

"I increasingly participated in Middle East-related meetings and conferences. I traveled extensively in the Middle East... always with my wife, Rose, who became a full partner in this work. My near total immersion... would not have been possible if my wife had not been fully committed to it and participated in it at all levels—from making practical arrangements and taking notes at workshops, to making our Middle East work the center of our social life."

Herbert C. Kelman, "Looking back at my work on conflict resolution in the Middle East." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, this issue.

Interactive Problem Solving: Changing Political Culture in the Pursuit of Conflict Resolution¹

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Interactive problem solving is an unofficial, third-party approach to the resolution of international and intercommunal conflicts, derived from the work of John Burton and anchored in social-psychological principles. The article presents the approach as a specially constructed microprocess, best exemplified by problem-solving workshops with unofficial representatives of the conflicting parties, designed to produce changes in the macroprocess of conflict resolution through the joint development of new ideas and insights that can be fed into the political cultures of the two societies. The article describes the dual purpose of problem-solving workshops: their relationship to official negotiations, their typical participants, the role of the third party, the ground rules governing workshop interactions, and the broad agenda they are designed to cover. The work of the author and his collaborators on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict over the past four decades is briefly reviewed and its possible contributions to the larger process are suggested. The article concludes with a major challenge to the methods of interactive problem solving in the current phase of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

For nearly 40 years now, my colleagues and I have developed and applied an unofficial, academically based, third-party approach to the resolution of international and intercommunal conflicts, which I have come to call

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