15 Managing and settling ethnic conflict

Asaf Siniver

Contending approaches to conflict management

The management of ethnic conflict, either by local elites or external actors such as individual states and international organisations, rarely results in the resolution of the conflict or the dissipation of rival ethnic claims and grievances. Conflicts characterised by ethnic and cultural rivalries are the most common types of conflict, most notably in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe (Bercovitch and Fretter 2004, 46; Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1999). The significance of a group's ethno-cultural identity cannot be dismissed as a guise to power-seeking. Depending on their historical and geographical experiences, ethnic groups are highly diverse in their aspirations and claims. Minority groups within existing political communities may seek access to power and equal rights (for example, Israeli Arabs), indigenous groups such as the Mayans and the Chiapas may resist attempts by the state to assimilate them, whereas the Basque people can be described as ethnonationals who strive for self-determination and even independence (Gurr 2000). Most contemporary conflicts need external assistance in order to be brought under control, and accordingly such strategies of conflict management may involve diplomacy (for example, negotiation and mediation), legal methods (arbitration, adjudication) and even the use of military force. However, due to the intricate nature of some ethnically generated conflicts, we may at best hope to manage, or regulate them, rather than resolve them. Accordingly conflict management can be defined as the limitation, mitigation and containment of conflict without necessarily solving it. Importantly, conflict management is distinct from conflict resolution, where the emphasis is placed on resolving the underlying incompatibilities which have caused the conflict, rather than simply containing them. Conflict management and resolution are separate but related mechanisms which need to be used at different stages in the 'conflict cycle'; managing a conflict may take a long time and must foster conditions which are amenable to the successful resolution of the conflict (Tanner 2000).

The choice of strategies depends on the nature of the conflict and the identity of the warring parties, as well as the identity of the third party and its available resources and linkage to the conflict. This chapter will examine the efficacy of such strategies employed by third parties in their efforts to manage and settle ethnically generated conflicts in recent years. The primary purpose of conflict management is to slow, or stop, the escalation of violence and to create conditions which are conducive to peaceful reconciliation between the warring parties. Accordingly conflict management is understood as a dynamic social process, in which external and internal actors employ

an array of strategies to reduce the rival parties' economic, political and humanitarian costs and enhance their mutual benefits through cooperation and compromise.

There is much debate, however, not only about which strategies work best and under what conditions, but whether intervention by third parties is desirable in the first place. Attempts by external actors to settle violent ethnic conflicts, some of which are fuelled by 'ancient hatreds', may sometimes compound the problem, rather than solve it, as their priorities and objectives may not necessarily be compatible with those of the warring parties (Lake and Rothchild 1996). In broad terms we can think of three contending views on the desirable role of third parties in the management of ethnic conflicts: realist approaches which emphasise the security of the state; liberal, governance-based approaches which focus on the role of third parties in shaping and developing linkages between state and society; and social-psychological approaches which are concerned with societal or human security (Hampson 2001, 388). Importantly, these approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but rather offer complementary elements which together may offer the best route to the understanding and successful managing of ethnic conflicts.

Realist approaches

While all realist interpretations of the causes of ethnic conflict and the role of third parties in managing it are rooted in similar assumptions about state-centrism and the rationality of the actors involved, they offer different emphasis on power sharing and the use of force as a means to an end. For 'hard' realists, the dynamics of ethnic conflicts are rather similar to the processes which shape interstate rivalries, that is to say, they are motivated by, and act in accordance with the security dilemma (Collins 2007). Accordingly the need to maintain a balance of military power between the warring parties is imperative – for example by supporting the weaker side with arms or withholding resources from the stronger side. In extreme cases, direct intervention on behalf of a third party is necessary to maintain such a balance in military power (Betts 1994; Van Evra 1994). Military intervention may be carried by a single state (the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone in 2000) or by a multilateral effort of international organisations (the United Nations in Mozambique in 1992–94) and regional organisations (NATO in the Balkans in the 1990s). Whether these strategies involve military aid to one party and sanctions on the other, or coercive military intervention for the purpose of ending the fighting, the emphasis here is often placed on creating new geopolitical boundaries, most notably through partition, rather than seeking political accommodation or reconciliation (Kaufman 1996, 2007). However, this approach to the settlement of ethnic conflict is often criticised for assuming that just and mutually acceptable territorial partition is a readily available solution to ethnic rivalries. Examples from Israel/Palestine, Cyprus, Kosovo, and most recently Iraq, suggest that in some cases the competition over territory is a zero-sum game where alternative forms of intervention may be necessary (Downes 2006; Pischedda 2008). Accordingly 'softer' approaches of realism to ethnic conflict management advocate the use of non-coercive forms of third-party intervention such as mediation, the provision of good offices and other confidence-building measures (Bercovitch 2002; Princen 1992; Zartman and Touval 1996). Moreover, these activities are not limited to the great powers, but are being taken by a wide range of states and international organisations, though with various degrees of success in managing such conflicts (Siniver 2006; Touval 1994;

Zartman 1995). Nevertheless, mediation by third parties with different resources and strategies creates opportunities for non-territorial solutions such as power sharing, political accommodation and other sociopolitical mobilisation mechanisms to drive the parties towards the settlement of the conflict. While these strategies offer an attractive, non-coercive alternative to direct military intervention by third parties, they can be effective only as long as the rival ethnic groups accept the identity of the mediator and indeed the strategies employed. Thus, even when mediation is undertaken by great powers, the ultimate power in the mediation process lies with the disputing parties. Furthermore, these attempts by third parties must take place under the most propitious circumstances of timing, or 'ripeness' of conflict to optimise the likelihood of success (Zartman 1985).

Liberal approaches

Governance-based approaches to conflict management have their roots in the Kantian notions of liberalism and just governance. Thus while variants of realism emphasise the use of force and balancing strategic security dilemmas as keys to manage conflicts, liberal approaches stress the importance of creating democratic institutions and mechanisms of governance. Here causes of ethnic conflict are understood as the lack of the authority and legitimacy of pluralist structures, violations of human rights and the breakdown of the rule of law. In addition to the reconstruction of political and security institutions, other reforms may include the establishment of truth and reconciliation tribunals in order to restore faith in the judicial process and to install a new cooperative and peaceful environment, as has been demonstrated in South Africa, East Timor, Haiti and El Salvador (Hayner 2006; Kingston 2006; Mani 2005). Thus in order to achieve these objectives, third parties must engage not only at the state level with local governments but, perhaps more importantly, with grass-roots actors, civil society leaders and the private sector. Like softer versions of realism, here too the role of a third party may be assumed not only by the great powers, but by intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. These organisations have the advantage of apparent neutrality and the emphasis on elevating the humanitarian suffering; however, they may lack the clout and resources which are often accompanied by the great-power intervention. Particularly with reference to the working of the United Nations in this field, the need to achieve first a wide consensus about the objectives and the contours of the settlement may hinder the effectiveness of the operation (Annan 2005). Still, this approach has a strong normative component in that the intervening outside party must stand by those in the conflict who are committed to the liberal democratic way. This raises obvious problems of neutrality for the mediator and indeed may damage the effectiveness of the entire approach on grounds of hypocrisy and bias. This has been demonstrated recently in the American and European support for the moderate and secular Fatah government in the West Bank, compared to the isolation and sanctioning of the militant Hamas government in Gaza. The most acute result of this policy has been the worsening of the humanitarian situation of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip (Pace 2009). Indeed, this normative crusade in the name of liberal democracy has been criticised repeatedly not only for failing to appreciate the difficulties in introducing democratic practices in unstable and torn societies with no democratic experience, but also in emphasising procedural and institutional priorities while neglecting the importance of an engaged and informed civil society. In extreme cases this may lead to

a return to violence and political instability (Mansfield and Snyder 1995; Tocci 2007). Finally, while the advance of various confidence-building measures such as elections and power sharing are important techniques to reduce violence and increase cooperation, they cannot alter the basic fears and perceptions which are embedded in individuals and ethnic groups.

Social-psychological approaches

The important contribution of social-psychological approaches to the study and practice of ethnic conflict management is the added dimension of image formation of the other. In other words, here the key to understanding the root causes of ethnic conflicts is not in the security dilemma or the breakdown of state authority, but rather in the development and reinforcement of 'enemy images', or 'us versus them' mentality (Stein 2005). These images and identities are formed by individuals and groups, political elites and the general public, and they relate to either tangible experience or certain beliefs about the behaviour of the other group. This basic need to establish individual and societal identity is most commonly achieved by differentiating 'us' from 'them'. Obviously, identity differentiation does not necessarily and invariably lead to violent conflict. The critical components which combine with these social images to cause violence are mostly environmental, namely the domestic and international conditions which may help to facilitate the formation of enemy images (Coleman and Lowe 2007; Lake and Rothchild 1996; Ross 1995). Accordingly any efforts by third parties to successfully manage the conflict must first address the embedded anxieties and identities which inform the rival groups' images of each other. Strategies designed to change these entrenched identities may range from reconciliation processes to special problem-solving workshops, as well as the development of systems which are compatible with the relevant local culture and norms (Kaufman 2006). These efforts are targeted at the local level, rather than the state, and the third party must assume a neutral role with the emphasis on communicating and facilitating strategies. Individuals and non-governmental organisations are best suited to perform these activities, as they often possess the required sensitivity, local expertise and perceived impartiality which are needed to lead the rival parties out of conflict. Successfully managing ethnic conflicts according to this social-psychological framework seems a particularly difficult task given the kind of knowledge and sensitivity which is required of the third party. Since conflict is caused by deep-rooted stereotypes and ethnocentric views of the other, it does not necessarily follow a rational pattern, and instead must be understood as a subjective and context-dependent social process. Third parties therefore need to engage with a cross-section of society on both sides and help change perceptions and attitudes without imposing new ones in the process. These strategies are best carried out in small informal groups which are composed of middle-range elites, such as academics, retired politicians and officials who can still influence policy but are removed from decision-making (Hampson 2001, 396). Nevertheless, third parties may find it difficult to access the local groups and may be prevented from intervening on the grounds of suspected biased or poor credentials. Moreover, even if these activities prove successful, their impact on society at large is not guaranteed. Unless high-level officials are informed and engaged with the process, these programmes will have limited effect, particularly in areas which are inaccessible or dangerous due to ongoing fighting. Most acute, however, is the question of whether these programmes can indeed change for the long run deeply

embedded images and attitudes which have been hardened over a long period of time and through personal experience.

Assessing the efficacy of conflict management strategies

As noted above, the first hurdle to successful outside intervention lies in the imperviousness of some conflicts to external efforts to bring an end to violence. This resistance derives most commonly from the parties' perceptions about the characteristics of the conflict and the associated stakes (Stedman 1996). Humanitarian intervention is perhaps the most visible manifestation of operations designed to address these issues. It can be defined as 'the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or a group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals other than its own citizens, without the permission of the state within whose territory force is applied' (Holzgrefe 2003, 18). However despite the large number of such missions in recent years, their record of success is mixed. Interventions in northern Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Kosovo, East Timor and Darfur (to name a few) have failed to produce a definite protocol for such missions. Inevitably, the conduct and efficacy of these activities breaks down to the question of the right of the international community to intervene in intrastate conflicts, followed by questioning the desirable characteristics of such interventions if they are indeed necessary. The principle of state sovereignty is embedded in international law, and calls for external intervention, even on humanitarian grounds, invariably raise important legal and ethical questions. Nevertheless, while non-intervention is still the norm in international relations, the post-Cold War period has witnessed a definite rise in the number and range of third-party interventions as the demise of the Soviet Union has removed the strategic constraints which had previously restricted the potential for ethnic clashes. The concern over the increasing failure of governments to protect their people and the rise in conflicting ethnonational claims of neighbouring ethnic groups has led former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to assert that 'the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed' (1992, 9). Others have similarly supported the need for more proactive engagement. According to Teson, 'foreign armies are morally entitled to help victims of oppression ... provided that the intervention is proportionate to the evil which it is designed to suppress' (1998, 15).

In recent years greater emphasis has been placed on defining the appropriate boundaries for interventions. Hoffman, for example, identifies two categories where intervention may be necessary: first, where there is a threat to international peace by 'dangerous' states, as was demonstrates in the cases of Somalia, Haiti and the plight of the Kurds in northern Iraq. Second, where there are massive violations of human rights, including the forcible expulsion of minorities and ethnic cleansing, such as in cases like Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor (Hoffman 1998, 161–64). An attempt to establish norms of intervention was manifested in the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty's framework of *The Responsibility to Protect*. This concept is designed to provide a legal and ethical basis for humanitarian interventions, as well as authorise military interventions in cases where the primary objective is to prevent human suffering. Moreover, it is suggested that in order to establish consistency in norms and operations the United Nations must assume a primary role in authorising and coordinating such interventions (Macfarlane et al. 2004). Despite its many

a return to violence and political instability (Mansfield and Snyder 1995; Tocci 2007). Finally, while the advance of various confidence-building measures such as elections and power sharing are important techniques to reduce violence and increase cooperation, they cannot alter the basic fears and perceptions which are embedded in individuals and ethnic groups.

Social-psychological approaches

The important contribution of social-psychological approaches to the study and practice of ethnic conflict management is the added dimension of image formation of the other. In other words, here the key to understanding the root causes of ethnic conflicts is not in the security dilemma or the breakdown of state authority, but rather in the development and reinforcement of 'enemy images', or 'us versus them' mentality (Stein 2005). These images and identities are formed by individuals and groups, political elites and the general public, and they relate to either tangible experience or certain beliefs about the behaviour of the other group. This basic need to establish individual and societal identity is most commonly achieved by differentiating 'us' from 'them'. Obviously, identity differentiation does not necessarily and invariably lead to violent conflict. The critical components which combine with these social images to cause violence are mostly environmental, namely the domestic and international conditions which may help to facilitate the formation of enemy images (Coleman and Lowe 2007; Lake and Rothchild 1996; Ross 1995). Accordingly any efforts by third parties to successfully manage the conflict must first address the embedded anxieties and identities which inform the rival groups' images of each other. Strategies designed to change these entrenched identities may range from reconciliation processes to special problem-solving workshops, as well as the development of systems which are compatible with the relevant local culture and norms (Kaufman 2006). These efforts are targeted at the local level, rather than the state, and the third party must assume a neutral role with the emphasis on communicating and facilitating strategies. Individuals and non-governmental organisations are best suited to perform these activities, as they often possess the required sensitivity, local expertise and perceived impartiality which are needed to lead the rival parties out of conflict. Successfully managing ethnic conflicts according to this social-psychological framework seems a particularly difficult task given the kind of knowledge and sensitivity which is required of the third party. Since conflict is caused by deep-rooted stereotypes and ethnocentric views of the other, it does not necessarily follow a rational pattern, and instead must be understood as a subjective and context-dependent social process. Third parties therefore need to engage with a cross-section of society on both sides and help change perceptions and attitudes without imposing new ones in the process. These strategies are best carried out in small informal groups which are composed of middle-range elites, such as academics, retired politicians and officials who can still influence policy but are removed from decision-making (Hampson 2001, 396). Nevertheless, third parties may find it difficult to access the local groups and may be prevented from intervening on the grounds of suspected biased or poor credentials. Moreover, even if these activities prove successful, their impact on society at large is not guaranteed. Unless high-level officials are informed and engaged with the process, these programmes will have limited effect, particularly in areas which are inaccessible or dangerous due to ongoing fighting. Most acute, however, is the question of whether these programmes can indeed change for the long run deeply

embedded images and attitudes which have been hardened over a long period of time and through personal experience.

Assessing the efficacy of conflict management strategies

As noted above, the first hurdle to successful outside intervention lies in the imperviousness of some conflicts to external efforts to bring an end to violence. This resistance derives most commonly from the parties' perceptions about the characteristics of the conflict and the associated stakes (Stedman 1996). Humanitarian intervention is perhaps the most visible manifestation of operations designed to address these issues. It can be defined as 'the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or a group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals other than its own citizens, without the permission of the state within whose territory force is applied' (Holzgrefe 2003, 18). However despite the large number of such missions in recent years, their record of success is mixed. Interventions in northern Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Kosovo, East Timor and Darfur (to name a few) have failed to produce a definite protocol for such missions. Inevitably, the conduct and efficacy of these activities breaks down to the question of the right of the international community to intervene in intrastate conflicts, followed by questioning the desirable characteristics of such interventions if they are indeed necessary. The principle of state sovereignty is embedded in international law, and calls for external intervention, even on humanitarian grounds, invariably raise important legal and ethical questions. Nevertheless, while non-intervention is still the norm in international relations, the post-Cold War period has witnessed a definite rise in the number and range of third-party interventions as the demise of the Soviet Union has removed the strategic constraints which had previously restricted the potential for ethnic clashes. The concern over the increasing failure of governments to protect their people and the rise in conflicting ethnonational claims of neighbouring ethnic groups has led former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to assert that 'the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed' (1992, 9). Others have similarly supported the need for more proactive engagement. According to Teson, 'foreign armies are morally entitled to help victims of oppression ... provided that the intervention is proportionate to the evil which it is designed to suppress' (1998, 15).

In recent years greater emphasis has been placed on defining the appropriate boundaries for interventions. Hoffman, for example, identifies two categories where intervention may be necessary: first, where there is a threat to international peace by 'dangerous' states, as was demonstrates in the cases of Somalia, Haiti and the plight of the Kurds in northern Iraq. Second, where there are massive violations of human rights, including the forcible expulsion of minorities and ethnic cleansing, such as in cases like Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor (Hoffman 1998, 161–64). An attempt to establish norms of intervention was manifested in the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty's framework of *The Responsibility to Protect*. This concept is designed to provide a legal and ethical basis for humanitarian interventions, as well as authorise military interventions in cases where the primary objective is to prevent human suffering. Moreover, it is suggested that in order to establish consistency in norms and operations the United Nations must assume a primary role in authorising and coordinating such interventions (Macfarlane et al. 2004). Despite its many

organisational and institutional faults, the UN is the only body in world politics which maintains, albeit not always successfully, the image of communal values and shared responsibility. Nevertheless, there are still some who object to the legitimisation of humanitarian interventions, for several reasons. As noted above, realists argue against humanitarian interventions as they not only challenge the principle of state sovereignty but can harm the national interest, and in some cases can even damage the state's reputation abroad (as in the case of American intervention in Somalia in the early 1990s). Moreover, they argue that states have no moral duty to intervene on behalf of the citizens or ethnic groups in other states, and that inevitably states will apply selective measures in their choices of intervention, which will lead to accusations of hypocrisy and double standards. This was evident when Western states failed to respond quickly and effectively to the genocide in Rwanda, or to the plight of Bosnian Muslims. Finally, pluralists point to the problem of forming an international consensus on what principles should guide these interventions. Described as *rule consequentionalism*, opponents of humanitarian intervention argue that international peace and order are better served by upholding the principle of non-intervention than by authorising humanitarian interventions in the absence of a consensus about the relevant criteria for intervention. Inevitably, these decisions are made by those who possess the power and the will to carry out such missions (Welsh 2006, 52–68).

This brings us back to the importance of multilateral missions, ideally led by the United Nations. Even though individual states are likely to respond more quickly and decisively to an emerging humanitarian crisis, the more an intervention is removed from the narrow interests of the big powers or neighbour states the more likely it is to be perceived as a whole as just and appropriate. This last point is often measured by the proportionality of the mission to the danger it posed in the first place. Proportionality here means that human suffering must be met with humanitarian response; that is, not to do more harm to human rights than the harm the intervention is aimed to prevent. However, assessing the proportionality of the response is a difficult task, as it does not entail ameliorating the level of violence displayed by the warring parties, but rather providing a morally appropriate response. This is problematic, since two similar cases of human rights abuse may necessitate different 'proportional' responses, depending on the relevant sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Similarly the task of assessing the success of humanitarian intervention is a difficult one. When evaluating success we must first ask, 'Success for whom?' There are various parties involved in such operations, each with different sets of objectives and desirable outcomes depending on how they view the conflict. Thus for example the United Nations (or 'the international community') may seek long-lasting peace and order, whereas the rival groups may be less preoccupied with respecting human rights and more with regaining territory; the primary goal of the civilians caught in the middle may be to return to their homes, whereas the third parties who intervene in the conflict may be more concerned about the safety of their personnel. In some cases success for one party to the conflict may come at a loss for another. Accordingly the US mission in Somalia had successfully limited its engagement after the initial setback, but this came at the expense of order and protection for the local population. Moreover, in assessing the success of interventions it is useful to distinguish between the short and long-term outcomes of the mission; indeed, the outcomes of such operations are as significant as the motivations to engage in the first place. Thus while in the short term the immediate suffering of civilians or the fighting between rival groups may be ended successfully, the long-term

and underlying causes of mutual fears and dilemmas must also be addressed. External actors must not withdraw quickly once the alleviation of human rights abuse has been achieved. To prevent the resumption of violent ethnic conflict, there must be a long-term commitment to address the underlying causes of the conflict through a combination of political, social and economic reforms (Walzer 1995).

These two different interpretations of success have their respective benefits, but inevitably they are in tension with each other and implicate different forms of intervention. Broadly, interventions of limited objectives and short duration have a stronger military component, whereas non-armed humanitarian interventions are more likely to engage with long-term objectives in order to address the underlying causes of conflict. Notwithstanding the evident differences between cases of humanitarian intervention, some generic criteria for success are applicable to all cases of intervention. Brown, for example, identifies three criteria for determine success, namely the fulfilment of the mission's mandate as specified by the Security Council resolution; the resolution of the underlying disputes of the conflict; and the contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is important to note, however, that often UN mandates are the result of political bargaining between different actors, the result of which may be overly vague or flexible, which makes the fulfilment of the conditions set in the mandate an unattainable task. Other criteria of success, such as the abatement of conflict or at the very least the discouragement of violence, invariably need to be judged based on their longevity, which opens up the question of how long a time frame should be considered in assessing the outcome (Bratt 1996; Diehl 2008, 118–23).

In addition to humanitarian and military interventions, third parties often assume the role of mediators in their efforts to manage violent ethnic conflicts. While mediation is often overlooked as an integral mechanism of conflict management, compared to the high profile of peacekeeping missions, it has in fact proved to be the most popular form of contemporary conflict management. It was present in nearly 60 per cent of international and intrastate disputes between 1945 and 2003 (Bercovitch and Fretter 2004, 29), while nearly half of all post-Cold War crises were mediated by third parties (Beardsley et al. 2006, 59). While definitions of, and approaches to, mediation vary, it is commonly understood as the intervention of a third party in the dispute of two or more parties for the purpose of improving the nature of interaction between the disputants (Kressel and Pruitt 1989). While it is distinct from other forms of intervention by its voluntary, non-forceful and non-coercive nature, third parties can exercise a significant amount of leverage on the parties in order to draw them closer to reconciliation. Zartman and Touval (1996) suggest that mediators may call upon up to five sources of leverage The first, *persuasion*, is the ability to depict a more favourable alternative to the present conflict. The second, *extraction*, is the ability to produce a favourable position from each party. The third, *termination*, is the ability to withdraw – or threaten to withdraw – from the mediation process. The fourth, *deprivation*, is the ability to deprive resources from one or both disputants. The final source, *gratification*, is the ability to reward the parties for 'good' behaviour. Rather than describing the full range of mediator activities these particular sources of leverage seem consistent with a select mediation strategy, one that is based upon tactics of manipulation (as opposed to pure communication or formulation), where mediation is viewed as a process of 'three-cornered bargaining' (Touval 1982, 16) in which the mediator has a clearly defined stake.

This is not to suggest, however, that third parties who do not possess the necessary resources to conduct such bargaining are powerless and hence less effective as mediators.

Here mediators are depicted as rational third parties who offer their services to disputants upon the basis of self-interest and shrewd cost–benefit calculations (Zartman and Touval 1996, 446). While it is especially apparent in the conduct of individual states (great and small), these rational calculations can also be found in the motivations of international organisations and other non-state actors, who maintain certain norms that they wish to uphold beyond the principle of peaceful settlement (Zartman and Touval 1996, 452). Indeed, mediation is a particularly useful tool to the United Nations and non-governmental organisations' efforts at conflict management. Compared to military and humanitarian interventions it is a cost-effective and flexible strategy which can successfully support other mechanisms of conflict management and resolution. However, here too assessing success is not an easy task. It is possible to identify two broad contending conceptualisations of mediation success. The first approach offers seemingly objective criteria which asses the ultimate consequences of the mediation effort. These criteria are often defined broadly to compensate for the idiosyncratic nature of different conflicts, and accordingly link success with objective and observable signposts, such as cease-fire, peace treaty or other tangible political settlements, as well as the opening of a dialogue and a marked reduction in the level of violence (Kriesberg 1991; Touval 1982). This measurement of success is problematic, as it fails to account for the effectiveness of mediation. The 1993 Oslo Accords between Israelis and Palestinians is one example of an objective mediation success (a binding political agreement), although it cannot be said to have been effective in ending the bloody conflict between two peoples. The second measurement of mediation success attempts to bridge this gap between results and perceptions. While the first approach eschews any discussion of the subjective interpretations of the disputants or the mediator to the bargaining process, this approach explains mediation success by focusing on the process of communication as a means of changing attitudes, largely outside the structures of formal negotiation. Successful mediation is defined here in terms of the (subjective) perceptions of the disputants and the mediator regarding their respective efforts to accomplish their aims as they were outlined at the initiation of the process (Hopmann 1995; Smith 1985).

Despite the real differences between the various strategies of conflict management, evidence suggests that best practice would entail both military and diplomatic components. Third party mediation is more effective when it is backed by actors who possess the will and the power to change the status quo, and conversely military intervention alone is less likely to produce a long-lasting settlement without a viable political process. (This partly explains the failure of US and UN missions in Somalia and Haiti.) Moreover, in their actions third parties must possess staying power and remain fully engaged during negotiations and military operations. History suggests that most modern conflicts do not resolve themselves, and that some type of external intervention is necessary to bring them under control. While the ultimate responsibility for changing modes of behaviour and reforming systems of governance lies with the parties themselves, it is clear that without armed and non-armed interventions by individual states and international organisations many more ethnic conflicts would spiral out of control and bring more suffering.

Further reading

D. Byman, *Keeping the Peace: Lasting Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

C. Crocker, F. O. Hampson and P. Aall (eds), *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001).

C. Crocker, F. O. Hampson and P. Aall (eds), *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001).

D. A. Lake and D. Rothchild, 'Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict', *International Security*, 21:2 (1996), pp. 41–75.

U. Schneckener and S. Wolff (eds), *Managing and Settling Ethnic Conflicts: Perspectives on Successes and Failures in Europe, Africa, and Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

References

Annan, K. 2005. *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All: Report of the Secretary General.* New York: United Nations.

Beardsley, K., D. Quinn, B. Biswas, and J. Wilkenfeld. 2006. 'Mediation Style and Crisis Outcomes', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 50:1, 58–86.

Bercovitch, J. (ed.) 2002. *Studies in International Mediation.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bercovitch, J. and J. Fretter. 2004. *Regional Guide to International Conflict and Management from 1945 to 2003.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Betts, R. 1994. 'The Delusion of Imperial Intervention', *Foreign Affairs*, 73:6, 20–33.

Boutros-Ghali, B. 1992. *An Agenda for Peace.* New York: United Nations.

Bratt, D. 1996. 'Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations', *International Peacekeeping*, 3:4, 64–81.

Coleman, P. and J. Lowe. 2007. 'Conflict, Identity, and Resilience: Negotiating Collective Identities within the Israeli and Palestinian Diasporas', *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 24:4, 377–412.

Collins, A. 2007. 'Comparing and Contrasting Realist and Constructivist Interpretations of the Ethnic Security Dilemma'. Paper presented at the forty-eighth annual convention of the International Studies Association, Chicago.

Diehl, P. 2008. *Peace Operations.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Downes, A. 2006. 'More Borders, Less Conflict? Partition as a Solution to Ethnic Civil Wars', *SAIS Review*, 26:1, 49–61.

Gurr, T. R. 2000. *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century.* Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Hampson, F. O. 2001. 'Parent, Midwife, or Accidental Executioner? The Role of Third Parties in Ending Violent Conflict', in C. Crocker, F. O. Hampson and P. Aall (eds) *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, 387–406. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Hayner, P. 2006. 'Truth Commissions: A Schematic Overview', *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 862, 295–310.

Hoffman, S. 1998. *World Disorders: Troubled Peace in the post-Cold War Era.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Holzgrefe, J. L. 2003. 'The Humanitarian Intervention Debate', in J. L. Holzgrefe and R. O. Keohane (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hopmann, P. T. 1995. 'Two Paradigms of Negotiation: Bargaining and Problem Solving', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 542, 24–47.

Kaufman, C. 1996. 'Intervention in Ethnic and Ideological Civil Wars: Why One Can be Done and the Other Can't', *International Security*, 6:1, 62–101.

Kaufman, C. 2006. 'What Have We Learnt About Ethnic Conflict? What Can We Do in Iraq?' *Harvard International Review*, 28:4, 44–50.

Kaufman, S. 2007. 'Escaping the Symbolic Politics Trap: Reconciliation Initiatives and Conflict Resolution in Ethnic Wars', *Journal of Peace Research*, 43:2, 201–18.

Kingston, J. 2006. 'Balancing Justice and Reconciliation in East Timor', *Critical Asian Studies*, 38:3, 271–302.

Kressel, K. and D. Pruitt. 1989. *Mediation Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kriesberg, L. 1991. 'Formal and Quasi-mediators in International Disputes: An Explanatory Analysis', *Journal of Peace Research*, 28:1, 19–27.

Lake, D. and D. Rothchild. 1996. 'Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict', *International Security*, 21:2, 41–75.

MacFarlane, N., C. Thielking and T. Weiss. 2004. 'The Responsibility to Protect: Is Anyone Interested in Humanitarian Intervention?' *Third World Quarterly*, 25:5, 977–92.

Mani, R. 2005. 'Balancing Peace with Justice in the Aftermath of Violent Conflict', *Development*, 48:3, 25–34.

Mansfield, E. and J. Snyder. 1995. 'Democratization and the Danger of War', *International Security*, 20:1, 5–38.

Pace, M. 2007. 'The Construction of EU Normative Power', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 45:5, 1039–62.

Pace, M. 2009. 'Paradoxes and Contradictions in EU Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: The Limits on EU Normative Power', *Democratization*, 16:1, 39–58.

Pischedda, C. 2008. 'Partition as a Solution to Ethnic Conflict', *International Spectator*, 43:4, 103–22.

Princen, T. 1992. *Intermediaries in International Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ross, M. 1995. 'Psychocultural Interpretation Theory and Peacemaking in Ethnic Conflicts', *Political Psychology*, 16:3, 523–44.

Siniver, A. 2006. 'Power, Impartiality and Timing: Three Hypotheses on Third Party Mediation in the Middle East, *Political Studies*, 54:4, 806–26.

Smith, W. P. 1985. 'Effectiveness of the Biased Mediator', *Negotiation Journal*, 1:4, 363–72.

Stedman, S. 1996. 'Negotiation and Mediation in Internal Conflict', in M. Brown (ed.), *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, 341–76. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Stein, J. G. 2005. 'Image, Identity, and the Resolution of Violent Conflict', in M. Evangelista (ed.) *Peace Studies: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, 364–89. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Tanner, F. 2000. 'Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution: Limits of Multilateralism', *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 839, 541–58.

Teson, F. 1998. *Humanitarian Intervention: An Inquiry into Law and Morality*. New York: Transnational Publishers.

Tocci, N. 2007. *The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard*. London: Routledge.

Touval, S. 1982. *The Peace Brokers: Mediators in the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 1948–1979*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Touval, S. 1994. 'Why the UN Fails', *Foreign Affairs*, 73:5, 44–57.

Van Evra, S. 1994. 'Hypotheses on Nationalism and War', *International Security*, 18:4, 5–39.

Wallensteen, P. and M. Sollenberg. 1999. 'Armed Conflict, 1989–1998', *Journal of Peace Research*, 36:5, 593–98.

Welsh, J. 2006. *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*. London: Oxford University Press.

Walzer, M. 1995. 'The Politics of Rescue', *Social Research*, 62:1, 53–66.

Zartman, I. W. 1985. *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zartman, I. W. 1995. *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.

Zartman, I. W. and S. Touval. 1996. 'International Mediation in the post-Cold War Era', in C. Crocker, F. O. Hampson and P. Aall (eds.), *Managing Global Chaos*, 445–61.