

## Managing Global Affairs: Approaches to Conflict Resolution in International Relation

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### Abstract

*This article critically examines the intricacies of global affairs, focusing on conflict resolution and the establishment of lasting peace. It aims to clarify the multifaceted nature of conflicts, the roles of various actors involved, and the approaches used to alleviate tensions and promote reconciliation. The paper explores the importance of diplomatic relations, negotiations, conciliation, and mediation in resolving and managing disputes. It also investigates the contributions of international organizations and regional initiatives in encouraging peaceful dispute settlement through dialogue. The study underscores the need for comprehensive approaches that address underlying factors and advance reconciliation, justice, and sustainable development. It urges the international community to support collaborative efforts to assist domestic actors and advance inclusive peacebuilding strategies. This academic article provides significant insights into the dynamics, challenges, and strategies for fostering stability and harmony in a rapidly changing world, offering theoretical and practical guidance for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners in conflict resolution.*

**Keywords** International relations, conflict resolution, diplomacy, negotiations, settlement, and peace

### Introduction

Over the past 50 years, the field of applied academic study known as "conflict resolution phenomena" has come of age and been defined in the post-cold war era. Global conflicts don't appear to be a collection of distinct, unconnected episodes that are equally important. Conflicts have a past, which, to some extent, should help to explore the root causes of disputes. States involved in the conflict should rely on their experiences and consider the mistakes that have led to the conflict, its uncertainty, or its repetition. Finally, one should remember that conflict management is a rational and conscious decision-making process. The parties to a conflict (with or without the assistance of other states and international organizations) must take steps to transform, deescalate, or end the conflict conventionally. The range of methods and tools for long-term conflict management is broad, including coercive measures, third-party intervention, and multilateral conferences. An effective way to choose the most effective method of resolving an international conflict is to divide existing methods into unilateral, bilateral (negotiations), and multilateral (third-party intervention). Also important is the role of factors influencing the response choice to the conflict and how certain specific conditions affect the choice of a particular method of conflict management or its final outcome.

The correlation between conflict resolution and international relations is apparent, and IR comprises an extensive array of fields, such as international security studies (ISS), which investigates the dichotomy between peace and war. Following World War II, this subfield emerged to examine the transition of research emphasis from warfare to security and defense. Primarily concentrated on the application of force in international relations. Conflict resolution seeks to transition a society ravaged by war from a state of unfavorable calm to another and from a state of unfavorable peace to one characterized by the existence of peace and harmony. Conflict evaluation and resolution, which are designed to resolve disputes, strive to prevent a relapse into a peace that is detrimental rather than peaceful. Conversely, conflict transformation

endeavors to eradicate the underlying factors that contribute to conflicts and works towards establishing non-violent mechanisms to prevent future conflicts.

Unquestionably, politics impacts research priorities, but conversely, the inverse holds true. Significant parallels can be identified among several historical epochs: the interwar period and the implementation of liberal ideology; the Second World War era and the subsequent acceptance of realistic thinking; the Vietnam War, the development of complex thought; the period following the Cold War, and a multitude of paradigm shifts. Significant connections were established over the period of the Cold War in matters concerning the use of nuclear weapons, deterrence theory, and the division between Eastern and Western countries. Similarly, there is a correlation between the cold war consequences and occurrences of civil wars, aid efforts, and, subsequent to September 11, 2001, terrorist assaults and acts of terrorist activity. However, educational programs generally undergo conceptual and practical development that is distinct from current events.<sup>1</sup>

### Historical background

The concerns about ending and preventing conflict have existed since the beginning of time. There are fleeting glimpses of supernatural and human interaction in old stories like the Odyssey and the story of the Mahabharata.<sup>2</sup> Modern methods can be traced back to major European state-centric efforts to create regional structures in order to prevent great powers from going to war: the disjointed Westphalia peace treaty that concluded the end of the “Thirty Years War” and was established through the post-Napoleonic Concert of Europe framework.<sup>3</sup>

Wars that started in Europe provided rise to a further contemporary initiatives aimed at preventing armed conflict worldwide: the “League of Nations” following the eruption of the “First World War” as well as the ground-breaking United Nations structure subsequent to the “Second World War”. The formation of advanced nuclear arsenals influenced the course of the decades-long Cold War and inspired experts, policymakers, and laypeople to consider ways to prevent nuclear arms races between superpowers as well as ways to preferably include or regulate small-scale disputes without running into the possibility of a potentially catastrophic global conflict among the superpowers.<sup>4</sup> Intense nuclear diplomacy that began in the 1970s contributed to lowering the likelihood that Europe would serve as a nuclear battlefield among the Warsaw Pact and NATO regarding superpower conflict. It cleared the path for the Cold War conclusion time and a reborn phase of collaboration among the Russian Federation and the United States.<sup>5</sup>

In his 1954 study, Waltz juxtaposed three conceptions of international relations that collectively contribute to the explanation of international disputes and war: the chaotic state structure (also known as the systemic scale), which refers to the framework whereby contendants coexist and fight for survival; human beings (also known as the personal level); and the makeup and organization of states (also known as the state level). It appears that

<sup>1</sup>Levy, J. (1998). The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1, 139–165.

<sup>2</sup>Wanis-St. John, A. (2013). Indigenous peace building. In R. Mac Ginty (Ed.), *Rutledge Handbook of Peace building* (pp. 47–57). New York, NY: Rutledge

<sup>3</sup>Kissinger, H. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.

<sup>4</sup>Wright, Q. “The Value for Conflict Resolution of a General Discipline of International Relations.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1957, 1, 3–8

<sup>5</sup>Dougherty, J. E., and Pfaltzgraff Jr., R. L. *Contending Theories of International Relations* (4th Ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996.

interstate warfare is all but gone, though not quite.<sup>6</sup> Weak nations, when authorities are unable to quell social unrest, ease complaints, or put an end to aggressive opposition, represent a different kind of potential.<sup>7</sup>

In 1960, peace studies began in Europe and the United States with the aim of acquiring knowledge about the origins of conflicts using behavioral methodologies.<sup>8</sup> Johan Galtung, one of its prominent scholars, made significant contributions, including the conceptualization of peace as a broader concept. The Concert of Europe, an operational framework designed to maintain a balance of power among the major powers, served as the primary security guarantee and consideration for the inception of the First World War in 1914. The liberal ideology, which placed a high priority on preventing international conflict, was prevalent during the interwar period. It held a firm stance against the realism of the balance of power and covert diplomacy. This fundamental perspective, which was ultimately labeled liberalism-idealism, was state-oriented and predicated on the notion of mutual defense, and it secured peace among states through the creation of permanently functioning diplomatic organizations with multilateral jurisdiction and international law. Two prominent instances of this strategy occurred in 1920, the establishment of the League of Nations and the ratification of the 1928 Kellogg-Briand accord.

Prior to delving into the elucidation of international conflict and peace studies, it is critical to scrutinize the origins of the conflict, as this enables the development of more efficacious frameworks for evaluating global conflicts. Additionally, comprehending the magnitude Peace is crucial when attempting to resolve international conflicts amicably.<sup>9</sup> Thomas Hobbes (1651) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1755) in the 17th and 18th centuries. Hobbes argued that the state of nature for humans was inherently characterized by 'warre'. Hobbes posited that individuals possess a natural inclination to inflict harm upon others of their own species in order to acquire personal advantages, safeguard their own safety, or elevate their social status. He claimed that the natural state of humanity was characterized by a condition where every individual is in conflict with every other individual, resulting in a life that is isolated, impoverished, unpleasant, savage, and brief. Hobbes considers this to be the fundamental state of humanity. Nevertheless, the establishment of the state and its coercive authority guarantee, at the very least, internal tranquility among the populace. The 1960s were four distinct eras in the international relations (IR) discipline that are distinguished by four basic debates. Primarily known as in the 1930s and 40s realist-idealist approach. The second one, referred to as the traditionalist versus behaviorist approach in 1950 and 1960, and the third, referred to as the argument between paradigms, occurred during the years 1970 to 1980. The ongoing discourse between rationalism and reflection, which is the fourth and most recent debate, dates back to the early 1990s. The following tenants are placed in the appropriate past context and connected to security issues in the study of international security and conflict resolution.

The culmination of the Cold War in 1991 was a considerable era with the loss of two dominant powers in a world with just one power, namely the United States. This shift created opportunities for fresh perspectives on the field of international politics. An American president, George W. Bush, served from 1989 to 1993. Bill Clinton, a Democrat, served as the

<sup>6</sup> Themnér, L., and Wallensteen, P. "Armed Conflicts: 1946–2011." *Journal of Peace Research*, 2012, 49, 565–575.

<sup>7</sup> Fearon, J. D., and Laitin, D. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review*, 2003, 97, 75–90.

<sup>8</sup> Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Rod Hay (London: Andrew Crooke, 1651).

American president from 1993 to 2001. Both presidents adhered to a "constructive multilateralism" policy, which sought to solidify American preeminence while also placing significant reliance on multilateral mechanisms, most notably the United Nations. The strategy utilized a pragmatic, idealistic perspective, combining realist power politics with the principles of human rights, democracy, dignity, equality, and multilateral conflict resolution. Madeleine Albright, who held the position of UN ambassador of the US from 1993 to 1997 and Secretary of State from 1997 until 2001, is coequality, human originating the phrase multilateralism," and the strategy was seen both as a means of lowering expenses, injuries, and US exposure to missions abroad and as a "peace dividend" brought about upon the conclusion of the Cold War.

### **From Cold War Tensions to Global Peacekeeping**

From the era of the Cold War to peacekeeping procedures, historic events like the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the USSR brought about a significant and profound transformation. During that period of time, the intense competition between superpowers came to an end. However, the anticipated establishment of a peaceful and harmonious global order was disrupted by the sudden outbreak of many civil conflicts, with the situation in Yugoslavia being particularly noteworthy. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros-Ghali, released the U.N. Peace Agenda in 1992. which provided a structure for international conflict resolution that remains in use today. The study delineated four primary responsibilities for the United Nations and other entities: preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. While there is currently no unanimous agreement among experts in the ICR field about the exact definitions of these domains, the report from the secretary general provides the most often used definitions.

### **International Organizations and Agreements for Managing Global Conflicts**

The transfer of power from a nation to a third party has not been considered since the inception of the United Nations, which significantly restricts, albeit does not eradicate, the organization's ability to function as an independent agent. In the practical international relations framework, the notion of collective defense has effectively supplanted the United Nations' principle of collective security. Collective defense entails a number of nations safeguarding their citizens against attacks by other nations. The security landscape during the Cold War was defined by military alliances formed for the purpose of collective defense. One such alliance was the NATO alliance, which stood in opposition to other alliances. The Warsaw Pact, the socialist bloc founded in 1955, and the capitalist bloc founded in 1949.<sup>10</sup> The implementation of the aforementioned approach yielded favorable outcomes, most notably the endorsement of the LTBT, which was signed in 1963. Following this, in 1969, the initial stage of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, namely SALT 1, commenced with the purpose of culminating in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty's ratification in 1972. The subsequent American administration, under the leadership of Richard Nixon, upheld this policy of détente until the late 1970s. While it did not completely eliminate the rivalry between superpowers, it substantially reduced the likelihood of war.

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<sup>10</sup> other agreements are the hot-line agreement, the direct line of communication between the American government and the Soviet government (1963), the peaceful uses of outer space (1967), the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), the Seabed Arms Control Treaty (1971), the Biological Weapons Convention (1972), and the second round of SALT between 1972 and 1979.



In 1960, peace studies began in Europe and the United States with the aim of acquiring knowledge about the origins of conflicts using behavioral methodologies. In addition to their desire to defuse the situation for political, economic, and other reasons, the UN, NATO, and EU are working to put an end to it. If we take the USA-Iraq relationship as an example, we can see that the nation that dominates the world stage and plays a major role in NATO, the UN, and other alliances, attacking the country due to its natural resources, economic growth, etc. The question of who should resolve conflicts and who should not is very difficult and complex because, as more realistically seen, organizations and nations that get involved in conflict resolution also contribute to and profit from conflict escalation.

### **International Relations and conflict analysis**

There are many different lenses through which to define, prevent, or resolve modern conflicts entwined with identity politics; the discipline of international relations that has been dominant for policymaking is merely one of them, and frequently a flawed one. We can reconstruct identity and conflicts as performative rather than static phenomena by using alternative conceptual frameworks to challenge the way we currently understand them. These revolutionary frameworks can be used in policymaking and are becoming more and more significant in conflict resolution strategies. Conflict evaluation involves the methodical examination of the factors, participants, mechanisms, and settlement of conflicts worldwide. This approach incorporates various fields of study and aims to consider conflicts in a thoughtful manner while also providing practical recommendations for conflict management and resolution.

The extensive scope associated with Conflict analysis is additionally evident in the diverse range of methodologies that are put into practice. This diversity is partially associated with the disparities in the research's general objective. For instance, certain studies make attempts to foresee conflict behavior and perspectives through the application to game theory and computational modeling<sup>11</sup>. Other studies strive to have practical implications for policymakers and to bridge the divide between theory and application<sup>12</sup>. In these kinds of research, organized comparisons or single case studies are often utilized for advancement and conflict management, as well as for standard and generic recommendations. In this regard, it is important to ascertain the most advantageous timing and approaches for implementing specific conflict-resolution strategies during each stage of a cycle of conflicts. Lastly, an increasing number of investigations employ narrative and ethnography to decode the challenges associated with particular contextual characteristics, conflicts, and international frameworks. In summary, the areas of study and practice related to conflict analysis are extensive.<sup>13</sup>

### **Approaches to International Conflict Resolution**

Various tools regarding international conflict resolutions between parties are available to manage and achieve the target goal of conflicts. These tools can be independently resolved or assisted by the UN or regional organizations. Few are here:

<sup>11</sup> Maoz, Z., and MOR, B. (1996), 'Enduring rivalries: The early years'. *International Political Science Review*, 17(2): 141–160.

<sup>12</sup> Fisher, R.J. (2009), 'Interactive Conflict Resolution: Dialogue, Conflict Analysis, and Problem Solving'. In: Sandole, D., Byrne, S., Sandole-Staroste, I., and Senehi, J., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. London and New York,

<sup>13</sup> Monroe, K., Chiu, W., Martin, A. and Portman, B. (2009), 'What is political psychology?' *Perspectives on Politics*, 7(4): 859–882.

- **Assessment, Prevention, and Early Warning**

There has been a growing focus on the early detection and prevention of violent disputes, which is a goal outlined in the UN Charter but not often put into effect.<sup>14</sup> Research in this field substantiates the saying that it is more effective to avoid a problem in its early stages than to deal with it after it has escalated. We believe that prevention is the act of resolving conflicts in their early phases of escalation. The objective of conflict prevention is not to achieve complete peace but rather to avert its expression via violent means. From this perspective, prevention refers to the use of conflict settlement and supervision techniques during the first phases of a conflict, before it escalates into violence. It also involves using these tools in post-conflict scenarios to anticipate the potential reoccurrence of armed conflict. There are basically two ways to promptly warn: first, detecting nations or people with systemic circumstances related to conflict, and second, following the closest causes of violent disputes or signals of impending violence. The initial strategy involves conducting numerical evaluations of nations, which have been much more susceptible to conflict hazards. This work was accomplished by Ted Robert Gurr, who examines incentive structures and capabilities for uprisings, and Paul Collier and his fellows, whose work uses econometrics for predicting the likelihood of disputes. Due to current studies on the origins and circumstances of aggression, governments, international non-governmental organizations, and NGOs are incorporating structured conflict assessment tools into their decision-making processes. These frameworks help them analyze the situation and evaluate if a certain action would improve or worsen the dynamics of the conflict.

- **Negotiation to Resolve Violent Conflicts**

Zartman's ripeness theory, which holds that a mutually harming deadlock, along with the jointly tempting chances to break out of the impasse and receptive approval by each party's credibility, are the prerequisites for an effective baptism, is the most significant theory about time negotiation initiatives (Zartman, 1989). According to Zartman (2007), p. 465, negotiations are "the initial phase of conflict resolution." While certain of the complexities of social and interorganizational negotiation are present during worldwide negotiations, other factors to consider include large diplomatic bureaucracies and the potential for armed forces intimidation, the influence of non-state actors and transnational players, a lack of a comprehensive legal structure, and the impact of various world events on any particular negotiation.<sup>15</sup> Most people agree that the peace treaty of 1648 in Westphalia was a turning point in the transformation of international relations and diplomacy. Another important turning point in diplomatic negotiations came during the Congress of Vienna in 1814–1815, as European countries attempted to rebuild peace and reshape the political fabric of Europe in the Napoleonic Conflict context.

- **Utilizing Case Studies as a Tool for Peacebuilding**

Case studies like the 1962–1964 Cuban Missile Crisis provide powerful illustrations of the way diplomatic talks might prevent disastrous wars. Led to a diplomatic settlement that avoided a nuclear confrontation among the US and the USSR, helped by direct talks and backchannel conversations amongst leaders. The incident made clear how crucial diplomacy is

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<sup>14</sup> Zartman, I. W. *Cowardly Lions: Missed Opportunities to Prevent Deadly Conflict and State Collapse*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005

<sup>15</sup> Hopmann, P. T. *The Negotiation Process and the Resolution of International Conflicts* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996

to handling high-stakes conflicts and how crucial dialogue and negotiation are to lowering tensions.

- **Mediation**

Civil conflicts are frequently settled by multilateral mediation, which is defined as talks carried out with third-party assistance where both sides find it difficult to negotiate directly<sup>16</sup>(Rubin, 1981). Mediators can be countries, the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, international or local non-governmental organizations, religious groups<sup>17</sup>(Huda, 2010; <sup>18</sup>Abu-Nimer, Khoury, and Welty, 2007), notable people operating alone, or an assortment of such players. The prospect of non-neutral mediators being paired with coercive mediation renders differentiating mediation from distinct third-party positions problematic.

- **Sanctions and Inducements**

Hard incentives, including financial penalties, have additionally been employed to facilitate international dispute settlement by depriving target governments or administrations of access to armaments, investment, export markets, or aid<sup>19</sup>. Aid for development could help to resolve global conflicts. Strategies for the peacemaking process frequently involve developing civil society and political organizations to promote local efforts to promote peace. Instruction in negotiation, mediation, and public relations, campaigning, and various other competencies may empower societies to settle conflicts locally and nonviolently. Constructive incentives, repercussions, and humanitarian assistance may serve as mutually beneficial weapons of sovereignty, allowing those involved to impact the dynamics of conflict without resorting to forceful diplomacy or military measures.

- **Peace building: Liberal, Indigenous, and Hybridized**

Peace building is becoming more and more popular as an alternative to or in conjunction with peaceful conflict resolutions.<sup>20</sup> Leaderships had a significant impact in this regard. Peacebuilding involves international conflict prevention measures, post-conflict rebuilding, the establishment of states, and democratic change in order to avoid recurring violent conflicts. Peace building, irrespective of this broader means, has begun to be usurped by developed-world nations and civic society, which are criticized for forcing its exterior concept of peace on those who endured its deprivation. The following has caused others to juxtapose the "liberal peace building" paradigm with "indigenous" reconciliation perspectives.<sup>21</sup> prosecutions for acts of war, democracy, voting, and violations of human rights standards and counter propose with reconciliation, regulated peacekeeping, or other means of bringing about peace.

## **Operational conflict prevention implications**

<sup>16</sup> Rubin, J. Z. (Ed.). Dynamics of Third-Party Intervention: Kissinger in the Middle East. New York: Praeger, 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Huda, Q. (Ed.). Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Abu-Nimer, M., Khoury, A., and Welty, E. (Eds.). Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Hufbauer, G., Schott, J., Elliott, K. A., and Oegg, B. Economic Sanctions Reconsidered (3rd Ed.). Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Lederach, J. P. Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1997

<sup>21</sup> Mac Ginty, R. "Indigenous Peace building versus the Liberal Peace." Cooperation and Conflict, 2008, 43, 139–163

- **Digital diplomacy**

The pandemic outbreak necessitated rapid adaptation. Diplomacy shifted online, resulting in both constrained involvement and increased involvement, which provided the proliferation of remote interactions. During COVID-19, women-led reconciliation activities adopted novel technologies like Zoom, Signal, and What Sapp. 145 While the world following the pandemic has reverted to greater in-person connection, the shift towards online involvement is not expected to reverse. Digital technology is potentially useful in conflicts negotiation, for example, by offering enhanced interaction venues for the negotiation sides. Promoting diversity by assisting in the identification and involvement of parties who ought to be at the negotiation table, particularly those that reflect historically marginalized groups like women and young people, and assisting with tactical communication through the utilization of social media to encourage beneficial results and harmonious narratives. The UN Assistance Operation in Libya (UNSMIL), for instance, carried out "the initial, massive virtual conversation digitally among Libyan youths" in 2020. The United Nations general secretary unveiled a plan in 2021 towards the digital evolution of UN peacekeeping, emphasizing the security of troops and the execution of the mission. When it comes to the connection between new technology and peacekeeping operations, two intricate issues ought to be given priority: safeguarding civilians against harm stemming from artificial intelligence and other potential violations of their fundamental liberties; and fostering internal collaboration and capacity building to guarantee data security and insider network defense against actions that could jeopardize the peacekeeping mission and, consequently, the legitimacy of the United Nations mandate.

## **Conclusion**

The reasons behind disputes and, thus, the methods for resolving them appear to be getting more intricate than before. Together with the traditional root causes of conflict, however, there are also novel factors and reasons. The time-tested strategies of governance and shared safety, together with political and financial measures (negotiations and restrictions, or hooks and penalties), remain the cornerstones of our nation's strategies for settling international conflicts. These initiatives are backed by fresh actors such as the United Nations' new reserve group of mediators and members of civil society, involving religious organizations that get involved in conflicts, arising standards and procedures of examination, preventative measures, as well as intervention, along with the connection between outside enforced peacebuilding and restricted preferences. There are new developments in the application of technology for tracking and avoiding conflict. Our comprehension of the financial consequences of warfare and peacebuilding, along with the aspects pertaining to global conflict resolution related to peace and security for humans, has improved. However, there is still a great deal to be undertaken in the areas of theoretical advancement and practical application to support the development of more lawful, diverse neighborhoods that do not incite conflict or rely on those who are part of them. Human ingenuity may be needed to mold the conflict's landscape and adjust to the changing needs of populations impacted by the dispute in order to resolve catastrophic conflicts worldwide. Another worldwide epidemic sped up collaboration inside the international system in the middle of the 2020s. Despite the fact that this subsequent worldwide epidemic, which struck shortly after COVID-19, predicted a catastrophe for public health as well as an economic, political, and social one, its effects were much less severe than anticipated because important players, both state and nonstarter, were willing to create interconnected strategies for addressing the issue. Several years later, the epidemic began, and this unprecedented degree of international collaboration spurred efforts on other fronts, including combating climate change, preventing violence, and promoting peace. Compared to 2023, the entire world has changed and is presently in greater prosperity in 2033.