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TYOLOGY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Introduction

Contemporary political scientists have grown quite fond of analyzing international affairs, and particularly, global security in the 1990s, in the context of “the post-cold era.”¹ The new epoch is viewed by many as a systemic watershed, a reversal of the pre-1989 realities, which warrants re-writing, or at least, serious up-dating of existing postulates in international relations theory. Peter Wallensteen, and Ted R. Gurr, for example, provide some empirical evidence that after 1989 there has been a major reconfiguration of the nature of world conflict.² Indeed, the fall of the Berlin Wall has ushered in revolutionary events in some parts of the globe, which, however, have had little, or no effect in others. In the light of our focus on conflict and the means for its resolution, it is important to pose the question of whether the current period is the preamble for a structural transformation of the international system, which requires the re-definition of key concepts such as global security, or we are witnessing developments, which do not change the system’s basic characteristics. For this purpose it is worthwhile examining whether perceptions of conflict have recently undergone qualitative changes, in which case they should be explained before aiming at the resolution of existing enmities.

Antonia and Abram Chayes point out that “[i]t is not that the nature of conflict has changed, [but its] significance understood (and misunderstood) only within the simple framework of superpower rivalry, is now far more difficult to grasp.”³ The disappearance of the pre-1989 dyadic ideological feud *per se* has not introduced any new theoretical features that could facilitate the operationalization of conflict resolution. Therefore, it is hard to claim that what was technically the resolution of one conflict, could have brought about structural changes in the entire international system. Our approach in the remainder of this paper will thus avoid excessive emphasis on “the post-Cold War era” as a cornerstone in the search for resolution of violent conflicts, and, instead, focus on longer-term trends in contemporary international relations theory and history.

In this research we will first focus on the theoretical dimensions of the concept of conflict resolution, derive a definition, and organize a taxonomy of related concepts. We will proceed by selecting the kind of typology best suited for the structural analysis of the concept, and then

¹*Inter alia*, Peter Van Ham, *Managing Non-Proliferation Regimes in the 1990s: Power, Politics, and Policies* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994), p. 1, p. 21, p. 36, p. 62, p. 69, p. 72; Janne E. Nolan (ed.), *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994), p. 3, pp. 10–11, p. 25; Leonard S. Spector and Jonathan Dean, “Cooperative Security: Assessing the Tools of the Trade” in Nolan, pp. 132–33; Catherine M. Kelleher, “Cooperative Security in Europe” in Nolan, p. 294; Harry Harding, “Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific Region” in Nolan p. 419; Ashton B. Carter and Steven E. Miller, “Cooperative Security in the Former Soviet Union: Near-Term Challenges” in Nolan, p. 543; Martin van Creveld, *Nuclear Proliferation and the Future of Conflict* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), pp. v–viii, pp. 63–64.

²*State of World Conflict Report 1991–91* (Atlanta: Georgia: the Carter Center of Emory University) pp. 16–18; Ted R. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: US Institute of Peace, 1993), p. 314.

³Abram Chayes and Antonia Handler Chayes (eds.) *Preventing Conflict in the Post Communist World: Mobilizing International and Regional Organizations* (Washington D.C.: the Brookings Institution, 1996), p. 1.

identify and discuss its constituent variables. Finally, we will briefly examine which one of the individual components of our typology (if any), and in what way, has been incorporated in the institutional framework of the EU.

Definition and Taxonomy of Conflict Resolution

John Burton suggested that conflict is “an essential creative element in human relationships. It is the means to change, the means by which our social values of welfare, security, justice, and opportunities for personal development can be achieved. [...] The existence of a flow of conflict is the only guarantee that the aspirations of society will be attained.”⁴ Barnett Rubin maintains that “[w]ithout conflict there would be no politics.”⁵ Dennis Sandole claims that “there is nothing specifically wrong with conflict [...]”⁶

There seems to be a consensus on the fact that while a “manifest conflict process”⁷ is inherent in human nature and even desirable and beneficial, an “aggressive manifest conflict process,”⁸ is to be avoided because of the irreversible damage it inflicts on both the individual well-being and the societal fabric. Resolution efforts, therefore, are to be directed at containing, terminating, and, eventually eliminating violence in conflictual relationships.

Conflict resolution, does not aim to eradicate conflict *per se*, but, rather, to terminate patterns of inapt social conduct as defined within the current normative system of the international community, and to introduce mutually acceptable durable solutions to contrasting interests by non-violent means. What is inherent in this definition is a realization that taking an initiative to resolve conflicts a conscious effort dictated, first and foremost, by value considerations which delineate a clear spectrum of acceptable and unacceptable behavior and interaction. In that sense, it is both conceptually and practically inappropriate to introduce net antipodes of the concept under scrutiny, such as genocide and population eviction, into a general typology of conflict resolution.⁹ Therefore, a “moral disclaimer”¹⁰ that aims at a simple enumeration of all “logically possible ‘solutions’” contradicts the very essence of the term.

As is evident from the discussion above, conflict resolution refers to initiatives launched after violence has broken out. They are, therefore, directed at reversing and re-mediating a *fait accompli*, rather than at preventing it.

Besides establishing the operational perimeters of conflict resolution, it is also necessary to establish a taxonomy of its semantic derivatives and variations in order to extrapolate a

⁴John W. Burton, *World Society* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 137–138.

⁵Barnett R. Rubin, “Conflict Resolution: Problems and Prospects,” a lecture delivered at the 5th seminar on conflict resolution, Corfu, Greece, August 1996.

⁶Dennis Sandole, “Paradigm, Theories, and Metaphors in conflict and conflict Resolution: Coherence or Confusion” in Sandole and van der Merwe (eds.) *Conflict resolution Theory and Practice, Integration and Application* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 6.

⁷*ibid.*

⁸defined as a state of affairs “in which at least two actors, or their representatives, try to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by physically damaging or destroying the property and high-value symbols of one another; and/or psychologically or physically injuring, destroying, or otherwise forcibly eliminating one another.” *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁹Alexis Heraclides, “Ethnonationalism, Separatism, and Conflict Resolution: Some Lessons for the International System on the Verge of the Year 2000,” a lecture delivered at the 5th seminar on conflict resolution, Corfu, Greece, August 1996; John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, “The Macro-Political Regulation of Ethnic Conflict” in John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary (eds.) *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 6–11; John Coakley, “The Resolution of Ethnic Conflict: Towards a Typology,” *International Political Science Review*, 13:4, 1992, p. 344.

¹⁰Coakley, p. 344, emphasis original.

comprehensive definition. In this paper we will consider the following four concepts, although scholars differ in their identification and differentiation.

Conflict settlement is used to refer to the termination of violence in a conflict. In contrast to conflict resolution, this term implies a temporary, intermediary and often unstable equilibrium between belligerents, which does not remedy the established brutality-prone conflictual relationships. The potential for re-occurrence of violence at this stage is high, although not inevitable. Conflict settlement can be also a transitory phase towards conflict resolution, e. g. cease-fires, agreements to introduce peacekeeping forces, etc.. Janie Leatherman and Raimo Väyrynen define conflict settlement, as the “cessation of overt hostilities, but not the removal of underlying causes [of conflict].”¹¹

It is important to distinguish conflict settlement, as discussed above, from **conflict termination** used in the more general sense of simply ending a conflict. As specified earlier, our understanding of conflict resolution does not consider all possible ways to end violence to belong to the realm of conflict resolution. We deem it necessary to introduce also the term “conflict termination” in order to contrast it to settlement and resolution. For instance, a peace treaty, which has come about as a result of the physical, military, or political surrender or capitulation of one of the parties to the conflict, or as a result of the victor’s unilateral declaration of victory, is not an example of conflict resolution, even if it has terminated violence. In this case the source of violence of the conflict is not eliminated, or resolved, but suppressed. By contrast, a joint political agreement that comes as a result of a negotiated settlement between the belligerents falls within our definition of conflict resolution. Therefore, conflict termination understood indiscriminately, and often in a strictly military sense¹² is introduced here primarily in order to clarify definitions, and not as a part of the taxonomy being developed.

Conflict management is contrasted to conflict resolution in that the former is considered a process, and the latter—a desired outcome. Conflict management, therefore, encompasses all techniques, strategies, and methods employed to arrive at the final objective—the resolution of violent strife. In that sense the two concepts are inherently linked to each other. In the words of Jacob Bercovitch, “[c]onflict management is a conscious decisional process whereby parties to a conflict, with or without the aid of outsiders, take steps to transform, de-escalate or terminate a conflict in a sustainable and mutually acceptable way.”¹³ It is worth noting that often the two terms are used synonymously to refer to both the process and the end–result.¹⁴ For purposes of conceptual clarity, however, and also in order to produce a more succinct (and, therefore, more functional) typology, it is advisable, at this stage to differentiate conflict resolution from conflict management.

The Nordic school of conflict has recently introduced the concept of **conflict transformation**, whereby “the parties, the issues and the expectations are changed, so that there is no longer a fear of war arising from the relationship”¹⁵ as a result of the idiosyncrasy and the dynamics of the conflict itself. This new specification is a useful element in our discussion in that it allows for possibilities to consciously aim at the transformation of the contended issues at stake as a means for the resolution of conflict. The main shifting variables that can reduce or eliminate

¹¹Janie Leatherman and Raimo Väyrynen “Conflict Theory and Conflict Resolution: Directions for Collaborative Research Policy,” *Cooperation and Conflict*, 30:1, 1995, p. 64.

¹²Bruce G. Clarke, “Conflict Termination: A Rational Model” *Terrorism*, 16, 1993, pp. 31–32.

¹³Jacob Bercovitch, “Managing Enduring International Conflicts: Theoretical Issues and Empirical Evidence,” a paper presented at the annual meeting of the British International Studies Association, the University of York, December 1994.

¹⁴Christopher Mitchell and Michael Banks, *Handbook of Conflict Resolution: The Analytical Problem-Solving Approach* (London and New York: Pinter, 1996), p. xii.

¹⁵Peter Wallensteen, “The Resolution and Transformation of International Conflicts: A Structural Perspective” in Raimo Väyrynen (ed.) *New Directions in Conflict Theory: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation* (Newbury Park, 1991), p. 130.

violence are thus a change of the essence of the strife, an alteration of the initial stakes in the contrasting relationship, or a change in the relative value placed by the belligerents on the contended problem. Since such development presupposes also accommodation of the former parties to the conflict to the existing realities, conflict transformation certainly falls into our initial definition of conflict resolution, and can thus be included in the current conflict resolution taxonomy.

Raimo Väyrynen identifies four major conflict categories which can undergo transformation: the actors, the issues, the rules, and the structure.¹⁶ Either one of these, in isolation or in combination with the others, holds the potential to expand the domain of conflict resolution, and bring violence to an end. This particular perspective, similarly to the one previously examined, renders conflict resolution a dynamic, as opposed to stationary, phenomenon. Furthermore, by suggesting to substitute the traditional, one-dimensional rationale of conflict resolution with a structural, multi-strata approach, conflict transformation also broadens the spectrum in which we can introduce an appropriate typology.

Typology of Conflict Resolution

We have defined conflict resolution as the durable elimination of violence in conflictual relationships and the accommodation of contrasting interests, i. e. a definition which entails a desired state of affairs. However, we tend to agree with the school which maintains that devising a typology of conflict resolution as an end-objective is difficult to conceptualize because of the great variety of solution appropriate for individual conflicts.¹⁷ We do maintain that a typology is needed to straighten the theoretical understanding of the process, as opposed to the final goal. We are, therefore, proposing to develop a typology for conflict management, viewed as an inherent part of conflict resolution, as explained in the preceding discussion.

Having in mind the conceptual limitations that we introduced in our initial assumptions, we are now concerned with viable strategies to recommend in order to achieve the resolution of conflict. Again, we exclude methods, which, while existent in the absolute, do not fall within the current normative framework of the international community. That being specified, we can identify the following conflict resolution *modi operandi*: formal or informal negotiations, third-party mediation, various forms of peaceful settlement of disputes, economic and/or political sanctions, de-militarization, peace-support operations, institution- and democracy-building, economic development.

Which of these techniques is chosen depends on the nature of conflict, the characteristics of the individual actors involved, and the past history of the conflict. Not all strategies of conflict resolution can be applied at all times to all types of conflict. For example ethnic conflict, in its nature quite different from ideological conflict, is more hardly susceptible to economic and political sanctions. On the other hand, democracy building might not be the most adapt method to resolve ideological conflict. The individual characteristics of the actors involved also need to be considered. It is difficult to implement, for example, de-militarization in conflicts in which the parties consider their vital security interests threatened. Negotiation, mediation, or peace-keeping might be more advisable in such situations. Finally, conflict memory and antecedent unfolding do influence the strategies aimed at their resolution. It is difficult, for instance, to imagine that de-militarization will work in a conflict with a persistent history of violence.

¹⁶Raimo Väyrynen, "To Settle or to Transform: Perspectives on the Resolution of National and International Conflicts" in Väyrynen (ed.) *New Directions in Conflict Theory*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁷R. J. Fisher, "Generic Principles for Resolving Intergroup Conflicts," *Journal of Social Issues*, 50, 1994.

Since it is not the specific purpose of this paper to prescribe under what circumstances the various conflict resolution techniques should be applied in order to be successful, we will now proceed with a brief description of the individual components of our typology.

Formal and informal negotiations relate to settlement attempts initiated and carried out by the parties to the conflict. This approach implies an understanding on the part of at least one of the belligerents of the necessity to reverse the status quo. It is important to underline the specific features of informal negotiations. On the one hand, the frequency of the interaction and the code for that interaction are not pre-set, and neither is there any constraint on any of the parties as to what to communicate, who to, how, when and how often to communicate it. On the other hand, unofficial negotiation is conducive to a trusting relationship through a more uninhibited exchange of information. Furthermore, informality contributes to the eventual success of the negotiation by leaving open the possibility of non-commitment without consequences for the party's prestige. The consensus that will eventually be arrived at will be perceived as voluntary—a fundamental prerequisite for conflict resolution. The informal phase of the negotiation process is often referred to as pre-negotiation.¹⁸ In case pre-negotiation is successful, it is formalized in open negotiations with the opponent. An important aspect of negotiations, formal and informal, is that the origins of the conflict resolution in this case are endogenous, and, therefore, likely to have a durable effect in the future.

Third-party mediation is in many ways “the continuation of negotiations by other means.”¹⁹ It is not structurally different from negotiation techniques, except that it involves the presence of a third-party, whose role is to facilitate the process of conflict resolution. Mediation is also a more complex technique in that it presupposes special skills on the part of the mediator that enable him/her to choose the right moment (the so-called “ripe moment”) to intervene and initiate the conflict resolution process. Mainstream mediation theory suggests that the “ripe moment” to intervene is when the parties to the dispute are caught in a situation of a “hurting stalemate,”²⁰ a point in time when they come to value a positive, i. e. cooperative, change in the status quo more than the status quo itself. Caution is warranted in choosing the “ripe moment,” however, since as a matter of practice, it is difficult to place it in a temporal framework.²¹ Furthermore, it is highly advisable that the specificity of conflict resolution must be endogenously arrived at by the parties to the conflict themselves, and not imposed by agents without a direct stake in the contentious issue. The mediator should thus only facilitate, and not impose or suggest solutions to the crisis situation. Finally, the issue of leadership in third-party mediation is an important one since it is linked to the notion of the third party's prestige. A key component of successful mediation is the respect of the parties to the dispute for the mediator's “prestige and authority.”²²

Before tackling the next variable in our typology, it is appropriate to add a note on the question of the neutrality of the mediator. Although scholars differ in the importance they place on that condition for successful third-party mediation, it does not seem to be crucial. First, a distinction is made between neutrality, defined as an absolute detachment on the part of the mediator from the issues at stake in the conflict, and impartiality, defined as an equal treatment of the parties in view of the issues at stake, which does not exclude a privileged treatment of the weaker side. Depending on the circumstances, both neutrality and impartiality can work to

¹⁸William Zartman, “Prenegotiation: Phases and Functions”, *International Journal* XLIV, Spring 1989.

¹⁹Jacob Bercovitch, “The Structure and Diversity of Mediation in International Relations”, J. Bercovitch and J. Rubin (eds.), *Mediation in International Relations* (St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 3.

²⁰Zartman, “Prenegotiation/4”, p. 241.

²¹Jeffrey Rubin, “The Timing of Ripeness and the Ripeness of Timing” in L. Kriesberg and S. J. Thorson (eds.), *Timing and De-Escalation of International Conflicts* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991), pp. 237–46;

²²J. Bercovitch, “International Mediation: A Study of the Incidence, Strategies and Conditions of Successful Outcomes, *Cooperation and Conflict*, XXI, 1986, p. 163.

produce a successful outcome, as long as the mediator's efforts are perceived to be balanced and genuinely directed at the resolution of the conflict.

Peaceful settlement of disputes (PSD) offers a broad range of mechanisms, which comprise, among others, the two conflict resolution strategies described above. Most of the other PSD mechanisms involve some form of judicial settlement of the conflict which, if successful, provides for the enhanced legitimacy of the outcome reached. What is typical of these is that they can hardly occur in isolation, and are usually preceded by prior arrangements. Furthermore, compliance with adjudicated decisions are likely to happen in conflicts where the parties have at least a degree of respect for the rule of law, which presupposes the existence of some form of civil society and democracy. Clearly, if the conflict has turned violent, it is hard to expect that PSD alone could offer an efficient resolution of the contended controversies.

Robert Bush identifies the following forms of PSD, besides the two just considered above²³:

Adjudication, used to mean a formal judicial decision imposed by tangible laws and implementation system.

Arbitration refers to the voluntary recourse for conflict resolution by the disputants to a mutually recognized authority, after they have unsuccessfully tried to find a solution to their strife by themselves.

Summary Jury Trial provides a forum for the exposition of each party's grievances in front of a neutral authority, which lays the foundations for direct negotiations. It is in many ways related to prenegotiation, as described above, except for the role of a higher third party, used to facilitate the "getting to the table."

Early neutral evaluation is a mechanism whereby the parties involved consult an experienced third-party on the eventual outcome of a formal trial, if they were to pursue that option.

Policy dialog is in many ways similar to negotiation, except that it is usually a wider public forum, where parties are less concerned with finding a solution, and more with formulating them in a mutually acceptable way in order to proceed with formal negotiations at a later stage.

When applied in particular to inter-state disputes PSD mechanisms might involve a certain degree of risk over the recourse to an international organization as a third party arbitrator to the extent to which that could be seen as an infringement on the states' sovereignty. Another problem is the perceived instrumental weakness of international organizations, exacerbated by certain contradictions in international law (such as inviolability of borders versus the right to self-determination).

Economic and political sanctions are in essence a coercive, although, non-violent method of conflict resolution, which is aimed mainly at the creation of an unbearable political or economic burden on perceived aggressors in order to induce them into an agreement. Of all the conflict prevention strategies this is probably the most precarious one, especially when applied in conditions of violence. First, economic and political sanctions usually take some time before they generate the desired pressure. Violent conflicts, on the other hand, usually unfold very rapidly, so the interaction between the desired effect and the course of the conflict are very complex and difficult to predict. Furthermore, often deterioration of the economic conditions of the adversaries brought about by economic sanctions often serves to increase, through populist mobilization of the population, the political influence of leaders who have an interest in the perpetuation of violence. To avoid such counter-productive development sanctions should be carefully evaluated in order to drive disputants to an agreement, that is actions have to be upheld by some actor(s) in the target-state, e. g. a political opposition or an influential NGO. This conflict resolution

²³Robert A. Baruch Bush, "The Domestic Arena: A Survey of Methods, Applications, and Critical Issues" in John A. Vasquez, James T. Johnson, Sanford Jaffe, and Linda Stamats (eds.) *Beyond Confrontation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 10-11.

mechanism might be more efficient when used in combination with other techniques, such as negotiation, mediation, and/or de-militarization.

Demilitarization is another coercive conflict resolution technique principally concerned with the disarmament of the warring parties and the demobilization of standing armies in conflict by the armed forces of a third party. This strategy is worth considering only when there is reason to believe that it is a security dilemma that perpetuates violence between the warring sides, and not the presence of arms *per se*. Much has been written on whether arms are a cause or a means of war. In view of our initial definition of conflict resolution which emphasizes durability of the solutions reached, demilitarization should be considered as an effective technique only when it contributes to the alleviation of the security dilemma, and thus offers prospects for the commencement of negotiations and mediation. Furthermore, rarely can demilitarization be applied in isolation—usually it is part of the peace-keeping mandate. Again, it is fundamental that there be a trusting relationship between the disputants and the third party monitoring demilitarization.

Peace-support operations is a generic term, which has recently been stratified into *peace-keeping*, *peace-enforcement*, and *peace-building*.

Peace-keeping has traditionally been an auxiliary measure, rather than a conflict resolution strategy *per se*. It serves to facilitate the reaching of a long-term agreement and the implementation of a cease-fire. It has recently been suggested that in the “post-Cold War era” peacekeeping also lays the foundations of post-conflict peace-building²⁴. Furthermore, just like in the strategy previously discussed, purposeless peace-keeping *per se*, i. e. one directed only at the cessation of overt hostilities, is not likely to have any effect on the resolution of the conflict since it would not remove its underlying causes and pave the way towards durable solutions. In order to be considered a viable conflict resolution mechanism, peace-keeping should be applied in combination with negotiations and mediation to induce the disputants to an agreement.

Furthermore, there are several points to be taken into account. First, the practical implementation of peace-keeping might cause logistical problems as often there are no clearly delineated demarcation lines on the battlefield. Second, the actor providing the peace-keeping force should have the characteristics of an impartial third party, and avoid getting drawn into the hostilities itself. Both problems are aggravated when the mandate is insufficient, or unclear, and when the particular characteristics of a peace-keeping force create, rather than alleviate, tensions on the ground.

Peace-enforcement is an extension of peace-keeping applied in situations, when the peace-keepers themselves become targets of hostilities, when violence continues despite their presence, or when a large-scale intervention is planned to preclude violence. It is also used to maintain cease-fires and to de-militarize adversaries. This approach involves a limited use of force, and as such cannot be considered a conflict resolution technique. However, we have decided to devote some marginal attention to it for purposes of completeness, and as a pretext to underline again our conviction that the use of force alone does not contribute to conflict resolution. This assertion does not mean to condemn the use of force in general—it should be specified that when applied on a limited scale and with a clear vision of what other measures are to follow (e. g. informal workshops to help minimize differences between warlords, mediation, etc.), the use of force can contribute to the resolution of a conflict. It has to be recognized, nonetheless, that because of the very intricate and highly contextual nature of this approach, it cannot be conceptualized in a satisfactory way.

Finally, *peace-building* can be considered both a prelude and a reference to the last two conflict resolution strategies: institution- and democracy-building and economic development. It is a long-term approach aimed at the eradication of the fundamental causes of conflict by re-

²⁴Leatherman and Väyrynen, p. 70.

constructing war-torn society and facilitating the development of civil society, democracy, and economic prosperity. These approaches imply a qualitative change in the societal structure which marginalizes, and eventually completely eliminates violence. As such it is not plausible under conditions of overt hostilities and cannot, therefore, lead to the regulation of the situation on the ground. Peace-building is, therefore, preventive, rather than resolvent in nature. In that we will only briefly consider the last two variables of our typology, which we decided to include to illustrate that conflict resolution cannot be analyzed in isolation, but in conjunction with other equally important concepts, such as conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace.

Institution- and democracy-building has given rise to much controversy about whether democracy is structurally conducive to the preservation of peace.²⁵ We tend to agree with the school that maintains that a democratic state possesses more war-avoiding tools than alternative state organizations. We wish to differentiate, however, between democracy as a state of affairs and democratization as a process directed at it. While the former, in its stable and complete form, is indeed less prone to aggressive violence, the latter constitutes a structural change which tends to be accompanied by major systemic cataclysms, often conducive to conflict. Therefore, societal recreation, or rather, the formation of a civil society, when applied to communities emerging from other methods of governance, should be applied very cautiously. Particular emphasis should be given to modes favoring indigenous initiatives and much should be invested in the education of local leadership elites. Natural and legitimizing channels of these activities should be created in national institutions, such as a popularly elected legislature, and an efficient judiciary.

An inherent part of democracy and institution-building is undoubtedly **economic development**. Violence is lower when there is a relative well-being. Systems of sustainable economic growth should be researched, while conditions of market-oriented economy should be created as the natural basis for economic prosperity. Particular importance should be given to an effective welfare system, especially in societies emerging from war. Regulations favoring different types of investment should be promoted together with the development of infrastructure and an efficient productivity system. The establishment of a stable financial sector is a must.

Clearly, these objectives are easier conceptualized than implemented. Creation and maintenance of stable and prospering economies is the biggest challenge to modern society, and therefore, to our efforts to find plausible responses to conflict resolution. There are no ready recipes, neither are there any particularly indicative success stories. However, as Leatherman and Väyrynen point out, “[w]e need to understand the conditions under which peace agreements are stable and transformative so that underlying sources of conflict can be removed and the likelihood of re-opening of old grievances diminished.”²⁶ In that, as already mentioned, conflict resolution is inevitably linked to conflict prevention and the concept of democracy in general.

The EU framework for conflict resolution

Having explored the theoretical dimensions of the topic proposed, it is now worth briefly examining to what extent (if, indeed, at all) they are incorporated in the EU’s approach.

²⁵C. Layne, “Kant or Cant: the Myth of the Democratic Peace” and D. Spiro, “The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace” *International Security* 19:2, Fall 1994; “Correspondence: The Democratic Peace,” *International Security*, 19:4, Spring 1995; T. Risse-Kappen, “Democratic Peace—Warlike Democracies? A Social Constructivist Interpretation of the Liberal Argument,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 1:4, December 1995; R. J. Rummel, “Democracies ARE Less Warlike Than Other Regimes,” *European Journal of International Relations* 1:4, December 1995;

²⁶Leatherman and Väyrynen, p. 75.

In analyzing the actual and potential contribution of the European Union to the various conflict resolution techniques as defined above, two general preliminary remarks have to be made.

First, it has become increasingly clear that the actual capability of the EU to intervene as an efficient third party in crises and conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas, is very much linked to the cooperation it is able to establish with other international actors, such as the US, the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and others. In that, the actual EU potential for conflict resolution in isolation is very limited. Indeed, a clear lesson that can be drawn from the experience of the international intervention in the conflicts that have erupted after the end of the Cold War is that no single state or organization alone can deal effectively with any major international crisis or conflict. This holds true, in particular, for the EU, which still remains basically a "civilian power" with a limited capacity to act consistently and effectively on the international scene and with an only embryonic security component.

Second, the EU relies on a set of long-lasting and well-proven mechanisms for attenuating conflict of interests and disputes that may arise among its member states. It is thus widely recognized that the EU per se constitutes an effective instrument to ensure that the current stability in the relations between the Western European states will continue in the future. In so doing, it also offers a role model to other regional organizations.

The most difficult and demanding role as a third party mediator was played by the EU in the early stages of the Yugoslav conflict. Its performance in that occasion has been widely considered as not very brilliant, to say the least, or definitely poor. As a matter of fact, the major mediation role was later taken over first by the UN and then by the so-called Group of Contact, a very restricted club including also non-EU countries (the US and Russia). The EU action suffered from internal divisions (such as the one concerning the recognition of the secessionist republics), undermined credibility as an impartial actor (as compared to the UN) and lower efficiency (as compared to the Group of Contact and the US). However, the EU was assigned a prominent role in the implementation of the civilian component of the Dayton agreements (while the military one is being implemented by NATO and the one related to institution- and democracy-building by the OSCE). This can be taken as a clear indication that, at least in Europe, post-conflict economic and civilian reconstruction should necessarily rely on a major contribution on the part of the EU. It is also worth noting that in the management of the Albanian crisis a similar sharing of tasks and responsibilities among the various international institutions has been adopted (although a coalition of "willing" instead of NATO is performing the military tasks).

Making use of the strength of the EU as a civilian power seems, therefore, essential for successful conflict resolution in post-Cold War Europe. In particular, any intervention that includes the use of economic means or leverage should involve a substantial—in most cases a leading—role of the EU. This applies to different types of action, some of which can also be carried out in different phases of a conflict. Relevant examples are provided by economic sanctions, post-conflict economic reconstruction and, in general, the various forms of economic assistance. The EU is today the key institution for these conflict resolution activities as shown by the experience of the last few years. What is also clear, however, is that these actions—which are typical of a "civilian power"—often need to be supported or complemented by other means, in particular the military ones (in this regard, the Yugoslav case is again very illustrative).

Much more controversial is the role of the EU in peaceful settlement of disputes. Other organizations—i.e. the UN and the OSCE—are better suited for these tasks. They take advantage from their recognized (in the case of the UN) or growing (in the case of the OSCE) specialization in the field and from their wider membership which enhances their credibility of impartial actors. As for democracy- and institution-building, the leading role in Europe today is being played by the OSCE and the Council of Europe. It is important to stress, however, that the EU countries form, within these institutions, notably the OSCE and the Council of Europe, an important caucus

that has often acted as a driving force in promoting, supporting and implementing their conflict resolution activities. Should the CFSP mechanisms be improved and strengthened (as a result of the ongoing institutional revision within the EU), the political input the Union is able to give to these organizations—and hence its indirect contribution to conflict resolution—could also become more effective.

Finally, the EU's potential role in military activities aimed at conflict resolution - in particular, in the various forms of peace-keeping - has also to be seen as largely indirect and dependent on the evolving cooperation with other organizations. The most crucial—indeed, closely related—factors are the relationship with the WEU and the implementation of the CJTF concept. A full incorporation of the WEU into the EU would provide the latter with the needed institutional basis to become an actor also in the military field. But since the WEU lacks a military structure of its own, the establishment of an effective cooperation with NATO—through the implementation of the CJTF concept—would make this possible in practical terms.

Summary

Conflict resolution is a generic concept, which can be analyzed both as a process, and as an end-objective. The latter refers to the durable cessation of violence in conflicts already under way, and to the maintenance of a civilized dialog in the general search for the reconciliation of contrasting interests. Conflict resolution as a process refers to the identification of specific techniques and strategies, which facilitate and promote the achievement of the final objective, and is thus susceptible to a conceptual typology. We have tackled the following conflict management techniques: formal and informal negotiations, third-party mediation, peaceful settlement of disputes, economic and political sanctions, de-militarization, peace-support operations, institution- and democracy-building, and economic development. Based on the theoretical discussion of these variables, we concluded that it is unlikely that either one of them taken in isolation could effectively contribute to the resolution of conflicts, and recommended an approach that combines different techniques.

We then examined to what extent the EU has incorporated the variables identified in our suggested typology. Based on the current institutional framework of the organization, we concluded that the EU possesses a well-developed mechanism for the resolution of conflicts among its members. As far as contributing to the conflict resolution efforts outside its framework is concerned, we saw that even though certain potential exists, it has to be seriously strengthened through both a more consistent application of the current available instruments, and by intensifying its ties to the other international organizations.

We wish to conclude by underlining the importance of conflict resolution in modern politics. It is imperative that research efforts and concrete actions are directed towards the eradication of violence in our society. Violent conflicts are no longer acceptable, nor sustainable, not only for a limited number of belligerents, but also for the entire international community. Therefore, international institutional participation in conflict resolution activities should be considerably and continuously emphasized.