
Coordinating Intermediary Peace Efforts

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Multiple peace-making efforts by intermediaries can be a blessing or a curse, particularly in ethnic, religious, or other types of communal conflicts. The author outlines four general ways in which multiple interventions can hamper peacemaking, as well as the different types of intermediaries and de-escalating activities that can help efforts to achieve conflict resolution. Multiple intermediaries can work effectively either in sequence or contemporaneously; coordination of such activities is vital. Based on the analysis presented here, the author offers four different strategies to maximize the benefits of multiple intermediaries in peacemaking.

The relations among multiple intermediaries trying to de-escalate and resolve large-scale conflicts between ethnic, religious, and other communal groups warrant close examination. This is the case for communal conflicts within the boundaries of one country as well as those that spread across state boundaries. There are numerous examples of intermediary efforts that have hastened a conflict's settlement and the justness of its outcome; but there are also numerous examples of such efforts that have failed to do so. Reports about specific intermediary policies are plentiful, but usually each is considered in relative isolation. Viewed singly, few efforts may be

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regarded as effective and many as failures, but instances of effective action may be the result of other efforts helping to prepare the way.

Too little attention has been paid to how various intermediary efforts interact to influence the course of a conflict. Sometimes, multiple intermediary efforts supplement each other but often they do not; and sometimes, these multiple efforts even hamper each other. We need to better understand how different sets of intermediary activities can be coordinated in various sequences and combinations so as to maximize their effectiveness in constructively resolving conflicts.

The scholarly and popular work regarding peacemaking intermediaries is growing rapidly, as is the number of reports by journalists and by the intermediaries themselves. Much of this work provides detailed information about particular cases, being largely descriptive accounts. Another body of work is largely prescriptive, stressing, for example, how mediation should be pursued. Some work provides quantitative analyses to draw generalizations about the use of mediation. In general, these analyses and reports focus on particular intermediary methods and episodes, but there are few analyses of multiple intermediary efforts and how they affect each other.

Increasingly, ethnic and other large-scale conflicts within societies are subject to intermediary efforts by many international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as by external governments. It is an extremely difficult task to coordinate initiatives that might be undertaken by the United Nations, regional organizations such as the European Union, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, or the Organization of American States, and the U.S., French, British, and many other national governments. In addition, international nongovernmental organizations have increased their activities in providing humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, assisting in economic development, and directly and indirectly aiding in conflict resolution. Some of these organizations and their workers do not, however, regard their activities as related to conflict de-escalation or settlement efforts.

Intentionally or not, what one intermediary does in a peacemaking effort is likely to have some effect on the work of others involved in similar efforts. I shall give particular attention here to effects resulting from those actions in which at least some of the intermediaries actually considered the relationship to what other intermediaries were doing. In a broad sense, interactions among multiple intermediaries often are coordinated. The coordination may be very close or very loose, and it may be effectively or ineffectively done. Intermediaries may supplement one another's work, whether in a coordinated fashion or not, either sequentially or contemporaneously. This analysis will provide insights into the ways the undesirable effects of the multiplicity of intermediary work can be overcome. But first, I offer a brief outline of some of the problems raised by the engagement of multiple intermediaries.

How the Multiplicity of Peacemaking Efforts Hampers Effectiveness

The destructiveness and protracted character of many communal and interstate conflicts, despite numerous efforts to intervene and resolve them, indicates that the interventions are often ineffective. Of course, those failures may be largely attributable to the nature of the conflict and the existing conditions and not to inappropriate intermediary actions. The time may not have been ripe for the kind of interventions which were available (see Zartman 1989; Kriesberg and Thorson 1991).

It is also possible that peacemaking efforts pursued by several intermediaries contribute to the failure of peacemaking. A study of five Indo-Pakistani crises between 1947 and 1990, for example, found that three cases resulted in war and involved multiple intermediaries, and two crises which were settled involved single intermediaries (Pavri 1996). The multiplicity of intermediaries may interfere with effective assistance due to poorly coordinated interactions among the intermediaries and the impact that has on the adversaries (Susskind and Babbitt 1992; Zartman 1991). Therefore, we should consider the difficulties in coordinating intermediary peacemaking efforts and how poor coordination contributes to the efforts' ineffectiveness.

The multiplicity of peacemaking efforts can hamper effectiveness in four sets of ways: overloading the adversaries' attentiveness; conveying competing expectations; intermediaries acting to undercut one another's policies; and intermediaries pursuing incompatible policies.

First, the very multiplicity of intermediary efforts can be a source of strain on the capabilities of the adversaries. Particularly for adversaries with limited capacity to attend to and order many kinds of information, a welter of would-be mediators can drain time and attention, resulting in confusion about who should be given primary attention. For example, following the 1967 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors, mediating efforts were pursued by U.N. Special Envoy Gunnar Jarring and by officials of the U.S. and the Soviet governments. In some ways the joint and increasingly unilateral actions of the superpowers distracted attention from the efforts of U.N. Envoy Jarring (Touval 1982:164).

Second, intermediaries tend to convey information about the likely course of developments in accord with their own preferences or needs. Consequently, different intermediaries are likely to raise different expectations among the adversaries. Each adversary can therefore select different messages to which to attend, making it difficult for any single intermediary to obtain general agreement among the adversaries. For example, during the Owen-Vance mediation efforts in the former Yugoslavia, a peace plan was urged, but the Clinton Administration in its first year indicated that the Bosnian government might well obtain better terms than those proposed by the mediators. The plan was not accepted and the fighting went on (Owen 1995; Ignatieff 1996).

Third, intermediaries may engage in turf battles and compete for attention in the media or from their home constituency. The need to mobilize constituency support for funds and other resources can constitute institutional barriers against cooperation. Furthermore, actions thus driven can lead to policies that gain attention and are undertaken precipitously. In addition, the adversaries may seek to exploit these differences by playing intermediaries off against each other, seeking unilateral advantage

Finally, intermediaries often have different objectives or different methods to reach a shared objective. These differences may not be mutually consistent and allow one or more adversary or segments of one or more sides to play one intermediary off against the other. This may be exacerbated by the likelihood that different intermediaries work with divergent segments of opposing sides, from elite to grass-roots levels.

Possible Contributions of Multiplicity to Effectiveness

Having many intermediaries pursuing a variety of peacemaking efforts, nevertheless, often actually facilitates the work of each. To understand how that is possible (and even likely), I shall first distinguish between the varieties of intermediaries and varieties of intermediary peacemaking activities.

Both intermediaries and de-escalating activities in communal conflicts are quite diverse (Kriesberg 1996). *Intermediaries* include officials from national governments and from such international governmental organizations as the United Nations; nonofficial persons representing religious, humanitarian, and other nonprofit organizations; individuals who are journalists, investors, lawyers, and educators; and organizations such as political parties, social movement organizations, and business corporations. Finally, intermediaries may be based outside the social boundaries of the primary antagonistic sides or be based from within one of the contending parties, serving as insider/partials or as quasi-mediators (Wehr and Lederach 1991; Kriesberg 1991).

De-escalating *activities* include a variety of mediating functions such as transmitting information between the adversaries, facilitating meetings between them, and providing consultations in the form of analysis, information, and suggested options to them. Intermediary activities may also include adding resources for a settlement, providing support to one side of the conflict, or invoking sanctions against one party in the conflict, as long as the providers do so as independent agents and not as integral parts of a primary antagonist. There is room for ambiguity here, and often the parties involved in a struggle disagree about what the intermediaries should do, or even about what they are doing.

Whether consciously intended or not by one or more of the intermediaries, some activities that different intermediaries pursue support the work of other intermediaries, making them more effective jointly than each would be alone. This is possible and even likely because many activities can contribute to conflict resolution. Various people can conduct certain activities

filling particular social roles, but it is not likely that any single person or role can effectively provide all the services at the same time (Kriesberg 1991; Mitchell 1992; Princen 1992). For example, mediator facilitation which enables adversaries to develop their own options is a useful service; so too is suggesting new options and adding resources to increase the attractiveness of the suggested option. But a mediator doing one of these kinds of mediation cannot do the other kind at the same time.

Finally, intermediaries may often be able to supplement each other's activities, particularly due to the complexity of large-scale conflicts. Many parties are engaged in every such struggle and the conflicts are about many issues. Furthermore, the parties are each internally differentiated. Certain intermediaries are more likely to have associations, be accepted, and have more influence with some of the groups engaged in a struggle than with other factions or leaders.

Sequential Supplementary Work

Multiple intermediaries may supplement each other in sequence, since conflicts change over time and different kinds of intermediary work are likely to be appropriate for different phases of conflict de-escalation and peacemaking. Furthermore, each kind of intermediary work tends to be more readily provided by some kinds of actors than by others.

Intermediary activities may be coordinated over time in several ways. Thus, there are many examples of one intermediary preparing the ground or even initiating de-escalating negotiations and expecting that the negotiations will be taken up later by a different set of mediators. Many instances of effective sequential complementarity can be cited, usually involving nonofficial or track-two methods preceding the more traditional diplomacy (Montville 1991; McDonald 1991; Earle 1991). Track-two actions may prepare the groundwork for official negotiations, providing assurances that a mutually acceptable deal can be constructed.

To illustrate, with the end of the Cold War, a nonofficial American-Russian mediating role in Tajikistan has evolved through one of the task forces which the Dartmouth Conference established in 1982. Following the deterioration of *détente*, members of the Conference established one task force on arms control and another on regional conflicts to examine what had gone wrong. Reflection on the process and the phases of development of the Dartmouth Conference provided the basis for two members of the task force on regional conflicts, Gennady Chufrin and Harold Saunders, to co-chair a sustained dialogue group in Tajikistan (Chufrin and Saunders 1993; Saunders 1995). Dialogue meetings among a wide range of Tajikistanis were begun in 1993, following the vicious civil war which erupted after the Soviet Union dissolved and Tajikistan become independent. Formal negotiations were undertaken subsequent to the initial dialogue meetings.

Similarly, organizers of short-term problem-solving workshops sometimes have also organized a series of workshops, with the same participants,

which constitute a continuing workshop (Rouhana 1995). This is the case for the Israeli-Palestinian continuing workshop organized by Rouhana and Kelman (1994). It met four times between November 1990 and July 1992; each workshop lasted for three or four days, and followed ground rules designed to facilitate analytic discussion leading to joint thinking about the conflict. The third-party facilitators, following an intervention model, steered the participants through two major phases: first, concerns and needs were presented and only later was joint thinking about solutions and barriers to reaching them undertaken.

These and earlier workshops involving Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs contributed in several ways to the later direct official negotiations between the Israeli government and the PLO (Kelman 1995). For example, the understandings about each other's points of views and concerns, and possible ways to reconcile them, provided the basis for officials on each side to believe a mutually acceptable formula could be found.

In other circumstances, negotiations are *initiated* in a track-two channel and then handed off to an official negotiating channel. Sometimes, however, the traditional diplomatic channel has reached an impasse and a second track is opened informally; then, when progress is made, the negotiations are transferred back to an official channel. This is illustrated in the 1993 negotiations between Israelis and the PLO, conducted in Oslo, Norway (Elon 1993; Makovsky 1996).

Informal intermediaries without clout generally precede more formal intermediaries, who sometimes act with great leverage capacity. The scope of the intermediaries' authority also tends to progress as the conflict persists, intensifies, or expands. Thus, in communal conflicts, the government of the country where the conflict is based generally undertakes to resolve the conflict before other governments intervene; then neighboring governments or regional associations are likely to undertake some intermediary efforts, subsequent to failed internal efforts.

One very important function intermediaries can provide is the construction of a formula for an agreement. Different intermediaries have greater or lesser standing to construct hard-to-ignore formulas. For example, the U.N. Security Council, reflecting considerable international consensus and power, can and has proposed resolutions which serve as formulas for settlement and which become the bases for other intermediaries to help specify and implement. The resolutions give legitimacy to the work of individual governments or other intermediaries and set parameters for an agreement. Examples include Resolutions 242 (1967) and 388 (1973) in the Israeli-Arab conflict and 435 (1978) for the conflicts in Namibia and southern Africa (Crocker 1992; Quandt 1993).

Finally, as a peace process advances, new tasks need to be undertaken and intermediaries with different capabilities can efficiently perform the varying tasks. For example, once an agreement has been reached to settle a large-scale, protracted struggle, much needs to be done to implement and

sustain it. In recent years, agreements have included holding elections, reducing and integrating previously hostile armed forces, and creating new civil institutions. Intermediaries often play critical roles in providing funds, training, consultations, and monitoring of the actions being taken.

Contemporaneous Supplementary Work

Effective coordination for simultaneous de-escalating efforts is a particularly difficult task. Due to the very complexity arising from the many persons and issues involved in large-scale struggles, such coordination occurs in several ways. This allows different intermediaries to make various contributions at each phase of the de-escalation process. For example, unofficial meetings and official back-channel conversations sometimes complement relatively traditional diplomatic activities when carried out simultaneously. One way this can take place is when unofficial tracks parallel official negotiating tracks, as became possible in the Israeli-Palestinian case once official negotiations between the Israeli government and Palestinian representatives began. This was also the case for the Pugwash meetings during the years of U.S.-Soviet negotiations regarding many arms control measures (Kriesberg 1992). The Pugwash program began in 1957, when nuclear physicists and others involved in the development and possible use of nuclear weapons, working in the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, met to exchange ideas about ways to reduce the danger that nuclear weapons would be used. The first meetings were held in Pugwash, Nova Scotia (at the summer home of Cyrus Eaton, who provided the initial funding) and developed into what has come to be called the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, these discussions contributed to the signing of the Partial Test-Ban Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Antiballistic Missile Treaty. Later meetings helped build consensus for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties I and II, the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and the Chemical Weapons Convention. In 1995, the Pugwash Conferences and Joseph Rotblat, its executive director, won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work.

Another important international example of parallel track-two diplomacy is the Dartmouth Conference. At the urging of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Norman Cousins, then editor of the *Saturday Review*, helped bring together a group of prominent U.S. and Soviet citizens as a means of keeping communication open when official relations were especially strained. The first meeting was at Dartmouth College in 1960, and many meetings followed, providing a venue for the exchange of information and ideas such that participants could serve as quasi-mediators.

In short, nonofficial meetings between well-connected persons from adversary parties often play significant roles in providing a second channel of communication and discussion of possible solutions to contentious issues. Possible options can be explored and their viability tested, with less risk than

in official meetings. This also occurs in local community settings through inter-ethnic and inter-religious councils or dialogue groups.

Thus far, I have emphasized intermediary work between and among the elites of the antagonistic sides and, to some extent, between the middle-ranking persons and groups. This presumes a top-down or a mid-level peacemaking strategy. Peacemaking also involves the grass roots level and a bottom-up peacemaking strategy (Lederach 1994). Often intermediary work at one level, without supporting developments at other levels, will fail. For example, agreements reached at the elite level between adversaries may be unfulfilled or violated by the actions of mid-level or local groups.

In large-scale conflicts, various intermediaries and approaches generally need to be blended together to be effective. If they are well coordinated, their effectiveness enhances the efforts of any one approach. The coordination includes actions pursued both simultaneously and sequentially, as illustrated in the 1989-1992 peace process ending Mozambique's war (Hume 1994). The various intermediaries functioned together almost like a team. Sometimes one organization acts to coordinate a variety of intermediaries in conducting a set of related activities. The U.N. is a likely coordinator, and sometimes has taken the lead in coordinating peacemaking efforts. The choice of the person or organizations which take on the leadership or the coordinating role may be made by the adversaries themselves; by the intermediaries, based on assessing who would have the interest and the resources; or through a power struggle.

Implications

This analysis of previous experience and review of theorizing and research suggest likely ways of maximizing the complementarity of multiple intermediaries and intermediary activities (Touval and Zartman 1985; Boulding 1994; Kriesberg 1982 and forthcoming). Possible intermediaries vary in the likelihood of effectively intervening in different kinds of conflicts. For example, conflicts within a country, between the government and challengers to the government tend to be resistant to peacemaking interventions by other states, and even by international governmental organizations; therefore, unofficial, facilitating intervenors are probably more likely to gain access (Hume 1994).

The difficulty that governments and governmental organizations have in intervening in domestic conflicts has created a void which nongovernmental organizations increasingly fill; for example, the Center established by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter has provided intermediary services in many internal conflicts (Brinkley 1995). Once negotiations have been initiated, however, intermediaries with large resources are relatively more effective than are facilitating, nonofficial intermediaries in bringing about an agreement and helping to implement it (Zartman 1991). Proper sequencing, then, is a way of overcoming some of the difficulties in achieving effective coordination.

Various intermediary activities also differ in their likely effectiveness for different kinds of conflicts and at different phases of a conflict (Keashly and Fisher 1996). For example, consulting and conveying information between the adversaries is likely to be more effective than strong, deal-making activities at the pre-negotiation stage of a conflict (Zartman 1991; Stein 1989). For negotiations between a government and challengers whose legitimacy as negotiating partners is denied by the government, nonofficial conversations often provide crucial preliminary explorations. This can be undertaken between sub-elite persons with ties to the government and officials from the challenging organization. For example, the meetings in Lusaka, Zambia, between South African business leaders and African National Congress (ANC) leaders contributed to the legitimacy of the ANC and reassurances to white South Africans, encouraging the South African government to undertake further steps on the road to a negotiated transformation of the conflict in South Africa.

For simultaneous intermediary activity to be effectively complementary, close coordination is important, particularly insofar as the intermediaries are working on the same issues with the same set of persons on each side of the struggle. Coordination is often aided by consultation among the intermediaries and agreement about the various roles each will play, such as which one takes the leading role. For example, in mediating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the regional Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe took the lead and the U.N. supported that work; in the Abkhasian case, Russia has generally taken the lead, in cooperation with the U.N. (Paye and Remacle 1994).

Some complementarity may be unwitting, as when one intermediary threatens to put increasing pressure on one party, while another intermediary suggests a solution and a way out of the confrontation. Complementarity also allows one intermediary to be used for confidential high-level exchanges while another is used for relatively open negotiations. Sometimes having a secret channel allows for exploration of alternatives, undistracted by attention directed at relatively public channels.

Effective coordination among intermediaries in large-scale conflicts often significantly contributes to resolving major conflicts, while poor coordination contributes to the deterioration of a conflict and its persistence. This was the case in the tragic deterioration of the communal conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. More attention to the risks of faulty supplementary activities and awareness of ways to overcome the difficulties is needed.

Four strategies to maximize the benefits of multiple intermediaries are suggested by the preceding analysis. First, partisans, would-be intermediaries, and observers should recognize the difference between the various roles intermediaries may fill and the variety of activities which can foster constructive peacemaking. No single intermediary, playing any particular role, can perform all the useful activities; some of them are inconsistent when performed by one person or group playing a specific role. Conse-

quently, different intermediaries, providing different services, can supplement each other's work.

Second, it is important to recognize that each conflict has its own character and course of escalation and de-escalation. Different kinds of intermediary actions can contribute to constructive peacemaking at various stages of a conflict. Consequently, different intermediaries can supplement each other as they provide different services at various conflict de-escalation and settlement stages. Shared understandings among intermediaries about the nature of a conflict and its course can help them recognize how they can complement each other.

Third, exchange of information among intermediaries about their respective peacemaking efforts usually contributes to effective supplementary work. Full communication may not always be possible nor desirable, but even general information can be helpful to good coordination and the avoidance of interference. Occasional or regular meetings among representatives of groups working on matters relating to the same struggle can be a useful mechanism for such exchanges. Providing information about which groups and persons are engaged in peacemaking work in various struggles would be helpful and networking linkages are being developed (for example by the Institute of World Affairs).

Finally, explicit differentiation of roles can reduce the hazards of many intermediaries interfering with each others work. Such differentiation, if acknowledged by the intermediaries, also allows mutual acknowledgment of the contributions of others. This can reduce some of the institutional barriers to good coordination, since giving mutual credit can allow each intermediary to make claims of effectiveness, and lessen the costs of providing intermediary services. As previously noted, some organizations and persons may take the lead in providing coordinating services; this is, in fact, one of the purposes of the Carter Center's Programs on Conflict Resolution (Spencer and Yang 1992). A government with leverage can take the lead and orchestrate a variety of activities to bring about a settlement, as was done by the Clinton Administration in 1995 in reaching the Dayton peace agreement on Bosnia Herzegovina (Ignatieff 1996).

In short, all the problems of multiple intermediary efforts confounding each other cannot be eliminated, particularly those arising from seeking incompatible objectives. But many problems can be reduced, and obstacles converted to opportunities for effective peacemaking. Attention to formal and informal coordination will foster such conversions.

NOTE

Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Annual Meetings of the International Studies Association, April 16-20, 1996 in San Diego, Calif., and at the Ninth Conference of the International Association for Conflict Management, June 2-5, 1996, in Ithaca, N.Y.

I want to thank Zachary Moore for his research assistance and Ronald J. Fisher, Stephanie Loomis, Michael Lund, and Thania Paffenholz for their comments about this paper.

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