

Engaging Diasporas to Promote Conflict Resolution: Transforming Hawks into Doves

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Diaspora groups link processes of globalization to conflicts over identity and territory. Globalization has increased cross-border migration and decreased communication and travel costs, thereby making it easier for migrants to construct diaspora networks that sustain links between the original homeland and current place of residence. Those forced across borders by war commonly have a specific set of traumatic memories and create specific types of “conflict-generated diasporas” that sustain and sometimes amplify their strong sense of attachment to the homeland. “Homeland” is often understood in specific territorial terms where a space from which a group has been forcefully detached assumes a high symbolic value.

Conflict-generated diasporas – with their origins in conflict and their identity linked to symbolically important territory – often play critical roles with regard to homeland conflicts. As many scholars have noted, diaspora remittances are key resources to a conflict. In addition, and the focus of this research, such diasporas frequently have a particularly important role in framing conflict issues. Diaspora groups created by conflict and sustained by memories of the trauma tend to be less willing to compromise and therefore reinforce and exacerbate the protractedness of conflicts.

One dynamic that tends to make conflicts in the homeland more protracted, therefore, is the existence of certain types of diaspora groups with strong symbolic

attachments to a territory and uncompromising views on how conflict there should be understood and contested. In cases where there is a powerful conflict-generated diaspora, there are some specific conflict resolution interventions that should be considered to help ameliorate the homeland conflict. This paper will argue that third parties such as nongovernmental and university based groups in the United States can help reduce homeland conflicts by engaging diaspora groups and promoting dialogues and other processes that help break down the categorical perceptions of the conflict.

Diasporas and Territorial Identity

The involvement of migrants and exiles in the political affairs of their homelands is not new and has taken many forms over the centuries. As the pace and scale of globalization has increased in recent years the location where key political, economic, and social developments take place are often outside the sovereign territory of a given state. Transnational politics in recent years has led, for example, to Mexican politicians campaigning for votes and financial support in southern California. Croatians in the diaspora reportedly provided \$4 million towards Franjo Tudjman's electoral campaign and were rewarded 12 of 120 seats in recognition of their key electoral role.¹ Worker's remittances, estimated to total \$100 billion a year, are critical to the economies of a number of states. They represent the single most valuable source of new capital for Latin America and the Caribbean and are more important to that region than foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, foreign aid, or government and private borrowing. According to a recent report, remittances accounted for nearly 30 percent of Nicaragua's

¹ See "Special Report: Diasporas: A World of Exiles," *The Economist* 4 January 2003, pp. 25-27.

GDP, 25 percent of Haiti's, 17 percent for Guyana, 15 percent of El Salvador, and 12 percent each for Honduras and Jamaica.² Transnational politics and economic ties between migrants and homelands are an increasingly prominent feature of the contemporary globalized world.

Diasporas are a particular subset of migrants and are characterized by their networks that link the migrants in the host country to their brethren in the homeland. Not all migrants join diasporas. Some want to assimilate into the host country culture (if allowed) or do not want to draw attention to their foreign allegiances for political reasons. Others migrate in small numbers and lack the critical mass to form an organizational core, although cheap communications through the internet and inexpensive phone calls makes organization less location bound.

This paper will focus on a more specific subset of migrants who form “conflict-generated diasporas.”³ This focus is narrower than the larger topics of globalization and migration (that includes consideration of economic migration, transborder communities, and remittances) and globalization and diasporas (that includes analysis of how migrants create organizations and networks to link those in the homeland to those in the host country regardless of the circumstances of their initial displacement). A migrant may or may not be a member of a diaspora and a diaspora may or may not be composed of members displaced by war. Conflict-generated diasporas are characterized by the source of their displacement (violent, often large-scale separation rather than relatively voluntary, often individual pursuit of economic incentives) and by the nature of their ties

² See Report of the Inter-American Dialogue Task Force on Remittances, *All in the Family: Latin America's Most Important International Financial Flow* (Washington, D.C.: January 2004), p. 4.

³ For a broader definition of diasporas see Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

to the homeland (identities that emphasize links to symbolically valuable territory and an aspiration to return once the homeland is free rather than ties of narrower kinship and remittance relationships). Like all diasporas, conflict-generated diasporas are characterized in part by the organizations and networks they develop to build and reinforce links between those in the homeland and those in the host country.

The identity and social mobilization of conflict-generated diaspora groups relate to a very specific and symbolically important and territorially defined “homeland.” Some have suggested that globalization and the development of diasporic identities will make territory and boundaries less salient as “supranational” identities develop and political, social, and economic life becomes deterritorialized. Appadurai, for example, writes “ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large) has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders.”⁴

In many cases, however, conflict-generated diaspora groups define their identity in large part by their strong attachment to a homeland that is defined in territorial terms. Rather than seeking to build a transnational virtual community, many diaspora groups retain and amplify attachment to the territorial aspect of their identity, even if they are physically distant and even unlikely ever to travel to that territory. A sense of solidarity and attachment to a particular locality can generate a common identity without propinquity, where territorially defined community and spatial proximity are decoupled.

The concept of territorially defined homeland often is inherent in the conflict-generated diaspora’s identity and therefore serves as a focal point of diaspora political

⁴ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 306.

action and debate. Frykman notes, “The homeland they do not live in any more is very likely to remain a crucial place of emotional attachment and decisively defines their strategies of identification.”⁵ As the intrinsic value of territory diminishes, as day-to-day activities focus on the new place of residence, the homeland’s symbolic importance may grow. Geographical detachment removes the territorial concept from the “concrete to the metaphysical realm and from one that has relatively clear boundaries to one that is unbounded and abstract.”⁶ As Yossi Shain notes:

For many homeland citizens, territory serves multiple functions: it provides sustenance, living space, security, as well as a geographical focus for national identity. If giving up a certain territory, even one of significant symbolic value, would increase security and living conditions, a homeland citizen *might* find the tradeoff worthwhile. By contrast, for the diaspora, while the security of the homeland is of course important as well, the territory’s identity function is often paramount.⁷

For the diaspora, therefore, homeland is a special category of territory, laden with symbolic meaning for those who identify with it from afar.⁸ As a consequence, diaspora groups are less likely to support compromise or a bargain that trades off some portion of the sacred homeland for some other instrumental end.

Conflict-generated diaspora groups are not societies to promote Esperanto or to study long gone cultures. They are social networks that link past conflict, the contemporary challenges of living in a host state, and an aspiration of return to a

⁵ Maja Povrzanović Frykman, “Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile,” in Maja Povrzanović Frykman, ed., *Beyond Integration: Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001) p. 23.

⁶ David Newman, “Real Spaces, Symbolic Space: Interrelated Notions of Territory in the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” in Paul F. Diehl, *A Road Map to War: Territorial Dimensions of International Conflict* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1999), p. 13.

⁷ Yossi Shain, “The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution.” *SAIS Review* 22:2 (Summer-Fall 2002), p. 134.

⁸ Monica Duffy Toft, “Indivisible Territory and Ethnic War,” Cambridge: Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Working Paper no. 01-08, December 2001, p. 7. See also David Morley and Kevin Robins, “No Place like Heimat: Images of Home(land) in European Culture,” in Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires, eds., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993).

particular piece of territory that is the symbolically important homeland. Diaspora websites and publications emphasize the symbols of the nation state – maps, flags, symbolic geographic features or local plants. Often the language of exile emphasizes the links to homeland as a very much earthly place by speaking of the “original soil” and the need to maintain “roots” in times of dispersal and uprooting.⁹

Research on conflict-generated diasporas and their roles in homeland conflict is new and more case studies need to be conducted to reach reliable conclusions. Clear cases of conflict-generated diasporas include the Oromo and (pre-1991) Eritreans from Ethiopia, the Kurds from Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, Tamils from Sri Lanka, Armenians (pre-1991), Croats (pre-1991), Irish, and Palestinians. Each has a large number of members forcefully displaced by war and currently has a critical mass participating in organizations that seek to build and reinforce links from the host countries back to the homeland in conflict. Such conflict-generated diasporas follow different patterns of behavior with regard to homeland conflict than those who may have fled conflict or political repression as in Central America, Iran, or Vietnam. They also differ from the much larger population of migrants who cross borders more or less voluntarily in pursuit of opportunities.

⁹ Hamid Naficy, “The Poetics and Practice of Iranian Nostalgia in Exile,” *Diaspora* 1:3 (Winter 1991): 285-302.

Diaspora Networks: Setting the Terms of Debate around Homeland Conflict

Conflict-generated diaspora networks form a link between conflict and territoriality. Homeland conflict is often the touchstone of identity and diaspora social organizations often mobilize around providing support for actors engaged in the conflict back home. These networks thereby often become a factor that complicates processes of conflict resolution and may make homeland conflicts more protracted.

Migration in general is a process that both depends on and creates social networks.¹⁰ Conflict-generated diasporas characteristically develop networks based on solidarity that emphasize identity and work to keep nationalist hopes alive from abroad. These organizations and networks often engage in political activism in support of the struggle back home, including lobbying the host country or international organizations for support, engaging in public education and consciousness raising, supporting projects on behalf of the victims of the strife, or more active fundraising for arms and other war materiel. The conflict back home is often the key to social mobilization in the host country and if the conflict ended another issue around which to mobilize will be necessary or else the organization will decline. O'Grady wrote about Irish American organizations that maintaining their cohesion requires "an agenda that is driven by events in Northern Ireland and capable of molding and solidifying that voting bloc." If the Good

¹⁰ See Alejandro Portes, "Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigration: A Conceptual Overview," in Alejandro Portes, ed., *The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship*, (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1995).

Friday Agreement results in lasting peace, then “Irish-Americans will have no reason to forge an agenda that will hold their reinvigorated pressure group together.”¹¹

Most conflict-generated diasporas develop social networks both to retain a sense of identity and to promote community self-help programs for finding jobs, housing, and managing immigration issues in their new host countries. They often form church groups, schools to maintain native languages and cultural practices among their children, and other social clubs to celebrate religious holidays or to mark other symbolically important dates and ceremonies. Martyrs Day (November 27), for example, is an important day for community mobilization among the Tamil diaspora. Annual events such as the Ethiopian soccer tournament in North America bring thousands together not only to compete and socialize but also to talk politics. Celebration of national holidays is a particularly important way to maintain links with the homeland and reaffirm borders between the diaspora community and the surrounding host country population. Iranians in the diaspora scrupulously celebrate *Nowruz*, the Iranian New Year held at the Spring Equinox. Celebrating *Nowruz*, one member of the Iranian diaspora notes, “allows practice of nostalgia and defiance of the unfamiliar Christian calendar simultaneously.”¹² These social events further are instrumental in socializing the generation born outside of the homeland to the issues that define their membership in a diaspora group.

A number of recent studies have focused on the question of diaspora funding of homeland insurgencies. Collier and Hoeffler conclude “by far the strongest effect of war on the risk of subsequent war works through diasporas. After five years of postconflict

¹¹ Joseph O’Grady, “An Irish Policy Born in the U.S.A.: Clinton’s Break with the Past,” *Foreign Affairs* 75:3 (May-June 1996).

¹² Laleh Khalili, “Mixing Memory and Desire: Iranians in the United States,” *The Iranian* May 13, 1998, found at www.Iranian.com/Features/May98/Iranams/index.html.

peace, the risk of renewed conflict is around six times higher in the societies with the largest diasporas in America than in those without American diasporas. Presumably this effect works through the financial contributions of diasporas to rebel organizations.”¹³

The Tamil diaspora provides critical funding to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the links between diaspora fundraising and conflict have been noted with regard to the Kurdish Workers Party, the Provisional Irish Republican Army, and Croatian political and military movements.¹⁴ Diasporas sometimes lobby host governments for increased support for states engaged in conflict, as demonstrated by the Eritrean, Armenian, and Croatian diasporas’ efforts.¹⁵ The level of financial support is an important area of research but the questions of why certain diasporas are so highly motivated to support their homeland and the particular targets of their support remain.

Beyond the provision of financial resources, diasporas play important roles in setting the terms of debate around issues of conflict and identity. The “old country” is often romanticized and past glories and grievances kept alive in an “allegiance to the land of memories” as a way of asserting continued belonging.¹⁶ Benedict Anderson argues that such diaspora groups that he labels “long-distance nationalists” are inevitably unaccountable and irresponsible:

¹³ Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, “Greed and Grievances in Civil War,” (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355, 2000), p. 26.

¹⁴ On the LTTE see Daniel L. Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2001). On the PIRA see John Horgan and Max Taylor, “Playing the ‘Green Card’ – Financing the Provisional IRA: Part I,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 11:2 (Summer 1999) and Paul Arthur, “Diasporan Intervention in International Affairs: Irish America as a Case Study,” *Diaspora* 1:2 (Fall 1991). On the PKK see Michael Radu, “The Rise and Fall of the PKK,” *Orbis* 45:1 (Winter 2001). On Croatia see Daphne N. Winland, “‘We Are Now an Actual Nation’: The Impact of National Independence on the Croatian Diaspora in Canada,” *Diaspora* 4:1 (1995): 3-29.

¹⁵ On Armenians see Moorad Mooradian, *Reconciliation: A Case Study of the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission* (Fairfax, Virginia: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution Working Paper, Working Paper no. 24, 2004).

¹⁶ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London, 1997), p. 185.

While technically a citizen on the state in which he comfortably lives, but to which he may feel little attachment, he finds it tempting to play identity politics by participating (via propaganda, money, weapons, any way but voting) in the conflicts of his imagined Heimat – now only fax time away. But this citizenless participation is inevitably non-responsible – our hero will not have to answer for, or pay the price of, the long-distance politics he undertakes.¹⁷

Pnina Werbner echoes this concern and notes that diasporas often “feel free to endorse and actively support ethnicist, nationalistic, and exclusionary movements.”¹⁸ Finally, Fitzgerald suggests that some members of diasporas advance a “model of citizenship that emphasizes rights over obligations, passive entitlements, and the assertion of an interest in the public space without a daily presence.”¹⁹ Political leaders back home are often ambiguous about the political influence of those who left and emphasize emotional issues and may have lost touch with the everyday struggles in the homeland.

The emotional attachment to highly symbolic land often leads to a framing of conflict in the homeland in categorical, uncompromising terms. This point of view and the way it sets the terms of debate and strategy is quite powerful because exiles often have greater access to the media and the time, resources, and freedom to articulate and circulate a political agenda than actors in the conflicted homeland. The cost of refusing to accept a compromise is often low (if the diaspora members are well-established in Europe, North America, or Australia) and the rewards from demonstrating steadfast commitment to the cause is high (both in personal/psychological terms but also as a mechanism of social mobilization).

In some cases, leading intellectuals have sought exile in order to continue to

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, “The New World Disorder,” *New Left Review* 193 (1992): 13. See also Benedict Anderson, “Exodus,” *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Winter 1994): 314-27.

¹⁸ Pnina Werbner, “The Place Which is Diaspora: Citizenship, Religion, and Gender in the Making of Chordic Transnationalism,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28:1 (January 2002), p. 120.

¹⁹ David Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Extra-Territorial Citizenship: Mexican Migration and the Transnational Politics of Community* La Jolla, Calif.: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, Monograph Series no. 2, 2000, p. 106.

engage in political debate. Major cultural figures including authors, filmmakers, and musicians frequently are based abroad and their framing of issues relating to identity, memory, and conflict resonate powerfully back home. Diaspora groups often control major media outlets both in host states and in the homeland. Armenians in the United States, for example, support one daily and eleven weekly newspapers in Armenia, along with countless newsletters, Internet sites, and e-mail distribution lists.²⁰ Major Congolese and other African musicians are often based in Paris or Brussels and some of Ethiopia's most famous singers and painters reside in the United States. Videotapes or cassettes of exile political speeches or demonstrations may circulate in a homeland where such activities are more dangerous. During the 1990s the Ethiopian government charged that the Voice of America's Amharic service encouraged demonstrations so that the opposition's point of view could be broadcast back to Ethiopia.²¹

Uncompromising diaspora positions often constrain the ability of actors in the homeland to propose different ways to understand the struggle or to engage in constructive conflict resolution. As suggested by Maney in his study of transnational movements and civil rights in Northern Ireland, external supporters "not only can exacerbate problems encountered by domestic coalitions but can also introduce additional obstacles to the effective pursuit of social change."²² The devotion to the cause by the diaspora may make it more difficult for political actors back home to accept compromise solutions that may be condemned as appeasement or treason among the émigrés. In Armenia, for example, the first post-Soviet president Ter-Petrossian sought to base

²⁰ Khacig Tölölyan, "Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation," *Diaspora* 9:1 (2000): 107-35.

²¹ Annette C. Sheckler, "Evidence of Things Unseen: Secrets Revealed at the Voice of America."

²² Gregory M. Maney, "Transnational Mobilization and Civil Rights in Northern Ireland," *Social Problems* 47:2 (2000), p. 153.

Armenia's foreign policy on state interests and make conciliatory gestures toward Turkey. The Armenian diaspora in the United States and France, however, regarded this as selling out their core issue of recognition of the Armenian genocide. Ter-Petrosian eventually fell to Robert Kocharian who followed the diasporas traditional anti-Turkish attitudes.²³ Conflict generated diasporas therefore can complicate the processes of conflict resolution in the homeland.

Conflict Resolution and Diasporas: Engagement and Transformation

Understanding how conflict-generated diasporas reinforce dynamics that make conflicts more protracted is important for policy makers interested in promoting conflict resolution. How can external parties work to reduce if not end the roles diasporas play in making conflicts less inclined to settlement? As argued above, conflict-generated diasporas tend to have categorical perceptions of homeland conflicts. If these perceptions can be reframed and made more complex through a process of dialogue or some other process, then the diaspora's role in the conflict may be changed. In addition, if a diaspora group shifts its support from the most militant leaders and organizations engaged in the homeland conflict towards a position that supports the leaders and movements seeking peace, then an important factor that makes conflicts more difficult to resolve can be reduced. Diasporas have the potential to be source of ideas and support for peace making as well as forces making conflicts more protracted.

²³ Yossi Shain, "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution." *SAIS Review* 22:2 (Summer-Fall 2002), p. 126-7. Shain cites an observer as saying that hard-liners in the Armenian diaspora "are said to care less about the homeland's present and future than about the past's dead" p. 121. See also Morad Mooradian, *Reconciliation: A Case Study of the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission* (Fairfax, Virginia: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, forthcoming in 2004).

This paper concludes by pointing to two examples where conflict generated diasporas shifted their attitudes toward homeland conflict. These cases are presented to illustrate the potential for working with diaspora groups to promote peace back home. More comparative case studies are necessary to draw clear conclusions and investigate which policy initiatives offer the most promise. The first case will describe a project by the George Mason University Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) that worked with the Ethiopian diaspora through a process of extended dialogues that helped the participants develop more complex and therefore less categorical perspectives on the homeland conflict.²⁴ The second case will study how changing Irish American attitudes towards the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday peace agreement suggest how diasporas may promote dynamics that reinforce conflict resolution processes under the right circumstances.

Extended Dialogue among Ethiopians in the Diaspora

From 1999 through 2003 a group of graduate students and faculty at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) conducted an "Extended Dialogue" with members of the Ethiopian diaspora. A group of community leaders from the various segments of the Ethiopian community met on a more or less monthly basis for a total of 20 meetings with the ICAR team serving as facilitators. This Ethiopian Extended Dialogue (EED) demonstrated how engaging a conflict-generated

²⁴ A report on these dialogues is in process. For a brief statement of another example, the Conflict Management Group's Diaspora Dialogues between Palestinian/Arab and Jewish Americans, see "Diaspora Dialogues: Mission Statement," and Naseem Khuri, "Diaspora Dialogues," *Peace by Piece* (Winter 2003) both found at www.cmgroup.org.

diaspora in a process of conflict resolution has the potential to alter the diaspora's perceptions of the homeland conflict and thereby reduce the degree to which the diaspora reinforces the tendency for conflicts to become protracted and increases the potential of the diaspora to become a source that supports peacemaking.

The diaspora community in Washington is a critical arena where Ethiopian politics is contested and the boundaries of debates established and acknowledged. The manner by which the Ethiopian diaspora frames conflicts has an important influence on how actors back home and other external actors view the conflict and the potential to engage in conflict resolution interventions. The diaspora is powerful and has lobbied the U.S. government and international financial institutions to reduce aid due to human rights conditions in Ethiopia and raised funds for humanitarian and development projects. The community has a wide range of organizations and newspapers, maintains dozens of websites and e-mail lists, broadcasts weekly a number of radio and cable television shows, and has a strong influence on the strategies and tactics of political actors back in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Sports Federation on North America has a soccer league with 25 teams and an annual tournament that draws tens of thousands and is an opportunity to renew old friendships, build solidarity, listen to major diaspora musicians like Aster, and engage in political affairs as well as sports.

The diaspora is by no means unified. Some favor the incumbent Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government, others a range of opposition movements, and still others are supportive of movements such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) that seeks self-determination for the Oromo people who represent an estimated 40 percent of the Ethiopian population. Ethiopian political leaders,

including those in the government and in the leading opposition organizations and liberation movements, regularly send delegations to brief their respective communities in Washington and to solicit their support. The Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a General Directorate in charge of Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs and funds a radio station in Washington, for example, to channel its message to the diaspora.

A series of incidents suggest that diaspora groups are critical to Ethiopian political players back home:

- When splits within the core EPRDF group known as the Tigray People's Liberation Front erupted in March 2001, both factions immediately sent high-level delegations to the United States to influence how the diaspora understood the intraparty conflict and to build support for their respective factions.
- Leaders of the political opposition within Ethiopia such as the Southern Coalition's Beyene Petros regularly travel to North America to solicit support and receive advice. When the Southern Coalition entertained the idea of engaging with the EPRDF regime and competing in the 1995 elections, the diaspora was sharply critical and threatened to label Beyene a traitor to the cause. Unable to ignore this pressure, the Southern Coalition ultimately boycotted the elections.²⁵
- Many of the most vigorous and dedicated supporters of Oromo self-determination and the OLF are in the diaspora. These leaders insist on uncompromising and unqualified demands – liberation of all Oromia by military means – and support OLF military leaders who pursue this agenda rather than other Oromo leaders such as those in the Oromo National Congress prepared to engage in political competition with the incumbent regime.

ICAR's Ethiopian Extended Dialogue built on the work done by Harold Saunders, who developed a type of intervention he called a "Sustained Dialogue" and used it to encourage discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and among parties to the internal conflict in Tajikistan.²⁶ The goal of a sustained dialogue is to address protracted social conflict, rebuild relationships, and to "change

²⁵ Terrence Lyons, "Closing the Transition: The May 1995 Elections in Ethiopia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 34:1 (March 1996): 121-142.

²⁶ Harold H. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts* (St. Martin's, 1999).

conflictual relationships over time.”²⁷ Sustained dialogues are unofficial by design with an open-ended agenda subject to the desires and interests of the participants, not forums for formal negotiations among official parties to sign a peace agreement. The dialogue takes place among individuals from diverse backgrounds and emphasized open, respectful discussion. In order to build on trust and relationships, extended dialogues are conducted with small groups (ten to twenty participants) where participants attend a linked series of meetings. ICAR’s major role as facilitators was to provide participant’s space and facilities where they could express their views and perceptions about the conflict in Ethiopia without fear and intimidation.

Much of the dialogue revolved around how members of the diaspora understood issues of identity, both in terms of their personal identities as members of a community divided as a result of conflicts and in terms of how identity drives many of the conflicts back in Ethiopia. To speak in very broad terms, the discussions tended to be three sided. On the one hand, one group of participants emphasized the overarching unity of Ethiopians and emphasized interdependence among the Ethiopian people. To them Ethiopia represented a glorious historical and territorial entity to which unity and loyalty was owed. To some this conception of Ethiopia included the entire territory of the currently recognized state as well as the neighboring state of Eritrea (part of Ethiopia until 1991). Another group suggested that the starting point for understanding Ethiopia was to recognize the structural, colonial system of domination and oppression and emphasized that certain groups, most notably the Oromo, had been incorporated into the Ethiopian “empire” state without their consent. The territorial space occupied by “Ethiopia” in this point of view included “Oromia,” the territory occupied by the Oromo

²⁷ Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 43.

people who awaited their legitimate self-determination. To them Ethiopia merely represented a geographic concept rather than a source of positive identity based on voluntary association. Oromia was their homeland. A third group also emphasized the use of force and domination in southern Ethiopia but worried that potential Oromo domination might replicate the historic northern domination of smaller, vulnerable identity groups. This third group shared the territorial definition of the homeland of the first but also the perception of oppression expressed by the second. These different perspectives on the conflict therefore had territorial dimensions in that each point of view had a different conception of what the space labeled as “Ethiopia” should be. Competing visions of homeland that overlap and occupy the same finite territorial space make the Ethiopian conflict particularly difficult for members of the diaspora to discuss together and hence inhibit conflict resolution processes.

Over the course of some twenty meetings with a core group, sufficient trust developed so that the quality of discussions changed. In the early meetings many participants made statements of principle and expressed their positions with regard to the injustices that they perceived caused the conflicts in Ethiopia. Over time, however, the discussions became more complicated as participants increasingly recognized how other groups also had legitimate grievances, how principles sometimes were in tension, and how as common members of a diaspora all had interests in promoting a just and sustainable peace in the homeland. These more complex perceptions opened up new possibilities for recognizing new options with regard to conflicts in the homeland.

The organizers of the Ethiopian Extended Dialogues did not expect that they alone would mark a major shift in the conflict behaviors of the parties engaged in conflict

back in the homeland. All small group processes such as dialogues or problem solving workshops face the challenges of how to translate the new perceptions and attitudes from the small group to the larger community. In addition, questions always remain with regard to whether social psychological processes such as dialogues and workshops can alter the structures that generate conflicts. What the ICAR facilitation team sought to explore was whether engagement by a third party in a conflict resolution process with the diaspora could promote new perceptions and new attitudes among the diaspora. These new attitudes, it was hoped, would complicate the diaspora group's view of the conflict back home and lead to a greater willingness to accept compromise or conflict resolution initiatives by leaders back home.

Northern Ireland

The shift of support of leading Irish Americans from organizations such as NORAID dedicated to supporting hard-line military leaders to those such as Americans for a New Irish Agenda (ANIA) focused on providing support for political forces seeking a peace agreement is an important part of the Good Friday Agreement story. The peace process in Northern Ireland is extraordinarily complicated and will not be summarized here. The role of President Bill Clinton and his Special Envoy to Northern Ireland George Mitchell were in part the product of and in part supported by a campaign by key Irish American leaders to shift the Irish American diaspora from supporting the most militant tendencies within the Irish Republican Army to supporting a political process that resulted in the Good Friday Agreement.

For many years, Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAIID) was the most prominent Irish American group that provided support to parties engaged in the conflict in Northern Ireland. Michael Flannery, an ex-member of the North Tipperary brigade of the IRA, founded NORAIID in 1970. The organization mobilized Irish Americans and dedicated itself to raising funds in support of the IRA. NORAIID formally channeled funds to *An Cumann Cabrach* a charity in the IRA orbit that supported families of prisoners but the organization also reportedly served as a key conduit for gun smuggling. Flannery, in fact, was charged (but not convicted) with gun running in 1982.²⁸

In the early 1990s, however, leadership among Irish American organizations interested in Northern Irish issues shifted. Senator Ted Kennedy, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neal, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Governor Hugh Carey (nicknamed the "Four Horsemen") began to speak out publicly against violence and in support of non-violent political movements such as John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). In 1991, Americans for a New Irish Agenda (ANIA) was founded, with *Irish Voice* editor Niall O'Dowd taking the lead. Representatives of the ANIA traveled to Ireland to encourage Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams to engage in discussions with Hume. The goal was to reinforce and strengthen the political wing of the republican movement and thereby promote the peace process.

ANIA and others pressured Bill Clinton to speak out on the Northern Ireland issue during the 1992 campaign and Clinton promised to appoint a Special Envoy and to grant Adams a visa. Those pressing for a visa for Adams argued that providing him the legitimacy and prestige of a trip to the United States would strengthen his position with

²⁸ Adrian Guelke, "The United States, Irish Americans and the Northern Ireland Peace Process," *International Affairs* 72:3 (July 1996): 521-536.

regard to the hard-line militants and promote the movement of Sinn Féin into peace talks. ANIA set up the National Committee on American Foreign Policy and invited Adams to New York to address their conference in February 1994. Clinton granted the visa, over the objections of the British, unionists in Northern Ireland, the State Department and the U.S. embassy in London.²⁹ The IRA did not proclaim a cease-fire as Clinton had hoped during Adams' trip to the United States. Following a visit to Ireland by O'Dowd and Congressman Bruce Morrison, however, the IRA proclaimed a unilateral and unconditional cease-fire on August 31, 1994.³⁰ The Irish American diaspora had clear influence on the dynamics of the peace process in the homeland.

The transition among leading Irish American organizations from NORAID to ANIA played an important role in supporting the Good Friday Agreement. NORAID represented and helped fund the most militant and uncompromising elements within the Irish republican movement. ANIA, in contrast, represented a different strain of the diaspora and adopted a different set of tactics. In particular, ANIA recognized that the violence of the Provisional IRA could not win and that the best strategy was to strengthen the moderates in the SDLP and Sinn Féin and support peace talks. ANIA successfully lobbied President Clinton and used the issue of granting a visa to Gerry Adams as a mechanism to provide a wider audience for the new thinking that Adams represented. In this way, a shift in the Irish American diaspora helped facilitate a shift from the uncompromising militants to the more politically minded moderates.

²⁹ Joseph O'Grady, "An Irish Policy Born in the U.S.A.: Clinton's Break with the Past," *Foreign Affairs* 75:3 (May-June 1996).

³⁰ Michael Cox, "The War that Came in from the Cold: Clinton and the Irish Question," *World Policy Journal* 16:1 (Spring 1999).

Conclusions

Conflict-generated diasporas are related in specific ways to globalization, territoriality, and conflict. Globalization has increased transborder migration but in many cases this movement has not decreased attachment to homeland. Diaspora groups with their origins in conflict often cultivate a specific type of linkage where homeland territory takes on a high symbolic value. Conflict-generated diasporas often frame conflicts in ways that are uncompromising and categorical and this framing has significance for political strategies relating to the struggle. Parties directly engaged in the conflict in the homeland often are dependent on supporters in the diaspora for resources, access to international media, international organizations, and powerful host governments, thereby giving diaspora groups influential roles in the framing of debates and the adoption of strategies relating to conflict. Because of the particular importance of symbolic territory and a conception of homeland to diaspora identities, diaspora groups often contribute to prolonging and making conflicts more protracted.

Despite this general pattern there are cases where the attitudes and behavior of diaspora groups have changed. The extended dialogues within the Ethiopian diaspora facilitated by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution contributed to creating more complex views of the conflict in the homeland. The shift of Irish American support from some of the most militant elements within the Irish Republican Army to more politically minded leaders intent on engaging in negotiations provides another case. Conflict-generated diasporas have a tendency to reinforce those dynamics of homeland conflicts that lead towards protractedness but this tendency is not inevitable.

