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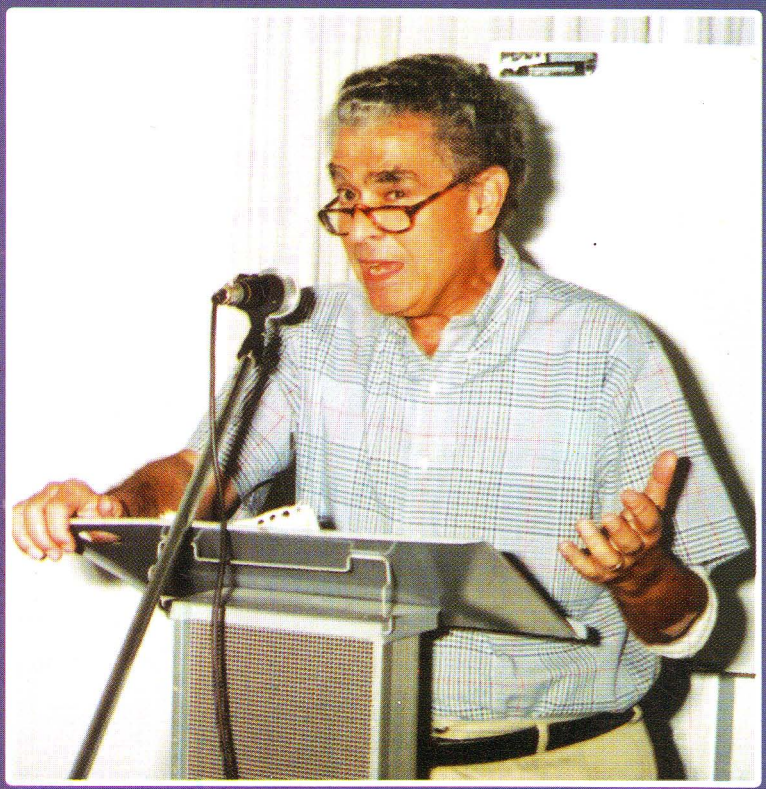
The Sri Lankan Peace Process: Lessons from the Middle East and Northern Ireland



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Introduction

The current Sri Lankan peace process has generated a great deal of hope—mixed of course with some fearful skepticism—that the Government and the LTTE can finally reach a mutually satisfactory peace agreement.[1] And there are certainly some signs that a degree of optimism is justified, including the fact that the LTTE has dropped its demand for an independent state, its apparent willingness to participate in the democratic process and even allow other Tamil parties to operate in the north and east, the involvement of a skilled mediator in Norway, renewed pressures for peace from other countries, encouraging signs of grassroots support for a negotiated solution in both communities, and perhaps some signs on the Government side of more wiliingness to compromise on the form and content of devolution. And indeed in early December there have been reports of preliminary agreement on a federalist, power-sharing arrangement for future relations between the two communities. Moreover, the costs of war have been devastating to both sides and some degree of battle fatigue among the public at large may also be influencing the willingness to think about the unthinkable: a peace that requires some sacrifice of deeply valued goals.[2] It may also be worth noting that the LTTE has been declared a terrorist organization by the U.S. and other Western governments, thus making it illegal for the Tamil diaspora to continue funding LTTE activities, which may have increased pressures on the LTTE leadership to seek a negotiated settlement.

A recent White Paper by the Governmment also clearly demonstrates awareness of the need to provide aid and rapid relief

to all Sri Lankans to "demonstrate progress at the grassroots level," a sentiment echoed by a World Bank official and supported by an initial grant of $31million dollars (and promises of an additional $75 million from Western governments). Progress in the ongoing negotiations between the Government and the LTTE has also been "more rapid than anyone thought possible," a point reaffirmed in a very recent statement (December 5th, 2002) that both sides were committed to a political solution that would grant a large measure of autonomy, but not independence, to the Tamils in the North and East of Sri Lanka.[3]

One of the greatest dangers, however, in peace processes that seek to end bitter protracted conflicts is premature euphoria—witness the rapid descent of the Oslo peace process from the euphoria of the signing ceremony on the White House lawn to the despair of a renewed and even more embittered cycle of terrorism and retaliation. That sad outcome was not preordained but it does provide a useful warning about the fact that signing an initial peace agreement is a long way from resolving the conflict itself. Social scientists who study peace processes provide us with another strong reason for caution. For example, of the 38 formal peace accords between 1988 and 2000, 31 failed to last three years. Statistical analyses that go back even further to the end of World War II are even gloomier.[4] More recently, the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland has had to be suspended and whether or when it will be resurrected is an open question, not least because of the massive opposition to the agreement in the Protestant community. The success of the Dayton agreement that brought an end to the conflict in Bosnia has also been called into question recently, although not without some strong support from the High Commissioner of the international community in Bosnia.[5]

There are other reasons to be wary. Signing an initial agreement is an immensely important and difficult first step on the road to peace but it is even more important and difficult to deepen that agreement, to stabilize the peace, and to make its continuation seem imperative for both sides. One obvious reason for this, which bears repetition, is that the structural and emotional

factors that have driven the conflict cannot be eliminated by the initial agreement and these factors (for example, inequality, failures of development, the need for psychological and emotional reassurance, festering resentments, the need for practical justice to resolve violations of human rights, etc.) may have more effect on whether the agreement survives than what is or is not in it. Moreover, the forces that have benefited from the conflict, such as soldiers seeking glory and booty, political entrepreneurs who manipulate ethnic hatreds for their own benefit, merchants who earn illicit and exorbitant profits from arms sales or the control of natural resources, and religious leaders who resist compromising "sacred" demands are likely to remain powerful and influential. There have already been public protests by part of the Sinhala community about the nature and extent of anticipated concessions to the Tamils. In sum, despite all the hopeful signs, it would be prudent to contemplate what went wrong—and right—elsewhere and to maintain a degree of prudent skepticism. This may help to contain or limit unrealistic expectations of quick gains and large "peace dividends" and it may diminish the dangers of forgetting how much remains to be done, of relaxing prematurely, and of losing momentum when it is most critical.

Complex, multidimensional conflicts are likely to yield complex, multidimensional peace processes. Indeed, the process has some similarities to Michael Hayes' definition of policymaking as "...at best, a continual effort to ameliorate problems that will never fully go away."[6] Any agreement is a set of conditional promises and there is a strong likelihood that some of the conditions may change and some of the promises will not be kept. Peace is also not, as some would have it, a "second-best" option: it is frequently a "third-best" option after outright victory and the continuation of a status quo that is usually bearable (at least to the leader and those who benefit from the conflict). This should not, of course, be taken as an argument that efforts to achieve stable peace are doomed to failure: some peace processes have succeeded, some have been partial successes, and even some failures—like Oslo—may leave tracks in the ground to guide

future efforts or some barely discernible shifts in thinking that may become important down the road.

What is the aim of the peace process in its early stages? Clearly, it would be naïve to expect the absence of conflict or even the faint beginnings of reconciliation (or "normalization" of relations as the Israelis hoped with the Egyptians and Palestinians). Nor can we argue that we should seek an agreement that neither has strong incentives to alter, since the weaker may always harbor the hope of improving terms in the future. However, it seems to me that two aims are critical: one is a felt sense that the relationship between the two sides is becoming fairer (the absence of which sense is critical in Protestant dissatisfaction in Northern Ireland) and the other is an agreement to resolve the inevitable conflicts that will arise through the political process—or at least to try to do so. More elaborate efforts to establish rules of coexistence and a more civic relationship must await the grounding of the peace process in enough success for people to feel they will lose something of value if it fails.[7] Perhaps I should add that these comments seem to me to clearly imply that "conflict resolution" is too ambitious a term for the art of the possible in this context: more appropriate is conflict amelioration.

From Existential Conflict to Exploratory Truce

My focus throughout is on the peace process and as a result I will not spend much time talking about the many ways that protracted conflicts deepen and intensify, all of which obviously make the breakthrough to negotiations more difficult. But I do want to say that a deep-seated conflict syndrome—consisting of structural and procedural characteristics—gradually develops and generates something close to a classic prisoner's dilemma game: distrust is so pervasive and the lack of reliable information about the other is so profound that sub-optimal outcomes are inevitable. At some point, after an exchange of atrocities and a hardening of views, such conflicts may become existential. Each feels that its very existence is at stake and that any or all means are justified to

destroy the other before being destroyed. One is often struck in these circumstances by a reciprocal lack of empathy, which is the basis of most moral reasoning, as each responds to accusations against itself not by accepting responsibility or expressing remorse but by immediately citing a long list of the other's atrocities.

Leaders in such conflicts have usually been weakened (threatened by extremists who promise more and denounce the possibility of a compromise agreement) by the fact that they cannot defeat the other or reach an advantageous settlement. In effect, a kind of Gresham's Law of conflict seems to operate with extremists driving out moderates and forcing opportunities for negotiations, should they appear, to be foreclosed. A leader caught between an enemy that is rigid and (by definition) untrustworthy and domestic opposition that seeks to use the image of militancy to get into power has very little room to maneuver, at least if the leader is concerned primarily with staying in power—and what leader is not?

At the height of the conflict, in its most existentialist phases, pessimism abounds and the conviction grows, as Richard Rose said of Northern Ireland some years ago, that "no solution is immediately practical."[8] This view may be too stark—although it has come back in full force in the Middle East—because some improvement in current conditions is always possible even between bitter enemies, as with arms control agreements between the US and the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. Moreover, not everyone on the other side is always a "true believer" in apocalyptic visions of the conflict and taking the "no solution" view too literally may miss important changes that are occurring in both communities. Still, when the conflict is widely perceived as existential, suggestions of compromise are likely to seem treasonable and opposition to compromise may be the only position that can maintain domestic unity—a key aim in all protracted conflicts for both sides since division can easily be exploited.

At some point, when both sides realize that they have reached a military stalemate, when the costs of going on seem to weigh more than the ever-receding benefits of victory, when the

simple desire to begin living a "normal" life becomes increasingly attractive, and when the leaders sense "feelers" from the other and feel secure enough to risk exploring the possibility of peace, a "window of opportunity" may open. But the road ahead is perilous because the initial agreement is usually no more than an exploratory truce that does not resolve any of the substantive issues at stake, the terms of this truce and any subsequent agreements are constantly exposed to divergent interpretations and changes in the political environment (for example, the election of a new government opposed to the peace process, as in Israel), the persistence of old attitudes and beliefs means that the post-truce, post-peace period will have many continuities with the pre-peace period, and the extremists will be energized to destroy the peace process with terrorist atrocities—as with the Omagh bombing in Northern Ireland or the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in Israel.

These comments also have serious implications for what we can reasonably anticipate from a very fragile peace process. We cannot expect that either side will make a full commitment to the process or to any resulting agreement because initial offers are likely to be minimal and unrevealing about the terms of a final agreement, doubts about the other's willingness or ability to offer more or to implement promises will be great, there will be widespread fear about either's ability to get a substantive agreement through domestic political processes, and both are likely to be unhappy with the terms of any agreement (preliminary or final) and constantly seeking to push its limits or renegotiate its terms. Since these fears and doubts are contextually rational, reluctant and tentative commitment to a low risk/low gain strategy is usually intrinsic to the end game of protracted conflict. Risk aversion will be high because fear of failure will be high and leaders will seek to protect themselves against these risks (to themselves and to the peace process, in that order) rather than to increase the chances of success by seeking to alter attitudes and patterns of behavior. In the worst of circumstances, as in the Middle East, the temporary truce may well revert quickly to renewed conflict because each seeks to manipulate the peace

process to gain more or to be stronger at the next stage of conflict. The central point is that the kind of stop/go, off/on, crisis-driven negotiating process that developed after Oslo, after the Good Friday Agreement and to some extent after the Dayton agreement is not simply the result of flawed leaders or unforeseen political events or waning interest by external parties; rather, this kind of process is not an aberration but intrinsic in this context.

I do not mean to absolve bad leadership of some responsibility for what happens to the peace process: such leaders can make a bad situation much worse and they can accelerate the race to the bottom, just as superior leaders can do quite the opposite. My point, however, is that we need to understand their choices contextually. We should not be surprised that leaders will not risk more or that they act with mental reservations, implicit doubts, and a readiness to pull back quickly to the comforts of familiar terrain. Thus we should anticipate a peace process that loses momentum and can easily become a prisoner of events, that is dominated by last minute decisions on the edge of an abyss, and that moves in an erratic and inconsistent fashion.[9] Leaps of faith into the brave new world of committed peacemaking are likely to seem bearable risks only to strong leaders very sure of their domestic base.[10]

These are not merely academic comments. One can see ambivalent commitments to the peace process in any number of actual cases. For example, Arafat immediately after the Oslo signing began signaling to his constituents that the "jihad continues," he expended foreign aid meant for development on eight different security forces—the nucleus of an army—and on the illegal import of arms, and he did nothing to alter the propaganda of his media about a right of return to Israel proper; the Israelis responded by expanding settlement activity and delaying withdrawals from territories meant to go to the Palestinians. In Northern Ireland, the IRA refused to destroy its vast stock of arms and was caught spying on the new Northern Ireland Executive (with lists of the names and addresses of various police and official figures, an ominous signal of malign intentions); and the Protestant Loyalists also refused to disarm

and continued to engage in violent actions. And in other conflicts, citizens refused or were prevented from returning to homes in mixed areas, security forces were not integrated, war criminals were not brought to justice, promises of aid were not fulfilled, and votes—as in Bosnia—continued to go only to extreme nationalist parties. People were still "thinking with their blood" and voting with their feet about whether peace had really come.

Peace and Its Discontents

The material in the last section presents a rather stylized version of the "base case" of the negotiating process to end protracted conflicts; as such, it fits some cases very well and it has varying degrees of relevance in nearly all cases. But the base case also suggests that there is a kind of metaphysical doubt that shadows these kind of negotiations. Suppose your experience with the other—and experience is the primary source of trust or distrust—is that he has lied or at least not fulfilled commitments in the past, that he used earlier cease-fires to regroup and to prepare for the resumption of conflict, that you fear that he will consume concessions as a preface to making new demands, and—in effect—you can take for granted that he will act in bad faith, which justifies your own bad faith. There is no way to guarantee that these fears and suspicions will not prove to be very well grounded in the months ahead. Such concerns were acute among many (and now almost all) Israelis in regard to Arafat's commitment to peace and among many Protestants in Northern Ireland about the real intentions of the IRA.

Why then join the negotiating process at all or why not cheat before being cheated? There are a number of possible answers and perhaps in some complex and shifting combination they justify taking some real risks for peace—at least until evidence of the other's bad faith is irrefutable. Thus the leader may feel that the status quo is bad and likely to get worse and that it is better to run the risks of generating and suppressing domestic dissent now rather than later. The risks might seem more

bearable if both sides would stop and ask what the future—say, ten years—will look like without agreement and if both also valued a future relationship with the other (which might make current sacrifices for long-run benefits more acceptable), but relying on political figures to sacrifice current gains for future benefits is probably wildly utopian. Another factor to diminish the doubts is the fact that there are far more reasons to implement commitments then to violate them, not least that it is also a good way to test the intentions of the other, that losing a reputation for trustworthiness can be very costly and very difficult to recapture, and that there are a variety of techniques available to decrease vulnerability against the dangers of non-compliance.[11] The leaders on either side may also come to enjoy their new status as peacemakers, resource recipients, and government officials and thus be willing to expend scarce political resources on sustaining the peace process, which clearly seems to have happened with Gerry Adams and his Sinn Fein colleagues in Northern Ireland. The leader's reputation as a peacemaker—even a Nobel Prize recipient—may also make him reluctant to undermine his own handiwork, even though this seemed to have no beneficial effects whatsoever on Yasser Arafat, perhaps because he never intended to take the Oslo process seriously, apart from acquiring resources and status. Pressure from external patrons may also push reluctant peacemakers along, since it implies that they will take some responsibility for guaranteeing beneficial outcomes or that they will react severely if the parties refuse to go along. Something like this may now be occurring in Cyprus where Ankara and Athens have their own reasons for pushing their allies in Cyprus toward an agreement that is only a more detailed version of what had been rejected by both sides in the past.[12] Finally, while the first stages of most peace processes are top/down, pressures from the grassroots, from the bottom/up, may also make the leader reluctant to return to battle. This bottom/up pressure has had some positive effects in Northern Ireland and the Basque country (and currently in Sri Lanka) but has had only negative effects in the Middle East.

Still, the dangers of moving toward a fragile and imperfect

peace always need to be kept in mind. It is arguable that the most important task that leaders confront in the aftermath of signing an agreement is the management of expectations. If hopes have risen unrealistically or if weak leaders have had to promise too much to skeptical opponents and fearful constituents, a rapid descent into despair and disillusionment is inevitable. Something very like this has happened not only in the Middle East and Northern Ireland but also in various peace processes in Central America and southern Africa. This is not surprising, given the obvious fact, noted above, that the peace agreement itself, which may have created a new set of opportunities for progress—if they are grasped by both sides—has not resolved the many underlying problems at the root of the conflict: socioeconomic inequalities, an unbalanced distribution of power, punishment for violations of human rights, psychological insecurities, and so on. Disappointed expectations may create negative self-fulfilling prophecies that can easily destroy the peace process and, in severe cases like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, escalate hostilities to the point that inflicting pain on the other becomes more important than reaching agreement on the issues. Put differently, peace may be a necessary step before other problems can be addressed effectively but it is not sufficient unto itself: peace does not and cannot cure all ailments.

One needs to keep in focus why people support or oppose compromise peace agreements. While part of the answer is that the leader and his close associates may see some clear benefits for themselves (especially if their security and future roles are protected), the agreement will not survive or prosper unless it begins to generate grassroots support, support that reflects the fact that the public feels it has something to lose if the agreement falls apart. Larry Summers, the President of Harvard University, has recently quipped that in the entire history of the world, no one has ever washed a rented car: in short, one must feel a genuine sense of ownership to take care of any piece of property, including a peace agreement. Unless the leadership and external patrons take immediate steps to generate this support by careful use of rhetoric about what can be reasonably expected, by clear

indications that the new regime will not recapitulate the mistakes of the old regime (a very reasonable fear among people scarred by disappointed expectations from previous failed promises),and by intelligent use of available resources to meet the basic human needs that have not been met during the conflict, momentum will rapidly dissipate and challenges to the leadership will be inevitable. That is exactly what has happened in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and to some extent South Africa.

The peace process is never entirely about the issues on the agenda at a peace conference: equally important are questions about who will lead in the future, who will have what share of power, and who will control access to financial and other resources. These kinds of intra-elite conflicts may distract from the need to build public support for the peace. Moreover, if one or both leaders are intent on manipulating the peace process only to be better prepared for renewed conflict, as with Arafat and Netanyahu in the Middle East and the IRA in Northern Ireland, the issue of generating widespread support for the peace will be irrelevant. There is, however, another level of explanation for the failure, an explanation that reflects the nature of protracted conflicts. Negative self-fulfilling prophecies are especially likely because the "conflict syndrome" that develops rests on very negative stereotypes about the other, almost a dehumanization of the other, which implies that you already know all you need to know about him.[13] This ignorance of the other seems to occur in many conflicts, perhaps amplified by the fact that the two communities are frequently physically and socially separated. But it also fosters a lack of empathy, which means that neither can put themselves emotionally or physically in the place of the other, and are thus indifferent to his needs, his fears and his desires.[14] In addition, one must be trained and educated in empathy and the failure to do so can be disastrous for the future stability of an agreement, which is one reason, for example, why Arafat's failure to alter the vile, anti-Semitic caricatures spewed out by his media and in various school texts sent such a negative message to Israeli supporters of the peace process. Empathy can also help us to

understand a situation that has been grossly oversimplified—good against evil—in a more complex and sophisticated fashion. Achieving empathy in protracted conflicts is obviously difficult because seeing the world through another's eyes and expressing your understanding of those views (but not necessarily agreement) in a non-confrontational manner is never easy—but it is crucial if one wants to express respect and change the character of an embittered relationship. In any case, being careful about how we describe what can and cannot be expected from the peace process, providing evidence to the public that the leadership intends to improve its quality of life as quickly as possible, and being very careful about the tacit and explicit signals being sent to the other side are crucial elements in the strategy to deepen the peace process.[15]

Obstacles along the Road to Peace

I would like to comment, if only very briefly, on four issues that have had a significant effect in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere. That means I must perforce leave a number of issues untouched, especially the management of expectations, the proper policies for socio-economic reconstruction after an agreement, an appropriate role for external powers (whether or not they have played some role in the actual peace process), and the vexing and complex issues of justice and reconciliation. The four issues are the perennial problem of trust and distrust, the terms of the initial agreement itself, the effect of domestic politics, and the dangers of terrorism in a very unsettled environment.

Trust and distrust have become very "hot" academic issues in the last few years and there have been some very interesting conceptual advances in our understanding of these concepts. Unfortunately, these advances have not been very helpful in terms of elucidating difficult choices in a very risky environment, perhaps because real world decisions are going to be made on the basis of the kind of detailed and timely knowledge that the theoretical analyses largely ignore or do not possess. Still, I want

to mention the topic here because its effects are profound and pervasive and because self-consciousness about the problems of trust and distrust may go some way, perhaps only a little way, toward diminishing the negative effects of the absence of trust. It is obviously difficult to make peace a credible option when your enemy has a reputation for cheating and when there are rational reasons for you to cheat in anticipation of the same behavior by him—a classic negative self-fulfilling prophecy. The risks of being duped or cheated are very high and it is in just such situations that trust can be the only way (or a major way) of accepting the risks. In this sense, trust is generally considered as a solution to the problems of risky decisions: in effect, trust is required only if you must make a decision where your losses could be great and you could come to regret the result. Trust is thus an attitude that permits you to take decisions that are inherently risky and to cooperate because you have favorable expectations about how the trusted will behave.

On what does such trust depend? The answer is complex but certainly prior experience with similar situations or with the individual that you are considering trusting is crucial, as are cultural and historical factors. More analytically, trust is justified if I believe that you have benign intentions toward me and the interests of concern to me, if I believe you intend to promote those interests even if they do not immediately coincide with yours—a very strong condition—and if I believe you have the competence to act to promote my interests.[16] Trust is thus based on my reading of both your intentions and your competence. What is interesting, as Professor Ullman-Margalit makes clear, is that while the notion of benign intentions is indispensable in any situation of trust, the other two conditions can be relaxed in various ways to suggest a kind of half-way house between trust and distrust. For example, in the complex political world created by peacemaking in protracted conflicts, it might make sense to relax the third condition on competence to fulfill intentions because both sides are aware that the other will have serious opposition to full implementation—to ask the other to do things too soon that are inherently dangerous is to ask a question that is

not going to be answered. Indeed, to ask too much too early may be a disguised way to undermine the agreement itself.[17]

Unfortunately, this kind of sophisticated reasoning may be too much to hope for in cases where two sides have been in a nasty conflict for a long time. If we were talking about an agreement between, say, the US and Canada or Switzerland and Sweden, we might say that the default case is to trust: where you are uncertain about whether to trust or distrust, trust unless or until you have specific reasons for distrust. But in our cases, the default option is to distrust: distrust until you have specific reasons to trust.[18] What other option is there when the consequences of misplaced trust could be catastrophic and the alternative of distrust costs little if the other also distrusts and gains much if the other trusts and you gain the (short-run) benefits of cheating?[19]

In such circumstances, trust is bound to be a very fragile good and the costs of regaining trust may be especially severe. Many economists argue that trust is unnecessary if interests overlap sufficiently to make some cooperation possible and rational choice theorists argue that trust is merely a rational calculation about the intentions of the trusted party.[20] I would question the validity of these arguments in a context dominated by strong emotions and deep grievances. I doubt that interests can be easily understood here or that there is much overlap in the interpretation of interests on critical issues or that people who are "thinking with their blood" will act rationally to accept an agreement from which they benefit but the opponent benefits more (or even equally).

That seems to leave us only with a familiar collection of make-do's: confidence-building measures to begin breaking up the mountain of distrust, proceeding step-by-step to test the opponent's behavior before too much has been given away, pooling or sharing risks especially with outside guarantors, dispute settlement mechanisms, and strict penalties for non-compliance. One seeks with these measures not to increase trust in the shortrun but to reduce the risks of trusting at all. This is all very well but it has a downside. A slow, incremental style of policy implementation may give terrorists and other opponents of the

peace great leverage because their acts will occur before the peace has had much time to spread benefits around. In addition, it is in the early stages of the post-peace process that the agreement is most vulnerable and most in need of buttressing and too much caution and care may have the opposite of the intended effect—i.e., risk-aversion when the willingness to run some risks is critical. As I noted earlier, perhaps we can at least hope that awareness of these dilemmas will generate better policy choices or that leaders will learn from earlier mistakes, which may be a very frail reed upon which to rest many hopes.[21] Is it too much to hope that a policymaker, even in an environment of distrust, might ask himself whether he has confidence that the other has plausible reasons to fulfill commitments and is aware that non-compliance will be costly? Probing this question might be beneficial, even if it sneaks rational calculation into at least some decisions.

The general outlines of a solution to most conflicts usually become apparent to most observers (and most participants) soon after the existential phase of the conflict begins to dissipate and a behind-the-scenes effort to begin peace talks commences.[22] Insofar as this is true, it has another crucial implication: getting to the point where the potential solution can even be discussed between the parties requires great political skills by the leader to get all his ducks in a row—the extremists, the doubters, the fearful, and the patrons abroad.[23] Of course, since the devil is in the details, broad agreement may not mean very much, as the last eight or nine years have shown in the Middle East. Moreover, such agreement says very little about how to traverse the distance from agreement on a few general principles to final agreement on stable peace. Yet that broad agreement does at least imply that there is a rational reason to continue the exploratory process: even if each side works with an inherent bad faith model of the other, changes are always occurring in leadership, opportunities, domestic and international pressures, and the like that open the possibility of a policy breakthrough.[24]

So what ought to be in the initial agreement? For the most part, this question can probably only be answered on a case-by-case basis. But if we try to think contextually again, a few

comments or suggestions may not be entirely irrelevant. One problem is that leaders who have been weakened over time by the failure to bring victory or an acceptable peace also may have overcommitted to hard policies to keep the reputation for militancy that brought them to power and to ward off domestic opponents who are willing to label any concession as a defeat. That tends to mean that the initial agreement will be loose and vague, putting off to the future any attempt to resolve the central issues of the conflict. This is also an attractive option because joining a peace process has obvious benefits for the leader (status as a peacemaker, recognition by the other, access to resources, meetings with world leaders, etc.) but signing an actual peace agreement that sacrifices real goals is much less attractive. The problem with this, of course, is that it makes it difficult to build support for the peace process either with the public at large or leadership rivals when it is unclear what the final agreement will look like. This is a standard complaint about the Oslo Accords and to some extent about other agreements (for example, Dayton, El Salvador, Guatemala).[25] It seems to me, however, that while it would certainly be better to give each side a clear picture of what the future would hold, asking too much at this stage of a very fragile peace process may end by destroying it before it even gets off the ground. Peace processes that are really exploratory truces are rather like blank canvases that the painter/leader must fill in as he chooses—carefully. This seems to me to imply that we need to look elsewhere for insights about this issue.

In short, rather than focusing on the terms of agreement, perhaps we should focus on the attitudes appropriate to that first stage of negotiations. Conflicts are always about more than interests. In fact, if the peace has any real chance of survival, it makes sense to be very aware of the things not said or clearly expressed: the entirely rational fears that create an environment of distrust. To begin to dispel these, each side in an ideal world should focus on the other's need for mutual reassurance, for doing things early on that provide evidence of good intentions and good faith in the negotiating process. Herbert Kelman and others have argued that one way to do this is to emphasize the other's needs

for such largely subjective values like identity, security, recognition, dignity, etc.[26] One can easily understand the benefits of this: for example, as one small illustration, I have had numerous Palestinians explain to me the anger and humiliation they feel from gratuitously rude and demeaning behavior by Israeli soldiers at checkpoints.[27] More strenuous efforts to stop this behavior by the Israeli authorities would remove an unnecessary impediment to improving relations between the communities—a small action with potentially beneficial consequences. Still, I am not as optimistic about Professor Kelman's belief that it will be easier to meet needs than interests because needs are less zero-sum: not all interests are zero-sum (say, economic growth or the provision of basic human needs support) and not all needs are uncontroversial because of different meanings and interpretations.[28] Perhaps it is worth noting that Arafat, Netanyahu and Sharon ignored the need for a policy of reassurance, however defined, and instead followed deliberately provocative policies (Arafat by adopting a strategy of terrorism and the Israelis by continuing to expand settlement activities). Put differently, reassurance is unlikely to be on the minds of the enemies of peace. It seems obvious enough that both interests and needs must be considered but that they can be beneficially linked in the post-peace period by providing tangible, immediate benefits that also provide evidence of seriousness about the peace process, about establishing a mutually beneficial long-term relationship, and about new intentions that imply that the future will not be a replay of the past. The difficulty of changing basic beliefs, the belief that our good intentions are self-evident but the other's are opaque, the dominance of conflict-driven norms, and the very low incentive to take any risks for peace mean that new ways of constructing social reality will be a task without end and with many bumps on the road. What is imperative is not only getting started and maintaining the momentum of beneficial actions and not only the provision of aid and technical support but also responding quickly to the psychological needs of the rebel side. Signs that they are being treated equally, that their arguments are understood and listened to even if they cannot be wholly accepted,

that there is some empathy for their suffering and that the days of petty humiliations and harassments are over would all be helpfu'. The willingness to meet deadlines, to begin substantive talks on unresolved issues, and to meet regularly with the other's leadership would also be helpful.[29]

I turn now to the issue of domestic politics (or internal politics for the rebel group). The malign influence of domestic politics on the stability of the peace process or the survival of any agreement is a standard theme in every study that I have consulted and this is also clearly true in Sri Lanka in the studies that I have been able to consult.[30] But I do not want to give in completely to the current tendency in my discipline to argue that domestic politics is always dominant.[31] I think we need to be a little more subtle and differentiated in our analyses. Domestic constraints and opportunities can be critical but most leaders involved in peace processes make their choices, I believe, based on a complex, shifting assessment of potential support or opposition domestically, the likely reaction of external patrons and diaspora communities, and signals sent out by the enemy—not to mention cognitive biases, the history of the conflict and their sense of whether time is or is not on their side. Given this conceptual maze and the difficulty of making clear judgments about this multidimensional chessboard, I would guess that the dominant form of decision-making is likely to be a form of what I call "negative satisficing". In effect, the leader will make a last minute decision, fudged as much as possible, that offends the least number of actors who have the power to do him harm.

One problem about exploring the effect of domestic politics on peacemaking is that the term itself has multiple meanings. For example, in Sri Lanka, where various analysts have argued that domestic politics has "poisoned" the peace process, the key issues have been the constraints created by divided authority between a President and a Prime Minister, the political use of the peace process by the political parties, and the absence of public support for the kind of compromises that peace will require. Conversely, in Israel, the problems include an electoral system that gives too much power to minority parties and ensures weak coalition

governments and an electorate sharply divided between religious and secular groups with very different notions of what is politically acceptable. Because of limitations of space, I will comment here on only two aspects of domestic politics, the role of leadership and the quest for a "sufficient consensus" behind any policy decision. I should note here also that the domestic politics of a democratic state and the internal politics of a rebel group are very different things, apart from the generic notion that each leader needs to secure his domestic base. Thus the leadership of the rebel group may get its legitimacy from its image of militancy, not from a free vote, the notion of a "loyal opposition" may be inherently suspect to a group that fears the loss of unity above all else, and the stresses and strains of a life in exile or in the jungle may produce dangerous levels of wishful thinking and conspiratorial fantasies.[32]

Complaints about failed leadership are endemic in the literature on protracted conflict. A simple contrast between, say, Arafat and Netanyahu and Nelson Mandela affirms the validity of the point but so too does the contrast between Gerry Adams and earlier leaders of the IRA/Sinn Fein. The more important analytical point, however, is why the leadership role has been so difficult and problematic. As noted earlier, one problem the weak leader faces is that his support will crumble over time from the failure to achieve promised objectives. This is one reason why new leaders may be imperative, especially if they have a strong electoral mandate (say, Tony Blair's freedom to act in Northern Ireland) or are not tarred with a long record of empty rhetoric (thus, ironically, Mandela's political status may have survived because imprisonment meant that he was not associated with the ANC's failures). Even more critically, if a decision to explore the peace track is made, internal unity is likely to crumble.. The masses, still imbued with the rhetoric and the fantasies of ultimate victory and perhaps unaware of all the factors pushing the leadership to explore peace, may threaten to support new leaders. Other elites may also threaten the leader by denouncing compromise and maneuvering to be in a good position if a succession crisis erupts. A weakened leader may also be trapped

by divergent credibility problems: the enemy may doubt that he means what he says but his followers may fear that he means what he says. When the split between the need to provide the enemy with signs of flexibility and the need to maintain or establish domestic unity can no longer be papered over, the safe and almost inevitable choice is to placate domestic enemies who threaten the leader's tenure, to lead from behind, and perhaps—as Arafat chose to do—to try to "negotiate" by exchanging atrocities and claiming victimhood.[33] Each party is also more focused on the domestic arena or on retaining the support of external patrons, thereby relegating the critical face-to-face negotiations with the other to the periphery of concern.

Two weak leaders without a strong domestic constituency for peace are, by this reasoning, unlikely to be able to make a strong peace. Conversely, two strong leaders like Mandela and deKlerk in South Africa or Sadat and Begin in the Middle East may be able to negotiate a reasonably stable peace, not ideal but certainly preferable to the available alternatives. Finally, there is the ambiguous case of one strong leader and one weak leader seeking to arrive at peace, say, Rabin and Arafat in 1993. The prognosis here is almost as bad as two weak leaders stumbling from crisis to crisis: an unequal peace, close to a diktat, that resolves nothing and guarantees trouble in the future. This might seem to imply that we should seek peace only when we have the luxury of strong leadership but I think that is too severe a constraint. The categories "strong" and "weak" are not static and it might be possible to compensate for weak leadership by a variety of other possibilities: for example, strong pressure from the grassroots for peace (as happened in Northern Ireland and the Basque country), the appearance of more flexible and skilled new leaders, or unusual pressures for peace from abroad, and perhaps even a degree of learning from past failures.[34] Since relative power is always a factor in the negotiating arena, even if only tacitly, it ought also to be noted that a strong leader or a leader of the stronger party should be able—if willing—to take greater risks for peace, to accept asymmetric benefits at the beginning of the process, and perhaps to use power superiority to compensate (in

One last point may be worth mentioning. What are the qualities that are important in effective leadership in the demanding environment that concerns us? We might speculate that effectiveness is a function of the interaction of five variables: 1)power, defined as control over a sufficiently broad and deep domestic constituency and sufficiently strong influence over crucial external supporters; 2) motivation, or a willingness to explore new options and to take some bearable risks; 3) opportunity, or the sense that there is something worth exploring with the other side; 4) skill, the ability to maintain unity, to get tough choices accepted, and to keep doors open with the other; 5) credibility, a reputation for being trustworthy. Although I cannot do it here, I would again speculate that we could construct a matrix based on these characteristics, rank order them in terms of high, mixed and low, and then evaluate various leaders in various negotiations to get some sense of what made them effective or ineffective.[35]

> *One tactic that leaders can use to widen the constituency for peace is to try to give any group powerful enough to undermine the peace process a seat at the bargaining table (both internally to develop a consensus and externally when negotiating with the other side.) Whether this is either possible or wise is unclear. It does broaden the process but at the cost of giving extremists and the "rejectionist front" a potential veto over the negotiating process or at least the ability to delay it dangerously. In South Africa, where the ANC and the National Party were the dominant players, analysts developed the idea of a "sufficient consensus" to isolate and (hopefully) control extremists but also to allow them to join the consensus if they decide to accept its premises.[36] But where each side is heavily divided and the extremists rigidly opposed to compromise (as with the Islamic terrorist groups), it may not be possible to construct such a consensus—except behind the continuation of*

the conflict, the rejection of compromise, and interminable delays in the negotiating process. In such circumstances, the best option may be to create a "coalition of the willing" on one's own side, try to contain one's own extremists, and seek support from the moderates on the other side—if such exist—to help limit the cycle of violence and retaliation.. Thus the "sufficient consensus" may have to cross boundaries.

There is a certain resonance here with the old idea in American political science that the best coalition is not the largest, most inclusive one but rather the "minimum winning coalition". The point is that larger coalitions imply fewer gains for each member, a lower common denominator for policy, and greater difficulties in implementation and compliance. I would, however, make a crucial distinction here: a smaller coalition may be the best option or even the only option when the peace process is launched, given the likely opposition, but the size of the coalition needs to be quickly increased after an agreement is signed to deepen support and marginalize the opposition. This is especially true in the very difficult transition period when the peace is new and untested and the forces resisting it are still powerful.[37] For the groups that heavily benefit from the continuation of conflict, peace may seem a public good that diminishes their private gains; for everybody else, peace is a public good from which all benefit.[38]

The relationship between domestic politics and peacemaking is too complex and too much at the mercy of situational factors to permit easy generalizations or defini ive conclusions. At best, perhaps a few rough and ready "rules of thumb" are worth keeping in mind. The first of these is that if the ability to make credible promises is the key to effective leadership, violating commitments and reneging on promises will destroy any peace process before it establishes itself. Thus the total absence of credibility for either Arafat or Sharon (with the other side and with an important segment of each's domestic constituency) is one reason that the current situation is so dire. Second, only an

unstable peace is likely to be possible if domestic support is thin and likely to turn increasingly hostile with the first atrocity or failed promise. Leaders cannot get too far ahead of their own followers because it gives too much leverage to internal opponents and they cannot cobble together a broad but badly divided coalition and then hope to make a strong peace: thus Barak was far-sighted in his efforts to reach agreement with the Palestinians but he did not have strong domestic support or a unified coalition to offer a degree of protection when the opposition was energized. The leaders on both sides can help each other tacitly in such situations but are rarely able or willing to do so. And finally, a system of divided authority, as in Sri Lanka, can be disastrous if the President and the Prime Minister are from different parties or have different views about the desirability of peace: *cohabitation* is always difficult but it may be especially disabling for highly controversial, potentially existential decisions about peace. Put differently, domestic peace is not by itself sufficient to reach a stable peace with an ancient enemy but it is certainly necessary. And note that even strong external support for peace may not suffice if internal resistance is too strong—as may now be at least momentarily true in regard to Protestant support for the Good Friday agreement.

The last point that I would like to discuss is the impact of terrorism on the peace process. Since both sides are likely to be internally divided over whether to enter into a peace process or whether to accept whatever it produces, it should not be surprising that some will be willing to use terrorism to stop the process or to get a seat at the bargaining table, that there are different kinds of terrorist groups pursuing different kinds of goals and using different means, that this will affect how and whether they can be dealt with by various counter-terrorism tactics, and that the timing of the terrorist atrocities (before, during, or after an agreement has been signed) will influence what effect they are likely to have and what responses make sense.[39] I am less convinced then Professor Darby that some of his distinctions between terrorists (dealers, zealots, opportunists, and mavericks) are very useful because the boundaries between these categories

are so fluid and because the ends that the different groups pursue can shift with circumstances and opportunities.[40] But Darby admirably succeeds in the task of alerting us to the dangers of perceiving terrorism in too simple or undifferentiated a fashion. Above all, we obviously need to keep a sharp focus on the nature of the aims pursued by different groups and the degree of support they receive. Since the initial causes of most protracted conflicts are complex (and frequently forgotten or reformulated over time), it is worth noting that the driving force of these conflicts frequently becomes the endless exchange of reciprocated atrocities. In effect, terrorism, and of course the other associated grievances, humiliations, and misunderstandings, can become a kind of tail that wags the dog, endlessly perpetuating a brutal stalemate and the assumption that there is no solution.[41] In this sense it is much more than a sideshow, a distraction from the "real" conflict. It is also worth keeping in mind that terrorism has come to have another effect, at least in its current manifestations: the amount of indirect damage it can do (to the economy, tourism, transportation, a growing sense of fear and foreboding, hostile reactions to innocent members of the community of origin of the terrorists,etc.) is so vast that it can nearly paralyze modern societies for some period of time and have other perverse effects for even longer. No one seems to know what to do about this, except to pay the costs and hope that the grievances that drive at least some of the terrorists can be gradually allayed. As the conventional wisdom would have it, there are no perfect solutions for dealing with the "new" terrorism and thus one can only seek to contain it or manage it or reduce its effects. The popularity of sustained suicide bombing by Islamic (and some secular) terrorists in or against Israel is another new aspect of the terrorist threat both in the ability to continue to attract new recruits to the cause and in the lack of any clear political purpose—killing the other, inflicting pain, exacting revenge seem to be the aim, even if it makes peace with the other ever more doubtful.[42] Will individuals indoctrinated in this faith and recruited to kill indiscriminately ever be willing to accept a compromise peace? In any case, the *problematique* created by the "new" terrorism is a symbiosis

between technology (in weaponry and communications), fanaticism, the absence of clearly defined political goals or moral restraints, and the asymmetry between the costs to the terrorists of launching their atrocities and the catastrophic effects and aftereffects for the targeted population.

The especially worrying aspect of this is that both 9/11 and the suicide bombers have in some sense been extraordinarily successful: they have raised awareness of their grievances, they have inflicted disproportionate costs on threatened societies, and they have seemed to have given enormous psychic pleasure not only to the terrorists themselves but to their active and tacit followers (especially in the Muslim world). The old notion that terrorism is the weapon of the weak may still have a degree of truth to it, at least in the sense that it can be used against much stronger enemies, but it certainly needs rethinking in light of the scale of the damage the terrorists have inflicted and want to continue to inflict. Since the conventional opinion seems to be that, while terrorism can be contained or limited by active counter-terrorism measures, it can only be eliminated or sharply diminished by the active support of the community from which the terrorists come, the continued support for the terrorists in some parts of the Muslim world raises substantial doubts that that support will be forthcoming. Still, one can at least hope that the vast number of decent and courageous Muslims—and members of other communities supporting terrorism—will become increasingly aware of the damage caused to their own societies by the reaction to terrorist outrages and increasingly willing to join in measures to stop the cycle of violence. When "battle fatigue" has risen to high levels on both sides, when the desire to live a normal life becomes powerful, and when a peace process shows some hope of producing real gains for both sides, terrorist outrages—like the Omagh incident in Northern Ireland—may generate greater support for peace and joint efforts to marginalize the "hard men" with guns.[43] But until the prior conditions are satisfied, we are left only with the usual repertoire of anti-terrorist measures and the hope that a strong leader committed to sustaining a very fragile peace process will emerge and will be willing and

able to control his own men of violence. Apart from this, the common-sensical tactic of trying to split the terrorist camp by making various kinds of generous offers (bribes?) to the supposed "moderates" undoubtedly makes sense in some cases but is obviously more difficult with groups that are very difficult to penetrate—such as the Islamic fundamentalists.

Conclusion: How to Get to Maybe—and Beyond

The high costs of conflict are not by themselves sufficient to bring peace: fear of the risks of peace may be greater then the hopes of gain from a cessation of violence. The logic of conflict, in which each acts rationally in the context of its beliefs about the other, thus can continue to prevail—despite endless invocations by legions of well-meaning analysts of the need to redefine the conflict away from the grievances and hatreds of the past to a joint problem that can be resolved by new ways of perceiving, thinking and acting. I do not in any sense mean to deride this perspective since, as Cross has noted, "...the attitudes of those involved in the conflict may prove to be better predictors of the long-term behavior of disputants than whether or not the parties reached an agreement. Agreements, after all, are often short-lived."[44] Any conflict is at least partly socially constructed and thus working to change the attitudes and beliefs that frame it is imperative. Unfortunately, since basic attitudes and beliefs change only slowly, and learning is thus limited, the more immediate problem is how to proceed when cognitive structures change only tactically—that is, new means of pursuing old objectives may become acceptable, which is at least a start. Not so long ago many astute observers of the peace process in Sri Lanka were decidedly pessimistic, expressing substantial doubts about the ability of the President to get any agreement on devolution through Parliament and even asserting that the conflict had descended into "structural darkness."[45] These views seem to have been at least partially reversed by new signs of willingness on the part of the LTTE to compromise on some of its earlier supposedly non-negotiable

demands. One devoutly hopes, of course, that these signs of moderation reflect a genuine will to seek a stable peace but I am sure that there are many who doubt the LTTE's commitment to peace, who remember their earlier use of cease-fires to prepare for a new round of war, and who fear—as have the Israelis and the Protestants in Northern Ireland—that what is accepted today will shortly become a platform for new demands that greatly resemble the demands of the past.

These cautionary comments are not meant to suggest that the peace process ought to be abandoned or that it is doomed to fail. It is worth remembering that even a peace agreement that fails, like Oslo, may have beneficial effects when peace talks are resumed in the sense of laying out some parameters and clarifying some assumptions. Worth keeping in mind also is the fact that other side's apparent rigidities may mask a great deal of internal differentiation that cannot easily be expressed beforehand—between those who accept the premises of an agreement and are willing to live with it, those who accept it but only as a stage for asking for more, those who uneasily float between lukewarm support and uncertain resistance, and those who reject any compromise at all. Thus it is always a mistake to act as if the enemy is all of a piece and exploring opportunities a mistake. Still, I think one will get further toward stable peace if one starts with a full awareness of the difficulties of bringing protracted conflicts to a successful conclusion. The question is, to borrow from Lenin, what is to be done?

Any peace process is a multidimensional discourse that tries to do many things at once, some of which may conflict: stopping the violence, resolving the issues on the bargaining table, beginning work on an effort to remove or diminish the underlying structural and psychological disabilities that have deepened and sustained the conflict, providing for the security of the rebel leadership and its military forces, surviving the transition period and broadening the constituency for peace on each side, providing immediate benefits for the masses but also establishing the grounds for long-term development, and trying to deal with the complex issues of justice and reconciliation.[46] Is that sufficiently

intimidating? Perhaps this list also illustrates why peace agreements, whether an initial exploratory truce or an apparently final settlement of central issues, are essential prerequisites for dealing with other issues but they do not and cannot resolve deep structural problems: such agreements change the nature of the post-peace problems but they hardly eliminate such problems.

Incremental, step-by-step negotiations seem to have failed miserably in such circumstances, if largely because they seem to give too much leverage to the extremists and too many opportunities for something to go wrong before the peace agreement can demonstrate its utility. The result, at least in the Middle East (and earlier in Bosnia and now apparently in Cyprus), has been a vogue for "big bang" negotiations in which third parties impose or "suggest" a solution or a set of principles on parties that seem incapable of negotiating seriously with each other. I doubt that these efforts will work: the swamp of despair and disillusionment with peace that the conflict has produced in areas like the Middle East needs to be drained before anything substantial can be erected on it. I prefer what I call (gradually) accelerated incrementalism that begins with a major effort by external parties to improve conditions on the ground, relatively flexible commitments in the transition period when support is uncertain and the extremists full of rage, and increasingly firm commitments about implementation and deadlines—including serious sanctions for failures—as time passes and the concessions that need to be implemented become more onerous and dangerous. There could be at least an implicit commitment from the start about what a final settlement will encompass. This is not a panacea or a utopia—which is inconceivable—but a means to make progress.[47] Perhaps it is also worth emphasizing that while premature euphoria is an obvious danger, premature cynicism about the possibility of ameliorating even desperately bad situations may also be very costly, not least in missing or misperceiving small opportunities for progress. Let me quote to you in conclusion a comment made by Alexander Herzen in one of Tom Stoppard's new plays: "A distant end is not an end but a trap. The end we work for must be closer—the laborer's wage,

the pleasure in the work done, the summer lightning of personal happiness."[48] I rather like those prudent sentiments, since we have suffered so much from so many failed utopias, but I am aware that they may not be ambitious enough for some. If you do choose that more ambitious path, please believe me when I say that I hope you prove that my skepticism is unjustified.

End Notes

(1) For a very optimistic view see Barbara Crossette, "Within Reach of Peace," The International Herald Tribune, Nov. 9, 2002, p.8.

(2) For some of the shifts in LTTE positions, see Phil Reeves, "Tigers Give Backing to Democracy across Sri Lanka," The Independent, Nov. 4, 2002, p.10.

(3) For the material in this paragraph, see The Daily Mirror, Nov. 22, 2002, pp. 1 and 9.

(4) See John Darby, The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes (Washington, D.C.:United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), p.8.

(5) See Paddy Ashdown, "Bosnia is the Model for Resolving Conflicts" International Herald Tribune, Nov. 5, 2002, p.9. For a more negative view, see William Pfaff, "Time to Concede Defeat in Bosnia-Herzegovina," International Herald Tribune, Nov. 2, 2002, p.7.

(6) Michael T. Hayes, The Limits of Policy Change: Incrementalism, Worldview, and the Rule of Law (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2001), p.52.

(7) Every conflict has unique elements that are crucial in determining policy choices, but I am also impressed by the

common elements that appear in almost all protracted conflicts, including divided and segregated societies, patterns of economic and social inequality, negative stereotypes of the other, a definition of identity in opposition to the other, a joint sense of being an embattled minority, a lack of empathy, etc. There is one major difference between conflicts—whether the solution requires separation or a sharing of power—but even here there are many commonalities until the details of the final agreement become central.

(8) Rose is quoted in John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, Explaining Northern Ireland—Broken Images (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), p. 354.

(9) If leaders on both sides understood this context—its limits and its possibilities—they might also understand a crucial piece of tactical advice: don't push to the edge of the abyss because there may not be a safe exit strategy. On how leaders in South Africa avoided getting trapped in this way, see Pierre du Toit, "South Africa in Search of Post-Settlement Peace," in John Darby and Roger MacGinty, eds., The Management of Peace Processes (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp.30-1. Arafat and Sharon have gone over the abyss and they may not yet have landed.

(10) I have drawn in the preceding paragraphs on my essay "A Fragile Peace: Could a "Race to the Bottom" Have Been Avoided?" in Robert L. Rothstein, Moshe Ma'oz, and Khalil Shikaki, eds.,The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: Oslo and the Lessons of Failure (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002), pp. 6-9. Perhaps it is worth adding that while leadership can be evaluated from a variety of perspectives (personal traits, relationship with followers, reputation, etc.), implicit in my argument is the notion that situational variables have tended to be undervalued, if not ignored, in some of the peace literature.

(11) For a useful discussion of this issue, see Richard B. Bilder, Managing the Risks of International Agreement (Madison, WI.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

(12) External intervention may have negative effects if it masks a desire to get in quickly, stop the violence and depart just as quickly or if it reflects the agenda and/or political needs of the intervening power—as with India's intervention in Sri Lanka or President Clinton's need for a quick Middle Eastern settlement before his term of office ended.

(13) On the conflict syndrome, see Daniel Bar-Tal, "From Intractable Conflict Through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis," Political Psychology, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2000), pp. 351-65. On lack of knowledge about the other, Yossi Beilin, a key figure in the Oslo negotiations, notes that a very high-ranking Palestinian official told him (Beilin) that the Palestinian leadership took pride before Oslo in knowing nothing about Israel and the Israelis: why bother if Israel was to be destroyed? So Israel was demonized, no distinction was made between different views, and knowledge about Israeli democracy was non-existent. See Yossi Beilin, Touching Peace—From the Oslo Accord to a Final Agreement (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), p.168. Perhaps this commitment to ignorance helps explain why Arafat took so many actions that undermined the Israeli peace movement. Note that Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza were far better informed about Israel.

(14) For one illustration of the effects of the absence of empathy, see Paul Arthur, "The Anglo-Irish Peace Process: Obstacles to Reconciliation," in Robert L. Rothstein, ed., After the Peace—Resistance and Reconciliation (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner, 1999), pp. 75-84. Let me also quote a comment by the former US Ambassador to Sri Lanka: "The large majority of Sinhalese have no conception of the

resentment [and] the petty harassment which most [Tamils] routinely experience, and the resultant skepticism that any Sri Lankan government will allow genuine devolution..As a result, they do not comprehend the passion behind the demands made by generations of Tamils..." Teresita C. Schaffer, "Peacemaking in Sri Lanka: the Kumaratunga Initiative," in Rotberg, Creating Peace in Sri Lanka, p.140.

(15) These kinds of concerns are frequently ignored, perhaps because leaders feel threatened by dissent about a compromise peace and thus focus on rebuilding elite unity and buying off opponents who could challenge for the leadership—and not on meeting the needs of the public or of developing some ties with like-minded leaders on the other side.

(16) I follow here Edna Ullman-Margalit, "Trust, Distrust and In Between," (www.nyu.edu/clppt/program 2001).

(17) Ian S. Lustick argues that Netanyahu sought to undermine Oslo by demanding too much in the way of implementation from Arafat and then using his failures to justify Israel's own failures to fulfill all its Oslo Commitments. See "Ending Protracted Conflicts: The Oslo Peace Process Between Political Partnership and Legality," Cornell International Law Journal, Vol. 30, No.3 (1997), pp. 741-57. Put differently, don't ask a question you know the other can't answer (yet)—unless you are looking for an excuse to end a process.

(18) See Ullman-Margalit, "Trust, Distrust and In Between," p. 14.

(19) The point here can be demonstrated in a game theory matrix but I will leave that effort for another paper.

(20) For a good illustration of the economist's focus on interests in the absence of trust, see Ralph Bryant, The International

Coordination of National Stabilization Policies (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1993), pp. 38-44.

(21) For an interesting analysis of learning in international relations, see the essays in George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, eds., Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1991).

(22) Thus David Little notes that the "general outlines of the conditions for resolving or modifying ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka have been understood since at least 1957..." David Little "Religion and Ethnicity in the Sri Lankan Civil War," in Robert Rotberg, ed., Creating Peace in Sri Lanka—Civil War and Reconciliation (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 1999), p.51. The outlines of a Middle East settlement have been known since at least 1948, since the early 1970's in Northern Ireland with the failed Sunningdale agreement, and the current discussions about a settlement in Cyprus sound much like earlier proposals from the 1970's.

(23) For an excellent illustration of how this is done, see the discussion of Gerry Adams' tactics to keep the IRA/Sinn Fein united behind his moves toward peace, see Ed Molony, A Secret History of the IRA (London: Allan Lane, 2002), pp.392-42.

(24) I have heard former Senator George Mitchell make the "bad faith" argument in reference to the parties in Northern Ireland.

(25) See my comments on this point in "A Fragile Peace: Are There Only Lessons of Failure?" in The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, pp. 163-64.

(26) See Herbert Kelman, "Transforming the Relationship Between Former Enemies: A Social Psychological Analysis" in Rothstein, After the Peace, pp. 180-205.

(27) It seems only fair to note that the Israeli soldiers, mostly very young, have been angered by the sustained terrorist atrocities of various Palestinian groups and fearful that any approaching Palestinian could be a suicide bomber.

(28) Kelman, "Transforming the Relationship," pp. 184-86.

(29) These are elements in a leader's attempt to change the logic of the conflict by diminishing psychic fears, providing clear evidence of good intentions, and containing expectations so that what can be accomplished—as distinct from what each side wants accomplished in an ideal settlement—becomes a valued good.

(30) On domestic political constraints in Sri Lanka, see (among many others) Alan Bullion, "The Peace Process and Democracy in Sri Lanka," (paper prepared for the Political Studies Association Conference, London, April, 2000) and Helena Whall, "Assessing the Sri Lankan Peace Process," (paper prepared for the Political Studies Association Conference, London, April, 2000).

(31) For one illustration of the emphasis on domestic dominance, see Helen Milner, Interests, Institutions and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

(32) There is evidence to support some of the arguments about the consequences of a life on the run in various studies of rebel groups in Central America, Peru, and Angola but I shall not pursue the point any further here.

(33) The problems that confront weak leader's raises questions about the commonsensical idea that the longer a peace process goes on, the more the leader has invested in it and the more he needs some face-saving compromise. But he may also choose to bail out under pressure, which suggests that the situation is more complex than the argument about

the passage of time implies: one needs also to assess the alternatives, the nature of the gains in a compromise, external and internal pressures to reach agreement or to reject compromise, and subjective judgments about whether time is or is not on one's side.

(34) Such factors as the drying up of financial support from the diaspora or changing international attitudes toward terrorism may also be consequential.

(35) I provide some illustrations of how these variables interact in several Middle Eastern cases in "A Fragile Peace: Are There Only Lessons of Failure?" pp. 166-67. In my case studies, it has seemed as if power and credibility were the most important of these variables.

(36) See du Toit, "South Africa: In Search of Post-Settlement Peace," p.29.

(37) There are some parallels here with the large body of literature on the transition to democracy after a long period of authoritarian rule. Note also that while I am sympathetic to the notion that the leader's primary obligation is to bring his own constituency along in the quest for peace, it seems to me that this is necessary and perhaps sufficient for getting an agreement, it is not sufficient for deepening that agreement. In the latter regard, it helps if the leader also sees the potential benefits to his own side of strengthening the other side's pro-peace leadership. This did not occur to either side in the Middle East or Bosnia but seemed to have some beneficial effects in Northern Ireland—for a while.

(38) On the problem of dealing with groups that benefit from the conflict—economically, financially, etc.—see Darini Rajasingham-Sananayake, "The Dangers of Devolution: The Hidden Economies of Armed Conflict," in Rotberg, Creating peace in Sri Lanka, pp. 57-69. This issue, especially in regard to resources such as diamonds, oil, gold

and various minerals, has become an increasingly important focus of research on the causes of conflict and its perpetuation. Both the World Bank and the UN have produced a number of important studies of the issue.

(39) Darby, The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes is very useful on these various distinctions.

(40) Ibid., pp.47-8.

(41) Jayadeva Uyangoda, "A Political Culture of Conflict," in Rotberg, Creating Peace in Sri Lanka comments: "Since the early 1980s the everyday experience in Sri Lanka has centered on violence, destruction, hatred, and moral commitment to enmity." (p.166). Another analyst, after noting the increasing numbers of deaths it takes for Sri Lankan violence to get into Western media, says that "the world has become accustomed to people dying there" and that this has given the parties "a certain latitude within which they can operate with impunity." V. Nithiyanandam, "From Non-News to Stale News," in Siri Gamage and I.B. Watson, eds., Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999),p.65. Note that these comments also imply that one of the major effects of protracted conflict is the coarsening of the fabric of democracy and the rule of law, a point that applies to the US and Israel as well as Sri Lanka. Then again, even a coarsened fabric of democracy may be preferable to the "enforced" unity of most rebel groups.

(42) Among the Islamic terrorists there seems to be a virtual "cult of death" in which indiscriminately killing innocent men, women and children is viewed as heroic because—according to one or another supposed religious "authority"—this guarantees martyrdom and a life in Paradise.

(43) For an illustration of the way in which terrorism in the right circumstances can increase support for peace, see Moloney, A Secret History of the IRA, pp.348-50.

(44) Susan Cross, "Three Models of Conflict Resolution," Journal of Social Issues., Vol.55, No.3 (Fall 1999), p.2.

(45) Uyangoda, "A Political Culture of Conflict," p.158.

(46) There is a very interesting literature that has begun appearing in recent years that argues that peace agreements are unstable in civil wars largely because the leader and his armed followers will be insecure if the government retains most of the military power and the power to allocate resources. Thus only a settlement guaranteed by a strong third party, like the US, or that allows the rebels to retain their arms is viable. I have not pursued that issue here because it is not relevant when the two sides are separating and that, even when it is of importance, there are other prior issues that need to be resolved before discussion about the security of a leader and his constituents in a situation where power is to be shared becomes relevant. At that point, it does not seem an insuperable problem to devise means of protection during the transition period to stable peace.

(47) Perhaps it would also make sense to pursue an old Cold War idea: graduated, unilateral and reciprocated initiatives in tension reduction (GRIT) in which publicly verifiable concessions are offered, preferably initially by the stronger side, in the hope of eliciting reciprocated concessions. If none are proferred, the blame lies clearly with the side that refuses to reciprocate. One hopes here to break a stalemate where neither will move for fear of seeming weak and to generate a kind of "cascade of events" that builds toward a breakthrough (rather like the idea of a "cascade of information" in economics). For an illustration of the successful use of the tactic, see Moloney, A Secret History of the IRA, p.352ff.

(48) The quote from Stoppard's play "Salvage" is in Adam Cohen, "Stoppard's Hymn to Imperfection," The International Herald Tribune, Oct. 23, 2002, p.7.

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