

# THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE ON PEACE PROCESSES



# THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE ON PEACE PROCESSES

*John Darby*



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE PRESS  
Washington, D.C.

The views expressed in this book are those of the authors alone. They do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE  
1200 17th Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-3011

© 2001 by the Endowment of the United States Institute of Peace

First published 2001

Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standards for Information Science—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Darby, John, 1940-

The effects of violence on peace processes/John Darby.

p. cm

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN: 1-292223-31-5 (pbk : alk paper)

1. Pacific settlement of international disputes. 2. Diplomatic negotiations in international disputes. 3. Political violence—Case studies.

I. Title

JZ 6010 .D37 2001  
327.1'72—dc21

2001039760

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD <i>by Richard H. Solomon</i>	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xi
1. THE TERRAIN OF PEACE	3
2. CONTEMPORARY PEACE PROCESSES	7
The "Peace Process"	11
What Is Known about Violence and Peace Processes?	12
PROFILE: Northern Ireland by John Darby	15
PROFILE: Sri Lanka by K. M. de Silva	27
3. VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS	37
Violence by the State	39
Violence by Militants	46
Violence in the Community	61
Violence as an Issue during Negotiations	66
PROFILE: Spain and the Basque Country by Cynthia Irvin and James Rae	77
PROFILE: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by John Wallach	87

4. VIOLENCE AS A CATALYST FOR PEACE	95
PROFILE: South Africa <i>by Timothy D. Sisk</i>	101
5. FIVE PROPOSITIONS	115
6. THE CUSTOM OF FELL DEED	125
NOTES	127
BIBLIOGRAPHY	137
INDEX	141

## FOREWORD

IT IS EASIER TO START A WAR than it is to stop it. Wars can be launched on schedule, with a telephone call or a flick of a switch. We can often date the outbreak of war to a particular day, even a particular hour. But how do we date the outbreak of peace? After all—as *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes* makes abundantly clear—peace is not the same as a cease-fire.

In decades and centuries past, the answer to the question of when peace “broke out” was perhaps easier to find. Wars between nation-states could be, and often were, terminated relatively abruptly, especially if one side was the clear loser. In World War I, the belligerents decided to end four years of unprecedented carnage at eleven o’clock on the eleventh day of the eleventh month. These days, however, even very powerful nation-states, such as the United States, can find it difficult to decisively cease hostilities against an apparently beaten foe: witness the continuing series of U.S. air strikes on Iraqi ground installations more than ten years after the “end” of the Gulf War. Nonetheless, it is still generally the case that when nation-states make peace with one another, their agreements tend to stick, at least for a few years. The reasons for this are complex, but chief among them are that the opposing forces are usually highly organized, they do what their commanders tell them to do, and they have somewhere to go when the fighting stops.

The situation is very different in intrastate conflicts, where the fighters are usually drawn from numerous political factions with diverging agendas, lines of command are blurred or nonexistent, and the battlefields are the very towns and villages where the combatants live. In such circumstances, the difficulties of stopping a war are greatly compounded. Deeply divided by history, prejudice, and apparently irreconcilable interests, the parties to violent civil and ethnic conflicts are

loath to end hostilities, reluctant to make the compromises necessary to secure a peace agreement; and wary of entering into a routine of accommodation and cooperation with old enemies—a routine that, if maintained for long enough, may finally lead to the stabilization of peace. In short, peace processes designed to end civil wars are often short-lived and always vulnerable.

They are, as John Darby explains in this slim but ambitious and insightful volume, especially vulnerable to the effects of violence. Professor Darby, a native of Northern Ireland, knows his subject only too well. In this volume he examines the impact of violence on four different—and not necessarily sequential—stages of peace processes: prenegotiation; cease-fire; negotiation for a political settlement; and postsettlement peacebuilding. His central argument is straightforward, but nonetheless daunting in its implications for would-be peacemakers: “Even when political violence is ended by a cease-fire, it reappears in other forms to threaten the evolving peace process.”

Drawing on a wide range of cases and integrating several strands of research, Darby takes an integrated and comparative approach to his subject. After first sketching a brief history of peace processes, he differentiates violence from four different sources—violence by the state, violence by militants, violence in the community, and the emergence of violence-related issues during negotiations—and within each type identifies subcategories. Thus, for instance, he divides paramilitary militants into Dealers, Zealots, Opportunists, and Mavericks, and charts the circumstances under which members of each group may seek to throw their support behind the peace process or to act as “spoilers,” seeking to derail the process with guns and bombs. Interestingly, as Darby goes on to explain, that return to violence can sometimes catalyze rather than destroy the peace process by enabling “the middle ground to find its voice at a time when the voice of moderation could make a difference.” In a later chapter, the author advances five propositions on the relationship between violence and peace processes.

These propositions are notable not least because they speak both to scholars and to policymakers and practitioners. Indeed, the entire book bridges the gap between the academic and policy com-

munities and offers insights that are intellectually stimulating and recommendations that are operationally practicable. Each discussion of the four main types of violence, for instance, ends by assessing the policy implications and by presenting a handful of clear, straightforward suggestions for those charged with framing policy or actually mediating or managing peace processes.

Just as it is harder to stop a war than to start it, so it is easier to destroy a peace process than to nurture it. The relative ease with which spoilers have delayed or derailed peace processes in places such as the Middle East and Northern Ireland can dishearten policymakers and discourage diplomats laboring to keep an agreement on track, and who know that theirs is always going to be an uphill struggle. *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes* cannot claim to ease the challenges of peacemaking, but some of its recommendations may help peacemakers to make the job of the spoilers more difficult.

The extent to which Darby's analysis is rooted in real-world situations is underscored by the inclusion in this volume of profiles of five conflicts—Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Basque Country, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These profiles, each of which has been written by an area expert, are intended to give the reader a richer understanding of the problems and possibilities facing negotiators and mediators in these very different parts of the world. Collectively, they also indicate the varied paths that peace processes can travel and the value of patience and perseverance in the face of frequent and seemingly fatal reversals. Students unfamiliar with the conflicts Darby explores may find the profiles especially informative, but more seasoned scholars may also be grateful for such concise, astute, and evenhanded sketches.

These same qualities of concision, good judgment, and evenhandedness—together with other attributes of Darby's book, such as readability, timeliness, and originality—are much prized by the United States Institute of Peace and, we trust, much in evidence in other reports and books that the Institute publishes. *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes* is also characteristic of the Institute's work in its ambition to transcend the divide between the scholarly and policymaking communities and to appeal to a very wide variety of readers, from

students and generalists to professors, practitioners, and other specialists.

Drafted while the author was a senior fellow at the Institute, *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes* complements many other studies published by the Institute that similarly address intrastate conflict and how best to prevent, manage, or resolve it peacefully. Some recent volumes cover a wide variety of cases (for instance, *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, edited by Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall; and *Peoples versus States*, by Ted Robert Gurr) and an equally wide spectrum of approaches and techniques (for example, *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, edited by Crocker, Hampson, and Aall; and *Peacemaking in International Conflict*, edited by I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen). Other books have focused on specific cases (such as *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*, by Rotimi Suberu; *Burundi on the Brink*, by Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah; and *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom* by Adnan Abu-Odeh) or have advocated a particular approach (for instance, *The Enemy Has a Face: The Seeds of Peace Experience*, by John Wallach; and *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, by John Paul Lederach).

Whatever their subject, all these books share with *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes* the aim of stimulating well-informed debate on the means by which violent conflict within deeply divided societies can be minimized or eliminated and the societies themselves encouraged to develop equitable, accountable, and peaceable systems of governance. Put more simply, they aim to make it easier to stop war and harder to (re)start it.

RICHARD H. SOLOMON, PRESIDENT  
UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE RESEARCH UPON WHICH THIS BOOK IS BASED was started in 1998, when I was a senior fellow in the Jennings Randolph program at the United States Institute of Peace, and completed in 2001 when I was visiting professor in the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. I want to record my thanks to both institutions, as well as to INCORE at the University of Ulster, at which I was senior fellow.

My gratitude goes to my wife, Marie, for her proofreading and patience, not necessarily in that order. I also thank Roger Mac Ginty, my colleague and coeditor of *The Management of Peace Processes*; Macmillan, which published it; and the other contributors to that book, Pierre du Toit, Tamar Hermann, Ludger Mees, David Newman, and Piakiasotho Saravanamuttu. The research we carried out together has influenced this book, and I am grateful to our funders, UNESCO's Culture of Peace program, the European Union's Special Peace and Reconciliation Fund, and Northern Ireland's Central Community Relations Unit.

I am indebted to the authors of the case profiles that appear in this book: K. M. de Silva, Cynthia Irvin, James Rae, Timothy Sisk, and John Wallach. Their expert knowledge and their ability to communicate that knowledge in an accessible and engaging fashion have enhanced this volume.

A number of other people, some of them inadvertently, contributed to this book. I have been influenced particularly by observations from Cynthia Arnson, Rebecca Barkis, Walker Connor, Adrian Guelke, John Groom, Donald Horowitz, Marc Ross, Timothy Sisk, Stephen Stedman, and Marie-Joele Zahar. I also want to thank colleagues at Notre Dame, particularly my friends Tristan Borer and Siobhan McEvoy, and students in my

graduate classes in international peace studies at the Kroc Institute, particularly Leon Malazogu, Rima Jeha, Hossein Alizadeh, Mark Frey, and Michelle Gawerc, for specific references.

# THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE ON PEACE PROCESSES

