

seven

The Problem-Solving Workshop in Conflict Resolution

Herbert C. Kelman

THE idea that face-to-face communication among parties in conflict, in a context other than diplomatic negotiations, may contribute to conflict management and resolution is certainly not new. The American Friends Service Committee, in particular, has pioneered in such endeavors. In the last few years we have seen some exciting new experiments in this type of international communication, based on concepts and techniques from the behavioral sciences. Notable among these are the exercises in "controlled communication" of John Burton and his associates at the Centre for the Analysis of Conflict at University College, London,¹ and the Fermeda Workshop, organized by Leonard Doob and his associates at Yale University.² Both approaches are designed to bring together representatives of nations or national (ethnic) communities involved in an active conflict, for face-to-face communication in a relatively isolated setting, free from governmental and diplomatic protocol. Discussions, following a relatively unstructured agenda, take place under the guidance of social scientists who are knowledgeable both about group process and about conflict theory. The talks are designed to produce changes in the participants' perceptions and attitudes and thus to facilitate creative problem-solving.

This chapter summarizes the Burton and Doob approaches and then compares, evaluates, and attempts to integrate them.³ The ge-

1 See John W. Burton, *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

2 See Leonard W. Doob, ed., *Resolving Conflict in Africa: The Fermeda Workshop* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

3 This chapter is a product of a research program on social influence and

neric term "problem-solving workshop"¹ is used to refer to both approaches, since it emphasizes the fact that these approaches utilize "workshop" techniques, but that their orientation is toward problem-solving rather than sensitivity training or personal growth as such.

The workshop approach (and psychological analysis more generally) is often greeted with skepticism; indeed, I share some of that skepticism myself. Before turning to the work of Burton and Doob, therefore, let me clarify some assumptions that I bring to this analysis—and with which, I believe, Burton and Doob generally concur.

(1) I do not assume that most international conflicts are simply products of misunderstanding and misperception that can be cleared up through improved communication.² Real conflicts of interest or competing definitions of national interest are often at the center of such disputes. In such cases, improved understanding may demonstrate more clearly that the goals of the conflicting parties are indeed incompatible. Communication may still be useful, in that it may reveal more precisely to each party what the costs of pursuing various alternative policies are likely to be. Nevertheless, more accurate perception would clearly not alter the realities of the underlying conflict.

Moreover, even where there is misperception, face-to-face communication can directly affect only the perceptions and attitudes of the participating individuals. International conflicts, however, usually involve not only individual misperceptions, but also institutionalized ones—that is, misperceptions that are built into and perpetuated through the decision-making apparatus. Vested interests and organizational commitments become attached to a given perception of a conflict situation at various levels in the decision-making bureaucracy, making it difficult for changed perceptions to penetrate.

Clearly, then, problem-solving workshops are not meant as panaceas or as total solutions. They are merely inputs into a more complex resolution process. They are not alternatives to diplomatic and political negotiations, but supplementary or preparatory to them. Burton argues that his procedures of controlled communication are potentially significant and central inputs into conflict resolution; yet

¹ I have discussed some of these issues in the introductory and concluding chapters of *International Behavior: A Social-Psychological Analysis*, ed. Herbert C. Kelman (New York: Holt, 1965); and in "The Role of the Individual in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Considerations," *Journal of International Affairs* 24, no. 1 (1970): 1-17.

² I have discussed some of these issues in the introductory and concluding chapters of *International Behavior: A Social-Psychological Analysis*, ed. Herbert C. Kelman (New York: Holt, 1965); and in "The Role of the Individual in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Considerations," *Journal of International Affairs* 24, no. 1 (1970): 1-17.

he too speaks of these procedures as preparing the ground for negotiation and as establishing the preconditions of agreement—not as substituting for negotiation.

(2) The problem-solving workshops discussed here are not to be equated with T-groups or sensitivity training as usually defined. They do use some of the techniques and approaches derived from T-group experience. The Fermida Workshop utilized fairly standard T-groups during its first phase, although in retrospect its organizers are inclined to view this decision as a mistake. In any event, the main task of these workshops is not to increase personal sensitivity, or even interpersonal trust and understanding of the other side; nor is there any assumption that international conflict can be redefined and resolved at an interpersonal level. Workshops are designed to promote trust and openness in communication. However, these are seen not as ends in themselves, but as means toward the development of an atmosphere in which creative problem-solving becomes possible. Unlike the standard T-group, the problem-solving workshop is oriented toward carrying out a concrete task and achieving a usable product.

THE BURTON EXERCISES IN CONTROLLED COMMUNICATION

John Burton's book⁶ and other papers on controlled communication draw on experiences gained in two workshops, one involving an international conflict and the other an intercommunal conflict. I was on the panel of social scientists in the second exercise, and I base my impressions of the approach on that experience. It differed in several ways from the first exercise and from further ones that Burton and his associates are currently planning—both because of different circumstances and because the technique itself is still evolving—but it illustrates Burton's general orientation.

The exercise dealt with the conflict between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus. It was held in the fall of 1966, in a university setting in London. It lasted a week. The participants included two representatives of the Greek community and two of the Turkish community. They were selected by the top decision-makers in their respective communities, but they participated essentially as private citizens rather than as official representatives. The exercise was presented to them basically as an academic project, which would meet

6 Burton, *Conflict and Communication*.

resolution of other international or intercommunal conflicts, especially through the development of patterns of functional cooperation; and by systematically attempting to explain why solutions that seemed very reasonable to one party caused anxiety and rejection in the other. The social scientists did not themselves propose solutions, nor did they convey the expectation that an agreed-upon solution was to be found. The assumption was that solutions would eventually have to be achieved through formal channels of negotiation, but that new insights about the conflict and new ideas for its resolution emerging from the workshop would be communicated to the relevant decision-makers and might thus influence the negotiation process.

The outcome of the workshop is difficult to assess. The parties seem to have communicated to each other some new and potentially important facts about their respective goals and intentions. Some new insights about the origins and escalation of the conflict have apparently been developed. Certainly by the end of the sessions the parties were able to communicate with each other more freely and within a shared frame of reference. Moreover, there is no doubt that the new information and insights acquired by the participants were transmitted to the top leaders of their own groups, because of the relationship of the participants to the decision-making process. We can only speculate, however, about the extent to which and the way in which these entered into subsequent negotiations. At the time of the exercise, the two parties had not been in official communication with each other for some time. Shortly after the exercise, communication between them was resumed. It is quite likely that the exercise played some role in this development, though we cannot be certain. At the very least, it may have provided a mechanism for the two sides to test each other out in a noncommittal fashion and an opportunity to learn whether resumption of negotiations would be fruitful.

THE FERMEDA WORKSHOP

The Fermeda Workshop was named after a hotel in the mountains of South Tyrol, where the Yale team of Leonard W. Doob, William J. Foltz, and Robert B. Stevens organized a workshop focusing on the border disputes in the horn of Africa between Somalia and its two neighbors, Ethiopia and Kenya. I did not witness this workshop firsthand. My information is based on various written accounts⁷ and on

7. Leonard W. Doob, William J. Foltz, and Robert B. Stevens, "The Fermeda Workshop: A Different Approach to Border Conflicts in Eastern Africa," *Journal of Psychology* 73, no. 2 (November 1969): 249-66; Doob, "Resolving Conflict in Africa; Walton, "Problem-Solving Workshop."

the interests of the sponsoring organization in the analysis of concrete conflict situations. At the same time, the organizers indicated that the communication between the two parties might also contribute to resolution of their conflict. The exercise's potential relevance to conflict resolution was clearly understood on all sides, but the organizers made no promises—nor did the parties, in agreeing to participate, commit themselves to anything other than a contribution to an academic enterprise.

In addition to the four Cypriots, a panel of six social scientists (one of whom served as chairman) participated in the discussions. Meetings were held each morning and afternoon during the week (and continued informally during lunch and tea). The discussions were relatively unstructured and designed to encourage participants to share their definitions of the conflict, their perceptions of their own and others' goals and actions, and their assessments of the costs and benefits of alternative conflict resolutions. The chairman and the panel tried to move the discussion away from mutual accusations and legalistic attempts to assign blame and toward a behavioral analysis of the conflict's causes, escalation, and perpetuation, as well as toward efforts to explore possible solutions.

The discussions can be roughly divided into three phases. In the first, the conflicting parties presented their respective views of the conflict; the social scientists generally intervened only to ask questions of detail, which sometimes helped sharpen and clarify an issue or lay the groundwork for subsequent analysis. During the second phase, the social scientists presented various models of conflict. The discussion following each focused first on the origins and processes of conflict in general, and then on the specific conflict at hand. Applicability of the various models to the Cyprus situation was explored, largely by the parties themselves. The social scientists intervened to inform and elaborate, and to propose tentative interpretations of the conflict in terms of the models presented. The social scientists used conflict theory and other theoretical concepts as a psychotherapist might use personality theory: they provided general models for analyzing conflict and then encouraged the parties to confront possible implications of these models for their situation. Where relevant, they drew on these models to raise questions about the two parties' differing perceptions of the same situation.

During the third phase, the parties considered various approaches to resolving the conflict. The social scientists contributed to this phase in two ways: by bringing in relevant experiences from the

personal communications with several of the participants, particularly with Leonard Doob and Richard Walton. In this connection, I also benefited from a working conference sponsored by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in May, 1970, in which experiences from both the Fermeda Workshop and the controlled communication exercises were presented, discussed, and evaluated in detail.⁸

The African participants in the Fermeda Workshop included six Somalis, six Ethiopians, and six Kenyans. The Ethiopian and Kenyan participants all held academic posts; the participants from Somalia—which had no university—were professionals or civil servants working in areas unrelated to foreign policy. Plans for the workshop were cleared with the three governments, but the participants were selected by the organizers and came as private individuals, rather than as official representatives. Participants from the same country did not constitute a team and, as far as is known, did not even communicate with each other in anticipation of the workshop. They were told that the workshop would follow the format of sensitivity-training groups, and that some innovative solutions to the countries' border problems were hoped for. They knew this was a highly exploratory effort, which might or might not yield significant results. In addition to the African participants and the three Yale organizers, the workshop included four American specialists in sensitivity training and related techniques, who came in the roles of "trainers" or "process consultants."

The workshop lasted two weeks, with a two-day break in the middle. From the beginning, the participants were broken up into two T-groups, each including three Somalis, three Kenyans, three Ethiopians, two trainers, and one or two of the organizers. During the first few days, the groups, which met intensively, followed standard T-group procedures, aimed at developing self-awareness and open communication among the participants. The trainers did not structure or lead the discussions, but functioned as observers and interpreters of group process. During this period, there were also several meetings of the total group in which theoretical notions about leadership styles and about cooperative and competitive strategies were presented by the trainers and illustrated through simulation exercises. These sessions were designed both to improve the working processes within the T-groups and to provide concepts that could be drawn upon in later discussions of the border disputes.

8. See "Social Psychological Techniques and the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes," *UNTAR Research Reports*, no. 1 (1970).

During these first few days, the meetings did not deal at all with the substantive issues relating to the border disputes. They focused on individual and group development instead. During the second phase, the workshop turned specifically to the border disputes. First, participants met in their three separate national groups; each group was asked to list its own grievances and the grievances of the other two national groups, as they perceived them, and to present these lists to the total group. The procedure did not work too well, since two of the groups failed to engage in the requested role reversal. In general, the total group seemed to make little progress at this point, and the participants' planning committee (which had since been formed) decided to revert to the original T-groups to work out concrete solutions. The general assembly was used during this phase for presentation and practice of brainstorming techniques and for reports of the activities of the individual T-groups.

Within each of the two T-groups, proposals were developed that all group members, regardless of their national affiliations, were willing to endorse. These proposals were then brought to the general assembly with the aim of achieving a joint solution. However, this particular effort did not succeed, apparently because the trust developed in the T-groups did not carry over to the larger group. National differences came to the fore; participants who had agreed to a solution hammered out in their individual T-group sometimes reverted to rigid defenses of their national position; in some cases, participants from one T-group accused fellow nationals from the other group of betraying their national cause by subscribing to a detrimental proposal. The workshop closed without being able to meet the staff's original goal of developing a joint proposal supported by the total group.

Though the workshop did not arrive at a joint proposal, it did have some positive outcomes. Within the T-groups, trust and an openness of communication developed. These yielded, in each group, a proposal for resolving the conflict that was generally supported by all group members. In response to a questionnaire, the participants indicated (on the whole) that they had acquired new knowledge about the cultures and problems of the other countries, that they had gained a better understanding of the other countries' views of the disputes, and that they were somewhat more open now to alternative solutions. Participants did not feel that the workshop yielded many innovative ideas for solving the border disputes. About a year after the workshop, Doob carried out follow-up interviews with thirteen of the eighteen African participants to gain some impressions of the

impact the workshop had on them and on their respective countries.⁹ On the whole, their reactions to the experience (and in some cases to the workshop techniques) were positive: they felt close to the other participants, regardless of nationality, and eager to remain in touch with them, and they showed an understanding of the intense emotional meanings that their respective positions had for each of the parties. On the other hand, their own attitudes on the best ways to resolve the conflict were not appreciably affected. News of the workshop reached important officials in each of the three countries, although most of the participants did not make extensive efforts to communicate their experiences.

THE TWO APPROACHES COMPARED

In comparing the two approaches—and particularly in noting the differences between them—we must keep in mind that neither one represents a “closed system,” a set of established and tightly defined procedures. Both are seen by their inventors as exploratory, as requiring further refinement, and as open to change, extension, and recombination. In this spirit, differences between the two approaches do not necessarily reflect incompatible views, but rather different starting-points and experiences. There is every reason to suppose that the two approaches can borrow from each other and be combined in various ways, and to treat them as two variants of a more general model, each applicable to a special set of circumstances.

The two approaches have several important features in common: (1) *Setting*. In both approaches, workshops are held in settings isolated from political and diplomatic environments. The Fermida Workshop was held in a physically isolated setting; the London exercise was held in an academic setting, removed from the pressures and publicity that typically surround official negotiations. The isolation is partly to reduce distraction and permit participants to concentrate intensively on the task. More important, it allows participants to explore issues while free of constant preoccupation with the public statements they must issue and the impressions they will be making on their various constituencies.

(2) *Sponsorship*. Both types of workshops are sponsored by academic organizations, independent of governmental or intergovernmental agencies. The governments concerned were informed and

consulted and, in fact, gave their approval of the workshops, but the workshops had no official status whatsoever. The sponsors' legitimacy depended entirely on their status as scholars and people of good will, whose interest in the exercise derived from their research concerns and their desire to make a constructive contribution to the resolution of a violent conflict. The organization of the Fermida Workshop was greatly aided, however, by the backing of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

(3) *Participants*. Although the two approaches differed significantly in the criteria for selecting participants, both sets of participants had two characteristics in common. On the one hand, they were prestigious members of their respective communities, who at least potentially (in the London workshop quite clearly and, indeed, by the nature of their selection) had access to their top decision-makers. On the other hand, they participated in the sessions as private citizens who spoke only for themselves. Even the participants in the London workshop, who were almost certainly briefed by their respective administrations, did not come as official, instructed delegates.

(4) *Interpersonal atmosphere*. In both workshops the discussions and the environments were designed to create an informal atmosphere in which participants would be free to express their views openly and to get to know and respect each other as individuals. The atmosphere fostered mutual trust, a sense of shared values, and commitment to a common task, cutting across national or ethnic divisions.

(5) *Discussion format*. Central to both workshops was the opportunity for direct, face-to-face communication among the conflicting parties. The agenda for discussion was relatively unstructured. The initiative for introducing issues—or for following up on inputs from the third parties—was largely left to the participants themselves. Third parties refrained from imposing their definitions of the situation and their interpretations of actions and events on the participants; rather, they encouraged participants to speak for themselves—to describe their own motives and perceptions, express their own hopes and fears. In particular, both workshops were committed to the idea that solutions must emerge from the group discussions, rather than be imposed from the outside.

(6) *Role of third parties*. Both workshops were under the general guidance of third parties, defined in terms of their professional skills and knowledge as theoretical or applied behavioral scientists rather than in terms of some official capacity as mediators. Though they

⁹ Leonard W. Doob, “The Impact of the Fermida Workshop on the Conflicts in the Horn of Africa,” *International Journal of Group Tensions* 1, no. 1 (1971): 91–101.

participated in the proceedings, their primary task was to provide tools that the participants could utilize in their discussions and analyses, to offer relevant information and suggest interpretations, and to facilitate the group process in other ways. In short, they played a role similar to that of the psychotherapist. And like psychotherapists, they tried to maintain analytical rather than evaluative attitudes toward the participants' pronouncements.

These common features of the two approaches are essentially designed to achieve two ends. First and foremost, they are designed to give participants the freedom, opportunity, and impetus to move away from a rigid reiteration of official positions and from efforts to justify their own sides and score points against the other side, and, instead, to absorb new information, explore new ideas, revise their perceptions, reassess their attitudes, and engage in a process of creative problem-solving. The isolated setting, the academic sponsorship, the participants' nonrepresentative roles, the informal atmosphere, the development of trust, the encouragement of self-expression and of an analytical orientation, and the inputs and attitudes of the social scientists all are geared to facilitating these processes.

Second, some common features of both approaches are designed to enhance the probability that the new information and ideas, the changed perceptions and attitudes, and the innovative proposals for solutions generated by the workshop will be fed into the policy process. The selection of potentially influential participants, the coordination with their governments, and a format that allows the definition of the issues and the development of solutions to emerge out of group discussions, rather than being externally imposed (thus discouraging analyses and solutions that go considerably beyond what the decision-makers are prepared to entertain), are geared to achieving this end. Both approaches, it seems to me (as I shall elaborate later), are more effectively designed to produce changes in participants than to feed such changes into the policy process—although the balance between these two ends is one respect in which the two approaches differ from each other.

Let me turn to some of the differences between the two approaches. In terms of the six categories used to describe common features of the two approaches, several distinctions can be drawn. (1) The Fermeda Workshop, held in a physically isolated setting, placed greater emphasis on the creation of a "cultural island" and on the psychological insulation of workshop participants. (2) The London workshop was sponsored by a research center concerned with

international relations theory, diplomacy, and the analysis of conflict, representing a research project within that center's ongoing program; the Fermeda Workshop was sponsored by social scientists interested in African studies and staffed by specialists in group process, representing an experimental application of the human-relations training laboratory to conflict resolution. (3) Participants in the London exercise were considerably closer to foreign policy decision-making and came as a team; those in the Fermeda Workshop were more removed from the foreign policy process and came as individuals, thus manifesting greater diversity and division within each national contingent. (4) The Fermeda Workshop placed more deliberate emphasis on creating an interpersonal atmosphere marked by emotional involvement, group solidarity, and mutual trust, and in forging cross-national bonds within the working group. (5) To facilitate discussion of the substantive issues of the conflict, the London workshop made greater use of theoretical models of conflict and of illustrative cases, while the Fermeda Workshop focused more extensively on the ongoing group process and interpersonal behavior; in discussion of the substantive issues themselves, the Fermeda Workshop made more deliberate efforts than the London workshop to hammer out an agreed-upon proposal for resolving the conflict. (6) In the London workshop, the social scientists made more theoretical inputs, both in their own presentations and in their interventions, and they were generally more active in the course of the discussion itself; in the Fermeda Workshop, they provided more feedback on the basis of their observations of group process and were more active in programming the workshop activities—in setting the tasks to which the participants were to devote themselves.

These differences in detail reflect certain underlying differences between the two approaches, both in their conception of the enterprise as such and in their definition of the workshop task. They differ in their views of the workshop's relationship to the larger process of conflict resolution, and in their views of precisely what ought to be happening within the workshop itself. My formulation of these differences may be overly sharp, but it should be helpful in pointing up the unique contributions of each approach.

How do the two approaches differ, first, in their conceptions of the enterprise? As I have indicated before, both are concerned with creating an atmosphere in which change—in the form of revised perceptions and attitudes and innovative solutions—can take place, in the hope that this change can be fed into the political processes of conflict resolution. However, the two approaches differ, it seems to

me, in their conceptions of precisely where the workshop fits into these political processes and what it is intended to accomplish.

In Burton's conception, the workshop is much more closely linked to national and international political processes. The concept of controlled communication flows out of a theoretical orientation toward international relations, containing such propositions as these: that "international conflict is a spill-over from internal or communal strife";¹⁰ that "the starting point in analysis and resolution of conflict is at the systems level of highest transactions";¹¹ that "conflict occurs as a result of ineffective communication, and that its resolution, therefore, must involve processes by which communication can be made to be effective";¹² and that "since the resolution of conflict depends upon effective communication, it can come only from the parties themselves. Processes are required that alter perceptions, and promote the points of view of the parties, and not of third parties."¹³ In Burton's view, then, procedures like those of controlled communication represent crucial steps in the conflict resolution process.

In keeping with this conception, Burton's workshops are closely coordinated with the relevant decision-makers. The participants must be individuals who are fully aware of the positions of these decision-makers. Though they need not be officials themselves (and do not come to the workshop in any official capacity), they are nominated by the top decision-makers and are in touch with them both before and after the workshop. Burton himself, both before and after conducting a workshop, tries to establish and maintain contact with the relevant governmental and intergovernmental agencies. In the first project conducted by the London Centre, the meetings themselves extended over a period of several months: after an initial week of intensive discussions, the group reconvened under the Centre's auspices whenever the parties felt that a session would be useful. In principle, then, controlled communication is not a one-shot exercise, but can be tied into a continuing process of conflict resolution at various points in time. Of course, such coordination of workshops with ongoing political processes is greatly facilitated when the sponsoring organization is specifically devoted to research on international conflict.

The Fermeda Workshop was further removed from the political process. Though the organizers communicated with the governments

concerned, their purpose was to inform the governments and get their approval, rather than to coordinate directly with decision-making bodies. Though the participants were potentially influential members of their societies, they were selected by the organizers and could not be viewed as even unofficial representatives of their respective governments. Both Burton and Doob took pains to hold the workshop itself in a setting isolated from the pressures of political and diplomatic environments, but Doob placed greater emphasis on separating the total enterprise from the political process.

In Doob's conception, as I understand it, a workshop can contribute to conflict resolution by creating certain products that can then be fed into the political process. In other words, the workshop itself is not directly linked to national decision-making or diplomatic efforts at conflict resolution, but its products may well be relevant to these activities. The workshop's potential products are of two kinds: they may take the form of attitude changes in influential persons, which would be reflected over time in the inputs these individuals make into their national policy debates; and they may be documents, setting forth possible solutions that would not have emerged as readily from the usual political procedures.

The difference between Burton's and Doob's conceptions of the enterprise thus has some clear implications for what the workshop is intended to accomplish. For Doob, it is a more self-contained enterprise, standing or falling on the immediate products that emerge from it. There is, therefore, more emphasis on the personal learning of the participants—on whether they come away from the workshop with demonstrably greater knowledge and insight. There is also more emphasis on producing an agreed-upon solution, in the form of a document that can serve as an input to the policy debate. For Burton, too, it is important to produce changes in the participants and to promote problem-solving; however, these effects are viewed as steps in the conflict-resolution process more than as ends in themselves. There is less emphasis on the personal learning of the participants, except insofar as it influences the new information and insights that they can feed into the policy process. Similarly, there is less emphasis on the production of agreed-upon documents within the workshop itself. The presumption is that the actual working out of solutions must happen elsewhere; the workshop will have made its contribution if it has brought some new possibilities for solutions to the attention of the relevant decision-makers.

If we look at the two ends of the enterprise that are central to both approaches—creating an atmosphere in which change can take

10 Burton, *Conflict and Communication*, p. 17.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

place, and feeding new information and insights into the policy process—we can probably say, at the risk of some oversimplification, that Doob's conception places relatively more emphasis on creating the conditions for *change*, while Burton's places relatively more emphasis on creating the conditions for *transfer*. In selecting independent participants, in insulating the workshop on a "cultural island," in breaking up the national groupings, in encouraging group solidarity and emotional involvement, and in emphasizing group process and personal learning, the Fermeda Workshop made it more probable that participants would experience changes, but by the same token it made the transfer of such changes once the participants returned to their home settings—and particularly the penetration of the changes into the policy process—less likely. On the other hand, the London exercise, by working more closely with the decision-making agencies, by selecting participants more directly tied to the decision-making process, by maintaining the national teams as the basic unit and avoiding divisions within it, and by keeping the discussions more fully at an intellectual and substantive level, took less advantage of the workshop's potential for producing changes, but increased the probability that any changes that did occur would be transferred to the policy process.

Given these somewhat distinct conceptions of the enterprise, how does each approach define the task of the workshop itself? What are the means by which the workshop brings about the desired changes, and what roles do the participants and the social scientists have to enact if these changes are to take place?

Both approaches are designed to create the conditions for effective problem-solving. To this end, participants must learn to communicate with each other in new ways, to revise perceptions distorted by a long history of conflict, and—in Burton's words—to see "the conflict as a problem to be solved and not as a contest to be won."¹⁴ In relation to each other, they must move from the roles of antagonists engaged in a zero-sum game, in which neither party dares to yield a point, to the role of collaborators searching for a positive-sum solution to a common problem. The social scientists' role is to facilitate this movement. The two approaches diverge in emphasis in their views of how this movement comes about.

In Burton's approach, the primary mediating process is the behavioral analysis of conflict. The workshop is designed to draw the participants into this process of conflict analysis along with the panel of social scientists. Anthony de Reuck, a member of the Centre for

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

the Analysis of Conflict, has distinguished three roles that participants may play in a workshop: combatant representative, conflict analyst, and cooperative representative. He points out:

An essential part of the controlled communication technique is to divest the parties of their roles and inhibitions as combatant representatives, and to offer them alternative roles, first as conflict analysts and later as cooperative representatives. In their roles as combatant representatives, the parties' reference groups are their governments and people at home. In their analytical roles, each party's reference group is that physically present around the conference table. At first, no doubt, it comprises only the academic panel, but as the meeting proceeds, I believe it could be shown to expand to include also the opponent party.¹⁵

The role of conflict analyst, fostered by the definition of the situation, gradually guides participants into that of cooperative representative. It also remains as an alternative when the cooperative process becomes too difficult or threatening: participants can retreat into the more intellectual role of general conflict-analyst.

The role of conflict analyst is readily available insofar as the workshop is presented—as was the case in the London workshop—as a research project. The research context, more generally, can facilitate entry into communication and broaden the content of what is communicated. Thus, when research serves as the context of the encounter, it becomes possible to bring together conflicting parties who until now refused to communicate, because to do so would have meant to yield a political point or to take unacceptable risks. The research context permits communication with minimum commitment and minimum risk. Similarly, within the situation, the research context allows participants to discuss issues and entertain ideas that they would have to avoid if they were speaking "for the record." Having agreed to collaborate in an ongoing research program, to which their conflict is relevant as a case in point, they can graciously defer to the wishes of the "professors" and pursue certain lines of discussion that would otherwise have met with objection. The combination of research with conflict resolution thus creates an ambiguity that may greatly help to move the process along. As Burton points out:

¹⁵ Anthony de Reuck, "Controlled Communication: Rationale and Dynamics," paper prepared for UNITAR Workshop on Social Psychological Aspects of Peaceful Settlement, New Paltz, N.Y., May 15-17, 1970.

The ambiguity of the role of representatives—whether they are acting as official representatives in expressing viewpoints, or whether as honorary academics participating in an exercise designed to examine conflict—is itself an asset. It provides a reason for exploration even on matters on which official policy has been firmly stated, it makes possible a working relationship between the participants as persons, and it removes any implications of official commitments. Traditional means of peaceful settlement require commitment: this procedure depends for its success on the absence of any commitment, and the establishment of relationships that do not require it.¹⁶

In short, the research context can surmount some of the barriers to communication that characterize the relationship of conflicting parties—provided, of course, that the sponsors of the workshop are genuinely interested in conflict research and not just using it as a device to bring the parties together. At the same time, the research context makes the role of conflict analyst particularly natural. After all, conflict analysis is the substance of the research in which the participants have agreed to help out. They are acting as informants, providing data for the social science panel, and gradually entering into the process of analysis itself. Thus the research context creates not only a general readiness to engage in communication, but a natural occasion for the specific process that Burton considers to be a crucial step in conflict resolution. Furthermore, insofar as both parties are working with the social science panel in a research effort, they can more readily come to regard each other as collaborators in a common enterprise.

In line with Burton's definition of the workshop task, the primary role of the social scientists is "to inject into discussion new information, not about the dispute in question, but about conflict, its origins and processes drawn from theoretical analyses and empirical studies."¹⁷ Later in the workshop, when solutions are under discussion, the social scientists also contribute information designed to extend the range of integrative mechanisms and possibilities for functional cooperation that the participants can consider. The social science panel, and particularly the discussion chairman, are by no means oblivious to the group process. They try to encourage movement away from the role of combatant representative and toward the role of conflict analyst and increasingly toward that of cooperative

¹⁶ Burton, *Conflict and Communication*, p. 43.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

representative. But the key professional input of the social scientists is at the level of theory and empirical findings.

In the Fermeda model, the primary mediating process is sensitization of participants to their own interpersonal behavior and to group process. The workshop essentially offers training in the skills of effective communication through the use of the "laboratory approach to learning." The training is designed to enhance participants' awareness of ways in which their own emotional commitments and the nature of group interaction may hinder effective communication and problem-solving, and to increase their ability to overcome these obstacles. The trainers convey the process of analyzing the ongoing interaction through demonstration, exposition, and the use of special exercises, and they draw the participants into active involvement in this process. As one of the trainers at Fermeda describes it, "The basic feature of this approach is that participants learn through analysis of, and generalizations from, their own experience and that of others with whom they interact. Laboratory participants, in different words, must first participate (interact, behave); then they are encouraged to reflect upon the meaning and impact of that behavior in relation to both themselves and others."¹⁸ To adapt de Reuck's terminology, in the Fermeda model the participants move from the role of combatant representative to that of cooperative representative through adopting the role of process analyst—a role calling for self-conscious attention to what is happening in the group and what each participant is contributing to that process, and thus mediating change from self-defeating to more constructive modes of interaction.

Adoption of the process-analyst role is facilitated by definition of the workshop as essentially a learning experience—a training laboratory. In this context, participants are more prepared to go along with procedures (such as the T-group) that have no obvious connection to the substantive issues with which they are concerned, and to accept exercises (such as simulation and brainstorming) that might otherwise strike them as overly artificial. (Even so, some of the participants in Fermeda apparently resented procedures that had no clear and immediate relationship to the objective that had brought them to the workshop.) Furthermore, the context of a training laboratory—like the context of a research project in the London exercise—permits communication with relatively little commitment and risk. In this playful, protective, and insulated environment, the in-

¹⁸ Thomas E. Wickes, "The African Context and the Schedule," in Doob, *Resolving Conflict in Africa*, p. 26.

dividual is moved to pursue and express ideas that would be unacceptable in other settings, and he feels free to do so without worrying that he will be held accountable for it. In the Fermeda T-groups, participants felt free to consider and support positions that deviated from the normative positions of their own national groups. It is interesting, however, that when the two T-groups came together in the general assembly and participants were exposed to fellow nationals, with whom they had not shared the common T-group experience, they tended to revert to a nationalistic stance. The learning context, which had served to reduce inhibitions, was overwhelmed by the real-life context provided by the presence of "outsiders" (particularly from one's own national group) and by the approaching end of the workshop and anticipated return home. As long as the learning context is maintained, however, the freedom to explore with a minimal sense of risk can greatly facilitate creative problem-solving.

Other important features of the training laboratory situation can help to push the problem-solving process forward. The development of a sense of solidarity, an openness of communication, and warm personal bonds within the learning group not only contributes to the learning process; it also constitutes an important element of the problem-solving that this learning process is designed to facilitate. A cohesive group can more readily approach the conflict to be resolved as a joint task for the conflicting parties, to be tackled in a collaborative spirit. Similarly, the deliberate utilization of the here and now as a source of insights, through observation and analysis of ongoing interaction, facilitates both the learning process and the conflict-resolution process itself. The T-group, according to a Fermeda trainer, "replicates in microcosm the dynamics of the real system without acting it out. It focuses on an examination of its own process, analyzing and learning from what is happening right here and now. It provides an instrument to 'see' problems or divisions between people more clearly because they are projected and illustrated in the group and to accelerate the search for solutions that personal and shared identification with problems stimulates."¹⁹ Insofar as participants can draw on the here and now in analyzing the conflict, they can partly overcome constraints imposed on the problem-solving process by formulations of the conflict that are rooted in historical arguments and the public positions of their respective governments.

In line with the Fermeda Workshop's definition of its task, the

19 Charles K. Ferguson, "Appraisal by a Trainer," in Doob, *Resolving Conflict in Affairs*, p. 133.

primary role of the social scientists is to encourage the development of sensitivity to group process and effective communication patterns among the participants. As the group turns to direct efforts at problem-solving, the social scientists' role is to facilitate the process—to help the group identify snags when the process seems to break down and to develop strategies that would keep it moving. In both the training and the problem-solving phases (which need not be temporally separated), they help the group observe and analyze the interaction in which members are currently engaged. As in Burton's exercises, the social scientists may inject relevant theoretical considerations or empirical information, but their major inputs in the Fermeda model consist of observations and interpretations of the ongoing group process.

The differences between Burton's and Doob's approaches are mostly differences in emphasis. Despite their different origins, both approaches are built on a surprisingly similar set of insights about the use of "clinical" procedures to promote change and collaborative problem-solving among conflicting parties, and about the potential contributions of these procedures to conflict resolution at the political level. Both are concerned with producing change, and with its feedback to national and international decision-making; to facilitate change, both use inputs from conflict theory and from group-process analysis. They differ essentially in their ways of maximizing the unique strengths of the workshop approach and of minimizing its limitations.

In the following sections, I consider some of these strengths and limitations of the workshop approach. In each case, I try to show how insights from both Burton's and Doob's experiences might be combined to utilize the workshop most effectively. My general assumption is that workshops, though rooted in the same basic principles, may vary along a number of dimensions—such as the degree of emphasis on personal probing or theoretical analysis, the proximity of participants to the decision-making process, or the specific attributes of third parties present. The Burton and Doob experiments occupy different positions on some of these dimensions and thus represent different combinations of the possible features by which a workshop might be defined—different cells, as it were, in a multidimensional matrix of workshop types. Various other combinations should be possible, each best suited to a particular set of circumstances. Further conceptualization and experimentation in this area can help us specify the circumstances in which a workshop is likely to be useful and, if so, the combination of techniques most likely to

be effective, given the nature of the particular conflict, the occasion for convening a workshop, and the relationship of both the organizers and the participants to the various decision-making units.

UNIQUE STRENGTHS OF THE WORKSHOP APPROACH

In the most general terms, the unique strength of the workshop approach is that it allows certain processes of communication that are almost impossible to achieve in the settings (particularly the more public and formal ones) where conflicting parties usually interact. The workshop facilitates such interactions, first, by providing a novel context for communication and, second, by using a unique set of techniques and third-party inputs to guide the communication process.

In many conflict situations, the very fact that communication is taking place may be seen, by one or both sides, as a concession—because it suggests that the other side may have a valid claim, or even because it constitutes recognition of the other side's existence as a legitimate entity. Communication may also be avoided because it represents unacceptable risks: decision-makers may be afraid that their willingness to talk would be taken as a sign of weakness, or that talks would reduce the pressure on the opponent, or that they would inevitably lead to compromises which would weaken the regime's domestic and international standing, or that they would end in failure with a resulting loss in credibility and prestige. Conflicting parties may, therefore, refuse to communicate at all, or at least to engage in meaningful communication. Once such a pattern has been established, public commitments and private fears make it difficult for the parties to break out of it—even when they have come to feel that something might be gained from communication. In this type of situation the workshop may be particularly helpful by providing a context in which parties can enter into discussion with minimum commitment and risk. If the outcome of the workshop seems promising, decision-makers can continue discussions through more formal channels; if it yields nothing useful, they can ignore it without feeling discredited; if, for some reason, it blows up, they can easily disown it, since it was merely an academic exercise to which they had no formal commitment.

These considerations suggest one criterion for determining whether mounting of a workshop is indicated. When there is some desire for communication among the conflicting parties but the official channels for communication are unavailable, or their use entails un-

acceptable risks at this point, a workshop may provide the needed alternative mechanism. It may allow decision-makers to transmit and receive information otherwise unobtainable, and to see whether officially acknowledged initiation or resumption of communication is likely to have more positive than negative consequences. In the limiting case, a workshop may serve as dress rehearsal for more formal negotiations.

For the individual participants, the workshop also offers an opportunity to communicate with minimum commitment and risk. This fact has a bearing not only on their willingness to participate, but also on the type of communication they are prepared to engage in. I have already indicated how the context of both Burton's and Doob's workshops enhances the participants' freedom to entertain and express ideas that they would be inclined to eschew in settings marked by greater public accountability. The usual norms against deviating from the position of one's own side, so pervasive in a conflict situation, are relaxed in the workshop context. More than that, an opposing set of norms, calling for uninhibited exploration of all possibilities, is generated in this setting. In Burton's workshop it derives from the requirements of the research for careful analysis of all dimensions and ramifications of the conflict; in Doob's, from the requirements of the laboratory method for open and honest communication. Having committed themselves to the enterprise, the participants feel a sense of obligation to abide by its norms.

To provide a novel context, it seems to me, the workshop must be held under the auspices of some institution independent of the political process which can bring an overarching set of norms to bear on the proceedings. In other words, there needs to be some institutionalized basis for the norms governing the workshop, if the participants are to regard them (while they are in the situation) as binding and as superseding their national norms. A workshop held under the auspices of a body such as the United Nations Security Council, for example, might not provide the necessary novel context, since it does not claim a set of norms independent of those of the member-states.²⁰ An agency more nearly transnational in character—set up to perform a function that cuts across (rather than coordinates) national interests—would be more suitable. Burton's and Doob's experiences suggest that such a transnational institution for conflict resolution might be most effective if it included research and training as part of its mission.

²⁰ Burton discusses other limitations of the Security Council as a possible institutional base for conflict resolution. See his *Conflict and Communication*, p. 235.

For both the London and the Fermeda workshops, the institutional base was the university. They provided the novel normative context of a research project in one case and of a training laboratory in the other. The research project seems to me to present a very useful context, particularly when the participants are relatively senior and high in status, and when the workshop requires the cooperation of decision-making agencies. Both the decision-makers who are asked to approve or support the enterprise and the participants themselves can usually understand and accept a research-linked workshop without difficulty, and they can readily justify their cooperation with such an effort. It is quite evident why students of conflict would want to meet with representatives of conflicting parties in a face-to-face encounter, and why the parties themselves would be prepared to support such a scholarly enterprise and to regard it as a source of potentially useful findings. Another virtue of the research context is that it offers the workshop participants the roles of expert informant and research collaborator—roles that are inherently rewarding and in keeping with their status. Finally, the research context allows a continuing relationship between the sponsors and the conflicting parties, and a resumption of the workshop if the need and opportunity arise: the natural life of the research project coincides with the natural life of the conflict.

The training-laboratory context strikes me as somewhat less powerful on all of these counts. Doob and his associates themselves seem to have concluded that the rationale and value of workshops within this context are not always manifest to governments and participants, and that the role of trainee is resented by some participants as insulting and out of keeping with their status. The training-laboratory context is also less amenable to a continuing relationship, since repeated workshops presumably offer diminishing returns from a training point of view. Finally, this context is more vulnerable to failure: a workshop that produces little learning and problem-solving can be assimilated in a research context, since (regardless of outcome) it provides grist for the research mill, but it may be quite demoralizing to both participants and staff in a training context. Nevertheless, there are occasions on which the training laboratory context may be highly appropriate and productive. Thus, a workshop might be organized specifically to serve an educational purpose—involving as its participants, for example, groups of students resenting conflicting parties or diplomats seeking to gain insight into the nature of conflict and the techniques of its resolution. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that training, in some fashion, is at

least a *component* of all workshops. Thus even in the Burton model participants must gradually learn the language and the attitudes required for the role of conflict analyst, and the hope is that this learning will generalize to their post-workshop behavior.

The context of the workshop, as we have seen, helps overcome some of the barriers to communication that are so prevalent in conflict situations. The relative lack of commitment gives participants the *freedom* to talk more openly and honestly, and the norms of the setting create an *expectation* that they will do so. The fact that the parties have come together for a task defined, essentially, by a third party, makes it possible and necessary for them to abandon, to some degree, their competitive stance toward each other and to adopt a more trusting and collaborative one. To capitalize on this favorable context for communication, the workshop approach utilizes a set of techniques and interventions to guide the communication process. Some of these are more pronounced in Burton's approach; others, in Doob's.

Interactions between conflicting parties are usually highly repetitive and stereotyped. Alternative versions of the historical record are recited, old accusations and justifications are rehearsed, and fine legalistic points-about rights and wrongs are debated. The workshop approach is designed to cut through this type of argumentation and to set a more constructive communication process into motion. The social scientists contribute to this end by setting the stage for a different communication process, by keeping the process moving and preventing a reversion to less-productive exchanges, and by injecting ideas, observations, and information on which new learning and insight can be built.

In setting the stage, the social scientists communicate the ground rules that are to govern the proceedings. In both word and action, they try to make clear that discussions will be mostly unstructured, that the basic raw material for analysis and problem-solving will have to emerge from the participants, and that the norms of the situation call for honest communication of perceptions and motives and for free exploration of a wide range of ideas. Through the attitudes they convey in their own interventions, they try to create a task-oriented, collaborative atmosphere, and an analytical, nonevaluative approach to the conflict. Stage-setting is mostly done at the beginning, but it has to continue throughout the proceedings. The social scientists must periodically remind the group of the ground rules. Furthermore, they must reinforce the norms and the atmosphere they have tried to convey whenever the opportunity arises—by the

kinds of questions they ask, by their reactions to what the participants say and do, and by the way they handle participants' efforts to induce them to assume leadership, to take sides, or to make authoritative pronouncements.

To keep the discussions moving in constructive directions, the social scientist injects observations about the ongoing group process whenever the group seems to have reached an impasse. He may simply point out that the discussions have stalled or that the participants have reverted to the standard pattern of argumentation among conflicting parties. He may describe what has been happening in the group, thus bringing to the members' attention some of the interactions that may have failed to register on them, but leaving up to them the interpretation of these events. At times, he may himself offer possible interpretations of the dynamics of the group process that seem to be impeding progress. Such interpretations, in my view, ought to be relatively infrequent. Moreover, they must be presented in the form of tentative hypotheses, recognizing that they may be wrong or (even if they are perfectly accurate) that the group may not be quite ready for them. (These considerations are similar to those governing a psychotherapist's tentative allusions to his patient's unconscious defenses in interpreting his resistances to the therapeutic work.) Finally, such interpretations in a problem-solving workshop must be at the level of group process, rather than personality dynamics.

Group process observations are useful, not only in keeping the discussions moving in constructive directions, but also in transmitting to the participants a potentially effective tool for problem-solving. Participants are encouraged to engage in process analysis themselves and thus to acquire a more analytic stance concerning their own and other members' interactions in the group. The ability to step aside and observe the ongoing interaction process is particularly valuable in the resolution of intergroup conflicts, which by their very nature inhibit effective communication and problem-solving.

The purpose of initiating and facilitating new patterns of communication in the workshop is to provide opportunities for the emergence of ideas, observations, and information on which new learning and insight can be built. It is such new learnings and insights that make it possible, and sometimes necessary, for participants to reassess their attitudes and reformulate the issues in ways more conducive to problem-solving. Some of the new information is injected directly into the discussion by the social science panel. Much of the information is specifically introduced by participants, or emerges

from their discussions, or is generated by their interactions; but the social scientists contribute to the process by helping to elicit the information, by encouraging the participants to focus on it, and by suggesting some of its implications.

One can distinguish at least three sources of new information in the workshop situation from which potentially new learnings and insights may emerge:

(1) In the course of the discussions, participants may acquire new information about the perceptions and intentions of the other side. The relatively private and relaxed setting may induce them to express sentiments that have not previously been acknowledged in public statements. Such information is bound to be useful, by adding depth to one's understanding of the other side's position, but there is also some danger in overemphasizing the significance of this information: the public positions of a government may be better indicators and predictors of policy than the private sentiments of individuals, even if these individuals are high officials (particularly since public pronouncements set constraints on future action). The workshop setting not only encourages the transmission of such new information, but also increases the probability that others will be receptive to it, to the extent that a degree of openness and mutual trust has developed. The social scientists contribute to the transmission and reception of this type of information by creating an atmosphere in which there is greater openness to new information and setting a task around which trust can be built. Moreover, when new information is introduced, the social scientists can call attention to it and make it a focus for discussion. They can encourage the participants to confront the information, making sure that it is neither avoided nor distorted and that its implications are duly drawn.

(2) The workshop can introduce the participants to a new conceptual framework for the analysis of conflict, a set of theoretical propositions, and a body of empirical findings, all of which may be applicable to their own situations. In the London workshop, such information was provided fairly systematically by the panel of social scientists, who then drew the participants into discussion of the theoretical models and their implications for various conflicts. The participants thus acquired some new insights into the nature of conflict, as well as a common language and frame of reference for analyzing specific conflict situations. The learning process may be aided, as in the Fermeda Workshop, by the introduction of games and simulations when such procedures might help illustrate and give experiential meaning to a theoretical proposition. In any event, the

application of the new concepts and analytical tools to their own situations must be left largely to the participants themselves. The social scientists can encourage the participants to make such efforts; they can ask leading questions, engage in gentle proings, and suggest tentative hypotheses to explain the nature and course of the conflict. But, in the final analysis, the application must be made *by the participants* if it is to have major impact on the resolution process. The timing of interpretations is also crucial, even if they are presented in tentative fashion. Again, one can take a leaf from the psychotherapist's book: an experienced therapist does not offer an interpretation unless he feels confident that the patient is ready for it.

(3) As the participants interact with each other and with the third parties in the course of the workshop, they may be illustrating—here and now—some of the underlying dynamics of the conflict between the communities they represent. Their behavior in the group may reflect the nature of the relationship between their communities and the self-perpetuating pattern of interaction that they have adopted. For example, in the course of the London workshop, I developed (but was unable to explore) the hypothesis that some of the interactions of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot participants, with each other and with the social science panel, could be understood in terms of their statuses as members of the majority and minority populations respectively. The exploration of such hypotheses, based on ongoing interactions, can be a source of profound insight, since the participants can see the conflict in operation. They can observe its concrete manifestations in the very situation in which they are still actively involved and almost at the very moment that the interaction occurs. This type of experience has much in common with the "corrective emotional experiences" that many psychotherapists see as the heart of the therapeutic process.²¹ In the context of psychotherapy, "the essence of a corrective emotional experience is the fact that the patient's examination of his attitudes and behavior patterns occurs simultaneously with their actual manifestation at a real-life level of emotional intensity. He examines his attitudes and behavior while he is still experiencing the relevant feelings, which makes this more than a mere intellectual exercise."²² Like the psychotherapist, the social scientist in a workshop can facilitate such insights by calling attention to ongoing interactions that might illuminate

21 Franz Alexander and Thomas M. French, *Psychoanalytic Therapy* (New York: Ronald Press, 1946), pp. 66-68.

22 Herbert C. Kelman, "The Role of the Group in the Induction of Therapeutic Change," *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 13, no. 4 (October 1963): 415.

the relationship between the conflicting parties, and by helping participants explore their implications. Again, of course, his interventions must be tentative and sensitively timed.

In sum, I have described three major types of new information and insight that the workshop can provide and that can facilitate attitude change and problem-solving: direct information about the perceptions and sentiments of the other side, theoretical concepts for conflict analysis with potential applicability to the specific conflict under discussion, and analysis of ongoing interactions that might reflect the relationships between the conflicting parties. The first was common to both the London and the Fermeda experiences, the second was more prominent in London, and the third in Fermeda.

The combination of Burton's systematic use of theoretical inputs with Doob's greater emphasis on analysis of group process and on emotional learning would, in my view, maximize the workshop's potential for producing change. Process analysis can promote change, not only by facilitating movement in the group, but also by utilizing the ongoing interactions as a source of new insights. However, problem-solving workshops in conflict resolution ought not to be equated with sensitivity training in the usual sense of that term. Though they encourage interpersonal trust and personal learning among the participants in order to achieve their goals, their purpose is not to promote personal growth or strong in-group feelings. Their purpose is to facilitate creative problem-solving in a specific conflict situation. It is essential that this task-orientation and problem-solving emphasis be reflected in the organization of the workshop and all of its components. In line with this view, I would agree with the tentative conclusion of Doob and his associates that it would be inadvisable, in future workshops, to separate "training" from work on the substantive issues.²³ The substantive issues ought to be the focus of attention throughout, with group process observations, as well as special laboratory devices (simulations, role reversals, brainstorming, or the setting of operational goals or subgoals), brought in whenever they become relevant and the participants seem ready for them.

23 The first few days of the Fermeda Workshop were devoted to T-groups in order to prepare participants for subsequent collaborative efforts to find solutions to their border disputes. The organizers concluded that "the sharp temporal distinction . . . between training in behalf of developing self-awareness and, more especially, communication skills on the one hand and the discussion of the substantive issues may have been a mistake and ought, therefore, to be blurred in the future. . . . It would . . . perhaps be better to begin a workshop with the substantive issue as the thesis and to let personal probing creep in slowly but inevitably as the antithesis." See Doob, *Resolving Conflict in Africa*, p. 122.

LIMITATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP APPROACH

The ultimate goal of a problem-solving workshop is to feed the changes and solutions it has generated into the policy process. As I have already pointed out, however, it is more effectively designed to *produce* changes in its participants and to generate innovative solutions than it is to *transfer* these products to the policy process. Much of the workshop's strength derives from its separation from the policy process. It is held under independent auspices, in a setting removed from decision-making agencies, with participants acting as relatively uncommitted individuals, and according to ground rules that encourage the transcendence of official positions. All of these features, by removing some of the usual barriers to change, make its occurrence more probable, but by the same token they make its transfer more difficult.

The problem of transfer actually involves two interrelated questions. First, if an individual changes in the workshop setting—that is, if he reassesses his attitudes and accepts a new approach to resolving the conflict—what is the likelihood that he will maintain these new attitudes and formulations once he returns to his home setting? Second, assuming he does—or to the extent that he does—maintain these changes, what is the likelihood that he will be able to bring his new attitudes and formulations effectively to bear on the policy process?

The first question is common to all types of workshops, ranging from those primarily oriented toward individual change to those oriented toward organizational problem-solving. It refers to what has been called the "reentry" problem. The workshop takes the individual into a different world, frees him from the usual pressures and constraints that bind him to a limited perspective, and thus allows him to reexamine his assumptions and to develop new ways of looking at things. But once he leaves this more open and protective environment and returns to the real world, there is a great danger of backsliding. The old pressures will come into play, and the dominant frame of reference will begin to reassert itself. Moreover, the individual may find that the new ideas he expresses are met with hostility and that the proposals he puts forth are systematically shot down. Of course, the severity of the reentry problem varies as a function of many factors. But I think it can be fairly said that, given an influence attempt that removes an individual or a small group from their usual

environments, any feature that enhances the probability for change almost invariably compounds the problem of reentry.

Workshops involving conflicting nations or communities may well present serious reentry problems, because here the issue of group loyalty is particularly salient. An individual who returns with a less militant view of the conflict may find himself treated as one who has been coopted by the other side, who has betrayed his own group, or who has inadequately defended its position. These pressures may make it difficult for him to express and ultimately to maintain his new attitudes.

The ease of maintaining changes produced in the workshop depends partly on the nature of the setting and the experiences it provided for the participants. The more different the setting and experiences are from those in which the participants habitually find themselves, the greater the likelihood that the workshop will present novel inputs, break up old thought-patterns, and produce change. These same conditions make the probability of transfer less likely, however. New attitudes may be closely associated with the unique stimuli of the workshop setting and fail to generalize to the home environment's radically different stimuli. Furthermore, a setting so different that it removes all reminders of home fails to prepare the individual for the reactions his new attitudes are likely to elicit upon his return. By keeping reminders of the home setting to a minimum, the workshop may reduce resistance to change, but at the same time fail to build immunity against the pressures to which the new attitudes will later be exposed.

These considerations must enter into the decision of how much the workshop should insulate its participants from family, work, and political distractions. As Walton points out, comparative insulation "allows for a deeper immersion in the mental and emotional processes of the workshop and permits the development of a 'cultural island,' which in turn encourages participants to challenge cherished assumptions, break old thought processes, and modify attitudes." But it also has its disadvantages:

Because the attitudes, views, and products generated by the workshop must eventually be persuasive also to countrymen who have not attended the workshop, it is possible for the cultural island effect to be too complete, if it leads to proposed solutions which will later be dismissed out-of-hand back home as unrealistic or idealistic. Similarly, some would consider the cultural island too complete if upon returning home a participant expresses conciliatory atti-

tudes which are so deviant from the national norms that he loses credibility.²⁴

Thus changes are more likely to take place in a cultural island, but more difficult to maintain once the individual returns to the mainland. Another workshop feature that is relevant in this connection is the extent to which participants are functioning as members of a national team or as individuals. If they function in teams, they are more likely to stick to the official positions of their respective groups longer. If they function as individuals, variations in point of view within each national group can emerge more quickly and a wider range of ideas thus becomes available for discussion and problem-solving. Also, participants can learn more quickly that the other side is not monolithic, and they can come to appreciate some of the diversity in its views. Thus change may occur more readily in workshops where national contingents are not treated as units.²⁵ At the same time, however, such a procedure may make transfer of new attitudes more difficult. Positions developed without having to achieve consensus within the national contingent may be more vulnerable to attack and rejection by fellow nationals once participants return home. In fact, this possibility became apparent at the Fermeda Workshop even before the participants left; changes achieved in the intimacy of the T-groups did not quite survive "reentry" into the general assembly.

The ease of maintaining changes produced in the workshop depends not only on the conditions of the workshop itself, but also on the nature of the setting and experiences to which the participants return. If they come back to fairly conservative settings that are committed (ideologically or organizationally) to the official group position, then the changes they underwent are less likely to maintain themselves. Thus, for example, changes are more likely to be maintained among participants who return to an academic setting, since diversity in views on national issues is more readily accepted there.

²⁴ Walton, "Problem-Solving Workshop," pp. 482-83.

²⁵ Walton argues that when participants (as in the Fermeda Workshop) come as individuals rather than in national teams, and when the representatives from the same national group do not know each other or have not previously worked together, it would be best—even when trying to maximize change—to meet with each national contingent separately before bringing members together in a multinational grouping. Such a procedure would help develop trust within each national group and make it easier for it to "tolerate and indeed encourage differences in viewpoints among its members" ("Problem-Solving Workshop," p. 479), thus "improving the quality of the deliberations . . . and the likelihood that the community would converge on some areas of substantive agreement" (p. 486).

On the other hand, participants returning to government agencies, which are committed to a particular way of formulating the conflict, may find their new attitudes and formulations ignored or rejected. As they continue to work under these pressures and within the built-in framework of assumptions, they are more likely to revert to the official position on the conflict.

The question of participants' organizational background leads us directly to the second problem involved in the transfer of changes generated by a workshop: what is the likelihood that participants will be able to bring their new attitudes and formulations (assuming these have been maintained) to bear on the policy process? Since the workshop is, by its nature, removed from the policy process, the problem of feeding its products back into that process must inevitably arise. The ease of achieving such feedback depends largely on the participants' characteristics and their relationships to the policy process.

In general, it stands to reason that if the decision-makers are involved in the plans for the workshop, if the workshop organizers consult with them both before and after, and if the participants themselves are close to the center of decision-making and are at least informally acting as representatives of the decision-makers, then the opportunity for feedback will be greater. There is probably less change in this case than in a workshop where the participants act purely as private citizens. The closer the participants are to decision-making agencies, the more likely they are to be constrained by official positions and decision-makers' expectations, and the less likely they are to be open to change. Whatever changes *do* occur, however—whatever new learnings and insights the participants acquire—will come to the attention of the decision-makers much more readily in this case. Thus it would again appear that there is a reciprocal relationship between change and transfer: the closer the participants are to the center of decision-making, the less open they are to change, but the more capable they are to feed whatever changes they do experience into the policy process.

On closer examination, it seems to me that the picture is considerably more complicated than the one I have drawn so far. Whether or not participants closest to the locus of decision-making are most likely to inject their changes into the policy process may well depend on the nature of the changes in question, as well as on the precise relationship of the participants to the decision-making units. For example, if change takes the form of some new learning about the intentions of the other side, then the proposition no doubt

holds. Say a workshop participant concludes from the discussions that the other side may be willing (despite previous public pronouncements) to entertain certain new lines of negotiation; he would be in a much more favorable position to carry this information to the decision-makers and to persuade them to act on it if he is close to the decision-making unit and has in fact been sent to the workshop by that unit (presumably to obtain just this kind of information). On the other hand, if the change he experienced is more fundamental—if he comes away from the workshop convinced that the whole policy pursued by his government is inappropriate, and committed to a thorough reformulation of the issues and the possibilities for solution—then his proximity to the locus of decision-making may make little difference. It may not enhance his ability to inject his new insights into the policy process and may, in fact, reduce it, depending on the exact nature of his relationship to the decision-making bureaucracy.

In conceptualizing this problem, I start with the assumption that the workshop approach can change *individual* perceptions, attitudes, and formulations of problems and solutions. Thus workshop techniques can be most useful when directed at those points in the decision-making process at which individual perceptions and formulations of the conflict become relevant and important. It can be argued that diplomats and foreign-policy officials do *not* represent such points in the process. They are relatively unlikely to act as individuals, bringing their own attitudes and perceptions to bear on their official role performance. They tend to act within a highly institutionalized conceptual framework; the assumptions of that framework are built into the routine operations of the decision-making apparatus and are constantly reinforced by the interactions of its various units. Perceptions and attitudes certainly enter into the role performance of diplomats and foreign-policy officials, but they are most likely to be the shared and frozen perceptions and attitudes that pervade the decision-making bodies. Diplomats and officials are usually not in a position to reexamine them or to call for their reexamination. Thus, it is not too likely that (acting within their roles) these individuals would effectively use changes gained through a workshop experience.

On the other hand, the situation might be quite different for legislators or their staff assistants, or for the leaders or executives of various powerful pressure groups. These are individuals whose task in the foreign-policy process is to formulate and define issues in keeping with the interests (at least as they interpret these) of the con-

stituencies they represent. Though they can generally be counted on to support the administration's foreign policy, they are not necessarily bound by the perspectives of the decision-making units and are relatively free to promote changes in direction or emphasis of existing policy. If they revise their perceptions and attitudes, their own inputs into the policy process may well be affected. These inputs, in turn, while not determining policy, may influence it considerably. I would hypothesize that individuals in these kinds of roles might be best able to make effective use of changes resulting from a workshop experience, because it is their business (unlike that of the diplomat or foreign-policy official) to bring their own perceptions and attitudes to bear on the policy process.

Thus my analysis tentatively suggests that the ideal participants in a workshop (even if its goal is to have maximal impact on the policy process) are not necessarily those closest to the locus of decision-making. Such individuals may not only be less likely to experience substantial changes in attitude, when compared to individuals more remote from the locus of decision-making, but they may also be less able to inject the changes they do experience into the policy process. Perhaps the ideal candidates for workshops are individuals at some intermediate distance from the decision-making apparatus. They must be influential members of their societies, preferably with an active interest in foreign-policy issues, but—if our criterion is their ability to feed the products of the workshop into the policy process—it may be better if their role is to influence and evaluate foreign policy, rather than to make it or carry it out.

There is, of course, more than one type of workshop and more than one model of the "ideal participant." Perhaps, if my argument is correct, individuals at such intermediate positions in the foreign-policy process as legislators or lobbyists may be the most "natural" candidates for workshop participation, but there are sure to be occasions when a very different type of participant—closer to the policy process or farther removed from it—would be highly appropriate. Selection of appropriate participants depends on the purpose of a particular workshop and on its place in the larger context of efforts at conflict resolution. The proper matching of participants and occasions is one of the major issues for further conceptualization and experimentation.

CONCLUSION

The pioneering work of Burton and Doob has demonstrated the feasibility and suggested the potential usefulness of problem-solving

workshops as inputs to international conflict resolution. Their experiments have pointed to the unique strengths and limitations of this approach, and they have revealed some of the dimensions along which workshops may vary. There is now a need for further experimentation, along with theoretically based efforts to specify just where the workshop approach can fit into the conduct of international relations and thus contribute to processes of conflict resolution. Such efforts, in turn, require a conceptualization of international politics in terms of the entire range of interactions that culminate in official state behavior.

I have argued that the workshop approach can have significant impact at those points in the policy process at which individual perceptions and attitudes play a determining role. To assess the potential of the approach, therefore, we must look beyond the points at which the final, official foreign-policy steps are taken—in other words, beyond the foreign-policy bureaucracy and the diplomatic corps—since at these points individual perceptions and attitudes are unlikely to play a major part (except perhaps in influencing style and detail of policy execution). Instead, we must take a more total view of the international political process and its ramifications. It involves multiple actors—individual and collective, official and unofficial—all of whom influence foreign policy and the shape of international relations. Within this larger process, there are many points at which individual perceptions and attitudes may have major impact, both on short-term decisions and on long-term trends. The analytical task required now is identification of these points and specification of the types of individuals who are located at them and of the nature of their contributions to the policy process. Such an analysis would provide a systematic basis for determining the occasions on which problem-solving workshops may produce useful inputs to conflict resolution and for selecting the participants appropriate to a given occasion.

The occasions on which a workshop may contribute to conflict resolution vary widely. The relevance of workshops is perhaps most apparent in situations where conflict has reached violent proportions, but communication between the conflicting parties has never been initiated, or has broken down, or has reached an impasse, with each side frozen into a position totally unacceptable to the other side. Typically, in such situations, the decision-making units on each side are boxed in by a set of images of the other side, assumptions about the nature of the conflict, commitments to a national posture, and real or imagined constraints that prevent them from breaking out

of their conceptual prisons and exploring new alternatives. New ideas and insights are desperately needed to cut into these self-perpetuating processes, and problem-solving workshops may be uniquely able to provide these. On such occasions, it seems to me, the most appropriate participants would be (as I suggested before) individuals at an intermediate distance from the foreign-policy apparatus, who are politically powerful and widely respected and whose loyalty to the national cause is beyond question, but who are not themselves completely caught up in the existing policy framework.

Other occasions for workshops may be tied much more specifically and closely to the process of diplomatic negotiations. There are moments in the interaction between conflicting parties when a workshop might be precisely the mechanism needed to facilitate negotiations—to bridge a specific gap between the position at which the parties find themselves and the one they know they want to reach. For example, a workshop may provide a context for exploring (with minimum risk) whether there is a basis for resuming broken-down negotiations; or for running a "dress rehearsal" before making a final commitment to formal negotiations; or for discussing certain new proposals in a relatively noncommittal fashion, away from the limelight in which official negotiations may be simultaneously proceeding; or, finally, for working out certain technical details of an agreement, which can be handled more effectively in a problem-solving format than in a diplomatic one. Participants in workshops of this type would most likely be diplomats, foreign-policy officials or advisers, or technical experts, depending on the specific occasion for the workshop.

At the other end of the continuum are workshops that are primarily educational. Such workshops may be occasioned by a specific conflict. They may bring together influential members of the two conflicting nations or communities, such as leaders of civic associations, journalists, intellectuals, business or labor leaders—or perhaps future influentials, such as students. The purpose might be modest and entirely long-range: to develop new ways of conceptualizing the conflict among elite segments of the populations, in the hope that these would eventually contribute to changes in public opinion and thus help create an atmosphere for alternative policies. Needless to say, such a workshop would probably contribute little to averting an imminent crisis. Educational workshops may also be organized independently of any specific conflict, to sensitize the participants to the nature of conflict and provide insights into its resolu-

tion. Diplomats or students of international relations in particular might benefit from such exercises.

The occasion for the workshop should help determine not only the types of participants selected, but also the mix of individuals composing the group. Various possibilities for composing the national groups and the total group suggest themselves, calling for experimentation and conceptual clarification. Depending on the purpose of the workshop, the national contingents may be selected to be homogeneous or they may be deliberately composed to represent different segments within each nation. In selecting the parties, an interesting possibility, particularly (though not exclusively) germane to general educational workshops, would be to include participants representing several pairs of conflicting nations or communities. Such a format would permit comparisons, would bring in a range of empirical inputs, and would allow participants to develop insights and to sharpen their conceptual tools through analysis of conflicts other than their own.

The criteria for selecting the parties in any given conflict situation are by no means self-evident, since the definition of the parties is itself often a matter of controversy. In selecting the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities—rather than Greece and Turkey—as the parties for the London workshop, the organizers took a position on the nature of the conflict. So did the organizers of the Fermeda Workshop in selecting Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya—the three nation-states—as the parties, rather than the Somali people and neighboring ethnic groups. The definition of the parties is even more controversial in conflicts in which one party is reluctant to recognize the other as a legitimate entity. Workshop organizers cannot avoid deciding how the parties are to be defined and thus indirectly taking a position in the controversy, but in making this decision it is important to analyze the relevance of different sets of parties to the workshop's particular purpose.

A workshop may be a way of establishing communication between parties unwilling or unable to communicate through official channels. However, if one party has refused to communicate, as a matter of policy, because of an unwillingness to recognize the other as a legitimate entity, then it may be equally reluctant to participate in a workshop. Communication, even in the context of an unofficial workshop, may represent too great a concession, particularly if the other party has *favored* a policy of communication. Thus, the organization of a workshop—creating the conditions under which both

parties could participate without feeling that they are compromising their positions—is a complex problem in its own right, requiring some experimentation. To overcome some of the barriers to initiating a workshop, it may be useful to think of it in stages. In some situations, it may be necessary to start with separate workshops for the national groups, paving the way for joint meetings. Such preparatory workshops may also confront divisions within the national groups and select the teams to represent them at the joint workshop. It may also be useful, by the same token, to experiment with separate follow-up workshops for each national group, preferably augmented by other participants from the same society.

One final set of issues requiring further conceptual and experimental analysis concerns the role of the social scientists in the problem-solving workshop. I have discussed their possible inputs to the proceedings in some detail. It would be useful to specify which of these inputs are most appropriate on what occasions. It is also important to keep in mind that these inputs are never mere scientific statements or process observations, devoid of value presuppositions. The organizers bring to the situation their own definitions of the nature of the conflict, their own assumptions about the possibilities for resolution, and their own preferences for the directions resolution should take. It would be well to make these explicit for themselves and for the participants.