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CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR THE WORLD TODAY

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This paper is concerned with the difficult question of what our field can contribute to preventing and resolving the sorts of destructive conflicts which are so prevalent in our world today at the interpersonal, intergroup, interethnic, and international levels. In this paper, I outline an approach to this question. The paper is divided into three parts. The first is a brief discussion of some of the factors which determine whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course. The second deals with the prevention of destructive conflicts—here I consider the potential roles of government, education, the media, religion, and industry. The third is concerned with how to manage intractable, destructive conflicts.

My paper is concerned with the difficult but important question of what our field can contribute to preventing and managing the sorts of destructive conflicts which are so prevalent in our world today at the interpersonal, intergroup, interethnic, and international levels. I do not claim to have the answer. What I wish to do here is outline an approach to this question. Admittedly, it has a utopian cast. I call upon you and other members of the community of scholars and practitioners concerned with conflict to actualize it and to fill in the details and many gaps in my outline. I note that as a social psychologist, I emphasize socio-psychological factors and do not consider sufficiently the economic, political, and institutional conditions which should be part of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach.

My paper is divided into three parts. The first is a brief discussion of some of the factors and conditions which determine whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course. The second deals with the prevention of destructive conflicts—here I consider the potential roles of government (from the UN to the village), of education of parents as well as children, of the media, of religion, and of industry. In the third, I am concerned with how to manage intractable, destructive conflicts.

Factors Affecting the Course of Conflict

In this part, I consider the determinants of whether a conflict takes a constructive or destructive course. My discussion is guided by a hypothesis which I have developed as a result of much research by my students and myself (Deutsch,

1973, 1985). The hypothesis, which I have termed "Deutsch's crude law of social relations," is that *the characteristic processes and effects elicited by a given type of social relationship* (e.g., cooperative or competitive) also tend to elicit that type of social relationship. Thus, cooperation induces and is induced by a perceived similarity in beliefs and attitudes, a readiness to be helpful, openness in communication, trusting and friendly attitudes, sensitivity to common interests and deemphasis of opposed interests, an orientation toward enhancing mutual power rather than power differences, and so on. Similarly, competition induces and is induced by the use of tactics of coercion, threat, or deception; attempts to enhance the power differences between oneself and the other; poor communication; minimization of the awareness of similarities in values and increased sensitivity to opposed interests; suspicious and hostile attitudes; the importance, rigidity, and size of the issues in conflict; and so on.

In other words, if one has systematic knowledge of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes, one will have systematic knowledge of the conditions which typically give rise to such processes, and, by extension, to the conditions which affect whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course. My early theory of cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1949) is a theory of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes. Hence, from the crude law of social relations stated earlier, it follows that this theory provides insight into the conditions which give rise to cooperative and competitive processes.

Understanding the conditions which give rise to cooperative or competitive social processes, as well as their characteristics, is central to understanding the circumstances which give rise to constructive or destructive processes of conflict resolution. A constructive process of conflict resolution is, in its essence, similar to an effective cooperative problem-solving process, while a destructive process is similar to a process of competitive interaction. Since much is known about the nature of cooperative and competitive processes, and the conditions which give rise to each from my work and the work of other scholars (see Deutsch, 1973, 1985, as well as Johnson & Johnson, 1983, 1991, for summaries), much of this knowledge can be applied to understanding the factors which determine whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course.

The effects of cooperative and competitive orientations on conflict processes have been studied extensively (see Deutsch, 1973, for a summary). As indicated earlier in this section, cooperative orientations generally lead to cooperative or constructive processes of conflict resolution. In contrast, a competitive orientation usually leads to a destructive conflict process which has the following characteristics:

1. Communication between the parties is unreliable and impoverished. Either available communication channels and opportunities are not utilized or are used to try to mislead or intimidate. Little confidence is placed in information obtained directly from the other party; espionage and other circuitous means of obtaining information are relied upon. Poor communication enhances the possibility of error

and misinformation of the sort likely to reinforce preexisting orientations and expectations. Thus, the ability of one party to notice and respond to shifts away from a win-lose orientation by the other party becomes impaired.

2. The competitive orientation to conflict stimulates the view that the solution can only be imposed by one side or the other through superior force, deception, or cleverness. The enhancement of one's own and the minimization of the other's power become objectives. The attempt by each party to create or maintain a power difference favorable to its own side tends to expand the scope of the conflict from a focus on the immediate issue to a conflict over the power to impose one's preference upon the other.

3. The competitive conflict leads to a suspicious, hostile attitude that increases sensitivity to differences and threats while minimizing awareness of similarities. This, in turn, makes the usually accepted norms of conduct and morality less applicable. It permits behavior toward the other that would be considered outrageous if directed toward someone like oneself. Since neither side is likely to grant moral superiority to the other, the conflict is likely to escalate as one side or the other engages in behavior morally outrageous to the other.

There are many factors influencing whether parties in conflict will approach their conflict as a mutual problem to be resolved through cooperative effort or as a win-lose conflict. In addition to the sorts of factors that are deducible from the "crude law of social relations," there are the ideologies, values, personalities, resources, and skills of the conflicting parties; the prior relationship between them; the nature of the issues involved in the conflict; and the political, cultural, social, economic, and institutional contexts within which the conflict is occurring. Elsewhere (Deutsch, in press), I have discussed some of the foregoing as they bear on the course of conflict. Here, I wish to emphasize that the prevention of destructive conflict as well as its management requires particularized knowledge of the conditions and circumstances which lead a specific conflict to take a malevolent form as well as generalized knowledge of the factors that contribute to the escalation and de-escalation of conflict.

Prevention of Destructive Conflict: A Utopian Perspective

A utopian and ambitious program for the prevention of destructive conflict is outlined below. It is difficult to estimate its costs. But surely they would be infinitesimal compared to the continuously occurring direct and indirect costs of destructive conflict. Consider some rough estimates: over six hundred billion dollars were spent annually on weapons in recent years; from 1960 to 1990, world military expenditures add up to over 21 trillion dollars; over 23 million people have been killed in the 149 wars since World War II (Sivard, 1991, 1993); the economic and physical destruction due to war and civil strife are in the billions; at least 18.9 million people were refugees in 1992 as a result of war or civil strife; a leading cause of death among youth is violence; millions of children and spouses are subjected to physical abuse; there are approximately 3 million incidents of

attempted or completed assault, rape, and robbery taking place at schools annually in the U.S.; one in ten students is regularly harassed or attacked by bullies; millions of adults and children suffer economic and psychological loss due to family break-ups; prejudice and discrimination, sexism and racism inflict economic distress and psychological harm on millions of children and adults. Of course, not even the most ambitious program to prevent destructive conflicts would eliminate all such costs. However, even if such a program were only moderately successful, there seems to be little doubt that it would be beneficial economically as well as in creating the conditions for a more congenial, humane, and civilized social life.

In this part, a number of different institutions—government, education, the media, religion, and industry—are considered in terms of what they can do to prevent destructive conflict. In each institution—at every level—the leading figures can (1) articulate and support a normative framework for encouraging constructive rather than destructive conflict resolution and they can help to make it widely known, salient, and popular; (2) serve as a good model in the way he or she manages conflict and provides leadership; (3) develop and provide incentives for constructive behavior and deterrents for destructive behavior; (4) develop and provide opportunities for the acquisition of the skills involved in constructive conflict resolution through education and training; and (5) develop and provide third-party facilities for dispute resolution such as conciliation, mediation, arbitration, and judicial procedures.

I now turn to the discussion of what different types of institutions can do. My discussion is meant to be illustrative rather than systematic or exhaustive.

Government

United Nations. The United Nations has a well-articulated normative framework for preventing war and for promoting human rights and a sustainable environment (Brenes-Castro, 1991). However, I suspect that only a tiny minority of the people in the major powers, as well as in the rest of the world have any knowledge of it; it is clearly not salient for them. I think this is also true for the great majority of the political leaders of the various countries throughout the world. Clearly, without extensive efforts by the UN, as well as its member nations and affiliated organizations, to disseminate information, to raise public consciousness, and to develop popular and political support for actions to implement its normative framework, it will have little influence.

My impression is that the UN central headquarters and its various agencies do not typically provide an effective model of constructive conflict resolution. They tend to be administered autocratically with internal conflict frequently being suppressed or handled by fiat. I suggest that it would be very valuable if the UN headquarters were to establish an institute for conflict resolution and mediation in its own headquarters which would be oriented internally, toward its own functioning as an organization. The Institute would have three main functions: (1) *educating* the administrators and staff of the UN in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of constructive conflict resolution; (2) *mediation* (conciliation or arbitration) of con-

licts which the conflicting parties can not resolve by themselves; and (3) providing *early warning* of potentially destructive conflicts which should be addressed. The effective functioning of such an Institute would provide a useful model to the representatives of the various nations which compose the UN.

As Peck (1993) has suggested in her paper on preventive diplomacy, the UN could do more than serve as a model. It could also help to develop regional Institutes for Conflict Resolution and Mediation which would also have three main functions: (1) *educating* the political and other influential leaders in the various nations composing the region; (2) *mediation* of inter-nation disputes; and (3) an *early warning* and *proactive* function to identify potential and emerging conflicts which should start a process of constructive interaction about the issues involved in the conflict.

To establish these regional institutes and to facilitate their functioning, the UN would have to establish an international institute to help to train the personal who would staff the regional institutes and to provide various centralized resources to support their functioning (initial funding, research, technical assistance, curricula, materials, etc.). The personnel of the regional institutes would be recruited so as to be representative of the various nations and ethnic groups in the region as well as to be representative of different influential segments within each nation.

Let us, for example, suppose that a Balkan Institute for Dispute Resolution had existed prior to the breakup of Yugoslavia. It would have educated the various leaders of the different ethnic groups in a series of workshops where they would have had the opportunity to meet and discuss their existing and potential conflicts in a benign atmosphere. The Balkan Institute, through its knowledge of the region, would also have been able to provide early warning and mediation of potentially destructive conflicts which were emerging. It could also have alerted the UN so that the international community could have acted to encourage mediation of the conflict through persuasion, incentives, and deterrents.

Would such a Balkan Institute have led to a more constructive resolution of the conflicts among the ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia? Possibly not, after all—not all attempts at prevention of a potential flu epidemic are successful. However, we have good reason to believe that education in good health practices, early identification of a threatening disease, and prompt intervention to prevent it help to reduce its destructive potential. Similarly, it is reasonable to expect that education in the practices of constructive conflict resolution, early identification of a potentially destructive conflict, and prompt intervention to help conflicting parties when they need assistance will reduce the chances that a conflict will spread and escalate.

It is, of course, true that some political leaders are not interested in being educated nor in mediation when they feel they have the military power to get their way. Here, the role of the UN is to provide timely and strong deterrents to the use of that power. It seems likely that the earlier such deterrents are employed, the less likely that the military power will be used in a conflict if more constructive means of dealing with it are also made salient.

United States. Here, I shall primarily address what the United States or any other government could do internally. Externally, by effective leadership, it could do much to promote within the UN the creation of the kind of institutions which have been described above. Also, by example, through its active participation in the relevant regional institutes, it could serve as a model for the participation of other nations in such institutes. As a superpower, the US may need to participate in several regional institutes.

The United States, as most other governments, has no well-developed institutions for bringing to the attention of either the executive or legislative branches emerging social problems and possible programs of remediation in a systematic way. There is not a social science advisory council nor a national social health council to develop and keep regular track of such national indicators as the quality of life; the occurrence of violence, institutional bias, discrimination, and prejudice with regard to race, religion, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, and physical disability; the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior that exist within the population regarding the promotion of good health practices, productive work, constructive conflict, and stable families; the nature of the institution and programs which exist for reducing bias and prejudice, improving health practices, preventing destructive conflict, etc. This is not to say that much of this information does not exist within the different agencies of the government, but this information is not brought together in a systematic way, and in a manner which leads to policy and program recommendations, at a high enough level of government to affect the President and Congress directly as is the case for international and economic issues.

There are, of course, other valuable actions the government could take. It could establish institutes, similar to the ones previously prescribed for the UN, at the national and regional levels and encourage such institutes at the state and local levels. While there are many effective agencies for industrial disputes at the different levels of government, there is a dearth of institutions for dealing with other kinds of disputes.

In addition to creating new institutions, there are other important things that can be done to foster an atmosphere which promotes constructive conflict resolution. The President as well as other influential leaders in the executive and legislative branches could articulate and implement a normative framework which supports constructive conflict resolution and condemns violence, bias, prejudice, and discrimination. There are an infinite number of ways to do this. They essentially involve the following core elements: (1) clear articulation of the norms; (2) education of officials and the public in their value; (3) exemplifying the norms in one's official actions and behavior (including appointments and political campaigns); (4) honoring individuals and groups who are leaders in support of the framework; (5) attempting to educate and convert those who violate the norms; (6) placing various forms of nonviolent public pressure (e.g., condemning, shaming, ostracizing, boycotting, sit-ins, etc.) on those who persist in such violations (see Sharp, 1973, for a splendid elaboration); (7) crafting and passing legislation which would make those

who engage in violence, bias, prejudice, and discrimination open to civil suit for the economic and psychological damage they do to groups and individuals; (8) encouraging educational institutions, at all levels, to educate their students in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of constructive conflict resolution; and (9) supporting research to develop further basic knowledge in this area, including knowledge about the most effective ways of educating people in conflict resolution skills.

These sorts of actions can be taken by political leaders at all levels of government—national, state, and local. Only a few political leaders have had the foresight and political courage to make the prevention of destructive conflict one of the central themes in the conduct of their political office: Foresight, because as important as the issue is today, it will be even more important in the future, and political courage because most ethnic, racial, and religious groups have little difficulty in recognizing how they are subjected to discrimination and prejudice but take umbrage at the suggestion that they also inflict it upon others.

Education. Education in this area should start prior to birth. In prenatal clinics as well as through their contacts with pediatricians, nurses, and other health-care providers, prospective parents should be taught about methods of constructive conflict resolution for parent–parent and parent–child conflicts and also about mediation for child–child conflicts (see Deutsch & Brickman, 1994). Educational institutions, at all levels, can provide education for their students by modeling constructive conflict resolution as well as by direct training in conflict resolution and mediation, and also indirectly by infusing its study in various subject-matters (e.g., by analyzing conflict in literature, history, science).

What Not to do in a Conflict. Education in conflict resolution (Deutsch, 1993) helps people learn what not to do (i.e., how to avoid getting into a destructive process) and what to do (i.e., how to foster a constructive process) in a conflict.

1. Define a conflict as a "win-lose" one when it is possible for both to win (i.e., know what type of conflict you are in).
2. Avoid violence and the use of threats even when one is very angry (i.e., know the harmful consequences of violence and how to actively channel your anger in ways that are not violent; learn to control the thoughts, feelings, and behavior which are apt to stimulate violence in oneself or the other).
3. Avoid attacking the other's pride, self-esteem, security, his/her identity, or those with whom s/he identifies (i.e., attack the other's behavior or ideas, not the other).
4. Don't confuse your "positions" with your "interests" (your initial positions on an issue may be opposed but not your real interests).
5. Avoid ethnocentrism: understand and accept the reality of cultural differences (i.e., what you take to be self-evident and right may not seem that way to someone from a different cultural background and vice versa).
6. Don't neglect your own interests or the interests of the other (i.e., communicate your interests clearly and firmly to the other, and listen attentively and empathically to the other's expression of his/her interests).

7. Don't avoid conflict; face it (i.e., learn the typical defenses you employ to evade the anxiety often associated with conflict; also learn what kinds of conflicts are best avoided—e.g., those that are inherently unresolvable and win-lose conflicts in which you will be a loser).

8. Avoid black-white thinking as well as stereotyping and demonizing the other during heated conflict (i.e., learn to be alert to bias, misperceptions, and misjudgments that commonly occur during heated conflict).

What to do in a Conflict. Some of the things people can learn to do, as a result of training, which will foster constructive conflict resolution are:

1. Find common ground between oneself and the other (by identifying shared values, interests, friends, etc. to help establish cooperative bonds).
2. Listen and communicate honestly and effectively so that the underlying feelings as well as thoughts are clearly understood, and check continually one's success in doing so (the *feeling* of being understood and *being* understood are both important).
3. Take the perspective of the other (skills in putting oneself "in the shoes of the other" can be enhanced through role reversal).
4. Social problem-solve. This involves learning to do several things: (a) *Reframe* the conflict so that it is perceived as a mutual problem requiring cooperative effort; (b) *Define* the conflict through identification of the incompatible actions, values, interests, goals, needs, or beliefs; (c) *Diagnose* the conditions and circumstances which reduce or enhance the incompatibilities; (d) Search for or invent fair *options* that lead to mutual gain; (e) *Evaluate* and select among the options the one that is viewed as fair and best meets the legitimate needs of the parties involved.
5. Develop methods for dealing with difficult conflicts so that one is not helpless nor hopeless when confronting those who are more powerful or those who use dirty tricks.
6. Know oneself and how one typically responds in different sorts of conflict situations so that one can control habitual tendencies that may be dysfunctional.

Training programs and curricula for teaching conflict resolution and violence prevention in the schools have been developed for students in the elementary as well as secondary schools. They take various forms depending upon the age groups for which they are used. Most programs employ lectures and videos to teach theory, concepts, and knowledge while role-playing, role-reversal, discussion of real conflicts, and video are employed to teach specific skills.

Mediation. There are difficult conflicts which the disputing parties may not be able to resolve constructively without the help of third parties such as mediators. To deal with such conflicts, mediation programs have been established in community dispute resolution centers and in schools. In schools, students as young as ten years as well as high school and college students and teachers have been trained to serve as mediators. Typically, they are given training for 20 or 30 hours in the principles of constructive conflict resolution as well as specific training in

how to serve as a mediator. They are usually given a set of rules to apply during the mediation process. Thus, Johnson and Johnson (1991) in summarizing what student mediators are expected to do, write:

The procedure for mediation consists of a series of steps. First you end hostilities. Break up fights and cool down students. Second, you ensure both people are committed to the mediation process. To ensure that both persons are committed to the mediation process and are ready to negotiate in good faith, the mediator introduces the process of mediation, sets the ground rules, and introduces him- or herself. Third, you help the two people negotiate with each other successfully. This includes taking the two persons through the negotiation sequence of (a) jointly defining the conflict by both persons stating what they want and how they feel, (b) exchanging reasons, (c) reversing perspectives so that each person is able to present the other's position and feelings to the other's satisfaction, (d) inventing at least three options for mutual benefit, and (e) reaching a wise agreement and shaking hands. Fourth, you formalize the agreement. The agreement is solidified into a contract. Disputants must agree to abide by their final decision and in many ways the mediator becomes "the keeper of the contract" (p. 38).

Although I am a strong proponent of education in this area, I must confess that so far there has been insufficient research on its effectiveness. Additionally, there is much need for basic research on the nature of social skills and effective procedures for education in this area (Deutsch, in press). It appears that to become skilled in constructive conflict resolution and mediation, one needs intensive practice as well as appropriate knowledge and attitudes.

Media. Four suggestions with regard to the media are outlined:

1. Reduce the amount of violence that children (and adults) are exposed to on TV. An idea that has been developed in relation to pollution control could be applied to violence control on TV. Give each TV station the right to pollute (i.e., have violent programs) a certain amount per year (e.g., 150 hours of TV time per year) and allow a market in these rights. A market would make it such that the more highly desired the right to pollute TV time with violence, the more costly it would become. Developing practical procedures for detecting violations of pollution limits and for responding to such violations would require considerable creative effort.

2. For TV programs containing violence, have alternatives made in which the violence episode is replaced by constructive, nonviolent behavior. Develop new TV programs which use the original and alternative version as a basis for the discussion of the alternatives to violence as well as the causes of violence.

3. Present more instances of dramatic constructive conflict resolution which emphasizes the courage, the creativity, skills, and knowledge required. Make heroes of mediators, diplomats, and social problem-solvers.

4. Help support and monitor compliance by public figures (and the media) with the normative framework of constructive conflict resolution. In the recent

presidential campaign in the United States, the media played a very important role in identifying and discrediting "dirty tricks" and misleading or false statements by the candidates or their proponents. They could fulfill a similar function in identifying and discrediting destructive conflict tactics (i.e., "what not to do in a conflict") as well as expressions of prejudice, bias, and discrimination.

Religion. Religious fundamentalism, as well as ethnocentrism, appears to be on the rise as a result of the increasing social turmoil, economic distress, and difficult life conditions being experienced by people in many areas of the world. These tendencies rise from understandable psychological needs for self-esteem, security, social identity, and cognitive clarity and simplicity. However, they may lead to moral exclusion, intolerance, and violence toward others who do not belong to their religious-ethnic community. To counter these tendencies, these things could be done:

1. The UN could sponsor a conference of the leaders of the different world religions which is aimed at developing inter-faith programs and institutions that would seek to reduce moral exclusion, intolerance, and violence within and among the various religious groups. Hopefully, with the models and help of the parallel UN institutions at the world and regional levels, institutions for interfaith cooperation and conflict resolution would be established to foster interfaith cooperation, constructive conflict resolution, and mediation of religious-ethnic conflicts.

2. The leaders of each religious groups, within their own group, in a way similar to that previously described for government leaders, could articulate and implement a normative framework to discourage the moral exclusion of members of other religious groups as well as intolerance and violence toward them. I shall not detail here the many ways of doing this; they parallel those I have described for government leaders.

Industry. In contrast to the fragmenting effects of religious fundamentalism and ethnocentrism, industry (more broadly, economic and environmental activity) is pulling the nations of the world into a tighter web of interdependence. Some constructive efforts are being made to avert trade wars and to reduce and repair the damage being done to our global environment. Despite this, the narrow, self-seeking, competitive orientation of many nations and industries is still producing collective harm economically and environmentally. A zero-sum orientation is common within nations and industries, as well as among them, and it is at the root of many economic and environmental disputes. To the extent that economic cooperation occurs among nations or among business firms, it is too frequently cooperation among a coalition which is against the interest of other coalitions of nations or firms or excludes the interests of the public-at-large. To reduce the possibility that coalitions will be exclusive or competitive, several desirable features of ideal coalitions are described below.

1. The building blocks of larger coalitions should be local, and these coalitions should be inclusive and representative of the important relevant interests related to and affected by the local coalition. Thus, the policy making council of a

local manufacturing plant should include local representatives of management, the working force, the broader community in which the plant is located, and the next larger coalitions in which the plant coalition is embedded.

2. There would be larger horizontal as well as vertical coalitions. Horizontally, the plant is part of a community which it affects and is affected by; it would be one component of a larger coalition that may compose a community's policy council. Or it may be one component of a local coalition of industries which, in turn, is a component of the community's policy council. Vertically, the plant is a component of a larger firm which may have local plants in many different communities. There may be several layers of coalitions—local, regional, national, and international—and the larger coalition at each layer would not only be nested in higher vertical coalitions but also in cross-cutting horizontal coalitions. This dual nesting should help to prevent a parochial, self-seeking orientation at all levels of society.

3. Inevitably, there will be conflicts of all sorts within coalitions and among them. In a manner similar to that previously described for government leaders, leaders of coalitions would need to articulate and support a normative framework which encourages constructive conflict resolution and would need to help to develop the procedures and institutions for mediating conflicts when the participants are unable to resolve without assistance from a third party.

The growth of institutions and procedures for the mediation of economic and environmental disputes has been notable within the past decade. However, it may not be at a rate sufficient to cope with the economic and environmental conflicts emerging in an ever more tightly-knit world.

Management of Destructive, Intractable Conflicts

It is a truism that the best way to manage destructive, intractable conflicts is to prevent them. However, it is not reasonable to assume that all such conflicts are preventable. For the foreseeable future, we can expect that evil, irrationality, religious fanaticism, fear, hatred, overwhelming power, basic conflicts of interest, and/or profound misunderstandings will continue to give rise to such conflicts. Our field has given little thought to these problems (for an exception see Kriesberg, Northrup, & Thorson, 1989). I have considered some of the issues related to intractable conflicts in the international area (Deutsch, 1983), and some of my students have done so in the marital and family context (Kressel, 1985; Gephardt, 1993; Herschlag, 1993), but we have only scratched the surface. I venture to express my thoughts in the hope of stimulating some of you to work in this area and do a better job.

Let me first say a few words about the extreme cases of conflicts involving evil, irrationality, religious fanaticism, or hatred before discussion of the more typical ones. In such instances, it may be true that no approach to managing the conflict constructively will be successful. However, as I have indicated in a paper, "On Changing the Devil" (Deutsch, 1964), even if you are being threatened by a

devil who possesses invulnerable H-bombs, it is more sensible to assume that the devil is corrigible than not. Assuming the devil is incorrigible, whether or not it is, inevitably leads to destructive conflict; if you assume that it is corrigible and it is, constructive possibilities may exist.

The devil could be corrigible in one or more of several ways; it could be (1) deterred by making salient the inevitable negative consequences for it of attacking you; (2) reassured that you will not initiate hostile action; (3) helped to recognize that the benefits of a constructive resolution of conflict would be greater than those that could be obtained through destructive action; (4) encouraged to recognize that the assumptions and motives underlying its hostility may no longer be appropriate or may obstruct the realization of its more important objectives; or (5) helped to refocus its attention and energies to more benign areas. In addition, it may be possible to enlist allies or friends of the devil or dissident elements within it to restrain its destructive behavior.

Of course, if the devil does not have weapons of mass destruction and you can bring to bear overwhelming power, you may be able to restrain it from engaging in destructive behavior even if it is temporarily or permanently incorrigible. Law enforcement agencies typically have as one of its main functions the restraining of those who seek to engage in destructive behavior. They are successful in doing so when they can amass the overwhelming power necessary to restrain even those who are incorrigibly intent on destructive action.

When dealing with perceived devils, particularly at the international level, there is often too much emphasis on deterrence as a means of influencing them to desist from destructive behavior. The retaliatory threat involved in deterrence, unless accompanied by strong reassurance, is often experienced as offensive rather than defensive in intent and this may contribute to a spiral of mutual hostile misunderstanding. Moreover, without the use of methods aimed at changing or redirecting the motivations of the "perceived devil," successful deterrence will only "freeze" the hostile relations and restrain destructive actions only until the deterrence can be outwitted, circumvented, or overcome. Let me conclude this section by quoting an old Jewish proverb: "An insincere peace is better than a sincere war." An insincere peace with the devil is better than a destructive war, and if the peace lasts long enough, the devil may not be able to survive it.

Negotiating the Non-Negotiable

Now, I turn to a consideration of a destructive conflict in a young couple who were involved in a bitter conflict over issues which they considered non-negotiable. I use this case for articulating a framework for thinking about negotiating the non-negotiable. The conflict was damaging their self-esteem, causing much anguish, and was harmful to their children. The couple were involved in what I have elsewhere characterized as a "malignant process" of dealing with their conflicts (Deutsch, 1985, chap. 17).

The malignancy was reflected in the tendency for them to escalate a dispute about almost any specific issue (e.g., a household chore, their child's bedtime) into a power struggle in which each spouse felt that his or her self-esteem or core identity was at stake. The malignant process resulted in (as well as resulted from) justified mutual suspicion, correctly perceived mutual hostility, a win-lose orientation to their conflicts, a tendency to act toward the other which would lead the other to respond in a way which would confirm one's worst suspicion of the other, an inability to understand and empathize with the other's needs and vulnerabilities, and a reluctance—based on stubborn pride, nursed grudge, and fear of humiliation—to initiate or respond to a positive generous action to break out of the escalating vicious cycle in which they were entrapped.

Many couples in such conflicts do not seek help: they continue to abuse one another, sometimes violently, or they breakup. The couple that I worked with sought help for several reasons. On the one hand, their conflicts were becoming physically violent: this frightened them and it also ran counter to their strongly-held intellectual values regarding violence. On the other hand, there were strong constraints making it difficult for them to separate. They felt they would be considerably worse off economically, their children would suffer, and they had mutually congenial intellectual, esthetic, sexual, and recreational interests which would be difficult for them to engage in together if they separated.

Developing a Readiness to Negotiate

Before I turn to a discussion of the negotiation of a non-negotiable issue, let me briefly discuss the steps involved in getting the couple to the point where they were ready to negotiate. There were two major interrelated steps, each of which involved many substeps. The first entailed helping each spouse to recognize that the present situation of a bitter, stalemated conflict no longer served his or her real interests. The second step involved aiding the couple to become aware of the possibility that both of them could be better off than they were currently if they recognized that their conflict was a joint problem which required creative, joint efforts in order to improve their individual situations. The two steps do not follow one another in neat order. Progress in either facilitates progress in the other.

Irrational Deterrents to Negotiation

There are many reasons why otherwise intelligent and sane individuals may persist in engaging in behaviors which perpetuate a destructive conflict which is harmful to their rational interests. Some of the common ones are:

It enables one to blame one's own inadequacies, difficulties, and problems on the other so that one can avoid confronting the necessity of changing one's self. Thus, in the couple I treated, the wife perceived herself to be a victim and felt that her failure to achieve her professional goals was due to her husband's unfair treatment of her as exemplified by his unwillingness to share the responsibilities for the household and child care. Blaming her husband provided her with a means of avoiding her own apprehensions about whether she personally had the abilities and

courage to fulfill her aspirations. Similarly, the husband who provoked continuous criticism from his wife for his domineering, imperial behavior employed her criticisms to justify his emotional withdrawal, thus enabling him to avoid dealing with his anxieties about personal intimacy and emotional closeness. Even though the wife's accusations concerning her husband's behavior toward her were largely correct, as were the husband's toward her, each had an investment in maintaining the other's noxious behavior because of the defensive self-justifications such behavior provided.

It enables one to maintain and employ skills, attitudes, roles, resources, and investments that one has developed during the course of one's history. The wife's role as "victim" and the husband's as "unappreciated emperor" had long histories. Each had well-honed skills and attitudes in relation to their respective roles that made their roles very familiar and natural to enact in times of stress. Less familiar roles, in which one's skills and attitudes are not well-developed, are often avoided because of the fear of attempting the unknown. Analogous to similar social institutions, these personality "institutions" also seek out opportunities for exercise and self-justification and in so doing help to maintain and perpetuate themselves.

It enables one to have a sense of excitement, purpose, coherence, and unity which is otherwise lacking in one's life. Some people feel aimless, dissatisfied, at odds with themselves, bored, unfocused, and unenergetic. Conflict, especially if it has dangerous undertones, can serve to counteract these feelings: it can give a heightened sense of purpose as well as unity and can also be energizing as one mobilizes oneself for the struggle against the other. For depressed people who lack self-esteem, conflict can be an addictive stimulant which is sought out to mask their underlying depression.

It enables one to obtain support and approval from interested third parties. Friends and relatives, on each side, may buttress the opposing positions of the conflicting parties with moral, material, and ideological support. For the conflicting parties to change their positions and behaviors may entail the dangers of loss of self-esteem, rejection, and even attack from others who are vitally significant to them.

How does a third party help the conflicting parties overcome such deterrents to recognizing that their situation of a bitter, stalemated conflict no longer serves their real interests? The general answer, which is often quite difficult to implement in practice, is to help each of the conflicting parties change in such a way that the conflict no longer is maintained by conditions within the parties which are extrinsic to the conflict. In essence, this entails helping each of the conflicting parties to achieve the self-esteem and self-image which would make them no longer need the destructive conflict process as a defense against their sense of personal inadequacy, their fear of taking on new and unfamiliar roles, their feeling of purposelessness and boredom, and their fears of rejection and attack if they act independently of others. Fortunately, the strength of the irrational factors binding the conflicting parties to a destructive conflict process is often considerably weaker than the motivation arising from the real havoc and distress resulting from the conflict. Empha-

sis on this reality, if combined with a sense of hope that the situation can be changed for the better, provides a good basis for negotiation.

Conditions that Foster the Recognition of the Conflict as a Joint Problem Requiring Joint Efforts

What are the conditions which are likely to help conflicting parties become aware of the possibility that each of them could be better off than they are currently if they recognize that their conflict is a joint problem which requires creative, joint efforts in order to improve the individual situations? A number of such conditions are listed below:

1. Crucial to this awareness is the recognition that one cannot impose a solution of the problem, which is acceptable or satisfactory to oneself, upon the other. In other words, there is recognition that a satisfactory solution for oneself requires the other's agreement, and this is unlikely unless the other is also satisfied with the solution. Such recognition implies an awareness that a mutually acceptable agreement will require at least a minimum degree of cooperation.

2. To believe that the other is ready to engage in a joint problem-solving effort, one must believe that the other has also recognized that it cannot impose a solution, i.e., it has also recognized that a solution has to be mutually acceptable.

3. The conflicting parties must have some hope that a mutually acceptable agreement can be found. This hope may rest upon their own perception of the outlines of a possible fair settlement or it may be based upon their confidence in the expertise of third parties or even upon a generalized optimism.

4. The conflicting parties must have confidence that if a mutually acceptable agreement is concluded, the other will abide by it or violations will be detected before the losses to the self and the gains to the other become intolerable. If the other is viewed as unstable, lacking self-control, or untrustworthy, it will be difficult to have confidence in the viability of an agreement unless one has confidence in third parties who are willing and able to guarantee the integrity of the agreement.

The foregoing conditions for establishing a basis for initiating the joint work necessary in serious negotiation are much easier to develop when the conflicting parties are part of a strong community in which there are well developed norms, procedures, professionals, and institutions which encourage and facilitate problem-solving negotiations. This is more apt to be the case in interpersonal conflicts than in conflicts between ethnic groups or nations that do not perceive themselves as members of a common community. When the encouragements to negotiation do not exist as a result of belonging to a common community, the availability of helpful, skilled, prestigious, and powerful third parties who will use their influence to foster problem-solving negotiations between the conflicting parties becomes especially important.

Creating the Conditions for Constructive Negotiation

Issues which seem vitally important to a person, such as one's identity, security, self-esteem, or reputation, often are experienced as being non-negotiable. Thus, consider the husband and wife who viewed themselves in a conflict over a non-negotiable issue. The wife who worked (and wanted to do so) wanted the husband to share equally in the household and child care responsibilities; she considered equality between genders to be one of her core personal values. The husband wanted a traditional marriage with a traditional division of responsibilities in which he would have primary responsibility for income-producing work outside the home, while his wife would have primary responsibility for the work related to the household and child care. The husband considered household work and child care as inconsistent with his deeply rooted image of adult masculinity. The conflict seemed non-negotiable to the couple—for the wife it would be a betrayal of her feminist values to accept her husband's terms; for the husband, it would be a violation of his sense of adult masculinity to become deeply involved in housework and child care.

However, this non-negotiable conflict became negotiable when, with the help of a third party, the husband and wife were enabled to listen to and really understand the other's feelings and how their respective life experiences had led them to the views they each held. Understanding the other's position fully and the feelings and experiences which were behind them made them each feel less hurt and humiliated by the other's position and more ready to seek solutions which would accommodate the interests of both. They realized that with their joint incomes they could afford to pay for household and child care help, which would enable the wife to be considerably less burdened by these responsibilities without increasing the husband's chores in these areas: doing so, of course, lessened the amount of money they had available for other purposes.

This solution was not a perfect one for either. The wife and husband, each, would have preferred that the other share her or his own view of what a marriage should be like. However, their deeper understanding of the other's position made them feel less humiliated and threatened by it and less defensive toward the other. It also enabled them to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement that lessened the tensions between them, despite their continuing differences in basic perspectives.

The general conclusions that I draw from this and other experience with a "non-negotiable" issue is that most such issues are negotiable even though the underlying basic differences between the conflicting parties may not be reconcilable. The issues become negotiable when the conflicting parties learn to listen, understand, and empathize with the other party's position, interests, and feelings—providing they are also able to communicate to the other their understanding and empathy. Even though understanding and empathy do not imply agreement with the other's views, they indicate an openness and responsiveness to the other which reduces hostility and defensiveness and which also allows the other to be more open and responsive. Such understanding and empathy help the conflicting parties

to reduce their feelings that their self-esteem, security, or identity will be threatened and endangered by recognizing that the other's feelings and interests, as well as one's own, deserve consideration in dealing with the issues in conflict.

"Non-negotiable" issues also become negotiable when the conflicting parties can be shown that their vital interests will be protected or enhanced by negotiation. It is helpful for negotiators to learn the difference between "positions" and "interests." The positions of the conflicting parties may be irreconcilable, but their interests may be concordant. Helping parties in conflict to be fully in touch with their long-term interests may enable them to see beyond their "non-negotiable" positions to their congruent interests. An atmosphere of mutual understanding and empathy fosters the conditions which permit conflicting parties to get beyond their initial rigid, unnegotiable positions to their underlying interests. And the development and deepening of cooperative relations between the conflicting parties enable them to place their conflicts in perspective and to see them as a mutual problem to be resolved or managed cooperatively.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to articulate a framework that would encourage lively, productive controversy rather than deadly quarrel when conflict occurs. Conflicts can have valuable functions if they take a constructive course. They can stimulate psychological development, creativity, and social change. Unfortunately, in today's world, too many conflicts are not taking this path. What can we do as professionals in the field of conflict resolution, beyond what we are already doing, to lessen the pervasiveness of destructive conflict?

Let me stress that whatever else we do, it is important to continue what we have been doing. Through our effective efforts in theoretical analyses, research, and professional practice, we have been developing an important new field of scholarship and practice which has immense social significance. This field is still in its early stages. If it is going to realize its important potential, much continued work of the sort we have been engaged in is needed.

However, if we are to make progress toward the utopia which I have sketched in this paper, we need to become *advocates* for as well as *articulators* of the social values, practices, and institutions which foster healthy constructive conflict rather than pathological, destructive conflict. Here I refer to such values as being for "win-win" rather than "win-lose" relations with others; the use of non-violent, non-coercive rather than violent, coercive techniques of persuasion; the moral inclusion rather than exclusion of others who are different; fairness and care for the other as well as oneself; and so on. Similarly, one should be for practices which implement the positive values and against practices which are antagonistic to them. Thus, one could be for practices which would enhance mutual power rather than the inequality of power; reduce the availability of weapons rather than make them easily available; indicate respect for the other and his or her interests rather than seek to devalue, disrespect, or humiliate the other; and so on. Also, one would be an

advocate for the development and support of institutions in all areas of social life that would foster the values and practices of healthy conflict resolution. The second part of this paper is an attempt to illustrate how pervasive these institutions will have to be in order to reflect this kind of cultural change that may be necessary to produce a world characterized by creative conflict.

If we are going to diminish the prevalence of destructive conflict, we have to recognize that, as advocates, we will inevitably be engaged in controversy with those who do not recognize the need for social and cultural changes. By following in our own behavior what we advise others to do, hopefully, the controversy would be lively and productive.

In conclusion, let me state that I wish that our field could create a magic wand which would enable us to turn ugly, destructive conflicts into beautiful, constructive ones. Unfortunately, I see no hope that we can do so. What we can honestly say is that our field has made a very significant beginning in understanding what the conditions and processes are which give rise to destructive rather than constructive conflict resolution as well as in understanding how education, the creation of new institutions for dispute resolution, and fundamental change in the way we think about conflict can make for a more humane world.

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