

Conflicts in the Second World:

A View on Track 2 Diplomacy

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About the Author

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In addition to her research, Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg has been deeply involved since 1993 in Track 2 diplomacy with colleagues from Azerbaijan and Georgia. She is the coordinator of the Armenian branch of the Transcaucasian Women's Dialogue and participated in a number of workshops organized under the auspices of the National Peace Foundation and the United States Information Agency.

Among her publications are "The South Caucasus: Paradigms for the Future," *Peacebuilder* 1, no. 2 (1999), "Social Equity and Social Cohesion: Traditional Values and Modern Reality," (Yerevan, 1998, in Russian), "Ethnic Mentality and Social Modernization: The Ideological and the Archetypal," *Self-Consciousness: Mine and Ours* (Moscow, 1997, in Russian), and "Ethnic Mentality as a Creative Space for Sacralization of the Future," *Philosophical Studies* 3 (Moscow, 1996, in Russian).

About the Institute

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, has as its principal mission to advance the understanding and resolution of significant and persistent conflicts among individuals, communities, identity groups, and nations.

In the fulfillment of its mission, the institute conducts a wide range of programs and outreach. Among these are its graduate programs offering the Doctoral and Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, clinical consultancy services offered by individual members of the faculty, and public programs and education that include the annual Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Lecture Series.

The institute's major research interests include the study of conflict and its resolution, the exploration and analysis of conditions attracting parties in conflict to the negotiating table, the role of third parties in dispute resolution, and the application of conflict resolution methodologies in local, national, and international settings. The institute's Applied Practice and Theory Program develops teams of faculty, students, and allied practitioners to analyze and address topics such as conflict in schools and other community institutions, crime and violence, jurisdictional conflicts between local agencies of government, and international conflicts.

The Northern Virginia Mediation Service is affiliated with the institute and provides conflict resolution and mediation services and training to schools, courts, and local agencies and practitioners in communities across Northern Virginia and the Washington metropolitan area.

For more information, please call (703) 993-1300 or check the institute's web page at www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR/.

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Foreword

Natalya Tovmasyan Riegg has been a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) and a Research Fellow at the National Peace Foundation since 1999. This Working Paper reflects her thinking about the problems of creating a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in her native Armenia. We at ICAR have benefited greatly from our association with her, and it is with great pleasure that we share her thoughts in this Working Paper.

Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg brings her background and research in social psychology together with her experience in Track 2 diplomacy engaged in seeking settlement of the conflicts that plague the Transcaucasus region to the thoughtful reflections on conflict in the former Soviet Union. These “Second World” conflicts are driven by ethnonational concerns and have been difficult to resolve in part because of the parties’ focus on narrow issues of sovereignty and land rather than a broader conception of development in a globalized world. Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg supplements her analysis of contemporary ethnonational conflicts with her reflections on her involvement in a series of Track 2 diplomatic initiatives in Transcaucasia, including her role as the coordinator of the Armenian branch of the Transcaucasian Women’s Dialogue and her participation in a variety of workshops on conflict in the region.

In her analysis of “Second World” conflicts, Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg points to the growing importance of civil society—what she identifies as nongovernmental actors—in driving conflicts. She argues that an effective constituency supporting a nonmilitaristic form of patriotism is needed to create the context for conflict resolution. The role of public opinion and hence the importance of Track 2 diplomacy with citizens’ groups is growing and needs to receive concentrated attention to build peace.

The conclusions developed in this Working Paper have implications for two issues that are at the center of ICAR’s continuing work—the analysis of deeply rooted ethnonational conflicts and the practice in Track 2 diplomacy. According to Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg, a key element in building peace is to promote the reconceptualization of development

from an obsolete, conflict-creating, land-related assertion of interests to a broader sense of development appropriate to the modern, globalized world. She argues that “third-party facilitators and mediators in Track 2 efforts [should] focus more clearly upon the need to get the primary parties to begin reformulating their national interests in terms of modern-day realities about the sources of economic development and national security [and thereby] help to transform the dominant social paradigms now driving countries into conflict into paradigms supporting regional cooperation and development.”

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg and with other colleagues from Transcaucasia and believe that this Working Paper makes an important contribution to our ongoing search for answers to the problem of conflict and identity.

Sandra I. Cheldelin, Director
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
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Ethnonational conflicts have erupted in many parts of the world since the end of the Cold War, including those parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe labeled as the “Second World.” Among the types of interventions that have been tried to manage or resolve these conflicts has been the problem-solving approach. This essay will examine ethnonational conflicts in the Second World and will propose some revisions to the standard problem-solving approach in order to better resolve such conflicts. In order to analyze these conflicts, we need to ask the following: Who are the parties to the conflict? What are the issues? What are the interests of each party? What options or alternatives do the parties have in pursuing or realizing their interests? What are the implications of the various options for reducing conflict or bringing about tolerance and peace?

Parties

Unlike the main conflict during the Cold War, where the principal actors were the political authorities of the two sides, today many of the key actors are nongovernmental forces, including populations at large. Indeed, whether we look at the Yugoslav, Russo-Chechen, Armenian-Azeri, or intra-Georgian conflicts, we see nongovernmental forces and public opinion significantly participating in both initiating and supporting the continuation of conflict. In short, nongovernmental actors and public opinion count as much as governmental ones.

The first military conflict between Russia and Chechnya, for example, was terminated in 1996 by a cease-fire and an agreement to postpone decisions over the ultimate status of Chechnya for five years. Chechen elections then were held for the “legitimate authorities of Chechnya,” and Aslan Maschadov was selected president. Governmental leaders in both Chechnya and Russia anticipated that the next steps at resolving the situation would take place in 2001, after the five-year “cooling-off period” had expired. However, nongovernmental actors on the Chechen side took actions in 1998 and 1999 that broke the balance. They invaded the neighboring region of Dagestan, urged it to separate from Russia, and sought to join it to Chechnya in an Islamic union. They also allegedly bombed several buildings in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia. Russia reacted, or overreacted, and drove the rebels from Dagestan, destroyed Grozny, and sought to annihilate the rebels throughout Chechnya.

The point is that the official authorities in Chechnya were unable to manage the situation vis-à-vis the nongovernmental actors (NGAs). The same type of problem has arisen in other countries suffering from conflict. In short, because of the activity of NGAs in today’s conflicts, the problem is not just to *achieve* an agreement but also to *maintain* agreements.

Part of the difficulty in maintaining agreements, argues Hampson, “has to do with the nature of civil conflicts in today’s world. Unlike the ideologically driven block-to-block struggles of the Cold War, these ‘protracted social conflicts’ are characterized by intense factional struggle

between rival groupings additionally motivated by non-ideological factors. Typically, these conflicts are rooted in a multiplicity of conflicting and overlapping tensions evolving from ethnicity, religion, nationalism, communal strife, socioeconomic problems, regional grievances, and so on” (Hampson 1996, 4).

One also could argue that in the Second World the rise in the importance of NGAs as parties to conflict has sociopsychological as well as institutional causes. The Cold War ended with the victory of the free world over totalitarianism. That victory, which heightened the global significance of democracy, created the objective conditions in which nongovernmental organizations could be formed in the Second World, having been previously banned by the totalitarian state. More important, the end of the Cold War created a psychological milieu, or mindset, that encouraged individuals and groups to stand up and become actors on the national policy stage, whether or not their objective was to be elected or otherwise participate in government.

The institutional factor contributing to the significance of nongovernmental actors as a party to new conflicts is the weakness in the management of the new Second World states. The new conflicts, in most cases, have occurred where there have been a disintegration of old authoritarian regimes and a collapse of the state. In these conflicted countries, the authoritarian mechanisms of government have been dissolved, but democratic mechanisms (rule of law, democratic institutions) have not become adequately operational, so the new states are weak or “soft.”

Both sides of these conflicts are experiencing or suffering from the weakness and ineffectiveness of the new government machinery. As a result, coordination between the government and the public becomes highly limited, distorted, and often problematic. As Donald Rothchild describes soft states, “the state and its institutions are ... unable to implement their regulations effectively through the territories ostensibly under their control” (Rothchild 1997, 27). Consequently, “where individuals and groups successfully defy state norms, the weak state can do little to stop them from opting for a kind of de facto autonomy” (Rothchild 1997, 42). Putting it in more positive terms, to cope with governmental weakness, the private sector has organized itself and risen

to challenge the state in many sectors, including in the formulation of policy options to meet social and security challenges.

It is the hypothesis of this essay that, in the large majority of countries, the public is no longer a passive recipient of the decisions made by the authorities. Be it through relatively democratic procedures (as in Eastern Europe) or through more anarchic ones (as in the Serb areas of Bosnia, Albanian areas of Kosovo, and Chechnya), nongovernmental public actors today have risen to the level of decision maker.

Here we need to clarify our understanding of the term “public.” Obviously, each side in a conflict is a compound entity that includes different, often rival, groups. However, the majority of the population on both sides of a conflict usually consists of ordinary people, men and women who have no personal interest in the conflict, except loyalty to their national or ethnic group. Their prevailing attitude toward a given conflict is reflected primarily in the results of elections. It is these “common” people who constitute “the public.” One could also say that “the public” includes civil society actors, but it cannot be reduced only to such organizations. One of the key attributes of civil society is that “it exists within the framework of the rule of law” (Marshall 1996, 55). As some public actors exist and act outside of the law, the “public” cannot simply be limited to civil society. Chechen rebels and Georgian opposition supporters are good examples of those elements of the “public” who are not within civil society and do not act within the rule of law.

Through electoral processes and sometimes through less-regular means, the public makes its preferences known among various policy choices and different leaders. The decisions made, through voting or otherwise, in countries in conflict depend largely on whether the majority of the population constitutes a “peace constituency” or a “conflict constituency.” For example, during the last Russian presidential elections, Vladimir Putin defeated other, better-known presidential candidates, mainly because he supported a hard line toward Chechnya. That position was in accordance with the attitude of the majority of the Russian public, as revealed in the media and public opinion surveys prior to and during the elections. The division of Czechoslovakia or the first election of Chandrika Bandaranaike-Kumaratunga as president of Sri Lanka demonstrate cases where a “peace constituency” dominated a “con-

flict constituency.” Politicians may appear to be in control, but often they are simply reflecting (or pandering to) the prejudices, paradigms, and perceived interests of the NGAs and people at large.

Conflicts may take place in a geopolitical world of *realpolitik*, where weak, transitional states are often dependent on the geopolitical interests of stronger countries, but the principal actors of these ethnonational dramas are often the people themselves. In this age of democracy and democratization, the people ultimately choose and guide their political authorities. No outside manipulation can make people fight each other if they are clearly unwilling to do so, but fight they do. Important political decisions, including ones related to conflict, can rarely be announced by authorities without prior preparation of public opinion or public discussion. To be durable, decisions must be legitimized by popular support.

A Problem-Solving Approach

The increased role of NGAs in Second World conflicts may require some revision of the ways in which third parties (e.g., the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, foreign academics, and nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]) currently seek to limit or resolve conflicts. First, because of the need for public legitimization of political decisions, nonformal Track 2 efforts should perhaps be considered on a par with formal Track 1 efforts. Second, the main accent in conflict management should be shifted from obtaining a *settlement* to achieving a *resolution* of the conflicts. A settlement that is not based on the resolution of the underlying conflict of interests is simply too fragile and subject to subsequent, violent revision. As Christopher Mitchell and Michael Bank have written,

Intervention leading to a *settlement* should be recognized as a victory for the goal of the intervening party but a defeat for the goals of both the original conflicting parties. The violent conflict ends, but the goals of the original adversaries are usually still there, still at issue. The underlying interests are still unmet. This means that although the problem

of violent conflict is no longer *manifest*, it remains *latent*. Take away the power of the intervening party (the peace-keeping force, the economic aid, the outside guarantees or whatever) and the goals and interests of the conflicting parties are likely to be immediately re-asserted. The problem of violent conflict reappears even years later, as it has in the former Yugoslavia, in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in other parts of the former USSR following perestroika, glasnost and the break-up of the Soviet Union (Mitchell and Banks 1996, 4–5).

To address underlying interests in the Second World's conflicts, "an academically based, unofficial, third-party approach," (Kelman 1992, 64) can be very useful, if not a necessity. Such Track 2 activities, which address underlying interests and complement Track 1 efforts, are a part of the "problem-solving approach" to conflict. As John Burton put it, one of the purposes of the approach is to encourage the parties to "treat the conflict, not as a contest, but as a problem to be solved" (Burton 1969, 42). Furthermore, the approach is "based upon the assumption that conflict avoidance and resolution are possible by bringing about altered perceptions, by offering different interpretations of behavior and changed assessments of values and costs, and by drawing attention to options not previously considered" (Burton 1969, 42).

Issues

What are these ethnonational conflicts about? Is there a common set of issues generally dividing the people and parties on the two sides of these conflicts? While there are many unique characteristics to each, there seems to be a set that can be traced through all the post-Cold War conflicts. In virtually all cases there are two communities desiring or claiming control over the same territory. One community wishes to "liberate" or assert independent control, while the other seeks to maintain its current authority over an area. Be it in Kosovo, Srebrenica, Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Abkhazia, Ossetia, or other parts of the former

Soviet Union, the main issue is the control of territory and the attempt of peoples to form independent nations.

These forms and motivations of conflict, while similar to those in medieval Europe, are different from more modern conflicts. The American, French, and Russian revolutions were fought mainly over the principles upon which society should be based, not over territory. World War II was as much about the principles that should govern political, societal, and international relations as it was a conflict over territory. And the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan were mostly ideological battles. But today's conflicts in the Second World are based less on the form or principles that should guide the governments of territories as they are ethnic demands for the physical control of territories.

Interests

In identifying and discussing the ethnonational interests of conflicting parties, let us focus upon popular perceptions of those interests. What are the perceptions that drive a people to continue a war, even when they are tired and deprived by it? What makes them oppose compromises and peaceful agreements and, thus, support the continuation of a conflict? A common answer is that they are strongly motivated by patriotism and the desire for security. People love their motherland and wish to see it thrive. Moreover, there seems to be an implicit assumption that the well-being and, ultimately, the survival of an ethnic group are tied to the existence of its own nation-state. Concomitantly, popular opinion tends to equate the size of national territory and its resources to the level of national strength and prosperity. Small wonder, then, that patriots consider the acquisition and preservation of territory to be an overriding supergoal.

A clear example of the uncompromising nature of popular opinion and populations at large is provided by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In 1992, Azerbaijani forces suffered serious losses and had to retreat from the enclave. Azeri president Ayaz Mutalibov was then forced to resign, on the charge that he had taken too soft a line on the dispute. Subsequently, the more hawkish leader of the nationalistic Popular Front,

Abulfaz Elchibey, was elected president, with the promise to retake Nagorno-Karabakh. The point is that the military defeat did not lead the population at large to seek a new, nonmilitary approach to resolve the situation. Instead, it caused the electorate to dig in its uncompromising heels and elect an even more militaristic leader, regardless of the prospect of facing new losses and deprivations, which inevitably occurred.

A similar phenomenon was seen six years later in Armenia. In 1998, Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrosian had to resign after indicating that he was ready to accept an agreement to settle the war with Azerbaijan. The political establishment, supported by the electorate and NGAs, simply had no willingness to accept any compromises. The next elected president of Armenia was a hawkish war hero, Robert Kocharian, who had also been president of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. It is even more telling in the Armenian case that the one presidential candidate who proposed a nonmilitaristic approach to resolving the conflict, Ashot Bleyan, finished in last place, getting just 0.11 percent of the vote. Now, Kocharian seems to be considering a negotiated settlement, but he faces resistance from the very forces who elected him.

The other strongly motivating element of the search for security also compels people to initiate and continue conflicts. Almost all the ethnonational groups in conflict suffer, to some degree, from a sense of insecurity. Often the anxiety comes from neighbors (in the case of international conflicts) or from majority/minority groups (in the case of civil wars and breakaway regions) that pose both real and perceived threats. From the point of view of the anatomy of conflicts, the perceived threats are as dangerous as the real ones.

For example, one of the main reasons given by the Russian government for its recent operations in Chechnya was the apparent terrorist bombing of apartment buildings in Moscow and other Russian cities. These bombings were allegedly done by Chechen terrorists. The Western media kept pointing out that there was no reliable evidence that they were really done by the Chechens. From the point of view of conflict analysis (and not from the point of view of condemning one of the sides), however, the issue of the responsibility for the bombing is

not of great importance. What is important is that the majority of Russians *perceive* those explosions to have been caused by the Chechens. This *perception* has, in turn, contributed to a strong sense of insecurity, which has further contributed to the support of the war in Chechnya by the majority of Russians.

To recapitulate, the paradigm still guiding public opinion in the post-Cold War, ethnonational conflicts in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and many other areas is that national security and welfare demand that territorial control be maximized and opponents be beaten into submission. This paradigm of ethnonational interests, which is held by the public at large, creates the milieu in which peacebuilding forces have to operate.

So the last question to be asked is the following: What are the possible options facing the parties to post-Cold War conflicts that would allow them to achieve their various real or imagined interests? Additionally, what alternatives could be recommended to the parties to resolve conflicting visions of their respective ethnonational interests?

Options

Traditional Land-Based Objectives: The question of options for addressing the ethnic or national interests can be effectively approached in the context of evolving, broad historic social processes. During the last three hundred years, the principal political, economic, and cultural actors of the world community have been, undeniably, nation-states. Accordingly, for a social or ethnic community to become strong, developed, and an independent actor on the world stage, it has had to have its own territory and nation-state status. Moreover the main measures for the power and wealth of a nation-state have been land related; that is, the extent of territory and the amount of natural resources. As a result, patriotism has been largely expressed over the last 300 years through struggles for physical territory, political independence, irredentism, and the creation of nation-states. These forms of patriotic expression, often dangerous, difficult, and heroic, were suitable to their ends.

Development-Based Objectives: Since World War II, however, the measure or standard of national/ethnic power has become more ambiguous. During a relatively short time, the countries that were defeated in that war, and even lost part of their territories (Germany and Japan), have grown incomparably richer and gained prestige by exercising a new, alternative approach to power. They emphasized economic, technological, scientific, informational, and other development-inducing policies in their march to national power and international respect. Other countries, particularly in Asia, that experienced impressive national progress—Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Malaysia—pursued similar policies to increase their national well-being and prestige, and ignored the siren song of territorial expansionism.

In short, the utilization of development-inducing policies, particularly those that emphasize technological, economic, regional, and global cooperation as an approach to the achievement of national well-being (versus land-related approaches), is a serious option to be pondered by people who want to see their countries rich, strong, and prosperous.

Globalization Factors: An equally serious change in global realities became increasingly obvious during the last decade of the 20th century: the concept of globalization and a global community. In a very broad sense, globalization may be described as a new form of consciousness, in which (most of) the world is viewed and felt to be a single, undivided whole. Economic globalization; globalization of business and finances; globalization of popular culture; globalization of academic culture (described as an emergence of the Faculty Club International in Berger 1997, 25); the development of worldwide health problems such as AIDS; and the extension of the concept of human rights (“ecumenism of the rights of man,” in the words of the French sociologist Daniel Herrew-Lager [Herrew-Lager 1998, 71]) all reflect and undergird the new consciousness.

These and other globalization processes are challenging and weakening both the sovereignty of the nation-state and the role of the nation-state as the principle performer on the world’s stage. This thesis can be illustrated by many present-day developments. For example, sitting down at home, next to my computer, connected to the Internet, I

find myself in a worldwide informational space, in which I can address any of my interests—even to skinny-dipping and Buddhism. Other than choosing to remain highly undeveloped, there is no longer much that any nation-state can do to prevent the dissemination of naturist or Buddhist ideals. Even the Chinese and Iranians have found that they cannot effectively deprive ordinary citizens of access to the Internet. The ideas upon which cultures are formed are no longer susceptible to traditional modes of national limitation, control, manipulation, or censorship.

Even more problematic (and increasingly less practical) are national restrictions on economic, business, and financial relations. When a German is implicitly changing marks into dollars and then to yen to buy a car over the Internet in Japan, without even leaving home in Germany, the resulting flow of electronic money across international borders challenges the very concept of national sovereignty over monetary policy in Germany, Japan, and the United States. An endless list of such examples could be given.

The point is that, in the modern world, subnational and transnational actors are increasingly challenging the once-exclusive role of the nation-state. The present-day world is, increasingly, not so much a sum of nation-states as it is a system of interdependent societies. That interdependence or connectedness creates other, new, and important options for people who wish to advance the prosperity of their ethnic communities. Can it be doubted that there are now better ways to promote the cultural self-expression and economic performance of an ethnic group than through bloody and costly struggles for political statehood? Are there not unquestionably better applications for the tens of thousands of lives and hundreds of thousands of the U.S. dollars that are being spent in the pursuit of the phantom necessity of an independent nation-state?

An Aside on Personal Track-2 Experiences

Before formulating a proposal for some adjustments in the Track 2 approach to the resolution of the Second World conflicts, let me provide some background on an initiative in which I took part. Since 1993

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An Aside on Personal Track-2 Experiences

Before formulating a proposal for some adjustments in the Track 2 approach to the resolution of the Second World conflicts, let me provide some background on an initiative in which I took part. Since 1993

I have been participating in Track 2 efforts for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I was a coordinator of the Armenian branch of the Transcaucasian Women's Dialogue, which brought together professional women from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, and was organized under the auspices of the National Peace Foundation. In the summers of 1997 and 1998, I was a member of the Armenian-Azerbaijani team of professors who conducted workshops on conflict prevention and management for mixed groups of Armenian and Azerbaijani students in Tbilisi State University (under the auspices of the National Peace Foundation). As a visiting scholar in the United States, I participated in an October 1999 Newly Independent States subregional project for Azerbaijan and Armenia, "Conflict Resolution: Second Tier/ Public Diplomacy," which was organized under the auspices of the U.S. Information Agency and brought together 12 NGO leaders from Azerbaijan and Armenia. In December 1999, I attended the symposium "Women Waging Peace," a global initiative of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and cosponsored by Hunt Alternatives, which brought together women from nine conflicted regions of the world.

The positive impulse of these activities has been great. Each time I have been reminded how important personal contacts and discussions are for changing stereotyped images of the "enemy," and for overcoming the demonization of opponents as a group. It was fascinating to learn that Ada Manafova, an Azeri University professor, was as scared as I by the brutality of the Karabakh conflict. It was great to find out that another colleague from Azerbaijan appreciated the musical sociology of Theodor Adorno and the fiction of Herman Hess. We Armenians and Azeris had a common language—Russian. We shared experiences from the Soviet past. We even had a similar regional cuisine. Generally speaking, we discovered in each other and in ourselves dimensions of identity besides the ethnic one—gender, professional, regional, ex-Soviet, just human identity. And these other identities created a counterbalance to our ethnic confrontation.

The same thing happened to our students. In the beginning they were apprehensive and even hostile to one another. That was understandable, given the background of a long conflict and the fact that

almost none of them had previously seen a representative of the opposite side. Gradually, however, while sharing classrooms and dining together, the impersonal and mythologized images of the enemy were challenged by the interaction and observed common characteristics of fellow students. They ended up discussing Nike shoes and the music of Prodigy (which also underscored the reality of globalization). The Armenian and Azeri students even played football and performed a stage play together. In other words, the students, as well as the professors, found lines of common, nonethnic identity that helped them to forget, for a while, the ethnic confrontation. Forget, but not reconcile. Sadly, the happy atmosphere of functional cooperation did not induce some "hyphenated," integrated identity, analogous to the "hyphenated American" phenomenon. We never felt ourselves Ex-Soviet-Armenians and Ex-Soviet-Azeris or Caucasian-Armenians and Caucasian-Azeris. It was rather like *Armenian-even-though-ex-Soviet*, or *Azeri-despite-Caucasian-proximities*. Why?

Track-2 Diplomacy

Current Practices: To answer this question let us look at our experience in Track 2 activities. In our analysis of the post-Cold War ethnic conflicts, we came to the conclusion that the main interest of the opposing sides is an aspiration for security and national welfare. Therefore, it seems logical that Track 2 diplomacy, in its efforts to create peace constituencies on both sides, should concentrate on finding win-win solutions for the popular quest on both sides for security and national welfare. How well have the practices of Track 2 diplomacy, which I have observed, addressed this task?

Generally speaking, the various workshops and conclaves have fairly adequately decreased the sense of insecurity of the participants. The meetings and joint activities contributed to trust building, to better understanding of the positions of opponents, and to the elimination of many perceived threats. Again, real people rarely prove to be those black villains that are drawn by worried ethnonational imaginations.

Unfortunately, the Track 2 workshops in which I participated were

less successful in terms of addressing the popular quest for national welfare, because of the way in which national welfare was defined. Unlike the security issue, the issue of national welfare, up to now, has gained nothing from the meeting of ordinary people from the two sides. While meeting each other, people are able to create human ties, including personal friendship and perhaps even love. But as long as fulfillment of one's patriotic interests (particularly the extension of national territory) requires the failure of the other's patriotic interests, traditional contacts at the Track 2 level cannot eliminate the objective contradiction. In the framework of a win-lose interpretation of national interest, an increased amount of contact can only increase the probability of dramatic collisions when the emerging feeling of personal affection is confronted with the sense of patriotic duty. What must happen, to overcome the contradiction and to avoid collision, is a reformulation of the meaning of national welfare.

Dealing with Contradictions: Rather than working on the need for reformulation, Track 2 diplomacy has, all too often, approached the problem of the contradiction of ethnonational interests in the two following ways. In most cases the ethnonational identity has been basically ignored and replaced by other dimensions of identity, such as identity by gender, profession, age, and so forth. As we tried to show above, this approach (based on the idea of functional cooperation as a path to conflict resolution) does work to some extent, but its peacebuilding possibilities are limited. In other cases, when the question of the ethnonational interests of the parties is being addressed, the stated contradiction is taken as an immutable fact and as the starting point for discussion. In this approach, rather than questioning basic assumptions of what constitutes national interest or national welfare, Track 2 tends to imitate Track 1 efforts in futile attempts to find Pareto-optimal trade-offs of the (unquestioned) contradictory interests.

Let us look again at the workshops in which I have participated. Based upon practical experience and the resulting maxim that suggestions and recommendations were not within the role of the third party, it was the local participants of the workshops who were expected to suggest solutions themselves, based perhaps on information injected by

the mediators. The problem was that the participants were inclined to suggest solutions within the societal paradigms that were common for their respective communities; and it was precisely those same societal paradigms, and related to them social models, that brought the communities into conflict. As a result, the proposed (futile) solutions could most often be described as "bargaining," "compromising interests," or displaying a "win-lose mentality." New information, injected by the mediators, often helps, as John Burton has written, to "establish a condition in which the parties see their relationship as posing a problem to be solved" (Burton 1969, 62). However, the information was rarely enough to promote the paradigm shift needed to solve the problem.

Toward a New Approach: The key question in developing a new approach is to understand what ethnonational interests truly are and how they might be reconceptualized—the issue that today is often ignored or taken as an axiom, and rarely pondered and discussed during the Track 2 workshops. The main question is not how to balance the ethnonational interests of the opponents. The main question is how to properly formulate the ethnonational interests of parties.

It is the thesis of this essay that ethnonational interests should be couched in terms of what is needed to advance national well-being, power, and influence in the modern age, and not in terms of previous ages. Modern, development-related definitions of ethnonational interests should be articulated and contrasted to obsolete, conflict-creating, land-related assertions of interests. If the conflicting parties look to the examples of Japan, Germany, Taiwan, and South Korea, as well as the European Union, NAFTA, and ASEAN, they will see that their real interests can be achieved through non-land intensive, technological, educational, and cooperative endeavors far more effectively than by pursuing land-based options.

Conveying the Message of Cooperative Solutions: Track 2 diplomacy could convey this key message in numerous and diverse forms. For example, student workshops could have border-dispute simulations where the team that wins would be the one that gives up its territorial claims for the sake of economic development. Workshops of scholars could

discuss nonconfrontational elements and options of ethnonational identities, aimed at regional cooperation, with findings of the meetings disseminated in the respective societies through the media, scholarly publications, and presentations. American and other literature discussing the influence of globalization on present-day political science, political economy, and so forth could be translated into the languages of ethnic groups or nations in conflict and brought to the attention of local students and academicians. University courses on the theory of modernization, theory of globalization, present-day social and political philosophy, introduction to conflict analysis and resolution, and so forth could be prepared and taught in local universities on a systematic basis. The mass media could systematically broadcast basic programs about the advantages of regional cooperation for the economic and cultural development of any country.

Such Track 2 efforts would help to promote clear images of nonmilitaristic options for the achievement of national welfare, when love for the motherland is expressed not through the readiness to die for it, but through the desire to develop it. One measure of the effectiveness of such Track 2 efforts would be the number of the politically active groups supporting the idea that political control over territory does not occupy the most important place on the scale of present-day ethnonational priorities.

Inducing a Paradigm Shift: The objective of increasing the size, scope, and diversity of messages about the cooperative and technological realities of the modern world is to induce a shift in the popular paradigms that now exist in the Second World's conflicted societies. Were third-party facilitators and mediators in Track 2 efforts to focus more clearly upon the need to get the primary parties to begin reformulating their national interests in terms of modern-day realities about the sources of economic development and national security, they could help to transform the dominant social paradigms, now driving countries into conflict, into paradigms supporting regional cooperation and development. Once the primary parties begin work on reformulating their interests and modernizing their paradigms, they will be in a better position to

make constructive suggestions and recommendations on concrete political steps toward peace.

To digress for a moment, one might profitably ask why it is that public opinion in the Second World has regressed into archaic paradigms. The current attachment to such paradigms may in large part be an artifact of the Second World's socialist and Communist heritage, which stressed adherence to late 19th century and early 20th century Marxist/Leninist ideas and discouraged the development of new ones. While public opinion in the First World was going through revolutionary changes in the concept of the nation-state, modernization, and globalization, the public behind the Iron Curtain was frozen out of the process. When socialist regimes and ideology were overthrown—and given the enforced ignorance of what was going on in the First World—the public had little to fall back upon, except pre-Communist ideas. Primarily they fell back to close affiliation with their ethnic and national groups, stressed old-fashioned nationalism, and resurrected nationalist conflicts.

Now, a shift away from old paradigms and a focus upon a reformulation of the national interest in terms of modern realities should be increasingly possible in the Second World, for several reasons. First, the average level of education is relatively high, so that there is a good capacity for the public to understand fairly abstract concepts and new approaches to issues. In addition, as time passes, and the Second World moves further away from the propaganda and limited forms of thinking imposed by the former socialist states, public opinion should become more open to Western approaches to problem solving. Indeed, the Second World's increasing contact with the West has resulted in a growing desire to understand what it is that has made the West so successful. Many parts of the conflicted Second World are now close to being ready to reformulate their ideas, if only they can better understand what modern realities truly are. There is clearly a deficit in the Second World's understanding of those realities, and it needs help in that regard if there is to be a paradigm shift.

Qualification on Reforming Identities

We need, to some degree, to see ethnonational conflicts as a clash of ethnonational identities. Identity is a complex sociopsychological phenomenon and it is an oversimplification to reduce it completely to the desire for well-being and security. For example, Russians see themselves as a dominant nation that has been beneficently expanding its statehood to other ethnic groups over the centuries. Chechens see themselves as a freedom-loving ethnic group strongly associated with Muslim culture that does not view absorption into the Russian state as beneficial to them. The Russo-Chechen conflict is, thus, a clash of Russian and Chechen identities, which include but cannot be reduced to just the search for prosperity and security by individual Russians and Chechens.

The question is if it is possible to modify such a complex and psychologically charged phenomenon as identity. Several good thinkers have suggested that it is possible, even though the process is slow. One can begin from the concept of Benedict Anderson's that ethnonational identity groups are "imagined communities," rather than groups who are "rediscovering something deep-down, always known" (Anderson 1991, 196). In the words of Michael Ignatieff, "Nationalism does not simply express a preexisting identity. It constitutes a new one" (Ignatieff 1999, 38). If some type of identity has been once created or "imagined," that means that it can be redeveloped, redefined, and readjusted to new conditions and demands.

There are also concrete historical examples of changes in the focus if not the very fundament of national identity. In the 19th century, a new generation of Armenian intellectuals, such as the self-taught clergyman Mkrtich Khrimian, redefined and changed the focus of Armenian identity from one stressing martyrdom for Christianity to one seeking restoration of statehood. If the basic focus or the essence of that identity has changed at least once, why not again? Why may it not be redefined and adjusted to the demands and spirit of the new age?

Also, if one agrees with the concept of "identity need" (i.e., we all have a need to identify with a group), the possibility of changing soci-

etal views of patriotism, or identity, toward nonmilitaristic, "humanitarian" ones also appears to be rational and realistic. As Richard Rubenstein writes, "the satisfaction of narrow (let us say, without intending any offense, 'tribal') identity needs . . . depends upon structural changes that permit every member of the tribe to satisfy his or her need for security, welfare, love, autonomy, and meaning. It appears that identity needs, while central to the understanding of many types of political violence, are derivative in the sense that satisfaction of all other needs also satisfies them" (Rubenstein 1990, 347). Therefore, if one can work to focus a nation upon fulfilling the needs of its individuals in the modern world, one can move the nation (derivatively) toward an identity more interested in solving problems in line with current, modern realities, than one more focused upon ancestral, land-based, conflict-laden forms of identity. Better flow of information across borders and, especially, more proactive Track 2 activities can do much in this regard.

In short, I would assert, when the identity of the nation is conceived to be such that its collective well-being is understood to be the sum of personal well-beings, as is found in many developed countries, that identity should be more viable—and therefore more attractive to opinion leaders—than more traditional, existing, conflicting national identities that constantly demand subordination of personal interests to the welfare of an abstract whole.

Closing Comments

In closing, let me make two points. First, the creation of an effective constituency supporting a nonmilitaristic form of patriotism demands much more financial investment than the occasional meetings and workshops that now characterize current Track 2 diplomacy. This is a serious reservation, but the funding and fulfillment of a more purposeful and intense Track 2 mission would be a form of international investment in the prevention of further conflicts and in sustaining the peace. Such an investment would be much less than the amounts necessary for the military forms of international intervention, let alone the costs of human suffering. NATO operations in Kosovo totaled at least

\$50 billion. The very preference given to the militaristic forms of peace-keeping versus nonmilitaristic ones can be considered as evidence of the continuing domination of the culture of war—even in the effort to bring peace.

My second comment goes back to the beginning of this essay and the limits of Track 2 efforts. The proposed new approach in Track 2 diplomacy presupposes a certain strength in Track 2 efforts relevant to the solution of the various conflicts. Should Track 2 efforts receive more emphasis, given that political decisions are ultimately made on the Track 1, not on Track 2, level? The answer is certainly yes, as the direction of Track 1 at any point in time reflects a current or previous direction taken in Track 2. In addition, Track 1 efforts are often held hostage to entrenched public opinion, the evolution of which can often be more effectively influenced by the media and grassroots (Track 2) organizations than formal political institutions (Track 1). At the end of the day, the ultimate source of political direction is the people. If that direction is to change, nonpartisan Track 2 organizations, which come from and are intimately entwined with the population at large, can be very effective.

A durable, sustainable peace occurs only when a society includes a critical mass of a “peace constituency” consisting of people who support peace as a way of pursuing national welfare and security rather than as a forced compromise with an enemy. It is Track 2 efforts that can instill that concept and build the critical mass.

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