

The Tree Model¹ in the Context of Unofficial Diplomacy

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I. Introduction

A variety of approaches to unofficial diplomacy have been developed to address societal groups in opposition to one another. Unofficial diplomacy, or non-traditional human oriented approaches to international relations, serves a variety of purposes. Herbert Kelman, Research Professor of Social Ethics, Harvard University, has described some of its functions as “provid(ing) a unique input into a larger process of conflict resolution by gradually creating an atmosphere of mutual reassurance that is conducive to negotiation, or by establishing an appropriate framework for parties that are ready for communication but not for official negotiations, or

by allowing the parties to work out pieces of a solution that can then be fed into the formal negotiation process” (Kelman, 1991, p. 152).

The Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction (CSMHI) at the University of Virginia’s School of Medicine has developed an approach to unofficial diplomacy, referred to as the “Tree Model”, that focuses on the diagnosis and removal of large-group psychological resistances that impair political, economic, legal, and military decision making and actions. In essence, this process helps antagonistic groups work together constructively. The

¹The Tree Model concept was developed in 1999 by Vamik Volkan, founder of the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction.

groups for whom such a process may be beneficial are not limited to opposing ethnic or national groups, but may include large groups defined by racial, religious, or socio-economic identities.

Formulated under the leadership of CSMHI founder Vamik Volkan, the Tree Model is a systematic psychopolitical approach to assessment and reduction of tension in ethnic and identity conflicts. The model is effective in working with groups that have been or are currently in conflict. In these situations, ethnic and identity issues (see Addendum 1) “become a kind of emotional fuel for current large-group conflicts, even though the current conflicts may seem rooted entirely in concrete real world issues such as economic, legal, or military concerns” (Volkan, 1999, p. 153). Psychological issues related to large-group identity (in contrast to individual psychological issues) can create resistances to solutions of real world problems. These dynamics are most pronounced in protracted conflicts and at times of high stress and can continue even when the stressor has discontinued. Most forms of conflict resolution are based upon rational dialogue. However, because people involved in identity and ethnic conflict are driven by group psychological processes that are not clear to them or are unconscious, opponents in a group dialogue often are not “logical”. Unless the underlying group meanings and dynamics are clarified, even the best intentioned group members’ and facilitators’ efforts may fail to result in an easing of hostility and the growth of cooperation. The Tree Model methodology uses a team of facilitators that includes people who have studied largegroup psychology from a psychoanalytic perspective as well as diplomats, historians, sociologists, and anthropologists. For this reason, the model is known as a “psychopolitical” process.

This process, described in detail below, grows over time and branches out like a tree (Volkan, 1999). It is rooted in a diagnostic assessment of the conflict by the facilitating team and then forms a strong trunk through a series of psychopolitical dialogues between influential people on each side of a conflict. The tree begins to branch as inter-group dialogue continues at the community, governmental, and societal levels. The final stage of the process, the small branches of the tree that will bloom and grow leaves long after the facilitators have completed their facilitation, involves the formation of sustainable projects or institutions arising from inter-group communication and collaboration. The fundamental goals of the Tree Model are “to promote peaceful coexistence in a democratic environment and prevent the kinds of interactions that lead to violence and conflict” (Volkan, 1999, p. 200).

II. The Tree Model in the Context of Unofficial Diplomacy

Harold Saunders, Director of International Affairs at the Kettering Foundation, in his model of unofficial diplomacy, “Sustained Dialogue”, focuses on the “human relationships [which] are at the heart of a conflict” (Saunders, 2001, p. 33). He develops the “working concept of relationship—its elements, its dynamics and how these can be changed” (p. 33). Saunders’s (2001) six elements of “relationship” include:

- 1) The human experience and observable characteristics which go into making up identity;
- 2) The human dimension of interests which goes beyond objective interests to include the fears, hopes, wounds, values, and perceptions that make up what is vital to protect as well as what is threatening to group identity;

- 3) The complex history of interactions over time;
- 4) The power to change the course of events or make things happen;
- 5) The documented principles of one group's behavior toward another as well as the psychological limits of interaction between parties which underlie tacit or explicit practices that regulate their interaction;
- 6) Each group's established and evolving perceptions of the other group.

The Tree Model emphasizes the influence of identity and group dynamics upon the development and maintenance of inter-group conflict. The Tree Model and Sustained Dialogue are similar in this regard; however, Sustained Dialogue places more emphasis on the role of power in conflict and the Tree Model uses clinical strategies to address the components of identity, perceptions, interests, and interactions.

There are several operational differences between the Tree Model and Sustained Dialogue, including:

- 1) The Tree Model addresses psychological issues more directly throughout the entire process. In Sustained Dialogue, the facilitators change their style of moderation from permissive to more assertive when participants begin focusing on one particular problem. In the Tree Model, the facilitators maintain a permissive, psychological form of moderating throughout the entire dialogue process to ensure that emotions are defined, identified, and worked through at every stage of interaction.
- 2) The mental health professionals in the Tree Model facilitating team, as well as other team members who have learned the

concepts of large-group psychology, keep a psychoanalytic/psychodynamic perspective throughout the dialogue process, listening for the rational and the unconscious content.

III. The Tree Model

A. The Roots of the Tree: Preparation and Diagnosis

Strong, balanced, well-nurtured roots are essential for creating a solid foundation for the dialogue process. The following objectives are accomplished during this initial phase: forming a facilitating team, identifying an entry point into the conflict, assessing the real world and hidden psychological issues of the antagonist groups, selecting participants for the dialogues, and addressing logistical issues such as funding. The following is a summary of general guidelines for this beginning phase. Since each situation is different, the steps involved are modified according to the particular circumstances.

The Roots of the Tree phase roughly corresponds to "Stage One: Deciding to Engage" of Sustained Dialogue (where the central task is bringing people to dialogue) (Saunders, 2001).

Formation of the facilitating work group

Members from the fields of psychology/psychoanalysis, and such disciplines as political science, history, anthropology, sociology, and diplomacy are selected. Inclusion of psychoanalytically-oriented mental health professionals is key to the Tree Model, since they bring both specialized knowledge about large-group psychology and unconscious processes as well as specialized clinical skills in listening, interpretation, and intervention. The use of diplomats adds political experience and

weight to the facilitating team and helps with networking and getting others involved. Facilitators need to have an optimum level of information to maximize the potential to analyze the situation, while maintaining their neutrality. For example, a regional expert would be better used as a consultant than as a facilitator because of the potential bias that the expert would have or the reaction s/he would cause in the participants. The group should form a working alliance as facilitating team members before entering a country so that they have a similar understanding of each other's fields, of large-group dynamics and ethnic identity issues, and of basic facilitating skills (Volkan, 1999). This work group solidifies by working together on entry, assessment, participant selection, and logistics planning.

Entry

Entry of a neutral third party into a conflict for the purposes of initiating a peaceful process may be very complex. The appropriate timing of an intervention depends upon the situation. In a violent conflict, it may be based on what is seen as a breaking point in the violence or unilateral conciliatory gestures that indicate a potential window of opportunity (Mitchell, 1996). In other situations, such as a recent or upcoming political change, it may be more suitable to approach people early on before violence erupts.

Sometimes the initial contacts in a region may be formed through relationships that have developed in an academic conference or other professional forum. Networking with these contacts, one may develop a relationship with a partner institution that then serves as a primary contact in the region.

Christopher Mitchell (1996), Professor Emeritus of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Institute for Conflict Analysis and

Resolution, George Mason University, provides the following general guidance about making initial forays into a conflict situation:

- 1) When approaching the parties to see if they are willing to engage in a workshop, go to the top-level person or the person with the true power. Be cautious about the channels you use to gain access and the way they may be perceived;
- 2) Approach the opposing parties at a similar time so that neither party feels neglected;
- 3) Be discreet, but honest, and emphasize a scholarly approach and professional authority to gain credibility for an initial meeting. Stress that the work is naturally low profile and that there is no commitment, so they can feel free to interact.

Assessment/diagnosis

During the diagnostic phase, the facilitating group identifies the real world issues and hidden psychological agendas of the antagonist groups in a systematic manner. This is a two-step process beginning with collecting background information off site, followed by in-depth information gathering on location. Using this information, the facilitating team then formulates a diagnosis or assessment of the situation.

Background information: The team gathers background information, formulates key questions about the conflict, and identifies the involved parties. Background information comes from a variety of sources including newspapers, expert opinions on the socio-political and historical situations, and summary papers (Volkan and Harris, 1993). Mitchell (1996) warns against biases that exist in some information sources (exiles, academ-

ics, businessmen, etc.) because they are often not intimately involved in the conflict. On the other hand, they do provide a spectrum of points of view. It is also important to understand American interests in the region and to use a multidisciplinary approach to learn about them, since they may influence how the facilitators are received.

In-depth information gathering on location:

The best way to understand a situation is to gather in-depth information on location in the conflict area. In the Tree Model, the facilitators conduct interviews with multiple members of the society in an open-ended manner. The aims of the interviews are to assess political realities and large-group psychological processes—such as the sources and degree of anxiety and the potential for dehumanization of the other—and to articulate common themes and a collective sense of the situation through the views of individual members of a group. The team visits “hot spots” such as mass graves, national monuments, or sites of important events in the groups’ histories. These locations are laden with symbolic significance for the large group and often bring trauma or emotion quickly to the surface. Visiting the site with members of both opposing groups can prompt conversations and interactions that reflect the perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of the large groups and further the team’s understanding of the large-group psychological issues.

Diagnosis/assessment: The diagnostic assessment, encompassing real world as well as psychological issues, draws upon material from both the off-site and on-site information gathering. This formulation works as a backdrop for the dialogues.

Participants

If, after forming the facilitating team, forging initial contacts in the region, and assess-

ing the situation, the parties involved “decide to engage”, then individuals are selected to participate in the psychopolitical dialogues. Selection methods for the Tree Model are similar to those developed by others in the field of unofficial diplomacy. The facilitators “will need to work with local partners to establish criteria for participant selection and to agree on a statement of purpose for a dialogue” (Saunders and Slim, unpublished paper). Participants should be persons from a variety of backgrounds who are highly influential within their respective communities, but who are not themselves in policy-making positions. The goal is to identify persons sufficiently unconstrained by their position to learn from and participate in the dialogues but also in a position to transfer what is learned to impact the policy process (Kelman, 1991). Saunders emphasizes that participants from the second and third levels of organizations meet these criteria. Participants are expected to interact in an unofficial, private capacity so that—in contrast to the discourse of official negotiations—what they say is non-binding. In choosing parties, it is good to begin with who is visible (the active parties) and to incorporate both moderate and extremist views in order to get an understanding of all perspectives (Mitchell, 1996). Selecting participants will involve identifying potential people and then talking with them about “their interests in participating, their ability to commit the time required, and their personal suitability, particularly their capacity to listen to viewpoints different from theirs” (Saunders and Slim, unpublished paper).

Logistics The facilitating group must attend to many logistical details when arranging the psychopolitical dialogues. These include securing funding, finding a neutral location where the meetings will occur, and taking

care of food, lodging, transportation, and other details. The facilitating group should also inform key officials of both sides about the process that will take place. The following are suggestions to help logistical planning go more smoothly that have been articulated by Christopher Mitchell (1996) and Yuri Urbanovich (2003), a CSMHI faculty member and former Soviet/Russian diplomat who has participated on Tree Model facilitating teams:

- 1) Get formal written approval for the process and send formal invitations to all participants (Mitchell);
- 2) Take care not to give in to conditional acceptances on the part of participants (Mitchell);
- 3) Maintain confidentiality, which is important to assure full participation (Mitchell and Urbanovich);
- 4) Be open about funding issues and potential biases related to this. Shy away from government funding because it will not appear neutral (Mitchell);
- 5) In securing a place for meetings, find a location that conveys prestige of a nonpolitical kind so that people will act professionally. The location should be neutral so that neither party feels threatened (Mitchell);
- 6) It is very important to behave respectfully towards participants, especially in relation to money (e.g., the facilitators should stay in the same lodging as participants, not in a fancier or more removed location) (Urbanovich);
- 7) Money (or the carrot of money to start an NGO) can be used as a draw to get participants involved, but there must be an explanation and disclosure about sources of funding (Urbanovich).

B. The Trunk of the Tree: Psychopolitical Dialogues

The strength of the trunk is vital to the survival of the branches. The focus in this phase of the methodology is on a long-term series of psychopolitical dialogues moderated by the facilitating neutral third party. The psychopolitical dialogue is a task-oriented, analytical approach to intergroup communication with the goals of: improving participants' understanding of the group psychological bases for their large-group conflicts; removing psychological barriers (resistances) to adaptive coexistence; and creating a willingness to cooperate between members of the groups. The success in this phase depends upon the degree to which participants are able to engage actively in dialogue, understand and identify psychological and practical barriers to negotiation, and grow together toward a more empathic understanding of the opposite side. Through this process, participants will develop more adaptive and peaceful ways of interacting with the opposing group, leading to sustainable working relationships over time.

This phase roughly corresponds to Saunders's "Stage Two: Mapping Relationships and Naming Problems" (where the central tasks are mapping the problems and relationships, defining or naming a small list of problems to probe in depth, and transitioning to Stage Three) and "Stage Three: Probing Problems and Relationships" (where the central tasks are to use in-depth probing of specific problems to reveal the dynamics of the conflictual relationships that cause those problems, to frame possible choices among approaches to changing those relationships, and weighing those choices to set a general direction for action, and decid-

ing whether a will to work toward changing those relationships exists) (Saunders, 2001).

Dialogue format

Who: 30-40 participants with equal representation from each group, usually chosen during the diagnostic phase. Ideally, the same participants are involved throughout the entire process so that gains made in previous workshops may be continued in future ones. As the dialogue series continues, new participants may be invited if the group feels that a new perspective is needed. The multidisciplinary facilitating group organizes and leads the workshops. It is also useful to have a political or historical consultant to provide objective information (a reality check) to the facilitating team as well as an “exercise historian,” who documents the process (Mitchell, 1996).

What: Four-day workshops meeting three times each year for two to three years or more. The workshops consist of large-group plenary sessions, small groups, and social activities. The small groups include eight to ten participants, with balanced representation, led by two or three neutral facilitators. Ideally, the co-leaders of each small group will include one clinician and one person from another discipline so that their skills may balance each other. The small groups should contain the same participants over the entire series to ensure continuity, trust, and depth of interaction. The ratio of plenary to small group sessions will vary depending upon the situation, but the groups should meet as a whole a minimum of two times during each four-day workshop. Participants will also engage in a number of social activities together. Since dehumanization has often occurred between antagonist groups, it is useful to bring out the human dimension of the other side through

meals together and other informal activities.

Where: Meetings should be held in a neutral location so that participants can focus on the task at hand. Depending upon the circumstances, the meetings may be held in a neutral third country, alternate between two countries, or convene in a neutral location within the participants’ country such as a hotel or university.

Initiating the dialogue

The moderators begin the first workshop by setting the tone for the dialogue. In an opening statement at a plenary session, the facilitators review ground rules and reiterate that the purpose of the meetings is to foster open communication and explore the conflicts and the relationships and identity issues that cause them (Saunders and Slim, unpublished paper). The facilitators should also reinforce the fact that these workshops are unofficial and confidential so that the participants feel free to participate fully in the process.

During the diagnostic phase, the facilitators will have formulated a list of questions relevant to the particular conflict. One way to begin the meetings is by asking these questions. Since the focus in the Tree Model is on understanding the group identity issues that are influencing the conflict, questions related to this topic may be a good place to begin meaningful discussion. These questions may be mailed in advance and formally presented by each small group during the plenary session or may be asked during small groups. The following are some examples of questions that can guide discussions during the first workshop (Volkan and Harris, 1993, p. 173):

Day One: Individuals should answer these questions in relation to their group identity not their individual identities. “Who are you? What is your heritage? What are your historical traumas and glories? How have recent events in your country affected you? Who were you before? Who are you now? Who would you like to be?” In small groups, people may be encouraged to discuss some of these questions in a more personal way to help humanize and particularize the situation.

Day Two: The second day focuses more on each group’s conception of the other group. “Who are they? How have recent events in your country affected them? Who were they before? Who are they now? What kind of neighbors are they? Why are they sometimes difficult to get along with?”

Day Three: These questions focus more on identifying psychological barriers and moving towards discussion of specific real world issues. “What are the psychological impediments to good relationships between neighbors? What can we do to improve relations with our neighbors?”

Day Four: “What action possibilities can we recommend to our respective leaders or governments?”

Psychopolitical dialogue process

The first workshop will set the tone for all future workshops. The groups will move through a variety of issues aimed at strengthening their own identities, re-humanizing the other group and establishing empathy, understanding psychological hidden agendas, and eventually moving to formulate action plans. The “days” outlined in the previous section can also serve as a rough guide for thinking about the overall process that participants will be moving through, both within each

workshop and within the larger process as a whole.

The facilitators form a functional work group among the antagonists, engaging the participants in a process to understand their own and the other’s large-group psychological processes. To be sustainable, any solutions or ideas that come from the dialogue process must come from the participants themselves rather than be imposed upon them. The facilitators take a neutral position throughout the dialogues.

The group dynamics are shaped by both the facilitators’ and the participants’ actions and interactions. Communicating openly about emotionally significant issues with a group that has been seen as the “enemy” can be extremely stressful for participants. The group and the facilitators will encounter “resistances” that impede communication and understanding and sustain conflict. The facilitators are trained to work with these resistances using a variety of clinical strategies. One of these strategies is to encourage the use of a metaphor that symbolizes the conflict, making the conflict more approachable for discussion.

For example, at a dialogue meeting in Estonia facilitated by a CSMHI team, a Russian participant introduced a metaphor equating Russia to a friendly elephant—big and strong, but not aggressive. An Estonian participant responded that if Russia were an elephant, then Estonia was a rabbit. It is difficult, the second participant noted, for the rabbit and the elephant to have a relationship even if both are friendly, for the rabbit cannot help fearing that he will be stepped on by the elephant. A different participant then observed that if such were the case, then

Russian-speakers in Estonia were like elephant eggs in the rabbit's nest—at any moment they might hatch and destroy the rabbit and his home, or the mother elephant might come protect them if she thought they were in danger. For days the participants played with these metaphors; indeed, three months later, at the next meeting, they briefly returned to the same “game.”

When an anxiety-producing relationship is symbolized and played with, participants come to a better understanding of some aspects of the relationship between them. Also, they begin to modify their perception of each other. As in the elephant-rabbit metaphor, the Russians upgraded their image of Estonians from being ungrateful for past “help” from the Soviet Union, to being simply cautious. They sensed that out of necessity the Estonians had to be careful and not too friendly with the Russians, for even a friendly elephant might step on a rabbit by mistake.

When a metaphor arises during the dialogue, it captures the attention of the participants and transforms diffuse emotions and blurred realities into a more concrete understanding of the problem. It connects the participants, allowing them to share in the game, while at the same time addressing a critical issue. As this play continues, resistances begin to disappear, and laughter often accompanies the banter. Realistic discussion of issues can then ensue.

In the Tree Model, facilitators are trained to work with groups under stress that will or have regressed. Addendum 2 describes in more detail the anatomy of a dialogue, listing key patterns of behavior between and within groups, strategies that characterize the process of psychopolitical dia-

logues, and ways in which psychologically aware facilitators can intervene to keep the group productive.

This process of exploring psychological issues that cause resistance to solving real world dilemmas will help the participants reach a point where concrete real world issues can be discussed and action plans formed. The group creates these plans themselves. Action plans may entail writing a series of memoranda to be given to officials, creating an NGO, developing educational programs in particular communities, or any number of other options depending upon the situation.

C. The Branches of the Tree

The branches and leaves of the tree spread and continue to grow and change as long as there is a healthy trunk. Insights gained during the dialogues can now be transferred to a level that can influence policy, since the dialogues have provided the necessary shifts in attitudes that pave the way for programs and other structural changes. The programs and changes are more likely to be sustainable if they arise out of the psychological understandings and relationship building that have occurred during the dialogues. The goal is to develop institutions, policy statements, or other actions that will carry on after the facilitating team has left. This phase roughly corresponds to Saunders's “Stage Four: Scenario-building” (where the task is to design an actual scenario for change and to anticipate projecting that change into the larger community) and “Stage Five: Acting Together” (where the group members engage in a process of deciding together whether to begin attempting implementation) (Saunders, 2001).

Questions to consider before taking action

Participants should identify several approaches to a problem and consider the advantages and disadvantages of each. When they have identified a possible scenario that will work toward positive change, they may consider the following questions: “What are the obstacles to moving in the direction we have chosen? What steps could overcome those obstacles? Who could take those steps? How could we sequence those steps so that they interact—one building upon another to generate momentum behind the plan for acting?” (Saunders and Slim, unpublished paper).

Critical junctures

The psychopolitical dialogues increase the participants’ understanding of their inter-ethnic conflict. Since the dialogue participants are acting in an unofficial capacity, it is vital that there be critical junctures, or meeting points, between official and unofficial diplomacy in order to impact policy. “Unofficial diplomacy is of no real use unless it affects official diplomacy, unless it affects actual policy” (Volkan, 1999, p. 182). These critical junctures may occur via reports, briefings, or participant or facilitator contact with national agents. Choosing participants who are highly influential in their communities helps provide legitimacy to this crucial step in the process.

Inter-level communication

In addition to informing policy makers about the progress of the dialogues and ideas that arise from them, facilitators hope to initiate a ripple effect where the change in attitude of a few influential people can affect the attitudes of others.

This may occur formally through academic

conferences and media reports, as well as informally through interactions at the grassroots level. For example, influential participants may “float” new ideas from the psychopolitical dialogues in their own professional environments, so that they become ideas “in the air”, which others pick up on and pass along. This can give the dialogues a broader impact and may help promote more peaceful approaches to ethnic tension or conflict.

Institutionalization/action

This is the community-building phase where actual programs and projects are carried out in a variety of settings. A contact group is formed by the facilitating team in consultation with participants from both parties to help coordinate the process of turning proposed action scenarios into real projects. This contact group may be made up of dialogue participants as well as other professionals and grassroots leaders in the community (Volkan, 1999). The contact group carries out the nuts and bolts aspects of implementing peaceful inter-ethnic projects or institutions (i.e., establishing an NGO, securing funding). This group may communicate with the facilitating team as needed but essentially it takes on the functions of the facilitating team with respect to the projects and programs to be carried out. With each concrete project, the Tree Model may be implemented again on a micro-level, with a mini-process of diagnosis, dialogue, and then action but at the level of the particular community. The original psychopolitical dialogues often reconvene for a time when groups of people begin working on these projects because intensive work relationships often rekindle the problematic dynamics of ethnic differences and conflict which pre-

cipitated the original dialogues. The original dialogue group can serve as a sounding board for the obstacles encountered in community project implementation. The facilitating team works with the contact group initially to provide a background in facilitation, but eventually fades out. In this way, sustainable leadership in the country is nurtured and developed. Examples of concrete projects include: developing a community center in an ethnically mixed community, joint educational curricula in an agreed upon language, and economic endeavors to benefit the entire community. By developing programs and institutions that implement and encourage peaceful, cooperative, and democratic ways of interacting, what is experienced at first by a few can be spread to many more to help alleviate tensions, prevent violent conflict, heal traumatized societies, and promote peaceful coexistence.

Addendum 1

Psychological aspects of ethnic identity and group interaction that occur during ethnic conflicts and psychopolitical dialogues

Principle of “non-sameness”: A group’s need to maintain minor differences as a psychological border separating it from an opposing party so that its separate identity remains intact and distinct (Volkan, 1999).

Intertwining of individual and group identity: When children develop, they begin to form a sense of self by discerning good and bad elements of themselves and others (i.e., what feels frustrating and what feels satisfying). They tend to think of the objects that make them feel comfort as good and therefore as part of their identity. This process is intertwined with eth-

nic identity because the inanimate objects that take on emotional meaning tend to be similar within a given cultural group. For example, a certain type of ethnic food or a song will soothe a child and thus become part of the child’s personal and ethnic identity (Volkan, 1997).

Projection and externalization: Normally, developing a sense of who you are is accomplished psychologically by putting the “bad” parts of yourself onto someone/something else that is considered different and other. This helps to reinforce a sense of positive identity. This happens on the group level as well. The identity of the group is formed and maintained by placing the “bad” images of the group onto another group. Emotional attachment to one group and thinking of the other group as “bad” are the beginnings of the formation of enemies (Volkan, 1999).

Black and white thinking: This is a form of primitive, oversimplified thinking that is normal in early child development when the child is trying to figure out how the same person (e.g., mother) can create both good and bad feelings (i.e., feed and punish). The child often thinks that there is a “good” mother and a “bad” mother and tends to think of the world as divided into all good and all bad until an appreciation for nuance is developed (“making gray”). Individuals and groups under stress tend to revert to thinking in these black and white terms (Volkan, 1999).

Inadequate mourning: The process of reacting to real or threatened loss (e.g., fallen soldiers or lost territories) is often interfered with when a group is under political, social, economic, or psychological stress. In situations of stress, a group may

hold on to whatever was lost and this loss may come to symbolize its self-esteem. The loss becomes incorporated into the group identity and it may affect decisions and feelings and take on a much greater meaning (Volkan, 1999).

Chosen trauma: The mental representation of an event in a group's history in which the group suffered catastrophic loss, humiliation, and helplessness at the hands of a neighboring group. When members of the victim group are unable to mourn such losses or reverse their humiliation, they pass on to their offspring the images of their injured selves and even the images of those who hurt them (Volkan, 1999).

Chosen glory: The mental representation of a group's past triumphs that serves to boost the group's self esteem (Volkan, 1999).

Time collapse: When feelings, perceptions, and expectations pertaining to a past event are collapsed into feelings, perceptions, and expectations about a current event and are even projected into the future. If feelings and issues about the past can be distanced and separated from present problems (i.e., when the time collapse is "expanded"), then today's problems can be more realistically discussed (Volkan, 1999).

Transgenerational transmission of trauma: When the next generation is given, unconsciously as well as consciously, tasks to carry out for their ancestors, such as completing the mourning process or reversing humiliation. Losses or trauma that are inadequately mourned become highly mythologized and become markers of the ethnic group's identity passed along from generation to generation (Volkan, 1999).

Victimization: When a group or individual experiences a threat or harm from

an external source creating an experience and feeling of helplessness. This experience can create a desire to regain a sense of power through vengeance or self-destructive behavior (Mack, 1990).

Dehumanization: A state in which one human being or group so brutalizes another that the victim loses dignity in the eyes of the aggressor. Dehumanization is the process of thinking of others/enemies as less than human to avoid feeling guilt over destroying them (Moses, 1990).

Addendum 2

Issues and phenomena that arise in the course of psychopolitical dialogues:

(For further details, see Volkan, 1999)

This list describes certain patterns of interaction that may occur during psychopolitical dialogues and ways in which the psychologically-aware facilitating team can intervene to keep the group productive (e.g., theoretical inputs, content observations, process observations at the inter-group level, strong leadership, motion to take a coffee break and reflect, etc.)

Displacement onto a mini-conflict: This refers to a situation when the major conflict or larger issues are displaced onto a seemingly unrelated conflict which rises to the level of an immediate crisis. This crisis, although symbolic of what will be explored later, is essentially insignificant in comparison to the salient aspects of the ethnic or national conflict for which the dialogue meeting has been organized. The facilitator must approach the crisis seriously, with assurance and respect toward the participants' large-group sentiments and must not allow it to drag on. An example of a mini-conflict occurred in one

dialogue series when a participant demanded that his wife be allowed to attend a meeting. This issue took on seemingly critical importance and obscured the large-group issues for the time being. In this instance, the mini-conflict was resolved by the facilitator declaring that all spouses were welcome. (None actually attended after this invitation.)

Competition to express historical grievances (“chosen traumas”) and past triumphs (“chosen glories”): At the outset of unofficial dialogue meetings, the competition to list grievances seems involuntary and the absence of empathy for the other side’s losses and injuries is expectable. This exchange of grievances appears to be necessary to the process because it serves to strengthen participants’ hold on their ethnic identities. This strengthening of identities is a necessary prelude to being able to hear the other side. Furthermore, when opposing groups begin to “hear” each other as the process proceeds, mutual recognition of one another’s suffering creates a favorable atmosphere for progress in negotiation because underneath there is a mutual understanding of each other’s group identity. During the listing of grievances, the task of the facilitating team is to absorb the outpouring of the parties’ emotions through active listening, to avoid taking sides, and thus to become a model of empathic listening.

Projective identification: When one group projects onto the other its own wishes for how the opposing side should think, feel, or behave. The groups end up talking about what they *think* the other group wants rather than what the other group *actually* thinks, feels, or wants. The facilitators clarify, for example, that each group may wish or fear various outcomes but that each group should report on its

own feelings, thoughts, and actions so that a “reality” emerges not colored by fantasized and projected expectations.

Accordion phenomenon: There is a natural alternation of closeness and separation during intense emotional dialogues about ethnic group conflict where the members alternately identify with the other group and feel close and then feel uncomfortable and need to withdraw. It is important for facilitators to understand and keep in mind the principle of non-sameness (see Addendum 1) because any intervention, action, or suggestion that undermines this principle is likely to be counterproductive in the long run. Therefore, it is unwise to develop formal agreements when the groups are very close because soon the “sameness” that this entails will become unbearable and they will push apart again. Facilitators should be aware of this phenomenon and recognize that agreement and realistic negotiation should not occur until this alternating effect moderates and diminishes.

Echo phenomenon: When representatives of opposing sides open a discussion, the echo of recent events involving their large groups can often be heard in their exchanges, further igniting emotions that exacerbate resistances to adaptive discussions. When this happens, the facilitators clarify the feelings that the participants may feel are unacceptable and which are ignited by the event. This empathic clarification enables the group members to continue adaptively rather than attempting to repress or contain their feelings. An example of this was when, in an Arab-Israeli workshop, a one minute silence in memory of several assassinated leaders was held. During this minute many aggressive remarks were heard, but the affect was flat. A facilitator noted to the groups that

the shadow of the assassinations seemed to inhibit the expression of emotion, especially aggressive emotions related to vengeance and the desire to “get even”. The discussion then continued in a more natural way.

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