

**LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT:  
SOME NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR  
PEACEMAKING**

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This paper attempts to determine some of the necessary political conditions that must obtain for leaders to achieve peaceful settlements in circumstances of either potential or long-lasting conflict. It will first address the fact that most of the famous political leaders of history have been warriors rather than peacemakers. It then draws on recent international relations theory to offer a structural model of political leadership that is argued to be of general application. This model is put to use in the analysis of a successful case of peacemaking leadership, the transition to a new South Africa between 1990 and 1994. This study is used, finally, to extract certain necessary conditions for leaders to be peacemakers, potentially applicable to other cases such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### **Leadership realities**

Much of the current writing on leadership is informed by a set of very questionable assumptions about the qualities of leaders, leaders' relations with followers, and the tasks leaders perform. Leaders are said to exhibit the virtues of honesty, integrity, intelligence, self-confidence, emotional maturity, tolerance to stress, ambition and energy (Robbins et al. 2001). In their relationships with followers they allegedly teach, inspire, show consideration, offer emotional support, set high standards, give frequent feedback, provide assurance in the midst of uncertainty, bring clarity amidst confusion (DuBrin 2001). In practising their leadership they never command followers but always persuade (Gardner 1990). They are pathmakers and guides who establish values and directions, who lead by example, who question and innovate, who create visions of the future, and who energise people to develop their full potential (Parry 1996).

Such 'descriptions' have an inspirational quality that is quite intentional. They are really normative statements meant to shape potential leaders in certain ways. They are, however, highly misleading about the reality of most leadership. To assert that leaders persuade rather than command, for example, is to forget that people are often best persuaded by the judicious application of force or pressure, or by well-presented lies. One seldom reads that leaders bully and threaten, or for that matter plead and beg, yet often they do and must. The leader-figure that emerges from the literature is dynamic but essentially pacific. There is an underlying presumption that all leadership is good (Onsman 2002), not just in the sense of being effective but of being high-mindedly virtuous and Christianly caring. The possibility of autocratic or demonic leadership is hardly contemplated. Forgotten are the lessons of one of the most famous leadership books of Western literature, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which instructed that it was sometimes necessary for political leaders to employ both cruelty and fear.

Overlooked, also, is the possibility that leaders may lead where no one really wants to go. Consider the definition offered by Garry Wills, which he said embodied three essential terms – leaders, followers and goals: “the leader is one who mobilizes others toward a goal shared by leaders and followers” (Wills 1994, 67). Yet we have recently witnessed a singular act of international leadership by George W. Bush on behalf of a goal chosen only by himself, that few outside his inner circle wanted, that was in fact opposed by most of the world and scarcely demanded by the mass of the American people (Kinsley 2002). This from a man, by the way, who most people in leadership studies would have said, before September 11, displayed few of the leadership qualities they tend to extol.

The current leadership models may be misleading even about genuinely good leadership. Abraham Lincoln, who was regarded as an incompetent leader for most of his presidency, received one of his finest tributes from Harriet Beecher Stowe who described his strength as:

...not aggressive so much as passive, and among passive things, it is not so much the strength of a stone buttress but of a wire cable. It is strength swaying to every influence, yielding on this side and on that to popular needs, yet tenaciously and inflexibly bound to carry its great ends (Mitgang 1962, 370).

It was notable that Lincoln failed to achieve the goals he had originally intended but produced a result that was, in his own words, far more “fundamental and astounding” (Basler et al. 1953-55, vol. 7, 281-2). Lincoln wanted to maintain the antebellum status quo, and for a long time into the civil war wanted nothing more than to return to it. His example should give pause to those who habitually think of leaders as people in powerful and purposeful motion toward new and visionary horizons. Conservatives, after all, may also be leaders. Withstanding the winds of change and keeping things as they are may require as strenuous and determined an act of leadership as engineering a revolution.

### **Leaders as warmakers**

This paper is concerned with specifically political leadership, which receives much less attention in the literature than does business leadership. Indeed it is probable that the bias toward innovation and progress in the literature comes from the fact that most of it is directed at corporate managers in search of commercial success. But it is also due to the fact that the dominant paradigm in the field is the dynamically ‘transforming’ or ‘transformational’ leadership identified by James MacGregor Burns (1978). Burns argued that, during challenging times, a leader must do more than simply manage transactional processes or negotiate bargains in a stable, pluralistic environment. He or she

must embody and promote certain 'higher' values, such as liberty or justice, in order to unify followers, alter the status quo and create a new political culture. I do not mean to denigrate Burns's distinction, which has its merits, but only to note its unnecessarily progressive bias. Burns, coming from a political rather than a business background, is in fact quite aware of some of the paradoxes of leadership. In his latest book he points to one particular 'paradox' that is important when thinking about leaders as peacemakers. He writes that: "The most arresting rulers in world history have not been the supreme peacemakers but the warriors" – Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Cromwell, Napoleon; and other leaders, though not themselves warriors, have been propelled to fame by war and violence – Lincoln, Churchill, Lenin, Hitler, Mao (Burns 2003, 186).

What are we to make of this fact, especially when we consider that the answer proposed for nearly every problem of conflict in the modern world is 'more leadership', or 'better leadership'? I believe it is wise to recall some of the fundamental modern dictums of politics. War, Clausewitz informed us, is merely politics using other means (Clausewitz 1973, 119). Political leaders have seldom hesitated to employ war as a means to achieve ends they thought vitally important. It is not that war is necessarily valued for its own sake (though some have so valued it) but rather that peace is usually not acceptable on someone else's terms. Peace may be valued highly, but seldom at any price. Lincoln would have accepted large compromises to avoid civil war, including a guarantee of protection of slavery in the South, but could not accept the break-up of the Union and the consequent destruction, as he saw, it of the American democratic experiment (Kane 2001, Ch 3). Other leaders and peoples think it worth fighting and dying for principles of self-determination or freedom, or to defend their rights or their very lives, or even just for booty (remember the Vikings). Sometimes the only way to a just and lasting peace is through conflict and war, in which case avoidance of war may be the wrong decision. This was the lesson ostensibly learnt from the appeasement of Hitler before World War II (a lesson as much abused, perhaps, as aptly applied ever since).

It is an obvious point, but one worth repeating, that conflict is ineradicable in human life. It is a creative as well as a destructive force, and war is only one extreme form of it. It is possible, in fact, to reject the use of violence even when one has accepted the need for conflict. Gandhi taught with his philosophy of civil disobedience. The *satyagraha* was a means of conducting conflict that gave the moral high ground to those willing to have their heads cracked and their bodies imprisoned for the sake of their cause (Burns 2003, 155-58; Iyer 1973). Gandhi tried to show that political leaders, having accepted the necessity for conflict, nevertheless had real choices about how best to conduct it.

When conflicts are fought and decisively won, the peace is settled largely on the victor's terms. If the vanquished accept these terms then even leaders who have pursued conflict become, in a sense, peacemakers. Devising terms that serve to allay grievance and avert the recurrence of war is an important and sensitive task that bears tangentially on my topic. But the peacemakers I want principally to investigate in this paper are those who find ways of averting conflict without compromising essential principles; or those who, in situations of chronic violence, are willing to make the necessary moves to negotiate an enduring settlement. There are situations in the world, as we are all too painfully aware, when victory is not, and perhaps cannot be, decisive, when the protagonists become locked in a prolonged and destructive cycle of violence that is, to all intents and purposes, permanent. What I am interested in here are the leadership conditions necessary for avoiding such vicious spirals or, being entangled, for ending them.

### **The structure of political leadership**

The social, economic, cultural, ethnic, national or religious tensions and fissures that exist within or between societies may always be either deepened or ameliorated by political action. Political leaders confronted with divisions that threaten to decline into conflict face a formidable set of choices. The nature and consequences of these choices can be best appreciated by examining the structural features of political leadership as such. In order to clarify these I want to draw on recent work in the field of international relations.

International relations theory long ago identified three levels of analysis for the explanation of interstate actions (Waltz 1959). These were: the international level where interstate relationships were conducted; the domestic level where social, cultural and political factors impinged; and the individual level where the personal and psychological characteristics of statesmen played a part. Debates ensued about whether domestic or international forces were decisive in foreign relations, though it was generally conceded in the end that the two had to be somehow synthetically combined. One attempt to achieve this synthesis exploited the metaphor of two-level-games. It was argued that in the arena of foreign policy statesmen typically tried to manipulate domestic and international politics simultaneously (Putnam 1988; Evans et al. 1993). The statesman was necessarily 'Janus-faced', constrained on the one hand by what states in the international arena would allow and on the other by what domestic constituencies would support. It was a distinctive feature of this theory that it specified the statesman as the central strategic actor, crucially positioned to scan both domestic and international situations in order to discern, in their complex interdependence,

not just constraints on, but also opportunities for creative statecraft (Moravcsik 1993, 16-17).

One does not have to be an advocate of games theory (as I am not) to appreciate the utility of this model. I want to argue that it can, in fact, be usefully employed beyond the field of international relations to describe the structure of political leadership in general. Leaders are always Janus-faced in that they must simultaneously attend to the constituency that sustains them while pursuing wider goals of political action. The logic of the political field in which leadership functions is seldom wholly congruent with the logic of constituency maintenance. Taking constituency support for granted as one pursues wider goals risks forfeiting one's leadership position (and thus, ironically, also the goals one seeks); looking only after one's constituency risks impotence or irrelevance in the larger arena (which can, again ironically, endanger constituency support). The leader inevitably encounters challenges and opportunities demanding responses likely to offend or alienate constituents, or some portion of them. Constituencies are always multi-layered, diverse in outlook and interest, and actions approved by one section will invariably be condemned by another. Leaders must therefore differentiate among the bases of their support and constantly calculate the probable effects of any action upon each segment, while simultaneously estimating their own ability to control or modify internal dissent and challenge. This complex task defines the perennial challenge of political leadership, which is to maintain sufficient political support over time to achieve broader goals selected as necessary or desirable.

It is easy to see why leaders can become obsessed with maintaining their hold on leadership, often to the detriment of any useful action in the world. This is sometimes popularly attributed to the incipient megalomania of rulers, and it is true that natural egoism combined with the seductiveness of power may produce an astonishing desire to retain leadership at almost any cost. (Someone once said sourly of Yasser Arafat that he did not care whether he drove his people into a ditch so long as *he* was at the wheel.) But the structural necessity of maintaining a leadership position is the objective ground on which personal ambition is played out, and in complex and unsettled conditions this task may be very dominating indeed. The bulk of Machiavelli's *Prince* is devoted to just this theme, and only in the last chapter is there any suggestion that leadership may actually be employed for any broader purpose (in his case, the political unification of Italy).

The cogency of this model of political leadership – with leader as central strategic actor attending simultaneously to the broad field of political action and to the maintenance of constituency support – will become especially clear when we look at leaders who choose to be peacemakers. It also explains what Burns has called the 'leader-follower paradox' (Burns 2003, Ch. 10). Burns's alleged problem is that leadership and followership are so

intertwined and fluid that it seems impossible conceptually to separate them. Followers are not simply an inactive mass waiting for guidance. New initiatives do not always come from the people designated leaders but sometimes from obscure followers. Leaders may choose their agendas by conducting polls and following majority opinion. Alternatively they may strike out in bold new directions only to find they are, embarrassingly, without followers. Who is really leading whom here?

Burns's offers what he calls a systemic solution to this (2003, 185), but the paradox disappears if we look at it merely as the ordinary leadership challenge of constituency management and maintenance. Such management is a highly dynamic process, as Burns's own study of Franklin Roosevelt demonstrates. Leaders may be constrained in their actions at a particular time by what constituents will then tolerate or support, or (in democratic systems where the leader must retain the support of a whole range of overlapping constituencies) what critical segments will support. Their agendas may be set not by their own desires or convictions but by their judgement of what will fly. Yet this may change over time, and change in part as a result of the leader's own actions and rhetoric, altering assessments of what is possible. Leaders may act creatively on followers just as followers act upon leaders. It is true that weak or poor leaders may remain virtually captives of their own followership. But the good or strong leader (potentially the great one) will nurture and educate his or her constituency and edge it toward support of important goals and policies that are the real ends of political action – the ends, that is, beyond mere leadership survival.

It is important to note that the choice of wider political goals cannot be simply separated from questions of constituency support. The outward view of the Janus-face is coloured and sometimes determined by the inward. Constituencies present leaders with many temptations and possibilities, and choosing a particular means of managing them may simultaneously be to choose one's larger political goals. Leaders may expediently appeal to (or inflame) different motives (or passions) in order to secure their rise to power or ensure their retention of it. Where serious societal tensions or divisions exist, they may be tempted to exploit and magnify enmity so as to unify supporters under their own banner. The world may never have heard of an obscure Communist official named Slobodan Milosevic had he not been sent to Kosovo in 1987 to mediate a minor dispute between the ethnic Albanian majority and minority Serbs. Faced with an angry mob of Serbs complaining of mistreatment by Albanian police, and with television cameras rolling, he declared "No one will ever dare beat you again." In uttering these fateful words he broke the late Marshal Tito's taboo against invoking nationalism in Yugoslavian politics and turned himself into an instant Serbian hero (Doder and Branson 1999, 3). Milosevic had established a constituency that would bring him to power, but it was a choice that simultaneously closed off the

possibility of peaceful coexistence of the different ethnic groups in a new Yugoslavia.

The rewards of inciting conflict and even violence make this path powerfully tempting to the embattled leader or would-be leader. Bellicose leaders, after all, tend to have certain advantages over pacific ones. They generally appear strong, resolute and decisive. By choosing conflict they confirm their identification with their followers and become the leading spokesperson for *us* as against *them*. In fuelling rather than dousing the flames of hatred they ensure that partisan feeling is strengthened, and consequently have less trouble binding their followers to one another and to themselves. Even individuals opposed to continuing or escalating the conflict will be reluctant to step out of line when it is made to appear that the very safety or survival of their own people is at risk.

Leaders who choose the path of peace have a much harder time of it. They must reach across divisions instead of exploiting them. They must be committed to dealing and compromising with groups regarded by their own constituency as the hated enemy. Their words and actions inevitably invite charges of weakness and betrayal. Their compromises cause divisions within their own ranks, and alienate their most radical factions who consequently become a danger to themselves and their leadership. This being so, the leader's choice of peace as a goal is much less likely to be determined by his or her choice of constituency management. The story is likely to be the other way around. The choice of peace will establish the leader's task of building or maintaining the necessary constituency support that will make it possible.

What conditions must apply if a leader is to have a chance of making peace? To help answer this question I want to present a case study of successful peacemaking, the negotiations that produced the transition to the new South Africa.

### **Mandela and de Klerk**

In 1993 Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk jointly received the Nobel Peace Prize for their leadership in negotiating the peaceful transition to post-apartheid South Africa. Their relationship over the four years that this took, however, was an exceedingly rocky one. Let us look at the conditions that founded their partnership.

There was no absolutely compelling reason why the National Party in South Africa should not have continued its policy of 'separate development' after 1989, the year de Klerk gained the leadership. (R.W. Johnson, in a 1977 book called *How Long Will South Africa Survive?* had argued that it could easily continue into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.) Despite international criticism, despite sanctions, despite business pressures, despite a growing movement of dissent among the disenfranchised black and coloured population, white South

Africa remained politically and militarily strong. The Soweto youth revolt in 1976 had been ruthlessly crushed, the most promising leader of the Black Power movement, Steve Biko, had been murdered, the guerrilla wing of Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) remained militarily insignificant, especially after their bases in revolutionary Mozambique had been crushed. Moreover, despite a growing weariness among Anglo-whites and even among Afrikaners with their peculiar system, the white population desperately feared the consequences of empowering a long-suppressed black population that vastly outnumbered them. The prospect of civil war and annihilation haunted white consciousness.

But de Klerk, a pragmatist rather than an ideologue, had witnessed the failure of the new 1983 constitution of his predecessor, Botha, which provided additional legislative chambers for coloureds and Indians but none for blacks. Botha's attempts to divide and rule the black opposition had produced a powerful and unanticipated popular reaction known as the United Democratic Front (UDF), and de Klerk had been unimpressed by the results of the security clampdown intended to suppress it. He had also taken to heart the fate of Ian Smith's attempt to hold back the tide of change in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). In addition, the time had suddenly become opportune. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its European satellites removed an obstacle to negotiating with the ANC, an alleged communist organisation that these states had supported. De Klerk, believing change to be inevitable, decided to take the initiative in order to control change for the safeguarding of white interests. He therefore stunned the nation on 2 February 1990 by unbanning all liberation organisations, abolishing media restrictions, repealing apartheid laws and outlining aims for a new democratic constitution with a universal franchise. His last and grandest gesture was unconditionally to release Mandela, who by then had become the most celebrated prisoner in the world.

Mandela was not, however, de Klerk's preferred choice of partner for negotiating the new constitution. His dramatic dismantling of apartheid was in fact intended to steal the moral high ground from Mandela and to disorient the ANC, whose organisation was still geared to struggle, not negotiation. The Afrikaner leader was hoping instead for a partnership with Zulu Chief Buthelezi, and certain other homeland chiefs, who had largely supported the separate development policy and were, unlike Mandela and the ANC, ideologically of the right. Buthelezi would have been much more congenial to elements in the right-wing of de Klerk's party, possibly even to breakaway parties of the extremist right like Eugene Terr'Blanche's Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging (AWB). But Buthelezi's Inkatha movement was, though not wholly Zulu, confined largely to Kwa-Zulu-Natal and deeply involved in a complex inter-black rivalry with the ANC. The Buthelezi connection was never a reasonable hope for de Klerk, though he long continued to nurture it.

The truth was that Mandela could not be ignored. Though only one among many imprisoned leaders of the black movement, he had become internationally famous as *the* black leader of South Africa (for somewhat opaque reasons – see Kane 2001, 127-131). De Klerk hoped Mandela would prove too old and feeble, too out of touch after 30 years in prison to lead his party effectively. And though this hope proved forlorn, Mandela did indeed have severe constituency problems. His chief claim to leadership, aside from the moral capital acquired in prison, was his attachment to the exiled ANC, particularly to its leader, his old friend and law partner Oliver Tambo. But the exiled ANC was itself out of touch with events in South Africa. Its continuing reputation rested largely on its sponsorship of the ineffectual, but symbolically important guerrilla wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK for short). After 1983, leadership of black opposition within South Africa had shifted to the UDF and the trade union movement. The UDF had in fact given the ANC a welcome boost by publicly committing itself to the democratic, non-racialist principles of the ANC's founding document, the Freedom Charter of 1955 (Sparks 1990, 332-333). But the political ascendancy of the autocratic, secretive ANC organisation over the loose, democratic UDF caused considerable resentment (Mandela 1994a, 500). Some of the new movement's gifted young leaders, like Cyril Ramaphosa, by no means assumed that the elderly Mandela had a right to walk out of prison and automatically assume the mantle of leadership (Meredith 1997, 446).

Mandela was anyway under suspicion for having unilaterally commenced secret negotiations with white authorities while still in prison. Mandela knew that many among the black leadership disagreed with his policy of negotiation, and clung still to a strategy of armed struggle that he believed hopeless. He considered it an act of necessary leadership to be "ahead of his flock" in this matter (Mandela, 458-459). Yet many elements within the ANC, particularly militant youth who worshipped guerrilla leaders like Chris Hani, suspected Mandela of being that most reviled of all creatures – a 'sell-out' who had gone soft on the regime. UDF members were upset, too, because he had broken their cardinal rule, not to act without the mandate of the people (Sparks 1994, 61). Mandela was well aware of this hostility. The colourless speech he made immediately on his release, so disappointing for the press, was aimed precisely at placating various 'comrades' by proclaiming his subservience to the collective will (Ottaway 1993, 21).

But black Africans could not overlook, any more than could de Klerk, Mandela's unparalleled profile and prestige. And Mandela, while always verbally deferring to collectivist sentiment, consciously used his stature to consolidate his leadership. With the help of the Old Guard of the ANC he gained the position of secretary-general, which made him, when Tambo suffered a stroke, *de facto* party leader. In order to guide South Africa

peacefully toward a non-racialist future, he had to receive backing for the policy of negotiation. He managed to convert Hani, whose influence over the wilder elements was crucial, but the greatest threat to Mandela would always come from the impatient militant wing of his own party. His cause was not helped by the slow progress of 'talks about talks' with government that dragged on for more than a year with no obvious gains. Mandela's insistence that the delicacy of these talks demanded continuing secrecy renewed suspicion that he was closer to de Klerk than to his own people. Though he managed to be elected president of the ANC at a party conference in 1991, it was amidst much angry criticism and no praise.

The slowness of progress was partly the result of de Klerk's own constituency problems. He was under severe pressure from the right to show results that did not sell out white interests. To ease his situation, de Klerk took the large gamble of holding a referendum on the reform process in March 1992. The solid Yes vote he received strongly reinforced his leadership. After that the real stumbling block was his own stubborn wish that the ANC would collapse so he could substitute the Buthelezi option. He refused to see that he needed an alliance with Mandela that would hold against the extremes on either side, and that Mandela's success was therefore in his own interest. Despite Mandela's avowed socialism and his founding of the MK, he was essentially a moderate, and de Klerk's best hope for a peaceful transition.

Meanwhile Buthelezi's Inkatha Movement, trying to forestall ANC dominance in Kwa-Zulu-Natal, fomented bloody clashes between immigrant workers and township dwellers on the Reef of the Witwatersrand. The ferocious response of the ANC's regional leader, Harry Gwala, a Stalinist Mandela could not control, threatened to turn this conflict into a virtual war. Then it was revealed that the instigators of the township violence were not just tolerated but actually supported by government enforcement agencies. Though de Klerk denied all knowledge of this, Mandela accused him of having a 'double-agenda': talks with the ANC on the one hand, support for murderers of ANC members on the other. 'Inkathagate' embarrassed both leaders, but Mandela moreso since it called into question his judgment in trusting the white leader. He despised de Klerk thereafter but never doubted his continuing need for him (Mandela 1994a, 533; Meredith 1997, 499). It took longer for de Klerk to admit his need for Mandela.

After the establishment of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in December 1991, Mandela began to assert a psychological dominance over the white leader. Nevertheless, two sessions of talks ended in deadlock, leading to an ANC walk-out and the commencement, in June 1992, of a program of 'rolling mass action' intended to pressure the government. Simultaneously, a shocking township massacre of men, women and children by Inkatha axe-wielders, followed by a police shooting of protesting demonstrators, precipitated an ANC crisis. The events gave a temporary

upper hand to senior ANC figures who argued that insurrection and seizure of power were the only sure ways to victory. One of them recklessly led 70,000 marchers to the capital of the Ciskei Homeland to overthrow its collaborationist government. When the Ciskei army opened fire, 28 were killed. In the chastened mood that followed, Mandela seized the opportunity to strengthen his hand against the radical wing. He severely chastised the militant leader, called off the mass action, and made conciliatory moves toward de Klerk. De Klerk, himself alarmed at events, reciprocated. A resulting summit produced a signed Record of Understanding between the leaders that finally locked de Klerk into partnership with Mandela, ending the Buthelezi option. The alliance would in future hold against all spoiling elements on the outer circle, from the neo-Nazi AWB, to the furiously sidelined Buthelezi, to still disgruntled militants within the ANC (including Winnie Mandela; see Meredith 1997, 480-481).

When negotiations recommenced, the main sticking point was the constitutional issue of simple majority rule (upon which the ANC insisted) versus a system of checks and balances (demanded by the National Party to ensure blacks could not rule without white agreement). Mandela saw that white insecurity needed to be assuaged if the negotiations were not to fail, yet he felt in no position to make a compromise that would again inflame militant opinion. He turned for help to a friend with impeccable revolutionary credentials, white communist leader and co-founder of the MK, Joe Slovo. Slovo obliged by recommending some 'shock therapy'. He advised the ANC to relinquish a bid for immediate power and put a sunset clause in the constitution that guaranteed power-sharing for a fixed period. The proposal was greeted with outrage by hardliners, supported by Mandela, and after an acrimonious debate endorsed by the ANC National Executive Committee. It provided a basis for fruitful negotiations with the government, which agreed to a new multi-party negotiating conference in April 1993.

In the midst of this conference, however, an event occurred that threatened to undo all. An AWB member, in what appeared to be a right-wing conspiracy, assassinated Chris Hani. The enormous welling of outrage among the black population threatened to explode into violence. ANC officials appealed desperately for calm. Mandela went on television and asked that people be true to the memory of Hani, who had been "a disciplined force for peace." A week of mass protest was announced to channel and contain the anger. On the eve of a planned day of mourning, Mandela again went on the air to plead for calm, adding rhetorical force by reminding people that a white Afrikaner woman had risked her life to identify the assassin and bring him to justice.

The appeal worked. The ensuing protests were mostly peaceful and calm returned. De Klerk's government (conspicuously absent from the media during the crisis) quickly agreed to a firm date for elections for a new

assembly in which power would be shared for five years (Mandela 1994b, 7). One of Mandela's biographers (Meredith 1997, 484) notes that no other event had "revealed so clearly to the white community how important Mandela was to their future security." When it came to elections, whites would not vote for him, but they would accept a government of which he was the leader.

### **Conditions for leaders as peacemakers**

I want to draw from this case some general conditions that enable a leader to be a successful peacemaker. First, the leader must be committed, as both de Klerk and Mandela were, to negotiating a peaceful solution. This may seem an obvious condition, but it can be a difficult one to fulfil where divisions of deep hostility exist. Moral passion, hatred and fear are seldom compatible with political bargaining. Amos Oz (1993, 18) once wrote that: "There are no sweet compromises. But only fanatics find compromise more bitter than death. Always and everywhere, uncompromising fanaticism gives off the stench of death. But compromise is the essence of life itself." However deeply partisan the leader may be, he or she must be able to choose life over death, compromise over purity, and therefore cannot be a fanatic.

One committed leader is not, however, enough. When the Prime Minister of India, Mr Vajpayee, made a surprise announcement early in May 2003 that he was restoring air and diplomatic links with Pakistan, his gesture would have turned instantly to ashes had the Pakistani leadership not responded warmly. Unless there is a leader on the other side of the divide also willing to commit to a peaceful solution, nothing can occur. The possibility must exist of building a relationship that can form the political heart of peace negotiations. The two leaders do not have to like or respect one another – indeed they may despise one another – but each must eventually find in the other someone with whom they are willing and able to deal politically. This means building, however painfully, some minimal level of mutual trust. Circumstances are seldom such as to facilitate the process. The difficulty of overcoming mutual mistrust is invariably magnified by adverse constituency reactions that each must manage as best they can.

In forming and trying to strengthen this negotiating alliance, each leader acquires an interest in the other's management of their constituency. Each now has an incentive to do those things or make those compromises that will assist the other in handling internal problems and divisions. What the alliance essentially aims at is the creation of a new, broad, overlapping constituency made up of moderate opinion from either side. If such opinion does not exist, at least potentially, then the task is impossible. Fortunately it is often the case that those in either community who desire the ordinary blessings of peace outnumber those who prefer the heroic virtues of conflict and sacrifice. But absent a joint leadership initiative capable of mobilising this

group, radical activist minorities easily make the political running. If the leadership alliance can hold together and make ground, then this constituency will tend to coalesce into a genuine political majority. This majority forms an essential platform for the leaders, from which they may isolate and defeat their own radical wings. The joint leadership task is to build and bind this majority by finding compromises acceptable, or at least tolerable, to all parts of it.

These, I would argue, are essential conditions for peacemaking but they are not of course the only ones. The degree of complexity varies from case to case, and different necessities may present themselves in each. Some conflicts involve opposing alliances of several groups, and agreements will have to be reached among many leaders, not just two. Even where a conflict involves two clearly defined groups there will usually be other players who have an intense interest in how matters progress or fail to – the British government in Northern Ireland, for example, or the United States and a whole set of Arab countries in Palestine-Israel. The actions of these other parties may be either spoiling or enabling, and on occasion may actually be necessary to starting the peace process.

Nevertheless, our case study reveals that, even when there are few external complications, the task of peacemaking is not easy. The process is never simple, and progress never linear. It is of course an impediment if, as in this case, one of the leaders is imperfectly committed to the alliance, hoping for a more congenial partner. But even if the alliance is firm, there is no guarantee that difficult but necessary compromises will be accepted by various constituencies. It will always seem to one side that too much has been given away, to the other, too little. If matters proceed too quickly it may be hard for constituents to adjust, if too slowly they will grow disillusioned. Since negotiations are delicate, they are easily threatened or derailed by particular events, especially violent events or atrocities intentionally performed by radical factions. Progress will therefore always be halting at best, often stalled, sometimes reversed.

Yet the South African case shows that if each leader can survive and the alliance hold, if the moderate majority can be consolidated and the radicals be sidelined or silenced, then there is a chance that peace may be achieved.

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