

VIOLENCE — CATALYST OR OBSTACLE TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

SEVEN PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECT OF VIOLENCE ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

By Kristine Hoglund^s

1. THE ROLE OF VIOLENCE IN PEACE PROCESSES

Bomb attack threatens peace in Northern Ireland . Violence gaining upper hand in the Middle East . Headlines in the media give evidence to the fear of return to armed conflict in spite of attempts to solve conflicts such as Northern Ireland, South Africa and Israel-Palestine. However, whereas one of the objectives of a peace process is to end the use of armed force, violence has usually not come to an immediate halt with the initiation of negotiations. What role, then, does violence play in a peace process, if it has any function at all?

The Northern Ireland peace process has seen the emergence of some of the most vicious splinter groups in the history of the conflict, such as the Real IRA and the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF). The assassination of Yitzak Rabin in November 1995 and the suicide bombings in Jerusalem and elsewhere are examples of high profile violent acts which have occurred within the context of the Israel-Palestinian peace process. In South Africa, there were many reports concerning the right-wing bombing campaign in connection to the election in 1994. A peace process, thus, tends to create a new set of intra-party dynamics, with some

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factions of a party or alliance objecting to the continued use of violence and others favouring the use of violence in order to attain certain goals. Hence, one of the potential obstacles to successful conflict resolution is violence which takes place during a peace process.

Apart from the personal suffering caused by such acts, violence may raise the tension and threaten a relapse to war or at least put the peace process on hold for some time. However, at times, violence appears to push the parties into negotiation, bringing the peace process forward.¹ Clearly, acts of violence during peace processes seldom pass unnoticed — most often the result is a debate on the value of the peace process. This raises a number of pertinent questions: How do acts of violence influence the progression of a peace process? When does violence serve as a catalyst for peace? And, what kinds of peace processes are likely to be vulnerable to violence? In this paper, the focus is on violence which occurs during a peace process. The following question is addressed: *Under what circumstances does violence tend to disrupt negotiations?*

The aim is to identify the mechanisms through which violence affects negotiations. It will be argued that incidents of violence during a peace process differ on a number of dimensions, which are associated with the questions of who commits the violence (parties), when (timing) and how (targets). These dimensions contribute to the understanding of why negotiations are disrupted or not. More specifically, how it affects the parties to the negotiations and the external parties/custodians. A set of propositions, related to the dimensions and their influence on the negotiations, will be presented.

2. CONCEPTUALISING VIOLENCE IN PEACE PROCESSES

Efforts to find lasting solutions to intra-state conflict have resulted in mixed outcomes.² Some of the attempts to solve violent conflicts have been relatively successful, such as the conflict resolution process in South Africa; others have seen disastrous results, Angola and Rwanda provide some of the worst examples.

A growing body of literature on intra-state conflict resolution has pointed out several reasons for the unsuccessful conclusion of these conflict resolution efforts. These include the terms of the settlement, lack of third party support, the significance of ethnic

¹ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000; Guelke, 1999; Sisk, 1993, Sisk in Zartman, (Ed.), 2001.

² The focus in this paper is on the resolution of intra-state conflict rather than on conflicts between states.

identities and the regional and global context.³ A number of problem areas have been suggested, which may pose a threat to successful conflict resolution. These have to do with the objectives and attitudes of the parties, such as commitment toward the conflict resolution process or lack of trust. These may also have to do with more tangible issues, such as the stipulation of an agreement, an election or the demobilisation of soldiers. However, the role of violence in the conflict resolution process is still not sufficiently examined and the scholarly debate concerning the issues is still at an early stage. More conceptual work is needed, both on what constitutes a peace process and on the role of violence in this process.

Previous research dealing with the relationship between violence and a peace process — besides from identifying the problem — has addressed questions such as why violence occurs, the effect of violence on a peace process and how its effect can be limited.⁴ This literature suggests some factors, which are important to consider in an attempt to explain under what conditions acts of violence may produce a certain outcome in a peace process at a given time.

A first set of factors has to do with the actors' interpretation of the costs associated with continued negotiation in the face of violent acts.⁵ Will the interpretation of the costs be related to who commits the act of violence and the apparent aim of the violence?

A second set of factors suggested in previous research has to do with the impact of different strategies to managing violence.⁶ Will the effect of violence depend on the way in which those who use violence can be managed? Which strategies are most useful? Thus, this literature suggests some strategies on how to handle actors who use violence. A question that is not addressed and which constitute a limitation in this literature, is whether certain responses may prove to be counter-productive.

Finally, Darby & MacGinty, for example, argue that the strength of the peace process itself is imperative to understand why a peace process can continue despite incidents of violence.⁷ Thus, another set of factors that should be considered are the structural characteristics of the peace process that tend to make it less vulnerable to violence. However,

³ See, for example, Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000; Hampson, 1996; Hartzell, 1999; Hartzell, Hoddie, & Rothchild, 2001; King, 1997; Licklider, (Ed.), 1993; Licklider, 1995; Miall et al, 1999; Ohlson, 1998; Pillar, 1983; Randle, 1973; Rothchild, (Ed.), 1999; Walter, 1999; Zartman, (Ed.), 1995.

⁴ Important contributions have been made by, for example, Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000; Guelke, 1999; Pillar, 1983; Rothchild, (Ed.); Sisk, 1993; Sisk in Zartman, 2001; Sisk, forthcoming; Stedman 1997.

⁵ This perspective is most clearly brought out in Pillar, 1983.

⁶ See, for example, Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000; Rothchild, (Ed.), 1999; Sisk, in Zartman, (Ed.), 2001; Stedman, 1997

⁷ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000

there is a substantial lack with regard to ideas that specify the structural conditions, which make a peace process resilient to violence.

2.1 The Disruption of Negotiations

Negotiations often take place in the wider context of a peace process. The term peace process is commonly used — both among academics, practitioners and the parties to a conflict — to describe the transition from war to peace and more specifically negotiations leading to the settlement of a violent and often long-standing conflict. According to Saunders, the term peace process was introduced in the early 1970s to describe the officially mediated Arab-Israeli agreements which were signed in the context of a larger political process.⁸ However, there is no generally accepted definition of the meaning of a peace process.

Scholars such as Saunders take a comprehensive approach to the conceptualising of peace processes. He argues that a peace process is an operational framework for peacemaking. It is not only a diplomatically negotiated process; it is also a political and human process that works simultaneously on multiple levels. The aim is to transform relationships and attitudes in society.

Peace processes are often conceived of as to be made up of different phases. Ohlson, for example, distinguishes between three phases of conflict resolution. The dialogue phase is the period of talks, which hopefully leads up to a peace agreement. In the implementation phase, the conditions of the peace agreement are carried out. Finally, in the legitimisation phase, the peoples and elites accept the changing circumstances resulting from peace.⁹ Even if it is recognised that the phases overlap and are not always easily distinguishable, the differentiation is useful for analytical purposes, since different issues and problems are in focus in different phases.

Providing yet another meaning of peace processes, Arnson defines it as processes of dialogue over time between representatives of contesting forces, with or without an intermediary, aimed at securing an end to hostilities over issues that transcend a strictly military nature.¹⁰ Thus, Arnson puts emphasis on the aim of the peace process: to end hostilities and solve the conflict issues.

⁸ Saunders, 1999, p. 19

⁹ Ohlson, 1998, p. 10

¹⁰ Arnson, (Ed.), 1999, p. 1

For the purposes of this paper, *a peace process will be considered underway when it is publicly known that the primary parties to the conflict have signalled a willingness to solve the conflict issues through dialogue*. This definition focuses on the resolution or regulation of the incompatibility, rather than on conflict behaviour. The definition carries with it some implications and issues, some of which are addressed below.

To begin with, the parties to a conflict can signal a willingness to solve the conflict in many ways. For example, such as making a public statement, or meeting with adversaries or third parties. However, signalled a willingness does not imply that the parties to the peace process have renounced the use of violence altogether. Darby & MacGinty argue that a peace process cannot continue if the participating parties are systematically involved in violence, that is if they use armed force to achieve their objectives.¹¹ This statement puts into question the role of cease-fires and peace agreements in peace processes. In fact, peace processes have developed along different paths with regard to these aspects. Whereas in some peace processes a cease-fire has been the prerequisite for the parties to start talking, in others a cease-fire has been part of a, more or less, comprehensive peace agreement. In other cases, a peace agreement has been signed without an existing cease-fire — the peace agreement concluded in year 2000 by the parties to the Burundian conflict is such a case. An interesting point made by Ikl is that parties to a conflict may refuse to negotiate for opposite reasons: while one party may not want to negotiate as long as fighting continues, the opponent may not want to accept a cease-fire as a precondition to negotiation.¹² Pillar argues that cease-fires are more likely to be part of the conclusion of negotiations than the opening of negotiations, since cease-fires remove the dynamic relationship between force and negotiation and the possibility of last-minute adjustments in power relations.¹³ However, other scholars have argued that cease-fires may help negotiations to get started, since they create trust and build confidence among the belligerents.¹⁴ Hence, the conclusion that can be drawn is that while ending violence usually is the objective of a peace process, a cease-fire is by no means a precondition to the existence of a peace process.

Another important issue has to do with the ending of peace processes. The view here is that terms like success and failure greatly simplify the dynamics of a peace process.

¹¹ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000, p. 8.

¹² Ikl , 1991, p. 87

¹³ Pillar, mainly investigating the ending of international wars, reaches the conclusion that of the conflicts ending with negotiation about two-thirds of the final settlements were reached after a cease-fire or an armistice. (1983, p. 30) It is also interesting to consider if cease-fires may have different meanings in peace processes with different conflict issues, for example territory or government.

¹⁴ Zartman, (Ed.), 1995, pp. 336—337. A similar point is made by Randle, 1973, p. 8

What is important to note is that a peace process does not end with the signing of a peace agreement. At best, a peace agreement signifies acceptance that armed conflict must end. It seldom solves all the conflict issues and the terms of implementation are often a matter for renegotiations. According to Saunders, peace agreements cannot generate peace until they are rooted in a political process aimed at the transformation of the society as a whole, including the civil society.¹⁵ Subsequently, one way of defining the conclusion of a peace process is the return to normal politics. Problematic when investigating the role of violence in peace processes, is that the durability of such a process is often defined in terms of whether violence has come to an end or not, as is the case of a study by Hampson.¹⁶ However, in contrary to this definition it has been acknowledged that a stable situation does not necessarily require the absence of violence, only that the main actors maintain their violence at acceptable levels.¹⁷

Specifying the effect on peace negotiation

A peace process may be affected by violence in a number of ways. Shakiki, for instance, has suggested that violence in the Israel-Palestinian peace process has not only suspended negotiations and delayed implementation, but has also influenced public opinion in favour of the peace process and in opposition towards violence. Furthermore, it has made it possible for a hard-line government to come to power and prevented the economy from taking off in the Palestinian areas.¹⁸

More specifically, the focus in this paper is the effect of violence on negotiations. Negotiations refer to a process based on exchange of concessions or compromise offers with the adversary.¹⁹ It includes bargaining between representatives of the parties and an accompanying process of action and counter-action outside the negotiation table, designed to affect the adversary. Negotiations do not usually end with the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. Some conflict issues are often left to be solved at a later stage and the implementation of the agreement is often a matter for negotiation. Therefore, negotiations can be seen as a subset of interactions within the wider context of a peace process.

¹⁵ Saunders, 1999, p. xxiii

¹⁶ Hampson, 1996, p. 207

¹⁷ Holl, in Licklider, (Ed.), 1993, p. 286

¹⁸ Shikaki also argues that violence affected the Palestinian nation-building process, which became largely security oriented, with an enormous security service which also has a mandate to do what it takes to maintain security. Hence, moves to counter violence may undermine the peace process. Shikaki, 1998 and Shakiki in Rothstein, (Ed.), 1999.

As suggested by scholars such as Pillar and Aggestam & J nsson, the ending of war can be seen as a bargaining process.²⁰ In other words, negotiations involve a strategic situation, where different actors interact. A strategic situation implies a situation where the actors decisions are interrelated and where the individual actors decisions combine into outcomes. Thus, one way of approaching the influence of violence on negotiations is to analyse its effect on the actors taking part in the negotiations and those who support the negotiations, and the way they respond (or not) to the violence. To recapitulate, negotiations include two adversaries, or coalitions of adversaries involved in the negotiations, and external actors/custodians who attempt to support the negotiations or otherwise influence the negotiations.

First of all, incidents of violence can influence *parties on one side* of the negotiations. An act of violence may lead one of the parties to withdraw or continue supporting the negotiations. For example, in June 1992, the African National Congress (ANC) broke off formal contact with the government in response to a massacre of ANC-supporters in Boipatong in southern Transvaal. Consequently, talks in South Africa could only be resumed after UN involvement and additional violence.

Second, violence can affect *parties on both sides* of negotiations.²¹ The bomb which exploded in the town of Omagh, Co. Tyrone, in Northern Ireland on the 15th of August 1998 with the splinter group Real IRA admitting responsibility for the attack, provides an illustrative example of when parties on both sides of the conflict react to an incident of violence. The bomb killed 29 people from both communities. In this case, the unionists/loyalists and nationalists/republicans joined to condemn the attack. Furthermore, the British and Irish governments responded to the Omagh-bombing by a joint move to counter terrorism by introducing a toughened anti-terrorist legislation.

Third, violence may influence the involvement of *external actors/custodians* to the negotiations. Although external actors/custodians may not have enough influence to disrupt negotiations driven by the parties to the conflict, they may indirectly weaken or strengthen a peace process by withdrawing or increasing the support to the negotiations. For

¹⁹ Mitchell, 1981, p. 198

²⁰ Pillar, 1983 and Aggestam & J nsson, 1997. The bargaining perspective to the study of conflict and war has been developed by several scholars. See for example Fearon, 1995 and Wagner, 2000.

²¹ Important to note is that in order for a peace process to continue, both parties need to cooperate. However, for a peace process to be disrupted, only one party s defection is required.

example, Guelke argues that violence made it possible for the international community to take greater part in the peace process in South Africa.²²

Consequently, the disruption of negotiations can be analysed by looking at indicators such as if one or both parties to the peace process threaten to or cancel planned talks or meetings; if one or both parties withdraw concessions made; or the withdrawal of support to negotiations from external parties/custodians. On the other hand, announcements of planned talks and meetings; actual negotiations taking place; concessions made; and the signing of agreements, indicate the continuation of negotiations.

2.2 Dimensions of Violence

Several researchers have pointed to the fact that incidents of violence and military matters affect the process of conflict resolution. The theoretical framework developed in this paper takes its starting point in the rational actor-approach as presented by Pillar. Pillar devotes attention to how armed force can be used to influence the opponent's negotiation efforts.²³ Pillar argues that the military instrument provides the parties to a conflict with a "powerful, direct and flexible means" of manipulating the cost of disagreement. Violence, thus, influences the cost-benefit calculation for the parties to continue fighting versus agreeing to a settlement.²⁴

Pillar provides some valuable insights with regard to why the effect of violence depends on the circumstances under which it occurs. He argues that the use of violence does not influence decisions regarding negotiations directly — it does so through the intervening variables of an actor's perceptions, interpretations and expectations. Thus, according to Pillar, there are many reasons to why diplomatic responses vary from one case to another.²⁵ The implication of Pillar's argument is that violence has an indirect effect on negotiations, and that its effect is dependent on the actor's interpretation of the cost associated with negotiations when faced with acts of violence.²⁶

Pillar's argument provides a point of departure in order to consider the circumstances under which violence may have an influence on negotiations. However, which

²² Guelke, 1999, p. 183

²³ Pillar, 1983, p. 144. Pillar focuses mainly on inter-state conflict — some of his arguments may not be entirely applicable to intra-state conflicts.

²⁴ Pillar, 1983, p. 145

²⁵ Pillar, 1983, p. 197

factors, more specifically, are likely to influence the actors' perceptions, interpretations and expectations, thus leading them to act in ways that disrupts the negotiations? The theoretical focus of the dissertation will be on factors that are related to the attributes and context of violence.²⁷ Thus, the propositions suggested will relate to the questions of who, when and how. More specifically this means propositions that concern the parties committing the violence, the timing and the targets.

This is in recognition of the fact that violence in the context of a peace process often appears in new forms, among a wide variety of actors with different motives, tactics and goals. This is a point brought out clearly in the work by Darby & MacGinty, Guelke and Sisk. Sisk, for example, argues that actors in the South African negotiations used violence for three different reasons: to halt or reverse the process; to prevent marginalisation; or to destabilise the opponent.²⁸ Guelke concludes that violence should be placed in a wide context of conflict, including those who are in favour of a negotiated settlement.²⁹ Darby & MacGinty, making a similar point, distinguishing between different kinds of violence: political violence, strategic violence, family feuding and spoiler violence. Moreover, they argue that criminality usually increases during a peace process, as well as street violence.³⁰ Thus, the purpose behind the violence will vary, ranging from those actors who are indulged in violent behaviour for mere tactical gains and those whose aim is to wreck the peace process altogether. The violence will also differ on other dimensions, such as when in a peace process it occurs and who is targeted.

In the following section a set of arguments and propositions will be advanced, that have been deduced from previous research on the relationship between violence and peace process. With regard to many of the arguments presented, the opposite argument could be made and some are in need of further qualifications. However, the dimensions of violence discussed in the paper should be understood not as a set of logically consistent theories on how violence is likely to influence a negotiations, but rather as a starting point for a more careful examination of what kind of mechanisms that are in operation. The section is concluded by a table in which the dimensions of violence are linked to its effect on the parties to the negotiations, including the custodians.

²⁶ For an interesting discussion on perceptions — see Tidwell, 1998, p. 91

²⁷ This seems like a reasonable approach because of the lack of theories in this area of research. Focusing on the factors that are related to the characteristics of violence, allows for the borrowing of theoretical reasoning from basic conflict theory and theories on violence.

²⁸ Sisk, 1993, p. 84

²⁹ Guelke, 1999, p. 183

³⁰ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000, pp. 230—235

Who - Parties

A peace process involves a situation with a wide variety of actors. The social environment does not only include those actors who are involved in the negotiations, but includes those who are affected by the negotiation outcome, and different types of observers to the negotiations.³¹ Within this larger context, individuals and groups will attempt to exert both direct and indirect pressures on the negotiations, sometime by using violence.

An important distinction with regard to violence may be the position of the parties: whether or not the perpetrators are taking part in the peace process. Stedman makes the distinction between actors inside and outside the peace process.³² An actor inside the peace process is an actor who is involved in the negotiations. An actor outside the peace process, is an actor who does not take part in the negotiations, either by choice or because the other actors do not allow it to participate in negotiations. A general notion is that violence by actors in a peace process are a more serious threat to the negotiations than violence by actors outside the peace process.³³ Thus, it can be posited that *violence by parties inside a peace process, is more likely to disrupt the negotiations, than violence by parties who are outside the peace process*. If parties that are inside the peace process commit acts of violence it may be seen as a lack of commitment toward the peace process, thus leading the other parties to withdraw their support to the negotiations. Violence by parties inside the peace process may also be taken as confirmation of the belief that the other party is not to be trusted.³⁴ Violence by the two largest paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Ulster Defence Association/Ulster Freedom Fighters (UDA/UFF), in the end of 1997 and the beginning of 1998, illustrates what may happen when parties inside a peace process are the perpetrators of the violence. The political wings of the paramilitary groups, the Sinn Fein and the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) were both part of the all-party talks negotiating the future of Northern Ireland. A tit-for tat cycle of murders was triggered by the murder of the

³¹ Lewicki, et al, 1994, p. 237. Lewicki et al argue that the greater the number of actors that have a stake and interests in a conflict and its outcomes, the greater the number of possible interactions between parties and the more complex the flow of interaction becomes.

³² Stedman, 1997, p. 8. According to Stedman an inside spoiler is an actor who has signed a peace agreement, whereas an outside spoiler remains outside the agreement.

³³ A related point is made by Hampson (in Crocker et al, 1997). He argues that for the success of a peace agreement, it is essential that all parties are represented at the negotiating table and involved in discussion about the future. Parties that are excluded from negotiations or whose interests are not represented at the bargaining table, will have a much stronger incentive to defect from the peace process and resort to violence to achieve their aims, p. 538

³⁴ For a discussion on this issue, see for example Darby & MacGinty, 2000, p. 232 and Rothstein, 1999, p. 233.

loyalist leader Billy Wright in the Maze prison on December 27th, 1997. Since the government established that the involvement of IRA and UDA/UFF in the killings was a clear breach of the Mitchell Principles³⁵, both the Sinn Fein and the UDP were expelled from the talks, thus causing a disruption of the negotiations.

The argument above will depend on who is included in the peace process and who is not included. For example if the parties outside the peace process have a strong connection to the parties inside the peace process, the threat may be considered more severe. Another aspect closely related to the seriousness of the threat, is the size of the actor committing the violence. An important question is if the actor has significant support, either from one of the parties in the peace process or the public in general.³⁶ This implies that *violence sanctioned by one of the parties to a peace process, or by a significant part of the population, is more likely to disrupt the negotiations, than violence which is not sanctioned by a party to the peace process or the public.* This is probably one of the reasons why the violence by Hamas during the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has not been easy to disregard: Hamas enjoys significant support from several parts of the Palestinian population.³⁷

An important point made by Guelke, is that the parties to a peace process may have very different conceptions of what constitutes legitimate political activity. Guelke argues that this posed a problem in the South African peace process, since violence was rarely judged without reference to the end for which it was applied. Whereas violence from ANC's supporters was usually seen from the perspective of their legitimate demand for democracy, the National Party and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), even after their acceptance of the principle of one person one vote, found their commitment to democratisation questioned. Often the violence committed by opponents to the ANC, was seen as an attempt to obstruct the transition to majority rule.³⁸ This implies that violence will be judged differently, thus affecting negotiations in different ways, depending on who commits the act of violence and for what apparent purpose.

A related issue has to do with who is held accountable for the incidents of violence. Sisk, for example, argues (and formulates in a hypothesis based on his argument) that violence tends to block negotiations when one single party is to blame. On the other hand,

³⁵ The Mitchell principles lay down conditions for negotiations, which the participants were required to agree to — overall a commitment to principles of non-violence and democracy — before being admitted to the all-party talks.

³⁶ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000, p. 255

³⁷ For Palestinian public opinion polls, see reports on The Center for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS) (<http://cprs-palestine.org/>).

³⁸ Guelke, 1999, pp. 63—64

when all parties are held accountable for violence by observers — especially by the international community — instead incidents of violence intensify pressures on the parties to negotiate, since they then realise the cost of continued deaths.³⁹ Thus, *violence where one single party is held accountable is more likely to disrupt the negotiations than violence in which all parties are blamed*. An example from South Africa is the so-called Bisho-massacre in September 1992, in which 28 ANC marchers were killed as homeland troops opened fire on the demonstrators who had departed from the agreed march route. Both the NP government and the ANC were blamed for the incident and both were reminded that there was no real alternative to negotiations.

When — Phases

The concept of timing, points to the notion that many events are of the kind that it matters not only that it happens — but, more importantly, when it occurs. The imperative of timing is frequently referred to in the area of diplomacy and conflict resolution in general.⁴⁰ Acts of violence in a peace process are not isolated incidents. Instead, they are part of a larger political context in which violence make up part of the dynamics.

Often the violence which occurs in a peace process is well planned and timed, not random and unpredictable as the media often makes it out to be. An example is the so-called Hebron Massacre, which occurred in the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. On February 25, 1994, a Jewish extremist settler entered the Abraham (Ibrahim) Mosque in Hebron and shot dead twenty-nine praying Muslims and wounded another 150 people, before he himself was beaten to death. The incident was timed not only to coincide with the middle of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, but also with a Jewish festival which celebrates how a Jew living in 5th Century BC, without help saved his people from the enemy.⁴¹

According to Pillar, we can expect particular circumstances during a negotiation process in which decision-makers are likely to employ more violence. These situations have to do with the sensitivity to absolute costs and the dimension of time. For example, if the parties expect that a conclusion of the conflict is near, cost-imposing activities may become a more attractive option. As a result, Pillar argues, violence can be expected to increase towards the end of a negotiation process, when the positioning of the parties is being concluded and a

³⁹ Sisk, 1993, p. 90. See also Sisk in Zartman, (Ed.), 2001, p. 82

⁴⁰ Timing is, for example, central to the concept of ripeness and contingency models as well.

settlement coming into sight.⁴² This is in line with a point made by Sisk. He argues that violence in South Africa usually increased either before or just after key events in negotiations. While these turning points reduced fear and insecurity for some actors, it increased them for others.⁴³ The question, then, is when in a peace process, violence is likely to disrupt negotiations?

Darby and MacGinty posit that the further the negotiations develop the stronger its shock-absorbent facility and the more capable its ability to withstand the inevitable atrocities designed to undermine it.⁴⁴ There are several reasons for why negotiations would be less vulnerable to violence after it has been ongoing for a while. For example, with the advancing of a peace process the middle coalition committed to peace is likely to become larger.⁴⁵ Well along a peace process, it may be more difficult to leave the process than to stay in it. The reasons for this may vary. First, engaging in negotiations may create a common bond among those participating. Second, parties may be locked into a pattern of cooperation because abandoning the negotiation process will leave them vulnerable to those who oppose accommodation with the adversaries. It can even place those who initiated the negotiations in personal danger from extremists within their own community.⁴⁶ For example, it has been proposed that before the assassination of Rabin, neither he nor Arafat could have politically survived a collapse of the negotiations, because it would have proven their respective opponents correct.⁴⁷ A related factor has to do with the importance of condemnation of acts of violence for the disruption or continuation of negotiations. As argued by Darby and MacGinty, strong leadership is necessary to condemn incidents of violence. This is more easily done when the peace process is well established.⁴⁸ Thus, it can be expected that *violence at an early stage of a peace process is more likely to disrupt the negotiations, than violence at a later stage*. Whereas violence in the beginning of the South African negotiations tended to polarise the position of the parties, the bombing-campaign by right-wing groups in connection to the election 1994 did not cause a disruption of the process.

A related issue is the progression toward a settlement of the conflict. As argued by Pillar, when an attractive outcome is available, changes in the cost of disagreement must

⁴¹ Hoffman, 1998, pp. 103—104

⁴² Pillar, 1983, pp. 166—167

⁴³ Sisk, 1993, p. 91

⁴⁴ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000, p. 254. A similar point is made by Sisk, in Zartman, (Ed.), 2001, p. 82.

⁴⁵ This is in line with an argument made by Zartman. He argues that the key to successful negotiations in the cases of spoilers, is to make sure that the middle coalition committed to peace is large enough to settle the substantive issues and make the remaining parties co-operate, while isolating the extremists

⁴⁶ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000, p. 250

⁴⁷ Sisk, 1993, p. 82

be more drastic to push bargainers away from it, while bargaining problems which lack such a compromise also lack this kind of stability .⁴⁹ Miall et al points out that a peace process will include both turning points and sticking points.⁵⁰ Therefore, at times, there will be a strong momentum towards a settlement. It could be argued, that during such instances, tolerance for disruptive events such as an incident of violence may be greater and have less influence on the parties involved in the negotiations. Thus, it can be surmised that *violence, when there is no momentum in a peace process, is more likely to disrupt the negotiations, than violence when there is momentum in the peace process.*⁵¹ An example from the peace process in Northern Ireland may illustrate this point. As a settlement drew closer in the spring of 1998, extremist groups on both sides, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and the LVF committed violent acts in an attempt to prevent an agreement from being reached. For example, on the 3rd of March the LVF murdered Protestant and Catholic friends Philip Allen and Damien Trainor, in Poyntzpass, Co. Armagh. This violent act was allegedly designed to destabilise the situation and prevent an agreement. However, the violence proved to be counter-productive — instead of wrecking the negotiations, it made a settlement even more urgent.

How - Targets

The last set of characteristics, related to the dimension of violence, is concerned with the direction or target of the violence and the tactics used by the parties committing the violence.

In a peace process, violence within the group or alliance is common. As argued by for instance Sisk, an often overlooked, but important factor in the endorsement of a peace process, is the unity and coherence of the parties in the conflict.⁵² Much of the literature on conflict resolution has treated parties that come out of armed conflict as homogenous organisations. However, this is rarely the case. Instead they are, as Darby put it, complex organisms performing a variety of functions and providing umbrellas for different interests .⁵³ Some studies acknowledge this fact and view divisions within parties and former allies as a potential obstacle to peace. Kelman, for example, argues that progression toward negotiations may be held back by conflicts between the moderates and extremists within each

⁴⁸ Darby & MacGinty, (Eds.), 2000, p. 234

⁴⁹ Pillar, 1983, p. 169

⁵⁰ Miall et al, 1999, p. 164

⁵¹ The term momentum is difficult to define. Indications of when there is momentum in a peace process are, for example, when a settlement is about to be signed or a summit meeting is planned.

⁵² Sisk, 1996, p. 84.

⁵³ Darby, in Cox et al (Eds.), 2000, p. 268

community.⁵⁴ Furthermore, with the initiation of a peace process, the strains on an organisation are likely to be augmented, not least with regard to the role of violence. In the case of the Hamas, for instance, the peace process triggered a debate on this issue, where the outside leadership was more supportive of violence than the inside leadership (West Bank and Gaze).⁵⁵

What implications does this have for the influence of violence on negotiations? Violent acts which are directed toward the own group, may reveal divisions within a group, or at least be perceived as such by the other actors taking part in the negotiations. In other words, intra-party violence may undermine the actor's legitimacy in negotiations. Violence directed toward members of the same group, may have yet another effect on negotiations. Often it undermines the moderate elements within a group, either because they are directly targeted or because they may find it more difficult to obtain support.⁵⁶ Thus, *violence targeting members within one's own group or alliance is more likely to disrupt the negotiations, than violence targeted towards the opponent*. There are several examples of intra-party violence, the assassination of Israel's Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin being one of the most well known cases. In November 1995, while leaving a peace rally Rabin was shot and killed. A young Israeli opposed to the negotiations carried out the assassination.⁵⁷ People around the world and the parties to the conflict were shocked and terrified. The South African peace process also experienced the assassination of pro-peace elements. Regional and local-level leaders participating in the peace process were especially targeted.⁵⁸

Another dimension concerning the target of the violence is associated with the distinction between expected and unexpected targets. Pillar argues that military trends in a war are likely to have stabilised by the time negotiations begin, since the parties have already demonstrated their limits and ability to continue the war.⁵⁹ Furthermore, he argues that armed action — even large-scale action — will not bring about a diplomatic response if the other party was expecting it to occur.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Kelman, in Simpson (Ed.), 1993, p. 236. A similar point is made by, for example, Atlas & Licklider (1999). They argue that political tension after a negotiated settlement often arises from deepening divisions among former allies, rather than between former enemies.

⁵⁵ Shikaki, 1998

⁵⁶ This points to the distinction between direct and indirect effects of violence.

⁵⁷ The assassin, Yigal Amir, was a member of a highly secretive violence-prone group called Eyal (a Hebrew acronym which translates as "Jewish Fighting Organization"; the group's leader, Avishai Raviv, has also been charged with involvement in the assassination). For a discussion on the assassination of peace makers in the Middle East, see Alianak (2000).

⁵⁸ Sisk, 1993, p. 89

⁵⁹ Pillar, 1983, p. 206

⁶⁰ Pillar, 1983, p. 198

What constitute an expected target is likely to be dependent on the nature of conflict and how the action-reaction patterns have appeared earlier in the course of the conflict.⁶¹ Usually expected targets include military targets such as military bases and members of the security forces. Subsequently, violence toward expected targets, may be viewed as legitimate and acceptable targets, and will not change the parties expectations concerning continued negotiation. On the other hand, attacks against unexpected targets, especially against the background of a peace process, are likely to cause a change of expectations on continued negotiation. It may also bring about a graver reaction and greater outrage among the public. This may set off feelings of revenge and provoke counterattacks. Thus, it can be proposed that *violence directed towards unexpected targets is more likely to disrupt the negotiations, than violence directed towards expected targets*. On the other hand, the opposite argument can be made. Some instances of violence which are directed toward unexpected targets, may marginalise the groups opposed to the negotiations and strengthen those committed to peace.

⁶¹ This touches on the discussion on legitimate targets and target selection in general, see for example Drake, 1998.

The dimensions discussed and their effects on different parties to the negotiations can be summarised in a table along with examples of arguments from each dimension.

Table 1. Dimensions of violence and the influence on negotiations.

| Effect on Negotiations | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| Dimensions of Violence | | Influence on one of the parties | Influence on parties on both sides | Influence on custodians |
| | By whom? (Parties) | E.g. Violence by a party inside the peace process is likely to disrupt the negotiations, since parties on the other side will view it as a lack of commitment to the negotiations. | E.g. Violence where all parties are held accountable is not likely to disrupt the negotiations, since both will realise the cost of continued deaths. | E.g. Violence by actors inside the negotiations is likely to weaken negotiations since the custodians may withdraw their support in punishment. |
| | When? (Timing) | E.g. Violence in the early stages of a peace process is likely to disrupt negotiations, since it may be difficult to condemn acts of violence. | E.g. Violence when there is a momentum in the peace process is likely to disrupt negotiations, since the parties to negotiations will be reluctant to leave it when a settlement is close in time. | E.g. Violence when there is a momentum in the peace process is not likely to weaken negotiations, since the custodians to negotiations will be reluctant to withdraw their support when a settlement is close in time. |
| | How? (Target) | E.g. Violence directed toward unexpected targets, is likely to disrupt negotiations, since it will change the parties expectation on negotiations. | E.g. Violence directed towards expected targets, is not likely to disrupt negotiations, since it will change the parties expectations on the relevance of negotiation. | E.g. Violence within a group or alliance is likely to weaken negotiations, since custodians may not view the parties to the negotiations as legitimate. |

3. CONCLUSIONS

The discussions on the dimensions of violence and its influence on negotiations bring attention to some further thoughts on the role of violence in peace processes. A first reflection is that none of these dimensions alone explain the effect of violence on a peace process. With regard to most of the arguments advanced, the opposite argument could be made. Some of the

propositions may even seem contradictory. Thus, there is a need for further specification of the arguments. For instance, with regard to timing it is important to note that momentum may be very strong at an early stage of a peace process, such as after the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993 between the Israeli government and the PLO. However, the momentum may after some time be undermined by events, thus bringing the negotiations to a stalemate. This implies that some of the dimensions of violence discussed in the paper may be more important than others to explain why incidents of violence sometimes disrupt negotiations and sometimes push the negotiations forward. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that an interaction of factors is important to understand the effect of violence on negotiations.

Second, violence is obviously not the only explanation to why negotiations sometimes are disrupted. Negotiations may be frustrated for several reasons. The parties to the peace process may not agree on how to solve specific issues or may not trust each other to engage further in negotiations. The negotiations in Northern Ireland, for instance, have several times been stalled over the issue of decommissioning. In the Middle East, the negotiations between Israel and Palestine have most recently been severely disrupted, due to the incapacity of the parties to solve central issues such as the future status of Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees.

Finally, with regard to the most recent escalation of violence in the Middle East, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made the following statement:

I know that there are those who believe that as long as the violence is going on, one should not talk. I, personally, disagree with that. I think that is one more reason to talk and it underscores the urgency to bring the parties together.⁶²

This statement points to the need for a systematic analysis of the role of violence in a peace process, in order to reveal patterns with regard to the attributes of violence and the disruption of negotiations. Furthermore, in the context of conflict management, it is important that both the disruptive effects of violence are understood, as well as its catalytic role for a deepened peace process.

⁶² UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in response to a question on the situation in the Middle East, on arrival at Headquarters, New York, 9 april 2001

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