

# *Peace and Conflict Studies*

## **Ethnic Conflict Resolution**

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Charles O. Lerche** teaches political science, international relations and international management at several institutions including: the University of Limburg/Maastricht, the University of Kent at Canterbury's Brussels School of International Studies, and Boston University Brussels. He is co-author of *Concepts of International Politics in Global Perspective*, and has published articles in academic journals on African politics, and peace and world order studies.

**Montgomery Sapone** received a Ph. D. from Yale University in 1994 in cultural anthropology. In 1997, she completed a J.D. from Harvard Law School. While in law school, she worked at the Arms Project of Human Rights Watch in Washington, DC and at the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Squad of the US Attorney's Office in Boston, Massachusetts. Currently, she is working as a freelance journalist in Europe.

**Amr G. E. Sabet** is Jean Monnet fellow at the Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Fiesole, Italy.

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# TRUTH COMMISSIONS AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

Charles O. Lerche III

*For countries just emerging from a struggle against oppression and tyranny the first challenge is whether to blindly forgive past oppressors or hunt them down and punish them. Often there seems to be a choice between reconciliation or justice, instead of attaining a balance between the two.*

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998b

*Justice in itself is not a problematic objective, but whether the attainment of justice always contributes to reconciliation is anything but evident. Truth, too, is a good thing; but as the African proverb reminds us, 'truth is not always good to say.*

Ignatieff, 1996

## Introduction

The “Post-Cold War” world presents staggering contrasts. On the one hand, the threat of annihilation has receded, totalitarianism seems to be in retreat and there is greater interest in such issues as sustainable development, human rights and good governance. On the other hand, however, political and economic instability seem chronic in many regions, and there is a sense of drift both within many countries and at the global level. Prominent on the “new agenda” of world politics is the apparent rising tide of communal conflicts around the planet: a trend which has both positive and negative aspects. Communalism is a threat to both the material and ideational foundations of the nation-state, and potentially, to the entire international status quo; but precisely because communal conflicts so often turn violent and have proved resistant to traditional methods of containment and resolution, they have stimulated the search for more innovative, more comprehensive, and more fully human approaches to dealing with conflict.

*Reconciliation* as a technique which goes beyond settling a conflict’s material stakes to restoring social relations and healing hearts and minds, has received increasing attention in recent years, largely because of the high profile Truth Commissions in places like Chile, Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Haiti and, most prominently, South Africa.<sup>1</sup> All of these bodies have proceeded, at least nominally, on the premise that shared truth was essential for social reconciliation. Over time, however, it has become increasingly clear that true “national reconciliation” is very challenging in countries attempting to make rapid transitions from authoritarian to liberal democratic rule. In most cases, there is a tension, if not a full-blown contradiction, between the officially proclaimed need for reconciliation and the capacity of the state to provide justice to the victims of past wrongs. The long term healing, stability and development of many societies may well depend on the degree to which this contradiction can, at least to some degree, be resolved.

In what follows the concept of reconciliation, as developed by Joseph Montville (1998) and others, is introduced and its contemporary application in the context of democratizing societies examined. In this regard, the tension between justice and reconciliation, as represented by the conditions of amnesty granted in several countries to the perpetrators of human rights abuses, is highlighted as a subject of concern in the practice of truth commissions. In addition, the difficulties

of establishing a "national truth" are considered. Subsequently, the paper considers what measures could assist in promoting further national reconciliation, and the emerging consensus about values of a "global civic culture" is explored as a promising source of more preventive long-term approaches to dealing with conflict.

### **Reconciliation: the concept and its application**

Violence, perceived injustice and negative stereotyping have combined over extended periods of time to render many contemporary conflicts inaccessible to standard non-violent resolution processes. In these situations violence, either latent or manifest, has become the status quo and any lasting change can only follow a transformation of the various dynamics underlying that status quo. *Reconciliation* is promoted by its theorists and practitioners as just such a tool of transformation. There is some breadth of definition of this concept in the literature which the following selection of citations tries to capture:

Reconciliation is currently essential to the construction of sustainable peace. It can be defined as a profound process of dialogue between conflicting parties, leading to the recognition of the "other", and respect for his or her differences, interests and values (International Year for Reconciliation, 1998b).

Reconciliation is "the action of restoring broken relations" (International Year for Reconciliation, 1998a).

Reconciliation is..."the acknowledgment of the dignity of victims for long ignored. It restores the individual's capacity to take hold of herself and to manage the future and herself in that future. It restores the capacity to live with or alongside the other. It allows us, while remembering, to bring closure to a chapter in our past. It enables us to live in the present, making our life as a nation and our lives as individuals in a shared future. It always remains a never-ending process" (Commissioner Wynand Malan of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, cited in "Reconciliation by Understanding," 1997).

Montville, who has studied the psychological effects of political violence in some depth, explains that those who have suffered unjustified violent attacks have an enduring fear of their trauma re-occurring; a fear which undermines the possibility of developing renewed trust in their victimizers, and inhibits any true negotiation or eventual (re)integration with them (Montville, 1998). Thus, in regard to most communal conflicts time does not "heal all wounds." Instead, grievances associated with unacknowledged and unforgiven wounds are passed down the generations, creating a widening gap of estrangement, fear and hatred, which increases the likelihood of further violent conflict and aggravates its intensity. Montville (1998) mentions

Catholics in Northern Ireland, Anatolian Armenians, European Jews during World War II, Palestinian Arabs after 1948, Poles and Ukrainians as examples of peoples for whom “victimhood is an integral part of their identity.” True healing according to Montville can only come through reconciliation which involves a sequence of three steps:

1. *Acknowledgment.* When oppressors publicly acknowledge what they have done, knowledge becomes, in a sense, truth, and victims are (to some extent) assured that the past will not repeat itself. This in itself contributes to victims' healing and, thereby, facilitates dialogue. However, as Montville (1998) points out: “The act of acknowledgment to be effective must be complete and detailed. The victim cannot accept the omission of any painful episode of loss by the acknowledging side, otherwise the good faith of the acknowledgment will be suspect.”
2. *Contrition.* The next step is to take responsibility for past actions, to express regret, and to directly request forgiveness. Again, sincerity, as judged by the victims, is the key to the success of this step.
3. *Forgiveness.* The first two steps by the oppressor/aggressor prepare the ground for the final psychological step, which is the victim's voluntary forgiveness of past injuries. It may take time for victims to express their forgiveness, but true acknowledgment and contrition by the other side will in themselves have a positive effect on relations between the parties (Montville, 1998).

Montville envisions reconciliation occurring in specially designed “workshop” contexts where participants from both sides feel secure, and trained neutral third parties conduct various therapeutic exercises such as “walks through history.” Reported results indicate that this kind of intimate, small-scale activity can bring about real transformation in attitudes and relationships among former enemies. However, where aspects of the reconciliation process have been applied at the national level to entire societies the results, while positive in certain respects, are on the whole more ambiguous. At present, states trying to get beyond their dark pasts seem to inevitably face a cruel short-term tradeoff between reconciliation and justice.

### **Truth Commissions and Reconciliation**

Truth commissions have emerged in most cases as part of transitions from some form of authoritarian government (military or civilian dictatorship, or minority rule) toward a more democratic political system in societies often characterized by serious divisions along class or communal lines. Richard Wilson (1998) describes them as “... post-war structures for publicly addressing unresolved issues arising from past human rights violations”, which “...typically consist of an investigative team with a mandate to take testimonies, corroborate evidence, document human

rights abuses and make recommendations regarding structural reforms and reparations.” They have been established either through legislation or presidential decree to achieve a defined and delimited task, and they are dissolved once they have reported their findings.

Truth commissions can be seen as important milestones on the road toward democracy. The extensiveness of a commission’s mandate, the thoroughness of and public support for its inquiries and the impact of its report (if any) are all indicators of the relative strength of the new political order. The data on various commissions presented in the Appendix reflects just how diverse national experiences with truth commissions, and related bodies, has actually been. Even a cursory comparison of the various cases reveals significant differences in regard to:

*Purpose.* Besides exposing the truth of human rights abuses, some seemed intended to show the current regime’s immediate predecessors in a bad light (Ethiopia, Haiti)

*Time period investigated.* While some commissions investigated periods as brief as 3-4 years (Haiti), several examined one or more decades of their nation’s history (Chile, Germany, and South Africa among others).

*Documentation.* Several commissions documented thousands -- and in a few instances tens of thousands -- of cases of abuse (Chile) while others found very few (Bolivia).

*Reporting.* Some commissions have issued no report (Bolivia, Philippines) or a report which was kept confidential (Zimbabwe). In some cases those responsible for abuses were named (El Salvador, Honduras) and in others they were not (Uruguay).

One of the most controversial aspects of truth commissions has been the granting of amnesty. Though amnesty has not occurred in all countries, it has been prominent in just those cases where the commissions have been regarded as most thorough in their inquiries. On balance, it almost seems that some sort of amnesty has been a necessary prerequisite for a commission to contribute to national reconciliation. This is exemplified by the Chilean case, where the military under former Head of State General Pinochet only accepted the Truth Commission on the condition of amnesty and a compromise in which the maximum truth about “disappearances” could be reported but judgment on whether the deaths were justified was left to “individual discretion”(Green, 1996). Despite these seeming equivocations the Chilean truth commission is assessed by many human rights experts as having dealt with past issues in such a way as to contribute to national reconciliation (Human Sciences Research Council, 1998).

#### *South Africa: Both Truth and Reconciliation?*

The variety, and sometimes contradictory, commentary on the work of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) also reflects ambivalence about the real connection between

the commission and national reconciliation. While the commission was in session an impression was created that "wounds of the past" were somehow being healed. Much of this was, no doubt, due to the extensive national and international media coverage of the commission's activities. Winslow (1997) for instance, explains that as a result of being "...deluged with newspaper reports of detailed human rights violations on a daily basis.." White South Africans have been forced to face the fact that "... old norms, myths and beliefs no longer hold true..." (Winslow, 1997), while for blacks their suspicions were validated and elaborated. Certainly, in the course of its work the Truth Commission has provided a context for many individual incidents involving acknowledgment, contrition and forgiveness, the three steps in Montville's model of reconciliation. Most importantly perhaps is Winslow's (1997) conviction that the TRC represents a major watershed in South African history: "...because of the TRC, there is no turning back. The nation must now adapt to the new norms and realities about its history, restructure its cognitive processes, and move on from the past."

Some psychologists have, however, warned against assuming that public "truth telling" leads to both individual and national healing:

There is a popular assumption that the TRC provides the space for a cathartic release of emotions that can form the basis for psychological healing - for individual deponents and for society as a whole. But this is questionable. Can we talk about individual healing in the same breath as national healing? Are the processes different or the same?

If we speak of helping individuals and society to 'heal' we must have at least a working definition of the ailment or injury; we must be sure that the 'cure' leaves the afflicted individual or society better and not worse off. In attempting to answer this question, it is crucial to establish whether there is a valid comparison between the cognitive and therapeutic processes that affect the 'society' and the 'individual' (de Ridder, 1997).

Furthermore, despite the willingness of many victims to forgive, the granting of amnesty and uncertainty over reparation payments are real and potentially explosive issues in South Africa today.

Some commentators, while agreeing that amnesty was a necessary and pragmatic compromise to permit the TRC to delve into human rights violations, feel it was not made clear that this was an "evil" compromise. In the worst case, this could contribute to the impression that the TRC has favored perpetrators over victims; an impression strengthened "...by the sense that at present it appears as though perpetrators have more to gain by receiving amnesty than victims have through reparation. Reparation seems distant as it will only occur once the TRC is over and there is no guarantee of what form it will take" (Hamblen, 1998). Though the South African case has several unique aspects, similar problems exist in other countries trying to make the transition from a closed to a more open system of government.

### *Truth in Transition*

The possibility that national reconciliation may be getting higher priority than justice and healing for individuals, raises disturbing questions. What sort of reconciliation is it that leaves many personal wounds untreated? In this regard the expression “forgive and forget” takes on a new and perhaps sinister meaning. While forgiveness is certainly healthy, it is far from clear that a nation should ever forget even the most painful aspects of its past. Writing about the major commissions in Latin America, Ignatieff (1996) has argued that “false reconciliation” is a danger worth taking seriously:

The record of the truth commissions in Latin America has disillusioned many of those who believed that shared truth was a precondition of social reconciliation. The military and police apparatus survived the inquisition with their legitimacy undermined but their power intact. The societies in question used the truth commissions to indulge in the illusion that they had put the past behind them. The truth commissions allowed exactly the kind of false reconciliation with the past they had been expressly created to forestall.

The German writer and thinker Theodor Adorno observed this false reconciliation at work in his native Germany after the war: “Coming to terms with the past” does not imply a serious working through of the past, the breaking of its spell through an act of clear consciousness. It suggests, rather, wishing to turn the page and, if possible, wiping it from memory. *The attitude that it would be proper for everything to be forgiven and forgotten by those who were wronged is expressed by the party that committed the injustice* (emphasis added).

A fuller appreciation of the difficulties of blending principle with pragmatism can be gained if one sees truth commissions in the broader context of democratization. Sørensen (1993), a specialist in this field, has written that the most important influence on the outcome of democratization in a given country is the nature of the coalition promoting the change. As he (1993:44) explains: “The crucial distinction is between transitions dominated by the elites who were also behind the old, authoritarian regimes [i.e. transitions from ‘above’], and transitions in which mass actors have gained the upper hand [i.e. transitions from ‘below’].” To date, the majority of democratic transitions in countries with truth commissions has clearly been “top down.” They have most often been precipitated by a crisis in the previous authoritarian government, in response to which the ruling coalition divided into those wanting to continue the old style of rule despite the crisis, and those who felt a process of democratization could bring such benefits as renewed legitimacy (both at home and abroad) or more international investment. In this scenario at least some old elites remain in positions of power and they will only accept institutional arrangements which do not adversely affect their interests to any significant degree. Sørensen (1993:47), in fact, argues that this type of transition can result in the creation of “restricted democracy” characterized by:

...the presence of elite groups whose members reserve the right to interfere in the democratic process in order to protect their interests. In the case of democratic transitions from above, such interference can be part of the actual basis of the whole movement toward democracy. In other words, the elite groups (the military, traditional economic elites, and leading politicians) may make the transition toward democracy dependent on the acceptance of a set of agreements, or *political pacts*, that define vital areas of interest for the elites. (emphasis in original).

He also sheds light on the amnesty issue discussed above, citing the case of Argentina where the new democratic government under Raúl Alfonsín tried to bring the military to account for its past actions before a court. Unfortunately, this was more than the military would accept, and in the wake of the military rebellions of 1987 Alfonsín had to stop most efforts to try military officers (Sørensen, 1993: 49-50).

Karl, writing primarily about Latin America, argues in a similar vein that any democratic transition based on a “foundational pact” between the government and the opposition is to some degree problematic since the pact inevitably restricts representation in the new system to protect the position of the dominant classes. In the final analysis, he (1990: 11-12) characterizes these pacts as: “...anti-democratic mechanisms, bargained by elites, which seek to create a deliberate socioeconomic and political contract that demobilises emerging mass actors while delineating the extent to which all actors can participate or wield power in the future.” Commenting on Karl’s judgment, Pinkney (1993) (summarizes the positive and negative aspects of this path to democratization. He (1993: 142) explains that precisely because of the concessions made: “...transition by pact scores highly in terms of consensus, at least at the elite level, and stability, but poorly in terms of the prospects for equality and mass participation, and leaves a built-in elite veto in place.” However, one should not conclude that the new system is only different in form, rather than substance, from the old. Rather, in the new democracy there will most likely be an end to arbitrary arrest, torture and execution; there may be more freedom for trade unions; and, perhaps most important over the long term, the electorate acquires the power to remove unacceptable leaders (Pinkney, 1993).

This assessment suggests another question: truth commissions are based on the premise that there is one truth, but how realistic is this assumption during a top-down transition? Post-modernist critique has made us aware that social truth is always contested, and in a “dirty war” all sides have their versions of the truth. Where truth commissions have not been allowed to fix blame for the acts they document, the “truth” of the security forces-- i.e. that they were engaged in putting down insurgencies--cannot be refuted. Besides different versions of the truth, there are also different dimensions of truth: “ One should distinguish between factual truth and moral truth, between narratives that tell what happened and narratives that attempt to explain why things happened and who is responsible. The truth commissions had more success in establishing the first than in



promoting the second” (Ignatieff, 1996). Ignatieff (1996) in fact suggests that for communal conflicts, the past cannot be exposed and reified once for all; rather: “The past is an argument and the function of truth commissions, like the function of honest historians, is simply to purify the argument, to narrow the range of permissible lies.”

*Guatemala: “top down” and “bottom up” truths*

The case of Guatemala further highlights several of these points. The various accords and commissions tasked with looking into human rights abuses in that country have been far from completely satisfactory, and the most significant of these, the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH)<sup>2</sup>, was clearly limited by the realities of a war-torn society and a transitional state. Wilson lists five clauses of the accord creating the CEH which he feels “...undermine its potential for challenging impunity and promoting the rule of law” (Wilson, 1998):

- (1) the stipulation that only abuses “linked to the armed conflict” should be investigated, which means that illegal acts against those not connected to either side could be considered outside the brief of the Commission;
- (2) the Commission’s existence was limited to six months, which is an impossibly short time to investigate several decades of events;
- (3) the Commission was charged with making “objective judgements about events during the period under consideration”, which is understood to mean that the security forces and the rebels should be held equally responsible for violence;
- (4) the Commission was extremely weak, having no powers (in contrast to the TRC in South Africa) of search, seizure or subpoena; and
- (5) the Commission “will not individualise responsibility, nor have any legal implications” which means that no names would be included in the Commission’s report and no Commission findings could be used in later legal proceedings.

The Commission was further hobbled by a serious lack of funds. The government had initially intended to allocate only \$50,000 to the Commission, but under pressure the figure was increased to \$800,000. However, the Commission’s Head, German law professor Christian Tomuschat, was obliged to delay the Commission’s work until he could find substantial international financial backing (Hegstrom, 1997). Also, though a “Comprehensive Accord on Human Rights” had been concluded in 1994 which contained strong anti-impunity provisions, in 1996 rebels and government negotiators agreed on amnesty terms which came into effect in 1997 in the, ironically titled, “Law of National Reconciliation.”

Several civil society organizations have participated in the work of revealing the truth in Guatemala, and most prominent among these was the Catholic Archbishop’s Human Rights Office (ODHA) which carried out the “Recovery of Historical Memory” (REMHI) project. The REMHI project’s report, entitled “Guatemala: Never Again” and completed in April 1998, documented more

than 55,000 documented human rights violations, and it claims that during the period under study: "...150,000 people died, 50,000 'disappeared,' one million became refugees, 200,000 children were orphaned and 40,000 women became widows" (*A War Called Peace: Images of Guatemala*, 1998). Most importantly, the REMHI project named both perpetrators and victims on both sides of the civil war. Thus, it has both complemented the CEH and served to further highlight its shortcomings (Wilson, 1998). The gap between the "truth" of the officially sanctioned commission, and that of this more extensive civil society initiative was dramatically demonstrated by the murder of Monsignor Juan Gerardi Conedera. Gerardi, bishop of the Archdiocese of Guatemala, was the Coordinator of the ODHA and the driving force behind the REMHI; and just two days before his death he participated in the presentation of REMHI's final report. Though government officials call the killing a common crime, human rights activists see it as a reprisal for demands made at the presentation ceremony for justice based on the report's findings. It also seemed to confirm popular suspicions that, despite government denials, death squads continue to operate in the country (*A War Called Peace*, 1998).

The Guatemalan context was also shaped by a United Nations human rights presence, which made several important contributions to improving the human rights climate during the transition from military rule. However, as the transition advanced some commentators felt there was tension between the U.N.'s role in promoting human rights and its role as mediator and verifier of the Guatemalan peace accords. Thus, in April 1998 the United Nations Human Rights Commission ended its probe into human rights abuses, despite widespread objections from various humanitarian organizations. This decision gave rise to speculation that the U.N. was so concerned with validating the transition to democracy that it was willing to make concessions on human rights issues. The effects of the decision are potentially far reaching, since in its wake the Guatemalan armed forces can once again buy weapons internationally and receive foreign military assistance (Zubieta, 1998). Finally, it should be noted that the murder of Archbishop Gerardi did not cause the United Nations to alter its judgment.

#### *An Alternative to Courts*

Though truth commissions very likely promise more than they can deliver, what they can deliver, as described above by Pinkney, is very significant. This is further illustrated by considering the differences between truth commissions and courts. It must be remembered that commissions are instituted in countries where the legal system had been, one way or another, perverted in such a way as to permit human rights abuses to occur, and even be "justified." The new order emerging out of a "top down" transition simply does not have, as clearly demonstrated by the Argentine case, the institutional capacity to right the wrongs of the past through the rule of law. Truth commissions represent, therefore, an imperfect but politically viable alternative way for a people to raise and examine at least some of the shortcomings in the human rights practice of their legal systems and security forces. Commenting on his country's experience, South African lawyer Richard Penwill

(1997) argues that the difference between the TRC and a court is, in many ways, the key to its success:

The TRC is not, and was not intended to be, a court of law. It was not created to make a judgment; it was created to help ventilate the evidence, establish the truth and bring about reconciliation. Unlike a court it does not aim at a conclusion so much as a process....Ironically it is these non court-like characteristics that have enabled us, the general public, to hear a wide ambit of evidence which has raised questions about the role of the courts, police and instruments of law and order and justice in our society.

Penwill goes on to illustrate this point using the example of TRC testimony in which a policeman confirmed the past use of the infamous “wet bag” torture by demonstrating how it was applied. This technique had been used frequently to illegally extract confessions which led to convictions of people for serious offenses they did not commit. Though the defendants regularly claimed that their confessions had been obtained under duress, there was no corroboration and the courts were obliged to accept the confessions as evidence (Penwill, 1997). Now all of South Africa has proof of the “justice” system being used for injustice and oppression, and by implication, everyone has seen the need for a new legal order which clearly distinguishes itself from past practice. Again, commissions cannot themselves reform institutions, but they can help create a climate in which true reform may become possible.

Furthermore, truth commissions seem to have contributed more, to date, to national reconciliation than war crimes tribunals. It is often argued that the two recent war crimes tribunals, for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, have proved too slow in their operations to meet the demands of justice, and that they lack the means to ensure that many known criminals stand trial. Writing about the Great Lakes region of Africa, Vandeginste (1998) explains that:

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was set up not only to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law between 1 January and 31 December 1994 but with the belief that prosecutions ‘will contribute to the process of national reconciliation and to the restoration and maintenance of peace.’

However, he concluded (in 1997) that : “Three and a half years later, it is becoming increasingly clear that the ICTR will not be able to contribute significantly to national reconciliation” (Vandeginste, 1998). The Guatemalan experience also seems to confirm the view that formal justice procedures are too slow and politically charged, and as Wilson (1998) explains:

...a maximalist ‘Nuremberg option’ for addressing war crimes is not even remotely possible in Guatemala. This is not to say that the legal route to justice should be

abandoned altogether...What is essential is that the limitations of the legal system be recognised so that the Commission and other initiatives can complement its work.

This overview of contemporary truth commissions as efforts at national reconciliation permits a few concluding observations. First, it seems clear that an effort at *national* reconciliation cannot be limited to Montville's (1998) three steps of acknowledgment, contrition and forgiveness. Rather, justice has to figure into the process somewhere. However, it is precisely the inability of transitional democratic institutions to provide justice that constitutes the most compelling rationale for truth commissions. This suggests that the long term constructive influence of truth commissions is their role as a bridge from a past where justice was denied and a present where it is not yet practically and politically possible, to a future where it can, in all its dimensions, become an integral part of the social order. In that sense, a process of national reconciliation must go beyond coming to terms with the past to seeking out and implementing more broadly equitable models of governance.

### **Towards a New Political Culture**

Several analysts have argued that national reconciliation, whether through Truth Commissions or other means, is neither a complete approach to conflict transformation nor an adequate end in itself. Galtung (1998) writes, for instance, that what he calls the "three's" -- resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation -- are all essential to stabilization and progress in post-conflict situations, and omitting any one will undermine efforts to achieve the other two. In a similar vein, Øberg (1996) describes post-conflict "reconstruction" as involving the reconstruction of "...1) human beings, soul and bodies, 2) social structure, 3) culture, 4) environment, and 5) a peace culture of reconciliation, repentance, forgiveness, respect...and simultaneously moving toward a vision of peaceful coexistence..." In contrast to such a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution, Øberg (1996) mentions the Dayton agreement for Bosnia-Herzegovina which, though stopping military activity, does not solve any of the underlying conflicts in the area. Clements (1997) suggests that the keys to "...development of more stable peaceful relationships between people lie in a deepening awareness of the key psychological, social and political processes which generate trusting communities within which individuals can realize their deepest sense of self." These are important insights: it is increasingly obvious that the real challenge in most countries attempting reconciliation is to build a society which is truly participatory and fulfilling for all groups. Otherwise, fissures giving rise to alienation and deep-seated conflict will emerge in the new order as they did in the old, eventually necessitating further efforts at reconciliation – efforts which would certainly be greeted with more cynicism than enthusiasm.

In this regard, Burton's work on human needs provides a useful benchmark against which plans for "post-conflict" society can be measured. Burton (1990: 23) starts from the premise "...that there are limits to the extent to which the human person, acting separately or within a wider ethnic or national community, can be socialized or manipulated..."; and "...that there are human development needs that must be satisfied and catered for by institutions, if these institutions are to be stable, and if

societies are to be significantly free of conflict.” While acknowledging that this is still a new and contested research area, Burton presents a plausible list of needs. First, human beings require a sense of *security* and of *identity*. Second, since people have a generic drive to learn, they require a *consistent response from the environment*, without which learning is impossible. Third, from their social context people require both *recognition* and *valued relationships*, or *bonding*. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, individuals require (some) *control* over their environments in order to insure that their needs are fulfilled (Burton, 1990: 47 and 95). This approach has important implications for social institutions. If, on balance, needs are being met within an institution, the institution receives support and is consolidated and perpetuated. If, however, needs are not met, the institution loses support and legitimacy, and confronts increasing opposition. In the latter case, authorities tend to react with repression and coercion, but if an institution is “de-legitimated” for enough people, conflict can not be resolved this way. Rather, the institutional structures have to evolve, sooner or later, to more fully accommodate the needs of the people they affect.

To Burton (1990: 127), legitimacy is a dynamic, rather than a static, condition which “stresses the reciprocal nature of relations with authorities, the support given because of the services they render, and respect for legal norms when these are legitimized norms.” He (1990: 127) contrasts this with a static notion of *legality* which “...has associated with it...loyalty to a sovereign or formal leader right or wrong, elitism, the common good and the national interest as interpreted by elites...” From this perspective, national reconciliation would not be complete until the social and political order was popularly perceived as legitimate. Though such legitimacy is currently considered to inhere in liberal democratic institutions, Burton (1998: 4) has recently argued that conventional representative democracy is only effective in a society with “...relative ethnic homogeneity, classlessness and equality...”; and this model alone is not able to guarantee institutional legitimacy “...in a society that contains major income differences, and in which minorities are unrepresented but must observe the norms of a majority”-- conditions characteristic of many transitional countries. In summary, Burton’s work indicates that social reform which goes further than conventional Western models of governance to meet human needs is necessary if the deep-seated conflicts of war-torn societies are ever to be transformed into peaceful and creative relations among the groups concerned.

There is, in fact, a widening consensus among human needs theorists, human rights advocates, international organizations concerned with development and peace researchers about the requisite qualities of such a new social order. Consider the United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) “five aspects of sustainable development”<sup>3</sup>

*Empowerment* - The expansion of men and women’s capabilities and choices increases their ability to exercise those choices free of hunger, want and deprivation. It also increases their opportunity to participate in, or endorse, decision-making affecting their lives.

*Co-operation* - With a sense of belonging important for personal fulfillment, well-being and a sense of purpose and meaning, human development is concerned with the ways in which people work together and interact.

*Equity* - The expansion of capabilities and opportunities means more than income BB it also means equity, such as an educational system to which everybody should have access.

*Sustainability* - The needs of this generation must be met without compromising the right of future generations to be free of poverty and deprivation and to exercise their basic capabilities.

*Security* - Particularly the security of livelihood. People need to be freed from threats, such as disease or repression and from sudden harmful disruption in their lives (United Nations Development Programme, 1997).

These characteristics closely resemble Burton's needs. In a similar vein, the UNDP goes on to outline the elements of a governance system which would promote sustainable development, suggesting that sustainable development can only be realized through political institutions which function according to similar principles (UNDP, 1997).

The convergence evident here parallels recent advances in the theory and practice of human rights. The Cold War division between the Capitalist camp's emphasis on civil and political rights and the Socialist/Third World preference for social, economic and cultural rights has now been recognized as unhelpful and unacceptable. All five major areas of human rights have been acknowledged by the international community (however grudgingly in some cases) as an indivisible whole. However, as indicated above, rights and the improved quality of individual and collective life they represent can not simply be legislated into existence; an understanding reflected in the emphasis by many activists and organizations on a "cultural" approach to the problem. Consider the following sample of such initiatives:

1. The United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), and others, are promoting a "Culture of Peace" defined as: "...a set of values, attitudes and behaviours which reflect and inspire participatory democracy, social interaction, sharing, tolerance, gender equity, solidarity, human rights, the rejection of violence and conflict prevention through dialogue" (UNESCO, 1996).
2. A group of Nobel Laureates is promoting a "Culture of Non-violence", which would encompass love, justice, harmony; reject oppression; and embrace social diversity, non-violence and personal transformation (Decade for a Culture of Non-Violence, 1998).

3. A former United Nations Secretary General promoted the creation of a “universal culture of human rights” (United Nations Secretary General, 1989).

4. The Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance promotes a “Culture of Democracy”, which highlights nonviolent conflict resolution, open decision-making, the role of civil society, transparency and participation (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998a).

Finally, the World Commission on Culture and Development draws some far-reaching conclusions from this burgeoning consensus. They believe it provides strong evidence that there is a discernible “global civic culture” from which important elements of global ethics can be derived (World Commission on Culture and Development, 1996). These “global ethics” are:

general principles denoting the fundamental moral concern that in a social and political community ought to find adequate reflection....the basic moral concern -- *to protect the integrity and to respect the vulnerability of human beings* -- is universal in its appeal and can be shown to be part of all major traditions of moral teaching...

In their own formulation, they put forth five principle ideas that should form the core of global ethics:

Human rights and responsibilities  
 Democracy and the development of civil society  
 Protection of minorities  
 Peaceful conflict resolution  
 Equity within and between generations

These principles, like those cited earlier, reject elitism and give priority to participation in all institutions and social programs. Furthermore, they argue that states, though historically the worst violators of these principles, are now under increasing pressure from global civil society and international organizations to conform to standards of global ethics both domestically and in international relations. Only then can the dominant pattern of conflict and power politics be replaced by something else.

Returning once more to the Guatemalan case, it is quite clear that such principles figured prominently in the peace accords that brought the armed struggle to a definitive conclusion. As Palencia Prado (1998) has explained:

The central concerns of the peace accords include the need to transform existing relations between state and society, so that political institutions are capable, *for the*

*first time*, of mediating the interests of all social groups in a poor, unequal, multi-ethnic, and multilingual Guatemala. To achieve this transformation, core provisions express time and again the need for participative consultation in the formulation, execution, evaluation and monitoring of state policies, and for accountability in legislative action and executive decision-making. In other words a *culture of involvement* in which public decision-making responds to the will of the citizenry is clearly promoted in the accords...(emphasis added).

The author goes on, however, to catalogue a number of ways in which political life in the new Guatemala either falls short of the ideals embodied in the accords or diverts from them completely. Though the country now has more democratic institutions, a better organized and more extensive civil society and distinct support for human rights from the international community, it is clear that a complete culture change in the direction of what she calls involvement remains a long-term goal demanding unrelenting effort. However, as argued below, Burton's work indicates that nothing short of such an effort can bring stable and creative social peace to this or any other country in transition.

### **Conclusion**

Burton has emphasized that there are two fundamentally different approaches to the analysis of conflict: either conflict is due to inherent human aggressiveness and can, at best, be controlled, or, as outlined above, it results from inappropriate social institutions that frustrate human needs. The former position justifies coercion and elite control in society, but the latter points out a direction for positive change (Burton, 1998: 1). His analysis is compelling for the countries considered in this paper since their historic turning points have been reached through the collapse of overtly coercive systems. This fact, in itself, lends prima facie support to Burton's second premise. Further support is provided by the broad consensus about what values a truly peaceful and democratic society should uphold: a consensus in fact sanctioned by state representatives in the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights in 1993 (Human Rights Internet, 1999).

Truth commissions can be points of departure for a process of transformation towards a civic culture which would fulfill rather than frustrate human needs; but they are not enough in themselves. The ambiguities surrounding these commissions and the problems of contemporary political development in countries where national reconciliation has been attempted, indicate that far-reaching challenges are still to be met before successor institutions in transitional societies acquire long term legitimacy. For instance, even assuming good will on the part of leadership, mounting evidence indicates that the pace and scope of contemporary economic globalization imposes policy choices that sow seeds of further disruptive conflict in transitional societies.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, the fate of transitions, whether incorporating formal truth commissions or not, may hinge on the degree to which they avoid what Galtung (1995: 12) calls the "one mistake which is no longer pardonable: the single-shot 'table at the top', the high table, for the 'leaders.'" He (Galtung, 1995) goes on to promote another model: "Let one thousand conferences blossom... Tap



the insights all over, marginalizing nobody, *making peace-making itself a model of structural peace*" (emphasis added). Thus, if the proliferating institutions of civil society can continue to define and focus attention on needs-related issues, such as human rights and sustainable development, and hold public institutions accountable for steady progress in these areas, it may be possible to gradually complement the original "top down" pact which launched transition with a longer term "bottom up" dynamic of social change.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Houston Chronicle reporter Tony Freemantle (1997) wrote that as of 1996: "some kind of truth commission charged with investigating past violations of human rights has been used in at least 14 countries."

<sup>2</sup> The commission's full name is: The Commission for the Historical Clarification of the Violations of Human Rights and Acts of Violence which have Causes Suffering to the Guatemalan Population.

<sup>3</sup> The UNDP defines sustainable development as:  
...expanding the choices for all people in society. This means that men and women – particularly the poor and vulnerable – are at the centre of the development process. It also means 'protection of the life opportunities of future generations... and...the natural systems on which all life depends.' (UNDP, *Human Development Report* 1996). This makes the central purpose of development the creation of an enabling environment in which all can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives (UNDP, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Waters (1995: 46) has argued, for instance, that the *intra-national* and *transnational* conflicts generated directly and indirectly by globalization may prove to be "...more intractable than the previous disputes between nations."

### Appendix

#### Examples of Official Commissions of Inquiry 1971 — 1995

Country	Year	Commission	Result
Bangladesh	1971	Commission on war crimes	30,000 charged after 1971; general amnesty 1973
Uganda	1974	Commission of inquiry into disappearances	1,000 page report published, but no details on individual cases
Brazil	1992	Human rights council	Said 111 detainees in Sao Paolo wilfully killed by military

Country	Year	Commission	Result
			police, 1992
Mexico	1992	National human rights commission	Reported on various disappearances
Nicaragua	1992	Tripartite commission	Reported deaths of ten members of former opposition
Togo	1992	National human rights commission	Said government forces responsible for 1991 killings
Niger	1992-1993	Human rights commission of the national conference	Only some corruption cases investigated
Ethiopia	1992	Special public prosecutor	Dozens of perpetrators charged in early 1995
Sudan	1992-1994	Commission of inquiry into government violence (Previous regime)	Report on incidents in Juba to be published
Thailand	1992	Ministry of Defense inquiry into killings and disappearances during demonstrations in May 1992	Report not made public
El Salvador	1993-1994	Joint investigation committee on illegal armed groups	Reported many killings had political background; perpetrators mentioned in confidential appendix
Zimbabwe	1993	Human rights commission to investigate violations under present and previous governments	In progress
Ghana	1993-1994	Commission on human rights and administrative justice	Failed investigation into killings of early 1980s
Burundi	1993	Commission to investigate	Commission apparently never

Country	Year	Commission	Result
		killings in coup attempt 1993	started work
Honduras	1993	National commissioner for the protection of human rights	Report named those responsible for 1984 disappearances
Malawi	1994	Commission of inquiry into political killings of early 1980s	In progress
Sri Lanka	1994	Three commissions to investigate killings and disappearances since 1988	In progress
South Africa	1995	Truth and Reconciliation Commission	Investigation of 30 years of apartheid regime violence and counter-violence. Report published 1998
Guatemala	1995	Commission of elucidation	Investigated human rights violations and acts of violence
Bolivia	1982	Commission of inquiry into disappearances	No report
Israel	1982- 1983	Commission of inquiry into killings in Sabra and Chatila	Report said no direct responsibility but urged measures against certain officials
Argentina	1983- 1985	Commission on the disappearance of persons (Sabato Commission)	Nunca Mas report documented nearly 9,000 disappeared, analyzed repression apparatus
Guinea	1985	Commission of inquiry	No report
Uruguay	1985	Parliamentary investigative commission on 'disappeared' persons	Report published, no details of individual cases

Country	Year	Commission	Result
Zimbabwe	1985	Commission of inquiry into Matabele land murders by North Korean 5th Brigade during early years of Pres. Mugabe's rule	Report kept confidential, amidst churches' and public's demand for its release
Philippines	1986-1987	Presidential committee on human rights	Report not completed
Chile	1990-1991	National commission on truth and reconciliation	Extensive report documented 2,100 cases, analysed repression apparatus, many recommendations for reparation and rehabilitation
Chad	1991-1992	Commission of inquiry on crimes by ex-president Habre and others	Report said 40,000 were killed, details on 4,000 cases named perpetrators
Czech Republic	1991	Parliamentary commission on lustration law	Some 200,000 individuals asked for certificate of clean record
Sri Lanka	1991	Presidential commission of inquiry	No report published
Germany	1992, 1995	Parliamentary commissions of inquiry to study effects of communist party, ideology and security apparatus	Analytical history of 150,000 pages, files opened for individual requests
Poland	1992	Inquiry by the Ministry of the Interior	Secret list of 64 names leaked to press, then discredited
Bulgaria	1992	Temporary commission of inquiry on the Communist Party	No report
Romania	1992	Parliamentary commission of inquiry	Two reports published

Country	Year	Commission	Result
Albania	1992	Commission on killings by security apparatus in Shkoder 1944-1991	Six mass graves discovered, 2,000 victims reported
Chile	1992	National corporation for reparation and rehabilitation	Ongoing investigation into killings and disappearances
El Salvador	1992	Ad hoc commission on the military	Confidential report recommended dismissal of 100 military officers for human rights violations
El Salvador	1992-1993	UN Commission of truth	Report said 60,900 killed, of which 5% by opposition; named perpetrators

**Source:** Human Sciences Research Council, <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/corporate/InFocus/May98/truthcomm.htm>.

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## **CEASEFIRE: THE IMPACT OF REPUBLICAN POLITICAL CULTURE ON THE CEASEFIRE PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Montgomery Sapone**

On August 31, 1994, the Provisional IRA (PIRA) declared a cessation of military operations. For the past thirty years, the conflict in Northern Ireland has been raging almost without pause.<sup>1</sup> British security forces have attempted to control the violence by establishing road blocks, conducting house searches, altering the judicial system to allow conviction on informant testimony, instituting internment without trial for paramilitary suspects, garrisoning over thirty thousand British soldiers in Northern Ireland, instituting broadcasting bans of Sinn Féin, and conducting intensive interrogation of suspects. Despite the best attempts of the British government over the past few decades to thwart PIRA, the conflict persisted. To sustain a low-intensity war under these conditions requires more than guns and ammunition; it requires the support of a political community, extensive organization of economic resources, and cultural values that give meaning to the conflict.

The duration of the conflict in Northern Ireland cannot be understood without reference to Irish Republican culture and history. Similarly, the ceasefire itself must be viewed in light of the history and culture of Irish Republicanism. PIRA's refusal, for example, to decommission weapons or to declare a "permanent" ceasefire as a precondition to entering into negotiations is generally seen by observers as a purely utilitarian strategic decision. After all, handing over guns with no guarantee that what is negotiated will actually be given creates unnecessary vulnerability. But behind the refusal to decommission weapons is not just a utilitarian political strategy, but a set of cultural values.

This paper begins with a discussion of the cultural forces that sustained the conflict. In addition to the considerable impact of cultural forces, British security policy contributed to the longevity of the conflict. Similarly, the antithetical political positions of the major players in the conflict (British, Republican, Loyalist and Irish Republic) prevented any easy settlement.<sup>2</sup> This paper describes how the low-intensity, military sustainability and cultural entrenchment of the conflict resulted in a stalemate between PIRA and the British Army. Noting that the ambivalence of a military stalemate has consequences for a ceasefire process, this paper reviews the political and military events during the ceasefire and then argues that the major stumbling blocks during the ceasefire process were not simply logistical, but deeply connected to the culture of Irish Republicanism.

### **Sustaining Perpetual Low-Intensity Conflict**

The conflict in Northern Ireland is one of the longest running low-intensity conflicts of the twentieth century. The continuity of the violence has confounded academic commentators and military analysts alike. In the thousands of books that have been published concerning the conflict in Northern Ireland, explanations ranging from religious hatred to material gain have been advanced to account for the longevity of the conflict and the intractability of the parties in negotiating a settlement.<sup>3</sup> But the key to the continuity of the conflict is neither economic nor sectarian, but cultural. Ephemeral cultural values have allowed the Republican community to continue fighting for



British withdrawal and the reunification of Ireland against one of the most sophisticated military organizations in the world for thirty years.<sup>4</sup>

The core political belief of Republicans in Northern Ireland, including Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA, is that the 1921 partition of Ireland and continued British rule in Northern Ireland are illegitimate.<sup>5</sup> Republicans view the British government as the source of the conflict in Northern Ireland. According to Gerry Adams (1995: 61), President of Sinn Féin, "violence in Ireland has its roots in the conquest of Ireland by Britain." Republicans do not see their own violence as the *cause* of continued British military presence in Northern Ireland, but as a *reaction* to it. They believe they are engaged in armed opposition against British colonialism. Therefore, any settlement that does not guarantee the withdrawal of the British from Ireland is de facto inadequate.

The social environment in which Republicans in Northern Ireland live only reinforces their perception of the British as the enemy and their armed struggle as necessary and just. The poverty, discrimination, social isolation and unemployment which Catholics in Northern Ireland experienced as a minority in a Protestant-majority state reinforced their perception of themselves as victims of a repressive colonial regime. In the Republican communities of Northern Ireland, most families have relatives or friends who have been killed by security forces or imprisoned for paramilitary activity. The impression of Republicans that the British were determined to destroy the Irish culture and deny them self-determination was confirmed by the constant, hostile presence of British armored vehicles and patrolling soldiers. For Republicans, these conditions amounted to a state of social and psychological siege.

For Republicans, armed struggle against British military occupation is unquestionably necessary, effective and legitimate (Irvin 1999). The political history of Ireland provides adequate evidence of the effectiveness of armed struggle as a means of creating political change. Without the historic efforts of the IRA and their forebearers against the British colonization of Ireland, the Republic of Ireland would not exist today. It is an impossible task to convince Republicans that change is possible through the democratic process alone -- their history instructs otherwise. And this history is a living fact that is, for Republicans, constantly present. Indeed, the historical deeds of grandfathers and great-grandfathers who fought against British occupation during the 1916 Uprising and the Anglo-Irish war often recounted with pride.

Another indication of the unchallenged legitimacy of armed struggle within the Republican community is that the IRA has never suffered from a paucity of volunteers. While it may seem incomprehensible that Provisional IRA volunteers chose to engage in military activities likely to result in death or imprisonment, to them the choice appears not only necessary but desirable. Status in this community is correlated with military competence. Bearing arms in the pursuit of Irish autonomy is considered to be the ultimate expression of Republicanism.

Like most cultures where violence is a fact of daily life, Republicans in Northern Ireland have successfully adapted to the misfortune by transforming the tragedy of violent death into communal benefit. The spectacular funerals of slain IRA volunteers, the treatment of the 1981 hunger strikers as martyrs, and the murals glorifying the Republican dead all testify to the capacity of Republicans to derive cultural value from politically motivated deaths. Violent death is seen not just as a necessity of the armed struggle against the British, but as a sacrifice which only serves to make the culture stronger. Although Republican culture could be negatively described as "necrophilic,"

the sanctification of violent death is a highly adaptive cultural practice within a militarized environment.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to cultural factors that perpetuated the conflict, British political and military policy have, perhaps inadvertently, contributed to its longevity. The British Army entered Northern Ireland in 1969 in order to conduct peacekeeping operations. Although the British Army was initially deployed to put a stop to Loyalist rioting in which the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) were colluding, the violence quickly escalated. Under the command of Lieutenant-General Tuzo, the Army conducted a number of large-scale military operations, such as the internment of suspects, the re-taking of urban territory (Operation Motorman), and use of unnecessary extreme force (e.g., "Bloody Sunday" in 1972).<sup>7</sup> The situation in Northern Ireland certainly looked like war; IRA prisoners were even accorded a de facto POW status by the British government.

Because this military approach to dealing with the IRA unintentionally legitimated PIRA as a belligerent, security policy was reevaluated in the 1980's. Alternative methods of containing the violence were sought. New British security policy emphasized normalization, Ulsterization and criminalization in order to limit the overall level of violence (Bew and Patterson 1985). During this period, attempts were made to contain the conflict geographically within Northern Ireland through exclusion orders, road blocks, and extradition. The conflict was "normalized" by creating a *cordon sanitaire* around Belfast City Center, by instituting police primacy, and undertaking by sophisticated public relations campaigns. Convicted PIRA members, as well as Loyalist paramilitaries, were treated as criminals ("terrorists") rather than as political prisoners. PIRA's attempts during the late 1970's to escalate the war by attacking "big targets" (helicopters, NATO bases, Mountbatten's yacht) and the 1981 hungerstrike, which sought to regain prisoner-of-war status for paramilitary prisoners, were responses to the criminalization program (Feldman 1991).

Although British security policy prevented escalation of the violence, it ironically also prevented any purely military solution. British commanders often asserted that, if law and public policy allowed them to do so, they could defeat PIRA militarily. However, legal restrictions on the use of force (e.g., rules of engagement, emergency legislation, and international instruments) prevented the British Army from taking aggressive military actions that would have routed the IRA. The status of the armed conflict as an emergency action with troop deployment authorized under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions Act) as military aid to the civil power rather than a war powers act, imposed a doctrine of minimum force. Soldiers issued with a yellow card containing the rules of engagement were allowed to fire only in life-threatening circumstances (Dewar 1985: 58-59). Furthermore, as the ostensible upholders of law and order, they could not be seen to act outside of the law. The British Army essentially tied its own hands with the security policy it adopted. As Pillar (1983: 28) points out,

[t]his combination of restraints — the inability to avoid entering a war and the inability to make full use of military capabilities once in it — means that wars which formerly would either never have been fought in the first place, or fought to a swift and decisive conclusion, are now fought in a restrained and carefully controlled way. This encourages deadlock and compromise and reduces the likelihood of capitulation.

PIRA effectively exploited the British Army's hesitancy to use force and concern with legality to engage in a protracted campaign of paramilitary violence. Thus, although violence was not eradicated, losses were kept at an "acceptable" level (in the words of Northern Ireland Secretary of State Merlyn Rees) and the war dragged on and on.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the cultural values of Republicanism and British security policy, the divergent interests of the major players in the Northern Ireland conflict also prevented any easy resolution of the political and military issues underlying the violence. Each group was fundamentally opposed to the interests and views propounded by the other groups, and generally unwilling to accept compromise of any sort. In brief, the Unionists despised the Republicans on political and social grounds and viewed any involvement of the Republic of Ireland in northern Irish politics with suspicion; the Republicans rejected the British presence in Ireland and saw the Unionists as sectarian and politically misguided; the British mistrusted the involvement of the Republic of Ireland but needed the vote of the Ulster Unionists; and the Republic of Ireland wanted to distance itself from the problems of the province altogether and yet retained a sentimental feeling towards the history of the IRA (Whyte 1990). These views derive from complex historical and political facts and are worthy of further explanation.

Successive British governments have proposed various unworkable solutions to the political problems of Northern Ireland. From 1921 until the mid-1970's Northern Ireland was ruled through Unionist controlled Stormont Parliament. Majority home rule reduced Northern Ireland to the status of a dependent colony, allowed Unionist domination of the security apparatus, effectively removed Catholics from political life, and led to the catastrophic deployment of British troops in 1969. As a result of Stormont and the events of 1969, the British government outlined new principles in the 1973 *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals* (Great Britain 1973). This paper made it clear that Unionists should be prevented from exercising total domination, and that any political arrangements require the involvement of the Irish Republic if they are to satisfy northern Nationalists. This power-sharing assembly combined with an all-Ireland council has remained the model for British political initiative since that time.

The Unionists generally dislike the power-sharing arrangement preferred by the British and view Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom. Although they form a majority in Northern Ireland, they would be a minority if the island were unified.<sup>9</sup> Unionists, not surprisingly, reject any political arrangement that would entail being governed by the Republic of Ireland and thereby losing their economic and political status. Since Unionists have traditionally occupied positions of political power and have controlled the domestic economy, they have much to lose if the distribution of power were altered. The security industry in Northern Ireland, including the police, the now defunct Ulster Defense Regiment, and the prisons, historically have been staffed by Unionists and would shrink radically if the conflict ceased.

Power sharing with Nationalists and increased involvement of the Irish Republic are seen by Unionists as concessions by Britain to the Nationalists. Historically, concessions by the British government towards the Republican community have resulted in a backlash by Unionists against the British Government.<sup>10</sup> Unionists, it has been said, have been willing to kill British soldiers in order to defend their right to remain British (Dewar 1985: 99). Prior to their own declared cease-fire, Loyalists were also willing to take on the Republic of Ireland. "Loyalists are not going to allow their country to be taken away from them," said Ray Smallwoods, the chief political strategist of loyalist

paramilitaries. "We've seen what the IRA has gotten by bombing and killing. Our war is not just with the IRA. It's with Dublin. And we're prepared to fight to the death" (Cullen 1994: 1). Loyalist paramilitaries have been quite willing to carry out their threats: in the last three years more people were killed by Loyalist than Nationalist paramilitaries.

Though Unionist objections to British withdrawal and power sharing may seem clear enough, the same objections by the Irish Government are a bit harder to understand. Since 1937, the Irish government has claimed constitutional jurisdiction over Northern Ireland. Article 2 of the Irish Constitution, declares that "the national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas." In 1990, this claim was reaffirmed by the Irish Supreme Court in *McGimpsey v. Ireland* which claimed that the "re-integration of the national territory" was a "constitutional imperative." For many years the British government did not object to these claims of sovereignty although they conflicted with the Government of Ireland Act 1920. Article 75 of the Government of Ireland Act (1920) provides that:

Notwithstanding the establishment of the Parliament of Northern Ireland...the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things in Northern Ireland and every part thereof.

At the heart of the Irish Constitution lay an aspirational claim to the political control of the whole of Ireland. One would imagine, this being the case, that the Irish Government would be delighted with British willingness to allow them to assume a larger role in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland through diplomatic agreements. The Anglo-Irish Agreement 1985 gave the Irish Republic the right to put forward views and proposals on matters relating to the administration of Northern Ireland (including security) in return for improved security co-ordination on their side of the border (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994: 19). Yet, unification is not a popular solution with the Irish Government. The British withdrawal from Northern Ireland would create innumerable problems for Dublin. Not only would the Republic be required to absorb the Unionists (and cope with any violence which might be directed at the Irish government), they would also assume the considerable financial burden of underwriting the depressed economy of Northern Ireland.

Nor are Northern Republicans particularly keen on being absorbed by the Irish government. From the perspective of Sinn Féin, the Irish government has abandoned the principle of Irish self-determination and has basically ratified the British claim to Northern Ireland. The Anglo-Irish Agreement, European Union membership, and the ratification of the Single Europe Act are seen as an erosion of Irish sovereignty and control of resources and a movement towards a "NATO view of international affairs" (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994: 83). Republicans view the current incarnation of Ireland as being little more than a dependent of Great Britain, since over fifty percent of its "foreign" trade is with the UK. Nationalists and Republicans believe that resolution to the political problems must include the democratic participation of all of the Irish people and that the negotiations depend on the political authority and legitimacy wielded by the Irish government. While Nationalists and Republicans have sought a greater role for Dublin in the ceasefire process, they are not seeking a simple end to partition resulting in reunification. Rather,

their long-term goal is to establish a democratic socialist republic based on the 1916 Proclamation, which would include decentralized economic and political structures in a pluralist, bilingual, non-sexist, and non-aligned Ireland (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994: 150).

A total reconstruction of the Irish state is probably not what the Irish government has in mind as a possible political future. Especially not at the hands of Sinn Féin. In the Republic of Ireland, Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA are treated as terrorists or criminals and generally are not viewed as legitimate political entities. Sinn Féin, for example, has been censored from speaking on television or radio under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act (not renewed in 1994). Yet, Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA are responsible for the very existence of the Irish Republic, having successfully fought a war against the British in 1916 for independence. It is not surprising that, historically, the government of the Republic of Ireland and the Fianna Fail party in particular have been sympathetic to the northern Republican cause. The Republic of Ireland has sometimes refused to extradite Republicans convicted of paramilitary offenses and has turned a blind eye to the use of the border as a "fall back" for paramilitaries during operations. Perhaps the most shocking example of covert support of the IRA by the government of the Republic of Ireland was the arrest of Charles Haughey, minister for the Gaelteacht under Jack Lynch's Fianna Fail party. Haughey and four other members of the Fianna Fail government were arrested for conspiracy to import arms that were to be sent to the IRA. "Whether the Cabinet either knew or implicitly approved of Haughey's activities remains to this day a less than satisfactorily answered question" (O'Malley 1990: 22 fn.).

### **Breaking the Stalemate**

The geographical containment of the conflict, the prevention of escalation through legal structures and the unwillingness to incur international approbation all served to turn the conflict in Northern Ireland into a "stalemate." A stalemate is a condition of conflict where neither belligerent party can achieve a decisive military victory and which can be almost indefinitely sustained by both parties (Goodman and Bogart 1992: 1). In stalemated wars, neither belligerent party is able to achieve a decisive victory, nor are they able to exhaust their opponent to a state of financial or military collapse. This has consequences for the ceasefire negotiation process. Negotiating a ceasefire after a stalemate tends to be much more laborious and intricate since the "winner" may be unclear and the belligerents may overestimate their own bargaining power (Smith 1995: 5).

Counter-insurgency operations or low-intensity conflicts that end in stalemate, such as that in Northern Ireland, appear even less amenable to negotiated settlement (Goodman and Bogart 1992: 1). In these conflicts the very identity of the belligerents and the legal status of the conflict are often unclear. In Northern Ireland, for example, the "belligerents" might include the British Army, PIRA, Ulster Defence Association (UDA), Irish People's Liberation Organization (IPLO), Red Hand Commandos, Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), or any number of other armed groups. PIRA declared a cessation of all military operations, but did not specify against whom. The Loyalist paramilitaries made a similarly ambivalent statement. Moreover, the legal status of the conflict in Northern Ireland is indeterminate. There is disagreement on whether the conflict ought to be called an "internal disturbance," as the British government would have it or whether it ought to be called a "war," as the Republican movement would claim.<sup>11</sup>

Limited conflict between equally matched opponents, such as that in Northern Ireland, is almost indefinitely sustainable.<sup>12</sup> Although more than three thousand people have been killed since

the latest period of conflict began thirty years ago, the conflict was not excessively costly in human terms. Similarly, the financial costs to Britain of prolonged low-level violence were negligible as a portion of the total economy. Neither the British Army nor PIRA were short on weapons, ammunition or manpower. Both would have been able to continue the war almost indefinitely.

In light of the military sustainability and cultural entrenchment of the conflict, the question arises: why didn't the conflict continue indefinitely?<sup>13</sup> For a variety of reasons, a ceasefire became simultaneously desirable to both the British and the Republican movement, despite the political, cultural and military entrenchment of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

British willingness to enter into negotiations with the Provisional IRA resulted partially from the end of the Cold War, which changed the strategic map of Europe. During the Cold War, the Republic of Ireland was not a member of NATO and disallowed any NATO bases or operations. Northern Ireland, being a British possession, was NATO friendly soil. Once NATO defense of the North Atlantic became unnecessary, Northern Ireland declined in strategic importance. The conflict in Northern Ireland, despite the excellent training benefits it provided for British Army regiments and the convenient "proving ground" it provided for British defense, had become enormously expensive. Deployment of nineteen-thousand troops has cost over £1 billion per annum, compensation to victims of violence by the Northern Ireland Office cost £30-50 million per annum, and the Exchequer grant to Northern Ireland cost over £3 billion (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994: 14). Furthermore, the concerns of insurance companies regarding the costs of bombs in London in 1992 and 1993 influenced the willingness of various ministers to support negotiations with PIRA (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994: 14).

The Provisional IRA's willingness to enter into negotiations also resulted from a confluence of factors. Since Gerry Adams and the other members of the northern leadership contingent (Tom Hartley, Danny Morrison, Mitchel McLaughlin) have risen to power in the Republican movement, Republican ideology has shifted from the primacy of the armed struggle to an increased focus on political process. According to Gerry Adams, "armed struggle itself is a tactic and one cannot shoot or bomb an independent Ireland into existence.... The tactic of armed struggle is of primary importance because it provides a vital cutting edge. Without it, the issue of Ireland would not even be an issue." "At the same time," Adams continues, "there is a realization in Republican circles that armed struggle on its own is inadequate and that non-armed forms of political struggle are at least as important" (1995: 63). This political refocus has led to a certain type of constitutionalization. "In the past, the republican movement was a separatist movement with radical tendencies. In its current embodiment, the radical tendency is for the first time in control..." (Adams 1995: 163). Additionally, rumors that the US would increase its aid package to Northern Ireland from \$19.6 million to \$120-200 million in order to restore the infrastructure and boost employment may have encouraged the Republican ceasefire (Adams 1995: 51).

In addition to the political and economic reasons for the ceasefire, recognition of a military stalemate also led to the ceasefire. British policy since the late 1970's has assumed that PIRA cannot be defeated militarily (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994: 12). Likewise, PIRA is aware that they will never be able to amass enough military force to compel Britain to withdraw. Belligerent recognition that the war is stalemated and is likely to remain so (or that one party has decisively more power than the other) is, according to Smith, the first precondition for a cease-fire. Belligerents must also believe, as the British did, that this power balance is unlikely to

shift either in their favor through military action, or against them through a cease-fire (Smith 1995: 8).

In Northern Ireland, the acknowledgment of a military stalemate made political resolution possible. Because a military victory was impossible, the solution to the problem had to be a political one. The ceasefire in Northern Ireland did not result from defeat or military necessity.<sup>14</sup> Rather, the cease-fire process was driven by an acknowledgment that the war was unwinnable.

### Talking it Out

The current cease-fire and talks about the future of Northern Ireland are the result of a long process of political reevaluation by Sinn Féin. Since 1987, Sinn Féin has been developing a strategy for peace, beginning with a discussion paper called *A Scenario for Peace* (Sinn Féin 1991). In 1990, Sinn Féin re-established contact with the British government through secret diplomatic channels which had been used extensively during the prior cease-fires and 1981 hungerstrike. In 1992, Sinn Féin circulated *Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland*, a discussion paper that explicated their view of what was needed in order for peaceful resolution (Sinn Féin 1994a).<sup>15</sup>

Attempts to develop a joint nationalist strategy led to talks between Adams and John Hume the leader of the Social and Democratic Labour Party, the largest constitutional nationalist party in Northern Ireland. In April 1993, Hume and Adams issued a joint statement, declaring the right of "the Irish people as a whole... to national self-determination" (Hume and Adams 1993). The Hume-Adams initiative, which was eventually endorsed by the Irish government, was the snowball that launched the peace avalanche.

The on-going secret talks between British government and Sinn Féin were made public in November 1993. Following a series of rumors and leaks, Sir Patrick Mayhew made an announcement in Parliament. Mayhew claimed that PIRA had initiated the dialogue with this message allegedly sent by Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féin's Vice President:

The conflict is over but we need your advice on how to bring it to a close. We wish to have an unannounced cease-fire in order to hold dialogue leading to peace. We cannot announce such a move as it will lead to confusion for the volunteers because press will misinterpret it as a surrender. We cannot meet Secretary of State's public renunciation of violence, but it would be given privately as long as we were sure that we were not being tricked (Great Britain 1993).

This announcement caused public uproar in the Republican community, Parliament and the British press. Because the British government had phrased the announcement in such a way that it appeared that Sinn Féin was the initiating party, Sinn Féin nearly backed out of any negotiations with the British. According to Adams, the admission by Mayhew "breach[ed] the confidentiality which we had at all times respected and ... misrepresent[ed] the content of our exchanges. The bad faith and double dealing involved clearly presented us with serious difficulties in assessing the sincerity of the British government..." (Adams 1995: 205). As the message makes clear, PIRA was unwilling to be seen by its membership as the party who had asked for peace.<sup>16</sup>

In 1993 the Joint Declaration on Northern Ireland ("The Downing Street Declaration") was signed by British and Irish governments. The Declaration articulated principles of negotiation and

framed the broad issues crucial for a negotiated settlement. The Declaration offered concessions to both Unionists and Nationalists (McKittrick 1994: 321):

The British government agrees that it is for the people of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, north and south, to bring about a United Ireland, if that is their wish (Great Britain and Republic of Ireland 1993).

This statement pleased Unionists by including the concept of consent. For Unionists “consent” (often referred to as “the Unionist veto”) meant that political or constitutional status of Northern Ireland will not be altered without their agreement.

Republicans had a mixed response to the Declaration. The inclusion of the concept of self-determination, which is central to the ideology of Republicanism, reassured some Republicans. Furthermore, the Joint Declaration attempted to bring Sinn Féin, historically marginalized in preference to the more moderate SDLP, into the constitutional talks. Unfortunately, the Declaration also specified that Sinn Féin would be welcomed at the negotiating table only after renouncing violence. According to Martin McGuinness, the declaration was “worthless” (Smith 1995: 206).

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Declaration for Republicans was the British government’s declaration that it had no “selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland.” This statement marked a fundamental shift in British policy toward Northern Ireland. Britain was apparently backing down from its promise to the Unionists to keep Ulster British. The abdication of Britain from any political responsibility for Northern Ireland prompted conservative critics of the Declaration to argue that, “Crucially, the Declaration puts the future of Ulster in an exclusively Irish – and not British – context” (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994: 12).

After the Provisional IRA Army Council voted not to reject the document outright (Coogan 1994: 496), Sinn Féin asked the British government for clarification of the Joint Declaration. In response to a written question posed by Sinn Féin, the British representative stated: “[We] accept the validity of all electoral mandates, including that of Sinn Féin...” (Dunnigan 1995: 46). Furthermore, the British stated that any agreement will be based on “full respect for the rights and identities of both traditions in Ireland” (Dunnigan 1995: 46). In effect, the Declaration opened the constitutional status of Northern Ireland (including the Government of Ireland Act) to discussion, confirmed that no party had veto power over policy in the North, and recognized Sinn Féin's mandate (Dunnigan 1995: 46).

Political recognition by the U.S., which had long had a “special relationship” with Britain, also indicated to Republicans that British intentions were good. As Pillar (1983: 79) points out, “[a]ction by a nonbelligerent party provides an even better opportunity [to begin negotiations]. A suitable proposal by a third party eliminates the need for either belligerent to move first in offering negotiations.” Although previous U.S. administrations had denied Gerry Adams admission to the United States, in January 1994, President Bill Clinton effectively opened diplomatic relations with Sinn Féin by granting Gerry Adams a visa to enter the U.S.

PIRA continued to mount attacks in the months leading up to their declaration of a cease-fire.<sup>17</sup> In continuing to attack British targets, the Provisional IRA was sending a signal that it was not capitulating out of weakness. In order to avoid the stigma of weakness attached to peace offers,



belligerents may attempt to demonstrate strength and determination by escalating violence directly prior to or at the beginning of a peace conference. The purpose is "to demonstrate through armed action that one's diplomatic initiatives do not indicate a weakening of the will" (Pillar 1983:187).

The Provisional IRA finally declared a cease-fire on August 31, 1994 in a brief, four-paragraph statement. It began:

Recognizing the potential of the current situation and in order to enhance the democratic peace process and underline our definitive commitment to its success, the leadership of Óglaigh na hÉireann [Youth of Ireland in Irish] have decided that as of midnight Wednesday, August 31, there will be a complete cessation of military operations. All our units have been instructed accordingly (Provisional Irish Republican Army 1994).

After commending the sacrifices of Republican volunteers, the statement affirmed that "[w]e believe that an opportunity to create a just and lasting settlement has been created." After the declaration of the cease-fire, Gerry Adams declared that "[t]he onus is on the British government, the onus is on (Prime Minister) John Major to seize this moment" (Kiernan 1994: 1). For the Provisional IRA, this cease-fire was conditional and would be honored only as long as progress was being made towards the right to self-determination asserted in the Joint Declaration.

While moderate Loyalists were optimistic about the cease-fire, hard-liners saw the cease-fire as a threat to their existence. As Pillar (1983:162) points out: "Solutions which leave open the possibility that the enemy will eventually take power are not highly valued because they pose a risk not only to one's political goals but even to one's life." The Ulster Freedom Fighters called the cease-fire a "recipe for civil war" (Kiernan 1994: 1). Belfast graffiti after the PIRA cease-fire summed up the Loyalist position: "Better to die on your feet than live on your knees in a united Ireland."

On October 13, 1994, six weeks after PIRA declared a cease-fire, the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Freedom Fighters, also declared a cease-fire.<sup>18</sup> Loyalist paramilitaries declared a cease-fire only after assurances were given about Northern Ireland's constitutional position as part of the United Kingdom. The Loyalist statement, read by Gusty Spence, the former leader of the UVF convicted of murdering a Catholic man in 1968, said: "The permanence of our cease-fire will be completely dependent upon the continued cessation of all nationalist republican violence. The sole responsibility for a return to war lies with them" (UPI Newswire 1994).<sup>19</sup>

Following the ceasefire, British officials held preliminary talks with Sinn Féin in December of 1994. In early 1995, the British and Irish governments published the Framework Document, outlining recommendations for a political settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland (Great Britain and Republic of Ireland 1995). The Framework Document satisfied neither Republicans (as it contained provisions for the Unionist consent) nor Unionists (as it accorded too much power to Dublin). The Framework Document was quickly shelved.

Disarmament was the biggest barrier in the peace process following the ceasefires. The British government and the Unionists demanded that all-party talks must be preceded by a permanent cease-fire and decommissioning of weapons. The Provisional IRA refused to renounce violence or to decommission their weapons. An independent disarmament commission chaired by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell was established by the Republic of Ireland, which is accorded

a consultative role in the governance of Northern Ireland under the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Mitchell commission recommended in a report released on January 24, 1996 that the British government drop its demand that the Provisional IRA disarm before Sinn Féin be allowed to take part in the peace talks. The report did suggest that Sinn Féin should be required to declare the ceasefire permanent and to agree to disarmament simultaneously with talks (Editors 1996a: A5).

The British Prime Minister rejected the commission's proposal, insisting instead on elections to confirm the strength of the political parties' respective mandates. All-party talks would take place after special elections to choose delegates to the all-party talks. Essentially, the British demanded the creation of an internal political assembly in Northern Ireland as the precursor to political negotiations (Editors 1996b: A5). Both the Republican community in Northern Ireland and the Irish government saw the creation of an internal political assembly as kow-towing to the political demands of the Ulster Unionists. An internal political assembly also negated what Republicans saw as the "all-Ireland" aspect of the conflict. The British Prime Minister was also criticized for prioritizing the coming election and retaining the voting power of the Ulster Unionist Party in the British parliament.

Following the British government's demand for a political assembly and the rejection of the Mitchell Commission's proposal, on February 9, 1996 PIRA issued a statement declaring that a resumption of the "armed struggle" was taking place, citing its frustration with the lack of movement on political talks. According to the statement: "The cessation presented an historic challenge for everyone and the IRA commends the leaderships of nationalist Ireland at home and abroad. They rose to the challenge. The British Prime Minister did not" (Provisional Irish Republican Army 1996: paragraph 4). Later that day, the Provisional IRA detonated a 1,500-pound fertilizer bomb at Canary Wharf in east London, killing two people and injuring hundreds.

Despite the end of the ceasefire, the British government carried on with its pre-Canary Wharf Plan. Elections took place on May 30, 1996 and seated a one hundred ten member forum, to "advise" teams engaged in promised multi-party negotiations.<sup>20</sup> Following the election, multi-party talks began on June 10. Sinn Féin was barred from the talks on the grounds that the Provisional IRA had not resumed its cease-fire. Following Sinn Féin's exclusion, the Provisional IRA exploded a van bomb in downtown Manchester on June 15th.

Despite Sinn Féin's exclusion from the talks, negotiations for a political settlement continued. On 1 May 1997 the Labour Party were elected to power in British General Election. Tony Blair, then leader of the Labour Party became Prime Minister while Marjorie (Mo) Mowlam was appointed as Secretary of State of Northern Ireland. The new Labour Government made a number of overtures to Sinn Féin, expressing a desire to include them in talks if the Provisional IRA would renew the ceasefire. According to a statement of the Provisional IRA, "having assessed the current political situation, the leadership of the Oglai na hÉireann are announcing a complete cessation of military operations from 12 midday on Sunday 20 July, 1997" (Provisional Irish Republican Army 1997: paragraph 4). After eschewing all paramilitary activity for six weeks, Sinn Féin signed the Mitchell Principles (agreeing to a democratic, non-violent political resolution) and was admitted into the talks.

In January of 1998, Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) was expelled from the talks on the grounds that the paramilitary group with which it is associated, the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) (a.k.a. the Ulster Defence Association), had been involved in the recent murders of at least three

Catholics. The British and Irish governments indicated that the UDP could re-enter the talks process if the UFF maintained its renewed ceasefire. On February 20, 1998 Sinn Féin was expelled from the multi-party talks on the grounds that PIRA had been involved in the recent deaths of two men. Shortly after the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) rejoined the multi-party talks following the its suspension, Sinn Féin (SF) rejoined the multi-party talks in mid-March 1998.

The Good Friday Agreement was reached on April 10, 1998 (Great Britain 1998). Under the terms of the Agreement, a new Northern Ireland Assembly would be elected by proportional representation, with executive and legislative powers and safeguards to ensure its operation on the basis of cross-community support.<sup>21</sup> In terms of security matters, the Agreement essentially creates a *quid pro quo*: if the Republicans (and other parties) will declare a complete and unequivocal ceasefire, stop all procurement of weapons, dismantle paramilitary structures actively directing and promoting violence, cooperate fully with the Independent Commission on decommissioning, and abjure from using other organizations as proxies for violence, the British government will de-escalate security, withdraw troops, release paramilitary prisoners, and amend the legal system. The Good Friday Agreement sets a two-year target for full decommissioning of paramilitary arms and explosives. It provides two possible methods of decommissioning: the provision of information to the Commission, leading to the collection and destruction of arms; and the destruction of arms by those who are in possession of them.

While the British Government has taken a number of steps that indicate their intention to follow through with the letter of the Good Friday Agreement, Republicans have taken only very small steps towards decommissioning. The British have de-escalated security by ending routine military patrolling in many parts of Northern Ireland, by reducing the overall troop level to its lowest at any time since the Provisional IRA's first ceasefire in August 1994, and by demolishing the British Army's Fort Whiterock base in Belfast in the near future. The British government has also instituted prisoner release under the Northern Ireland Sentences Act that came into force at the end of July 1998. This Act provides for the early release of over four hundred prisoners in Northern Ireland over the next two years in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement.<sup>22</sup> The sole action of the Republican movement thus far has been the appointment on 2 September 1998 of Martin McGuinness as Sinn Féin's representative to the International Commission on Decommissioning.

### **Stumbling Blocks in the Ceasefire Process**

From this cursory review of the events during the cease-fire process, the unwillingness of the Provisional IRA to decommission their weapons in light of the British *quid pro quo* de-escalation of security measures and withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland seems like pure folly. Haven't the British clearly shown that they are eager to evacuate Northern Ireland? Similarly, Sinn Féin's overwhelming mistrust of British intentions, despite good-faith assurances offered by the British and the U.S. governments appears incomprehensible. Surely, the British are playing fair? It is also hard to understand Sinn Féin's inability to negotiate on behalf of the Provisional IRA. How can Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA negotiate a truce when they can't control their own members? The rise of hard-line paramilitary splinter groups like the Real IRA is also perplexing. Does the existence of such groups belie the Republicans' claim that they desire peace? The answer to the last question goes straight to the heart of issues central to Republican political identity.

*Republican suspicions of “perfidious Albion”*

The unwillingness of the Republican movement to extend any trust to the British government can be explained by sketching briefly the history of IRA ceasefires. The present ceasefire is the most recent in a long series. In addition to the three-day Christmas truces declared annually since 1990, bilateral cease-fires occurred in 1972 and 1974-5. During the 1981 hungerstrike, PIRA declared a cease-fire so that the deaths of the hungerstrikers would not be overshadowed by other military actions. Most recently, PIRA had called a brief halt to hostilities in April 1993.

From a Republican perspective, the British were responsible for breaking these ceasefires. For example, the 1972 cease-fire was broken when the British Army and UDA attacked civilians in West Belfast (MacStiofain 1975: 260). Loyalist violence directed against the Nationalist community drew PIRA into armed engagement. According to one PIRA Army Council member, "If our units had been ordered to stand aside, ...the IRA would have lost the defense initiative and all credibility with the people" (MacStiofain 1975: 289).

The settlement negotiations following these ceasefires all involved the same basic Republican demands: public recognition of the right of the Irish people to decide the future of Ireland, a declaration of intention to withdraw British troops, and the grant of a general amnesty for political prisoners (Finn 1991: 80). Not surprisingly, the British were unwilling to grant the IRA's demands in 1972 or 1974-5 (Wichert 1991: 171). In the 1970's, the British Army had no intention of withdrawing, believing that the war could be won on the ground. The expectation of eventual victory almost certainly inhibited the British desire for cease-fire (Smith 1995: 21).

A major factor underlying Republican resistance to the declaration of a permanent cease-fire was their perception of Britain as perfidious and double-dealing. PIRA's experiences with these prior cease-fires led them to suspect that the British would use the current cease-fire as an opportunity to regroup and develop new strategies. According to Adams (1995:103),

the British government has also used bilateral truces with the IRA to gain the upper hand, to cause confusion in republican ranks and to introduce new strategies. It has never engaged in a truce with the serious intention of considering or conceding the republican demands. In particular, the lengthy bilateral truce of 1974-5 was used to push ahead with the 'Ulsterisation/ 'normalisation/ 'criminalisation' policy.

The Provisional IRA, like many belligerents considering ceasefires, were concerned that a ceasefire would put them in a worse position and the British in a better position if fighting resumed (Smith 1995:16).

It is not unusual for belligerents to take advantage of cease-fires to regroup and rearm. In international law, this is generally viewed as a legitimate practice.<sup>23</sup> According to Oppenheim (1952: 551), "belligerents during an armistice may, outside the line where the forces face each other, do everything and anything they like regarding defence and preparation of offence..." A ceasefire, in this sense, allows for a continuation of war by other means (Seabury 1970: 102). Since wars are *legally* ended only by formal peace treaties, this continuation of war by other means is, in a sense, legitimate (Smith 1995:17). Ceasefires "may simply fix the conditions under which the fighting will be resumed, at a later date, and with a new intensity" (Bailey 1982: 3).

Having experienced the British "continuation of the war" under the guise of prior cease-fires, the Republican movement was wary of British intentions in the 1990s no matter how eloquent the assurances. Martin McGuinness, who negotiated the 1972 truce and was instrumental in the most recent cease-fire, resolved after the 1972 breach that "from [then] on there could be no question of an end to the violence until the ink on the treaty of withdrawal was dry" (Bishop and Mallie 1987: 230).

### *Permanence*

Although the Provisional IRA declared a "complete cessation of military operations," they did not affirm that it would be permanent. The Downing Street Declaration, which spelled out terms for peace talks, allowed Sinn Féin to join the negotiations three months after PIRA called a "permanent" end to violence. Following the announcement of the cease-fire, Major requested an assurance that it was, indeed, permanent. Neither Adams nor deputy Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness were willing to describe the cease-fire as "permanent." "I think you have to take the statement at face value," according to McGuinness (Kiernan 1994: 1).

A number of cultural and historical factors underlie PIRA's unwillingness to declare a "permanent" cease-fire. First, from the perspective of Sinn Féin, asking PIRA to declare a permanent cease-fire before the withdrawal of British troops would place all the military obligations on PIRA.<sup>24</sup> Declaring a permanent ceasefire would give the British exactly what they had long wished for (a de-clawed and powerless Provisional IRA), while the British themselves remained fully armed. Following the Loyalist cease-fire, Gerry Adams pointed out that "[t]he British government is now the only agency with armed forces under its control which has not ceased its military activity" (U.P.I. newswire 1994). By declaring a permanent ceasefire, the Republican movement would receive nothing but further assurances.

The second factor militating against declaring a permanent ceasefire concerns the basic political philosophy of the Republican movement. The Republican philosophy of armed struggle is based on the notion that only force will compel Britain to leave Ireland. There is the implication that since Britain has not withdrawn its troops, "by giving up force ... blood has been shed in vain" (Dunnigan and Martel 1987: 41). Dunnigan and Martel (1987: 41) refer to this problem as "entrapment:" belligerents locked into a confrontation believe that they have invested too much labor in establishing an international support network, the acquiring and hiding of arms shipments, organizing the required military training and political education of its members. PIRA's cease-fire announcement (Provisional Irish Republican Army 1994) attempted to deal with the problem of entrapment by commending the volunteers who had died in the cause of Irish freedom: "We remember all those who have died for Irish freedom and we reiterate our commitment to our republican objectives."

On October 22, Prime Minister John Major announced that he would accept the current cease-fire and that the ceasefire now being observed by both sides is "intended to be permanent." As Pillar (1983: 91) points out, "The fundamental diplomatic act in an international negotiation is a change in one's offer — a change in what a negotiator says he will accept as an agreement." Apparently in response to pressure from Reynolds and American leaders, Major accepted the terms of the ceasefire. According to Major: "I am now prepared to make a working assumption that the cease-fire is intended to be permanent.... If we can continue reasonably to assume that Sinn Féin is establishing a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods, if the IRA continues to show that it has

ended terrorism, then we shall be ready to convene exploratory talks before this year is out" (Tuohy 1994b: A1). Major said the Provisional IRA's adherence to the cease-fire was "more compelling than their words" (Tuohy 1994b: A1).

### *The Military Structure of the Provisional Irish Republican Army*

Sinn Féin's inability to negotiate or speak on behalf of the Provisional IRA remains a major puzzle of the peace process in Northern Ireland. Yet the inability of Sinn Féin to exercise control over the Army Council is a result of the basic structure of the organization. While many present leaders of Sinn Féin are former members of the Army Council (the governing body of the Provisional IRA) Sinn Féin does not control the Army Council. The "armilite and the ballot box" strategy of PIRA, which accords equal primacy to electoral politics and military action, must satisfy the Army Council or risk splitting the movement. For example, Sinn Féin requested clarification by the British government of the Downing Street Declaration before they would bring the proposal to the Army Council (Wichert 1991: 121). Without the Army Council's full support for the cease-fire, Sinn Féin could not implement it. According to Adams (1995: 221): "It was up to the IRA to hold their own consultations and come to their own decision. I would have respected whatever decision they took."

The Army Council's inability to exercise total control over militant factions within the Provisional IRA also results from the organizational structure. The Provisional IRA is organized into active service units (ASUs). Organizationally, ASUs are a cell structure rather than a traditional military hierarchy. While this structure protects PIRA from infiltration and prevents any one person from knowing too much, it also limits the control that the Army Council actually has over the members.<sup>25</sup>

This organizational structure has implications for the cease-fire negotiation process since "at a pure logistical level, a belligerent may actually be unable to cease fire because it cannot control the military forces which purport to fight for it" (Smith 1995: 123). In the case of the Provisional IRA, a number of infringements since the cease-fire point to the unauthorized use of violence by volunteers who are dissatisfied with the negotiation strategy. During an armed robbery of a post office in Newry on November 11, 1994, a postal worker named Frank Kerr was killed (Melaugh 1994). After denying that it has authorized any use of weapons since the cease-fire, PIRA acknowledged ten days later that its members were responsible, although the robbery had not been "sanctioned" by PIRA leaders.

### *Republican Factionalism*

Perhaps one of the most serious stumbling blocks to the ceasefire is the resistance to political settlement within the Republican movement itself. In many paramilitary organizations, hard-line military factions are likely to be skeptical about the political process, and to view negotiation as capitulation. At the Letterkenny Conference, for example, eight-hundred party delegates of Sinn Féin dismissed the Downing Street Declaration as inadequate and tilted too much in favor of the Ulster Unionists. Even at that time, military factions within PIRA saw the ceasefire declaration as a betrayal of the Republican movement. Ruairi O'Bradaigh, IRA chief during the 1960s, told the Belfast Telegraph that the leadership has been "constitutionalized," meaning that political process

has replaced armed struggle to an unacceptable degree. But in the nature of the long struggle, he said, another group would rise up to take its place (Tuohy 1994b: A1).

Another group did, in fact, rise up to take the place of PIRA. On 15 August, 1998 the Real IRA (RIRA) came to the attention of the general public when it detonated a car bomb in Omagh, Northern Ireland killing twenty-eight civilians and injuring more than two-hundred people. The RIRA is a "fundamentalist" Republican group that objected to the 1997 PIRA ceasefire and to the peace process. Despite the popular Republican support of the of the Good Friday Agreement, RIRA preferred to continue the armed struggle. RIRA split following a convention of senior PIRA figures at Gweedore, County Donegal, in October 1997. At this meeting, PIRA's Quarter Master General who was in charge of weapons, ammunition and explosives, resigned from the PIRA Executive.<sup>26</sup>

While Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA retained the loyalty of the majority of Republicans, not all were satisfied with the northern leadership and their plan for peace. A number of senior PIRA figures, including some members of the General Headquarters Staff, which comes immediately below the Army Council in the PIRA chain of command, abandoned PIRA in favor of this splinter group. RIRA absorbed elements of the PIRA's Southern Command and recruited some of PIRA's top bomb-makers giving them the capability to make home-made explosives, to prepare bombs and to assemble a range of mortars. In addition to certain members of the Dublin Brigade, an entire PIRA unit in Tipperary is said to have gone over to RIRA with its arms.<sup>27</sup>

### *Decommissioning of Weapons*

The single major stumbling block in the ceasefire negotiations has been the issue of decommissioning of the Provisional IRA's arsenal. The British government has consistently insisted on the decommissioning of the weapons before all-party peace talks. Michael Ancram, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, stated that "peace without fundamental solutions is not a permanent peace. So we ask those with arms, 'If you are committed to peace permanently, why do you need a vast arsenal?'" (Montalbano 1995: A1). Loyalists have also consistently refused to negotiate with PIRA without prior weapons decommissioning. According to Michael Empey, a member of the Ulster Unionists: "Laying down arms is a test that the IRA is truly committed to peace. As long as they can turn on terror, we are not playing on a level field" (Montalbano 1995: A1).

Despite demands from all sides, the Provisional IRA has consistently refused to decommission its weapons. For the Provisional IRA, decommissioning amounted to a form of military surrender that it was unprepared to undertake (Editors 1996c: A14). According to Gerry Adams, "The British government is not simply interested in a gesture. It is, in reality, demanding the start of a surrender process as a precondition to all-party talks" (Bew and Gillespie 1996: 105).

PIRA's unwillingness to decommission weapons is related not only to the armed struggle against the British Army, but to the defensive role which weapons have played in nationalist communities. According to Gerry Adams (1995: 50), "the circumstances which shaped the recent support for the IRA are, above all, the experience of the barricade days from 1969-1972." During the Loyalists rioting in Belfast in August of 1969, the IRA (which had been defunct) rearmed and reorganized in order to defend the community from attack (deBaroid 1990). The current expectation that PIRA will abandon its weapons runs counter to the fundamental worldview of Republicans -- that their communities are besieged by hostile British and Loyalist forces and that the only defense they can expect is what they themselves provide.

Following the approval of the Good Friday Agreement, the Provisional IRA issued a statement refusing to give up any of its weapons. "Let us make it clear that there will be no decommissioning by the IRA. This issue, as with any other matter affecting the IRA, its functions and objectives, is a matter only for the IRA, to be decided upon and pronounced upon by us" (Provisional IRA 1998). The statement described the Northern Ireland peace deal as significant, but said it fell short of "presenting a solid basis for a lasting settlement." "The leadership of Óglaigh na hÉireann have considered carefully the Good Friday document," the statement begins. "It remains our position that a durable peace settlement demands the end of British rule in Ireland and the exercise of the right of the people of Ireland to national self-determination" (Provisional IRA 1998).

### *Articles 2 and 3*

Another stumbling block to an enduring peace settlement was the dual claim of the Republic and Ireland and Great Britain to the territory of Northern Ireland. The modification of the Irish Constitution became the cause of a deadlock in drafting of a framework document for talks. While this issue does not involve the Provisional IRA directly, it is bound up with the political history of Ireland and with concepts of cultural and national sovereignty. The Irish Constitution and the British Government of Ireland Act both lay claim to the territorial sovereignty of Northern Ireland. Article 2 of the Irish Constitution, declares that "the national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas." The phrase "national territory" implicitly makes a claim that the territory of Northern Ireland belongs to the Republic of Ireland. Article 3 states that "pending the re-integration of the national territory" the laws enacted by Parliament shall pertain to Northern Ireland. Article 3 effectively claims the right to exercise legal jurisdiction over the whole island. In *McGimpsey v. Ireland*, the Irish Supreme Court declined to "abandon [...] the claim to the re-integration of national territory," essentially reaffirming Irish territorial claims to Northern Ireland.<sup>28</sup>

Negotiating these contradictory claims to sovereignty has been rather thorny. Earlier in the talks process, the British government proposed that if the Irish Government would amend the territorial claims in Article 2 and Article 3, the British government was willing to modify the terms of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act (and the subsequent 1973 Amendment). Nobody was happy with this arrangement. Although the original wording of Articles 2 and 3 was perceived as a threat by Unionists who do not consider themselves to be part of the Irish nation, the modification of the Government of Ireland Act (1920) was even worse. Because the wording excludes Unionists, it is totally counter productive to the very objective that the articles purportedly sought to advance (Fitzgerald 1994). Alteration of Articles 2 and 3 was seen as a compromise by Irish nationalists. By renouncing the claim over the territory of Northern Ireland, the partition of Ireland was legitimated. For Sinn Féin, the revocation of Articles 2 and 3 would "have the effect of leaving Britain's assertion of, and claim to, sovereignty over six Irish counties uncontested, while withdrawing Ireland's rightful claim to sovereignty" (Adams 1995: 206).

The Good Friday Agreement seems to have provided some solution. Under the Agreement, the Irish Constitution will be amended, abandoning the Republic's territorial claim on Northern Ireland and offering formal recognition that Northern Ireland is legitimately part of the United Kingdom. This will please the British government and assure the Unionists that they will not become "Irish" without their consent. The British Government agreed to repeal the 1920



Government of Ireland Act, thereby disavowing their sovereignty claim, and to introduce legislation to create a united Ireland should that become the wish of a majority in Northern Ireland. This arrangement will please Nationalists by removing Britain's claim upon Irish soil and mollify the Unionists by guaranteeing Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom unless a majority want to change that status. Additionally, this arrangement will probably meet with international approval; Adrian Guelke (1988) argues that islands are perceived by the international community as integral political units.

### *Republican Constitutional Issues*

The appeal of a group like RIRA may, from the outside, seem incomprehensible. They engaged without apology in the slaughter of civilians and seemed determined to destroy all the gains made during the ceasefire process. Yet, RIRA did appeal to many Republicans. To Republicans, the appeal of the Real IRA was not based on a gruesome appreciation of the atrocities committed by gung-ho blood-crazed Provo gunmen. Rather, the Real IRA touched a nerve in the Republican body politic. The Real IRA claimed that they, in fact, were the "real" IRA. They claimed that their historical mandate and political legitimacy were derived from the 1919 Dail. In their view, by participating in the political process and by giving up the armed struggle, the Provisional IRA had betrayed the fundamental values of the Republican movement.

Historically, disputes over political legitimacy and who represents the "authentic" spirit of Republicanism have caused significant splits in the Republican movement. All of these splits resulted in considerable bloodshed and were (for Republicans) presumably worth fighting for. Perhaps the most well known split in the movement is that which resulted in the Irish Civil War, 1921-1923. Similarly, disagreements over participation in the political process led to the 1970 division of the organization into the Official and Provisional IRA. The Provisional IRA rejected any political recognition of either Stormont, Dublin, or Westminster parliaments and thereby became the inheritor of the armed struggle tradition (Wichert 1991:121). Although it never came to pass, an impending feud between the Provisional IRA and RIRA did not seem unlikely following the RIRA bomb in Omagh.<sup>29</sup>

Disputes concerning the legitimacy of political mandate lie at the heart of the secret culture of Republicanism. The appeal of the Real IRA, the refusal to give up weapons before "the ink on the treaty was dry," the factionalism and militarism of the Republican movement, and the relationship between Sinn Féin and PIRA are all informed by the strange history of Republican constitutionalism.

At the beginning of the 1916 uprising against the British occupation of Ireland, the leaders of the rebellion authored a Proclamation of the Irish Republic. This was essentially an aspirational, constitutional charter document, as the actual Republic of Ireland only came into being following the Anglo-Irish War. As part of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, a parliament of the Irish Republic, known as the Dail Eireann, was established. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret military organization, was renamed by the Dail to the IRA. They took oaths to "support and defend the Irish Republic and the Government of the Irish Republic, which is Dail Eireann, against all enemies, foreign and domestic." They then entered into a war of independence against the British Government. While the IRA won freedom for the southern twenty-six counties of Ireland, the victory was incomplete.

In December 1921, the Dail Eireann signed a treaty with England which gave them the status as a nation-state within the dominion of the British Empire and which ended the Anglo-Irish War. Northern Ireland was then partitioned from the rest of the island and became a British protectorate. Sinn Féin split into two factions in the Dail: those favoring the Treaty, and those opposed. In 1922, when the Dail accepted the Treaty, the IRA withdrew its allegiance and fell back on its own convention for authority (Cronin 1980: 132). The Anti-Treaty faction called themselves Republicans, believing that the Anglo-Irish War had been fought in order to found an independent republic, outside of any political influence of England. The Irish Free State came into existence in 1922, and the Republican anti-Treaty forces began a guerrilla war against it, known as the Irish Civil War.<sup>30</sup> The anti-Treaty forces or Republicans refused to participate in any way in the political process and vowed to continue the armed struggle against the British occupation of Ireland.

These historical facts have informed Republican political thinking for over seventy years, and still influence the daily functioning of the organization. As the direct organizational descendant of the anti-Treaty Republicans, PIRA claims a historical mandate as the legitimate government of the Irish Republic.<sup>31</sup> No other political organization holds this authority — it is the prerogative of the Army Council itself. Every Republican owes allegiance to the Army Council, of which Sinn Féin is merely the proxy. The training manual of the Provisionals, *The Green Book*, states that "The leadership of the IRA is the lawful government of the Irish Republic" (Clarke 1987: 2).<sup>32</sup> Essentially, PIRA views itself as the legal successor of the Second Dail, and therefore as the legitimate government of the Irish Republic (Cronin 1980: 208).<sup>33</sup> Sinn Féin, therefore, has no power of its own, but can only act under the political will of the Provisional IRA.<sup>34</sup>

Historically, the Provisional IRA and Sinn Féin have refused any political participation in British institutions, as they see the British government in Northern Ireland as illegitimate. As a force of occupation, the British government lacks any political mandate. Participation, therefore, of Republicans would legitimize an unacceptable political situation. But this view seems to be changing slowly. On 10 May 1998 Sinn Féin decided, at a second Ard Fheis in Dublin, to support the Belfast Agreement. Sinn Féin's decision was made possible, in part, by a change in the IRA's constitution allowing Sinn Féin to take up seats in the new Northern Ireland Assembly. Most speakers at the Ard Fheis emphasized that Sinn Féin's acceptance of the Belfast Agreement was no more than a tactical "extension of the armed struggle." The Provisional IRA would retain its arms and (as Gerry Kelly put it) the decision to participate in a Northern Ireland Assembly was taken in the knowledge that "in six months we can revisit it" (British Information Service 1998). These statements go far in explaining Republican willingness to engage in political process -- if that participation can be couched as "tactical" or "provisional" then it does not confer unearned legitimacy on the British political machine.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to show how the cultural values that helped sustain the war also had a direct impact on the cease-fire process. PIRA's refusal to decommission weapons or to declare a "permanent" cease-fire as a precondition to entering into negotiations reflects not only a utilitarian strategic decision but also reflects a set of cultural values. In a culture that reveres military competence and sees the Anglo-Irish war as historical proof of the efficacy of arms, the

decommissioning of weapons threatens to negate the foundation upon which Irish Republican culture is based. In light of these values and attitudes, what is the prospect for permanent peace?

PIRA appears willing to bargain during negotiations, to accept a staged withdrawal of British troops and to accept the principle of democratic consent to political change. Yet this flexibility only extends so far. Because they are not simply an organization but the military expression of a complex culture, PIRA will not back down on certain issues. In the interests of self-protection and cultural militarism, PIRA will probably resist decommissioning of weapons unless the British government withdraws troops. Their unwillingness to declare a permanent ceasefire indicates that the ceasefire is a tactic in much the same way that armed struggle was a tactic. If they fail to get what they seek through negotiations, they may begin the military campaign again. On the other hand, after the experience of peace for such an extended period, their support base in the Republican community may shrink. Peace, like war, may become an entrenched condition.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ceasefires represent an indeterminate state between peace and war. The difficulty in defining the stages of transition between peace and war is reflected in disagreements within international law regarding the definition of "ceasefire." The term was used neither in the Hague Convention (1907), nor in any major works on international law of armed conflict, such as Greenspan (1959) or Schwarzenberger (1968). Only with the creation of the United Nations was the term "ceasefire" distinguished from "truce" or "armistice" (Mohn 1950). Truce can be distinguished from ceasefire in that a truce involves stabilization or strengthening of a ceasefire. Armistice can also be distinguished from ceasefire since it may only be local in character. For the purpose of this paper, Smith's (1995: 266) definition has been adopted: "A cease-fire is an implemented agreement between belligerents (either explicit or implicit), involving all or the greater part of their military forces to, at a minimum, abjure the use of violent force with regard to each other, for a period of time (not necessarily specified) regardless of the intention for doing so, and regardless of the eventual outcome of such agreement."

<sup>2</sup> Generally, "Republicans" tend to be Catholic and are sometimes mistakenly referred to as such. "Loyalists," though the name denotes a political view that is not dependent on religious affiliation, are often called Protestants. "Unionists" seek to maintain political unity with Great Britain.

<sup>3</sup> The material gain theory, for example Gordon (1987), seems particularly unlikely considering the poverty of Northern Ireland. The British government derived no obvious economic benefit from its ties with Northern Ireland, although it is likely there were certain military, strategic and political benefits. The soldiers who patrolled West Belfast learned invaluable tactical lessons; operations during the Falklands War benefited from the training ground of Northern Ireland. In light of the political neutrality of the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland also provided an invaluable strategic position for NATO air and sea operations in the North Atlantic during the Cold War (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies 1994). Similarly, the Republican community derived no material benefits from the war that would encourage its continuation. According to Gerry Adams (1995:65): "If the life of an IRA volunteer was a career, one might be able to talk about people who wanted to keep the war going rather than lose their livelihoods, but there is not even that mercenary element."

<sup>4</sup> Commentators such as Byrne and Carter (1996) and Byrne (1995) have argued that we need to take note of the role of ethnic identity in the competing attachment of two opposing ethnic communities to the same territory. The point of this paper is somewhat different: that cultures contain internal mechanisms or social values that may, under the right circumstances, serve to sustain or produce conflict.

<sup>5</sup> Republicanism is just one subtype of nationalism in Northern Ireland. The Social Democratic Labor Party (SDLP), the largest nationalist group in Northern Ireland, has views that are dissimilar to those of Republicans. While Republicans see British occupation as the bar to unification, leftist social democrats pinpoint the problematic relationship of unionists and nationalists as a bar to reunification. Guelke (1988) makes the point that the international community views the partitioned territory of Northern Ireland as illegitimate.

<sup>6</sup> “Necrophilic” in this context can be taken to mean a strong, abiding fascination with death and with the political martyrdom of Republican figures like Padraig Pearse and Bobby Sands. Commentators have noticed that blood-letting in the Republican tradition has a redemptive quality (Feehan 1986). For background on the hungerstrike see Beresford (1987).

<sup>7</sup> On the history of British military operations in Northern Ireland, see Dewar (1985).

<sup>8</sup> The delicate process of preventing escalation and avoiding international disapproval forced the war underground. By the late 1980's the conflict centered on undercover operations, informants and a mutual, informal shoot-to-kill code of combat between PIRA and British Army Special Forces (Urban 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Loyalists fear that if Ireland is united, the nine hundred thousand Protestants in the north would become a minority among the three million Catholics in the Republic of Ireland.

<sup>10</sup> For example, when in May 1974 the British labour government proposed a Council of Ireland, the (Protestant) Ulster Workers Council began a strike that shut down all activity in Ulster. As a result of the strike, the Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont collapsed and London assumed governance of the province (O'Malley 1990: 228). The Home Rule bills of 1893, 1912 and 1913 were also violently resisted by Ulster Protestants.

<sup>11</sup> Wars are typically defined by authors in the field as those with more than one-thousand combat deaths per year (Pillar 1983; Small and Singer 1982: 12). Northern Ireland and other such low-intensity conflicts thus fall outside of the parameters of the studies.

<sup>12</sup> The cease-fire in Northern Ireland challenges a fundamental assumption of conflict resolution theory: that wars end because they cannot be sustained. This idea emerges out of the military history of pre-nineteenth century Europe, when most wars ended with a decisive military victory or when victory became militarily or financially inconceivable. Statistical data suggests that modern wars, with the exception of the Gulf War and the Falklands War, have not ended in a decisive military victory. Rather, they tend to result in a stalemate with an ambivalent relationship between the belligerents (Pillar 1983: 16-21; Dunnigan and Martel 1987: 207-262). Dunnigan and Martel's data indicate that in 85.7% of wars between 1975-1983 stalemate was considered to be the decisive factor in ending the war.

<sup>13</sup> The conflict in Northern Ireland challenges other assumptions in cease-fire theory which are beyond the scope of this paper. Wars are assumed to be temporary aberrations in the political life of nations that must and will eventually come to a halt when the belligerents have the political

will to do so. In Northern Ireland, the basic assumption that wars are temporary needs to be carefully considered.

<sup>14</sup> Quantitative studies have attempted to determine the relationship between casualties, force ratios and the duration of wars in order to predict when wars end (Small and Singer 1982). The data do not associate any threshold level of combat deaths with cessation of war, and there may in fact be a negative correlation between length of wars and battle deaths per capita per month (Wittman 1979). In other words, the fewer the deaths, the longer the war.

<sup>15</sup> Key sections of the document included the recognition by the British of an Irish right to self-determination, the end of partition and transfer of sovereignty to an all-Ireland government who would be democratically selected by the people, the use of British authority to influence Unionist opinion, and consultation between London and Dublin to set policy objectives of ending partition (Adams 1995: 209).

<sup>16</sup> PIRA denied ever sending this message. This may, in fact, be true since the messages were transmitted orally, rather than in written form (Sinn Féin 1994b; MLR Smith 1995: 201). According to Pillar (1983: 67), the pervasive notion that an initial offer to negotiate is 'suing for peace' leads governments to resist making such offers for fear of being considered the defeated party."

<sup>17</sup> Such attacks included a bomb explosion at an army checkpoint in Keady on May 15, 1994 that killed a British soldier. On May 21 in Armagh, the Provisional IRA abducted, interrogated and executed Reggie McCollum, a private from the Royal Irish Regiment. McCollum was the third member of his family killed by Republicans. These attacks may have been intended to show the pre-ceasefire strength of PIRA, but other attacks were long-intended and had very specific targets. On July 11, 1994, Ray Smallwoods, a notorious former paramilitary from the Ulster Democratic Party, was assassinated in Lisburn and two members of the Ulster Freedom Fighters, Joe Bratty and Raymond Elder killed on July 31 in Belfast. Additionally, after many attempts, PIRA finally did shoot down a British Lynx helicopter on March 19 in Crossmaglen with a mortar shell.

<sup>18</sup> The statement issued by the Combined Loyalist Military Command said: "In the belief that the democratically expressed wishes of the greater number of people in Northern Ireland will be respected and upheld, the Combined Loyalist Military Command will universally cease all operational hostilities as from 12 midnight, Thursday Oct. 13, 1994" (Combined Loyalist Military Command 1994).

<sup>19</sup> According to Martin McGuinness, "Against the backdrop of no IRA attacks against British forces, you have a situation where they are free to deal with these people within the Loyalist community who would embark on rampages . . . but that's not to say you won't have outbreaks of violence." (Kiernan 1994: 1). In stark contrast to the traditional Republican view of the British Army as collaborating with Unionists, McGuinness' statement indicates that Republicans now expected British security forces to protect the Republican community from Loyalist violence.

<sup>20</sup> Sinn Fein gathered more than fifteen percent of the vote, a record high. The outlawed Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Defence Association polled six percent of the vote. This election indicated that twenty-one percent of the vote in Northern Ireland supported political parties advocating violence.

<sup>21</sup> The Agreement also included a provision for co-operative council between Northern Ireland and the Republic to consult, co-operate and act within the island of Ireland.

<sup>22</sup> As of November, 1998 over two hundred and twenty prisoners, about half of those eligible, have been freed. Prisoners from the following organizations are ineligible for early release: The Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA), The Real Irish Republican Army, The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF). Despite the fact that PIRA is not co-operating with the decommissioning body and punishment attacks have continued, PIRA prisoners have been released.

<sup>23</sup> Another school of thought views cease-fire as a status quo in which belligerents are not allowed to take advantage of the calm for military gain. During the conflict in Palestine, the UN Security Council resolved on August 19, 1948 that "no party is entitled to gain military or political advantage through violation of the truce" (Smith 1995: 18).

<sup>24</sup> Pillar (1983: 111) notes that cease-fires are generally unsuccessful if "each side proposed placing all the military obligations on the enemy while assuming none itself."

<sup>25</sup> Finally, neither Sinn Fein nor PIRA have much influence with other hard-line paramilitary groups, such as the INLA or the IPLO. These organizations operate independently, and thus far have been cooperating with the cease-fire. The INLA declared a "tactical rather than permanent" cease-fire on May 5, 1995.

<sup>26</sup> The Executive elects the seven-person Army Council, which is the main decision making body of PIRA.

<sup>27</sup> In addition to receiving covert support from PIRA members dissatisfied with the peace process, RIRA has worked with the two other Republican groups opposed to the peace process: the Continuity IRA (CIRA) and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), which called a ceasefire after the Omagh massacre. For an excellent summary, see Boyne (1998).

<sup>28</sup> In *McGimpsey v. Ireland*, constitutional questions were raised regarding the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Article 1(a) affirms "that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland." The plaintiffs argued that because the Anglo-Irish Agreement effectively recognized the legitimacy of the present constitutional arrangements in Northern Ireland, it violated Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution which exert a claim over Northern Ireland as part of the "national territory." Furthermore, the "consent clause" of the Agreement was challenged, insofar as it was argued that Ireland had entered into a Treaty whereby it committed itself to obtaining the consent of one section of the Irish nation, while disregarding the interests of the majority (e.g., the population of the Irish Republic). The Irish Supreme Court held that the Anglo-Irish Agreement was not inconsistent with Article 2 and 3 of the Constitution, but merely "constitutes a recognition of the de facto situation in Northern Ireland ... without abandoning the claim to the re-integration of national territory."

<sup>29</sup> The Omagh atrocity, which seemed to be designed to frustrate the peaceful aims of PIRA and Sinn Fein, could have easily provoked a feud between PIRA and the Real IRA. In the past, this type of unauthorized military action often resulted in bloodshed. Another sensitive issue was the theft of PIRA arms and war material by the Real IRA. Misappropriation of weapons is considered to be a capital offense by PIRA. The fact that there was not a feud indicates that the northern leadership of Sinn Fein and the Army Council successfully restrained the more militant factions in PIRA.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Collins was a figure central to the Irish Civil War. At the end of the Anglo-Irish War, Collins took a pragmatic pro-Treaty view, believing that the Treaty was the only concession

that the British could offer in 1921. Nevertheless, Collins was determined to protect the Republicans in the north from Protestant anti-Nationalists. Despite the fact that he had become a minister in the newly formed government of the Republic of Ireland, Collins carried out military operations against British forces along the border. At this time, a series of pogroms were being carried out in the North, and these were widely considered to be the work of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, ex-Chief of the Imperial General Staff and current military advisor of the Unionist government in Belfast. Wilson, a vehement anti-Nationalist, was killed in London on the order of Michael Collins by the IRB. Wilson's "killing was the pretext that finally tumbled the two Sinn Fein factions into Civil War" (Cronin 1980: 151). Collins was assassinated in 1922.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that the "Irish Republic," which is a nation waiting to be born, is not the "Republic of Ireland," which is a nation born following the Anglo-Irish war.

<sup>32</sup> This is almost identical to clause twenty of the Constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood: "The Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood is hereby declared in fact, as well as by right, the sole Government of the Irish Republic."

<sup>33</sup> Believing themselves the legitimate government of Ireland, the Provisionals claim a mandate to declare war against Great Britain.

<sup>34</sup> Although it may seem that the tail is wagging the dog, the Provisional IRA's physical force tradition not only established the Republic of Ireland, but has assured the continuity and preservation of the movement for at least a century (or eight centuries, depending on when one begins counting). The ideology of Republicanism is also remarkably consistent: Seamas Twomey, former commander of the Belfast Brigade of PIRA in the 1970's and Gerry Adam's predecessor as Chief of Staff, summed up the basic ideology of Republicanism very simply: "Our first prime and main objective is the unification of our country. This means getting the British out of the occupied part of the country. After that the whole system in North and South would have to be changed" (Cronin 1980: 214).

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## PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Amr G. E. Sabet

### Peace as Cant

Once upon a time, as the story goes,

there was a bear who was hungry and a man who was cold, so they decided to negotiate in a neutral cave. After several hours a settlement was reached. When they emerged the man had a fur coat and the bear was no longer hungry (Karrass, 1970: 3).

The saga of the Middle East 'peace process' and the fanfare that has surrounded it, obscured the fact that little has been subjected to detailed systematic and objective analysis. Nor has it been sufficiently put to the test of negotiation principles in a fashion that would shed light on its underlying nature and substance. This caveat hindered addressing important questions regarding the very structure of the process and its ability to deliver on its purported promises. It further raises questions as to whether one could speak of a real peace in the making, or whether the whole endeavor is merely used as *cant*. By cant is meant "a mode of expression, or a cast of thought, of which the effect--irrespective of the motive--is to create a misleading discrepancy between the natural meaning of words and their practical significance..." (Hugo, 1970: 19).

In order to understand the full implications and underpinnings of regional politics it is crucial to reintroduce some basics of the Arab-Israeli conflict which, have been lost or concealed in the maze of peace proclamations. This should not be construed as an attempt at rehashing the polemics, arguments and counter-arguments of the past five decades or so, but rather as a bid to expose the structural flaws connected with the policies devised to deal with the current regional predicament. A careful diagnosis helps in anticipating the patient's prognosis.

The origin of the Arab-Israeli conflict goes back to the early part of the twentieth century. The Zionist movement, founded by Theodore Herzl in the late 1890s, was able to elicit a promise from the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, committing "His Majesty's Government" to the "establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..." (Heikal, 1996: 28-29).<sup>1</sup> Brief statements made by two major figures involved in the Zionist Jewish state project, serve as an exemplary of the genesis and stakes of the conflict: the aforementioned Arthur Balfour and David Ben-Gurion the first Prime Minister of the newly created state of Israel. Admitting in a memorandum to cabinet colleagues in 1919, that the Palestinians had been deceived, Balfour attributed the deception to the "Big Four" powers (the US, France, Britain, and Italy), rather than to Britain alone. He stated: "so far as Palestine is concerned, the powers have made no statement of fact that is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate" (Heikal, 1996: 30). As for Ben-Gurion, he stated in 1938:

When we say that the Arabs are the aggressors and we defend ourselves—that is only half the truth. As regards our security and life we defend ourselves.... But the fighting is only one aspect of the conflict which is in its essence a political one. And politically we are the aggressors and they defend themselves (Finkelstein, 1995: 108).

Reverting to the basics of the Arab-Israeli conflict allows us not to lose sight of the politics of injustice as an inherent source of antagonisms. The moral foundations of the Arab-Israeli conflict do not simply lie in the realm of competing perceptions, but in veracity and justice. Its essence, as Balfour's and Ben-Gurion's words clearly suggest, is born in a historical *injustice* inflicted rather than in a current violence perpetrated against the Palestinians. Not in a conflict between two rights, as Albert Einstein has philosophized, but a situation in which one party is clearly an aggressor and the other a victim.<sup>2</sup> To frame the matter differently would sound reminiscent of Harry Truman's cynical aphorism "if you can't convince them, confuse them."

In order for such politics not to constitute the sown seeds of a future more violent and bitter collision, an important analytical distinction must be made between conflict *resolution* and *settlement*. The former refers to "the transformation of relationships in a particular case by the solution of the problems which, led to the conflictual behavior in the first place." The latter designates "the suppression of ... conflict by coercive means, or by bargaining and negotiation in which relative power determines the outcome" (Burton, 1990: 3). Resolution must incorporate the principle of *Justice*, the salience of which has made the Palestinian issue the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Otherwise, it would simply collapse into a reduced settlement arrangement.

### **Peace Transformation and the Politics of Injustice**

The 'peace' process has attempted to circumvent, transform, and conceptually obliterate the true nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict by resorting to conventional Western conflict resolution and power politics mechanisms. These mechanisms fundamentally altered the political agenda of the conflict through subterfuge and issue transformation, imposing and maintaining an asymmetric power relationship in favor of the Arabs' adversary. A development facilitated by systemic and regional changes arising from the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Second Gulf War and the destruction of Iraq, and American-Israeli military and scientific cooperation. Superordinate axes were introduced in order to change the regime of alliances. For the purposes of creating overlapping space, 'moderate' Arab and Jewish forces supporting 'peace' were supposedly to be aligned against 'radicals' or 'extremists' across both societies, opposing it. A closed Arab agenda would have set Islamists and incumbent regimes, at least in principle, as natural allies against a common Israeli enemy. Arab governments instead, have sought to establish *common* cause with Israel in fighting Islamic resistance to such open concessional schemes. This *open* agenda evolved into one of confronting the *effects* of injustice rather than its *causes*, changing the political constellation supporting the original principles and re-connecting interests in a fashion that cuts across *closed* foundational considerations.

Back in January 1989, President Hosni Mubarak (1995) of Egypt proclaimed that he and other Arab leaders were supported in their search for peace, among other actors, by "the peace loving forces in Israel itself." To make his starting point clear, he indicated that after all the sacrifices due to previous wars with Israel, he "was not ready to take more risks" (Mubarak, 1995:

546-547). In one stroke, Mubarak was acknowledging the conflict to be one of costs rather than of entitlements, conveying a willingness to play by the rules of the opponent rather than his own. A less than inspiring overture from someone engaged in a protracted and gruesome process of conflict management. Expressing his rather limited understanding of the Vietnamese case as an example of a war that “was settled only through negotiations,” Mubarak failed to relate the outcome to the conditions on the ground and from there on draw the relevant conclusions. The Vietnamese had been willing to take risks and consequently were successful in imposing their will on a much more powerful adversary.

According to Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing, inferior power is not in and of itself the most important determinant of outcome. Resolve plays an extremely important role as well. “The military inferiority of one party may be compensated by its greater interests engaged, thus making the parties equally resolved. A militarily stronger party may be less ‘resolved’ in the crisis than its opponent if it does not value its interests as highly as the opponent values his” (Snyder & Diesing, 1977: 498). Exacerbating their military inferiority by translating it into a lack of determination, the Arab party’s *starting* point to negotiations conversely, was to concede entitlement claims from the very outset. For to recognize Israel, is invariably to recognize the right to dispossess the Palestinians and to occupy Arab land in defense of such dispossession. This gradual yet steady concessionary Arab behavior served implicitly and/or explicitly to self-condemn earlier policies and stances adopted vis-a-vis Israel, and to undermine the justice principle. In essence, the Arabs arrived at a situation in which they became susceptible to recognizing their values to be, if not wrong, then at least faulty. Since at a point they became actually willing to relinquish what they had considered sacred for the past five decades or so, further pressure, so the justified expectation would be, may lead them to concede other rights and Jerusalem as well. The late king Hasan of Morocco and president to the Jerusalem Committee, for instance, had indicated that Jerusalem constituted to the Arabs nothing more than the sacred sites, such as “Al-Aqsa Mosque” (Hasan, 1999: 172). Statements of the kind undermine rights to land restoration and liberation.

Such precedents introduced structural transformations capable of concomitantly changing the psychological distribution of power heavily in favor of Israel. It emasculated the Arab position, first and foremost at this level, from defiance to one of virtual submission. Their practical manifestations include the degradation of religious consciousness, which is necessary if Jerusalem is to be compromised, moral and spiritual decadence in order for people to forsake values such as Jihad and the undermining of national and historical self-confidence so as to justify defeatism. Together with the media and mind-altering changes in Arab educational systems, they came to constitute what President Clinton has termed “education for peace.” As a settlement mechanism the ‘peace’ process, has recast the substance of the conflict by steadily creating the appropriate environmental means-ends framework for such ‘concessions’ to be made.

Negotiation constitutes the “art of the dialectics of wills that use force (and/or peaceful measures) to resolve their conflict” (Luttwak, 1987: 241). Strategies, tactics and skill, in addition to options and resources available, constitute the pillars of its dynamics. Their overriding principle is for one side to take advantage, to the extent possible, of the adversary’s weaknesses, loopholes, and oversights. The outcome configuration largely determines the privileged or non-privileged translations of any proposed agreements, and heavily influences the subsequent order of events. In this sense, negotiation is a double-edged sword. It may resolve conflicts or it may exacerbate them.

Setting detailed blueprints or axioms predictive of the ensuing results of a negotiating process therefore, is by no means an easy task. It is important nevertheless, to underscore the inter-linked premises that “where one ends up depends on where one starts” (Raiffa, 1982: 215); that the final outcome of negotiations usually reflects the relative power configuration of the parties concerned and; that negotiating outcomes not only emanate from objective material conditions, but as importantly, from subjective psychological fortitude. Thus, the weaker side in particular must exhibit a good measure of steadfastness in order to establish a credibility threshold for any demands made or positions upheld. Otherwise, diminished will power would inevitably translate into a one sided open agenda in which--as far as the privileged party is concerned--agreement may not necessarily be preferred to non-agreement. Unequal costs emanating from a failure to agree, together with an asymmetric capability to modify the reference structure, constitute two determining factors of negotiation outcomes. This is especially so in as far as they reflect not simply an imbalance in power resources but also in “control relations.” As a reflection of structural asymmetry, they allow for the unilateral alteration of the rules of the game and for redefining the norms which *all* actors are expected to follow in their mutual relations (Hopmann, 1978: 143; Vayrynen, 1991: 4-5). Once this stage has been reached, it *substantively* ceases to be negotiation since, “the weak,” to quote Henry Kissinger, “do not negotiate” (Finkelstein, 1995: 237).

Both the Americans and the Israelis believed that a preliminary step-by-step negotiating approach, rather than a comprehensive one, would contribute to undermining the famous Arab consensus, agreed at the Khartoum summit in August 1967, of “no talks, no recognition, no peace” (Field, 1994: 384). The purpose was to divide the Arab World, win *de facto* recognition of a few countries and put the Israelis in a stronger position when they came to negotiate directly with the front-line states and the Palestinians. The idea behind such a strategy which, underscored Kissinger’s negotiating style, was to build “positions of strength with an active diplomacy pressing for settlement” (Kissinger, 1994: 467ff). Israel’s tactics as Yehoshafat Harkabi (1977: 103) had alluded to as early as 1977, was to bring the Arabs into “... step by step, practical settlements and interim agreements as a gradual incremental process of ‘interlocking’ the rivals into positive arrangements which may make it more difficult for them to revert to open conflict and war.”<sup>3</sup> Or in a more recent statement by a British diplomat, which mirrors the same position, to create “a complex architecture of Arab-Israeli connections... that will not be easily demolished” (Field, 1994: 368). Such tactics were consistent with the overall strategy of detaching Egypt from the Arab-Israeli conflict, isolating Syria, and cantonizing the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Above all, they have succeeded in breaking the necessary link between statecraft and war. Once all this had been achieved, Israel reversed its position, with the former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calling for “a package approach” that circumvents earlier agreements made (1997a: 39).

### *The Peace-Justice Dialectics*

Power relations based on considerations of order and might frequently offend the “sense of justice,” and cannot but fuel the emotions of resentment, anger, and tension which, ultimately lead to violence. Notions of injustice, as a backlash against perceived disparities between prerogatives and benefits, always remain an inherent and perpetual risk factor (Lerner, 1981: 12-13). ‘Peace,’ merely as the opposite of violence rather than as a reflection of justice is unlikely to overcome or rectify such concerns. Injustices inflicted by the Western colonial legacy on the Arabs in general and the

Palestinians in particular have characterized the nature of the conflict from its very inception as one of entitlements-benefits. The erupting sense of injustice triggered intense and unique emotional responses which, could not be quantified solely in terms of tangible indices or reduced simply to an aversion of loss and an appetite for gain. *Phenomenologically* “it engage(d) powerful passions that have the effect of increasing the stridency of demands, amplifying intransigence, reducing sensitivity to threats and value trade-offs, increasing the willingness to run risks, and increasing the likelihood of violent behavior” (Welch, 1993: 20). This helps explain the drive behind the martyrdom bombings perpetrated by Islamic militant organizations such as Hamas, Hizbollah and Jihad, and allows putting their militancy in perspective. Their actions largely constitute the observable symptoms of the unobservable motivation and need to respond to group insult with rage (Burton, 1984: 13). Referring to these organizations as terrorist structures opposing peace comprises an altering discursive mechanism which seeks to eliminate the entitlement-benefits discrepancy context in favor of one re-constructed and based on *cost-benefits*. The former then is depicted as irrational and the latter as rational. Historical experiences however, show that when basic entitlements are at stake against overwhelming odds, less rationality is needed, and actually fares better, than more rationality. For instance, the Czechs’ behavior with respect to Nazi Germany’s demands on their land, in Michael Handel’s (1981: 91) words, was “*too rational*” in response to a military threat they believed they could not win out against in the long run. This was in stark contrast to the Finns and the North Vietnamese who were less calculating, more emotional, and more determined to fight against the overwhelming powers of both the Soviet Union and the United States respectively. The Finns, while losing twice, earned respect and admiration and perhaps made themselves less attractive as potential satellites. In the case of the North Vietnamese, they ultimately prevailed and won a war in which they virtually had lost all the battles. One can not help but wonder what the outcome might have been had the Vietnamese, alternatively like the Arabs, started doubting themselves. The constructed ‘peace’ discourse, based on such self-doubts, makes it immensely easier for the Americans and Israelis to manipulate parties whose strategic calculations can be transformed toward cost-benefit quantification (the Czech option). This as opposed to actors who consciously adhere to their own strategic imperatives, irrespective of costs (the Finnish or Vietnamese option). The former constitutes a strategic victory, the latter a strategic challenge.

The justice motive differs from loss aversion or appetite for gain in two further respects: *prescriptively* and *extensively*. Prescriptively, the very desire to see justice done ‘though the earth may perish’ is a very strong drive embedded in basic and non-negotiable human needs and values. This sets them in stark contrast to material valuations based on economy or self-interest. Extensively, it does not overreach to what people simply would like to have, but rather to what they consider to be their entitlements. In this respect, it is categorical and demanding of nothing less than full satisfaction. People within the entitlement-benefits value matrix are usually willing to incur a heavy price for potentially less useful things they consider a matter of right. They are also more willing to trade-off or forswear pursuing goods which, they would like to have but to which they do not necessarily feel particularly entitled. “The mode of reasoning involved in the defense of one’s entitlements,” therefore, “differs fundamentally from the mode of reasoning involved in the pursuit of other goods: it tends to be categorical and deontological rather than utilitarian” (Welch, 1993: 20-21).



Substantively, Israel with the aid of American indifference if not complicity, attempted to reconcile the entitlement-benefits discrepancy. This was done not by meeting Palestinian legitimate demands for statehood, but by transforming the rules in a fashion that would increasingly lead the Palestinian Authority, headed by Yasser Arafat, to act--if not actually believe--as if it has misconceived the scope and content of Palestinian entitlements (Welch, 1993: 20). According to Harkabi (1977: 88), "making the opponent uneasy and apologetic about his objective, is a first small step in the process of its *erosion*, inducing him to start discarding it."

The expectations of the Palestinian negotiator presumably anticipated a Palestinian state at the end of the road. The pattern of negotiations it followed, however, appears in all practicalities to have reduced the Palestinian Authority (PA) to nothing more than an auxiliary Israeli security structure. Israel's further de-linking of security matters from changes taking place on the ground in Jerusalem and the West Bank and therefore from the *political* heart of the 'peace' process, reflected the divesting of the purported Palestinian/Arab negotiating formula. Israel continues to maintain its own constants and payoffs in terms of a unified Jerusalem under its control, entitlement to most of the West Bank (notwithstanding redeployment maneuverings), monopolized access to nuclear weapons, priority of its security concerns over all other considerations, and eventual access to the water resources of the River Nile and the Euphrates (Lesch, 1992: 158).<sup>4</sup>

America's rather explicit recognition of the legitimacy of this agenda was manifested most conspicuously by the Congress's vote (even if non-binding) to transfer the US embassy to Jerusalem by 1999. US envoy Dennis Ross' statements, during his August 1997 visit to the region, in the wake of bombings in Jerusalem by Hamas militants, attempted to further entrench the Palestinian negotiator within this de-linking structure. He called upon Israelis and Palestinians to work as partners against a "common threat" from militants, and emphasized that "security is something that serves Israeli interests and Palestinian interests..." (Goller, 1997: A15). Israeli security was to become the Palestinian Authority's own, irrespective of whether or not Palestinian demands for statehood can or will be met. In return for Arafat's resumption of security cooperation with Israel to rein in Islamic militants, a vague promise was given by Ross of an upcoming broad US peace initiative. Supposedly it was to address Palestinians' complaints against Israel, including reportedly, *some kind* of freeze on Israeli expansion of colonies (conveniently termed settlements), and an acceleration of talks on a final peace settlement (Assad, 1997). However, American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's response during her subsequent visit to the region in September 1997, to complaints that Israel was strengthening its grip on Jerusalem, expanding Jewish colonies and leveling the homes of Palestinians, was unequivocal. "There is no moral equivalent," she stated "between killing people and building houses.... The Palestinian Authority must take unilateral steps and actions to root out the terrorist infrastructure" (Schweid, 1997). The problem with unilateral gestures as Kissinger (1994: 488) has indicated, is that they "remove a key negotiating asset. In general, diplomats rarely pay for services already rendered..." Moreover, they tempt the adversary "...to drag out the negotiations in order to determine whether other unilateral gestures may be forthcoming." Not only that, but Albright was also making the connection between militant acts and the peaceful process of building houses, rather than to the breaking of agreements and Israeli colonial expansion. In as far as she was interested in accomplishing any significant results, it was to call for holding financial contributions to Islamist groups, and to cajole Arab regimes into attending the upcoming economic conference to be held in Doha, Qatar, in November of that year. Ross'

earlier promises--and for that matter any upcoming ones--to Arafat are unlikely to be any different from the British WWI superfluous offerings to give Arabs their independence in exchange for support in the war effort against Ottoman Turkey. In essence, nothing has been learned, nothing has been forgotten.

Arafat's relationship with Islamist groups is significantly complex to allow for the above demands to be conceded, at least in their US-Israeli ideal. Much as he would like to clamp down on their infrastructure, he remains strongly constrained as to how far he could go. In many ways, his fate has become intertwined with their own to the extent that by destroying them he could virtually be committing political suicide. Eradicating Hamas and Jihad could greatly diminish the need for his presence as a party altogether. When newspaper photos had depicted Arafat embracing Hamas figures, they were basically showing him holding to his last trump card. This is where the inherent contradictions of a common security framework can be most strongly felt. The major caveat is that while the Israelis would like to see Islamic opposition eradicated, the most that Arafat could do, if for no other reason than to ensure his own survival, is to contain and weaken but not eliminate them. The logical outcome is that both the PA and Israel can only pursue a *parallel* rather than a common security policy. This poses Arafat's dilemma. It serves to project him both as a collaborator, to many Palestinians, and as an ineffective and uncooperative 'negotiator,' as the US and the Israelis allege. Such an ambivalent outcome could only lead to the eventual erosion of the PA's legitimacy, forcing it to control its own people by increasingly coercive measures. As Glenn E. Robinson (1997: 54) has stated, "...PLO failure to deliver Palestinian rights will compel the PA to tighten the noose around its own society. Open politics in the midst of national failure is not a recipe for regime survival." It should come as no surprise therefore that Arafat would accept internal security guardianship by the CIA on his people through the Wye River agreements.

Israeli security officers further have warned that enfeebling Arafat could open the door for Hamas to achieve political dominance in Gaza and parts of the West Bank (Drozdiak, 1997b: A14). Capitalizing on such a trade-off, Arafat continues to project himself as the one most capable of controlling and possibly coopting those groups. In as much as the Israelis may loathe him, he stands as the best of two evils. Arafat has become an Israeli interest and safety valve. His rumblings that he will not be dictated to by Israel do not hide his real concern. The *Washington Post*, referring to statements made by Palestinian officials, has indicated that he remains constrained by the fear of generating sympathy for Islamic militants by acquiescing to Israeli demands (Drozdiak, 1997a: A01). His holding of "national unity" talks, during the latter half of August 1997, and then again with other dissenting Palestinian groups in September 1999, simply aimed at bringing militants into the political process as a way to dilute their influence and persuade them to abandon their actions and opposition. This reflected a typical pattern of political cooptation reminiscent of Egyptian President Sadat's policies toward Islamist opposition and which ultimately proved fatal for him. Furthermore, Arafat continues to concentrate power in his hands. While attempting to weaken all other forces and/or rudimentary social institutions (most of which have an Islamic identity), as is being demanded by the Israeli side, he continues to personally control money offered by international donors. With virtually no accountability, Arafat in all but name has become the PA (Robinson, 1997: 45). This significantly consolidates the position of the Israeli negotiator who by constructing control structures to 'handle' the PA 'chief' could indirectly 'administer' the 'tribe' as well. A virtual situation is thus created in which the grand strategy of one side is in effect being

tackled in the framework of personal, tribal and ‘fiefdom’ politics, by the Arab side. Though short of a state, the PA is not an aberration but rather a typical regional structure, where it only takes control of the leader to dominate the hierarchical socio-political configuration.

### **Peace Concessions and the Strategy of Defeat**

Empirical studies regarding winners and losers in negotiations have indicated that parties with higher aspiration levels and wanting more, actually did get more. In a conflictive non-cooperative bargaining process, opponents with high aspirations, irrespective of their skill or power, ended up as winners in every case where they opposed low aspirants. They indicated furthermore, that negotiators who made the first compromise ended up being losers in the final outcome (Karrass, 1970: 17-18 & 19). From the outset and as a reflection of collapse of will, the Egyptian side had declared itself desperate to opt out of confrontation. Since the Israeli side did not exhibit such desperation, it becomes clear that negotiation terms can only be strategically tilted in its favor, with the outcome most likely to reflect that condition. In light of such findings, it follows that the strategic concessions initiated by the late President Anwar Sadat through the Camp David regime, and in whose footsteps a number of other Arab leaders are following, can only lead to disastrous consequences for the Arab World.

Such a pattern of concessions can never be fair or just to the Arabs due to several reasons. Firstly, concessions are fair only as long as the negotiators have no need to revise their original expectations about what the ultimate agreement will be or about their strategic goals of entitlement (Bartos, 1978: 22). Yet, while Mubarak’s chief political adviser Usama al-Baz conceded that the conflict between the Arabs and Israel was over boundaries and no longer over the latter’s existence, former Israeli chief of staff Raphael Eitan declared the Arab-Israeli conflict to be “civilizational” (*Kayhan al-Arabi*, 1998: 11). This reflects a remarkable strategic turn of events in favor of the Israeli negotiator, confirming the conclusion that a negotiating opponent will concede in opposite proportion to the adversary’s concession rate (Cross 1978: 29).

Secondly, negotiation requires that parties be constrained by the same rules which, neither side have the right nor capability to alter unilaterally. If negotiation is a matter of finding the proper formula as a referent principle, and then implementing detail (Zartman 1978: 76-77), and if one party has the capability of changing it at will while the other is constrained by it, then no element or mechanism of joint decision-making does in reality exist. Both parties cease to share equal stalemating power, and the asymmetry is such that one party could at will alter the terms of the negotiating formula from land for peace as formulated at the Madrid conference in October 1991, to one of peace for peace or security for peace. *Strictly speaking then, there are no negotiations taking place between the Arabs and the Israelis even as they continue to talk to each other.* Israel’s formula alteration capability reorders the whole process in its own image against the opposite number, a strategic advantage that is unlikely to be thrown away whether the Likud party is in power or Labor. Yet, Arab negotiators continue to project the personalized nature of their own governance onto the ‘other’ even when the Labor party had been doing by stealth what the Likud party implemented unpresumptuously.<sup>5</sup> Negotiations in October 1999, between the Palestinian and the newly elected Israeli Labor government, which set security matters in the hands of the Israelis on the “safe passage” road linking Gaza to the Western Bank, actually constituted an additional Palestinian

concession to the security formula. This concession was more than could have been possible earlier during the incumbency of Likud's conspicuously intransigent leadership.

Such attitude reflects Arab susceptibility to (and naive entanglement into) the psychologically deceptive good-guy (Labor)/bad-guy (Likud) routine. Within this framework, two parties on the same side stage a quarrel related to seemingly opposed stances with respect to a common adversary. The good guy offers promises of reward if the opponent cooperates, the bad guy raises the specter of punishments if no 'cooperation' was forthcoming (Fisher & Ury, 1983: 141-142). Arafat, during his appearance at the United Nations in October 1998, continued to hold to the belief that the assassinated Yitzhak Rabin was his partner in peace, and to lament his loss. This despite Kissinger's statement that the latter had repeatedly brought it to his attention that should the 'incongruities' of the Oslo agreements become pervasive, "he would initiate a strategic reassessment with all the greater determination because of a clear conscience" (Kissinger, 1997: C07). In between Labor (good guy) and Likud (bad guy) the psychological fabric of the target opponent is undermined, softening his will to the level of concessionary pliance in order to escape emotional distress. Any semblance of concession offered by the good guy would then be seen as a big favor to be reciprocated with a supposedly sizable concession lest ammunition be provided to alternative 'radical or extremist' forces. A dynamic of escalating demands for every concession offered, not necessarily made, is thus introduced into the negotiating framework.<sup>6</sup> Arab negotiators should not act perplexed as they come to face this situation with a Labor negotiator.

A dual routine of this kind, one should add, requires formal autonomous domestic institutional structures which, do not exist in the Arab world. One party to the negotiating table is capable of playing a game that the other side is structurally deprived off, and as such is at a constant disadvantage. Having been situated in an external rule structure the Arabs have come up against a no win situation. This applies whether they make one decision or its opposite. It should come as no surprise that Arafat has lost on both accounts when he continued to threaten to declare a Palestinian state in May 1999 only to back down as expected. To declare a state was simply to end up with a cluster of disparate villages beyond which he could make no further demands (assuming Israel does not respond by reentering the territory under PA authority). Having retracted however, he continues to lose much of his already shaky credibility not only with regard to his people, but also vis-a-vis the enemy. In strategic terms he has continuously and perpetually been placed on a 'horn of a dilemma.'

Thirdly, geo-strategic considerations related to the very nature of the Zionist Jewish homeland project continue to play a determining role in the negotiation outcomes and the politics of concessions. In a superbly detailed and documented three volumes study about secret negotiations between the Arabs and Israel over the last hundred years or so, Mohamed Heikal (1996b: 27ff) illustrated that the idea of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine hark back to the days of Napoleon Bonaparte's French occupation of Egypt (1798-1801). This clearly was long before Herzl and the events of WW II. As part of his grand strategy, Napoleon believed that Egypt and Syria's security, both being situated along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean respectively, were historically and strategically intertwined. In order to secure his power base in both countries, he believed that a foreign (Jewish) structure at their meeting point had to be created. The idea was to separate and prevent them from coming together in any form of common political framework. With the defeat of the Napoleonic armies this strategy was appropriated and actively pursued by Great Britain's Lord Palmerston, during the first half of the 19th century onward. While

the reduction of the Palestinian issue to a matter of land and territory veiled the significance of this purpose, the Israeli negotiators could not but harbor it, albeit indirectly, as a strategic factor in their policy calculations. Responding to a question by *Newsweek* as to whether he envisions a Palestinian state, Netanyahu answered a categorical “no.” More interestingly, he added, “...I believe that the granting of unlimited self-determination would mean that we would face a Palestinian army with heavy weapons, a state that could make military pacts with countries like Iran or Iraq...” (Netanyahu, 1997a: 39). Israel, he declared, “will not reduce itself to a fragile ghetto on the shores of the Mediterranean” (Netanyahu, 1997b: 13). Given that the envisioned Palestinian pseudo-state could hardly pose such a serious threat as Netanyahu claims, even if such pacts were presumably to be made, more must be read between the lines. The Israeli negotiator seems to be hinting that no mass of land, however small yet adequate enough to help re-establish the severed Egyptian-Levant strategic link, would be allowed. Implicitly underscored is not the issue of a reduced territorial size, which had actually sustained this state until 1967, but one of *role* as a link-severing structure. This attribute contributes to a large extent to Israel’s geo-strategic relevance. The Israeli negotiator is unlikely to accept a condition in which, the Jewish state could be by-passed or cut through. This after all, is what could turn Israel into a ghetto, and this is largely what will contribute to determining the Israeli position regarding a sovereign Palestinian state. Former Prime Minister and Labor Party leader Shimon Peres’ suggestion that Israel should be allowed to take the “reins of leadership in the Middle East” instead of Egypt was part and parcel of this consistent vision (Gerges, 1995: 71).

The coming of Ehud Barak to power brought little change despite the visible sigh of relief among Arab officials. In the same vein as his predecessor, he called for combining certain “parts” of the 1998 Wye River agreement with Oslo’s final status negotiations. Not only that, but shortly after he had come to power, his government expanded colonies construction at a much faster pace than that of Netanyahu’s (*Al-Ahram*, 1999a: 8). In addition, he declared that Jerusalem was to remain “the eternal and indivisible Capital” of the Jewish state and, that there would be no return to the pre-1967 borders. He also rejected the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland, and suggested only the possibility of a withdrawal “on” rather than “from” the Syrian heights. These positions were accompanied by a stream of statements declaring a commitment to peace, and even setting a year 2000 deadline for an agreement (Usher, 1999).

Finally, while any concessions that the Israeli side may offer or make can only be from gains and profits acquired at the expense of the Arab side, reciprocal concessions by the Arabs can only be offered from their own capital. A framework of mutual concessions while in appearance procedurally fair hides a substantive injustice inflicted on one negotiating party. If the claim is made that this is natural given the facts on the ground and that Israel has acquired Arab land by winning militarily, whatever the justifications may be, and that the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must, then the whole negotiating exercise becomes one in which the victor is basically imposing its will over the vanquished. This essentially, dissolves the very substance of negotiation and reduces it to one of how to yield the best surrender scenario.

The Palestinian leader committed a serious strategic mistake when he conceded to interim agreements at the expense of postponing the fundamental issues of Jerusalem, the refugees, and the fate of Jewish colonies for future talks, (i.e. emphasizing the process of interaction rather than the content of the negotiated positions). In so doing he was following in Sadat’s prenegotiation footsteps

when, together with Israel, both had sought to narrow the upcoming negotiation agenda to be undertaken at Camp David, by elimination or postponing the most controversial issues. The purpose was to reduce uncertainty and complexity and to lessen anticipated costs for Israel (Stein 1989b: 255; Stein 1989a: & 174-205).<sup>7</sup> Blunders of the kind were a reflection of the Arab/Palestinian negotiators' inability to rank strategic priorities of collective national interests, goals and objectives, and their confusion of means and ends. Within the framework of a confidence building process as opposed to that of content, top priority tends to be credited to current and *ad hoc* problems as opposed to long term strategic considerations. Each and every concern as a result, becomes a matter of top priority to be addressed by the force of circumstances, basically propelling a policy of survival that renders equal importance to hierarchical issues. Strategies, however, must be set on a priority basis. If priorities are confused, which a framework based on process rather than content actually leads to, then no long term collective national interest strategy could be focused upon, nor could a decision about the channeling and commitment of resources be made. Process becomes an end in and of itself rather than the means it is supposed to be. This helps explain Barak's call upon Syria to join the "peace of the brave" and Syria's sober reluctance to do so. Syria's approach reflects an astute awareness of the dimensions of the conflict, which go beyond land. Unlike Sadat and Arafat, Hafez Asad does not seem inclined in his pattern of negotiation to lose the whole (Syria) so as to bring back the part (the Golan heights) into his fold.

Such loss of strategic balance is what has allowed Peres to acknowledge that at Oslo II Israel had in fact "screwed the Palestinians" (quoted by Chomsky 1996: 6). Whatever Western conflict management framework is put forth, Arabs can only emerge as losers. As Carl Schmitt (1976: 49) has observed,

...as long as a people exists in the political sphere this people must, even if only in the most extreme case...determine by itself the distinction of friend and enemy. Therein resides the essence of its political existence. When it no longer possesses the capacity or the will to make this distinction, it ceases to exist politically. If it permits this decision to be made by another then it is no longer a politically free people and is absorbed into another political system.

In ending the intifada and signing the Oslo accords Arafat gave up two of his most important trump cards without receiving anything of substance in return. His errors further lifted any embarrassment considerations standing in the way of other Arab and non-Arab countries normalizing and establishing relations with Israel. This effectively bolstered its regional and international status and ended its isolation. The PA winded up wasting the very limited leverage it might have had. In the process it placed itself in its enemy's grip, and in that of its American ally, in much the same fashion, although under much worse conditions, as the Egyptian negotiator had done earlier.

With the exception of the highly skilled Asad of Syria, a look at the behavioral characteristics of Arab decision-makers and their negotiating competence reveals a significant propensity to modify the values at stake in a fashion that ultimately challenges their own entitlements. This means that a pattern of unfair concessions is being made which will continue to

manifest loss of control over economic and political outcomes. An opened Arab agenda was, being unfairly reciprocated by a closed Israeli one. And while failure to match concessions may be a necessary though not sufficient condition of unfairness, the latter condition will inevitably exist if the opponent's payoffs have not changed (Bartos, 1978: 22). Palestinian rights and demands for viable statehood are unlikely to go heeded or materialize since nothing in the negotiating pattern of the PA would allow for such an outcome. Parallel expectations on the broader Arab front, continue further, to decreasingly vary in light of their adversary's initiative dynamics. Such concessionary patterns continue to undermine Arab political existence.

### **The Politics of Peace Dialectics**

The key toward winning a negotiating outcome is to change the perception, and in the process, the stakes of the opponent. As a reflection of American thought logic and presumably their intent, I. William Zartman and Maureen Berman (1982) provided an example of two antagonists clashing over the same piece of land--without naming any specific parties. If 'both' parties' perceptions could be changed, they reasoned, so as to convince them that it is the resources which the land holds that matter, then the two may be able to negotiate a deal whereby one can be the owner of the territory while the other shares in the benefits of the resources (Zartman & Berman, 1982: 13). Translated into the 'peace' process context, Arab perceptions are to be changed in favor of remunerative incentives (e.g. through economic cooperation, joint economic projects, and aid), while Israel is to acquire the land and perhaps even, the water resources. Anis Mansour (1999), a columnist in Egypt's *Al-Ahram* newspaper, for instance wrote that the countries of the Nile basin would not object to Egypt extending the Nile water to adjacent countries such as *Israel*, Palestine and Jordan if they were to be adequately paid, and if Egypt was to be remunerated for allowing water to pass through its territory (Mansour, 1999: 36).<sup>8</sup> Since such statements are unlikely to be made nonchalantly, given the Egyptian social, economic and political scene, one can not but anticipate further concessions of the kind down the road. Especially so when they were published only one day after the same newspaper had disclosed an American commitment to Israel to assist it in accessing water resources from *within the region* (*Al-Ahram*, 1999b: 1 & 4).

The whole issue is transformed from entitlement values to utilitarian calculations. The strategic cost of such a transformation would be tremendous. Rather than being the most powerful Nile basin country at its downstream, Egypt instead would be squeezed between a more powerful Israel (which would now become a Nile basin country!) in control both at downstream and at the source. This is not difficult to gauge if one is to closely observe the American-Israeli collaboration in the heart of Africa. Matters could be worse of course, if that state were to have commensurate access to the Euphrates. Israel would make economic, territorial and strategic strides, while the Arabs, notwithstanding some meager financial benefits, if any, would lose on all accounts.

Much of the inherent failures of Arab decision-makers and negotiators arise from their lack of a solid and participating national constituency. Their perennial legitimacy crisis and personalized governing style inevitably reflects on their performance and conflict management competence. In his book *Egypt's Road to Jerusalem*, Boutros Ghali (1997), a key figure in the negotiations which led to the Camp David accords, indicated that the Egyptian delegation to the US did not know how to prepare for the conference. Nor was the general strategy upon which to base its movements clear. As he sarcastically suggested, "it was said that Napoleon Bonaparte never set a military plan until he

was in the battle field. It dallied my hopes that inspiration would come to us when we arrive at Camp David. However, I did not come across signs of Napoleonic genius among us” (Ghali 1997: 137, author's translation). This testimony, in itself, constitutes a most serious indictment of the pattern of negotiation followed by the Egyptian regime.

Such indictments, however, do not end with Ghali. Raymond Cohen (1995) in addition observed that “...surely the single most noteworthy feature of the Camp David conference of September 1978 was Sadat’s willingness to place his own fate and that of his nation in the hands of the leader of a foreign power-President Carter.” Being at a total loss as to the next step that should follow after his visit to Jerusalem, a condition emanating precisely from the absence of a clear vision or strategy, Sadat’s only recourse was to rely on the American President. In as far as he had a strategy, it was to “put himself completely into American hands...project(ing) assumptions about the value of client status onto his relationship with the United States” (Cohen 1995: 55). Cohen cited both Kissinger and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to make his point. According to Kissinger, Sadat worked at identifying Egypt’s interest with America’s own, repeatedly challenging the US to enter the negotiations not as mediator but as participant, *or else he offered to accept what was put forward* to him (Cohen, 1995: 55, emphasis added). In essence, he put his full trust in the American president willing, in the words of Vance, “to take Carter’s word that a given step was necessary...” (quoted by Cohen, 1995: 56). Rarely, as Cohen (1995: 56) described it, “can a patron-client relationship have achieved such pronounced expression.” The logical outcome of this negotiating pattern was that Carter put Sadat’s trust to excellent use, although not quite in the way that the latter may have expected. “The US president, it turned out, was better able to separate business from friendship than the Egyptian leader” (Cohen, 1995: 56). This outcome was a product not only of traditional diplomatic frameworks, such as negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration, but also the presumably more advanced methods of conflict resolution. The latter emphasize the process of interaction (such as confidence building, education for mutual understanding and the pursuit of super-ordinate goals, including of course economic incentives) rather than the content of the negotiated positions (Reychler, 1994: 5-7). The two overlapping approaches nevertheless compromised core issues, leading Sadat to undermine Arab strategic entitlements in favor of short-term Egyptian territorial and financial gains. This ultimately translated into continued foreign domination of that country’s decision making structure while providing the negotiating adversary with an opportunity to single out its fragmented Arab opponents.

The tragedy is that the Palestinian Authority seems to be following the same pattern of concessions of the Egyptian negotiator, yet without the assets and the leverage that the latter possessed. By offering the Israeli side the strategic concession that the largest and most powerful Arab country would drop out of the conflict equation, as a bargaining chip, Egypt could make territorial gains. Those gains came nevertheless at the cost of a de-militarized Sinai, and almost total loss of national independence, sovereignty, and self-esteem, as well as a significantly diminished regional status. “In the realm of strategy (however), a course of action cannot persist indefinitely. It will tend to evolve into its opposite, unless the logic of strategy is outweighed by some *exogenous* change in the circumstances of the participants” (Luttwak, 1987: 18, emphasis in quote). This exogenous factor was introduced in Israel’s favor by eliminating Egypt from the conflict matrix and neutralizing it as the principal adversary, and is currently being added to by bringing Turkey into the conflict as an Israeli ally. This is not in order that the latter may deliver more land subsequently to



the rest of the Arabs, but rather to enjoy a freer hand on Egypt's North-Eastern flank. The Camp David accords, in other words, were the high points of the peace strategy after which the reversal of opposites can only set in. The more it is pursued the less the returns, until a point is reached where negative results can only ensue.<sup>9</sup> As Heikal (1996a: 308, author's translation) has stated,

there is nothing more dangerous-in regional and international politics- from a condition of war that has stopped without a decisive end and without a mutual consent that forsakes (resorting) to arms. Under such a condition, explosion becomes possible at any time and without need for convincing reasons: for the reasons are inherent in this very condition and its nature.

The above factors essentially constitute the dynamics of the peace dialectics.

The Arab negotiators have three main alternatives: 1--to accept whatever is being imposed on them, seeking the best conditions under the circumstances, 2--to stall for time hoping for a reversion to the original land for peace formula, or 3--to counter-transform the negotiating rules by bringing in their own new formula and redefining the conflict in terms of its broader religious and strategic horizons. At the same time negotiators would work actively toward the construction of new regional and systemic alliances. Opting for the first choice could very well preclude the second but more likely add fuel to the third. Mubarak's (1997: 21) remark to Netanayahu that war is "...an old (fashioned) matter...and will not solve any cause" effectively presented the Israeli Prime Minister with an altered peace for peace formula. Furthermore, when the threat of economic boycott was furling by the Arab League, as a result of Israel's continued building of colonies in Jabal Ghoneim (Har Homa) in occupied East Jerusalem, it was declared as a 'recommendation' rather than as an obligation. Associated calls for Arab countries to freeze their normalization of relations with Israel were declined by both Egypt and Jordan, on the grounds that they were tied to peace agreements with Israel which restricted them from doing so.

To put forth a land for peace formula is to make a conditional statement. Intrinsic to it is a presumed *veto* power: if there is no land returned, there will be no peace. But to what extent can the Arabs exude such credibility? The Arab summit which, had convened in Cairo in June 1996, announced peace to be a "strategic choice." Such a declaration *de facto* rendered land a residual component. If war is not an option nor are economic and diplomatic sanctions, then this essentially dissolves the Madrid formula, and its supposedly incorporated veto or conditionality. In line with Mubarak's remark, the summit effectively reduced the formula to one of peace for peace's sake. Nations which attempt to present themselves as unfailingly peaceful to the international community can hope to obtain little in the way of suasion from any forces they may have (Luttwak, 1987: 194). If they do not project much in terms of coercive credibility, sporadic violence will not uphold the required veto power. Islamist militants' bombings for instance, is not the same thing as war capability, and could be dealt with at the local security level rather than within the broader context of the 'peace' process.

Lacking control over their concession behavior the Arab decision-makers have contributed to the elimination of the second option altogether, even though they continue to demand its implementation. From then on, they can only move and act within the strict confines of an American-Israeli security framework, tilting the balances heavily in favor of option one.

Netanyahu's intransigence and disrespect for agreements previously signed, and his successor's negotiating pattern simply reflect consistent Israeli strategy and beliefs, common sense negotiation principles and calculations, and a well thought out understanding of the hard facts of the evolving situation. If the Arab negotiators in the course of their concessionary behavior were willing to undermine their entitlements, then naturally their opponent would not feel obliged to substantively revert to the less favorable linkage of land for peace. This goes for Barak as much as for Netanyahu.

Netanyahu's less than subtle approach, served to expose three extremely important factors. In the maze of the perception altering processes that had overwhelmed the region, those factors were conveniently obscured from the Arab and Muslim people: 1--Israel's structural and expansionist threat, masked in terms of security concerns, to the whole region and not just the Palestinians, 2--the bankruptcy of the Arab regimes, and 3--the true nature and stakes of the civilizational conflict. In as far as there had been tense relations between the Clinton administration and Netanyahu, it had to do more with the absence of the subtlety required for the pursuance of the above strategy--a strategy which the Labor party is perceived to be much more adept at directing. Barak's style has been more effective in reestablishing the space necessary for Arab regimes to make further concessions. In many respects and contrary to the impression given by Arab media and officials, Netanyahu has been a blessing in disguise.

### *The Third Option*

In what is tantamount to a vicious circle, capitulation can only add to bitterness, resentment and ultimately to the mobilization of forces of indigenous resistance. This would be expected to bring forth even if in the long run option three. The Palestinian core of the Arab-Israeli conflict obscured the underlying religious and strategic foundations of the colliding wills. In as long as the focus was on the presumed confrontation between two nationalisms, Jewish and Palestinian, over the same piece of land, these more inherent contradictions were made less visible.

With the gradual and steady collapse of nationalistic justifications and with the issue of Jerusalem coming to the forefront, the Arab-Israeli conflict is being relinked with the religious dimension and its coextensive strategic underpinnings. This linkage emerges from the insight that "a nation's interest derive from its identity" (Huntington, 1997: 1). No longer is the confrontation solely over the same piece of land or scarce resources, be it territory or water, but more so over belief systems and basic values. Since Jerusalem is a religious cause, the clash over it can not be secularized (i.e. become solely a political issue). As such 'peace' outcomes and legalities will always remain marginal considerations applicable in the domain of politics to the extent that the coercive framework that produced them continues in place. In the realm of religion such limitations may not function as a long-term viable deterrent. The religious logic of the conflict would very likely alter the terms of confrontation from reduced objective calculations to subjective metaphysical convictions. Such sources of neo-hostility can not be settled by imposing legal norms and enforcing them against rule-breakers, since ultimately they are irrelevant to the conflict. Strategic policies of deterrence are unlikely to contribute to peace and are more likely to promote conflict as they frustrate the pursuit of entitlements, identity, and basic values (Burton, 1984: 137-138).

In the Arab/Islamic World, Islamist groups are mostly motivated by the justice motive which is value oriented (entitlement-benefits), while actors committed to the 'peace process' tend to be more utility oriented (cost-benefits). Militant Islamic groups, and Muslims in general, continue as a

matter of faith and values to refuse to accept the basic existence of the enemy irrespective of what takes place at the political level. More fundamentally, these motives continue to be transferred from one generation to another in Islamic societies. Secondly, the contending parties to the conflict do not see anything in common with one another, nor is there any overwhelming desire or willingness to coexist (Abu-Nimer, 1996: 33-34). Thirdly, while the Palestinian issue is being transformed through the peace strategy, it is also being counter-transformed into a core religious principle, a substantive change foreshadowing a future Islamic-Jewish conflict. Whatever the political outcome of the 'peace' process, it is unlikely to resolve this broader confrontation which is now slowly but steadily taking a more ominous tilt. The constant foundations of Islam limit the possibilities of absorbing the changes induced or imposed by the 'peace' process. This poses an acute problem for the application of Western conflict resolution mechanisms in an Islamic context. If a negotiating formula is understood to reflect "a shared perception or definition of the conflict that establishes terms of trade, the cognitive structure of referents for a solution, or an applicable criterion of justice" (Zartman & Berman, 1982: 1-2), then it is clear that it is none of these. Therefore, there is no negotiating formula in the first place. Negotiation "as a process in which divergent values are combined into an agreed decision, ... based on ... appropriate stages, sequences, behaviors and tactics..." can only fade into irrelevance (Zartman & Berman, 1982: 95).

External mechanisms which, seek to emphasize or artificially construct common and super-ordinate goals or interests do not apply in this case. They could very well be seen as just another attempt at superimposing alien modes of thought and structures. 'Peace' as a process of de-escalation is not value free and does not bear the same implications for the different parties. Western power and conflict resolution principles for instance, frequently surmise that 'peace making' is not possible until conflicts have "ripened" to the extent where costs have escalated to the point at which parties are prepared to settle (Burton, 1990: 88). In the process, "[d]eciding whether or not to try to de-escalate a conflict and which strategy to pursue, necessarily involves value preferences regarding an acceptable outcome" (Kriesberg & Thorson, 1991: 24). While war may be condemned all along, "sanctions, punitive expeditions, pacifications, protection of treaties, international police, and measures to assure peace remain" (Schmitt, 1976: 79). A sweeping look at the Arab/Islamic World may help demonstrate the implications: Egypt prostrate and ineffectual, Syria isolated and pressured, Jordan an American-Israeli vassal, Palestinians cantonized, Iraq destroyed, Libya and Sudan embargoed, the Arabian Peninsula virtually occupied, Algeria having undergone a bloodbath, and Iran and other militant Islamist groups being contained or crushed. This condition is contrasted with a robust Jewish State, militarily more powerful than all its potential adversaries and nuclear capable if not accessible. Given such asymmetry, no substantive inducements exist for a just resolution.

Furthermore, to capitalize on the outcome of the Second Gulf War as an issue transforming event, Field (1994: 385) stressed that as a result of this war, the Arabs have come to recognize "...not only that they could not fight Israel but that many of them had no *interest* in doing so." A conclusion which the majority of the people in the Arab World-as distinct from their largely de-legitimized regimes-may not particularly share, yet which mind and perception altering mechanisms seek to induce.<sup>10</sup> Within this objective and psychological re-construction of the regional order, one can perceive Samuel Huntington's (1993) "Clash of Civilizations" argument not simply as an intellectual exercise to be supported or refuted at the academic-analytic level, but more so as the theoretical cover for a policy in the actual process of implementation. This policy attempts to procure and

justify the *ripe* environmental conditions for the establishment of ‘peace’ while reconstructing the Muslim world and crushing grass roots Islamist groups. To the extent that Islam is an active value that determines the subjective, and where and when possible the objective nature of the conflict, it constitutes an organizational counter-mechanism which will continue to prohibit the alteration of the conflict structure as a zero-sum game. This stems from Arabs’ and Muslims’ awareness that if American-Israeli ‘peace’ is to constitute the region’s new *interest*, this will require the transformation of the region’s *identity*. Islam will be attacked on the plane of its basic values not merely on that of the political.

The fact that Islam is entitlement driven (content-ontological) while the ‘peace’ process is cost articulated (process-epistemological), sets both on two incommensurable planes of interaction. Harmonizing thought systems alternatively necessitates that they be positioned within the same logical framework (Burton, 1990: 89). On the one hand, to harmonize ‘thought logics’ in the Arab/Muslim World, with that of the ‘peace’ strategy requires that counter-thoughts be either peripheralized and contained, or if necessary crushed. Identity configurations become at stake as land, despite its centrality, becomes secondary to more crucial civilizational considerations. Whereas an intractable conflict of the Arab-Israeli variety would require the consolidation and mobilization of a collective Islamic-Arab identity, the American-Israeli side conversely, has sought to impose the state secular identity as the highest value. Continued concessions by the Arab side have allowed their opponents to impose their own desired configuration. Primary and/or secondary identities are imposed not chosen as a result, as a direct outcome of the very structure of the negotiating process. This provided the Americans and the Israelis with the opportunity to single out the Arab parties. By accomplishing this purpose they have caused the Arabs to pursue contradictory and conflicting state policies, which ultimately led to their fragmentation, bringing them under virtual American (and Israeli) colonization and/or domination. Even by the standards of primacy of state values, the Arab ‘state’ has been a failure.<sup>11</sup> The extreme hostility to Islamist currents by parties to the ‘peace’ process actually reflects their opposition to any potential reconfiguration of regional identity in favor of religio-strategic valuations. Herein lies the essence of the so called ‘clash of civilizations’ and its camouflaged link to the ‘peace’ process. All else is detail. On the other hand, an Arab negotiator whose thought logic is reconstructed within the very framework of his adversary’s is reduced basically to a supplicant rather than a counterpart. His will and perceptions of reality continue to be managed and altered by the opponent, with any settlement arrived at likely to hinge solely on contingent power relations.

In focusing on the new Islamic enemy, the US has targeted what it calls ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘terrorist’ groups, aiming with the collaboration of client regimes and to different degrees of success, at neutralizing and marginalizing them. Any Islamist oppositional group was depicted as a “disturber of peace...(and) designated to be an outlaw of humanity” (Schmitt, 1976: 79). Yet in so doing, both parties seem to overlook “...the dynamic way in which the environment of conflict gets out of control” (Burton, 1990: 52). While it may be feasible to crush such groups through the overwhelming power of the state and/or external assistance, this does not solve the problem as long as the environmental conditions leading to their emergence remain in place and regenerate. Secondly, their suppression does not necessarily lead to the containment of Islamic dynamism, since the vitality of Islam is not constrained by, nor dependent upon their existence. Islam has a long and inherent tradition of revival, renewal and resurgence. Thirdly, even though many of those groups

could or had been actually marginalized, by mainstreaming Islam in public life and society at large, they have nevertheless succeeded in scoring a major strategic victory. Despite his assessment of political Islam as a failure, Olivier Roy (1994: 78) could still notice that although the specter of Islamic revolution has been fading, Islamic symbols continue to penetrate the society and the political discourse of the Muslim world more than ever. In a dialectical fashion, the retreat of political Islam has been accomplished by the advancement of Islam as a social condition. What Roy does not appear to anticipate is the dynamics of *exponential* change that is independent of the existence of politicized groups but which, if unhindered, would ultimately lead to their victory.

Exponential change is a substantive process, which involves a preliminarily slow and gradual subterranean shift.<sup>12</sup> In its earlier stages it borders on being imperceptible or even natural, calling for no special attention or in all practicalities not much could be done about it. Serious difficulties would arise, for instance, if Muslims were to be pressured or dissuaded from practicing their faith or rituals. But then, rituals do have practical social consequences and implications, which can not be isolated from the overall environment. They keep the faith and its values alive and are the foundations of its reproduction and its social and political influence. Under stress, they are frequently imbued with socio-political content as an expression of protest and opposition. Given the nature of the conflict promoting environment created by 'peace' dialectics and its concomitant structures, 'social' Islam at one stage or the other may very well transform into a political wave of mainstream religious activism engulfing society at large. 'Peace' dialectics become conducive to the development of a religio-national psychological mode, cutting across diverse social strata, strongly disposed toward resisting its impositions. This transformation, while subtle, inevitably reflects the substantive differences in conflict perceptions based upon costs as opposed to entitlements. In contradistinction to the former quantification, the latter demarcations will be "basic," "fundamental," "consciousness" based and "less mutable" (Huntington, 1993: 22 & 29). Very few if any of the existing regimes appear capable, willing or qualified to make credible claims to such alternatives or deal with their transformative implications. For instance, Osama al-Baz, (1998: 6) the political advisor to Mubarak responded to the Israeli negotiator's stalemating intransigence by declaring that the Arab states have 'several' options, the most important of which is the convening of a *new international conference* to save the peace process. Such statements which, reflect bankruptcy rather than the availability of any real choice structure, manifest a condition of *entrapment*. Entrapment is a decision-making process "whereby (regimes) escalate their commitment to a previously chosen, though failing, course of action in order to justify or 'make good on' prior investments." This dynamic frequently leads to 'irrational' decision making and outcomes to the extent that it escalates commitment when de-escalation or opting out may be the more intelligent thing to do (Brockner & Rubin, 1985: 5 & 7).<sup>13</sup> And while it may be argued that an alternative Islamist agenda may offer no assurances for a successful extrication, it would uphold a real measure of commitment and hope, given that the only guarantee the virtually failing 'state' seems to be able to offer is abject defeat.

The 'peace' process is contributing to the regeneration and the recharging of its own nemesis by reconnecting religion to the internal and external organizing principles of politics and strategy. Such linkage would allow for an ideological thrust to bear, that could serve to mobilize Arab/Muslim society and to channel its commitments toward the counter-transformation of the negotiating rules. Islam as a national resource could create options and space that are vital within the context of the threats that the Arab and Muslim nation face. By redefining the conflict in terms of its

broader religious and strategic horizons, while working actively toward the construction of new identity reconfigurations, Islam could provide for a situation in which “an asymmetry in the [re]evaluation of stakes may offset an asymmetry in the national power of the participants in a struggle” (Lockhart, 1979: 93). Such potential may heavily tilt the balance against the existing negotiating regimes and erode their sense of security and legitimacy. Neutralizing such challenges has called for a collaborative effort, between local rulers on the one hand, and regional and global forces on the other, in order to crush militant or serious oppositional manifestations. Through suppression and ‘education for peace’ they seek to snuff out the very value system upon which Muslims’ motivations may come to be based on (i.e. Islam itself). ‘Peace’ and war on Islam/justice have become two congruent if not, in many ways, identical processes.

### **Conclusion**

Religious and strategic factors continue to converge and conflate in their own special way, as the prospects of the American-Israeli ‘peace’ persist in harboring the roots of humiliation and bitterness. Defining Islam as the new enemy after the collapse of communism constitutes a strategic decision foreshadowing the American-Israeli project of redrawing the political and potentially geographical map of the Arab World. This upcoming wave will not only target disparate or marginalized Islamist groups or just Muslim regimes, but more broadly mainstream Islam and mainstream society. Expectations of the kind have slowly introduced a subtle messianic streak in conflict perceptions among many Muslims, and contributed to projecting images of upcoming apocalyptic events.

These policies, aiming at restructuring regional identities, are becoming increasingly transparent, exposing Israel not solely as a Palestinian national security threat, but a much broader Arab/Islamic one. The conflict will likely continue to transform in direct proportion to the increasing intensity of threat perceptions. That Islam is being politicized is not simply a matter of a religious doctrine that does not allow for the separation of religion and politics, but more fundamentally, a matter of justice and strategic considerations as well as religious convictions. In its call to arms, Islam is not about violence and extremism but about the legitimate and unequivocal right to self-defense. It is a statement that threats to security, identity and religious values can not be contained by suppression or by mere settlement arrangements. By the same token, ‘peace’ as cant is not about negotiations and cooperation but about the destruction of values. It is a statement that motives, at the very core of human needs and existence, will have to be neutralized and/or compromised.

Western conflict resolution mechanisms do not seem to be well equipped to cope with these unique characteristics of present and future Arab-Israeli antagonisms, nor with their neo-hostility structures. Available theoretical constructs have externalized religious beliefs as determining components, reducing them to culturally alterable variables. Religiously held convictions, and especially Muslims’ views of their Jewish/Zionist adversary, remain fixed conflict parameters. Conflict theory’s reaction was to continue to reject such factors, largely as a source of cognitive dissonance, and to perceive religion more as a matter of unwelcome complexity that falls beyond the limits of the field, except perhaps as a reduced cultural variable. As a result, acts of violence and resistance perpetrated under the rubric of religious justification are either condemned as terrorist aberrations or analyzed and understood in a rather condescending fashion. What these theories have utterly failed to do is to address crucial questions regarding whether “the weak have the right to

make a different set of rules for themselves” (Orwell, 1981: 40). More importantly, how conflict mechanisms can cope with the Israeli-Palestinian showdown as only one facet of a multi-dimensional conflict in which religion is a parameter not a variable, as these mechanisms imply. These implicit yet very real underpinnings will continue to undermine the impositions of the ‘peace’ process. The fear that the Arab/Muslim World would go ‘Islamist’ is the fear that Western settlement mechanisms do not and cannot meet the basic human needs of its people.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Balfour Declaration dated November 2, 1917 was just five weeks before Jerusalem fell to the forces of the British General Edmund Allenby. In so doing, Great Britain was basically renegeing on its promises of independence made to the Arabs in return for their support against the Turks during WWI (Heikal, 1996: 28-29).

<sup>2</sup> According to the King-Crane commission, appointed by American President Woodrow Wilson for the purpose of determining which of the Western nations should act as the mandatory power for Palestine, “...the initial claim, often submitted by Zionist representatives, that they have a ‘right’ to Palestine, based on an occupation of two thousand years ago, can hardly be seriously considered.” (Laqueur & Rubin, 1995: 27).

<sup>3</sup> Harkabi was a former Chief of Israeli Military intelligence (1955-1959), and an advisor on intelligence to the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. While aiming at breaking-down the Arab consensus, the US subsequently proclaimed itself an “honest broker.” (US Letter of Assurances to the Palestinians, October 18, 1991, in Laqueur and Rubin, 1995: 576). In the same letter, the Americans indicated that negotiations would take place along two tracks between Israel and Arab States and Israel and Palestinians, effectively singling them out through the very structure of the negotiation framework (Laqueur and Rubin, 1995: 574).

<sup>4</sup> In a *Report of a Study Group Convened by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* it was proposed: “Regional water plans would be an important component of the bilateral and multilateral accords. The opportunity to increase access to water would serve as one of the *inducements* for Israel to negotiate security accords with its neighbors. Projects to be given high priority would include the Unity Dam on the Yarmouk River involving Jordan, Syria and Israel, pipelines for water from the Litani River in Lebanon and from Turkey or Egypt, and a joint Jordan-Israel desalinization plant in Eilat/Aqaba” (Lesch, 1992: 158). Notice the pattern of concessions required of the Arabs so that Israel would simply *accept* negotiating security accords with its neighbors; Israeli security of course being paramount over other actors’ considerations. A security for peace rather than the Madrid land for peace formula is clearly being suggested here several years before Netanyahu’s coming to power.

<sup>5</sup> According to Benjamin Netanyahu, Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated Labor party leader and ex-Prime Minister, “was very clear that there were no limitations whatsoever on Israeli construction in Jerusalem. Rabin was the one who authorized the building of Har Homa (Jabal Ghoneim colony)” (Netanyahu, 1997a: 51).

<sup>6</sup> For instance, despite Barak's intransigence and in response to abstract pledges, the US declared its commitment to maintaining Israel's “qualitative edge” and “deterrent capability.” This included upgrading Israel's airforce and Arrow defense systems (\$ 250 million), increasing aid from \$ 1.9 billion to \$ 2.4 billion a year, and finally obtaining congressional approval to provide \$ 1.2

billion so that Israel can build “fortified” by-pass roads to isolated ‘settlements’ in the occupied West Bank to ensure a “secure” Israeli redeployment under the terms of the 1998 Wye agreement (Usher, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Commenting on the result, and perhaps justifying Netanyahu’s position and his own call for *redesigning* the Oslo agreements, Kissinger stated that any analogy to the early stages of the peace process was illusory. As he put it “in the earlier negotiation, step-by-step progress relieved tensions and built confidence. On the West Bank, the opposite was the case. Both sides had jumped into the “peace process” without having clarified workable objectives and expected to wrest that clarity from the process itself. Instead, it has compounded their perplexities. This was no accident. Clearly, Arafat was led to believe by Israeli, American and European interlocutors that the final destination was at least the ‘67 borders and recognition of a Palestinian statehood. But that ignored the vast difference in the negotiations between Israel and the PLO compared with those between Israel and the neighboring Arab states” (Kissinger, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Note how Mansour equates Jewish Israel with Arab Palestine and Jordan. He also seems to be insinuating that extending the water to Israel may be the price Egypt, in its ‘commitment’ to the Arab cause, may have to pay. In what is tantamount to a trial balloon, Mansour appears to be reviving the offer which Sadat had made in the early 1980s to extend the Nile water to Israel in return for Arab land; an offer which the Menachem Begin Likud government rejected at the time. This is where the *Toushki* project, claiming to create a new living space in the South-Western part of the country, may come in handy as a scenario. Based on this project, Egypt would make a case for much needed additional sources of water supply, which could be accessed if an agreement is reached whereby African states would gain financially. Egypt would receive more water and so would Israel. Any internal opposition could then be denounced as unpatriotic, foolish and perhaps even treasonous since it would undermine the ‘national project’ of *Toushki*. In this set scenario, providing Israel with water would be the ‘nationalistic’ thing to do. Perhaps at the heart of this matter lies Egypt’s real hostility to the Islamic regime in Sudan, which appears to be oblivious to financial incentives of the kind and therefore perceived as an obstacle to such a grand design.

<sup>9</sup> Moshe Dayan told President Jimmy Carter, before Anwar Sadat’s visit to Israel that “the future is with Egypt. If you take one wheel off a car, it won’t drive....” Mirroring this view, Carter indicated in his memoirs that “it was fairly obvious that the key to any future military threats against Israel was the Egyptians...” Yitzhak Rabin indicated “Syria alone was no problem whatsoever for Israel,” and that “terrorism is not a threat to Israel’s existence... I wish that the so called PLO would be the only problem.” “Egypt,” he stressed “is the key country” (quotes in Finkelstein 1995: 171).

<sup>10</sup> Commenting on several polls in the Arab World related to this matter, Edward Said (1995: 134) observed: “In every instance public opinion has in fact expressed no enthusiasm for normalization with Israel. On mass level this suggests that the sense of defeat is not quite as widespread and prostrate as official policy and the logic of capitulationist intellectuals would have us believe.” In the same vein, an *Al-Ahram Weekly* poll result indicated that “the Egyptian public ... (has) its own ax to grind with Israel” (as quoted by Gerges 1995: 75). Even Shenouda III, the Coptic Patriarch of Egypt, prohibited his followers from making pilgrimages to Jerusalem, declaring that “(t)he Christians of Egypt will not be the traitors of the Arab World” (as quoted in Heikal, 1996a: 553).



<sup>11</sup> At the Oslo meeting held during the first week of November 1999, between Arafat, Barak and Bill Clinton, Barak, according to *Newsweek* “signaled his willingness to accept a Palestinian state. But to the consternation of the Clinton administration and Palestinian leaders, he also made it clear he wants to disentangle the two economies.... Many Palestinians believe that such disengagement would be a disaster...” Note the psychological pressure exerted and the clear Palestinian dependency on Israel. One can not but wonder as to the nature of the prospective ‘state’ (Klaidman & Rees, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> A typical exponential change curve moves along in an almost horizontal line for a long period of time (tradition) before showing any marked shift in direction. Then, once there is a significant increase in the rate of change there is a sudden acceleration until the curve moves into a nearly vertical direction--a wave of *mainstream* change or revolution (Burton, 1990: 53-54).

<sup>13</sup> Quote de-italicized. *Irrationality* here is not to be confused with the sense in which *non-rationality* has been used above in the Finnish and Vietnamese cases. Irrational decisions could be made based on extreme caution and calculations. To many it would seem to be rational not to waste away sunk costs--a situation in which seeming rational inputs could lead to irrational outcomes.

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