a stupid way of handling major conflicts. You can look at the Second World War in a variety of ways. One of the ways to look at it is to think of it as "Round Two" - it is the second round of the First World War, [with] more or less the same players in it. More or less the same! How, in God's name, did we actually manage to fight a world war - two world wars - 20 years apart ?

I think that was one of the things that underlay the beginning of the efforts in the 1940's, which - if you like - started off with the attempt to set up the United Nations at the San Francisco conference.

One of the interesting things about actually begin taught by John [Burton] was that he had been there. He had been there as part of the Australian delegation in this effort to set up this organization that was supposed to save the world from "the scourge of war". And, you know, he would tell fascinating stories about the role of the Australian delegation - together with the Indians, the Canadians, the South Africans as well - in trying to head off some of the things which they saw were going to be wrong with the United Nations, if setting up the United Nations was left simply to the five so-called "victor powers".

So saying this thing [the field] started in 1950's is like all generalizations…an exaggeration because there were certainly seeds [before that]. The setting up of UNESCO, for example, was part of this whole effort to deal with the root 'causes of war' All

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of the stuff in Chapter Seven which has to do with peace and security, which is in the hands of the Security Counsel. That was dealing with what you could call the "surface manifestations" and the "crisis times", whereas a lot of the stuff which, according to John, was intended to be put in by the Indian delegation - in association with some of the other smaller countries, including Australia - came in from them. I remember John saying at one point [that] the atmosphere… among the delegates from the great powers - I mean, from the Soviet Union, from the United States, Britain, China, France – was: "…All right, we will look after the important stuff. We look after the business of keeping the peace. You guys… if you want to monkey around with social… and cultural things, that's all right, go ahead and do that." That got put into the UN Charter, mainly because of the activities of people like Mike Pearson, the Canadian delegate…

But if you think about the whole set up, the whole "peace and security" set up at the United Nations was really that peace and security was going to be in the hands of a "trade union" of the "Great Powers". It was going to be the right of the members of the Security Counsel. That's the whole thing about the veto. And it all actually depended on the five Great Powers continuing to agree among themselves as to what would be done.

Now, we all know what happened to that. About 1945 it was going to hell in a handcart. The Cold War was beginning, so it wasn't quite so much the Second World War that affected what happened in the 1950's, I think it was the Cold War. I think it was the fact that what the victor powers tried to establish in the 1940's… obviously [was] not working. That you were in this… dreadful situation in the 1950's where the wartime consensus had very rapidly fallen apart and you had the Cold War and you had this terrible process of [the] continuing escalation of the arms race.

And you got to the point where people were talking about MAD… which, for the information of anybody who is under the age of 30 does not mean "Mothers Against Drunk Driving." It means Mutually Assured Destruction. And it would have been mutually assured destruction. I think that was the trigger. That was what you call "the atmosphere". It was the sheer fear that unless something was done about it and I, as a social psychologist, I as a historian, I as a mathematician, have a duty to try to see if I can use my skills to try to do something to get us out of that thing.

Interviewer: But the root fear of that was also the way the Second World War ended.

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Chris Mitchell: Yes, I think that is probably right… There is [a] sort of continuation… Here we have got the Red Army in the middle of Europe and unless we actually… deter them, they will be rolling up the steps of Buckingham Palace before you know where you are.

Interviewer: I was actually thinking more of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Chris Mitchell: Well, yes… that was the other side of things. And I… really didn't start thinking about this until I was actually in the Air Force. You know, you're getting on with your life and you know that there are nuclear weapons about the place, but you can't do anything about it, so you just have to live with that. And not just nuclear weapons. I remember being given a lecture by a flight sergeant in the Air Force about chemical weapons. About kinds of nerve gases that the Germans had produced during the Second World War and the fact that people were stockpiling those as well. There are all sorts of horrors. And the other thing that… convinced me - at least for a while - that something had to be done about this, (although I didn't actually even think that I could do it) was - well, what we just heard; jets flying overhead.

One of the jobs I had in the Air Force was to keep track of the movement of planes in British "air space", which… extended across the North Sea towards THE threat. And that stage at least, - and again, this is sort of 1953, 1954 and 1955 - the Royal Air Force was [still] trying to re-fight the Battle of Britain.

You know, it was important in 1940, but what they were trying to do was to update a system which had defeated the Luftwaffe in 1940, whereby you could see enemy plane approaching Great Britain on the radar screen and you then sent up fighters to try and shoot these bombers down. Now, even in 1940, if you shot [down] .. if you intercepted 25 percent of the planes coming over, you were doing extremely well. If you shot down 10 percent of them, you were having a hell of a good day. The rest of them bombed you - and I can assure you that being bombed was not a very pleasant experience, even at the age of 10.

But what the RAF was trying to do in the 1950's was exactly the same thing, except that - as you say - Hiroshima and Nagasaki had happened. So if, in fact, there were incoming planes that were carrying nuclear weapons and you shot down 10 percent of them - or 20 percent of them or 50 percent of them - it didn't matter a damn. Somebody once did a study that… said [that] if you dropped six five-megaton nuclear bombs on the west side of

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Britain [and if] they were "dirty" nuclear bombs, then the prevailing winds would turn the rest of the island into a desert.

And we knew. We weren't stupid. We knew that we couldn't stop them. There was no way we could stop them. So … after I came out of the RAF and I started school teaching for a couple of years afterwards, I would occasionally get woken up by… jets going over. And I knew very well - this was before the era of jet airlines. I knew they had to be (I hoped) RAF fighters, - because if they weren't RAF fighters, then we were in real trouble!

Interviewer: Okay.

Chris Mitchell: And that was… just how terrifying the time was. That was, I think, the spur that - rather late with me, but with a lot of other people…who were… ten years my senior…pushed them into that study.

Interviewer: So having set the atmosphere for the '50s and early '60s, you were a student of John Burton's. So give us an overview of how the field in Britain then developed at that time - seemingly starting to compete with the disciplines, but also just from Burton onwards - different people, different strands. How did we…move from 1955 to 1975 so to speak? Is that the right block of time to talk about even?

Chris Mitchell: It's as good as any. Maybe, from… the mid '60s to the mid '70s. Because there really wasn't much going on in Britain in the late '50s. Much more going on over here, much more going on in Scandinavia.

Interviewer: And while you are talking about "going on", was this "peace and conflict studies" ? Was it peace studies? How was it framed?

Chris Mitchell: Yes, that was the interesting thing. That is one of the things I have actually picked up [while] doing the interviews. Yes, I think they were self consciously - in this country and particularly in Scandinavia and also I think, probably in some of the European continental countries - they were quite self consciously interested in understanding "peace and conflict" and they started using those terms.

If you think back, in 1957 there was a group of people at Michigan University in Ann Arbor. [They] had got together and there were the Bouldings and David Singer, Robert Angel, -Dean Pruitt was there. Herb Kelman was there. They had actually

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started the whole thing rolling by deliberately calling the journal which they published the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

And nobody quite knew where… did this fit in ? "Conflict resolution" - what was that? Political Science? Was that… what was it ?

Interviewer: And this is 1957, right?

Chris Mitchell: That was 1957. And then a few years later, the peace research people in Oslo produced the *Journal of Peace Research* - and the interesting thing is there has always been this…slight tension between the American science of conflict – but we started calling it "conflict research" in England in the mid '60s when we got conscious of this and the Scandinavians always talked - much less ashamedly - about "peace".

One of the concomitants of the Cold War, of course, was - as happened with the word "freedom" now - the word "peace" became a dirty word…. partly, it was because - I think - the Soviets actually used the term "peace" for many of the things that they set up, which were… front organizations for defending Soviet foreign policy.

You talked about the "European Peace Committee" and it was probably heavily weighed in the favor of people from Eastern Europe - and some westerners as well - because it was probably funded out of Moscow.

Interviewer: So "peace" was a propaganda term?

Chris Mitchell: Peace was a propaganda term in the 1950's. If you said the word "peace" then you were immediately suspect in some circles in this country, and in Western Europe, because the Soviets had hijacked that term. But the Scandinavians weren't afraid of it. It was…an interesting thing. They were actually quite happy to use the term "peace". So when PRIO put out its journal, it was the *Journal of Peace Research*.

I think one of the first people to use the word "peace" unashamedly in an institution was Walter Isard, who had an organization, which was a kind of a peripatetic conference - an annual conference which moved from place to place. And this was run by Walter's organization, which was called the … let me get this right- Peace Research Society International - PRSI.

Interviewer: Which still exists?

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Chris Mitchell: It still exists. Well, it exists, but - this jumps ahead to the 1970's - it then changed its name to the Peace Science Society International.

Interviewer: That's what he talked about when we interviewed [him] ?

Chris Mitchell: That's right. And as you've gathered, the reason he had to change the name was because in the early '70s the Scandinavians - particularly some of the extreme left in Scandinavia - actually attacked American peace research as being self-serving apologists for American policy in Vietnam. So Walter… said, "All right, if that's the case, we are going to be scientific. We're not political."

Interviewer: We need to talk about the divisions within the field itself and also about the differences in research methodology, but lets keep those two things for our next question and go back to Britain.

Chris Mitchell: Yes.

Interviewer: So the British history of those 20 years of the mid-'60s to the… or the ten years, the block of time you suggested was mid-'60s [to] mid-'70s. How did we move into what was the early work that John [Burton] did into the workshop model and all of those things?

Chris Mitchell: The British story is always fairly small, fairly under funded and somewhat marginal - with a couple of exceptions. I said that in the early 1960's - I can't remember the date, I think it was 1964 - people like Kenneth Boulding and some of the Scandinavians got together and they set up the International Peace Research Association, which was a network of scholars from different places and different departments. And you've got to remember there weren't any departments of conflict and there certainly weren't any departments of peace studies.

I think the one in Bradford - which was set up in 1979 - was the very first one in Britain… that was a department of peace and conflict studies. The thing that was happening though was that there were… isolated people, individuals in academia, who were interested (in the United Kingdom) in what was going on in the United States and in starting up some kind of organization that was interested in peace and conflict that linked people together - because they were all so terribly isolated.

And this was the Conflict Research Society. People felt that "conflict research" was safe – and, after all, we were academics and that [research] was a respectable thing to do. So it was an

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academic network focused in Britain… I think that was set up in 1965. So all of this was going on and all of this was being pushed by John and by a small group of people who were mainly Quakers - Adam Curle, for example, at that stage was very definitely a Quaker though he subsequently sort of became a sort of Quaker/Buddhist or something like that.

The Quakers were the ones who were interested in peace – obviously. Going back to your earlier question, if you look at the history of the development of the peace movement [then] the Quakers have a central part in that - and they were the ones who would actually pony up the money for it. A lot of the money for what was going on in Britain at this stage came from the Cadbury Trust and the Rowntree Trust, which - if anybody knows anything about Britain – is "chocolate" money. You buy a bar of chocolate and in London and it is either [made by] Rowntree or a Cadbury…

And so the Quakers were very keen in setting up institutions, they were very keen in setting up networks. If you wanted funding for a particular project that had something to do with peace, then you caught a train to York and you went and you talked to one of the Quaker foundation. So this was going on in the early 1960's. Again, you've got to understand that… the universities were really not… interested in this. If you were an anthropologist and you had this strange interest in doing something about the Cold War, that was fine, [but] you [had to] do it on your own time.

In those days, British universities were much more relaxed than they are now… so that as long as you taught your classes, as long as you turned up for at least half of your lectures and gave the lectures, that was fine. You could go off and "do your own [research] thing" and nobody interfered. It was very, very loose, - very… flaky. A good time.

So, the idea was to… pull together these individuals from places like the University of Lancaster or Strathclyde or whatever and… keeping that work going, and that was the Conflict Research Society… a network of like-minded scholars who were interested in research into conflict. Now,… problem solving workshops ?.

Interviewer: Was that the main strand of thought that one should be thinking of in terms of the development of the field?

Chris Mitchell: No, not at all, not at all. I mean… there wasn't a main strand of thought. There were… little bits and pieces going on here, there, and everywhere. Let me backtrack a bit [to] my last year as an undergraduate.

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We, as a group of undergraduates, knew that our professors were "up to something". (Undergraduates always suspect their professors of being up to something or other !) And we were right on this occasion. They would come in late for lectures and then they would sort of go off smiling smugly as if they had this big secret.

And what we didn't realize that what they were doing was… they were inventing "problem solving workshops". They didn't know this at the time, of course, because what had happened was part of this row, this intellectual debate between what you could call the "traditionalists", if you like, and the "behavioralists" - which is the way it was expressed at the time in international relations, which… frequently came to a head at conferences, where people would present papers and people from the other side would be - in that wonderfully British way - spitefully rude about the papers that the other side was giving.

Eventually, it came to the point where - simplifying truly - a group of traditional professors, senior professors in the LSE, more or less turned around and… said, "Well, if you're so smart, if your ideas are good, *do* something about a conflict. Show us that your ideas work." Which was… a challenge that John and his group - it is a very small group - couldn't turn down. So they said, "All right" so I'm told. [This is all second hand stuff that John has told me.] They said, "Okay, *do something* about the Middle East !" (Even in those days, the Middle East was… not exactly a garden of peace.) Very sensibly, John… said, "No, I'm not going to do anything about that."

Now, this was '1964, so we are talking about the time in the Middle East between the 1956 war - which is the one that everybody forgets about - and the 1967 war… I'll come back to that in a minute.

So, John… said, "No, I'm not going to do that. However, there is this nasty little conflict, which is going on at the moment in the Far East between the Indonesians and the Malaysians, which the British government was involved in, because the Malayans didn't have any military [forces]. So there was a British…army actually in Malaysia preventing the Indonesians infiltrating over the borders and causing mayhem and violence.

The Indonesians had actually come to the conclusion that the so-called "independence" of Malaysia was a sham, and basically, Malaysia was to be a British surrogate. The main thing that we were worried about was those huge military base in Singapore. So there was this… it was called confrontation or Konfrontasi in Indonesian.

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Now, the thing about that was that John, when he had been with the Australian Foreign Ministry - and he ended up, of course, being the head of the Australian Foreign Ministry as the top civil servant [although]… he had the Minister above him [who] was an interesting guy called Herb Evert.

While he was in that position [and we are now talking about the end of the 1940's] the Indonesians were struggling for independence from the Dutch. [Indonesia used to be the Dutch East Indies…] And John had actually persuaded the Australian government that it was in their long-term interests to support the Indonesians and not to support the Dutch coming back. And so he had done various things like block the transportation of arms through Australian ports to the Dutch army in Indonesian.

Anyway, in the end, the Indonesians achieved their independence. The Dutch pulled out of "the Dutch" East Indies and the Australians had very good relations with the new Indonesian government. Subsequently, John kept up these relations in that part of the world. This was after he had been to China and been "investigated" during the Australian McCarthy period. He lost his [diplomatic] job, but then he also did things you are not supposed to do as a former civil servant - like visit China just after the communist take over. He went to the Bandung Conference, which was the conference in 1955 that set up the Non-aligned [movement].

So he knew all these guys. He knew the Malaysians. He knew the Indonesians. It was his part of the world. So what he did was he pulled together a group of academics and practitioners and he approached the Indonesian government and said, "You're stuck in a situation of impasse. You're not getting anywhere. Why don't you try some informal conversations about the possibilities of coming up with some kind of solution to this dilemma that you're in. And if we do this, I can pull in some experts that can help you do this." Which he duly did.

Interviewer: Was that the kernel of the whole development?

Interviewer: John pulled together a whole group of people, some were area experts, some people from the "behavioral school". He got a lot of help from people at the Tavistock Institute, which is a not-for-profit NGO in London, part of which does work and psychoanalysis, but part of which has a human resources department, which was doing early conflict resolution work on a commercial basis. And there was a young State Department lawyer, who is on a year's sabbatical at the London School of

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economics, who was also part of the team. Somebody called Roger Fisher.

They actually met over something like a five or six-month period starting, I think, in December 1965. They had representatives who had been nominated, as far as I can tell, by the respective presidents of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. I talked to a lot of the people who are actually involved in this - because we weren't. We were just trying to pass our final examination as undergraduates and while this was going on. And they say, particularly Tony De Reuck, who was chairing this thing, that they were making it up as they went along, that they had no idea what they were doing… the thing that Tony says was that he and John had really profound discussions about the lack of structure and the lack of an agenda. It really troubled people. And the whole issue about what was the role of the area experts among the… panel of participants came up. So a lot of things came up that we are familiar with, now, with regard to problem-solving groups.

Anyway, at the end of it, I think, it was pretty clear. I tried to write this up in Ron Fisher's latest book [that] the ideas that they came up with there had a profound impact on the eventual agreement that was signed in Bangkok to end Konfrontazi. And so that was the very first problem-solving approach to a nasty conflict - I mean, it wasn't a major conflict at all.

But there was this new technique, which they seem to have developed, almost out of nothing, although obviously there were various people who had ideas about group dynamics, and why small groups worked. John was reading a lot of stuff out of the [social] casework literature at the time.

The Tavistock [Institute] had adopted some of the ideas of people like Kurt Lewin in the National Training Laboratories T-groups. And so all of that went into a kind of mix, and it seemed to work.

So subsequent to that - and again, remember this is… all second hand- I think John then went to two places. He went to the Quaker foundations and said, "Look, we've got this new method. It's going to be called "controlled communication". Will do you fund this for three years so that we could set up a centre which has to do this kind of problem solving, conflict resolving work ?"

At the same time, he went to the Social Science Research Council in London and said, "We've got this new method and I want to set up a center to do this work. Here is an application for a grant." So suddenly, by the summer of 1966, he got a promise of a considerable amount of money - or a least it was a considerable

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amount of money in those days. And he had this [new] method, and he had all sorts of contacts in various parts of the world from his time as the head of the Australian Foreign Service.

And that was the beginning of the Center for the Analysis of Conflict. And that was actually the beginning of this whole problem-solving approach.

Now John almost immediately afterward, started work on a book on this method. And I remember … saying to him, "How do you know that it works?" And we had this long methodological argument in about there only [having] been a couple of cases where it had been tried - how dare you write a book about two cases ? Anyway, he went ahead and wrote it and that was the book that subsequently came out in 1969, called *Conflict and Communication.* So that is where that comes from.

Interviewer: And then other people – [Leonard] Doob and others in America f-ollowed this model? How did that happen?

Chris Mitchell: That happened, I think, because there were others who were interested in small group dynamics and the use of small groups - separate, isolated, insulated from public pressure - to try to thoroughly examine the underlying roots of the conflict that they found themselves in. Doob… was a Yale psychologist [and] he was helped by a political scientist from Harvard called Bill Foltz. And they got interested in the use of this… of method, and I remember them coming and talking to John and the rest of us in the fall of 1967, and saying - much to my personal chagrin - that they were interested in the Horn of Africa.

They were interested in all of the problems in the Horn of Africa that were going on between the Ethiopians and the Somalis and the people in Djibouti - and they were proposing to run a series of workshops on that, which they duly did - and published a book, which I think was called *The Fermeda Workshop,* after the place [in Italy] where they actually held the thing. But the thing that really accelerated, or boosted, or started up the adoption of this particular approach were really… and truly speaking… the people that John involved in some of the exercises. I mentioned Roger Fisher was in this particular exercise.

Interviewer: People like Herb Kelman?

Chris Mitchell: Well, Herb came on the second of these experiments, which dealt with the Cyprus conflict. If… I can get a bit personal on this, it will… explain how I got involved… because all of this was going

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on while I was triumphantly completing my degree. So I was finished with the degree in the summer.

Interviewer: The degree being… ?

Chris Mitchell: It was a Bachelor of Science in Economics with a specialization in International Relations. It's a bit of a mouthful. So there I was, the end of the semester…In England, universities have three terms and the third one ends around about the beginning of July. And from beginning of the summer beginning of July, I had been writing off letters of application for jobs in schools, because it was my intention to go back and become the head of a history department - or something like that. And much to my amazement, nobody was interested in me. I was absolutely furious about it. How dare they turn me down? Here I was with seven years experience and a degree !

And then I heard that John was organizing this Center for the Analysis of Conflict and so I plucked up courage and went and saw him and said, "I understand you're setting up a research. Do you have a job for me?

Interviewer: Just to be clear now, which university are we talking about?

Chris Mitchell: This is University College London, which is one of the constituent parts of London University.

Interviewer: Okay.

Chris Mitchell: London University is a… confederal system. And he… responded in his usual way, which is to say something like, "What makes you think I would give you a job? And I said, "Well, you've taught me for two years and I've got an upper second degree, which isn't the same as the first but some people think it's better." So I think he said something like, "I have to appoint a secretary tomorrow. Come and see me the day after tomorrow." So he thereupon appointed somebody as a secretary… And I saw him [the following day] and he said, "Okay. You may start on Monday." You see what I mean about British universities being much looser and flakier in those days than American universities ! There was none of this business about search committees. So I said, "Okay. Thank you."

It was a job and my parents, who went through the Depression, always taught me to believe that the important thing is

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that you had a good steady job. I didn't really get excited about it until I realized what the job involved.

And I said, "Well okay, what do I do?" And he said, "You hold the fort until I get back." And he then took off on a journey that was supposed to be a return [trip] to Australia, but it actually turned out [that] what he was actually doing was… activating a lot of his previous contacts to see if this mechanism, this process, (which they had sort of stumbled on) could be used and applied in other situations.

So, aside from… visiting Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to check up on what was happening with the Indonesia-Malaysia thing - which was winding down, . You know, the thing had actually… got a very simple and very straightforward agreement - an official agreement, which my [later] interviewees said was very much like some of the notes that [were]… finally sent back with the participants.

He went to Cairo, and he went to Nicosia, and various other places… On the way back from Australia, he called in at the United Nations, working a large number of people, including the Secretary General, who at that point was, I think, Karl Waldheim, and apparently the Secretary General said to him, "You know, we have this terrible problem in Cyprus because nobody will talk to my special representative." … The Turks won't because the Greeks will. The Greeks don't want to, until the Turks actually make some concessions. Can you… do something about that situation?"

So when he came back from this… trip around the world, he had two things. One was Cyprus and the other was Arab/Israeli relations, and those were the two things that this new "Center for the Analysis of Conflict" is going to work on. So the second of these… experimental "problem-solving workshops" turned out to be [on] Cyprus. And on that, he pulled together, apart from the people who are part of this new Center, he pulled together three American academics, including a social psychologist from Harvard called Herb Kelman.

It was Herb Kelman, who got absolutely fired up by this process, and from that point onward actually started to take it seriously. Not just as a means of intervening, but as a means of studying conflicts and as a… worthwhile topic of study in and of itself. So [you] could see a full stream of articles coming out written by Herb…

Interviewer: Okay. Now help me understand this. We're now in the '60s, early '70s.

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Chris Mitchell: 1967 - 68. Herb was moving on into the '70s.

Interviewer: So… I think you already said that the workshop model wasn't really the thrust of the field… so how should we then see what was happening there in terms of the development of the field ? Which other organizations, institutions and people became what became "Peace and Conflict studies" in Britain, as it moved into the 1970s and '80s.

Chris Mitchell: Okay. It was something of a struggle, because there were really only three places that could be said to be institutionalizing the peace and conflict field. One was University College, which was where this Center for the Analysis of Conflict was. There was Lancaster University, which is up in the northeast of the country, where there were a group of scholars that were interested in the formal analysis of conflict, using mathematical models and statistical techniques. And they… they were literally hanging on their fingernails. Again, they were kept going by Quaker money.

   And that was a [systems modeler] called Paul Smoker, and a mathematical economist called Michael Nicholson, a sociologist called Robin Jenkins, a mathematician called Gordon Hilson - and there were a couple of others. So here we're talking about five people... If you're talking about the Center Analysis of Conflict [CAC] you're [also] talking about five people - basically. So there were those two "centers", if you'd like.

   And then shortly afterwards a somewhat renegade psychologist called Bram Oppenheimer started up…a "Conflict Research Unit" at the London School of Economics.

    Now, all of these things were funded by what, in this country you call "soft money." In the case of CAC, with money from Quakers, and from the Social Science Research Council. In the case of the Richardson Institute up in Lancaster [it] was Quaker money again. In the case of the Conflict Research Unit - they got a grant from the Social Science Research Council, for … a pilot study [of diplomatic organizations] that they were going to carry out.

   So… the thing that I learned from this experience - and the experience at the Center of Analysis and Conflict - I think is a pretty general lesson, which is, that universities are absolutely delighted to have these innovative and experimental centers or institutes (or whatever) as long as they don't have to fork out the money for it. As long as they can bring in money from the outside, everybody is delighted with them. If the money stops, then the center collapses. And that happened to the Conflict Research Unit.

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	It happened to be Center for the Analysis of Conflict after a while. And it also happened to the Richardson Institute, which… has limped along for the last 30 years up at Lancaster.
	So, really and truly speaking [in] Britain anyway - until the setting up of that Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Bradford - there wasn't an institution that was firmly financially settled…
Interviewer:	Supported by the university.
Chris Mitchell:	Supported by the university ! As I indicated, that started off with Quaker money again paying for professors. .. Adam Cole was the first professor there [and] he was funded by Quakers.
Interviewer:	And this was in the late '60s?
Chris Mitchell:	This was in the late '70s.
Interviewer:	Late '70s.
Chris Mitchell:	Late '70s. So it was a struggle all the time. Jim Laue, who was one of the first people to be appointed at the Institute [for Conflict Analysis & Resolution], used to have this lovely song that he would sing … it's supposed to be a song sung by one of the university administrators and the refrain goes something like, "If you've got the money, honey, I've got the line."
Interviewer:	So you brought us up to the Richardson Institute, Bradford. Is that it? What's happened since? And in asking that I want to remind you of our trip together to various people and places. And I have this memory of you saying to me on a train somewhere, "One day when you interview me, you must ask me about the origins of British ADR or ADR in Britain."
Chris Mitchell:	Ah, well, now you're going into the '70s and '80s.
Interviewer:	Okay.
Chris Mitchell:	And I think - even in this country - you're actually going into the '70s, if [you are] talking about "alternative dispute resolution" being used for local community conflicts or for family conflicts or whatever. And again, I have just to… fall back… being personal. I had never heard of "ADR" until the early 1980's. The only

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reason that I heard about it was - I was then teaching at City University in the center of London in the Department of Systems Analysis.

Which, you know, it was the only place that I could find a job. There were no jobs in conflict resolution. All of the jobs in international relations tended to go to… rather mainstream traditionalists or to people who were interested in strategic studies. Almost everybody who was originally at the Center for the Analysis of Conflict ended up in departments, which formally had almost nothing to do with the study of conflict. Again, that was something you did in your spare time while you were in that Department of –

Interviewer: Systems Analysis.

Chris Mitchell: Systems Analysis, right. Or the Department of Russian and Linguistic Studies, which is where my colleague, Tony De Reuck ended up. So, the whole thing about "institutionalization" really didn't come about until the field got respectable in the 1990's and the 2000's.

It's still not very big in the UK. Richardson Institute is still going and Bradford is the major, major center for Britain. I don't know whether this is… an indicator of how important it is, but I think it's the only department in Britain, which has ever been investigated as being subversive by the British government.

Interviewer: And you should maybe explain why.

Chris Mitchell: Oh, because—

Interviewer: I remember them telling us about it, but—

Chris Mitchell: You were there It was that a lot of them wrote – and some published - articles round about the time of the Falklands/ Malvinas War, which…was a war between Argentina and Britain over the islands in the South Atlantic that the British call the Falklands and the Argentineans call Las Malvinas. It is clearly the case, as far as the British are concerned, that they're British. As the Duke of Wellington once said, "We stole them, fair and square."

So at the time of the war, to write articles that suggested that there may be another side to this… Maybe, if you were going to try to understand why the war had actually taken place… it was necessary to empathize - not sympathize, empathize - with the

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Argentinian group… This was regarded as tantamount to treason, and so, apparently, the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at Bradford was put on the list for MI5 to investigate. They survived that.

Interviewer: And they were investigated and duly found not guilty.

Chris Mitchell: I'm not sure whether they actually got the "not guilty" [verdict] but they were found "harmless".
So, but…I've lost track. We were talking about the developments of the field in the 1970s and the '80s and ADR.

Interviewer: ADR. And I believe you told me, "I've got to tell you about ADR and this woman who was the core of ADR in Britain." Am I not remembering this correctly?

Chris Mitchell: No. Well, maybe you are, maybe you're not, but there certainly was a woman [who] was… the major figure in the development of *family* mediation in Britain, as a branch of ADR.

Interviewer: And when are we talking about now?

Chris Mitchell: I think they started in the mid '70s. In fact, the only way that ADR really got a foothold in Britain in the 1970s was [through] family mediation - dealing with families.

Interviewer: I see.

Chris Mitchell: The other possibility is, that I got to know about ADR quite fortuitously [because] I had a visit from an Australian woman called Wendy Foulkes, who's one of these tremendously dynamic Australian ladies…she… suddenly turned up in my office at City University and… said, "I'm Wendy Fox. I'm interested in alternative dispute resolution. They tell me you're somebody to talk to. Tell me about it in Britain !" And I didn't know a thing about ADR. I don't even think I knew what… it stood for.
And so I sort of finessed that and said, "Oh, well, I don't think there is much of it in this country." I didn't know. But she came and told me what was happening in Australia and she had just done a…a tour of ADR centers in this country… and she had then come across to Britain and… expected that the British would be also doing it - and they weren't ! There was none of this idea about conflict resolution and local communities or anything like that at all. It was family mediation. That is what I subsequently found.

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Interviewer: Was that happening through social services or the court systems?

Chris Mitchell: It was very much court related although there were… independently funded institutions to whom you could be recommended. At that stage, I don't think that there was much in the way of family mediation attached to the family courts. Again, the British were… way behind what was going on. Much to my chagrin I discovered that they were way behind the Australians…

Anyway, she… went away, having been disappointed by my response… I think she then went down to the law department at Kings College [London] and there was a law lecturer down there who was involved in this whole thing, and this lady, Lisa Richardson, who was down in Bristol [and] who had this service… and then she told me about all of the things that were going on in this country - and in the '70s, of course, ADR really took off.

Partly [it was] because Jimmy Carter had actually funded, I think, three experimental services out of the federal budget…and also, the American Bar Association was pushing [ADR] as an alternative to legal processes for handling [neighbor] conflicts - you know, the barking dog problem - that sort of thing, because they were getting tired of the courts being chocked up by hundreds and hundreds of these cases, which really didn't need to go through a legal process.

So the end of the '70s and the beginning of the 1980's - I think it was 1981 - I got a small travel grant to come over here and look at what was happening with ADR. Because what was fascinating, from what Wendy Foulkes had told me about what was going on in Australia, I thought, "Hey, these ideas are pretty similar to the ones that we were trying to get people interested in the late 1960s."

So I started off in New York City and talked to people there. I found this quite extraordinarily lively center in Harlem, which was dealing with all sorts of problems - community problems - in Harlem. I went, and came down here and talked to one of the community centers. Anyway, I … did a cross-country trip.

Interviewer: This is now the early '80s.

Chris Mitchell: This was '81, I'm pretty sure it was '81. No, maybe it was 1980. And then I went back to the UK and spent about 4 years trying to get the British Government, the Home Office and various university centers interested in this idea of alternative dispute resolution. Put together a number of conferences, got a couple of trainers over [from the USA] to talk about ADR. Fortunately, there

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was a young, not very senior official in the Home Office called Tony [Marshall]… who took this up with a great deal of enthusiasm and pushed it in the Home Office - the equivalent to the Department of the Interior here, but it does, the kind of work that it does fit in with ADR.

Interviewer: And the result of that?

Chris Mitchell: The result of that was that it actually started [and] people started to get interested in it. They put together—

Interviewer: It didn't lead to any institutionalization?

Chris Mitchell: Well, it did eventually, but by that time… I was sort of half …

Interviewer: Moving towards ICAR.

Chris Mitchell: I was moving towards the United States. So I… left that movement half way through its gestation period. I think it's now… there are now lots and lots of family meditation services. There are lots and lots of community mediation services set up here, there, and everywhere in the UK. So that's where ADR comes in.

Interviewer: Chris, just very briefly, how did you end up at ICAR, before I ask a couple of other questions…about other institutions from Britain and then I want to just talk about… the rest of Europe. But just very briefly to bring your history up to date to where we all know… I met you as a doctoral student in 1988. How did that all come about?

Chris Mitchell: I think what happened was, as I said, it was a terrible struggle during the '70s and the early '80s to get people interested… No, let me back off that.

It was very easy to get students interested in the topic of … conflict research, conflict analysis, conflict resolution. It was much more difficult to get universities interested in setting up centers - or whatever - in Britain.

It took me something like 10 years before I could persuade my university - City University - to even put on a single course on conflict analysis, even in a Department that was… as "loose" as the Department of Systems Analysis. Then in the end, what I had to do was I managed to get the Curriculum Board to accept a course on "Conflict Management." I couldn't call it "Conflict

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Resolution" anymore. "Management" was okay, because my Department was…formerly a Department of Systems and Management, so I called it "management" and that was all right.

And the other thing is that, when John was setting up the Center for the Analysis of Conflict in the mid-'60s at University College London, it was a period - a very brief period - of expansion for British Universities… It lasted from… I mean, it started in 1964 when the Labour Government came in and the then Prime Minster started talking about turning Britain into a twentieth century country through - I think the phrase he used was "the white, hot something or other of technological innovation". But when it came to actually technologically innovating at universities he realized that, if you are going to… set up engineering departments or medical schools or what ever, it cost a hell of a lot of money.

Social sciences and humanities are much cheaper, so if you are going to expand the student body then the cheapest way of doing that is to have lots of social science courses or humanities courses. Now, that lasted for about eight years – a sort of period of expansion in Britain. And then the British economy tanked, as it frequently does. And cuts started to be made in universities.

Interviewer: This is the Maggie Thatcher era ?

Chris Mitchell: No, it's earlier than that.

Interviewer: Earlier than that.

Chris Mitchell: Earlier than that… it's the Jim Callahan era. There are a whole series, first of all starting in… the mid-'70s and then when Maggie Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph (of blessed memory) got into the act, there were a whole series of other cuts.

Interviewer: They were making cuts for different reasons, but that's a different conversation.

Chris Mitchell: That's a different conversation, right. But the end result was the same. You see, if you're a small precarious departmental unit… and the university budget gets cut, you are the first to suffer. And so that happened in a lot of places. It happened at University College, which was why the Center for the Analysis of Conflict, which by that time was really reduced to two or maybe three people, got moved from University College down to [the University of] Kent.

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	And that happened all the time. There was no expansion going on… Governments would come in and say, "We must expand !" At one point it was Russian studies. You know - we have to have Russian speakers to understand what's going on as détente or coexistence comes into effect, and then it became "Business Studies" or –
Interviewer:	And in the end, we got you because of that history.
Chris Mitchell:	In the end, you got me because of that history, because at one point, I had been… working in the Department of Systems and Management and gradually…making my way up the… British hierarchy from a lecturer to a senior lecturer to a reader - and then I got… made up into a professor which, in Britain, is a major step. There aren't many "professors" in departments, you know - one or two or something like that.
	And I remember that I had just been promoted to professor. I had just… had this interview with the Board, they made me a professor, and the Vice Chancellor called me into his office - the Vice Chancellor in Britain, of course, is the equivalent to the university president [in the USA].
Interviewer:	And we should maybe say that a professor in the British system is something of much higher standard or…, standing than it is in the American system.
Chris Mitchell:	Much higher standing - much lower pay. Anyway… this was 1987, I think, 1986 or '87. The vice chancellor… called me in and… said, "Congratulations. What plans do you have?" And I told him a few things I was planning to do. I wanted to… regularize the conflict strand and he… said, "Well, you know, the problem is, I would like to say that I could throw the weight of the university behind you, but to be quite honest, we are going in a completely different direction. And so I will try to do what I can for you. And if I come across anybody who is interested in funding what you're doing, I will certainly put [you in touch]. I have to tell you that we don't have plans for expanding in that direction." And I thought, "So what do I do now ?"
	At that point, Bryant Wedge, who was the founder of the Institute here and John Burton who was… retired from England and come over initially to the University of South Carolina and then to the University of Maryland and then to George Mason University, he and Bryant and Joe Scimecca… Dennis [Sandole] probably remembers this much better than I do because he was

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here… had actually sort of broken through in the sense of getting some serious, permanent university support for appointments to the Center of Conflict Analysis - as it then was.

(Then it became the Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, I think, and then it became ICAR.)

Interviewer: So the fact that the field was more institutionalized, at that point, in the US than in Britain is really what eventually made you come here, if I understand it correctly.

Chris Mitchell: Well, yes. The thing was that there seemed far more opportunities over here. There were far more resources, there were more students, etc., etc. So that was how I ended up in Fairfax, Virginia.

Interviewer: Okay, Chris… we haven't mentioned Kent. So just give us a very quick overview of what it is now, what did this all come to in Britain… And then…what happened, indeed, in your absence while you were now at ICAR as of '88 till this day. And maybe - just as a quick exercise - jump across the channel and tell us what happened during all this time on the continent.

Chris Mitchell: Okay. I think what's happened in Britain is the idea that you can study peace and conflict has become… accepted and respectable, which I think is the same thing that has happened over here, isn't it? Now, that doesn't mean that there are scads of government money. The thing about British universities, of course, is that they are all, with one exception… funded by the government… You don't have private universities. You know, [Oxford and] … Cambridge… own half the country so they are slightly different, but… to some extent, what happens in universities follows the ups and downs of government policy.

Now, all sorts of things have happened to the universities in the '90s and the 2000's.

Interviewer: But those are more the internal institutionalization of the organizations themselves, etc., but I am more interested in the field itself in terms of which universities, what are they teaching, how is this all ended up in, as I said,… in your absence because you were here from 1988 onwards ?

Chris Mitchell: I think from that point of view, the whole field is… stuck in kind of an ice age over there. You know… you've got a lot of universities that have departments of politics and international relations or departments of strategic studies or - the most honest of

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the lot is the Department of War Studies at Kings College, [London]. At least they are honest about what they're teaching. And incidentally, of course, they actually teach a lot of courses on peace and peace research.

So I think what you've got is a lot of departments which have traditional names on them. I am thinking about [the University of] Kent for example, which is a Department of Government and International Relations or the University of St. Andrews or one of the other. Well, you've got departments which have safe, comfortable names on them, but within those departments, frequently you've got courses or focuses… on peace studies, on conflict studies, on conflict resolution, etc., etc.

And that's, I think, the case in a lot of provincial universities. Now, the one thing I don't know about at all is that one of the last things the Conservative Government did in the mid-'90s before it was flung out – deservedly - and replaced by the Labour Government - , or New Labour government with Tony Blair - was that it decided that, as a gimmick, it would announce that far more 18 years olds, and indeed, far more people in later life who wanted to go to the university, would indeed be accommodated at "universities".

Interviewer: Right.

Chris Mitchell: The way they did this - because, of course, if you do that properly it is going to cost a lot of money - they took a lot of technical colleges and they relabeled them as universities, so that there are now something like eight universities in London [alone] .

Interviewer: What is the impact of that on the field?

Chris Mitchell: I don't know. You know, I think that… I've noticed in some of the literature that is coming out of Britain… that there are a lot of people… who are teaching in these new universities that are actually interested in writing within the field.

Interviewer: But what I find interesting - and I would like to hear your perception on this - is that it seems like the idea of peace studies… is much more acceptable or accepted in Britain than here.

Chris Mitchell: Yes, I think that's right. I think that's not just Britain, I think its generally much more accepted in Europe. Much to everybody's surprise, Britain is part of Europe, and so, you find that there are departments of peace studies in German universities. There are

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departments of peace studies, growing numbers - in Spain. There are some in Italy. There are places in Europe where it's not respectable… unless it had changed very much… I remember going to a conference in Greece, where it was like stepping back into the 1960's… there was no sense in which there was anything worth studying other than the manipulation of power or the sort of traditional things that… I had been studying the 1960's as part of my international relations degree.

Interviewer: And the French had their own take on that and the Dutch actually got much more involved.

Chris Mitchell: The Dutch and the Belgians… the smaller countries in western Europe. Yes, I think they have become involved in it from a pedagogical point of view… The other interesting thing is that the European Union now has become very, very much involved in financing interventions which have to do with conflict resolution, to do with… post conflict peace building. You know… if you take money as an indicator, there is a lot of European money going into that.

And one of the reasons for this, I suspect, (and again, this is something that Dennis Sandole knows about) is the Helsinki Process and the establishments of OSCE. Because one of the things that has happened in the meantime - one of the points I always try to make with the students when I am teaching - is that ours is a field which is very much affected by what is going on in the world.

Now, one of the things that has been going on in the world since the early 1990's of course, is the collapse of the Soviet Union and the development of all these encroaching new conflicts in Eastern Europe, in Transcaucasia, in places like that, in many of which… the OSC becomes involved. And so, where the interest in conflict resolution and peace studies - if one calls it that in this country - seems to me to be on the decline, in Europe, it's been on the rise for a considerable period of time. I think that makes a difference to the support for university programs and for organizations like the Berghof Institute in Berlin, for example.

Interviewer: I want to move into a series of much… broader questions, but there are two things I… feel I need to ask quickly. So, how does a field develop? How does a group of people get to know about each other? How does all this ferment become something? They go to the same conferences. They meet each other through other

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ways. What was your sense of how it all sort of came together, if it did - or to the extent that it did in Britain.

Chris Mitchell: I think the weird thing is that academics get their intellectual support outside their own department. And there are exceptions to that, I think, but my experience was that if I really wanted to throw some ideas around, then I had to go to like-minded people in other departments. So I think one of the answers to your questions is "networking". Conferences are important, but the problem is that, if you go back to the beginning of our field, and… and you say, "Well, all right, where did you guys meet? Where did you exchange ideas?"

There really wasn't anywhere until the 1980's. There's an exception to that [which] is, I think, IPRA - the International Peace Research Association. But IPRA was always strapped for money.

Interviewer: So it is also organizations, not only conferences.

Chris Mitchell: It's not just conferences, but IPRA was a conference giving—

Interviewer: An organization giving a conference.

Chris Mitchell: Giving a conference, right. You know, there was the annual IPRA conference.

Interviewer: Which is still in existence?

Chris Mitchell: Still in existence. The other thing is that, gradually, what happened in the…1960s and the '70s and on into the '80s is that you gradually got [into] a situation where you… took over a tiny, tiny part of an existing, large conference. For example, the International Studies Association Conference, an enormous jamboree… and there is a Peace Studies section in there, which every year runs some panels and to which academics go and students go - and these are… major job markets as well, of course.

So you get yourself known that way. ISA, International Studies Association, was important. The annual conference of the ISPP - the International Society for Social Psychology - I think was another one which was important. A lot of psychologists were interested in and became part of the field… If we're talking about Europe, the European Consortium for Political Research has an annual conference. And at that, there would be panels and there would be workshops.

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Interviewer: But you're also indirectly now referring now to "interdisciplinarians". I always think there is such a word, but I can't get it out of my mouth - so people came from different disciplines.

Chris Mitchell: Oh yes. Yes. You have a… parent discipline. I remember going to an ISPP - I believe a psychology - conference in Mannheim. Must have been about the beginning of the 1980's. And most of the people there, of course, were psychologists. Some of them were even psychiatrists. And you know, I was just… the odd person out, because I didn't have that background.

The International Studies Association - most of the people at ISA teach international relations. The American Political Science Conference, yes. That's what happens. There's a section in each of these very large, umbrella organizations. And… the other thing that you've got to bear in mind, particularly if you're thinking about Britain and… about how did the British conflict research community there - it was a very small one - get involved globally?

The answer was - with the very greatest difficulty, because of the fact that it takes money to go to a conference and most British universities are strapped for travel money, constantly. I remember, I think the last year I was at City University, the budget for travel for a department that had something like 15 or 16 faculty in it was 1,200 pounds. That will get you to a conference in south London, [but] it wont take you much further.

So… there was always the problem about how do you get to these places. Now, I don't know what is happening now with the internet, which is… a different world.

Interviewer: So what does this all say in terms of the "institutionalization" of the field itself? You've talked about conferences. We talked about programs. These days, I always note as a former journalist, that 25 years ago no one mentioned the word "mediation" in the media and they actually didn't use it properly. And now I think there's an acceptance and a proper use of the term, so overall, what did this all come to, in terms of institutionalization?

Chris Mitchell: Well, I think it depends on where you're talking about. .. If you're talking about here in the [United] States, I think what has happened is that because people are getting used to the idea of "mediation" and they are even using terms like "conflict resolution" or "post conflict peace building" and things like that, is that it has become "respectable". So a lot of people, a lot of universities, a lot of

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colleges, a lot of educational institutions, have set up programs - and that's okay.

I remember Juliana Birkhoff, ten years ago, did this… study of how many programs there are. And I think in this country, it's in a lot less precarious situation than it is in Britain.

Interviewer: There are over 80 masters programs with different names - peace studies, dispute resolution, conflict resolution, conflict management.

Chris Mitchell: I think that it's well established here and I think it will not die the death. In Britain, I think it is less well established, but on the other hand there you do have fairly well established institutions like Bradford, but there are very few of them. The other thing that is interesting, though, is… what is happening on the Continent. You asked about Europe, and I think that there it is also becoming much more respectable and hence, much better established and much better funded and much better organized. It always has been in Scandinavia - Scandinavia is quite extraordinary in that.

Interviewer: Of course, there is a bit of a cynic in me that wants to say a part of our field has been in a sense [hijacked and misunderstood] - diplomacy, especially, uses the terminology very actively, but doesn't always apply it so actively, so where does that lead you in your thinking and understanding about institutionalization?

Chris Mitchell: Well, I don't think you can stop people using your language. I think you can… try to correct them when they misuse it. I mean, I have actually sat in meetings in this town where people have talked about [the] need to… apply some kind of conflict resolution measures to this. "Why don't we impose sanctions?" And you think, "Whoops, wait a minute: maybe the understanding of the term 'conflict resolution' hasn't quite reached here !" So, yes, I don't think you can do anything about that, except try to correct it when it happens.

The thing that really worries me - and I'm not sure what the answer is to this - is [that] it's not simply being co-opted linguistically. I think its being co-opted organizationally. That is what I'm… worried about, I know a lot of the students at ICAR got really furious with us last year because the faculty decided that they were not going to join in this latest scheme for getting large sums of money out of USAID via the Office of Conflict Mitigation and Resolution. I think… I may have the name wrong.

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Interviewer: You've got it right.

Chris Mitchell: You know, I can see their point of view, but… I think you have to be very careful about being associated with any government at all. And there's a terrible temptation, if there are sacks of money to be had, that you… swallow hard and say, "Well, we'll be able to control it or we'll be able to affect it." And I think that's a sort of fairly slippery slope that you go down. I've just actually been associated with a project to try to do something about a country in Africa. To get a civil society dialogue going among the many disaffected groups within this country. And I got asked to go down and assess whether this dialogue was going to be effective, or not.

And I found out after a while that the main reason for the project being pushed [and] organized was that there was something like three quarters of a million dollars lying around in a US government department, waiting for somebody to come up with this kind of an idea. I thought, the great thing that you have to do, in doing the kind of work that we like to do (some kind of intervention work) is that you have to do it the way *you* want to do it. You have to do it and if you can get funding from anywhere to do what you want to do, not what they want to do, then that's all right [although] it has its dangers.

But to do something because the money is there and the project itself is masterminded from somewhere else, I think is NOT OK.

Interviewer: Chris, rather than starting with a number of questions I've just mentioned, let me just finish ones that we didn't cover on this page before I turn it. Who were, in your mind, the early visionaries in the field coming from whatever discipline within the social sciences… If you have to give me a list of people that one should really be aware of in the history of the field, who would they be?

Chris Mitchell: Oh, I think first and foremost, Kenneth Boulding. He really was somebody who combined… a really heartfelt interest in peace and peace building with the idea of… rigorous analysis and the use of basically economic methods of…trying to understand the dynamics of conflict. His book *Conflict and Defense,* which came out, I think, in 1962 was the first real attempt to try to produce a general theory in a positivist sense.

But he was also… a polymath, really. He was somebody who was very much influenced, again, by his Quaker background. He was an organizer… IPRA was really his and Elise's baby. So, he would be one of the first people that I'd suggest as being a key

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figure. And he was key figure in the United States… He [actually] comes from the northeast of England.

Clearly, Johan Galtung…What was striking about talking to some of the people in Oslo - and indeed in other places - is that whether they approved of Johan or not, whether they approved of his ideas or not, everybody said the thing would not have got off the ground in Scandinavia and Norway if it hadn't been for Johan. And I think that's absolutely true… I'm not suggesting he invented the field, but certainly his input was absolutely vital.

And then there are a number of people that we've missed… if he was still around, at least intellectually speaking the political scientist from Harvard called Karl Deutsch was really also incredibly influential… He wrote two books, one of which was very, very much in John Burton's mind when he was… talking about intervention into complex conflict systems. This was called *Nerves of Government*. And another one - which we tend to neglected, but I think was a better book - was called *Nationalism and Social Communication*. And they were both intellectually very powerful influences on the way people thought about at least the academic side of the field.

I think for the practical side of the field, I would say Herb Kelman was really very important. I hadn't realized that Herb had been at both the Center for Advanced Behavioral Science at Stanford where a lot of this actually got initially started, but he was certainly in Michigan. And he was the one, as I said earlier, who picked up the idea, the technique of problem solving and really started to pull it apart and ask, "All right, if it works, what do we mean by "work" and then what are some of the things that affect whether or not this process has an impact on the people who are there - and then on the conflict system from which they originally came ?" So I think Herb certainly really ought to be up there with the rest of them.

Somebody that – again - we missed, and that was Hendryk van der Merwe in South Africa. I mean, if you are looking at Africa and asking… what is the fountain head of conflict analysis and resolution on the continent, it has to be South Africa and it has to start with Hendryk. So I think probably he would be most important.

And then - inevitably from my point of view – John… John Burton. He was just extraordinarily dynamic in the 1960's and the 1970s at getting things started, getting things organized - terribly, terribly ambitious… and he was talking years ago, before International Alert or Conciliation Resources or the Berghof Institute or any of the other practice organizations were more than

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a gleam in somebody's eye… he was talking about what he called an "International Green Cross Service," which was going to be a…sort of permanent, on alert, Track Two organization. It never got off the ground, in his sense, because he got diverted into…, well, he was originally on the academic side of things, but I think "the field" owes him an enormous intellectual debt [and a] practical debt as well.

Interviewer: So, you mentioned a couple of people that were all… in, what I would call (to some degree) the post-war figures, who were their intellectual fathers, - and mothers, of course. And the other thing we haven't mentioned is really influential women.

Chris Mitchell: Well, I think that's very difficult because, thinking back into that time when I was around - which was the 1960's - the way academia was structured in Britain… (I have less knowledge of over here)… but it was pretty much a male dominated part of academia… Elise, of course, working with Kenneth. Elise Boulding - you can't… neglect the effect that she had on Kenneth's thinking.

But aside from that… There were a couple…, one particularly, an international lawyer called Roslyn Higgins who was a very good foil to John's thinking and… caused him to re-think some of the things that he was pushing. But you have to go back to - oh, Mary Parker Follett, for example, and she was writing in the '20s and the '30s. If you're really thinking about somebody who had a long-term impact.

But to be quite honest, unlike today it was very much a male dominated profession by the time I got into it. I mean… intellectual precursors. Well, at long distance, there was a very unfashionable sociologist - at least unfashionable in his time – called George Simmel, who wrote a couple of really interesting… pioneering works which have had a very long term influence on the way in which people… think about conflict analysis. I mean, one book… I think originally he wrote in German. He was a German sociologist. And he was quite neglected in his day because sociology tended to be - particularly in this…beginning of the Century… the 20th century… to be very much affected by Max Weber and [Emile] Durkheim and people like that.

But he wrote a book called *Conflict* and then he wrote another one called *The Web of Group Affiliations*, which in fact is not written [about conflict] in this sense, but it certainly has implications for how do you actually…tie together [a multi-group] society in a "web" that doesn't abolish conflict, but certainly

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dampens it down when it starts up. His idea is were taken up in the 1950s by Lewis Coser, who became another influential figure. And we are talking about the 1900s… when he was writing. [And then there was another in the 1940s] - I'm blanking on the name.

Interviewer: Kurt Lewin ?

Chris Mitchell: Yes, Lewin's idea… he wrote, again, in the 1930s and 1940s - but … you know, his idea of "field theory" and his idea about the… practical theorist [which] very much gave voice to the idea that, if the field is going to be any good, it has to have practical applications to it. It had to be practiced by people who knew theory. And that's a… thread, which is still around today.

Then the… difficult thing of answering that question is - as we were discussing earlier - people came into this discipline from very, very different background so that if you were a political scientist, or even an international relations specialist, in the 1950s and '60s, a whole… tradition of measurement and… comparative studies, using statistical methods - the sort of work that David Singer took up and really goes back to Quincy Wright in the Chicago School. Wright did this amazing - because it's a pre-computer - study of wars… simply doing a survey of the number of wars that there had been up until…I think he started this in 1942 (fateful date !) And you know… I don't think he would ever… consider himself a conflict researcher, but… basically there's a whole line of thinking that comes from Quincy Wright.

Interviewer: Chris, you mentioned David Singer and of course, he's known for a more mathematical approach to the field. There seem to be the people who do that and then it wears off with [time] or [is] often called a lack of [a scientific] research approach to peace studies. Is that the major division in the field or are there others?

Chris Mitchell: Well, yes. I don't think David would consider himself to be mathematical. I think he would be somebody who would consider himself—

Interviewer: Statistical.

Chris Mitchell: Statistical and quantitative. I think those things are somewhat different, and my reason for saying that is because one of my colleagues at the CAC in London, Mike Nicholson, was a… mathematical economist and he… used to get very hot under the collar when people would introduce him as… somebody who did

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"statistical work" - because he didn't! He did mathematical modeling.

I don't think the distinction is between quantitative international conflict analysis (or quantitative conflict analysis) and non-quantitative. I think that is just one of the divisions in the field. There are very many divisions - and sub divisions - some of which…I think are probably much more important than that distinction. I sometimes think it's a forced distinction between those who count and those who don't. It's certainly a difference, but philosophically speaking, I think, sticking numbers on things is one way of describing them, which is only slightly different from sticking qualities or labels on.

Far more important for me, recently, has been the… division in the field between those who are - very roughly speaking - positivist and empiricist, and those who are postmodern - those who… see the world as a series of… "narratives" that one can apply linguistic analysis to. Those who… follow people like Foucault, arguing that you… construct the world by the way in which you describe it.

I'm certainly one of the [former] who… say, "No, you don't construct the world. You may select from it, but 'the world' is out there and your business is… to understand how the world actually is put together" – which, God knows, is difficult enough, in and of itself.

So I think there is… a major division that has emerged over the last decade between what you could call the post-modern approach and the… old fashioned - I suppose it's old-fashioned - empiricist approach to the field.

The other thing that has happened, is - and again, I think this is a distinction which is interesting, but not profound - the feminist, gendered approach to understanding international conflict - or conflict as it occurs within societies. Again, this is going to make me sound like an old fuddy duddy - which I probably am. I don't think there is that much difference between feminist approaches and other, non-feminist approaches. I think the major difference is what you focus on. What are important questions? That's not a particularly profound difference, it seems to me.

I'm trying to think. The other sort of difference - distinction, division, whatever you like to call it - that was… important in the 1970s and '80s, but seems to have… died down a bit now, is the whole issue about "objectivity". Is it possible to be "objective" about analyzing [or] describing a conflict ? And again, I think people [can] take up an extreme position on this… There are bits of the research process which can be objective and there are bits

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that are entirely subjective. It's not one or the other. What you decide to pick up and look at is entirely up to you. The language that you use tends to be colored by… subjective aspects, but ultimately, as somebody once wrote… if the evidence doesn't exist to prove your case you can't actually say that the case is proved. Depends on what evidence you can muster…

Interviewer: So are the main divisions, then, essentially what you focused on, was research based - the way we analyze?

Chris Mitchell: I think that's one of the divisions… You can find divisions within the field, however you look at it. People who would argue that you shouldn't look for generalizations because everything is different, so you have to consider the particular case of conflict or a particular conflict system in and of itself. And then you've got others who… say, "Every individual *is* different, but nonetheless there are commonalities in looking at human individuals which you can… treat them as a category.

 I sometimes think these are distinctions without much of a difference in them.

Interviewer: The discussion about research methodology - how much does that have to do with the sometimes lack or recognition for the field, in (or outside) academia?

Chris Mitchell: Well, it certainly affected the field at the very beginning [with] the desire to be considered "scientific" - whatever scientific means. But to some extent, I think it depended upon where you came from. You know, the sort of methodology you used and the epistemology that you believed in, to some extent depended on whether you came from Economics or Psychology, or - in my case - History. If you really believed in the efficacy of game theory - which I don't: I think it is a sort of interesting, intellectual exercise - then that's what you did.

 You actually started off looking at the Prisoner's Dilemma and then you… took it to looking at [various] kinds of Chicken. Robert Axelrod, I think, did some very interesting work about cooperation using game theory, but I… personally tended to think it was a blind alley - but possibly that is because I'm not a mathematician. You know, I haven't told how Rappaport and Raiffa and people like that really… thought this was the way - to strip down to the essential the nature of a conflict system.

 And I come from a background in history, so… my attitude towards looking at conflicts is [that] you take case studies and

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compare them and see if anything… jumps out at you in terms of, "Well, that's interesting. That's something uncommon !"

If you're a psychologist, well then… the tendency is to try to do survey work - to be interested in foreign policy opinion making, the impact that this has on… for example hedging leaders in to what they can do. I think we started off talking about where do people come from and I think where people come from affects their methodology.

Interviewer: We've been talking about research. Let's talk about theory for a second. People often describe the field as multi-disciplinary, sometimes inter-disciplinary, so we borrowed concepts theories, approaches from other disciplines. To what degree has that been helpful, defined the field, been an issue?

Chris Mitchell: Well, I think this is one of the things, one of the places where International Relations has gotten an intellectual advantage over peace and conflict studies because if you ask somebody from an international relations background, "All right what are your basic theories ?" they will be able to tell you. They will be able to talk about… if they're "Realists" they'll be able to talk about the theory of balance of power, the theory of the use of influence. You know, the problem with our borrowing from all over the place is [that any ideas from] the field… means different things…theories about hat?

Again, it… depends upon the background of the person you're talking to and the thing [that] somebody is interested in at the moment…I think sometimes the theories that you use depends upon the questions that you're asking. If I'm asking a question, [such as] why is it so difficult for leaders involved in a protracted conflict to change course then there's a whole body of theory – which, in fact, comes originally from psychology - to do with the whole issue of "entrapment" and the whole issue of… commitment to a particular course of action - and what does "commitment" mean. So you have a theory of commitment as well, which is also psychological.

But then you go into political science and you start talking about "interest group theory". So, in a way, it's an advantage. You can pull in relevant theories to a particular problem. But it's a disadvantage if somebody says to you, "Okay, what's the theory of your field ?" Because the answer is - anything that is useful to try to understand what is going on in this particular conflict.

Interviewer: Chris, there seem to be a search in the field for some "generic theory" and people often mention "needs theory" - Burton's needs

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theory - in this regard, but I would say in the last ten years or so it's been relegated to what others would call "middle range theory" - to use a sociological term.

Chris Mitchell: Well, leaving the needs theory point aside for the moment, I think that's one of the ways in which the field has changed over the last maybe 40 years. Because one of the things that needs to be recalled is the way in which the developments of ideas about conflict and conflict resolution was accompanied - in the early years - by an interest in general systems theory. There was very definitely, and very consciously, an attempt to develop an overarching theory of the behavior of "systems", some of which had conflicts in them.

Now, if you look at… the authors who were writing in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* in the early days, - in the 1950s and the '60s - and you also look at the *General Systems Yearbook*, which started to come out at more or less the same time, the overlap is just tremendous. I mean… Boulding is writing in both of them, Rappaport is writing in them, Dave Singer is writing in them - both of them. So is… Karl Deutsch, and they are, all of them, in both of these venues in which they're working - searching for an over arching theory which will enable you to explain the behavior of complex, interacting systems. And it is a very, very strong theme in the early decade of the development of the field - and then it… suddenly drops out.

In fact, I think one of the last people to write about it was John in writing a book called *Systems, States, Diplomacy and Rules*, which was an amazing attempt to…take some of the - often very hard, science-y kind of systems writing and just convert it into [an] understandable way of thinking about systems which involved human beings and human groups.

I think beyond that point, the whole enterprise… starts to flow in different directions so that you [should] talk about human needs theory, or you could take up… Ted Gurr's ideas about relative deprivation. Now, relative depravation is really a derivation of frustration aggression theory, which goes back to [Leonard] Berkovitz in the 1940's. And it is a theory of "why conflicts start up". But… if you ask the question, "Well, why do they continue?" then I think… there are another set of theories which… come into explaining the continuity of conflict - or if you are asking, "What if they get worse?"

If you're asking, "Why do they escalate?" - then I think you're into action-reaction theories, the kind of thing that Robert North and his colleagues were dealing with in the late 1960's, early

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1970's. Or alternatively, if you want to look at, "Why do they get worse?" - you can look in the early 1970's. There's a whole load of ideas that came out about crisis decision making and "Groupthink" – which, incidentally, is a buzz word at the moment about why the present administration in Washington D.C. – apparently - is totally unable to grasp what is going on in Iraq.

So, you know, I think you're not going to have an overarching theory of everything - the search for what one of my colleges once described as the behavioural laws which are like [the] sort of general unifying theories that physicists are looking for. I think that [such] "laws of social physics"… don't help - don't exist.

Interviewer: But what would you say was the biggest area of contribution of the field towards theory. It seems to me that so much of the energy of the field, in terms of writing about theory, has gone into third party intervention.   Would that be fair, or not?   And is that a development over time?

Chris Mitchell: I think that's probably not completely inaccurate. I think the reason is - you've got to remember the field is sometimes called "conflict analysis *and* resolution".   And it goes back to the "practical theorist" idea of Kurt Lewin - that the reason for engaging in this analysis is to find out ways of "doing something" about it and therefore, what we need is some kind of theory about intervention and about effectively coping with the conflicts. So you can… argue that… if you look at things like entrapment theory, the reason for… examining entrapment theory is to do something else. Third parties can go into that situation and - I'm not sure this is a word even - de-entrap those who are… caught into a… relationship out of which it is a very… you cant see a way out. So it's the practicality, the hope of practicality… of the field that leads to this concentration on, "Well. what can you as a third party *do* about it?" - which is a different question from "What can you, as protagonists, *do* about it?" So I don't think you're wrong. I think those are reasons for that.

Interviewer: So, we've now been studying the peace and conflict studies field - as some people would call it, because we're still grasping for an over arching term that's inclusive of all the places where the field are being studied at the moment. But we now study peace making, peacekeeping, peace building and we use terms such as conflict settlement, conflict resolution, conflict resolution, conflict management. You've written about "conflict transformation" ?

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Chris Mitchell: Critically.

Interviewer: So critically. So, the question for me becomes, "What does that tell us about the evolution of the field on the one hand. And could that have been envisioned by people who started this 50 or more years ago?"

Chris Mitchell: I think they would have hoped, 50 years ago, that there wouldn't have been this proliferation of labels. And proliferation of lines of… separate lines of investigation because they really were, (when the field started) they were trying to set up a unified body of knowledge, which… built upon itself, and reinforced the various part of this *corpus* of knowledge. So I think they would probably have been disappointed.

I think… one shouldn't be surprised, because it seems to me that a lot of… academic disciplines… follow this pattern where you start off with some sort of unifying principle and the objective is to try to produce a coherent and unified body of knowledge, but then what seems to happen is that the thing expands and divides, and specializations creep in and the field gets bigger and more complicated and so you can't hope to understand all of it - and so you specialize.

So that somebody now, who is writing a doctoral dissertation, will… focus in on the conflict prevention literature and ask, "Okay… what do we know about preventing conflict crossing the threshold from simply being unpleasant to the other side - to actually hurting them across the violence threshold. And that's become in and of itself… if one just… takes the literature on conflict prevention and the ideas that float around that… that's become, in itself, difficult to master. It's become a sort of subfield. And that, I think… that's true of sociology. It's certainly true of economics. I think this is the inevitable concomitant to making something the subject of "study".

And I think it, in many ways, it's a good thing and in some ways, it's a bad thing - because you've written your Ph.D. about conflict prevention and somebody says, "Well, what about psychology being in conflict - conflict psychology?" So I think it's a sign of a maturing field of study.

Interviewer: Funny, you're reading my mind because my next question was, what do these different frameworks and labels say about the maturity of the field. It seems to me one can say it both ways. You framed it rather positively as a breaking off into different

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parts. But then you also put it somewhat negatively in terms of trying to define itself.

Chris Mitchell: Yes, early on there is also the problem - which I think is not peculiar to our field, but it is certainly a feature of it - that, because it claims to be "multi-disciplinary" it's very difficult to [grasp] and it borrows ideas from hither, thither, and yon. It becomes very difficult to… say where the thing begins and ends.

I tried this exercise with the last few classes that I've taught - which is to say when I was teaching the integration class at the end of the Masters program - and one of the exercises we carried out, I would say to the students, "Okay, I want you to do a map of the field, and I want you to tell me what's in the field and where the field extends; and I don't care if your map is the same as my map. I would hope that there would be some overlap, but you know, you have to do a map of the field as it appears best to you. And this is at the end of two years of…

Interviewer: Course work.

Chris Mitchell: Attending similar classes -and the maps were very, very different. So it is a particular problem - no it's a particularly acute problem - in our field, I think, because of this borrowing from other disciplines. And people can… say, "Well, maybe that means that it is *not* a discipline. Maybe it is a focus of study."

I have seen people… compare conflict analysis and resolution and conflict and peace studies to development studies. Well, what is "the" theory of development studies ?   Partly it's political science, partly it is borrowed from economics, partly it's psychology… partly it's the amalgamation of all of these ideas and these disciplines.

Interviewer: Hence your reason for wanting to call it a field, but not necessarily a discipline ?

Chris Mitchell: Well, I think you get into less trouble if you call it "a field" because "a discipline" implies that you've got a central organizing set of theories, which interlock and inform each other and you've got a particularly distinctive methodology. And I don't think that guides the nature of what we do and how we do it…. But I'm not worried about that.

Interviewer: I always wonder about the comparison between conflict resolution and the communication field, which also split off from other

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disciplines in the 1970s. And depending on who you speak to, it is also suffering from criticism in terms of "Is it really a distinct area of study ?"

Chris Mitchell: Oh, I am sure there is [a literature] about the way in which academic disciplines - fields of study - get set up and "respectablized" - if there is such a word as respectablized. And what's interesting is that…a particular generation of respectablized subjects will, in turn, look down on the next generation of newcomers and say, "But these are really not proper disciplines."

Interviewer: Is that not part of International Relations criticism of conflict resolution?

Chris Mitchell: Well, it is and… part of the reason is… because international relations got heavily criticized in its era for attempting to break off from political science or politics… And… when I was doing my international relations, it was slightly amusing - in retrospect - the way in which international relations scholars struggled like crazy to differentiate themselves from politics "within the state" You know, ours… had to be different. Ours *was* different - because if it wasn't different, how did you justify having a separate department ?

Interviewer: So how does one then look ultimately at the institutionalization of this field? I mean, over the last 50 years, since '57… more than 50 years now… but how does one look at maturity? What do you count? How do you define? There are serious journals. There are various departments of study across the world. Masters and Ph.D. programs - fewer Ph.D.'s. You can study the same thing through the disciplines. Conferences. There are associations. So is that how we define, frame the field ? Or are those the major changes over the last 50 years ? Is that not the way one thinks about this? What are the markers?

Chris Mitchell: Well, I think there are two answers to that. One is - yes, those are the markers, those are the ways in which an academic discipline…, or academic field of study, gets established. The other one is,… a sort of an intellectual marker, which is, "Is this producing some new knowledge ?" Not "Is it producing some insights into things which puzzled us before ?" - which I think is the important one.

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But of course, the sociology of academia being what it is, then these usually are a sign that a particular field of study or a particular discipline… has actually "arrived".

Then it's not a particularly worthy way of actually… saying, yes, this is a new discipline and it is useful, but that seems to me to be [the marker], and I think that's happened… over the last 50 years…

Interviewer: So what can we say about the development in the field in terms of practice?

Chris Mitchell: Oh…go back to what you said a few minutes ago about institutions that practise practice and what one could say about that is there are now quite a large number of institutions - many of them struggling – that… are involved in the practice of resolving conflicts at different social levels. You know, if you start off with family mediation centers. If you start off with FMCS and the [parallel] Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service in Britain, which are [both] institutions devoted to the mitigation and resolution of conflicts in… labor management conflicts.

You know… practice has become institutionalized in two ways. It has… set up institutions whose main [task] is analysis and resolution of conflict in certain areas of society… The second way is that it's actually…crept into organizations that are multi-functional and have adopted conflict resolution as… part of their job. You know, if you actually look at the United Nations now, for example... you will find that there are, in all of the UN agencies, there are people, sections…

Interviewer: And even departments with such names.

Chris Mitchell: Yes. And… the same is true of many regional organizations like the African Union, for example [which] has what they call a "mechanism" for conflict resolution - I'm not sure why they have chosen the word "mechanism", but they have… They've also got - not necessarily formally - affiliated organizations like IGAD or ECOWAS.

ECOWAS is quite strange because it's the Economic Commission of West African State. They [call it] "Economic" commission and yet a lot of what it does, is in fact, conflict resolution work.

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So the second way in which… practice has become imbedded is in organizations which - if you go by their title - they should be doing something completely different.

Interviewer: Well, I think the same is also true of diplomacy, but on the other hand, there is a feeling among many in the field that, in terms of the field's public policy relevance, that it's essentially failed.

Chris Mitchell: Well, it's easy to say, "What effect does it have on present policy towards Iraq, for example… But on the other hand, you… need to get away from the idea that "success" and "failure" are… dichotomous situations. You've either succeeded or you've failed. I think one talks about it more properly in what contribution have some of the ideas of conflict resolution made to - the peace process in Northern Ireland, for example, instead of a success or a failure.

At least they have an agreement. At least they have stopped killing each other in large numbers. Have they actually learned to reconcile and live together in a relatively civilized code…? Probably not. But I don't think you can - I don't think you should talk about "success" or "failure" - although, inevitably, some people are going to. I think you have… talk about what's been the impact.

Interviewer: But to not be bulimic about the issue… it's also been a characteristic of the field to attempt to be practical and applied - to be, in some sense, "real world" and to affect conflict and to effect peace. So, asking the same question in a different way, how did we do?

Chris Mitchell: B minus.

Interviewer: So, is that graduate school grade - because that's "Failing" ?

Chris Mitchell: No, it's a British grade. It's - you're not doing very well, but you could have scored a C or a D or an F.

Interviewer: Okay.

Chris Mitchell: Go back years and years to the problem solving workshop I was talking about with respect to Cyprus - which we did in the fall of 1967, or something like that. When we were thinking [that] we had this key to solve the whole thing. So, we did this…

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pioneering… problem solving workshop with representatives from the two sides. And was it a success or a failure?

Well, of course, it wasn't a success in the sense that we ended the conflict, we unified the island, the Greek and the Turkish [communities there] are living happily ever after. On the other hand, what happened as a result of that was, first of all, the level of tension between the Greeks Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot leaders went down.

They started to move towards formal negotiations between the two sets of leaders. The level of tension on the island at the local level went down. Both sides had been… blockading villages in their own area, so that if you were a Turkish village in a Greek area… you had a Turkish flag flying over the center of the village, but you were surrounded by Greeks, who were blockading you.

That was one of the things that happened as a result of that workshop - the Greeks actually lifted some of the blockades. They let Turkish kids go to the local school. They let Turkish contractors in to pour bricks into the village - and they didn't… say, "Well, of course, they are going to use these bricks to build blockhouses for defence.

Was that a success or a failure ? Well if you were in an "over claiming" mode - which unfortunately we were [in] for a considerable period of time - then of course it wasn't a success. But if you were in a reasonable mode where you were… claiming these [changes] contributed towards moving the situation away from further violence, it was a success. And you know, I think that is the way you have to approach it.

Interviewer:	One of the ways in which we have defined the field is a move away from the bar paradigm. We could say that we now have involvement by major governments in the world in ways that we didn't have before, in both government reconstruction, even in conflict prevention. So, can the field take some [credit], can it claim some success or some involvement in changing the language or the approach over 50 years or more?
Chris Mitchell:	[That's difficult] to prove, isn't it ? I mean, there has been a change [but] is that because of academic conflict, research ? I don't know. I think it is. I think the change of language is good, even though… I'm not a post-modernist so I don't believe simply changing the label on something is a good thing. But to trace it through… is very, very difficult indeed. I mean… if this is success (or part of success) the acceptance of ideas from practices, from the field, has certainly happened… I'm thinking now back again

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to the way… the whole thing started and I remember efforts that we were making in the late 1960s and early '70s to get the British Foreign Office interested in this.

And particularly in the late1960s where one of the things that we were trying to do at the Center for the Analysis of Conflict was to get the British government at the Foreign Office interested in trying to apply some of these ideas to the situation in Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe. And [we hit] a complete brick wall; they just weren't interested. They were "the professionals". They had been doing this for 300 years. Who the hell were these academics coming along saying, "You know, we may have some ideas that could help you" ?

In fact, there was one famous occasion - I think it must have been in the very first couple of years in the 1970's - when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office sent a couple of representatives… to the British International Studies Association conference, which was an annual event, and more or less… said, "Why don't you stick to your academic teaching and mind your own business and leave us to get on with the [real] thing."

And that was the sort of attitude that was around almost right up until the time I came over to the [United] States 20 years ago - and one of the nice things about coming out of the States was that the American State Department and the people from there were much, much more open to ideas from academia… and they may have been just… patting our heads and saying, "Thank you very much." But I think it went beyond that. So… I think the Foreign and Commonwealth Office now is much better… because… the original] attitude was, "Well, if you're so clever, tell us which conflicts you've resolved" Or "You claim that you did this particular thing in this particular conflict and [it] had beneficial results, but how do you know? You don't really know !"

Well, you can… turn around and say to them, "Well, how the hell do you know ? Look at the monumental number of screw-ups that you perpetrated using traditional methods, [even] having read Thucydides !" So I think a certain amount of humility on everybody's part is a good thing.

Interviewer: Chris, in retrospect, where has the field, as you see it… overall, fallen short? What has happened that's disappointed you?

Chris Mitchell: Well, I think one of the things that I would have liked to have seen happen is a more systematic articulation of theory and practice.

Interviewer: Interlinked ?

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Chris Mitchell: On the one hand, it's… encouraged me like crazy that the use of conflict resolution - very broadly considered - has actually taken off exponentially. There are institutions and processes that have been taken on board almost wholesale. The whole business of every single United States government agency has now a department, which is charged with the management of conflict within that agency.

There are now sort of institutions and organizations, which… you could actually look at and say, "Well this is pretty much like John Burton's Green Cross idea." There are institutions that do environmental mediation. There are institutions like International Alert or the Berghof [Institute] which actually get involved in places like Sri Lanka or Liberia with whatever… level of "success" - whatever we mean by that. So, in one sense, it's a very… exciting thing to see this happen.

And yet, there is this… feeling that I get that a lot of them…either…drive… by the seat of their pants [or] get involved [and just] do their best. Or they have a sort of "cookbook". They go in and its this… "eight steps to conflict resolution in a marital dispute" - or something like that. And I [find it] sort of disappointing that the people don't actually articulate, as they're practicing, why they're doing what they're doing. What they expect to happen as a result of doing X rather than Y and what theory informs their choice of doing X rather than Y.

So I… think the field has, in a way, bifurcated into those who do practice and those that write about theory. It goes back to something John Burton said years and years ago…in the early '80s…"One of the things that we ought to do when we get involved in a problem solving exercise is, every evening, we sit down at the end of the day and write down what we did, but also why we did it. What we were hoping too [achieve] and what our… theoretical assumptions were in suggesting A to these people."

And I think if I were to be the dictator of the field of conflict analysis and resolution, I would insist that this gets done. Not just every day[at the end of each exercise as] a retrospective, a post mortem (which is another bad expression).

Interviewer: Practice translated back into theory.

Chris Mitchell: Yes, that's right. Explain why you are practising the way you are practising,. Of course, you know, it is awfully easy to say that because… if you're caught up in the maelstrom which is running an intervention of any sort, it is difficult to do that. That is why I

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used to say to the people who were taking my course on problem solving and the use of panels as mediators, or panels as facilitators: "Part of your panel should be the historian for that event. And the historian's business should be to talk to people afterward and say, "Why did you do that? Why? What was your [underlying] theory ?" - and I'm using "theory" in a very broad sense now, which is: "What effects did you expect to get from that, and why ?"

You know, otherwise I think what you get is something that I've observed in various parts of the world which is, you get practitioners who have a particular technique which they apply and if it works that is fine. [But] if it doesn't work - if it goes wrong - maybe we don't understand why it goes wrong.

Interviewer: So we really don't explain the utility of anything that we do enough, is what you're saying ?

Chris Mitchell: I don't think we do - and I don't think we even explain it to ourselves enough.

Interviewer: And does that translate into, again, the acceptability and maybe credibility of the field?

Chris Mitchell: Well, I don't think it has that much of an effect on the acceptability and credibility of the field, except to those who… work in it, from a theoretical point of view.

Interviewer: It has to get funded again.

Chris Mitchell: Yes, it's results that matter - and how we get to the results is less of importance, it seems to me… Basically, I'm an academic so it probably is less important to people who are running successful intervention operations.

Interviewer: We were talking about the last 50 years, but would it be fair to say that in the last five years we have had another big shift in the field since the end of funding by the Hewlett Foundation and, in a sense, the coming online of government agencies and funding for the field ? And perhaps also the field moving - to a degree - to other fields, such as development… through lack of funding.

Chris Mitchell: Sometimes I think we make too much of this ending of the Hewlett support. Certainly it affects some of the activities, but… that's one small subset of institutions in a subset of the overall field.

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I think its to early to tell. And the thing that does alarm me, as I [was] talking with Susan at question and answer time, the money's there. And now that what's there is mainly within the purview of governments, and because the money *is* there, that is where we go. And so inevitably we go to governments and I think that… the change that has taken place is that, whereas previously we would go - and we would even go to government sources – saying, "This is what we want to do, would you fund it?" , there's a tendency now… for the government to say, "This is what we want to do, [we] the government, and if you want to play with us, that is what you [will] do, and then we'll give you some money."

Interviewer: So, it's - to a degree - a shift from granting to contracting.

Chris Mitchell: Yes, I think that's right. And it's terribly difficult not to get pulled into that relationship.

Interviewer: So, looking back, what surprised you? What disappointed you? You… said what you would have liked to have seen, but what are you thrilled about?

Chris Mitchell: What surprised me was the sheer growth of the field. I don't think we could ever have imagined in 1970 that we would be where we are now, with all the things that you've described in… programs and institutions, journals, conferences, etc., etc. I mean, it's just totally baffled and amazed me, in a very practical sense, that when I finish my own Ph.D. I… sat down and thought, "Well, what do I do now?" And I thought, "The field needs a textbook." And so I actually sat down in the mid – no, the early 1970s so I could write a textbook.
And, it wasn't all that easy, but on the other hand, I could read the main literature in the field and I could synthesize it into some kind of a coherent whole. Now, if you're trying to do the same thing, it's almost impossible. You… talk about the institutions and the journals… Just… simply trying to keep up with reading the journal. When I was doing this in the early '70s there were two journals that you *had* to read and then there were the odd issues of particular journals, like the Journal of Social Issues… on mediation… or conflict, or something like that. And that was it!
Now, you simply… can't keep up with the journals that come out. There are… new journals coming every year - virtually. And the size of the literature is scary. So…t whether I'm pleased about it - I don't know. At the moment, as I'm actually trying to read this stuff, I'm not particularly pleased. But I'm just amazed !

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Interviewer: Is there a main disappointment, other than the practice-theory link, or lack of it?

Chris Mitchell: I think that, again this is… just an initial impression; that it's almost inevitable that people who write in a particular subpart of the field, often seem to me to write in ignorance of what is going on in the other subparts of the field. I think it is concomitant of the thing just getting so big. But they are also writing, it seems to me, (in many cases) in ignorance of the past intellectual development. I frequently come across books or articles… where I think, "I've read this before somewhere" and… I remember this article that I read years ago in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* in 1973 or somewhere and what I'm reading now is being produced as a "new breakthrough".. I sometimes think we spend a lot of our time reinventing the wheel, because we don't know where the wheel has come from.

Interviewer: You're referring strictly to academia now.

Chris Mitchell: Well, I'm referring to academia, but I'm also referring to people who write practical "handbooks"… you read these things and you think, "Hang on a minute, Dudley Weeks was writing that 20 years ago - or something like that!"

Interviewer: My last two questions, I promise. One is, you wanted a historian, but what about futurists? If you could be your own futurist, in terms of the field, where do you think it's going?

Chris Mitchell: There are… two scenarios I have in mind… the positive one is because of all of these new young people coming into the field, it is going to take on a new lease of life a go off in interesting directions and pick up new lines of thought and eventually it is going to be not just the language which is adopted by people who are responsible for making policy, but the actual theories and the concepts that are going to be used.   That… relatively straightforward ideas like self-fulfilling prophecies are going to be understood much better in policymaking circles.

   That was something that was… accepted as standard practice even in the time of President Kennedy. It was… incorporated as standard practice into policy making everywhere. [For example], in any decision making group you have somebody whose job it is to put counter arguments and you listen to them. It is something that seems to have dropped out.

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The negative scenario is that the whole thing gets co-opted and independence is completely lost and we end up becoming a - I'm trying to think of a phrase somebody used a while ago - a hand maiden of the rich and powerful.

Because it seems to me that if we do that, then our ability to *resolve* conflicts - as opposed to *settle* them temporarily from the point of view of stability, law and order, is going to get lost. And I think we wont be able to say things like, "You're not going to be able to solve this without major, major restructuring. And it is going to cost you in the short run." If you're being paid to tell people what they want to hear, you can't say things like that. So that is my bad scenario.

Interviewer: Okay. I want to pull your leg before I ask the final question. I noted that you didn't say "transform", but "resolve".

Chris Mitchell: Well, you know, if you read that [article] I wrote about transformation, you realize that to me, "resolve" means "transformation". That is why I think its an unnecessary label, but hell - we use it.

Interviewer: Okay. Chris, thank you very much for three hours of taping, but let me ask a final question then, which you always enjoy asking people. What did we skip? Did we not ask you something? What topic did we not address? Was there one?

Chris Mitchell: Um, well, I think you could have asked me what attracts people to this field, and how has that changed.

Interviewer: And you would answer… ? In terms of what attracted them 50 years ago and over time till now.

Chris Mitchell: Yes. How has that changed? I think what attracted me… I think there is a very strong element - then and now - that attracts people because it offers an opportunity to do something to make the world a better place - if you will. But I think what attracted me in the 1960s, and what attracted a lot of the people in the 1950s, was a tremendous sense of intellectual excitement and exhilaration - and I don't get that from people now.

I may be quite wrong in this. I'm just… remembering. It is three or four years now since I was a serious teacher, so I don't know about the present generation of students.

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	But in a way, it has become a mature subject. It is something that universities are teaching, students learn and I don't necessarily get the feeling that students now are thrilled about doing this. I think we were [thrilled] at the time. And maybe it was because it was new and there were all sorts of ideas that were floating around and had never been tried out. I think our teachers were thrilled by it - and I don't get the same feeling of … intellectual "pizzazz".
Interviewer:	Well, many of the people we spoke to talked about wanting to make the world a better place. And preventing conflict, especially after the Second World War - the Second World War and the coming of the nuclear age - but even 20 years ago, when we met, were we a different generation of students in terms of our commitment or interest in the field, compared to the ones you knew five years ago?
Chris Mitchell:	Well, I think everybody has got a sense of commitment to the field and an interest in doing it… it may just be that I'm remembering being (relatively) young at that time and… I just remember getting a tremendous kick out of doing what we did. And I'm not sure students these days get a kick out of it. Maybe they're also so worried about money and… keeping body and soul together - and all of the obstacles we put in their way. You know, I'm remembering a time when it didn't cost a fortune to go to university.
Interviewer:	I'm sorry, I did lie. There is another question. What's in the future for you? What would you select to achieve in this field?
Chris Mitchell:	I would actually like to do one last initiative to the point where - the next time somebody says to me, "Well, how many conflicts did you resolve last year ?" I could say, "That one !" And I mean, resolving it in the sense that the confrontation between Malaysia or Indonesia or Singapore was resolved. I just would like to do that.
Interviewer:	Publications?
Chris Mitchell:	Yes. You know, I've got publications coming along, but that's… standard stuff now. I mean it's possibly tied in with what I meant when I said I don't get the same sort of thrill out of doing certain things. I think once you publish several books and innumerable articles that nobody reads, you sort of feel just "Another one off the production line."

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Interviewer: You also seem to be saying that, for us to be relevant, we have to shift somewhat from that towards practice.

Chris Mitchell: I think you have to shift towards practice, but you have to shift towards informed practice. No, no, I think I'd just like to do one more… project. One more set of dialogues, one more… problem solving exercises and see the thing through to the end and know what I was doing. And be able to say, "Well, that one's finished and gone away."

Interviewer: And please don't forget that you have to write them up. You have to be your own historian.

Chris Mitchell: Well, I'm hoping somebody will give me a GRA.

Question and Answer Session.

Susan: I would be very interested to hear your hopes and dreams for the future of this field, as well as the fears you have about the direction that maybe felt.

Chris Mitchell: Let me start with fears first of all [and] so follow up to what I was saying to Jannie. I am afraid that this field is going to get co-opted and that it is going to lose what independence it has… It seems to me that, if it is going to survive as a field of practice, then it has to fight every inch of the way to try to maintain its independence and its credibility as being independent from governments, the rich, the powerful, etc., etc.

When we started off this field many, many years ago, I think we regarded it as a kind of a semi-subversive activity because, a lot of the time, what we were suggesting was, "If you really want to resolve this particular conflict, then there have to be major structural changes accompanying that."

In other words, what we were talking about was what is now fashionably called "conflict transformation" [but] we didn't use that [term]. And my worry is that as it becomes more and more imbedded into… and accepted by the powerful in the society, that we will end up working for them. That, I think, is a constant danger and that is a fear that I have.

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Hopes and dreams… I would like - and heaven knows how this is going to happen - I would like to see resources [untied resources] put into the field. So that its possible to (a), on the one hand, maintain your independence, but (b) do the work that is needed to be done.

I remember once we were running a set of Northern Ireland dialogues [or] workshops and we ran one in Grenoble in France and we both [Jim Laue and I] ended up with something like $7,000 worth of debt on our American Express cards because we… committed ourselves to do this work, to continue this work with the parties in Northern Ireland and we were… rushing around scrambling like crazy, trying to put together something [costing] - maybe it was $25,000 [or] $30,000, which if you think about that, isn't even a nanosecond of what we're spending in Iraq at the moment.

And Jim and I had to… "pony up" this [amount] and just cross our fingers that some of the people who had said yes, they would pay for this, would [actually] pay for it… But then, of course, getting resources like that always tends to have… strings attached to it. So if you were to ask me tactically, Susan, rather than… in terms of goals and objectives, how do you bring this about, I don't know. I don't know.

Pushpa   This answer to Susan talking about the danger of being co-opted and then there was a question in my mind as it comes more like we talked about governments and more powerful people in society co-opting it, but I have seen this more as a student here wondering what happens like the international relations, the sociology. Everyone seems to be using "conflict resolution" now. It's not really used in strict terms of the way we study it here, but yet it is becoming more common even when you talk about it being an interdisciplinary… So… what do you suggest we do to retain this independence?

Because on the one hand we want to be independent, on the other hand when we are looking for jobs, we are looking and saying, "Well, if sociology is opening for us, we get in, into that. And how do we maintain kind of a separation of our field from the rest?

Chris Mitchell: I think… you are talking about two things, Pushpa. You are talking about institutional separation and I think that matters less than intellectual separation. I mean, for 17 years I was working in a Department of Systems Analysis… and I was, I think, able to… my hold on the ideas that I had and that I shared with my colleagues… from other places… so I would be less worried about

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the intellectual problems of working in a Department of International Relations… Some of the people that I know in London, for example, who work on peace research actually work in a Department of War Studies in Kings College London and they seem to be able to maintain their intellectual integrity. Now, the difficulty… it seems to me that you're alluding to sort of indirectly, is the one that constantly plagues us, which is [that] you come out of here with a Ph.D. in conflict analysis and resolution and then you go and compete for a job in a sociology department with people who've got Ph.D.'s in sociology…The tendency of universities is always to be inherently conservative… and if you've got somebody with a Ph.D. in sociology for a sociology department, that's immediately one step up for that person

Kevin Avruch's answer to that is [that] we have to spend a lot more time - and of course, we have *so* much more time around here – in… selling the field to people so that they understand what's involved in it, so that if somebody comes with a Ph.D. in "conflict research" they know what it is. But that… is a long-term thing and as you said, the problem is, people use the language. Jim Laue used to say, "They… talk the talk, they don't walk the walk." That is another thing I'm scared of, incidentally, Susan.

Female Speaker: I've heard through the interview all your stories about as a student and also as a professor and the [field] and I am curious about how you have seen the evolution of the students that you have had in the last 20 or 25 years that you have been here, how that student body has changed and how you have seen them once they are out of here. What has happened to them?

Chris Mitchell: Is there life after you're through ?

Female Speaker: Yes…maybe.

Chris Mitchell: The student body - aside from the fact that it has grown huge ? I mean, when I first came here, Jannie was part of a cohort which had eight people in it… ten people ?

Interviewer: … Actually we were about eleven, of whom six or seven finally did finish their Ph.D.

Chris Mitchell: And there were 20 odd… Master students so - it's just mushroomed and I think the fact that it has mushroomed [and] the way it has mushroomed is an indication about the fact that it has become acceptable to come and get a degree in this field. It *is* a

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field now. The other thing that I've noticed is that… well, two things. One is, there are many, many more people who want to come here and do a Ph.D., and I'm slightly worried about that… it goes back to fears that -and I don't think this just affects our field - … that the nature of qualifications – "required" qualifications - has gradually escalated so that, whereas before (in the 1950's, and 1960's) getting a bachelor's degree was a good enough thing to get you into a career, then it became [that] you had to have a Master's degree. Now… and I don't think it applies to us quite as much is it is going to do… you've got to have a doctoral degree before you can get into it. And that worries, me - this… "escalation" of the bar, so to speak, worries me.

The other thing that… I've noticed is when I first came here, the Master's degree students were almost entirely mid-career people who were coming to add another skill to their existing skill range. I remember looking at Dennis Sandole first class in 1983 or '84… and they were all [in their] mid-30s, early 40s, that sort of thing - so what has happened now, I think, is that the age range has changed tremendously.

I don't think it is just me getting old. I think they are getting younger compared with previous cohorts coming through. And that, I think is interesting - that the original cohorts wanted to… you know, they've got a career and they're doing other things [but] they were adding things so they could get the next promotion. Now, I think a lot of Master's students… are doing this as a stepping-stone to a Ph.D. And I think that connects with the first problem I had.

The other thing - and this is… very different from my experience in England with this field - is that the available resources to encourage people to do a second degree were much more easily available in England than they are here…. you know this as well as I do. There are so many people who are driving themselves into debt to do this degree, both Masters and Doctorate and that is something that is very different from 20 odd years ago.

It's another of my fears. That in fact we are going to price ourselves out of the game, so to speak. That is not something that we can't control. That is just a university problem. You mention it to the university authorities here and they'll say, "You know, relatively speaking we're very inexpensive compared with other institutions such as Georgetown !" The crucial word there is "relatively".

Female Speaker:	What about the [job situation in] England [and elsewhere] ? How do you see that ?

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Chris Mitchell: Well, a lot of them have gone back and have… ended up teaching in the universities, so the influence goes from them into the next generation of students - in Turkey, for example. Some of them have gone back and started up institutions - organizations that in some way, shape, or form, put into practice some of the ideas that they've got here. But again, it's a question of human beings as one resource. Other resources have to do with money, time, etc., etc. If you compare the military budgets of most countries in the world to the educational budgets and to that part of the educational budget that goes to looking at some sort of peace-related or conflict resolution related activities, it is miniscule. So you really have to accept that you're going to have to swim against a tide of resources that are going to go the other way. They are going to go to conflict "resolution" via force. And you're not going to have…

You know, you are going to have occasional triumphs, you are going to have an occasional successes, but I think you've actually got to accept that you are going to face a lot of disappointments in going back to various countries and trying [for example] to get people to empathize with a set of "terrorists". Who is going to empathize with terrorists, for God's sake? As soon as you label people "terrorists", that's [an end to discussion].

Sorry. I would like to… be a bit more sort of hopeful about that, but I think you have to be realistic about what sort of an impact you're going to have.

One of the things that I probably haven't covered at all with you - which I should do, because it would be less than honest to the past - is that if you go back to the very beginning of this [field when it was] happening, in the 1950s and '60s in the… establishment of the idea of scientific analysis of the causes of conflict and the development of results and solutions. It was, my memory of it was one of the most exciting periods of my life to be involved in that and particularly with regard to… problem solving workshops ! We thought we had the key to making a better world, which was not going to be a world without conflict, but it was going to be a world where we knew how to handle it. And I mean… imagine that discovery or that belief. It was tremendously exciting and exhilarating to be around then.

After we had finished the Cyprus workshop… the next thing that John wanted to tackle was the Middle East. And I got… side tracked into looking at the Horn of Africa, which is another [conflict ridden] place. Which is why I got very annoyed when Leonard Doob turned up and… said he had gotten this large chunk

of money for the Fermeda Workshop. How dare he do that…trespassing on my interest ??!!!

But the idea that you could *do* something about that situation, that you have something that was new, that was different, that seemed to work, [that] did work ! And we hadn't come across any of the snags or the difficulties yet. It is very difficult to… convey what it was like to be, at the end of the 1960s, in this field - in spite of all the drawbacks.

Interviewer: Other questions?

Female Speaker: I was interested in your most recent response. You characterized the last of the 1950s as we thought we had found the key to handling conflict productively - and that is a past tense statement. What did we do?

Chris Mitchell: I think it is a damn sight more difficult than we thought it was at that particular point in time - and it is a much more complicated process than we imagined. I still think that problem solving, dialogue, workshop methods are an important component of actually understanding the situation and coming up with some potentially useful ideas for moving towards a solution. But practically speaking, it is much, much more difficult than we ever imagined, both from a organizational point of view and from the point of view of doing something about a protracted and deep rooted conflict which is going to last.

What I mean by "an organizational point of view" is that one of the… credos of the work that we were doing in the 1960's - and subsequently the '70s and the '80s - was what you really needed to do was… to set up an institution that did three things. The institution had to have a practice component, so that it actually could go out there - to Cyprus or to Butte, Montana or wherever - and get involved in the situation that was causing the problem.

And secondly, you had to have a theoretical, research component so that you actually could take some theories there, check them out, see whether they worked, then come back, spread the good word around. You know, this is one of the things you have to look for in situations like this… Psychologically people will [usually] get into these kinds of hang ups…

Then there will have to be a teaching component, to bring the next generation along with you, to carry these [ideas] forward and to… spread the idea that there were alternatives to violence…

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Now, the practicalities of doing that are enormously difficult. All right, you're talking about [an] ICAR. All right – you're talking about practice, theory, teaching.

Well, teaching, of course, does tend to mean you can't suddenly drop your class and go off to – say Liberia - because now is the appropriate time to intervene or *do* something. You've got a class, you can't [just] leave it. It is the middle of the semester. Students… will complain like mad. And the world does not conform to the two-semester year.

Also, of course the thing is [that] you've managed to do some intervention and then you come back and you don't really have time to reflect on what you've learned about that [situation or process] or to put it into any kind of comprehensible form so that people will say, "Oh, that's interesting. In that sort of a situation this is the kind of thing that you are likely to encounter - and it is not just in this one [case]. It happens several times."

And this isn't really just in universities. I remember going up to the UN with Kevin Clements when he was Director here, talking to people from the Political Affairs Departments at the UN and them saying, "Look you know the problem is, even if we do have a success we don't have time to come back and reflect on that [success] and think what went right and why did it go right. Or indeed, if we have a failure, what went wrong? We're [immediately]on to the next problem."

So the combination of these three things often works against the ability to do any one of them very well. Now, I don't know what the answer is to that, to be honest with you.

Maybe, you drop the teaching component and you end up with something like International Alert in London or Conciliation Resources or the Berghof Institute, which is working in Sri Lanka. Or you give up the idea of practical intervention [initiatives] and you just become standard academic department or … what do you do?

But the practicalities of carrying through with that kind of a model are pretty overwhelming. I don't know what the answer is to that except more resources which are unlikely to turn up in this day and age.

I seem to be getting gloomier and gloomier. Sorry about that.

Male Speaker 2:   In the conflict resolution field, you're promoting a more independent field in the future, conflict resolution and analysis, but in terms of relevance if conflict resolution **[inaudible]** or academics or people working in that area want to continue to be relevant in many different fields, like international relations and

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politics and sociology, community, interpersonal psychological, does it make sense then to say that for conflict resolution institutes need to be independent everywhere else taking into account that to this day we know that there are people out there talking about conflict resolution field as a **[inaudible]** idealistic people who can get everything done that **[inaudible]** problem solving workshops or dialogue or such, especially in a world where conflicts continue to become more violent.

Chris Mitchell: Well, if they become more violent it would seem to me that it makes peace people more relevant rather than less relevant, but I think you're right. I think you have to strike a balance between trying to stay independent of the powerful in society. The danger is that you're going to become perceived as being co-opted by the powerful, the dominant in the society. And in a sense, the trick is to try to remain relevant and yet try to remain as independent as you can from both sides, because power comes in different forms… It is not just being rich or anything like that.

I also think that you… alluded to one thing that the field has done, and it was a big mistake and we're still paying for it and that's that there's been a tendency in the past to overclaim. But I think we've learned that lesson. I don't think people nowadays go around - or at least I hope they don't - pretending that they've got the answer to every single problem in the world. "Bring us your conflict, we can solve it ! We've got the answer !"

I think what tended to happen for various good and sufficient reasons - well, [maybe] they're not good or sufficient – was that in order to… keep going and to keep resources flowing in, you had to… argue - or you thought you had to - argue that you're offering something which is going to be successful because people who supply you with resources [neded to hear that.]. It is not quite as crude as saying, :How many conflicts did you resolve last week ?"…

But there is that kind of a [tendency], particularly in this country. I think, Europeans are slightly less devoted to this. There is this sort of tendency to... say, "Okay. If we are to help you, if we are to support you, if we are to let you loose on this particular conflict, then you have to guarantee - or you have to be absolutely sure, or you have to be pretty sure - that what you're going to do is going to improve it *in the short run*. And what people don't like to hear is somebody saying, "Look, we can help you move towards a solution, but it is going to take several years. It's going to take a lot of time. It's going to take a lot of patience. It is going to take a

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lot of resources, which are going to be put into no apparent effect to begin with ."

If you say that to people who have the resources, well, they'll look at you and they'll [think] "That's not the sort of thing that we want; we can't… tell our Board that !"

So the tendency is to over hype. And that is one of the things that I think has happened in the field. I think the field is getting better at it now, to be realistic, but there was a time in the 1980's and also the early 1990's when I used to… say that you [could] arrive at the airport in – say Ruritania - and the first thing you saw at the airport in any country where there was a conflict is somebody from the Harvard Business School - or somewhere like that - who is coming back, having convinced the government that *they* can come in and solve this thing within six months.

And it did the field absolutely no good at all to over-claim on that.

So you're caught between being realistic and not sounding very hopeful, or being unrealistic and sounding as though you've got [all] the answers. I tend to… try to be a bit more realistic and tell people that we don't have a magic wand. We have a number of tools. We have a number of ways of (perhaps) making things better and moving them in the right direction, but…

It was one of my old friends, Frank Edmead, who was actually one of the original people at the CAC who moved with me to City University, that used to talk about conflict resolution as rather like rolling a boulder up a hill and when you get it half way… your foot slips and the boulder rolls down to the bottom of the hill again. And he used to say, "Some hills are steeper than others" and the analysis part was to find out which is the steep hill and see if there is a little gully [so that] you can shove the thing around the side [with less effort]" Which I think was a nice metaphor…

The other one that occurs me is…John Paul Lederach's comment. "It's taken you guys 35 years to get to the mess that you're in at the moment. Why should you expect [that] it is going to take less than 35 years to get you out?" Now, that doesn't sound great to a funder - but it's honest.

Male Speaker: [Perhaps you could] maybe [do] a little recap of the relation between those two and [why] then there has only been a growth in some core areas like Berghof and International Alert, but it still doesn't seem to match. The practice doesn't seem to have matched the amount of growth you have seen in academia. That is just kind of anecdotal, you know, kind of a statement. But I am wondering what thoughts you might have on that.

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Chris Mitchell: It is much more difficult to… run something like Berghof than it is to run a small [research] center which is part of a university…If you want to see why it's so difficult, look at Africa. I mean, their conflict resolution is a sort of cottage industry. Everybody is setting up centers and NGO's and one thing or another. But, the infrastructure isn't there for it, except in universities. I think that's a microcosm of what has happened in lots of places in the world. The great thing about universities - and they have tremendous disadvantages, as I say, especially if you want to do the kind of work that Berghof or Conciliation Resources [does] and…you've got three courses that you have to teach …   But at least the infrastructure is there - to some degree. So I think that one of the easy ways (and Lord knows it is not all that easy) is to expand the educational side of things. The difficulty is to expand the practice side of things.

   But in defense of John's Burton's old idea about the… " three legged" institution, the great thing that you've got in universities… is a little time for reflection on the development of ideas whereas in Berghof or International Alert or any of the others the drawback is that you're constantly practicing, but in order to practice you constantly have to develop your resource base. So if you talk to anybody from these institutions and they are honest about it, a large chunk of their time is simply spent on getting the next grant - and if you don't get the next grant, then people get fired.

   So I think that's one of the reasons why you find such a slow growth in peace making and peace building and conflict resolution NGO's.

Male Speaker 2:   Maybe a follow up to that - the relationship between what you were just discussing and more… non-traditional conflict resolution areas, like development, government, democratization - all these other areas that have traditionally been more well funded and maybe less risky than straight ahead conflict resolution and how it is such a good thing for this kind of watering down of the field. I mean, a lot of development work now you see conflict resolution [ideas and] terminology thrown around all the time. Is that going to be a help or a hindrance?

Chris Mitchell: ….   One of our Ph.D. students… is actually looking at the incorporation of conflict resolution practices into large organizations that have to do with development. A lot of the conflict prevention ideas are now being… taken over by USAID and the UN development programs with the objective of trying to

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shape development projects and programs towards the long-term prevention of the development of protracted and deep rooted and violent conflicts.

I don't want to… pre-empt what she's found, but from preliminarily looks at this [and she is looking just at one country, [and] two organizations] is that there is a lot of lip service paid to it, but conflict prevention work gets crowded out by… rather more traditional, development strategies.

And … a lot of people that she interviewed… say, yes, it would be very desirable if we could incorporate this, but it is very difficult to incorporate it… We do… have early warning systems [and] we have plans and proposals, but then implementing it, we have haven't managed to do that. So I don't know what the answer to your question is, to be honest.

I'll wait till Amy finishes her dissertation work before hazarding a guess, but I would guess that it is going to be very difficult to incorporate it into existing institutions. Universities are inflexible enough, but I think other places are even more inflexible.

Interviewer: We have another 15 minutes of tape. Anyone? Or are you all ready for lunch? Thank you very much for coming.

Chris Mitchell: If anybody, incidentally, is interested in part of the story that I was telling about the early days of problem solving, there is a piece in Ron Fisher's book called *Paving the Way* about one of the very first [workshops involving] Indonesia/Malaysia [that] I was talking about - if you want to follow up on that.

[End of audio]

Duration: 235 minutes