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**THE THEORY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION
MEETS THE DAYTON ACCORDS**

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the theory of conflict resolution and tests the Dayton Accords against selected theories to assess whether the Accords are likely to provide the basis for a lasting peace.

Ron Fisher's contingency model provides a framework for study. He postulates four stages of conflict and appropriate measures that can be taken at each stage to de-escalate the conflict to a lower stage. This model is augmented by David Last's Spectrum of Conflict De-escalation which clarifies the tasks to be undertaken as the conflict is de-escalated and shows the appropriate roles for military forces and civilian intervenors.

The Dayton Accords are shown to be lacking in not meeting the needs of all the parties involved in the Bosnian Conflict, especially the needs of the Bosnian Serbs whose historic nationalistic aspirations have been crushed. Dayton attempts to resolve coercively several aspects of the conflict which are theoretically best handled once a conflict has been de-escalated to lower levels of tension.

The author opines that Serb nationalistic aspirations will once again lead to war in the Balkans, as they did in 1873, 1914 and 1992.

THE THEORY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION MEETS THE DAYTON ACCORDS

The fuller our picture of Dayton becomes, the clearer it is that the Dayton process-its accomplishments notwithstanding-is less a how-to manual for peacemakers than a cautionary tale.¹

Warren Bass

INTRODUCTION

Canadian soldiers have extensive experience and knowledge about the practice of peacekeeping. This military experience, gained as it was in the broader context of various third party interventions to reduce, resolve and settle conflict, has given us a good understanding of how military peacekeeping fits into the broad spectrum of activities that make up conflict resolution. What has hitherto been lacking in the Canadian military cognizance is the theory of conflict resolution.

In this paper, we will use Mitchell and Banks' definition of conflict resolution:

an outcome in which the issues in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties, self-sustaining in the long run and productive of a new, positive relationship between parties²

The bloody wars of this century, the rising influence of the peace movement, the founding of the United Nations and the willingness of states to intervene in armed conflict have drawn social scientists into the study of conflict and conflict resolution. As in all social science, no single model is sufficient to fully describe the problems or the potential solutions. Today, there are enough good theories that it is worthwhile for the

¹ Bass, Warren, "The Triage of Dayton", *Foreign Affairs*, (New York, Sep/Oct 1998), pp 95-108.

² Mitchell, Christopher, and Banks, Michael, *Handbook of Conflict Resolution-The Analytical Problem-Solving Approach*. (London, Wellington House, 1996) p xvii.

professional practitioners of military peacekeeping to study conflict resolution as well as the art of war.

This paper will review the theory of conflict resolution with a view to providing Canadian officers with a basic understanding of the field and hopefully to stimulate further reading and research. Once the theory has been reviewed, it will be applied to the Dayton Accords to test them for viability. This paper aims to show that the Dayton Accords will surely fail as a mechanism for achieving lasting peace in the Bosnian Civil War.

This paper will not attempt to draw practical conclusions about the art of peacekeeping. The aim is to express some of the theoretical thinking about conflict resolution. It is left to the reader and practitioner to apply this theory to the doctrine and tactics of peacekeeping.

CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Military officers are familiar with the theory of conflict between states. Interstate conflict assumes that decisions are made by “rational or constrained actors across national boundaries”.³ This theory is insufficient for modern experience since modern armed conflicts typically are between ethnic, tribal or social groups whose boundaries are within or across states. The behaviour of these groups includes actions by their leaders, violent actions by elements under control of those leaders, such as militia, “liberation” or defence forces and violence by uncontrolled individuals and elements within the groups, such as military irregulars, armed sub-factions and criminal elements. Protracted social conflicts, often “deep rooted insecurities based on human needs”⁴, are now most prevalent.

³ Last, David M. *Theory, Doctrine and Practice of Conflict De-Escalation in Peacekeeping Operations*. (Cornwallis Park: The Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1997), p 15.

⁴ *Ibid.* p 17.

David Last describes the causes of violence in six broad categories:⁵

- Violent individuals who achieve success through violence and are therefore inclined to continue using violent means. Some potential solutions are to: separate belligerents, prepare for the risk of violence if belligerents need to be brought together, educate people about their objects of violence, determine and satisfy frustrated needs, and inform belligerents about the role of the intervention force.
- The denial of basic needs.
- Groups suffering from mixed status. Some examples are: wealthy groups with low political power, numerically large groups with a declining share of wealth, or militarily strong groups with low economic or political power. Included in this category are groups whose expectations have been raised and then dashed. Powerful factions that are not recognized or which are accustomed to getting their own way and which are suddenly disempowered are also included.
- Ethnocentrism and realpolitik may involve the manipulation of distrust of others to unite a group with internal divisions. Groups with internal weaknesses are more likely to engage in conflict with other groups. Political or economic discrimination falls under this category. To counter these problems, establishing and protecting minority rights can forestall violent behaviour. Minorities who feel discriminated against generally prefer collective minority rights to individual rights.
- Hostility spiral, over-perception and over-reaction. The hostility spiral leads to escalation as hard-liners are vindicated and moderates are marginalized by each violent action of the opposing group.
- Escalation. A number of factors can cause escalation of an already tense situation. Some of these factors are summarized in the following table (listed in random order).

Predestination	History of antagonism	Parties unaware of costs
Cultural differences	No limit to actions	Parties not concerned with costs

⁵ *Ibid.* pp 17-20.

Insecure self-images	Uncertain status differences	Poor socialization
No experience with crises	Weak social bonds	Mild power advantage
Perception of power advantage	Motivation to win (or not to lose)	Uncertainty
Lack of identification with other	Festering resentment	Inability to escape conflict
Long, injurious stalemate		

Figure 1. Causes of Conflict⁶

A CONTINGENCY THEORY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Ronald Fisher, in several papers and books, offers a contingency theory of conflict resolution. Building on the work of several other researchers in the field, he offers an analysis of conflict progressing through four stages. Each stage can be characterized and specific measures, each appropriate to a specific stage, are proposed for de-escalating the conflict to a stage of lower intensity.

Conflict can be seen as comprising a mix of subjective and objective elements that tend to escalate or de-escalate over time. An objective problem of resource sharing may be resolved by an approach oriented towards compromise. A conflict based on subjective elements like misperception or miscommunication can be best addressed using a collaborative approach. The subjective elements usually increase as the conflict escalates.⁷

The dimensions of conflict at each stage (Figure 2) are characterized by the nature of communication, the relationships between the parties, the types of issues and the possible outcomes perceived by the parties.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Fisher, Ronald J. *The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict*. (Harrisonburg, Virginia, R.R. Donnelly & Sons, 1990), p 234.

At the first stage of conflict, communication is direct, often face to face. Discussions and the interactions between the parties are debates. As a conflict escalates to the second stage, the parties start to avoid direct communication and they start to interact through deeds, such as demonstrations and uncooperative acts, rather than by words. At stage III, there is little direct communication and interactions tend to be threatening. At stage IV, there is practically no communication at all between the parties except for the violent direct attacks that characterize this stage.

Perceptions of conflicting parties tend to be realistic at the first stage and relationships are typically characterised by trust and respect. At stage II the perceptions of the parties become stereotypical. At Stage III, the conflict becomes one of Good versus Evil and at Stage IV, the other side is seen as bestial and depraved. Similarly, the relationship moves through a stage where the other side is still seen as important, to a stage where distrust and disrespect sets in, and finally the fourth stage where the relationship is seen as hopeless.

The issues in the first stage tend to be objective, as mentioned earlier. At Stage II, the relationship between the parties becomes the important issue. At Stage III, the parties usually focus on basic needs from the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. By Stage IV, the issue becomes survival itself, either in the social sense of survival of the group as an entity, or the literal survival of the people exposed to violence.

At first, the parties will be attempting to achieve win-win solutions to their conflict and will tend towards a mutual decision as a means of resolving the issues. At the second stage, compromise will be the desired outcome and negotiation the means. By Stage III, the parties are usually embroiled in a win-lose mindset and they are attempting to win the conflict by competitive behaviour. Stage IV is characterised by a lose-lose mindset and internecine behaviour. The following table summarizes the various stages of conflict and how they are characterized.

Dimensions of the Conflict				
Stage	Communication / interaction	Perceptions/ relationship	Issues	Outcome/ management
I	Discussion/ debate	Accurate/ trust, respect commitment	Interests	Joint gain/ mutual decision
II	Less direct/ deeds, not words	Stereotypes/ other still important	Relationship	Compromise/ negotiation
III	Little direct/ threats	Good vs evil/ distrust, lack of respect	Basic needs	Win-lose/ defensive competition
IV	Nonexistent/ direct attacks	Other non-human/ hopeless	Survival	Lose-lose/ destruction

Figure 2. Stages of Conflict Escalation⁸

The contingency approach links third party interventions to each of the four stages to de-escalate the conflict back down through these stages. It should be noted that the effectors of de-escalation are not the opposites of the causes of escalation cited earlier in this paper. Some examples of the situations and issues which might cause de-escalation are: a common enemy, fatigue, stalemate, impending disaster, voluntary yielding, a change of goals and conciliatory gestures.⁹

Fisher argues that since Stage I conflicts are about objective interests and that the parties are still able to discuss and debate, a third party can assist by improving communication through a conciliatory approach. The resultant improvement in communication should lead to negotiation that settles the interests in dispute.

Fisher and Ury proposed the following criteria for “principled negotiation”: “they should produce agreements which serve the legitimate interests of both parties; they should be efficient; and they should improve, or at least not damage the relationship between the parties.”¹⁰ The four tenets of principled negotiation are: “separate people from the problem (do not make it a conflict of personalities); focus on interests, not

⁸ *Ibid.* p 235.

⁹ Last, David M. *Theory, Doctrine...* p 20.

positions; invent options for mutual gain; and insist on using objective criteria for evaluation.”¹¹

At Stage II, the key issue is relationships. A third party can provide consultation with a view to improving the relationships which can lead to either negotiation or mediation to settle the interests at the heart of the dispute. The key point to note is that the Stage II conflict must first be de-escalated to a Stage I situation and then Stage I approaches have a chance of leading to success.

At Stage III, the parties are segregated and no longer communicating directly. An intervenor can use arbitration to control the relationship and manage the hostility. The third party can mediate between the parties while providing incentives to both sides to de-escalate the conflict. Some coercion or arm-twisting may be required to keep the discussion moving in the right direction. The aim is to de-escalate to a Stage II type of situation, which allows the use of consultation to improve the relationship, building on the successes on the arbitration/mediation in Stage III. The Stage II techniques eventually should lead to a Stage I, setting the stage for resolution.

There is a risk to using mediation with muscle, as suggested by Mitchell and Banks:

“If the intervening party applies sufficient ‘leverage’ or power (in the form of either coercion or reward) then it may subdue or suppress the conflicting behaviour of the original parties, thus ending the violence...this kind of outcome is both unlikely to achieve stability in the long run, *and* is undesirable.”¹²

Peacekeepers are usually called in at Stage IV. At this stage, the parties have already resorted to violence and they are caught in a negative spiral of retaliation.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p 35.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Mitchell, Christopher, and Banks, Michael, *Handbook of Conflict Resolution-The Analytical Problem-Solving Approach*. (London, Wellington House, 1996), p 3.

Impartial, neutral third party peacekeepers, with an appropriately robust mandate, enter the scene and control the violence with an aim to allowing Stage III approaches to be used. Military confidence building measures are often used to de-escalate the violence. These measures are well known to peacekeepers: prisoner and wounded exchanges, temporary cease-fires, zones of separation, progressive disarmament, etc.

Problem solving workshops aimed at analysing the conflict are also appropriate once the violence has been brought under control. Problem solving approaches require:

- Third party devotion to the interests of *all* the parties
- Allowing adversaries to explore win-win options
- A safe venue
- A genuine exchange of ideas
- Free-ranging analysis
- Non-committing exploration of options¹³

Civil authorities are sometimes able to consider and offer various types of development aid to reduce the inequity that may have been at the root of the conflict in the first place, or which may have arisen as a result of the strife. Fisher says that peacebuilding should consist of coordinated, multitrack third-party initiatives.¹⁴ Figure 3 summarizes the contingency approach and highlights the stage by stage nature of the de-escalation process.

¹³ *Ibid.* p 5.

¹⁴ Fisher, Ronald J. "The Potential for Peacebuilding: Forging a Bridge from Peacekeeping to Peacemaking." *Peace and Change*. 18 (1993), p 264.

Intervention Sequence

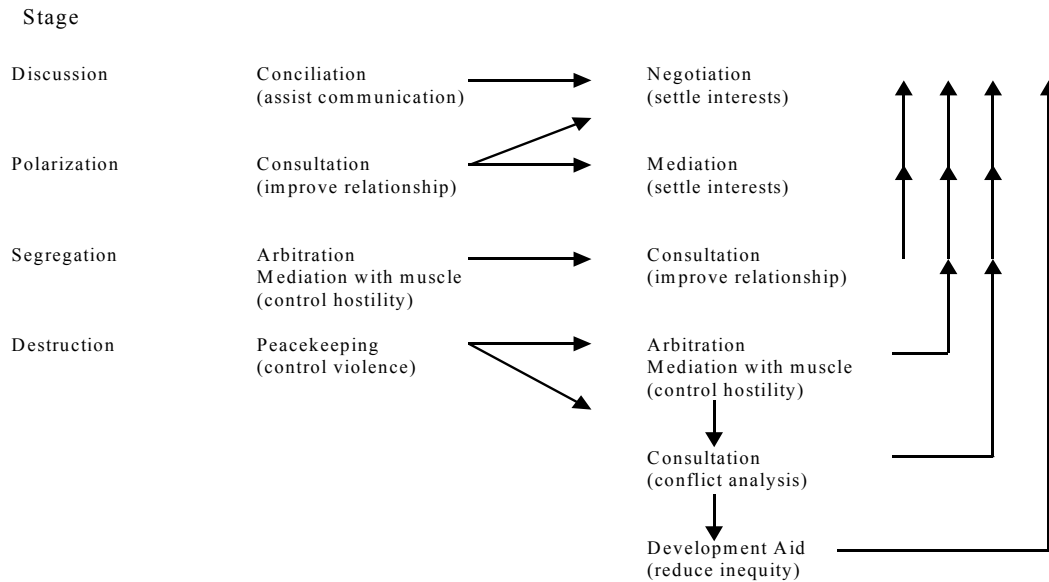


Figure 3. Intervention Sequence¹⁵

OTHER MODELS

Beth Fetherston’s work is consistent with the contingency approach, though she sees intervention in three stages rather than four. She says:

“First [peacekeeping] is the role of conflict control which provides the base level of activity of peacekeeping preceding the application of either of the other two roles. Second [peacemaking] is the facilitation of an atmosphere conducive to negotiations and settlement, and in the long term movement toward resolution.

¹⁵ Fisher, Ronald J. *The Social Psychology...*, p 237.

Third [peacebuilding] is the facilitation of an actual settlement and resolution process.”¹⁶

David Last sees the problem thusly. Starting from a peacekeeper’s perspective in a conflict already at stage IV, the roles of a third party are to: stop the fighting, “push” the combatants towards settling their dispute, establish trust and confidence necessary for negotiations, resolve the conflict, and alter the conditions that gave rise to violence. As shown in Figure 4, the third party has a mostly military role at first which decreases for the first three tasks of peacekeeping, peacepushing and peacebuilding. The civilian intervenor role increases through the last three tasks of peacebuilding, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building.¹⁷

¹⁶ Last, David M. *Theory, Doctrine...*, pp 23-24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p 25.

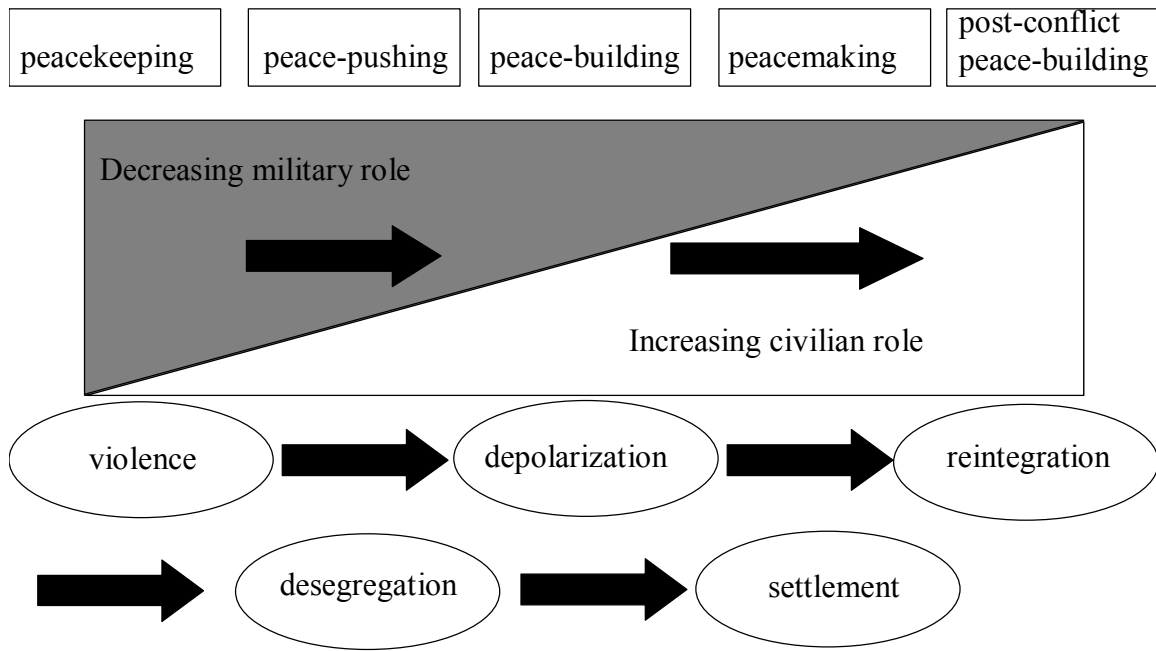


Figure 4: Spectrum of Conflict De-escalation ¹⁷

Stopping the fighting “depends on the nature and origins of the conflict... The situation, which exists now in Yugoslavia, Lebanon, and several former Soviet Republics is particularly resistant to solution.”¹⁹ Last states that the conflicts in Yugoslavia, Lebanon, and the former Soviet Republics result from incompatible values and goals. The hostility spiral is simultaneously reinforced by individuals acting autonomously and by leaders directing violence from the top. These types of situations suggest the need for forcible separation of the parties followed by forcible enforcement of the cease-fire.²⁰ The change in the nature and character of peacekeeping activities during the 1990’s attests to the role of military forces in modern conflict resolution.

Peacebuilding is based on “the idea that understanding can contribute to a broader peace process [that] hinges on the belief that interests are not fundamentally inimical.”²¹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p 25-26.

²¹ *Ibid.* p 27.

The task of post-conflict peace-building is necessary to remove the causes of the violent conflict.²² In the long run, it is especially important to educate the youth, especially young military men, to reinforce positive images of the other side.²³ Finally, to achieve the de-escalation of protracted conflicts: “economic developments and political restructuring may be part of the solution; powerful factions must be acknowledged and included in the process...the basic truth [is] that only a solution acceptable to the belligerent communities will be durable.”²⁴

In summary, there are several stages to conflict. Each conflict requires a distinct approach and the problems at each stage must be dealt with before one can de-escalate to a lower stage. At each lower stage, one must deal with the issues and tasks that are pertinent at that stage. Finally, the key protagonists must be satisfied with the eventual agreements and peacebuilding initiatives must be undertaken to reduce the underlying tensions and inequities that gave rise to the conflict in the first place.

The theories are attractive, but lack empirical support. According to Fisher:

There is little evidence that these types of deliberate efforts occur in the real world, at any level of conflict. Therefore, it is likely that one of the reasons for failures of third party interventions is their inappropriate application with regard to the stage of conflict.²⁵

THE BOSNIAN CONFLICT

²² *Ibid.* p 28.

²³ *Ibid.* p 34.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p120.

²⁵ Fisher, Ronald J. *The Social Psychology...*, p 238.

Bosnia is a morass of ethnically mixed villages in the mountains...rural, isolated, and full of suspicions and hatred...an intensification and a complication of the Serb-Croat dispute...full of savage hatreds, leavened by poverty and alcoholism.²⁶

The antecedents of the Bosnian conflict go back literally hundreds of years. "The area has been successively a part of Greek, Macedonian, Roman, Bulgarian, Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman empires."²⁷ The drive for Serb independence goes back to the 1875 revolt which sparked the Russo-Turkish War. The Treaty of San Stefano at the end of this war ended Turkey's ownership of Bosnia. Subsequently, the Congress of Berlin, the Paris Peace Conference, the Treaty of Versailles, and the Treaty of Trianon forced Bosnians of the three communities, Serb, Croat and Muslim into a series of Pan Slavic states culminating in Yugoslavia after the First World War. The resulting Serb/Croat tension reached a peak in the Second World War where "as many as one million Yugoslavs are thought to have died at the hands of their fellow 'countrymen' during the Second World War."²⁸

Josip Broz Tito attempted to disperse the Serbs into several republics to thwart their nationalistic aspirations. Unfortunately, his strategy of weakening the central government to prevent the Serbs from dominating the federation encouraged nationalistic aspirations in the constituent republics. After the first Yugoslav civil war in 1991, resulting in the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, the Bosnian Serbs declared several provinces to be Serb autonomous regions which would secede from Bosnia if Bosnia seceded from Yugoslavia.

In late 1991, a time when fighting raged in Croatia while Bosnia remained strangely quiet, Croats and Serbs alike had no illusion about the tragedy that lay

²⁶ Kaplan, Robert D. *Balkan Ghosts A Journey through History*. (New York, St Martin's Press, 1993), p 22.

²⁷ Gagnon, LCol J.A.S. "Bosnia-Herzegovina: The Case against Armed Intervention". *Canadian Forces College Review* (Toronto, 1994), p 14.

²⁸ David Walker, "Battles of the Balkans: A Survey of Wars from 1877-1945 and their Underlying Causes", *RUSI Journal*, June, 1993, p. 63.

ahead. *Why was there no fighting in Bosnia?* went the joke. *Because Bosnia has advanced directly to the finals.*²⁹

When Bosnia declared its independence on 6 April 1992, true to their word, the Serbs formed the Bosnian Serb Army from remnants of the Yugoslav National Army and established control of these Serb regions, later to be called Republika Srpska. These territories comprised nearly 70% of the Bosnian land mass. The Bosnian government and the ethnic Croats formed their own armies and the Bosnian Civil War was underway.³⁰

A series of international initiatives, starting with Major-General Lewis MacKenzie's personal efforts in June-July 1992 and including the Vance-Owen Plan and the Vance-Stoltenberg Plans in late 1992, had little success. The Vance-Owen Plan was rejected in a Bosnian Serb referendum by 96 percent of voters.³¹ On 10 February 1994, the UN negotiated the withdrawal of heavy weapons from Sarajevo under the threat of NATO air strikes. In the fall of 1995, 12,500 British, French and Dutch troops were deployed in de facto support of the Bosnian Muslims.³² N.A.T.O. provided over a thousand sorties against the Serbs from August 28 to September 14.³³ Thus emboldened, Muslim troops captured about a third of Serb held territory, thereby reducing the Serb controlled area of Bosnia to 50%. This territorial action and the N.A.T.O. enforced cease-fire set the scene for the Dayton Agreement, negotiated by Richard Holbrooke. A series of embargoes and diplomatic measures aimed against Serbia were also used to bring pressure on the greater Serb community.

Underlying the conflict and the tension in Bosnia since 1873 has been the fact of externally imposed multi-ethnic states on the unwilling Serb population. This single fact, combined with the historic Serb nationalism and the recurring inter-ethnic strife has lead

²⁹ Kaplan, Robert D. *Balkan Ghosts...* p 22.

³⁰ Gagnon, LCol J.A.S. "Bosnia-Herzegovina...", pp 15-17.

³¹ Regan, Richard J., *Just War: Principles and Cases*. Washington, (The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), p 205.

³² *Ibid.* p 198.

³³ *Ibid.* p 204.

to war several times since the Treaty of San Stefano. The externally imposed Dayton Accords set the stage for yet another war sometime in the future.

THE DAYTON ACCORDS

The Dayton Peace Agreement was initialed by the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (representing the Bosnian Muslim faction), the Republic of Croatia (representing the Croatian faction) and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (representing the Bosnian Serbs). As such, it is an agreement between sovereign states instead of an agreement between the parties directly involved in the war.

The parties agreed to continue the cease-fire and withdraw foreign forces from Bosnia. The combatants were to be separated by a four kilometer zone of separation. A NATO led Implementation Force, authorized to use force, was to be deployed into Bosnia. The Bosnian Republic, the Croat-Muslim Federation and the Bosnian Serb Republic were to enter into the usual military confidence building discussions.

The agreement established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign state with two entities, the Croat-Muslim Federation and the Bosnian Serb Republic, delineated by an Inter-Entity Boundary. The Federation was awarded 51% of the land area of the new Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁴ The agreement provided for internationally supervised elections, established a constitution and government structures. Persons indicted by the International Tribunal may not hold public office.

The Federation and the Bosnian Serb Republic were to enter into binding arbitration to resolve disputes. Freedom of movement throughout the territory and the right to reclaim lost homes was granted to all citizens. A High Representative was designated to chair a Joint Civilian Commission to coordinate and facilitate civil affairs.³⁵

³⁴ Zimmerman, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, (Random House of Canada, Toronto, 1999), p 233.

³⁵ "Summary of the Dayton Peace Agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina." Fact Sheet Released by the Office of the Spokesman, November 30, 1995, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/icty/dayton/daytonsum.html>.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH DAYTON?

American diplomacy kept Bosnia whole by stitching it together like Frankenstein's monster.³⁶

The Bosnian Civil War was already a Stage IV conflict by Fisher's model. Fisher would have suggested peacekeeping to control violence and de-escalate the conflict to Stage III. In fact, the end to violence was brought about by overwhelming N.A.T.O. air support to one of the belligerents in the conflict, combined with the commitment of ground troops. The forcible separation of belligerents was followed by the forcible enforcement of the cease-fire. Unfortunately, the coercion of Dayton went too far.

If N.A.T.O. air strikes were the stick, then the promise to lift sanctions against Serbia was the carrot. This carrot has two problems. First, it is not a positive motivator, such as the promise of development aid and post war rebuilding might have been. The lifting of sanctions represents the removal of a punishment that had been inflicted against Serbia since 1992. Secondly, the sanctions could only bring pressure against Serbia, not the Bosnian Serbs who were already living in the hills under austere wartime conditions. The agents of Dayton did not have a carrot to offer the Bosnian Serbs, while the Croat-Muslim Federation were promised a unitary state backed up by N.A.T.O. military might.

As a result, "Holbrooke made a basic decision to ignore the Bosnian Serbs and deal only with the Yugoslav president, Milosevic."³⁷ The Bosnian Serbs were shut out of the negotiating process in the months leading to Dayton. At Dayton, "only minutes before the signing ceremony, Milosevic told the Bosnian Serbs that he had given up the Serb demand for Sarajevo."³⁸ The "deal" was forced upon the principal protagonists in the conflict and clearly cannot satisfy the concerns that brought the Serbs to war in the first place.

³⁶ Bass, Warren, "The Triage of Dayton", *Foreign Affairs*, New York, Sep/Oct 1998, pp 95-108.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*



Figure 6. Alija Izetbegovic, Franjo Tudjman, Slobodan Milosevic, signatories to the Dayton Agreement.³⁹

After controlling violence, the next step would have been to carry out mediation with muscle and problem solving workshops and to offer development aid. Fisher and Last's approaches would have suggested a multi-stage process where the coercion is first applied to stop the violence. The cease-fire situation becomes the first step in a de-escalatory process that eventually leads to principled negotiations that can deal with the specific issues in the conflict. In the Dayton Agreement the key issues, land and constitutional arrangements, were resolved at stage IV coercively under threat of air bombardment. It would have been more likely to be stable if the conflict could have been

³⁹ *Ibid.*

de-escalated to Stage I through a disciplined process and the final agreements arrived at under conditions of *détente*. Consequently, there has been little progress in implementing the nation building and conflict resolving provisions of Dayton⁴⁰, and “the Bosnian Serbs have, unsurprisingly, balked on almost every major implementation issue.”⁴¹ And it is not only the Serbs who are unhappy, as

the most disturbing incidents of interethnic violence since Dayton have occurred not between Muslims and Serbs but between Croats and Muslims-ostensibly the allies keeping Pale at bay.⁴²

The third party involvement in this crisis has not met Mitchell and Bank’s criteria of “devotion to the interests of all parties”.⁴³ A long treatise exploring this statement is not required: one side in the conflict was provided arms, the other side was bombed to the negotiating table and then not allowed to negotiate on its own behalf. Bosnian Serb interests are not reflected in the Dayton Accords, they are subjugated. The N.A.T.O. imposed solution serves the Bosnian Muslim dream of a multi-ethnic unitary state where the Serbs are a minority.

CONCLUSION

The field of conflict resolution includes many activities besides peacekeeping. While the change in the character and variety of “peacekeeping” activities in the early 1990’s caught some by surprise, they would have come as no surprise for someone familiar with the modern theory of conflict resolution. Education in the theory and application of conflict resolution is essential for officers in the CF to give them a broader understanding of the use of military forces in the spectrum of activities required for the lasting settlement of protracted social conflicts.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Mitchell, Christopher, and Banks, Michael, *Handbook of Conflict*, p 5.

Today's peacekeeping missions are less likely to deal with inter-state conflicts and more likely to be involved with protracted internal social conflicts. The old tools of state level diplomacy are insufficient to deal with the large numbers of independent actors in today's ethnic conflicts. The study of modern theories of conflict resolution is most appropriate for Canadian military officers to give them insight into the approaches and means that should be used to provide lasting solutions after the military job of controlling violence has been carried out.

Ronald Fisher proposes a contingency approach based on the stage of the conflict at the time of the intervention. He describes conflict escalation in four stages and specific means and approaches that are appropriate for de-escalation at each stage. Key to his contingency model is the requirement to deal with the current stage of the conflict and bring about de-escalation to the next lower stage before attempting to resolve the issues at lower stages.

The Fisher and Ury criteria for principled negotiation stress that the agreements arrived at should satisfy the legitimate interests of both parties. Mitchell and Banks indicate that imposed settlements may freeze the conflict in an unstable configuration, and that third party interventions requires rigorous attention to the needs of both parties. Finally, once the conflict is de-escalated, there is a need to follow through with what was once known as nation-building, now peace-building: development aid, reduction of inequities and education of the youth.

The Bosnian Conflict was the latest expression of ancient Serbian nationalistic forces. After three years of war, N.A.T.O. imposed the Dayton Agreement on the Bosnian Serbs through air strikes and by siding with the Muslim-Croat Federation. The Agreement creates a unitary state comprised of two entities, with 51% of the territory allocated to the Muslim-Croat Federation.

The process used to arrive at the Dayton Accords diverge from the approach suggested by conflict resolution theory in several key respects. In addition to being externally imposed, the Agreement attempts to establish a final resolution while the conflict is still frozen somewhere between stages III and IV in the Fisher contingency model. All the models we have seen would suggest a disciplined de-escalation to Stage I before attempting the kind of settlement imposed by Dayton. Finally, the involvement of third parties in the settlement clearly sided with the Bosnian Muslims to the detriment of the Serbs.

The theory of conflict resolution suggests that the Dayton Accords are doomed to failure as a means to build peace in Bosnia. Recent events point to the unwillingness of all sides to implement the provisions of the accords. The history of Serb nationalism teaches us quite clearly that unless the Serb issues are somehow resolved, there will again be war in the Balkans.

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