

Conflicts in the Second World:

A View on Track 2 Diplomacy

Natalya Tovmasyan Riegg

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About the Author

Dr. Natalya Tovmasyan Riegg received her Ph.D. from Yerevan State University in Social Psychology and has taught and conducted research at the Armenian National Academy of Sciences and the University for Environmental and Political Studies in Armenia. She has received scholarships at the Moscow Institute of Philosophy and was a Fulbright scholar at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Her work has focused on sociopsychological causes of conflict and the prospects for peace in Transcaucasia. Since 1999, she has been a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, and a Research Fellow at the National Peace Foundation.

In addition to her research, Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg has been deeply involved since 1993 in Track 2 diplomacy with colleagues from Azerbaijan and Georgia. She is the coordinator of the Armenian branch of the Transcaucasian Women's Dialogue and participated in a number of workshops organized under the auspices of the National Peace Foundation and the United States Information Agency.

Among her publications are "The South Caucasus: Paradigms for the Future," *Peacebuilder* 1, no. 2 (1999), "Social Equity and Social Cohesion: Traditional Values and Modern Reality," (Yerevan, 1998, in Russian), "Ethnic Mentality and Social Modernization: The Ideological and the Archetypal," *Self-Consciousness: Mine and Ours* (Moscow, 1997, in Russian), and "Ethnic Mentality as a Creative Space for Sacralization of the Future," *Philosophical Studies* 3 (Moscow, 1996, in Russian).

About the Institute

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, has as its principal mission to advance the understanding and resolution of significant and persistent conflicts among individuals, communities, identity groups, and nations.

In the fulfillment of its mission, the institute conducts a wide range of programs and outreach. Among these are its graduate programs offering the Doctoral and Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, clinical consultancy services offered by individual members of the faculty, and public programs and education that include the annual Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Lecture Series.

The institute's major research interests include the study of conflict and its resolution, the exploration and analysis of conditions attracting parties in conflict to the negotiating table, the role of third parties in dispute resolution, and the application of conflict resolution methodologies in local, national, and international settings. The institute's Applied Practice and Theory Program develops teams of faculty, students, and allied practitioners to analyze and address topics such as conflict in schools and other community institutions, crime and violence, jurisdictional conflicts between local agencies of government, and international conflicts.

The Northern Virginia Mediation Service is affiliated with the institute and provides conflict resolution and mediation services and training to schools, courts, and local agencies and practitioners in communities across Northern Virginia and the Washington metropolitan area.

For more information, please call (703) 993-1300 or check the institute's web page at www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR/.

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Foreword

Natalya Tovmasyan Riegg has been a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) and a Research Fellow at the National Peace Foundation since 1999. This Working Paper reflects her thinking about the problems of creating a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in her native Armenia. We at ICAR have benefited greatly from our association with her, and it is with great pleasure that we share her thoughts in this Working Paper.

Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg brings her background and research in social psychology together with her experience in Track 2 diplomacy engaged in seeking settlement of the conflicts that plague the Transcaucasus region to the thoughtful reflections on conflict in the former Soviet Union. These “Second World” conflicts are driven by ethnonational concerns and have been difficult to resolve in part because of the parties’ focus on narrow issues of sovereignty and land rather than a broader conception of development in a globalized world. Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg supplements her analysis of contemporary ethnonational conflicts with her reflections on her involvement in a series of Track 2 diplomatic initiatives in Transcaucasia, including her role as the coordinator of the Armenian branch of the Transcaucasian Women’s Dialogue and her participation in a variety of workshops on conflict in the region.

In her analysis of “Second World” conflicts, Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg points to the growing importance of civil society—what she identifies as nongovernmental actors—in driving conflicts. She argues that an effective constituency supporting a nonmilitaristic form of patriotism is needed to create the context for conflict resolution. The role of public opinion and hence the importance of Track 2 diplomacy with citizens’ groups is growing and needs to receive concentrated attention to build peace.

The conclusions developed in this Working Paper have implications for two issues that are at the center of ICAR’s continuing work—the analysis of deeply rooted ethnonational conflicts and the practice in Track 2 diplomacy. According to Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg, a key element in building peace is to promote the reconceptualization of development

from an obsolete, conflict-creating, land-related assertion of interests to a broader sense of development appropriate to the modern, globalized world. She argues that “third-party facilitators and mediators in Track 2 efforts [should] focus more clearly upon the need to get the primary parties to begin reformulating their national interests in terms of modern-day realities about the sources of economic development and national security [and thereby] help to transform the dominant social paradigms now driving countries into conflict into paradigms supporting regional cooperation and development.”

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Dr. Tovmasyan Riegg and with other colleagues from Transcaucasia and believe that this Working Paper makes an important contribution to our ongoing search for answers to the problem of conflict and identity.

Sandra I. Cheldelin, Director
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
George Mason University

Ethnonational conflicts have erupted in many parts of the world since the end of the Cold War, including those parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe labeled as the “Second World.” Among the types of interventions that have been tried to manage or resolve these conflicts has been the problem-solving approach. This essay will examine ethnonational conflicts in the Second World and will propose some revisions to the standard problem-solving approach in order to better resolve such conflicts. In order to analyze these conflicts, we need to ask the following: Who are the parties to the conflict? What are the issues? What are the interests of each party? What options or alternatives do the parties have in pursuing or realizing their interests? What are the implications of the various options for reducing conflict or bringing about tolerance and peace?

Parties

Unlike the main conflict during the Cold War, where the principal actors were the political authorities of the two sides, today many of the key actors are nongovernmental forces, including populations at large. Indeed, whether we look at the Yugoslav, Russo-Chechen, Armenian-Azeri, or intra-Georgian conflicts, we see nongovernmental forces and public opinion significantly participating in both initiating and supporting the continuation of conflict. In short, nongovernmental actors and public opinion count as much as governmental ones.

The first military conflict between Russia and Chechnya, for example, was terminated in 1996 by a cease-fire and an agreement to postpone decisions over the ultimate status of Chechnya for five years. Chechen elections then were held for the “legitimate authorities of Chechnya,” and Aslan Maschadov was selected president. Governmental leaders in both Chechnya and Russia anticipated that the next steps at resolving the situation would take place in 2001, after the five-year “cooling-off period” had expired. However, nongovernmental actors on the Chechen side took actions in 1998 and 1999 that broke the balance. They invaded the neighboring region of Dagestan, urged it to separate from Russia, and sought to join it to Chechnya in an Islamic union. They also allegedly bombed several buildings in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia. Russia reacted, or overreacted, and drove the rebels from Dagestan, destroyed Grozny, and sought to annihilate the rebels throughout Chechnya.

The point is that the official authorities in Chechnya were unable to manage the situation vis-à-vis the nongovernmental actors (NGAs). The same type of problem has arisen in other countries suffering from conflict. In short, because of the activity of NGAs in today’s conflicts, the problem is not just to *achieve* an agreement but also to *maintain* agreements.

Part of the difficulty in maintaining agreements, argues Hampson, “has to do with the nature of civil conflicts in today’s world. Unlike the ideologically driven block-to-block struggles of the Cold War, these ‘protracted social conflicts’ are characterized by intense factional struggle

between rival groupings additionally motivated by non-ideological factors. Typically, these conflicts are rooted in a multiplicity of conflicting and overlapping tensions evolving from ethnicity, religion, nationalism, communal strife, socioeconomic problems, regional grievances, and so on” (Hampson 1996, 4).

One also could argue that in the Second World the rise in the importance of NGAs as parties to conflict has sociopsychological as well as institutional causes. The Cold War ended with the victory of the free world over totalitarianism. That victory, which heightened the global significance of democracy, created the objective conditions in which nongovernmental organizations could be formed in the Second World, having been previously banned by the totalitarian state. More important, the end of the Cold War created a psychological milieu, or mindset, that encouraged individuals and groups to stand up and become actors on the national policy stage, whether or not their objective was to be elected or otherwise participate in government.

The institutional factor contributing to the significance of nongovernmental actors as a party to new conflicts is the weakness in the management of the new Second World states. The new conflicts, in most cases, have occurred where there have been a disintegration of old authoritarian regimes and a collapse of the state. In these conflicted countries, the authoritarian mechanisms of government have been dissolved, but democratic mechanisms (rule of law, democratic institutions) have not become adequately operational, so the new states are weak or “soft.”

Both sides of these conflicts are experiencing or suffering from the weakness and ineffectiveness of the new government machinery. As a result, coordination between the government and the public becomes highly limited, distorted, and often problematic. As Donald Rothchild describes soft states, “the state and its institutions are ... unable to implement their regulations effectively through the territories ostensibly under their control” (Rothchild 1997, 27). Consequently, “where individuals and groups successfully defy state norms, the weak state can do little to stop them from opting for a kind of de facto autonomy” (Rothchild 1997, 42). Putting it in more positive terms, to cope with governmental weakness, the private sector has organized itself and risen

