

# MECHANISMS OF RUSSIAN-AMERICAN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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During the period of the Cold War, both the U.S. and the USSR demonstrated repeatedly their capacity to become involved in and exacerbate many conflicts in the Third World. Indeed, superpower involvement in these conflicts, ranging from supplying arms to full-fledged military intervention, was one of the most active and dynamic elements of their overall competition.

During the period of Mikhail Gorbachev's primacy, Soviet-American competition in the Third World was greatly reduced, if not completely eliminated. Under Gorbachev, the U.S. and the USSR achieved an unprecedented degree of mutual cooperation with regard to several regional conflicts, including those in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Central America, southern Africa, and the Persian Gulf. With the generally peaceful breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of democracy in Russia and other republics in 1991, Russian-American cooperation in all areas, including the Third World, is likely to increase.

Yet despite the end of the Cold War and increased Russian-American cooperation in conflict resolution, conflict continues in many regions of the Third World. One reason for this is that while previous Soviet-American involvement served to exacerbate regional conflict, the U.S. and the USSR did not actually cause it. The causes of these conflicts were local disputes and grievances which did not disappear with the end of the Cold War. Another reason for the persistence of regional conflict is that the local antagonists often have massive arsenals provided by the superpowers and others in the past which enable them to continue fighting. Possessed with both the motive and the means to fight, the local antagonists can and will continue to do bat-

tie—especially in those cases where they continue to receive arms from external sources.

Can the U.S. and Russia and/or the Commonwealth of Independent States act together to successfully resolve regional conflict, as opposed to simply disengaging themselves from it? A basic prerequisite to their being able to do so is that both of them actually want to resolve regional conflict. Little progress toward superpower conflict resolution can be expected if this is not the aim of one or both superpowers (and despite its many problems, Russia with its large nuclear arsenal and armed forces remains a superpower). This basic prerequisite, though, is now present and seems likely to remain so.

A willingness on the part of Washington and Moscow alone to resolve regional conflict, however, is not sufficient to actually achieve this goal. This article will examine the strengths and weaknesses of various mechanisms to resolve conflicts which the two superpowers either have employed or could employ in the future.

I. William Zartman (1989) has concluded that a propitious opportunity for conflict arises when a "hurting stalemate" occurs. A hurting stalemate is a situation in which the antagonists in a conflict all realize that they cannot defeat their opponents militarily, and that their own strength will increasingly diminish if the conflict is prolonged. The existence of a hurting stalemate may not necessarily result in a conflict being resolved, but it can lead to a "ripe moment" when the antagonists realize that they would be better off by agreeing to a peaceful compromise ending the conflict than by continuing the fight.

Each of the mechanisms of superpower conflict resolution discussed here will be evaluated for their utility in bringing about a hurting stalemate, a ripe moment, and hence, actual conflict resolution. In general, there are six mechanisms of conflict resolution which the superpowers have used or could employ: 1) the withdrawal of foreign forces; 2) the mutual cessation of military assistance; 3) joint diplomatic initiatives; 4) mutual cooperation in holding elections or plebiscites; 5) the joint sanctioning of military intervention; and 6) collaboration with international organizations.

## THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES

In addition to the downfall of Marxism in Eastern Europe, a dramatic indication that the Cold War era was coming to an end was

Soviet-American cooperation to bring about the withdrawal of foreign armed forces from three regional conflicts. In April 1988, a series of accords were signed that led to the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan; this process was completed in February 1989. In December 1988, agreements concerning Angola and Namibia were signed which led to the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola and Namibia as well as Namibia's independence in 1990, and the complete withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola by mid-1991. Although not the subject of a formal agreement, Vietnam withdrew its troops from Cambodia by September 1989.

The primary benefit of withdrawing foreign forces (whether they belong to a superpower or its allies) has been to lessen regional conflict as a source of tension in superpower relations. From the American point of view, Soviet, Cuban, and Vietnamese troops in Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia threatened to lead not only to the consolidation of pro-Soviet Marxist regimes in these countries, but to enable the USSR to use these countries as bases to more easily undermine pro-Western governments in important neighboring countries. Soviet intervention in Afghanistan led to a halt in progress toward Soviet-American arms control for many years.

The announcement that communist armed forces would withdraw from Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia and the completion of these withdrawals were important factors in the renewal of Soviet-American detente. The U.S. no longer feared Soviet expansionism in the Third World. These withdrawals also helped end the USSR's isolation from the West.

Despite these benefits, the withdrawal of foreign armed forces from regional conflicts has not been notably successful in resolving those conflicts. Conflict has continued in Afghanistan and Cambodia. Only in southern Africa was conflict actually resolved.

Conflict resolution did not occur in Afghanistan and Cambodia as a result of the withdrawal of foreign forces because this step alone did not result in a hurting stalemate. In both cases, all or part of the opposition forces against pro-Soviet Marxist regimes concluded that their prospects for achieving military victory were enhanced by the withdrawal of communist armed forces. This was especially true in Afghanistan: both the mujahideen and their external supporters (including the U.S.) expected the Najib regime to collapse shortly after Moscow's troop withdrawal was completed in February 1989. In Cambodia, the Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge saw the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops not as an opportunity for conflict resolution but for

militarily defeating the Phnom Penh regime which Hanoi had sought to maintain in power. In Angola, the opposition UNITA at first saw the gradual withdrawal of Cuban troops as an opportunity to strengthen its hand vis-a-vis the MPLA.

The perception on the part of anti-government forces that the withdrawal of foreign forces had served to weaken the Marxist regimes in these conflicts did not contribute to a hurting stalemate. In each case, the opposition saw their own prospects for military victory as greatly enhanced by the withdrawal of foreign forces; they did not see themselves as "hurting" at all by this step.

In addition, while communist armed forces were withdrawn from Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia, the local antagonists in all three conflicts continued to receive large-scale arms transfers from the U.S., the USSR, and other countries. With these massive arms transfers, the local antagonists did not see themselves in a hurting stalemate. They either thought they could use these arms to achieve victory over their opponents, or at minimum, avoid being defeated by them.

There are, of course, a number of other regional conflicts to which neither the superpowers nor their allies sent combat forces (or, at least, not very many) but were heavily involved in otherwise. One such conflict—Nicaragua—was largely resolved; many others have not been. Clearly, the withdrawal of foreign forces is not relevant to the resolution of these conflicts.

Despite how it has served to improve overall Soviet-American relations, the withdrawal of foreign armed forces from regional conflicts by itself did not serve to bring about a hurting stalemate in regional conflicts. While the side which foreign forces had supported may seek peaceful conflict resolution in order to avoid being defeated, the other side is likely to see the withdrawal as an opportunity to achieve military victory. And if both sides continue to receive substantial military assistance from other countries, neither may see itself in a hurting stalemate. Other measures are needed to bring this about.

## **THE MUTUAL CESSATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE**

If the United States and Russia cut off the supply of arms to the local antagonists in a regional conflict, this would obviously be an important step in creating a hurting stalemate between them. If the local antagonists cannot obtain additional arms, their ability to fight

effectively will decline. Just as obviously, however, cutting off the supply of arms to the local antagonists in a regional conflict is an extraordinarily difficult task.

There are now fewer obstacles than ever before to Washington and Moscow agreeing to mutually cease arms transfers to antagonists in regional conflicts. Yet even if such Russian-American agreements are reached, they will not necessarily lead to conflict resolution.

One problem is that a mutual cessation of arms transfers by the superpowers will not necessarily limit equally the local antagonists' ability to continue fighting. One side may possess a much larger arsenal than the other. A mutual cessation of military assistance by the superpowers, then, might leave one of the local antagonists in a position to defeat its opponent (or at least think it can).

A more important problem is that even if Washington and Moscow can agree upon a mutual cessation of military assistance, other countries may be willing to arm one or more of the local antagonists. This could prevent a hurting stalemate from occurring. Third party military assistance, though, will not necessarily do this. There are not many countries which are willing and able to transfer large quantities of weapons to Third World clients for free on a long-term basis like the two superpowers used to do.

Following the cutoff of American arms transfers to the Nicaraguan contras and Soviet arms transfers to the Sandinistas, Cuba continued to ship arms to the latter. Thanks in part to Soviet diplomacy, Cuba did not ship enough arms to the Sandinistas so that they felt they were strong enough to avoid holding free elections or disregard their results when they lost (Kramer, 1990). In this case, non-superpower arms shipments did not prevent the achievement of a hurting stalemate or a ripe moment for conflict resolution.

In general, though, protecting the achievement of a hurting stalemate in regional conflicts from the influence of third party arms transfers will be difficult in most cases and may be impossible in some. In El Salvador, the arms flow to the leftist guerrillas was greatly reduced by the change of government in Nicaragua and the decline of Soviet interest in Central America. Cuba, however, continued to ship some arms to the guerrillas via the Sandinista army over which the new Nicaraguan government exercises only limited control (Hockstader, 1991). It must be emphasized, though, that external arms supplies to the FMLN guerrillas have been substantially reduced. At the same time, large-scale American arms transfers to the Salvadoran government continued.

As a result, the Salvadoran government (especially the Salvadoran army) did not see itself in a hurting stalemate after the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990. Initially, the Salvadoran military saw itself in a better position than ever to militarily defeat the guerrillas.

After months of fruitless counterinsurgency efforts, however, the Salvadoran government apparently decided that it could not defeat the rebels militarily. At the end of 1991, the government and the FMLN agreed to peacefully resolve their conflict. There are still, however, many obstacles to actually ending the civil war (Golden, 1992).

America was largely uninvolved in Ethiopia's civil war while the USSR had disengaged itself from it by the beginning of 1991. The conflict there, however, continued. The Eritreans, Tigrayans and other regionally-based forces fighting the Mengistu regime did not see themselves in a hurting stalemate. Instead, they saw the end of Soviet military support to Addis Ababa as providing them with an opportunity to completely overthrow the Mengistu regime—which is what they did. Although the then rebel forces were receiving some arms from Arab sources, their main source of weapons were those that they captured from the demoralized Ethiopian army. With the Mengistu regime ousted, it remains to be seen whether the victorious rebels will be able to peacefully resolve differences among themselves.

Yet while the superpowers were unable to peacefully resolve the conflict between the Mengistu regime and the forces opposed to it, Washington was able to arrange for the peaceful surrender of Addis Ababa to the rebel forces, thus avoiding a bloody battle which the Mengistu regime could not have won and which would have resulted in numerous civilian casualties (Krauss, 1991).

A Soviet-American agreement to halt arms transfers to their respective allies in Afghanistan by the beginning of 1992 was reached shortly after the failed August 1991 Soviet coup attempt. The agreement, though, has apparently not resulted in a reduction of arms supplies to the mujahideen. Working together, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan clearly have the ability to supply arms to the mujahideen on a concessionary basis indefinitely. Iran may also have the ability to do so. Under these circumstances, the mujahideen are unlikely to see themselves in a hurting stalemate. This agreement, then, may only encourage the rebels and their regional supporters to continue their fight against the Kabul government. Even if the Najib regime is ousted, though, it is highly likely that the different rebel groups will continue to fight among themselves.

In Cambodia, a mutual cessation of military assistance by the superpowers to the local antagonists will not only fail to bring about a hurting stalemate, but could facilitate military victory by the genocidal Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge has shown little interest in a peaceful settlement on terms which would not allow it to regain full power. China has continued to supply the Khmer Rouge with large quantities of weapons after the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia in September 1989, and after the Chinese government claimed it had stopped arms shipments to the Khmer Rouge in September 1990 (Erlander, 1991). Far from seeing itself in a hurting stalemate, this continued Chinese aid has resulted in the Khmer Rouge anticipating that it will be able to achieve military victory. Unless the superpowers and others are able to persuade China to halt its military assistance to the Khmer Rouge, or persuade Thailand to stop allowing China to arm the Khmer Rouge via Thai territory, a hurting stalemate is unlikely to arise. Due to China's hatred of Vietnam and Thailand's fear of offending China, these events are highly unlikely. This being the case, the superpowers could attempt to create a hurting stalemate through arming the pro-Vietnamese regime in Phnom Penh. Moscow, though, is now unlikely to do this. The U.S., of course, has been unwilling to take any actions which might help Vietnam or annoy China even though the larger context in which Washington has pursued its Indochina policy has changed dramatically.

Domestic politics within the superpowers may also present an obstacle to a mutual cessation of military assistance by Washington and Moscow to the local antagonists in a regional conflict. The most obvious example is the Arab-Israeli conflict. Large-scale American arms transfers to Israel and Soviet arms transfers to Syria have allowed these two countries to avoid the hurt in the stalemate that exists between them, and between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Moscow has drastically cut back its arms transfers to Syria, but Damascus already possesses an enormous arsenal. Although American public support for Israel has declined in recent years, it is highly doubtful that American domestic politics would ever allow the U.S. to reduce its military assistance to Israel to the point where Tel Aviv saw itself in a hurting stalemate necessitating a peaceful settlement.

Ironically, domestic politics within the former USSR may force Moscow to continue its support for the Arab cause. The Soviet Union's 50 million Muslims may insist on the continuation of Soviet military aid to the Arabs. As long as Moscow wishes to retain the Muslim republics within the Commonwealth, it may be forced to continue this aid. Even without the Muslim republics, there is a substantial Mus-

lim population within the Russian Republic alone. A democratic Russian government might continue aiding the Arab cause at its insistence for the sake of domestic peace inside Russia. But with or without continued Russian support for the Arabs, continued American support for Israel means that a hurting stalemate will not occur in the Middle East.

Another obstacle to the effectiveness of a mutual cessation of superpower military assistance is that some countries are largely independent of the superpowers and other countries for their weapons. India, for example, produces much of its own weaponry. An attempt to isolate India from foreign sources of arms in an Indo-Pakistani conflict would probably have little effect on New Delhi's war-making ability, especially if the conflict was short. Other Third World countries are also becoming relatively self-sufficient in arms production, which could result in their becoming increasingly immune to any effort to isolate them from foreign sources of weapons.

Superpower cooperation to isolate local antagonists from external sources of arms may be an essential element in creating a hurting stalemate, but will obviously be difficult to achieve in most cases. Something more is needed to persuade third countries and the local antagonists to stop fighting. In order to do this, some form of joint Russian-American diplomatic initiative may also be necessary.

## **JOINT DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES**

Chester A. Crocker (1990), the Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs during the Reagan administration, has written about how he convinced all the relevant parties to agree to the December 1988 Angola/Namibia accords. He indicated that the various parties involved did not finally agree out of any sense of idealism or devotion to peace. They agreed because they eventually became convinced that a peaceful resolution to the conflict would better serve their interests than would continued warfare. Such a realization apparently occurred in other cases where progress toward conflict resolution has been achieved. Conflict resolution in the future is also likely to occur only when all the parties involved see it as serving their interests.

The realization by the two superpowers that they each have an interest in resolving a conflict is clearly a prerequisite to their working cooperatively toward conflict resolution. A joint diplomatic initiative to resolve regional conflict can take several different forms: Washing-

ton and Moscow working actively together, one taking the initiative while the other plays a supporting role, or one or both encourage their allies to lead the resolution process. Whatever form it undertakes, the basic function that a joint Russian-American initiative performs is to demonstrate to all other parties concerned that none of them can take advantage of superpower rivalry to gain their support for continuing the conflict.

For even without active superpower military involvement, third countries can continue to arm the local antagonists in regional conflicts. Without more positive inducements, an effort by the superpowers to isolate the local antagonists from external sources of weaponry will not necessarily succeed. It is also the task of a joint superpower diplomatic initiative to provide those inducements, or in other words, to help transform a hurting stalemate into a ripe moment for conflict resolution.

There are two elements to this task: persuading third parties to reduce their involvement, and persuading the local antagonists to actually resolve their dispute. Achieving neither of these aims is easy, though the first one may be less difficult. While the U.S. and the USSR may not be able to prevent third countries from supplying arms to their allies in a regional conflict, the superpowers can take action to limit their effectiveness. If, for example, a third country persists in arming one side, the superpowers can arm others until the third country realizes that increased arms shipments to its ally will not lead to military victory but only prolonged conflict. The superpowers can also raise the diplomatic and other costs that third countries must pay for their continued intervention. On the positive side, the superpowers may be able to convince third countries not only that their legitimate security concerns will be respected through cooperation in the conflict settlement process, but that this is the only way they will be secured. If the conflict continues, they will continue to experience its costs without meeting their goals.

Whether or not third countries can be persuaded to work for regional conflict resolution, it can occur if the dispute between the local antagonists is resolved. On the other hand, the dispute between the local antagonists will not necessarily be resolved even if all outside powers end their involvement. A hurting stalemate may come about, but not a ripe moment if the local antagonists still refuse to resolve their conflict due to a complete lack of trust among them. Even if a settlement among the local antagonists is reached, it can easily break down because of this lack of trust.

An example of this may be the 1991 agreement between the Cambodian government and the tripartite opposition coalition. Each faction has agreed to disband 70% of its armed forces and put the rest under UN supervision. China and Vietnam, the primary backers of the contending factions in Cambodia, were the main external powers who arranged for this agreement. The U.S. and the USSR played only minimal roles (Shenon, 1991). The agreement probably does not reflect a genuine compromise among the local antagonists, but a compromise between Beijing and Hanoi which have become increasingly fearful about what the downfall of communism in the Soviet Union means for their communist regimes. It may also reflect Hanoi's willingness to sacrifice its allies in Cambodia in exchange for support from China since Vietnam is now unlikely to receive much assistance from Moscow or any other major power. Instead of peace, then, this agreement may only lead to further fighting or renewed Khmer Rouge domination in Cambodia.

Special attention, then, must be given to the method of resolving the conflict between the local antagonists.

### **MUTUAL COOPERATION IN HOLDING ELECTIONS OR PLEBISCITES**

Before Gorbachev, the Soviet Union did not promote free elections anywhere. After he came to power, Gorbachev accepted them in Eastern Europe, the Third World, and, eventually, the Soviet Union itself. In the aftermath of the failed August 1991 coup, free elections are likely to become the norm in Russia and most of the other republics. This has expanded the possibility of relying on elections as a means of conflict resolution. And indeed, the U.S. and the USSR were able to promote the holding of elections as part of the process leading to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Nicaragua and Namibia. In mid-1991, the contending parties in Angola and Cambodia accepted the principle of free elections too.

But of course, merely because resolving conflict through elections appears desirable to outside parties (including scholars), this does not mean that the local antagonists will agree to hold them. For even if they recognize themselves to be in a hurting stalemate, several conditions need to be met before the contending parties agree to abide by the results of elections. These conditions are in addition to those necessary for a hurting stalemate and are really the prerequisites to creating the "ripe moment" for the resolution of civil wars.

The basic conditions necessary for holding elections as a means of conflict resolution include: 1) confidence on the part of all parties that the elections will be fair; 2) confidence on the part of all parties that whoever emerges as the electoral victor will not seek to eliminate the losers politically or physically; 3) confidence on the part of all parties (especially those likely to lose the election) that regularly scheduled elections will be held in the future which they will be able to participate in on an equal basis with other parties; and 4) a commitment on the part of all parties to continue the political struggle by peaceful, democratic means, and to eschew violence.

These conditions do not appear to be present in many civil wars. The Afghan mujahideen have expressed their unwillingness to allow the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan to survive politically; they do not seem willing to allow the PDPA leadership to survive physically either. In Cambodia, it is uncertain whether the Khmer Rouge will accept the results of an election which it will probably lose since it seems confident of an eventual military victory anyway. The rebel forces in Ethiopia came to power there by force and not via elections. Now that they are in power, it remains to be seen whether they will allow free elections or abide by their results. In Mozambique, the FRELIMO government has made important concessions for the peaceful resolution of the civil war there, but so far these have been rejected by the opposition RENAMO. In El Salvador, the leaders of the opposing sides have agreed to resolve their conflict peacefully, but it is not clear yet whether the right-wing Army leadership will abide by the UN-sponsored settlement process.

Even if Washington and Moscow can help bring about a hurting stalemate, they cannot necessarily create a ripe moment to resolve a conflict through elections. The U.S. and the USSR cannot create trust among the local antagonists in a civil war. It is clearly difficult for trust to grow naturally among groups which have been fighting each other. The problem is compounded by the fact that none of these countries wracked by civil war has any experience with democracy. Convincing people, especially leaders, that they can benefit from democracy even if they lose the election is extraordinarily difficult when they have no experience with democracy and have no faith that it can work in their country.

Yet merely because a country has had no or limited experience with democracy does not mean that it cannot acquire it even after a civil war. After all, neither Nicaragua nor Namibia had any experience with democracy and yet free elections were held in both countries in 1990. It is possible, of course, that democracy may not survive

in either country, but the fact that two formerly authoritarian parties (the Sandinistas and SWAPO) have come to accept it when they did not have to is encouraging.

Angola is a case where two formerly authoritarian parties, the MPLA and UNITA, have accepted the principle of free elections. This example is particularly noteworthy. At the time of the December 1988 accords calling for the withdrawal of South African and Cuban troops, the MPLA and UNITA each appeared convinced that it would soon be able to prevail militarily. Gradually, however, both parties became convinced that this was impossible. In May 1991, they signed a peace treaty calling for free elections in the fall of 1992 (Hoffman, 1991). The U.S. and the USSR, along with Portugal, played an instrumental role in the negotiations which brought it into being.

The trend toward increasing democratization throughout the world may also encourage the local antagonists fighting civil wars to see elections and democracy as a viable means of resolving their conflicts. Democratization spread throughout most of Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. Its being accepted throughout the region may have encouraged the Sandinistas to accept it—or fear the loss of legitimacy resulting from refusing it—in Nicaragua.

Democratization has also made progress in the Far East (South Korea, the Philippines), South Asia (Nepal, Bangladesh—though retrogression may be occurring in Pakistan), Africa (Benin, Cape Verde, Zambia), and most spectacularly, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The example of democratization occurring in communist states has led many Third World Marxists to lose faith that authoritarian socialism can work in their own countries and to become more tolerant of political and economic pluralism. The very fact that democratization is spreading and that many governments which previously spurned it are now embracing it may also increase the willingness of local antagonists in civil wars to accept democracy too.

Yet while there may be some hope that contending parties in civil wars may accept elections as a means of conflict resolution, it may be less likely that all the local antagonists in inter-state conflicts or wars of secession will accept plebiscites. Unlike an electoral process, which is supposed to take place periodically, a plebiscite is usually intended to decide an issue once-and-for-all. Thus, while the losing party in an election can at least hope to do better in subsequent elections, the losing party in a plebiscite will lose completely.

There is often less uncertainty about the anticipated results of a plebiscite than an election. For example, if plebiscites were held in

Arab territory occupied by Israel or in Indian-occupied Kashmir, the inhabitants would unquestionably vote to oust the occupying power. The Israeli and Indian governments fear that giving up these occupied territories would greatly increase the security problems they face. Many Israelis fear that relinquishing the occupied Arab territories will bring into question the survival of the Jewish state, while many Indians fear that allowing Kashmir to secede will lead to increasing demands on the part of other regions for secession and to the breakup of India. As a result, the occupying powers in both cases have so far refused to hold plebiscites in these areas.

It is highly doubtful that the general trend toward democratization will positively affect these situations. Indeed, both Israel and India are democracies in which a majority of the voting population favors retaining these occupied territories despite the will of the latter's\* inhabitants. Washington and Moscow may be unable to help resolve these conflicts unless and until the-occupying states see themselves in a fatally hurting stalemate—one in which continued occupation threatens their security even more than giving up the occupied territory would. In both cases, it seems doubtful that such a situation will arise.

In 1991, however, there were a large number of cases in which central governments have acquiesced to the demand of regions that have long been under their rule to respect their right to secede. The new government in Ethiopia has agreed that a plebiscite on independence may be held in Eritrea. Moscow has acquiesced to the independence of all the non-Russian union republics of the former Soviet Union.

As a result of the example of the relatively rapid breakup of the Soviet Union, the appeal of secession might well increase among those groups seeking it from other multi-national states. Further, the Soviet experience may serve to enhance the legitimacy of secession efforts elsewhere as well as the illegitimacy of attempts to prevent secession by force.

## **JOINT SANCTIONING OF MILITARY INTERVENTION**

The U.S. and the USSR cooperated to an unprecedented degree in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and refusal to withdraw from it. Soviet-American cooperation in the United Nations Security Council contributed to the passage of twelve resolutions against Iraq,

including one authorizing the use of force if Iraq did not withdraw voluntarily. Although the Soviet Union did not participate in combat operations against Iraq, these could not have been undertaken under UN Security Council auspices without Soviet cooperation.

Could the United States and Russia (which has inherited the USSR's permanent membership on the UN Security Council) cooperate again to jointly sanction military intervention against aggression? Since they cooperated in doing this once, they could obviously do so again. The set of circumstances which led Washington and Moscow to jointly sanction military intervention against Iraq, however, were exceptional and are unlikely to arise again frequently. To begin with, Saddam Hussein was a particularly blatant aggressor. He used the pretext of the border dispute with Kuwait to invade and annex the entire country. Nor was it clear that he would stop there. An attack by one Third World country against another for more limited goals (such as to gain a region) would probably not elicit military intervention on the part of the superpowers.

Even more exceptional than Saddam Hussein's aggressiveness and cruelty is the extraordinary economic and strategic importance of the Persian Gulf region, including Kuwait, to America and the West. There may be no other region in the Third World where the annexation of one nation by another would threaten Western security interests as strongly as the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait.

Another problem, of course, is whether the U.S. and Russia would cooperate again to militarily reverse the annexation of one Third World state by another. If conservative forces in Moscow did succeed in seizing power, the two superpowers might be unwilling to cooperate in the UN Security Council, as was usually the case during the Cold War. But given Russian President Boris Yeltsin's desire to maintain good relations with America and the greater likelihood of a common view of aggression due to the decline of Soviet-American competition in the Third World, this problem might not arise.

Instead, a more likely problem is that the U.S., Russia, and the other permanent members of the Security Council can indeed agree on identifying and condemning acts of aggression, but that none of them will be willing to send troops to reverse it. In other words, acts of aggression on the part of some Third World states against others in regions besides the Persian Gulf will not affect the interests of the great powers sufficiently so that they would undertake a massive effort to expel an invader as they did from Kuwait. Public opinion in the West and Russia would not necessarily tolerate large-scale inter-

vention to halt aggression. Even the expectation of a relatively easy victory might not arouse public enthusiasm for intervention in any of the major powers. And, of course, there can be no guarantee that other aggressors will be as militarily incompetent as Saddam Hussein. Smaller scale intervention to halt aggression may be easier to arrange, but even if this seemed likely to succeed, it would not be undertaken unless at least one major power saw its vital interests being threatened by the invasion.

As reprehensible as they would be, an Indian invasion of Bhutan, an Indonesian or Malaysian invasion of Singapore, a Senegalese invasion of the Gambia, or any other case in which a relatively powerful country could quickly and easily overrun a weak neighbor is simply unlikely to arouse the great powers the way the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait did. Of course, if the target nation is able to resist, the U.S. and Russia may cooperate in supplying it with some degree of military assistance against the aggressor. But they are unlikely to be willing or able to do anything about "splendid" invasions which succeed before military assistance to the target nation can be organized.

## **COLLABORATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

In an era when Russian-American cooperation is increasing so dramatically, the relationship between Moscow and Washington may be in the process of becoming a *de facto* alliance. Indeed, Yeltsin has proposed that Russia become a member of NATO. Even if this alliance is more apparent than real, the perception that it exists may hinder Russian-American conflict resolution efforts. This is because various actors in the Third World might come to fear that superpower efforts at conflict resolution are actually an attempt by Moscow and Washington to impose a joint condominium over them.

Although many in the West may dismiss such notions, there is a real possibility of their gaining currency in the Third World. If such theories about Moscow's and Washington's intentions gain credence among one or more of the antagonists in a regional conflict, the U.S. and Russia may be unable to help resolve that particular conflict.

Acting in close collaboration with the United Nations and regional organizations may help allay fears that superpower conflict resolution efforts are only intended to advance Russian and American interests at the expense of the Third World's.

The UN played a key role in bringing about the 1988 Angola/Namibia accords. An important reason why SWAPO agreed to participate in national elections even though South African troops and administration remained in Namibia was because of the UN peace-keeping presence that was introduced. The condemnation of Iraq in twelve UN Security Council resolutions served to provide a much greater degree of legitimacy for military intervention against Iraq than it would have received otherwise.

Working with regional organizations is also important since these can help raise the legitimacy of conflict resolution efforts among the states most immediately affected. In extreme cases, the involvement of regional organizations can be crucial. It is questionable whether Saudi Arabia would have permitted even UN-sanctioned intervention against Iraq from its territory if Iraq had not been condemned by a majority of the members of the Arab League.

In addition, working with regional organizations may contribute to successful conflict resolution efforts in other ways. Russian-American efforts to restrict arms transfers to the local antagonists from third parties may be greatly enhanced if such measures are backed by the relevant regional organization. Similarly, Russian-American diplomatic initiatives may have greater prospects for success if they are supported by it. In those cases where an attack occurs but Washington and Moscow are unwilling to intervene, Russian-American support for intervention sponsored by a regional organization may be sufficient to contain or reverse aggression.

## CONCLUSION

Russian-American efforts to resolve regional conflicts will encounter serious obstacles even if there is full cooperation between the superpowers. In the aftermath of the failed coup of August 1991, it may be tempting to assume that such full cooperation between Moscow and Washington will occur. It might not.

If another coup attempt should succeed at bringing a dictatorial regime (either communist or non-communist) to power in Moscow there could be a setback in Russian-American relations. Even a dictatorship in Moscow, though, might seek good relations with America and the West and thus be willing to continue to work for conflict resolution in the Third World. The hard-line coup plotters of August 1991 expressed their desire for cooperative relations with the West.

But Third World governments and groups traditionally allied with the USSR in the past may hope that a successful coup in Moscow will lead to a resumption of the Cold War and a renewal of Russian military and other assistance to them. This was clearly the hope of those governments and groups such as Iraq, Libya, the Palestinians, Vietnam, North Korea, and others which welcomed the August 1991 coup attempt. Though Russian-American relations might not return to the hostility of the Cold War following a successful coup in Moscow, the relationship may become too unfriendly to allow close cooperation on Third World conflict resolution.

At this point, however, a successful coup in Moscow appears unlikely. Despite the relatively peaceful breakup of the USSR, there are a large number of actual and potential territorial, ethnic, and other conflicts among and within the fifteen republics of the USSR (Office of the Geographer, 1990).

Unless the devolution of the Soviet Union is managed very carefully, numerous conflicts could break out within it. One of the results of this occurring is that Moscow will obviously be too preoccupied with its own problems to actively cooperate with Washington on Third World conflict resolution. America and the West may not only face the task of resolving Third World conflict without help from Moscow, but also the task of resolving conflict within the former Soviet Union. Managing both these tasks will not be easy.

Yet even if the devolution of the USSR takes place peacefully and democracy takes root in Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union, cooperation between Moscow and Washington to resolve Third World conflicts will encounter the obstacles discussed here. It must be emphasized, though, that Washington and Moscow have already made considerable progress in this realm. If democratization proceeds in the former USSR, Washington and Moscow may be able to further this progress. And where Russian-American efforts cannot resolve regional conflict, they may at least be able to either help reduce conflict or prevent it from spreading.

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## CONTACT THEORY OF INTERGROUP HOSTILITY: A REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

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AUport (1954a) established contact theory nearly four decades ago. Although AUport was not the first to analyze intergroup contact (see Festinger & Kelly, 1951; Harding, 1952; Watson, 1947), his work has been the most influential. The theory has since been extensively researched and applied, and continues to make significant empirical, theoretical and practical contributions (cf., Cook, 1990). Most research has focused on interethnic relations, but recent studies also examine inter-age prejudice, industrial relations, and attitudes toward the handicapped.

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

AUport considered intraindividual dynamics the immediate cause of prejudice: ". . . it is only within the nexus of personality that we find the effective operation of historical, cultural, and economic factors . . . it is only *individuals* who can feel antagonism and practice discrimination" (AUport, 1954a, p. xvi). Situation and group variables were important because they influence the development of the prejudiced personality. Distal sociocultural etiologies were also acknowledged.

AUport (1954b) defined prejudice as an "almost universal psychological syndrome" marked by an affective disposition based on erroneous beliefs. He asserted that hostility "arises not from unacceptable characteristics in other people, but from our private emotional disorders for which the hated group is not responsible" (AUport, 1956, p.