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Ten Thousand Cultures, A Single Civilization

MIRCEA MALITZA

ABSTRACT. The role of ethnicity and culture in local conflicts is examined with special reference to the former Yugoslavia. An examination of the literature on conflict resolution is offered, leading to a discussion of the probability of numerous regional conflicts in the coming century. The role of an overarching civilization in preventing their expansion into a general war is emphasized, and finally, the example of the European Union is invoked to exemplify the promise of conflict resolution through pursuit of common programs for the future, with no reference to the quarrels of the past.

Introduction

International life in the last decade of the twentieth century has undergone several dramatic changes. More than forty years of preparation by two military blocs possessing atomic arsenals for a war that would have become a world war suddenly ended in the early 1990s, with the disappearance of one of the actors, the USSR and its military alliance, and with its official renunciation of hostilities against former enemies. At first sight, the threat of a world war being removed and hands being extended by both parties created the illusion that an era of worldwide peace was commencing. But there was no time for the illusion to take hold, as it was brutally contested on the very soil of Europe, which had been considered immune to war, compared to regions outside the Eastern and Western alliances, where local warfare had been going on ever since the end of World War II.

The conflict that broke out among the republics of the former Federation of Yugoslavia, with its violence and resistance to peaceful settlement, was followed by conflicts between ethnic or religious communities, among which Bosnia-Herzegovina has been the most shocking, and by the events in Kosovo. Similar conflicts have occurred in the former Soviet republics of the Caucasus. The question then legitimately arises: Is this phenomenon of violence a feature of the end of all empires or unions, or does it presage the start of a longer, more widespread conflict? If the

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former is the case, we can rest assured about peace in the twenty-first century, perhaps following a few spasms; if the latter is true, in the new century we can expect a perpetuation of conflicts, different from the twentieth-century categories in both class and extension.

The incidence of conflicts during the last decade is sufficient to allow us to extrapolate the features of an era of new conflicts into the next century, since there is no reason to believe the existing conflicts will be transformed by peaceful solutions. Nothing seems to have changed, either in human nature, institutional structures, or the peaceful means at hand, to encourage a belief that this kind of conflict can be stamped out.

An ample literature is devoted to the definition of conflicts. De Jouvenel (1965) says succinctly: "Politics is conflict"; according to Butterworth (1978) conflict is a violent, or non-violent, dispute with "specific power-political aims." Choucri (1984) remarks that all definitions contain several common elements, such as "hostility, insecurity, antagonism, competition, and willingness to exert violence and inflict human damage." Azar and Farah (1984) wrote that protracted conflicts are "hostile interactions that extend over long periods of time and fluctuate in frequency and intensity. . .rooted in ethnicity and/or nationalism"; this type of conflict, which is not restricted to the inter-state category, has gradually drawn attention to its cultural implications: values, beliefs, and identity.[1]

Cultural Conflicts

In any conflict, the fighter is driven by a creed, by adhesion to a cause with an emotional loading so strong that it can be transformed into hatred of the enemy and a desire to destroy him. A young soldier fighting in the Bosnian conflict said in a short TV interview: "I am ready to die for my cultural identity"; he could have added, "I am ready to kill," as well. This statement, drowned in a sea of news about hostilities, deserves more careful analysis.

The feverish search for cultural identity, for an ethnic or religious grouping and its specific language and traditions, represents a crisis. The old identity as "citizen" of a federative republic has in these cases completely lost its meaning. In the case of artificial unions such as the former Yugoslavia, "citizenship" is an identity overlaid to serve central interests, addressing all groupings, no matter what separates them on the cultural plane of personal beliefs. The unifying project in the case of Yugoslavia, as in other countries, was building a prosperous, egalitarian society; due to the remarkable role the country played internationally, great dignity was to inhere in the status of Yugoslav citizen. The Yugoslav personality was linked to the pride of having initiated the non-alignment movement, the building of a new order able to lead the Third World toward development and independence from the major powers and blocs. This construction was, however, vulnerable because it was grounded on an ideological and cultural character, but what culture builds, culture breaks up, in the eternal undulating motion of beliefs, and attempts to build civilizations on culture alone have failed.

Once the ground of this imposed common identity—which had controlled the centrifugal action of ancient identities—had vanished, a train of aspirations for autonomy and independence was set in motion, with all its separatist slogans, historical pretensions, and notions that one must defend oneself against threats from the other, surfaced. The "Other" turned into a deadly enemy. The stronger the bond connecting the rediscovered community, the less important are relations

with a group having another culture and value system, and the possibility for interaction with members of that group. This is the expression of the propensity to isolation, segregation, and in its extreme form, "ethnic cleansing" and genocide.

Because culture is considered to be the totality of the values, beliefs, traditions, and heritage that confer an identity on each individual, conflicts of the type described above can be classified as cultural conflicts, although this common usage confers a degree of high, noble, humanistic value that can hardly be reconciled with it.[2] Indeed, in its potential for explosive violence, culture could be compared to a nuclear reactor; when a moderating influence of heavy water (or a common project or authority) is removed, a chain reaction follows.

The Crisis of the Social Contract

The causal logic underlying the reasons for conflict is not the same as the beliefs and slogans of the conflicting parties: it belongs in the sphere, not of emotion, but of policy and economics. It stands behind beliefs, and is manipulated by the politicians, who, unlike common fighters, seldom die in the conflict. Political and economic reasons are behind the power exerted by the members of the elite—club, party, or clique—who are bound together, such as the Tutsi minority in Rwanda who for centuries have made up the Rwandan army, to form a nucleus of power. In the case of Rwanda the conflict became acute with the struggle of the Hutu majority to liberate themselves from the dominant group.

The interests of other nations, and their intervention in support of one or another of the parties, feed and amplify internal conflicts. All African tribal resentments are marked by the remembrance of colonialism, which favored one tribe above others.

Turning to a more general viewpoint, past the subjective domain and closer to empirical causes, we find that a cultural conflict invariably breaks out with the failure of one or several governments to build a society in which a minimum living standard is offered to its members, whatever their group affiliation; the failure to channel the energies of society into a civilizing project; or the delay of modernizing reforms that might have allowed the various communities to interact peacefully in their own common interest. Mankind's social map presents us with the most adequate background for the outbreak of conflict, and shows an overwhelming majority of people caught between uncontrolled population growth and the need to subsist, struggling with misery and poverty, ravaged by disease, malnutrition, homelessness, or crowded together in unsanitary agglomerations if they do not become refugees out of fear of extermination. Their desperate situation is blamed on others; a scapegoat, who must be destroyed as the cause of all their ills, appears or is presented, and is usually any outsider who enjoys better living conditions, no matter how small the difference.

The same impotent rage can also be found, even in a prosperous society, where the uprooted, the misfits, the underprivileged, once called the *lumpenproletariat*, can be mobilized by the slogans of various subcultures seeking to unbalance the larger society, even violently.

In this light, theories may not be as mutually contradictory as they seem at first sight, that explain the causes of conflicts by referring to power politics (the realist school), economic roots (mainly Marxist or postMarxist), institutional structures, biological propensities for aggression, demographic or social factors, or (our own

emphasis) cultural motivation and attitudes springing from the need to assert one's personal identity. A new, identity-ascribing culture—divisive and conflictual—takes center stage when the "civilizing project" that provides the functional binder of society disappears, in the context of the social contract connecting the economy, politics, and institutional structures.

Sketching the Conflicts of the Future

The conflicts Samuel Huntington (1996) considers possible and probable in the twenty-first century derive from his conceptual scheme. He argues that the awakening of civilizations, and their simultaneous entry into competition in a globalized economy and information network, will generate more conflicts. As he sees the future, the primary risk is of a clash between the West and Islam, or between the West and Asia (China and/or Japan). Of the two, the most disturbing is the reactivation of the centuries-long conflict between Islam and the West, the more so as (according to Huntington) relations between Islam and Asia are more relaxed. But the same cannot be said for relations between the West and Asia: in the present power triangle, the West is isolated. On the threshold of the twenty-first century, according to Huntington, the supremacy of the West and its quest for universality are being denied.

There are fault-lines between civilizations, where in Huntington's opinion the roots of conflict should be sought. However, he mistakes civilization for culture. Civilizations are large formations, and their conflicts will also be large. Huntington stresses macro-conflicts, but also recognizes conflicts between states belonging to different civilizations, and conflicts of contiguous groups along the civilizational fault-lines.

The paradigm Huntington supports drives him to overestimate the large conflicts at the expense of the importance of the local ones, those inside civilizations where the cultural factor drives their clashes. Bosnia is paradigmatic. The conflicting parties share the same civilization but have different cultural banners under which they attempt to rally groups to claim distinct cultural identities. Despite support from the Muslim countries for their Bosnian brethren, and despite Russian support of the Orthodox Serbs, the conflict is not of Islamic and Christian civilizations, but of local affinities involved in a cultural confrontation.

Numerous criticisms have been made of Huntington's paradigm, most notably that it is not unique (Alker, 1995). Present-day conflicts are indeed cultural ones, as Huntington himself says when referring to "history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion." But there are no hints that civilization centers linked together in a growing interdependence will engage in violent conflicts; the "mature rivalry" that characterized commercial tensions between the United States and Japan is a conflict in the broad sense, but not a clash. It has been observed that those engaged in building a global civilization are little inclined to enter into conflicts. A remark by William H. McNeill (1997) seems pertinent: "It is surely a striking fact that the countries involved in the 'Asian Affirmation' and the 'Islamic Resurgence,' whose growth and power Huntington persuasively emphasizes, do not attempt to withdraw from global society. Quite the contrary, China's recent export success in world markets is central to the entire phenomenon of Asian growth, while the Muslim faith is and always has been friendly to trade and accustomed to unbelievers. No one, in fact, is ready to pay the costs of withdrawal from the rapidly growing global exchanges that sustain human society in all parts of the earth."

Alvin Toffler, author of the "Third Wave" theory, (Toffler, 1980), applies his theory of waves of social change to the conflicts necessary for change to occur. Toffler uses culture and civilization interchangeably (as do other American sociologists). He does not define civilization by its subjective components based on beliefs, rather he relies on the system by which society's richness and power are produced. Thus, he says, there are only three big civilizations, symbolized by the hoe, the assembly line, and the computer, and conflicts occur at their frontiers. He further distinguishes himself from Huntington, saying that a potentially even greater collision faces us, a major conflict that will subsume the clash of civilizations predicted by Huntington: "[T]he traditional definition of civilization Huntington relies upon is inadequate and many of the conflicts he foresees, if they will occur, will take place within a larger framework: a world divided more and more into three distinct supercivilizations potentially conflictual. We shall continue to use the word civilization to refer to the agrarianism of the First Wave or to the industrialism of the Second Wave or to the emerging society of the Third Wave. . . ."

How does Toffler's conceptual scheme appear in the light of the definitions of culture and of civilization proposed above? That he sees civilizations as production and organization systems brings Toffler nearer to what we think the term "civilization" expresses; the present article presumes a universality of civilization. What Toffler calls "civilization" represents, in my opinion, the clear, undeniable evolutionary steps of this overarching civilization, as well as its present layers, existing either peacefully or in conflict. Toffler mentions the cultural factors in several places, for example, "Thus, while the poets and the intellectuals from the economically backward countries write national anthems, poets and intellectuals in the Third Wave countries sing the virtues of a frontierless world. The resulting collisions, reflecting the totally different needs of two radically different civilizations, can provoke some of the worst bloodbaths in the coming years" (ibid.).

One of Toffler's most interesting considerations refers to "niche wars," a reflection of the notion of the economic niche; ". . . the third world's economy challenges the older industrial system by breaking markets into smaller, more differentiated pieces. Hence the appearance of niche markets followed by niche products, niche financing and niche brokers on stock exchanges. . . . This de-massification of advanced economies is followed by a de-massification of the world threats, while a single giant threat of war between the superpowers is displaced by a multitude of 'niche threats'" (ibid.).

Discussing the "distributed threats" which we associate with the fragmentation of cultures, Toffler has pertinent observations: "We see today a confusing diversity of separatist ethnic wars, religious violence, coups d'état, border conflicts, civil uprisings and terrorist attacks which throw whole waves of emigrants over national frontiers, stricken by poverty and war (but also hordes of drug peddlers). In a global economy which is a more and more interconnected one, many of such apparently small conflicts produce strong side effects in the neighboring and even distant countries. Thus, a scenario of 'many small wars' forces military planners in many armies to consider again what they call 'special operations' by 'special forces'—the niche of tomorrow's warriors." Toffler thus signals a new kind of soldier, needing a training period of up to ten years and destined to act together with his elite unit in "hostile, defended, remote and culturally sensitive areas" (ibid.).

A new theme for the twenty-first century, posited in the twentieth, is the "space war." To measure the change in classical geopolitics, a rule for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was: He who controls Eastern Europe controls the Continent's

heartland; he who controls the heartland commands the World Island; he who controls the World Island controls the World (Mackinder, 1919).

Today the rule is different: He who controls the circumterrestrial space commands Planet Earth; he who controls the Moon controls the circumterrestrial space; he who controls L4 and L5 (equidistant points of gravitational attraction between earth and moon) controls the Earth–Moon system.

Theories thrive after events have occurred: having the case at hand, we wish to obtain explanations with a generalization and prognosis value. Reading Huntington and Toffler, one sees clearly the impressions that the Gulf conflict and the repression of Iraq's attempt to achieve regional hegemony have had on these authors. Was this a case of the clash of civilizations? Not according to Huntington's definition, in which Iraq represents a totalitarian system based on a secularist and nationalist doctrine—Arab socialism—supported by armed force. According to Toffler's definition, it was an example of the persistence of a rudimentary form of the second type of civilization in the face of advance and domination by a developed civilization of the third type. Obviously, these authors use the concept "civilization" differently, and neither discriminates between "civilization" and "culture." However, if this distinction is made, this becomes a cultural conflict, since it involves an ideological lay doctrine in search of an Arab identity different from the Islamic identity, that needs to expand at the expense of neighbors belonging to the same civilization (or the same level of civilization), but owning different cultural forms. Thus it is actually a continuation of the earlier Iran–Iraq conflict.

Since Islam is so much present in today's political analyses, let us identify some landmark features. At this time, power in countries like Iran and Sudan is held by fundamentalist groups that seek to ground the state institutions on religion: theocracies. Libya, at the mid-point between Islam and the model of lay military revolution, is a special case; in Saudi Arabia the leaders are fundamentalists, conducting public affairs in the name of the Sunni branch of Islam, similar to most of the Arab Gulf states, but their militancy is much more moderate and has not caused international concern. The next candidate for a fundamentalist regime is Algeria, while lesser offensives are mounted by Islamists in Egypt and in Turkey, Jordan, and other Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia. What most worries the West is the possible growth of that wave and its becoming a movement, a common front able to wage war as a coalition against the West.

By virtue of the historical echo of Islam's swift expansion from the Red Sea to north of the Mediterranean after its conquest of North Africa, when the region it administered was the center of a remarkable civilization, today's fundamentalists consider Islam itself to be a civilization, instead of a particular culture with dozens of variations and schools. Yet the fundamentalists see in this a civilization erected upon their own corpus of beliefs, a world power able to confront the other existing civilizations. It is doubtful that this unity will be achieved; despite some temporary successes in one country or another, the economic, technological, and scientific disappointments will increase competition among various Islamic schools, eventually leading to division and failure.

Here the historical experience of the European Christian countries is relevant. There have been more conflicts in the bosom of Christianity than battles against the infidels. What should be considered in the future evolution of Islam are its universalist tolerant values, temporarily being overshadowed by the fundamentalist trend, which emphasizes a militant exclusivism.

While the scenarios for the twenty-first century do not exclude a world war, its probability is considered minor; most authors point to the increasing, persistent danger of what are called "cultural wars" (see Stein, 1989; Peres, 1993; Ibrahim, 1996).

The Proliferation of Conflict

It is mistaken to presume that all direct causes of cultural conflict will be removed within a predictable future. For four decades after the emergence of the new states from the era of colonialism, progress was hardly perceptible in the creation of civic consciousness, which continues to be stifled by the need to belong to an ethnic, religious, or language group: tribes have not melted into societies.

The seriousness of the gaps between the rich and poor countries appears to be largely ignored by the developed world; the economic strategies applied so successfully in a limited area comprising less than a quarter of mankind's population, appear to have had no impact on the rest of the world. In fact, the international institutions, especially created to address this problem, yield doubtful or negative results. For a period beginning with the final decade of the twentieth century, and predicted to continue for two decades of the next, cultural wars may be the order of the day: a new thirty years' war, feeding on the immense fuel of impotent rage in the considerable part of mankind living in perpetually precarious conditions.

Part of Huntington's prediction should thus be confirmed, but only that part concerning culture as we define it. Our objection to Huntington's term is that civilizations cannot clash since there is only one civilization, characterized by a single science, a single technique, and a globalization of economic practices. This civilization has competing centers of equal rank, and even rival ones, in the way it has developed in different degrees and to various levels in different places. Simple reasoning would diminish the probability that these centers would clash, because they are increasingly interdependent. According to Toffler and Toffler (1993), clashes between different layers of civilization are more probable, but in view of the military capacity of the developed countries, it can be presumed that they will be able to discourage them. Regional hegemony strategies to "blackmail" the great powers by ownership or use of modern weapons, especially atomic weapons, will be the object of concerted diplomatic efforts, discouraged by sanctions, or stifled by swift reprisals, as in Iraq.

Local conflicts remain possible between those countries that cannot resolve their disputes without resorting to arms, for example in the case of Iran and Iraq, or more recently between Peru and Ecuador. Such conflicts are, however, regarded with relative indifference by the international community, which simply waits for the fighters to exhaust their resources. For the above reasons, Huntington's prediction of a possible general conflagration, his "clash of civilizations," should be thoroughly amended.

Civilization is spelled in the singular, and there is little risk that its inner tensions could change into violent conflicts; cultures are spelled in the plural, and all signals point toward numerous conflicts under their banners in the twenty-first century. The new elements they feature may be summarized in a few considerations:

1. The cold war was characterized by an intense but controlled tension. Actually, this was the third world war, experienced in a virtual, simulated mode. This feature of disciplined restraint is fading away; new conflicts break out more easily, under any pretext. In the recent military confrontation

between Peru and Ecuador cultural traits played significant roles: hurt pride, offense and response, and national pride; this is a signal for the future.

2. Unlike the comprehensive goals of the Napoleonic Wars, with vast deployments of troops and great operations, which Karl von Clausewitz used for an example in developing his theory of war (Watts, 1996) the wars of the twenty-first century are viewed by some experts as having the dimensions of eighteenth-century conflicts, where the deployment of troops was demonstrative, conventional, and with small losses. Wishing to spare the lives of their own soldiers, the developed countries will more and more often have recourse to blockades and economic sanctions against those countries considered offenders against the international order.
3. Regional and local conflicts will be allowed to proceed to exhaustion, hastened by international moratoriums, at the price of sacrificed lives and goods: the main international actors are interested in the localization of such conflicts, rather than their extinction.
4. International control of the arms trade will be circumvented by mafias, private armies, illegal trafficking in arms, and smuggling, as states integrate into larger regions and their power to control this traffic is diluted.
5. Earlier conflicts were motivated by a "raison d'état," self-interest, and featured a judicious balance of gains and losses. Cultural wars, motivated by irrational elements (the need for ethnic or religious identity; fear of the Other) are marked by an absence of precise goals and an inability to articulate objectives and strategies. At the outer end of the spectrum can be found nihilist wars, the microconflicts which some authors suggest will haunt the earth's cities, like Enzensberger's "molecular wars."

Between 1945 and 1989 approximately 23 million people were killed in 138 wars. It is estimated that internal repression cost the lives of an even greater number. On average some 50 wars were in progress each year from 1989 to 1993 (Wallensteen and Axell, 1994). SIPRI (1998) considered "major" those conflicts with 1000 or more combat dead, and recorded 26 of these in 1996, 25 in 1997, all but one being intra-state conflicts.

Negotiation Strategies and Conflict Prevention

While the dominant type of conflict was departing from the classical example, the theory and practice of negotiations were also evolving. The distinction had previously been made between two kinds of solutions: *distributive* solutions, for disputes over property claims (territory, resources, zones of domination or influence) and *innovative* solutions (finding a formula or an interest that transcends the issues at stake). In the first case, analytical methods and mathematical models were applied, such as games theory; however, protracted conflicts, essentially those of identity and values, were difficult to formalize and even the best theoretical case led to deadlock, such as the Prisoner's Dilemma exemplified by the Cyprus conflict.

Since 1965 the difference has been recognized between "distributive bargaining" and "integrative bargaining" (for a discussion, see Iklé, 1964). The latter belongs to the "problem-solving" category, where the case is not so much of mutual concessions (as in distribution) as of a search for mutually profitable alternatives. Players consider themselves not opponents, but partners, and resort not to formal tools, but

to informal, creative procedures. While distributive conflicts were studied, particularly by the realist school of international relations, value conflicts caught the attention of the liberal school.

Problem-solving methods led to new negotiation forms consisting of workshops designed to enhance the actors' ability to satisfy their basic needs and self-identity through informal interaction (Hopmann, 1995). Communications between the parties were the basis of Fisher's "delinking" method (Fisher, 1997) and Burton's "facilitating" method (Burton, 1987a, b; 1990). While dialogue is obviously a necessary condition for any negotiation to begin, it is not a sufficient condition to achieve success. That is the basis for the development of debate workshops in which the conflict can be reformulated and innovative reasoning induced through creatively heuristic procedures. "Creative reasoning addresses difficult old problems by finding novel ways of reframing and redefining the issues" (Spector, 1995).

This, then, is the present state of methods for dealing with, solving, or preventing conflicts. The new type of persistent conflicts, those for identity, values or culture, must be met with a new negotiation method that offers peaceful solutions of the integrative, innovative type.

The next step in refining the method, making it transcend the heuristic stage and become efficient, is to specify its goal: What should be the final outcome of the process? A few historical cases seem to offer the following answers: (1) adoption of an integrative, interaction-generating project; (2) stabilization of the interaction through institutions located in the realm of civilization; (3) assurance of an overall approach; and (4) transcendence of the values that dominated the confrontation.

Three Examples of Historical Reconciliation

France and Germany. The dispute between France and Germany was one of the lengthiest modern conflicts, for 80 years (1870–1950) dominated by tensions and litigious issues and three wars fought during the period. However, since 1950, now nearly a half-century, a reconciliation process has been developed which has allowed the two countries to avoid upheavals or accidents and has offered the world at large a remarkable example of conflict resolution and prevention. Its essence was to find an innovative, creative project that would serve the common interest and render the causes of their former disputes irrelevant. This project is the integration of Europe. When a country joins a common entity with others, territorial possession becomes less relevant. The common entity in this case was ownership of great resources in steel and coal; at the beginning the integrative project had no explicit political goals, but provided a framework for immediate interaction as members of a European team which came to have other partners as well. To a certain extent, interaction presupposes dialogue, but it is infinitely superior to dialogue, which it influences to a determining degree. In a world of information and communication, where thinking is dominated by linguistic theories and the role of dialogue, it is a major step to understand the concept of interaction and its determinant position in ensuring peaceful relations.

The authors of the solution to the eighty-year old problem had a perfect understanding of the goals to be pursued. On 9 May 1950 Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet described the plan as one that will rid relations between France and Germany of their secular opposition and will link the two countries through a common solidarity of interests firmly to the West. The vision and authority of statesmen such as de Gaulle and Adenauer were certainly necessary and they knew what they were perfecting. In 1960

de Gaulle wrote to Maurice Couve de Murville that they should strike now while the iron of European organization was hot.

In the later 1960s the political texts reversed the order: Europe is based on the Franco-German understanding, a formula still evoked today, whereas it had originally served as a joint project in which a litigious situation was ended and a situation created which would be immune to conflict. The follow-up was a continuous broadening of the idea, from coal and oil to atomic energy and the economy, to the Common Market, to economic union and a common currency, and to a common political and defense agenda. Each step was consolidated through institutional and legislative restructuring, an unprecedented construction for which there is no comparison with other contemporary regional integrations.

A few great lessons are to be gained from this historical experience: The reconciliation agenda does not include the old disputes, nor did the negotiations refer to them except implicitly. All attention was directed toward the future and to working out the definition of a "solidarity of interests" and the new framework to which parties could "moor firmly." Although the agenda does not touch on issues concerning culture, identity and specific values, within the common project it will be possible to affirm them (de Montbrial, 1990; Vaisse, 1993).

South Africa was an item on the United Nations agenda from the start of the organization. For five uninterrupted decades the international community had debated an apparently unsolvable conflict. How, it was asked, could one interfere with a situation which, according to the UN Charter, is a matter of a member state's internal jurisdiction? How can the rights of an oppressed majority be attained, when a minority holds all the keys to power? The language of distributive solutions at the expense of an integrative solution failed to illumine the South African case; following the logic of apartheid, segregation of the populace into several categories by race would suggest division and separation, but the specter of Rwanda, where the minority removed from power was at once slaughtered by the newly-empowered majority, was ever-present. Finally, the solution was the fruit of international pressures, a change in the world political and economic situation, and the evolution of attitudes within the country.

Two men worked to find a solution: Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk, who were later to share a Nobel Peace Prize. Mandela understood that the future of South Africa, an affluent country with considerable economic power, would be threatened in the harsh world of international competition if it were inhabited only by the former European colonists. Mandela, imprisoned for decades and trained as a leftist revolutionary, nevertheless understood and applied an integrative solution, illustrated below with a few quotations.

> ". . . South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white . . . whites were Africans as well, and in any dispensation the majority need the minority. . . . To make peace with an enemy, one must work with the enemy and that enemy becomes your partner." This splendid definition of interaction is completed with the recognition, not the incrimination, of the partner:
> "Whites are fellow South Africans, we want them to feel safe and to know that we appreciate the contribution that they have made towards the development of this country." Not history but future: "We should forget the past and concentrate on building a better future for all." The common project is provided by the future of a South Africa inhabited "by people from various

social groups who have a common loyalty, a common love for their common country" (Mandela, 1995).

This not only ended a local conflict, it also created a new civilization and the basis for the development of the African continent. There are strong possibilities that following reconciliation in South Africa the entire subequatorial region will become the most efficient economic cooperation zone on the continent, although other African economic associations are not wanting.

The Israeli–Arab Conflict. Half a century has elapsed since the 1947–48 war between Israel and the Arab states, during which the 1967 and 1973 wars were outbreaks in a continuing state of war characterized by many violent clashes, many casualties, and immense material losses.

As time passed, two ideas became paramount. The first was that the conflict could not end as a zero-sum game—it could not be won under the terms of distributive justice applied to a territory in dispute on historical, legal, and factual grounds, among others. The second was that a respite from conflict could allow each side to focus on making its way into the global civilization, as was happening in Asia where former conflict-torn countries were now thriving. In contrast to Asia's productive peace, armed conflicts from 1948 to 1992 in the Middle East have produced three million casualties and 14 million displaced persons, at a cost estimated at 1.5 trillion dollars. What did Singapore have, that allowed it to become a prototype of development? To join the "small dragons" of the world, what more does a nation need, which was once the birthplace of trade, communication, the alphabet, and navigation?

Two political figures, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, played a special role, meeting with Norwegian mediators and signing the Oslo agreement. The historic reconciliation is still under way, and although it is expressed in the old vocabulary (acknowledgment of rights, mutual concessions, ratio of forces, alliances of either party, gaining international sympathy) and the opposing parties have not changed into partners, analyses of the text and subtext indicate that the initiating protagonists understood the imperious need to enter the international circuit with the qualities that confer status on all major actors today: economic, financial, and commercial power.

The most valuable means of solving this conflict is to place it on the world map as a prosperous economic zone, credited with a power of imagination it indeed never lacked, understanding the prospects opened to it as it reorients its resources from conflict toward assuming its role in the game of global competition. To bring the reconciliation process to the desired end, the two sides must join efforts on a common, future-oriented project, one that is civilization-based, not culture-based, that will ensure the interaction of the two populations as participants in an integrated team. As the project is carried out, the historical dispute will be extinguished, old antagonisms rendered obsolete and irrelevant. To paraphrase a Latin proverb, *Inter negotium silent armae.*

One analyst enunciates four paradigms for the future of the Middle East (Ibrahim, 1996). Two imply confrontations with Israel in which each side wants to win through numerical supremacy and force: these are the Arab paradigm and the Islamic paradigm. The other two, the Middle East and the Mediterranean paradigms, are integrative and promise a partner's place to Israel. Although Ibrahim prefers the Mediterranean project, the creation of a Middle East zone as

inspired by the West, it is easy to see that the Middle East paradigm is more likely to succeed than the vast Mediterranean program, which would be called upon to extinguish many other conflicts and problems as well.

The Common Project School

Basic Elements. The cases of historical confrontation and protracted conflict that are principally value-based and historically rooted contain valuable clues for conflict prevention.

The Common Project school of conflict prevention starts with an examination of the prevalence of conflicts called alternatively identity or value conflicts, including ethnic, religious, or ideological conflicts, as they clash with other forms of belief now and into the next century. Negotiation practices that deal with this type of conflict are enhanced by the theory and practice of problem-solving, integrative formulas, and innovative heuristics. The strategy of this school, which concerns itself mostly with the conflicts in the Black Sea and Southeast Europe areas (Black Sea University Foundation, 1998), proposes that the best ways to end or prevent a conflict are as follows:

1. A common project must be found that can produce common interests, overlapping diverging interests and shifting them into a secondary place.
2. The theme must belong to the sphere of civilization and imply minimal cultural, value, or belief considerations.
3. The common project must generate interaction which in turn is a source of solidarity, understanding, and mutual accommodation.
4. As this project is carried out, an institutional and legislative consolidation must occur which will guarantee the continuity of the process.
5. Without prejudicing the distinct cultures of the parties, which must enjoy maximum respect and tolerance, a favorable climate must be created through mutual attitudes of trust.
6. The project's merits must be expressed tangibly in material advantages and accomplishments in the global arena.

Clarification

To understand the above plan of action, a few points should be clarified. Let us assume that two parties are disputing (a) a good claimed by both of them (for example, a territory, access to a natural source of water or wealth, or control over a strategic point), or (b) the rejection of some common institutions accused of unacceptable damage to the identity of one of the parties (autonomy, separatism, irredentism, rejection of domination). These can be manifested simultaneously; the colonial struggle also contains the claim for restitution of territory. What happens when the problem is not removal of a foreign power whose solution is separation and abandonment of territory, but a problem of populations forced to live together in spite of their differences? In the latter case, the key seems to be to design a common project that will change adversaries into partners.

The "Common Project" approach offers the promise of tangible rewards for the two actors, rewards high enough that they call off the controversy. It is thought that a compromise solution can be reached when the confrontation is of a religious, linguistic, historical, or cultural nature, but in matters of belief one cannot add or

subtract, as in the case of measurable resources. The challenge is not to change cultures in collision, but to divert them onto a course that will allow them to commit their energies to common interests without involving their cultural identities. All projects of regional integration have economic and commercial goals as well as the goal of successful competition with a third party. The appearance of a common enemy axiomatically creates unlikely alliances: the threat of communism served to unify the West. In our times the specter of ruthless competition leads some traditional enemies to unite their markets and economic potentials, despite solemn pledges of eternal enmity passed from father to son. In the case of negotiations, solutions do not begin with identifying divergent interests, but with seeking common interests. The moment the latter can be convincingly articulated, the former becomes less relevant. The method of the "Common Project" sheds new light on the performers in any conflict (allies, arbiters, mediators, and so on). The merits of the recent mediation attempts in Bosnia can be evaluated as they reveal efforts to pursue integrating projects, or the lack of such efforts, and the degree to which the discussions focus on separation of the parties.

Despite the fact that dialogue has been one of the most used and most often recommended solutions in the literature devoted to peaceful solutions, observations of crises reveals its limited capacity to affect the terms of a dispute. In the best of cases it favors seeking a solution, but it is far from playing the magic role assigned to it. The first attribute of a common project is to generate interaction, to make two populations work together.

Another myth that pervades the literature is that of "peaceful coexistence." In the absence of interaction we do not get peace, we get conflict; peaceful solutions begin with ending separation and establishing collaboration. When two groups abolish the ties that have joined them through common projects, either intentionally or through outside intervention, the road to future conflict lies open. Finally, interaction does not rely on similarities, but presumes complementarity, which will provide a variety of resources to achieve the common project.

A common project needs divergent cultural values and enough neutrality to become lasting. Our century has provided a valuable lesson: Ideologies, conceived as particular forms of culture and belief systems, cannot preside over the building of civilization; religion, another important form of culture, has in the course of two centuries withdrawn from the construction of civilization. Still, despite the lessons of history, we witness in the Third World vain attempts to unify under the formulas of ideology or religion.

In ending and preventing conflicts there exists an "institutional" viewpoint. This consists of discovering the potentials and the gaps in the institutions that were designed to intervene. The United Nations, regional institutions, and military alliances, as well as the juridical arbitration institutions, are being scrutinized despite their small effects in the field. The means for peaceful solutions were specified in the UN Charter, and events continue to confirm the efficacy of non-formal means such as negotiations, conciliations, and mediations, and the ponderous inefficiency of the well-defined, carefully structured ones.

Yet, as in the case of European integration, attention continues to focus on institutions. The new type of conflict and the new emphasis on common projects do not exclude the role of institutions in the genesis and implementation of projects; if the World Bank would loosen its exclusive ties with the member-states and embrace a regional and multilateral approach it could prevent conflicts better than the Security Council. Unofficial groups of experts find solutions more easily than

governmental agencies caught in politics and hampered by bureaucracy. Certainly a common project presumes the creation of institutions to ensure its stability and continuity; carrying out a project is a matter of perpetual negotiation, and calls for flexible institutions that can guide a perpetual transition.

Conflicts and their origins are never missing from the literature or the debates describing the march of mankind, in the past, or in the present, nor will they be in the coming century. We must remember that personal or collective identity, which confers recognition and self-respect, is expressed outwardly by "status" and its strong connotations in culture, image, and opinion. At the same time, the identity offered by civilization means a social or professional role, a position in the network of knowledge and action. A common project generates interaction and roles; the value of the project lies in the satisfaction derived from exercising one's role, from the material, tangible advantages enhanced by fulfilling the role. These rewards are much more important than the volatile, airy prestige conferred by mere status.

Notes

1. For further discussion of these points see de Jouvenel (1965); Butterworth (1978); Choucri (1984); Azar and Farah (1984). Lincoln Bloomfield (1997), also created a computerized system, CASCON, for the analysis of conflicts, the results of which can be found in Bloomfield and Leiss (1979) and in Bloomfield and Moulton (1997).
2. A background on the importance of ethnic and religious beliefs may be found in Boulding (1956); Druckman, Broome and Korper (1988); Holsty (1962); Gandhi (1995); Gurr (1993); and Chapman (1991).

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Biographical Note

MIRCEA MALITZA is the founder of the Black Sea University, an active member of its Center for Conflict Prevention and a member of the Romanian Academy and of the Club of Rome, for which he co-authored the 1979 report "No Limits to Learning." He has written on diplomacy, negotiations, and mathematical models for international relations, and recently lectured at several US universities on conflict resolution. His most recent book is *Ten Thousand Cultures, One Single Civilization: Toward the Geomodernity of the XXI Century* (1998). ADDRESS: Black Sea Univerisity, Bd. Primaverii 50, Bucharest, Romania. [e-mail: m_malitza@rnc.ro].