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Engaging Conflict History: Toward an Integrated Framework of Inter-Group Dialogue and Capacity-Building.

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Abstract:

This essay is an attempt to construct an integrated framework for understanding multi-faceted meanings of history that correspond to different communal experiences of social conflict. The concept of *conflict history* is introduced to describe a worldview of a conflict party in search of a coherent explanation of the conflict's origin, evolution, and significance. Four interconnected approaches to conflict history – orthodox, different, mediative, and alternative – are explored to integrate empirical inquiry into polarized relationships with unexplored possibilities of more peaceful coexistence that has not materialized in the past. This exercise of theory-building draws on the author's applied practice in conflict resolution dialogues on US-Pakistan relations, as well as on the Taiwan Strait. It examines hypotheses emerging from his field experience from sociological, psychoanalytic, and other social scientific perspectives. The author employs a dialogical way of communication – including storytelling – throughout the essay.

Introduction

In mid-September, 2010, I was in Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan Province, located in Pakistan's western frontier bordering on Afghanistan and Iran. The playground and the backyard of Quetta's Boy Scout community center were filled with make-shift tents, men, women, and children, most of them from rural tribal communities of the Baloch national, linguistic background. They had been driven out of their ancestral land by the unprecedented floods and the resulting flush water that emerged in late July and early August of that year. The disaster affected some twenty million people and seventeen percent of the nation's territory, about half the size of the United Kingdom.

The sunset was near when I reached the Boy Scout. A gentle breeze caressed the ground. Along with my local guide and interpreter Raziq – a pseudonym I will assign for this episode – I sat on the grass facing people sitting in a semi-circle. The crowd was comprised of several dozen men of different ages, from early teens to gray-haired elders. Curious small children, mostly girls, gathered behind me, giggling, whispering to each other, and trying to sneak a peek at this foreign visitor and his notebook. They had just gathered in response to the call of the Boy Scout's headmaster, who invited them to share with me and Raziq their experiences of coping with the floods. Assisted by Raziq's oratorical skills so palpable in his highly engaging way of dialogue and translation, the whole crowd seemed to be captivated by each of the questions I posed through him, with responses coming ceaselessly from all directions, one after another.

An elderly man with white beard, seated right in front of me, raised his hand when I asked the people in attendance about the floods' psychological effects. His gentle, dignified eyes had an air of sadness, I sensed. "The floods came so suddenly and unexpectedly," he said. "They destroyed our houses, livestock, and lands. We lost our ancestors' lifestyle...." He tried to continue but burst into tears, with his shoulders heaving. I hesitated for a moment but inched forward to hold his hand. I was not sure, I must confess, if doing so was culturally appropriate, but I was compelled to demonstrate a gesture of support and togetherness with him one way or another. Two of us, though strangers to each other, had stayed silent together for a while, with the whole crowd witnessing the silence. In that silence, I could still sense his shoulders heaving.

The rest of the community discussion that I had held with these people in attendance, lasting for about an hour, was filled with many emotional twists and turns of this nature. One theme that had repeatedly emerged throughout this community gathering was how deeply sorry they were for their ancestors and how humiliating it was for them to have lost their honor. Half way into the conversation, I began to feel as though I was sitting not only with dozens of flood-affected people, but also with their deceased ancestors who had remained alive and available to guide their way forward.

At the end of the meeting, I was moved to express my appreciation and affirm what I saw as the community's resilience to recover and rebuild. To do this, I decided to share a small part of my own life:

One of the decisive moments that had shaped my vocational commitment as a peacebuilder was a visit I made as a teenager to Hiroshima, where I heard the testimonies of atomic bomb victims for the first time I have decided to explore how to contribute to disaster-struck areas of Pakistan by visiting here today partly because of the strength and inspiration I received from my parents' and grandparents' generations, exemplified by these Hiroshima victims I met

I paused for a moment, felt highly tentative to share my own thoughts, yet decided to proceed:

It is my humble opinion that generations into the future, there will be a time when descendants of this land will face trying times and seek strength from examples set by their ancestors. They will remember how you have stood up and overcome the unprecedented floods. They will seek inspirations in your examples at that time just as you seek strength in your ancestors' legacy today. I pray that you will be remembered in the future as ancestors who exemplify unprecedented courage, honor, and resilience that will continue to inspire your dependents for generations to come.

I spoke from the bottom of my heart. After Raziq translated my last sentence, there emerged an enthusiastic applause that had lasted for a long time, much to my relief. As in other meetings I had facilitated or attended in Pakistan, there were more than a few people insisting on inviting me to their houses – their temporary shelter, to be precise – for hospitality. And their facial expressions and body language appeared to *mean it* earnestly, especially on this particular occasion in Quetta.

Despite the passage of time, I still reflect on this experience in Quetta. As a social scientist myself, I remain cautious, in the absence of verifiable evidence, as to whether the small effort I made in that dialogue circle truly helped the Baloch community crystalize a perceived continuity of its past, present, and future generations as a way of affirming its collective inner strength. Yet this experience was significant, at least for my own learning experience, because it confronted me with potentially important questions: How can communities undergoing crises ranging from natural disasters to protracted conflicts engage their shared history proactively and creatively to overcome such crises? How can they identify peace potential inherent in their communal history and activate it systematically and constructively, not merely by chance?

The remainder of this essay will attempt to answer these questions, with emphasis on how to engage *conflict* history as a specific example of crisis-oriented history. Conflict history is defined here as an ever-evolving, cognitive universe of a conflict party, either an individual or as a community, that seeks to offer a coherent explanation as to how the conflict has come about and evolved into where it stands today. This question of *how* inevitably leads to a parallel inquiry

into what events and issues matter in shaping and reshaping the conflict, who else is involved, and why the conflict is happening in the first place. It is a worldview of conflict, broad and holistic in scope, seeking its own internal logic of coherence and completeness. When we are born into our conflict history that has been internalized by our caretakers, we may or may not be aware, let alone receptive, of other conflict histories that potentially contradict ours. Our conflict history feels natural and authentic as water feels to fish and air to birds.

Our inquiry in this essay will take us first to two episodes of dialogue I have facilitated, one on the historical conflict over the Taiwan Strait and the other on US-Pakistan relations since September 11, 2001. These episodes will enable us to explore not only how different cognitive universes come together through dialogue, but also how these manifest, articulated versions of history facilitate deeper inquiry into less conspicuous realms of thinking still to be explored for transforming conflict. We will map out these different types of thinking and construct a working framework for engaging conflict history proactively. We will do this exploratory exercise using the case study of the Taiwan Strait, one of the two contexts to which we now turn.

Two Episodes of Conflict History

“221 BC: Unification of China,” says a large sheet of paper sitting on the floor. This historical event was one of the seven that a team of five mainland Chinese dialogue participants chose in order to describe the origin of the conflict across the Taiwan Strait, in response to my inquiry. Their Taiwanese and American counterparts in dialogue stood still in the room. They watched their mainland partners’ chronology with intense curiosity.

It was in November, 2005 that I first facilitated what would later become the first in a series of semi-annual weeklong dialogues for conflict resolution between mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, and American student delegates. These dialogues have since been organized by Strait Talk, a student-run peacebuilding initiative hosted by Brown University in November and the University of California, Berkley in April each year. Strait Talk organizers select five delegates each year as potential future leaders, from a large pool of applicants from leading universities in each of the three societies.

The Strait Talk dialogue in 2005 took place against the background of China’s anti-secession law that had passed in March of that year. The law stated, among other things, Beijing’s readiness to use force, if necessary, to prevent Taiwan from establishing and formalizing its separation from the mainland. The student delegates were in the workshop as private citizens, not as representatives of the three societies. Yet tension was palpable when our dialogue delved into the question of Taiwan’s political status in relation to the mainland’s One-China policy.

During this 2005 dialogue, as part of our joint exploration of the roots and dynamics of the conflict across the Taiwan Strait, I invited the mainland Chinese and Taiwanese delegates to form two separate teams and asked each side to come up with seven historical events that each team believed to have shaped the Cross-Strait conflict most decisively. This experiential way of

reflecting jointly on conflict history – commonly referred to as walk-through history – was first developed by Joseph Montville (1993), a former US diplomat with a background in psychology, and has since been used widely among practitioners of conflict transformation.

The dialogue room was spacious, quiet, and sunny, with large windows half open, inviting fresh air in. The antique chairs and tables placed in the room appeared to help orchestrate a reflective, academic atmosphere conducive to an exploratory dialogue.

After half an hour of passionate discussion to prepare for the exercise of walk-through history, both the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese teams wrote down each of the seven selected events and the years of their occurrence on a sheet of paper twice the size of a notebook. As we placed the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese timelines side by side on the floor, with each comprised of seven events, we saw before us two conflict histories unfolding. These timelines spread from one corner of the large conference room to the other. For each of the two timelines, we kept an appropriate physical distance between consecutive chronological events in such a way that the distance could symbolically represent the number of intervening years between the two events placed next to each other. Portion of these timelines may be reproduced as follows:

ILLUSTRATION 1: WALK-THROUGH HISTORY ON THE CONFLICT OVER THE TAIWAN STRAIT COMES HERE.

All the fifteen participants were then invited to form a single line behind me as I stood in front of the first sheet, which stated “221BC: Unification of China”. We walked slowly and silently on the narrow isle between the two timelines while we exercised the best of our imagination and empathy to be in the shoes of both sides, looking to the right and looking to the left as we walked. There was a symbolic weight of history I felt when as we as a group walked silently for a few seconds from the first mainland Chinese event, “221 BC,” to the distant second, “1945 Japan lost WWII.” After all sixteen of us had finished this ceremonious walk, we sat on the floor and formed a large circle surrounding the two timelines. Silence prevailed for a while. Then came a barrage of questions, mainly from the Taiwanese delegates eager to engage their mainland counterparts. Neither side had ever had a direct, open conversation about such deeply political issues.

“So why do you need to go all the way back to 221 BC to talk about our conflict?”, a curious Taiwanese participant asked. For the Taiwanese team that started its timeline in the 1940s, 221 BC was not only unthinkable but also shockingly irrelevant. After a considerable amount of exchange between the delegates, the understanding that had eventually emerged in the room was that the Taiwanese attempt to separate themselves from the mainland, according to the mainland delegates, represented a disintegration of China’s historical oneness. One of the mainland

participants equated this disintegration with “amputating a limb”; another mainland delegate compared it to “a child leaving his family, never to return”. While the Taiwanese delegates’ conflict history started with the mainland rule over the island (since 1945), as well as with the massacres by the newly-arrived anti-communist mainlanders of their local Taiwanese opponents (in 1947) in the immediate aftermath of Japanese military occupation (1895-1945), the mainland team in dialogue sought its genesis to antiquity, as far back as 221BC, in order to affirm the inviolable wholeness of One China.

I have since facilitated many iterations of the walk-through history exercise for different groups of Taiwanese and mainland Chinese delegates, including young members of the Chinese Communist Party, and have never again seen a mainland team going as far back as 221BC. Yet the emotional commitment with which these dialogue participants strive to validate their conflict histories, often relating back to generations ago, has been consistent, with many tears shed and deep frustration expressed in each workshop.

Before I explore lessons learned from my experience with the dialogue over the Taiwan Strait, I would like to reflect on another episode, in order to broaden my inquiry from a comparative perspective.

In February, 2011, I facilitated a four-day workshop on cross-cultural communication outside of Washington DC, focusing on the link between social conflict and culture. Most of the thirty-two participants were mid-level policy-oriented practitioners. About half of them were Americans, mainly of civilian and military government background. The other half came from sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and elsewhere, with a diverse mix of organizational and professional backgrounds. The workshop engaged the participants in a series of in-depth case studies that required them to form small working groups and come up with practical solutions to the problems presented as part of the case studies. These exercises were supplemented by storytelling, participatory theater, a cultural talent show, and a joint visit to historical sites and national memorials in Washington DC. We bonded through these activities. The participants’ interactions at lunch and dinner tables and during coffee breaks appeared to indicate genuine relationships emerging through these encounters.

After two days of intensive discussion on the cultural and psychoanalytic dimensions of Pakistani Taliban and other current issues on war and peace, I invited Pakistani and American participants, two to three people each, to construct a walk-through history of the two countries’ relationships. More specifically, I asked each national team to identify eight to nine historical events that in their views had most decisively contributed to the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, as well as to the nature of Afghan-Pakistani-American relations since. I added Afghanistan to our equation because the conflict there was clearly what had brought Washington and Islamabad into an uneasy alliance, especially after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The US team was comprised of two experienced government officials, one from the state department and the other from the Pentagon, both with extensive practical experience in diplomatic relations. The Pakistani team consisted of three individuals – a leading journalist and expert on terrorism, a former government employee currently pursuing a doctorate in public policy, and an NGO director with scholarly background in international relations. After half an hour of discussion within each team, they came up with two distinct timelines:

ILLUSTRATION 2: WALK-THROUGH HISTORY ON US-PAKISTAN RELATIONS COMES HERE.

There was a slight discrepancy in the reasoning processes through which the two teams came up with their chronologies. The Americans tried to represent diverse views of the American general public, which they inferred based on their professional experiences and their observations of American public opinion. The Pakistanis, on the other hand, came up with the timeline as a synthesis of the three individuals' personal opinions. Despite the difference in approach between the two sides, the contested worldviews illustrated by the two timelines, extended from one corner of the large conference room to the other, were evocative and compelling. Some thirty participants, led by me, walked through the timelines slowly, silently, and attentively. Then we sat on the floor, forming a large circle surrounding the two conflict histories unfolding in front of us.

Before I proceed to narrate the rest of my experience, I would like to pause for a moment and invite you, the reader, to imagine being in this workshop yourself and entering an exploratory conversation. What do you make out of these two timelines about how the two sides understand their conflict histories? How do you describe the most important differences? How about similarities? Why do you think these differences and similarities came about? And finally, if you were the facilitator in this dialogue circle, how would you organize the debriefing among the participants? Let's pause, imagine, and reflect.

The actual debriefing that took place was highly engaging and at times emotionally-charged not only between the Pakistani and American participants, but also among the rest of the thirty-two participants of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. We extended the designated time for discussion well into our scheduled lunch break, yet several participants still remained in the room and continued to exchange their opinions with considerable passion.

Among a number of important observations that emerged from the debriefing, I would like to highlight two as most relevant to our inquiry on conflict history. First, while the American timeline was global in scope, including events that occurred in Iran (1978), Afghanistan (1979; 2001), Lebanon (1982), Iraq (1990-1; 2003), Yemen (1997), Tanzania and Kenya (1998), and the

United States (2001), the Pakistani version, on the other hand, focused almost exclusively on either its own national history (1947; 1977) or on the direct, immediate impact that American policy (2001; 2004) or events in the neighboring Afghanistan (1979; 1989; the mid-1990s) generated in Pakistan. This is an important difference between the two sides.

The interpretation provided by the US team for the global scope of these events suggested that American public opinion, by and large, views terrorist threats posed by “Islamic fundamentalists” as a rather monolithic category of undifferentiated phenomena and be content with the prevailing worldview that “we” as Americans are threatened by “them”, the Islamic terrorists. This orientation of thinking, according to the American participants, suggests that terrorist acts carried out by Al Qaeda in the American homeland and by Taliban in the Afghan-Pakistan context are a decisively important part – yet still not the whole – of the terrorist threats that concern Americans. To counter this American interpretation of the conflict history, one of the Pakistani participants who created their own national chronology remarked:

This is not an Islamic *religious* perspective as our American colleagues seem to suggest. This is rather a Pakistani *national* perspective. Our timeline is a history of US-Pakistan relations, in which we have experienced many American betrayals.

He then added that there has been a consistent pattern of American approaches to Pakistan in which Washington builds and severs ties with Islamabad according to its own ephemeral needs and ever-changing priorities.

Over the years, I have observed similar dynamics between “high-power” and “low-power” parties reflected in their reciprocal images of conflict history. While the distinction between these two concepts is admittedly impressionistic and far from definitive, it generally describes which side of the conflict appears to maintain the upper hand in exercising more influence over the other, especially in adversarial relationships. From the viewpoint of the “low-power” party, such as Pakistan in this case, the words and deeds of the “high-power” party preoccupy what it can or cannot do domestically and internationally, and as a result, the conflict history presented by the “low-power” party reflects its preoccupation with the “high-power” party. On the contrary, from the perspective of the “high-power” party, its “low-power” counterpart is but a small part of the larger picture that frames its outlook toward the conflict at hand. Other examples of this interplay between power relations and collective perceptions of conflict history include mainland China and Taiwan (with the diplomatic squeeze preoccupying Taipei’s foreign policy agenda all the time), and Israel and Palestine (with Palestinians viewing the end of Israel’s occupation as a prerequisite to anything significant that Palestine as a state would be able to do internationally.)

The second observation derived from the debriefing relates to the apparent difference in the lengths of the two timelines. The earliest events in the Pakistani timeline were the nation’s independence from Britain in 1947, thus first acquiring statehood to conduct diplomatic

relations, and Pakistan joining two US-led anti-communist regional pacts in 1954-5, with seeds planted through these events for what the Pakistanis described as a pattern of American betrayal. The American timeline, in contrast, started with the fall of the Iranian Shah and the hostage crisis besieging the US embassy in 1978, intended to portray a US public image of how religiously motivated forces started threatening American lives and security. The American chronology also highlights a cluster of events that had occurred from the 1980s to the 2000s, in contrast to the spread of the Pakistani timeline from the 1940s to the 2000s.

Though nothing conclusive can be said about these different lengths of the timelines based merely on a single exercise of walk-through history, one plausible interpretation worth consideration, supported by similar experiences I have in the Taiwan Strait, Israel-Palestine, and other contexts, is that the difference reflects deeper, less visible forces at play in conflict. A community with little to no firsthand experience in tangible, destructive effects of the conflict to which it has been a party tends to experience a sharp, collective sense of awareness raising that may be triggered suddenly by unexpected crises breaking out, as in the September 11 attacks in 2001. Such a community, akin to the United States in this walk-through-history exercise, tends to view the history of an emerging conflict as a series of visible crises such as hostage-taking, suicide bombing, and outbreaks of violent uprising. A conflict history of this type is often perceived as relatively shorter and *event*-oriented, for it focuses more on the visible manifestations of violence and crisis than on the sustained social processes, relationships, and structures underlying the events.

In contrast, a community experiencing tangible, chronic effects of destructive conflict, especially when they are affecting its constituents within their own territory, tends to build a view of conflict history that centers on why and how they have come to endure their present suffering. The Pakistani timeline illustrated this type of thinking. Such a conflict history tends to highlight not only key events, both glorious and traumatic, but also social processes, relationships, and structures (such as what the Pakistanis saw as repeated patterns of American betrayal) that account for the “why” and “how” of the conflict’s lifecycle. In short, a conflict history born out of direct conflict experience tends to be *process*-oriented and relatively longer in scope, in search of a longitudinal account of its origin and evolution. Underlying this process-oriented view, I would hypothesize, is a collective desire to be heard and respected, instead of their voice being ignored and suppressed.

The two episodes of dialogue I have described thus far – one on the conflict across the Taiwan Strait and the other on Pakistani-US relations – illustrate how people from different sides come up with different images of conflict history. The episodes also illustrate how natural and unquestionable these images seem to have grown in their minds, as well as how unfamiliar and even unimaginable the other side’s image appears when first introduced. Thus the key to peacebuilding through dialogue, I believe, lies in our readiness and capacity to build on such unimaginable, unexpected moments and to use them proactively as an invitation to reimagine the

meaning of the past, present, and future. I will describe this process more systematically in what follows.

In Search of Patterns: Orthodox and Different History

As I grew up in a small rural town in Japan, I learned history at school as a subject that required memorizing many events, dates, and names of famous people and places. While I was preoccupied with the task of memorization, I had never thought that there could possibly be different worldviews and interpretations of the same history, and in fact even different *histories* altogether. History, in my mind, had long been a single line of events. As I started researching and practicing conflict transformation as my vocational commitment many years later, using walk-through history and other methods, questions arose within me and have since been nagging me: what if I had been taught history differently early on, in a way that enabled me to open up different worldviews of history?; what if my history lessons had been filled with problem-solving exercises to reconcile these different worldviews and with explorations of alternative histories still to be realized?; what would world history look like then? Such history lessons, if available, would have been far more exciting to me than the monotonous task of memorization.

What I would like to outline in this section is a basic pedagogical approach to interactive and creative history lessons and dialogues of this kind, which I have experientially developed through trial and error over the years. There are four interrelated components of the approach:

- Orthodox history – mainstream history, often carried by a “high-power” party
- Different history – non-mainstream history, often carried by a “low-power” party
- Mediative history – a history of nonviolent peacemaking that seeks to transform polarized relationships between carriers of orthodox and different histories
- Alternative history – a hypothetical yet plausible history of more effective peacemaking that has not materialized in reality

I will first describe each of them and later explore their link through a concrete case study.

Every time I facilitate a group debriefing session on walk-through history, I am reminded that the contrasted timelines represent only a very partial, incomplete representation of more expansive, non-linear thinking. Non-linear they may be, the patterns of thinking underlying the exercise are usually structured in some coherent manner that is unique to each of the political communities experiencing deep-rooted conflict. To understand these patterns, we need to look at the social and historical contexts from which timelines are derived.

Zviatar Zerubavel (2003), a sociologist studying memories of historical communities, systematically compared calendars of 191 countries and found that 139 of them celebrate days on which they attained independence or sovereign status. Attainment of independence or sovereign status in these national calendars was often marked by decisive war victories over colonialists and foreign occupiers, territorial expansions after much sacrifice, heroic standing to

defend frontlines and outposts, memorable contributions by founding fathers, and the introduction of national flags and anthems. These events are typically decades old and sometimes a few centuries old. They are associated with contemporary state-making and regime changes. Though national calendars are different in nature and origin from the examples of walk-through history exercises we have discussed so far, we can still identify some evocative parallels. For example, the mainland Chinese reference to regaining sovereignty over Taiwan upon Japan's defeat in 1945 and the Pakistanis' reference to the nation's independence in 1947 follow this generic pattern that Zerubavel found in his research.

Zerubavel also notes that 176 out of the 191 national calendars under study celebrate religious holidays, presumably as an attempt to remember their sacred, spiritual origins. Many of these holidays honor significant events, imagined or real, in the lives of the founders, prophets, and prominent disciples of the respective faith traditions. The events are typically centuries to millennia old, not years or decades. Fourteen out of the seventeen Indian national holidays, for example, celebrate the nation's Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Christian, Muslim, and Sikh origins. In the example of Cross-Strait relations we have discussed earlier, the mainland Chinese reference to the unification of China in 221 BC, though not strictly religious in nature, illustrates commemorative significance of this type, by appeal to the nation's ancient origin and its inviolable continuity to the present.

By comparing the two types of holidays – one contemporary and the other ancient – Zerubavel discovered a pattern in the relationship between these types:

The historical events nations usually commemorate on holidays are typically organized chronologically in two clusters. Those clusters normally consist of a set of religiously significant events that occurred in the very distant past and another set of politically significant events that occurred in the past two hundred years. They are typically separated from each other by long stretches of commemoratively unmarked, 'empty' history. (Zerubavel 2003: 327)

To illustrate this pattern, Zerubavel cites Thailand's national calendar. The Thai calendar includes holidays that commemorate the following two types of events:

- The Buddha's birth (563BC), his first sermon (528BC), the announcement of his imminent death (483BC) – all remembering ancient events of religious significance.
- The foundation of the current royal dynasty by King Rama I (1782), the rein of King Rama (1869), the transition to constitutional monarchy (1932), the accession of the current ruler King Bhumibol (1946) – all remembering relatively recent political events.

Between these two types of events, that is, between 483BC and 1782AD, there is a long stretch of time – as long as 2,265 years – that contains no commemorative events in the Thai calendar. In our example of Cross-Strait relations, the vast distance between 221BC and 1954, the latter

being the year in which Japan lost control over Taiwan to China, appears to reflect what Zerubavel refers to as a bipolar structure of national history.

A lesson learned from Zerubavel's study is significant. Each country appears to have adopted its national calendar and selected its commemorative events independently. But globally and historically, there have been relatively consistent *patterns* of thinking that appear to demonstrate how the respective nations have made these seemingly independent choices. A deeper undercurrent of these patterns, I would hypothesize, consists of the firmly entrenched structure of contemporary sovereign statehood and the culture of nationalism that goes with it. Both statehood and nationhood inherently seeks internal cohesion and togetherness within its boundaries, often at the cost of excluding others outside.

Parallel timelines created by the walk-through history exercise, like national calendars, represent their creators' images of their communal histories. These representations illustrate how their creators understand the origins and evolutions of their communal life and how they seek to communicate them, knowingly or unknowingly, to others within their own communities as well as to unfamiliar outsiders. Unlike national calendars, however, parallel timelines emerging from the exercise of walk-through history represent opposing worldviews, each trying to communicate its own sense of internal coherence, however nebulous and incomplete. From the viewpoint of each of the parties creating a timeline, there is a *self-oriented* and *other-oriented* conflict history, as it were, in the two-way interactions demonstrated by our two examples of walk-through history. There is a separation between "our history" and "their history", in other words. And there may be multiple versions of other-oriented history when there are multiple communities interacting with a self-oriented history.

Experience in conflict resolution dialogues across international contexts suggests that a group's conflict history, whether self-oriented or other-oriented, tends to gravitate toward either a collective self-image of superiority or one of relative inferiority – or most often, an intricate, indistinguishable mixture of both. A self-image of superiority often reflects a "winner's" history, or at least perceived as such, in relation to the conflict. This worldview is inclined to highlight certain historical events as national holidays that commemorate having won revolutionary wars of independence, expelled enemies, subdued dissenters, and established exclusive sovereignty. Its timeline is typically punctuated by wars, revolutions, and other watershed events. Many of the mainstream history textbooks mirror this orientation of thinking for they chronicle preferred official versions of history, with state sponsorship and financial, ideological backing. It may highlight collective memories of patriotism and heroism that saved nations during their trying times. I call this worldview an *orthodox history* because it has been mainstreamed and legitimized as an official version by history textbooks, national calendars, museum exhibits, monuments, national ceremonies, and other means of intentional memorialization.

The leading psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan (2004) uses the term chosen glory to describe the collective subconscious process underlying an orthodox history born out of protracted social

conflict. Volkan defines a chosen glory as a collective mental representation of an event that group members have internalized and remember as a glorious triumph. According to Volkan, it is “passed from generation to generation through caretaker-child interaction and by participation in ceremonies that recall the past success” (Volkan 2004: 47).

When international and inter-communal conflict generates a self-declared winner who is willing and able to project its image of an orthodox history onto the society to which it belongs, there is the potential of a *different history* looming on the other side of the conflict. If the Israeli War of Independence fought against the Arab neighbors in 1948, for example, is considered as part of Israel’s orthodox history, the exodus of Palestinian refugees in the same year, known as the Nakba (Catastrophe), corresponds to a different history. Likewise if the formal US recognition of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as well as its One-China policy in 1979 is an important part of Beijing’s orthodox history, then a different history that corresponds to it includes the loss of the formerly recognized status in the 1970s of the Taiwan-based Republic of China (ROC).

A different history revolves around a collective memory of experiencing a defeat or otherwise remaining in underdog status. It tends to highlight historical events of being victimized and humiliated, and of performing acts of self-sacrifice and martyrdom for an aspirational cause still to be fulfilled. Because a different history, or multiple versions thereof, represents experiences of people who belong to a less visible side of the society, it may not be as well-known or popularized as an orthodox history, especially from unfamiliar outsiders’ point of view. Worse yet, it may be actively suppressed, de-legitimized, or even treated as non-existent under extreme circumstances of tight central control¹.

Volkan calls psychoanalytic dynamics underlying a different history a chosen trauma, which he defines as “the collective mental representation of an event that has caused a large group to face drastic common losses, to feel helpless and victimized by another group, and to share a humiliating injury” (Volkan 2004: 50). Like a chosen glory, a chosen trauma is passed down from generation to generation through caretaker-child relation, through a reenactment of ceremonies and symbols that help maintain the collective sense of belonging and the continuity of the past, present, and future.

In US-Pakistan relations, the repeated pattern of “American betrayal” as pointed out by the Pakistanis – including the formation and dissolution of the US-led anti-communist alliances in the 1950s, as well as the subsequent “marriage of convenience” arranged to support the US-led “war on terror” since September 11, 2001 – illustrates a different history, one that is not often heard of in the US public discourse.

¹ For an excellent case study of how a different history evolves through refugee crises in the African Great Lakes, see Liisa Malkki’s ethnography, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*.

If we set aside details, my point so far has been fairly simple and perhaps commonsensical: there are different sides in conflict, and consequently, there are different conflict histories, self-oriented and other-oriented in relational terms; in conflict-affected societies, these different worldviews tend to represent orthodox and different histories, gravitating toward either a perceived winner's view of history or its victimized opponent's view, or toward an intricate, indistinguishable mixture of both; these different sides and views of conflict history may evolve within and across states and nations, yet they may also develop within each society, as in an asymmetrical relationship between the ruling class and the ruled; and over time, some form of coherent perceptual patterns emerges on each side, and it is facilitated and crystalized by a shared communal experience.

Activating Peace Potential in Our Visions of the Past: Mediative and Alternative History

If somebody had taught me at least this much when I was learning history as a schoolboy, it would have been revolutionary and more than satisfactory in my mind. Yet as a practitioner engaged in dialogues with conflict parties in search of solutions, I have always felt that juxtaposing orthodox and different conflict histories in their presence is far from enough, however useful such an exercise might be to foster empathy between them. This is because conflict transformation, which needs to go beyond analysis, is ultimately about creating concrete ways to overcome the inherent *contradictions* between opposing views on conflict history. And building empathy across the lines of division is only part of what is required. Israelis acknowledging the Palestinian history of Nakba and Palestinians acknowledging Israelis commemorating the War of Independence may both help promote mutual recognition, for example. But that recognition, and deep empathy that goes with it, would not necessarily suggest how to resolve the fundamental contradictions in their respective claims to sovereign statehood, Jerusalem, and other issues of enduring importance. So our next question is: how should we engage conflict history in such a way as to overcome the fundamental contradictions underlying a social conflict at hand?

To answer this question, let us go back to the parallel timelines constructed in the walk-through history exercises. This time, however, let us read between lines, quite literally. Imagine a version of history that none of the conflict parties would come up with. It would be neither an orthodox nor different history, neither self nor other-oriented. That missing version so needed is a history – or perhaps multiple histories – of tenacious, nonviolent peacemaking that has sought to transcend, resist, or at least cope with the overriding trends of divisiveness and polarization, with the social forces sustaining we-ness and they-ness. This is a search for cumulative historical processes catalyzed by committed individuals, communities, events, and social forces that have sought to discover, restore, create, and activate less visible potential of *interdependence* between different sides of the conflict, underneath the highly visible contradictions between orthodox and different histories. I would like to refer to this worldview of the past a *mediative history*, building on the insights of the peacebuilding scholar-practitioner John Paul Lederach.

Acknowledging this usage of the term mediative to be unconventional, Lederach (2005) views “mediative capacity” as a basis of a holistic, systemic approach to transforming social conflict. By mediative, he refers to the quality of intentional, strategic social processes that employ multiple actors, channels, and influences to cross lines of division, both vertically (across elite/grassroots relations) and horizontally (across national, ethnic, religious, and other identity groups, each sustaining a sense of belonging). Mediative capacity, according to Lederach, restores and creates social spaces, or opportunities for social interaction, that facilitate relationship-building across these divisions and humanize mutual images of Self and Other. He illustrates mediative capacity with the process of making a robust spider web made up of numerous vertical and horizontal threads crisscrossing the two-dimensional space, as well as that of bread-making in which yeast, when mixed thoroughly with flour and other ingredients, helps generate a synergistic, multiplying effect to permeate the whole of the bread.

Importantly, Lederach distinguishes such a mediative process from a conventional *mediation* process because the latter, unlike the former, typically assigns impartial roles to particular actors – individuals or groups – and presumes representatives of different sides to go through facilitated discussion under the intermediaries’ leadership. On the contrary, mediative capacity suggests a cumulative, integrative effect of group-based, interactive processes that work together to create, restore, and expand humanizing ways in which divided sides of a conflict may choose to envision and practice nonviolent coexistence.

One of the best-known examples of a mediative history is the Gandhian movement of active nonviolence that emerged in the late 1910s for the independence of India from British colonial rule. The historical context in which the movement had gradually taken root centered around the dominant “orthodox history” of over three centuries of British colonialism. When the Gandhian movement was beginning to gain momentum in India, there were also radicalized, violent movements for independence, on their paths toward potentially shaping “different histories” of the nation. However, the Gandhian-led mediative history, on the one hand, and these different histories openly advocating violent means, on the other, shared one thing in common: a commitment to resisting foreign rule, supported by the collective resolve to endure greater self-sacrifice. But their critical difference lay in the Gandhian adherence to nonviolence and the movement’s refusal to retaliate, at least from the viewpoint of the movements’ leaders.

Most often, however, a mediative history is far less visible, making the Gandhian movement a rare exception. It tends to be a hidden history. Elise Boulding, a Quaker sociologist and a pioneer in peace research, documented a wide range of such hidden histories, from the ancient to the contemporary, across religious, geographic, gender, age, and other differences². On the European Crusades of the eleventh to the fourteenth century, for example, Boulding wrote:

² Elsewhere I have also analyzed seventeen examples of what may be viewed as mediative histories, broadly defined, from the small community level to the international level, orchestrated by actors playing the roles of intermediaries and conflict parties, as well as by those playing these two roles simultaneously. See Arai (2009).

There were large-scale peace movements during the Crusades – movements of voluntary poverty and refusal of arms. The Humiliati, the Poor Lombards, and the Poor Catholics all refused to take feudal oaths, bear arms, or obey church authorities. Lay religious orders for both men and women, such as the one founded by St. Francis, with 1,500 congregations across Europe toward the end of the Crusade era, followed a rule of voluntary poverty, compassionate service, and nonviolence. Penitential processions of thousands moved from city to city, actually conducting peace negotiations between the poor and the aristocracy wherever they went. A popular peace movement of the mid-1200s gathered 400,000 people in Verona on August 28, 1233, for what was called the Great Alleluia, a public demonstration to end a prolonged and bloody civil war. (Boulding 2000: 58)

These movements of active nonviolence, negotiation, and public education, while falling short of suspending the Crusades, must have been significant social forces when they were in full swing. Yet how frequently do we learn about these aspects of the Crusades in history lessons, compared to the more popularized image of the period of European history that focuses almost exclusively on the endless cycles of brutal killing between Christians and Muslims? Lines are drawn between orthodox and different histories in our mental mapping of the past. And which worldviews of history we internalize depends decisively on which part of the world we are born and raised in, often beyond our control and free will.

While such a discovery of a mediative history never mitigates the seriousness of the enduring shadows cast by the Crusades, the awareness of these nonviolent peacemaking efforts in history helps prevent an oversimplified image from growing about Christians in medieval western Europe being categorically evil. The cumulative effect of these images throughout remembered history, I believe, has decisive, long-lasting impact on the collective mindset of the West and Islamic World today, against the backdrop of the US-led global “war on terror” and violent jihadist movements to counter the war.

This then brings us to our final set of questions: was the history of destructive conflict, illustrated by the tension between orthodox and different histories, inevitable in a given social, geographic context?; was the violence, suffering, and misery involved in the conflict history unavoidable?; is it even relevant and meaningful to raise these questions in the first place for the historical events, by definition, have already occurred and they thus belong to the unchangeable past? If the goal of our inquiry into conflict history is merely empirical – that is, to collect verifiable data through some systematic means, look for trends, patterns, and linkages using accountable methods, and evaluate findings to develop theories – then we may comfortably stay away from facing these value-laden questions head-on. But conflict transformation requires not only understanding and evaluating empirical reality, but also exploring how proactively and concretely to change that reality when needed. This exploratory mode of inquiry and social action is inherently *value-driven* in that it proactively confronts violence of all forms – direct, structural, cultural (Galtung 1996) – when violence permeates the empirical reality in question. For this reason, taking action

at present to strive for eradicating violence in the future is an essential requirement of conflict transformation.

With this inquiry in mind, I have been dedicating part of my reflective practice to explore how to apply this future-oriented thinking into ways in which we reimagine our troubled past, asking counter-factual questions about what alternative histories could have been possible to prevent violence from arising and escalating. The reason why I think this question is important is this: if we do not do this exercise regularly and habitually as part of our history lessons, public forums, peacebuilding workshops, and other settings of civic exchange and education, how do we acquire self-reflective worldviews and creative thinking skills to change empirical reality as it unfolds?; how do we prepare our mind to shape our future more constructively and less violently if we have not done this exercise on important turning points and critical moments of choice in our past?

By raising these questions, we are cautiously entering a field of intellectual landmines – and perhaps spiritual, religious ones, too – filled with the unknown and the unknowable. Our inquiry now focuses on a search for some systematic ways of envisioning an *alternative history*, which I define as a history of more active peacebuilding and less violent social relations that did not materialize in reality but that could have been possible, instead of impossible, by activating greater peace potential inherent in a given well-defined historical context. It is a hypothetical, counter-factual history for it is neither empirical nor factual. It is a potential history for it is not actual.

Such an inquiry, however, should not be entirely baseless empirically or excessively utopian. It takes all the known and knowable elements of empirical reality seriously, including orthodox, different, and mediative histories. It must be built on a careful understanding of how essential needs and aspirations of primary actors involved contradict one another to give rise to the conflict (thus shaping orthodox and different histories) and how, on the other hand, they may be interdependent and connected at a deeper level (thus shaping mediative histories). A search for an alternative history, then, is a process of both practical and imaginative thinking about how to transform the contradictions and expand the interdependence beyond what empirically happened in history. Alternatively, it may be conceived of as a more modest exercise of finding ways to make the conflict-prone contradictions less salient and more dormant in favor of making interdependence more salient and mainstreamed.

All in all, we have so far explored four interconnected approaches to conflict history – orthodox, different, and mediative histories as aspects of empirical reality and alternative history as an image of hypothetical, potential reality that builds on yet transcends the empirical. One way of demonstrating the link between these four approaches may be illustrated as follows:

ILLUSTRATION 3: FOUR INTERCONNECTED APPROACHES TO CONFLICT HISTORY COME HERE.

Case Study: Reimagining the Peace Potential in Cross-Strait Relations in the early 1990s

Let me illustrate this way of exploratory thinking, by revisiting the conflict across the Taiwan Strait. Imagine being in a history lesson or in a facilitated dialogue between concerned parties across the Taiwan Strait. As instructors/facilitators, we will need to first introduce the conflict to the learners/participants. Our introduction may highlight primary conflict parties and their aspirations at stake, preferably through interactive dialogue with the learners/participants. Here is one way of describing the macro-historical context of the conflict succinctly, for the purpose of this exercise:

From the mainland Chinese point of view, what is at stake in the historical conflict across the Taiwan Strait is their collective commitment to their nationhood and inviolable territorial coherence. This commitment is rooted in the sustained effort to reaffirm the establishment of effective control over the mainland in 1949 by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which resulted in two million soldiers and civilian followers of the Chinese Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), crossing the Strait and establishing the transitional government of the Republic of China (ROC) in Taipei. From the Taiwanese perspective, this conflict is not only about claiming the legal continuity of ROC's statehood despite KMT's defeat in the Chinese civil war, but also about establishing and protecting the Taiwanese freedom to choose their political and economic future without interference by the mainland. At the core of this Taiwanese yearning for freedom to choose their political future lies the rise of Taiwanese historical consciousness and increasingly divergent sub-national identities that in their view are distinctly different from the mainland Chinese, having experienced over three generations of physical, political separation. Conflict transformation across the Taiwan Strait requires first understanding the contradictions between the two sides and then building new relationships of interdependence that honors the human voices underlying these seemingly contradictory aspirations.

We need not to emphasize which of the two sides carries more or less of an orthodox history as opposed to a different history, or some combination of both, in the presence of the learners/participants. In reality, the two sides carry a heavy dose of both types in an intricate mix. But the instructors/facilitators should still keep these analytical categories in their mind so that they can demonstrate deep empathy when they manifest.

Now let us wind the clock backward to the fall of 1992, when the two sides of the Strait had come to agree on some shared understanding of One China through a cumulative exchange of memorandums. This shared understanding, which had later come to be known as a "1992 consensus", enabled the two sides to meet the long-standing precondition to break the four

decades of refusal to negotiate, paving the way toward a first-ever semi-official cross-Strait meeting that took place in Singapore in April, 1993. This was clearly a turning point in the history of cross-Strait relations. Our exercise aimed at constructing an alternative history focuses on how the two sides could have worked differently to realize the fullest peace potential present in the unprecedented historical momentum that was growing at that point and since then – instead of this milestone even soon to be overshadowed by the political and military crises that would ensue across the Strait in 1995-6. We will return to this point later.

The consensus reached in 1992 implied the two sides' choice not to seek an immediate answer to the seemingly irresolvable contradiction between them. The contradiction concerned whether Taiwan is a part of China, or more precisely the People's Republic of China (PRC) – a position taken by Secretary General Jiang Zemin of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) – or alternatively, whether the Republic of China (ROC), based in Taiwan and its adjacent small islands, is an independent political entity like the mainland-based PRC, while these two political entities belong to the same China that was divided at present – a position taken by Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui. Instead, the 1992 consensus suggested that both sides of the Strait belong to One China and both sides essentially uphold the One-China principle. Despite the ambiguity surrounding this consensus, Beijing accepted that the two sides do not have to agree immediately on the precise political definition of One China in order to carry out day-to-day interactions through commerce, mail service, transportation, and other areas. Taipei, on the other hand, wanted Beijing to agree that the two sides disagree on the definition of One China, and it sought to start negotiation toward national reunification on that basis. The consensus was thus a truly ambiguous, precarious basis of nascent diplomatic ties. But it would prove to be at least a minimally functional basis of intermittent cross-Strait negotiations for eight years, lasting till 2000, when Chen Shui-bian, a pro-independence candidate of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), won presidency in Taiwan, deeply upsetting Beijing.

A mediative history in this particular process, I would argue, was perhaps insignificant in scope unlike in the history of the Crusades or in the Indian independence movement. Because the two sides had been nearly completely separated for four decades since the late 1940s, there were no peace feelers or bi-communal movements capable of crossing the Strait and creating a humanizing social space. However, the gradual opening of cross-Strait trade, investment, and travel since the late 1980s, facilitated by the mainland economic reform under Deng Xiaoping, led to an increase in human encounters, especially in the form of Taiwanese investors and entrepreneurs visiting or staying in the mainland in search of inexpensive labor. Burgeoning ties through economic interdependence began to add layers of political complexity in cross-Strait relations. Taiwanese business leaders, in particular, were pressurizing Lee Teng-hui, sworn in as president in 1988, to create more stable and promising conditions conducive to cross-Strait trade and investment (Bush 2005). Arguably there emerged mediative potential, however nascent and uncertain, through the pragmatic economic exchange emerging across the Strait.

Now that the exercise scenario is laid out, let us enter discussion on alternative history. Suppose Lee and Jiang, or at least the two leaders' high-ranking envoys and policy advisors, were brought together for dialogue in 1993, when the momentum was gathering on both sides. Let us also suppose that they listened to each other deeply and brainstormed imaginatively yet practically. What would an alternative history look like that they might be able to come up with, preferably with mutual consent? Too hypothetical? Perhaps yes. But let's try imagining.

First, I suspect each side would need to face up to their unrealistic "theory of change," a set of assumptions underlying their action that they presumed to be useful for generating desired effects, only to prove wrong in no time. For the mainland's part, the most challenging of all, I believe, was the assumption that its readiness to use force would prevent Taiwanese movements toward independence, either in the form of formal declaration or through less formal means. This assumption was put to test in 1995-6, when the PRC government under Jiang's leadership conducted rounds of military exercises partly in response to Taiwanese president Lee's provocative 1995 visit to Cornell University, his alma mater in the United States, as well as in anticipation of the Taiwanese national elections in 1996. There is no evidence to demonstrate that the PRC's military threat effectively deterred either Lee's or Taiwanese voters' resolve to establish and expand international recognition of Taiwan. When forced, the human tendency is to increase resistance to the force. To win respect and affection toward peaceful union through mutual consent, removal of force, I would argue, is a prerequisite. Exactly the same as in marriage.

The most problematic of the assumptions that the Taiwanese leadership held, on the other hand, was their assertion that an increase in the scope of international recognition of ROC would increase Taiwan's negotiating power over the mainland, despite the highly contentious, zero-sum nature of cross-Strait relations. Even if the "one country, two systems" formula, which implies Taiwan's subordinate status as a province of the PRC government upon reunification, was objectionable to Taipei, the latter's apparently provocative behavior to forcefully increase its international space was bound to generate adversarial consequences, reversing whatever modest gains toward more substantive dialogue that the 1992 consensus appeared to have built. To realize a vision of more equitable relationships, the Lee administration needed to project a more long-term, gradualist approach as of 1995, setting aside incentives to make quick, visible "progress" leading up to his presidential election campaign scheduled in 1996.

What, then, might an alternative history look beyond 1993? In my mind, that vision of a less violent, more peaceful past needs to build more consciously on the mediative history of emerging interdependence, tolerate ambiguity for a much longer period of time despite apparent discomfort, and carry out three broad action plans simultaneously. The first of these would involve expanding and deepening small, incremental exchanges in economic and human exchange that the 1992 consensus permitted the two sides to initiate. Might it have been possible to gradually open up direct flights across the Strait, less restricted flows of tourists, scholars, and university students, and reciprocal visits of artists and museum exhibits designed to affirm the

two sides' shared heritage? (In retrospect, there was no need to wait for another fifteen years to make human exchanges of this nature a reality, given the 1992 consensus that had already been reached.)

A second action plan might have been to deepen a more substantive, political discussion on at least one central question of mutual interest: what would a formal end of the Chinese civil war look like across the Strait and what practical steps could both sides have taken to make that aspiration a reality? A careful review of Lee's and Jiang's public statements during this period suggests their common desire to end the state of hostilities despite significant disagreements over how to make it happen. These disagreements concerned, among other things, whether the war's formal end should be negotiated on an equal footing. But that fragile common ground could have been explored more constructively and creatively, for example, by refocusing attention to the establishment of cross-Strait "hotlines" to prevent accidental escalations of crisis. And imagine – just imagine – what confidential brainstorming sessions might have looked like, in which designated representatives of both sides put on their agenda a gradual reduction of PRC's military deployment targeting Taiwan, on the one hand, Taiwan's voluntary restraint on purchasing US arms, on the other, to substantiate the end of the civil war.

A third action plan might have been to strengthen the political institutions already in place on both sides to facilitate cross-Strait relations, with a view toward adding new roles to them for confidence-building. In order to facilitate administrative exchanges between the two sides, in 1992 Taiwan established the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the mainland established the Association for the Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), both working under the supervision of higher political bodies. At the SEF-ARATS level, and eventually at higher levels, might it have been possible to discuss the need to further a gradual evolution of cross-Strait political relations over decades to generations, instead of months to years? More concretely, what could have been done to gradually transform this institutional basis of Cross-Strait exchange into a more reliable channel through which mid to senior-level representatives could visit each other more frequently? And how best could the two sides have utilized this channel to hear each other's needs and concerns firsthand over some extended period of time, instead of second-guessing each other's motives prematurely and dangerously?

None of these events actually took place across the Taiwan Strait in the early to mid-1990s. As such, an alternative history outlined here is hypothetical and counter-factual. But isn't this kind of thinking important when we look at conflict history? And wouldn't it make our history lessons more empowering, inspiring, and meaningful, demonstrating a clear departure from history lessons that emphasize memorization of what happened in the past? Perhaps most importantly, wouldn't our awareness of different worldviews of history – mediative and alternative, beyond orthodox and different – make us more responsible citizens and more capable of applying lessons learned from the past to shape a more peaceful future? My journey of inquiry continues with these questions in mind.

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Illustration 1: Walk-Through History of the Conflict over the Taiwan Strait

Taiwanese Delegates' Chronology

1947: 228 (February 28) Incident; many local Taiwanese killed by KMT forces.

1979: The US recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Mainland Chinese Delegates' Chronology

221BC: Unification of China under the Qin Dynasty

1945: Japan lost WWII. China regained sovereignty over Taiwan, with Japan's retreat.

1949: Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) moved to Taiwan from the mainland.

1970's: The US officially recognized one China.

(The remaining portions of the timelines are omitted for brevity.)

Illustration 2: Walk-Through History of US-Pakistan Relations Leading up to and Following September 11, 2001

<i>US timeline</i>		<i>Pakistani timeline</i>	
		1947	Independence from Britain
		1954-5	Pakistan joins US-led anti-communist alliances in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, thus entering formal security ties.
1978	Fall of the Shah and the Iranian hostage crisis	1977	Martial law by General Zia-al-Haq, after seizing power through a coup. Islamization policy starts in Pakistan.
1979	Soviet invasion of Afghanistan	1979	The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. US support for mujahedeen (Muslim fighters) starts.
1982	Bombing of US Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon		
1990-91	First Gulf War in Iraq	1989	Soviets pull out of Afghanistan. The US loses interest in the region.
1997	The suicide attack against the US Navy destroyer USS Cole in Yemen. Al Qaeda suspected.	mid-1990s	Osama bin Laden moves to Afghanistan and issues a religious decree against the US.
1998	The US embassies bombed in Kenya and Tanzania		
2001	September 11	2001	September 11
2001	Afghanistan War		
2003	US-led invasion of Iraq	2004	US drone strikes start in Pakistan.

Illustration 3: Four Interconnected Approaches to Conflict History

MANIFEST
(Empirical, Factual)



POTENTIAL
(Hypothetical,
Counter-factual)

