

# **Track Two Diplomacy Transfer in the Middle East Peace Process**

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Major Research Paper

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## *Abstract*

This paper focuses on the role that Track Two diplomacy has played in the Middle East peace process. Specifically the paper addresses the area of the transfer of outcomes from Track Two diplomacy initiatives to the official talks, Track One. The paper begins by discussing the field of Track Two diplomacy and the various terms associated with it, including an analysis of transfer, then moves on to a brief overview of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its history and key issues. It also looks at Track Two diplomacy within the context of this conflict. The paper then examines two relatively recent Track Two initiatives in the region, the Jerusalem Old City Initiative and one addressing what an international security presence would look like if a peace agreement was reached, to assess their development and how transfer was approached. In both cases the third-party as part of their transfer strategy that used influential participants who had close ties to officials, which has been shown to lead to successful transfer of Track Two outcomes to the official track. Equally positions held by third parties affect the level of transfer that the projects achieved. The lack of official negotiations occurring during the initiatives duration made it difficult to assess the success of transfer.

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## Introduction

The Middle East process has been a long and drawn out affair, with many times where there was great hope for peace and many moments of bitter failure. The conflict itself remains one the longest in modern history with its roots in the end of the nineteenth century with the rise of political Zionism.<sup>1</sup> The peace process really began following the 1973 War<sup>2</sup>, also known as the Yom Kippur War, in an effort bring peace. Though attempts had been made prior to this period in the aftermath of the 1948 War<sup>3</sup> and the 1967 War, there had been an impasse as the Arab states had refused to acknowledge Israel and Israel, being the victor of both wars, was waiting for the Arabs. In the wake the Yom Kippur War, some Arab nations, particularly Egypt, were willing negotiate, as was Israel. This began the next forty years of the peace process. With high points like the first Camp David in 1979 and the Oslo Accords in 1993 and some low like the Second Intifada in 2000 and the Gaza War in 2008-2009 the process has continued without any real success. Bitter negotiating points such as the right to return for the Palestinian refugees, Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank<sup>4</sup> have caused talks to breakdown many times. The whole peace process has left many both on the ground and around the world skeptical about the chance of any real resolution. Yet the peace process has continued in search of a sustainable and just peace for both Israelis and Palestinians.

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<sup>1</sup> For a general history of the conflict suggested readings include; Caplan, N., *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories*, Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010; Dowty, Alan, *Israel/Palestine*, Malden MA: Polity Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed., 2008

<sup>2</sup> The war took place between Egypt, Syria and Israel. Initiated by Egypt it was an attempt to break the political stalemate in the region since the 1967 war. Read Bergman, A and El-Tahri, J., *The Fifty Years War: Israel and the Arabs*, London: Penguin and BBC Books, 1998

<sup>3</sup> The 1948 War is known by the Israeli's as the War of Independence. The Palestinians and the rest of the Arab world refer to it as Al-Nakba (the Catastrophe)

<sup>4</sup> For a map of Israeli Settlements as of 2011 visit Peace Now website at: <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/sites/default/files/Settlement%20Map%20Nov%202011%20Page%201.pdf> Be aware that this an Israeli peace NGO that is against settlements

Behind the official talks there have been other attempts to develop a framework for peace and challenge fears and perceptions held by each side. Track Two diplomacy has emerged in the last half of the twentieth century as a mechanism to address those sensitive issues that cause the official, Track One, talks to stall. Track Two, has provided, in many ways, a space for both sides to problem solve issues away from the official talks in many conflict situations globally. In the Middle East, practitioners of Track Two have been holding initiatives as long as the official peace process itself. Unlike the official talks, Track Two talks are non-binding, meaning that any documents produced during the projects do not settle the conflict. The documents, or outcomes, need to be transferred and agreed upon in the official track.

The purpose of this paper is to examine Track Two diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The question the research is seeking to answer is whether Track Two diplomacy has had a significant influence on the Track One in the Middle East peace process. Specifically the paper analyzes the area of transfer of Track Two diplomacy outcomes to the official process.

The paper is structured in the following manner to best address the question presented; first the field of Track Two diplomacy is studied to provide a theoretical basis for the analysis. This includes exploring the transfer of outcomes between the different tracks within the field. Second, there is a short examination of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in both a historical context and providing a history of Track Two projects within the peace process. Thirdly, two specific Track Two initiatives are studied to assess the transfer between the two tracks. Lastly, studying the findings from the two projects and the literature to analyze whether Track Two has had a significant effect on the peace process and how it has effect it.

## *Research Methodology*

Initially existing literature on Track Two diplomacy was consulted to build what will provide the theoretical basis for the paper. Primary sources of research are from journal articles and books published by Track Two practitioners including R.J. Fisher, H. Saunders and John Burton. Others that have involved in Track Two specifically within the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, as Herbert C. Kelman, will be used to gain understanding into the role Track Two has played and who is involved in discussions. Problematic to the research is that there is a limited amount of literature<sup>5</sup> about this topic due to the often sensitive nature of these Track Two meetings. This has also caused a lack of empirical evidence of transfer within the field making it difficult to discern the affects of strategies or mechanisms of transfer. The field itself is relatively new within diplomacy and is still very much questioned over its validity in academia and its contribution within diplomacy. Some scholars have questioned the validity of Track Two as a discipline “as questions are raised about the theories of conflict resolution that guide practice, methodologies used in research, and evaluation of interventions’ impact on the macro-dynamics of conflict.”<sup>6</sup> The argument has been made that “that poor analytical standards of what makes successful interventions have created a field which lacks academic credibility and official legitimacy.”<sup>7</sup> Yet scholar-practitioners of Track Two diplomacy have argued that the field is still in its early stages of development as field. They also question the need to quantify results of

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<sup>5</sup> Most literature about the subject has been published by scholar practitioners, such as Herbert C. Kelman, Harold Saunders and Nadim Rouhana

<sup>6</sup> Rouhana, Nadim N., “Interactive Conflict Resolution: Issues in Theory, Methodology, and Evaluation” in *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, Druckman, D., and P.C. Stern, eds., Washington D.C.: National Academy Press 2000, p 294

<sup>7</sup> Jones, Peter, “*Canada and Track Two Diplomacy*, The Canadian International Council, Toronto, 2008, available at: [http://www.pugwashgroup.ca/events/documents/2009/2009.03.28-Canada\\_TrackTwo\\_EN.pdf](http://www.pugwashgroup.ca/events/documents/2009/2009.03.28-Canada_TrackTwo_EN.pdf) also see Rouhana, “Interactive Conflict Resolution...”

Track Two talks, even if the field develops into more academic model, measuring the outcomes would remain difficult.<sup>8</sup>

Interviews were conducted with two practitioners of Track Two diplomacy in the Middle East to provide concrete examples of the role Track Two has played in the overall peace process.

### **Track Two Diplomacy**

The concept of ‘Track Two diplomacy’ finds its foundations in third-party intervention, later unofficial intervention. Diplomacy, in the Westphalian nation-state system, has found its place within official governance realms. Diplomats act as official representative of the state. Third Party interventions are thus conducted by citizens acting in their private capacity, i.e. they do not represent the state, and they are intervening into state affairs.

Third-party intervention is not a new phenomenon. One account of a third-party intervention is that of Dr. Logan, an American Quaker, who in 1798 went to Paris to engage in private discussions with “French officials about the escalation in American-French tensions that was leading to open warfare”<sup>9</sup> However Logan’s efforts were not appreciated by the American leadership. Congress would eventually pass the Logan Act that was “created to prevent private citizens from undertaking diplomatic negotiations with foreign nations.”<sup>10</sup> This attitude would be generally held by governments for much of recent history.

In the aftermath of World War II there was the Moral Re-Armament movement from Oxford in the United Kingdom. The group brought together “prominent German, French and

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<sup>8</sup> See Saunders, Harold, et al, “Interactive Conflict Resolution: A View for Policy Makers on Making and Building Peace,” in *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, Druckman D., and P.C. Stern, eds., Washington D.C., National Academy Press, 2000, also Jones, “Canada and Track Two”

<sup>9</sup> Chataway, Cynthia J., “Track II Diplomacy: From a Track I Perspective”, *Negotiation Journal*, July 1998, p269

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p270

later British citizens with the aim of promoting reconciliation between these societies.”<sup>11</sup> Ronald J. Fisher notes “proponents of unofficial interventions in peacemaking have always maintained that their work could make important contributions to official interactions, but historically their interests and ideas have not been welcomed by the diplomatic community.”<sup>12</sup> However, by the mid twentieth century, conflicts had become more intractable as they became more ethnic and ideologically based; third party interventions though still eyed with suspicion became more acceptable.

The conception of Track Two came “historically...from the realization by diplomats, social scientists, conflict resolution professionals and others that formal official, government-to-government interactions between instructed representatives of sovereign nations were not necessarily the most effective methods for securing international cooperation or resolving difference or conflicts.”<sup>13</sup>

The thought was that conflict resolution was not something that could be decided upon by only politicians. This was for several reasons, first politicians are more often than not required to take official positions during negotiations, particularly on sensitive issues, making it difficult to be creative or flexible when it comes to potential solutions. Secondly, conflicts are not limited to land boundaries, power or resources, they often include social-psychological factors such as fear, stereotypes and dehumanization. If conflicts are not limited to the power factors then a peace process needs to be more encompassing if a sustainable peace is going to be achieved.

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<sup>11</sup> Jones, p1 also visit the Initiatives for Change, as it is now called, website their history at: <http://www.iofc.org/about/>

<sup>12</sup> Fisher, Ronald J., “Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation” *International Negotiation*, vol. 11, p70

<sup>13</sup> Diamond, Louise and John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. West Hartford CT: Kumarian Press 1996, Introduction and Chapter 1, “The Systems as a Whole” p1

The term Track Two Diplomacy was first coined by Joseph Montville in the early 1980s in an attempt to capture the range of activities happening outside of official diplomatic areas. He initially defined Track Two diplomacy “as involving unofficial interactions between members of adversarial groups or nations that are directly toward conflict resolution addressing psychological factors.”<sup>14</sup> Montville would later expand this explanation to “include not only interactions that develop strategies, but also those that influence public opinion in favour of more humanized images and conciliatory policies and develop cooperative economic activities to provide incentives for conflict resolution.”<sup>15</sup> In time other definitions have been formed that build on Montville’s in attempts to capture the true essence of the field. Tobias Böhmelt provides the differentiation between the tracks, stating that “official diplomacy such as Track One involves state and official actors. Unofficial diplomatic intervention is formed by Track Two Diplomacy and Track One-and-a-Half Diplomacy ...Track Two encompasses unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversarial groups or nations.”<sup>16</sup> Hussein Agha et al state that “Track Two talks can also be defined by what they are not: neither academic conferences nor secret diplomacy conducted by government officials.”<sup>17</sup> Though governments may be aware of the Track Two initiatives taking place they are usually not participants officially, however, in some cases governments have acted as sponsors of talks. For the purpose this paper, Track Two diplomacy will be seen as “discussions held by non-officials of conflicting parties in an attempt to clarify outstanding disputes and to explore the options for resolving them

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<sup>14</sup> Fisher, “Coordination between Track Two... p69

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p69

<sup>16</sup> Böhmelt, Tobias, “The effectiveness of tracks of diplomacy strategies in third-party interventions” *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(2), p 167

<sup>17</sup> Agha, Hussein, Shai Feldman, Ahmad Khalid and Zeev Schiff, *Track Two Diplomacy Lessons from the Middle East*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004, p 3

in settings or circumstances that are less sensitive than those associated with official negotiations.”<sup>18</sup>

There is also a track that resides between Track One and Track Two, known as Track 1.5. The term Track 1.5 was developed by Susan Allen Nan, “as referring to conflict resolution activities facilitated by unofficials and directly involving official negotiators for the conflict parties.”<sup>19</sup> The most notable instance of this is the Oslo Accords in the Middle East peace process.

Track Two diplomacy as coined by Montville challenges the held notion that diplomacy was conducted by “diplomats” as representatives of the states. Instead diplomacy could be conducted by a willing third party. This challenge to the accepted norm of diplomacy has not been without criticism from diplomatic and academic circles. Some “officials are concerned that “amateurs” may damage that diplomatic process, though others hold that Track Two can be useful”.<sup>20</sup> Practitioners and sponsors of Track Two are usually conducted by private persons, scholar-practitioners, NGOs, international and regional organizations. Nadim Rouhana notes that “practitioners come from all kinds of disciplinary backgrounds and are often drawn by sympathy to one side or the other in the conflict. Former diplomats, academics, psychologists, psychiatrists, and many other practice conflict resolution.”<sup>21</sup> There are no set qualifications for who should conduct them, which can add to the held perception of third parties meddling in what is thought of as governments’ business.

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<sup>18</sup> Agha, et al,p1

<sup>19</sup> Nan and Strimling, p2, also see Susan Allen Nan, *Complementary and Coordination of Conflict Resolution Efforts in the Conflicts over Abkhazia, South Ossetia, a Transdnistria*, George Mason University, 1999

<sup>20</sup> Jones, Peter , “Canada and Track Two...”, p 5

<sup>21</sup> Rouhana, Nadim, “Unofficial Third-Party Intervention in International Conflict: Between Legitimacy and Disarray”, *Negotiation Journal*, July 2005, p261

## *Interactive Conflict Resolution*

When researching Track Two diplomacy one often comes across the term Interactive Conflict Resolution. ICR is often used as being synonymous with Track Two diplomacy, however it is only a method of Track Two, albeit the most well known. Cynthia Chataway notes “the terms ‘interactive conflict resolution’ and ‘Track Two diplomacy’ are often used interchangeably, although ICR is actually a subset of Track Two.”<sup>22</sup> However she contends that “when people are speaking of ICR, they generally mean a form of Track Two diplomacy in which a scholar-practitioner facilitates conflict analysis dialogues between influential people from the societies in conflict, at the active problem solving.”<sup>23</sup> It is a methodology within the Track Two diplomacy field that is widely used by many practitioners.

The “creation of small group, interactive methods of conflict resolution in the mid-1960s is generally attributed to John Burton and colleagues at University College London.”<sup>24</sup> Though initially Burton “referred to approach as controlled communications to capture the role of the third party in building a nonthreatening atmosphere in which the high level representatives of adversaries can examine their perceptions of the conflict and each other prior to exploring avenues for resolving it.”<sup>25</sup> ICR can be defined as “small group problem solving discussions between unofficial representatives of identity groups or states engaged in destructive conflict that are facilitated by an impartial third-party panel of social scientist-practitioners.”<sup>26</sup> This definition given by Fisher is narrow as he goes on to give a more encompassing definition which sees ICR

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<sup>22</sup> Chataway, Cynthia J. “Track II Diplomacy: From a Track I Perspective” *Negotiation Journal*, July 1998 p270

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p270

<sup>24</sup> Fisher, R.J., “Historical Mapping of the Field of Inter-active Conflict Resolution,” in Davies, J., and E. Kaufman, (eds.), *Second Track/Citizen’s Diplomacy: Concepts and Techniques for Conflict Transformation*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, p65

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p66

<sup>26</sup> Fisher, “Historical Mapping...” p61

as “facilitated face-to-face activities between members of conflicting parties that engage them in communication, dialogue, analysis, training, or reconciliation with the intention of increasing mutual understanding and trust.”<sup>27</sup> ICR varies in its end goals, Kelman notes that the “selections of participants and definition of the agenda...are based on careful analysis of the current political situation within and between conflict parties. Moreover, the objective of workshops is to generate inputs into the political process, including the decision-making process itself and the political debate within each of the communities.” Similar to other track two methodologies its goal is to bring adversaries together to address conflict resolution. ICR, as a method of Track Two, remains the most developed within the field.

### *Multi-Track Diplomacy*

Also within the field of unofficial third party intervention is that of Multi-Track diplomacy, as there were activities within the peacebuilding field that did not fit into Track Two diplomacy’s definition. Louise Diamond and John McDonald write that:

the term Multi-Track Diplomacy refers to conceptual framework...designed to reflect the variety of activities that contribute to international peacemaking and peacebuilding. The concept is an expansion of the “Track One, Track Two” paradigm that has defined the field during the last decade.<sup>28</sup>

Within the framework there are nine tracks in which third party interventions occur ranging from Government or Peacemaking through diplomacy, to Communications and the Media, or Peacemaking through information.<sup>29</sup> They state “that each of these one tracks represents a world

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<sup>27</sup>Fisher, “Historical Mapping ...”,p61

<sup>28</sup> Diamond and McDonald, p1

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p4-5 The nine tracks include 1. Government, or peacemaking through Diplomacy 2.Nongovernmental/Professional, or peacemaking through conflict resolution 3. Business, or peacemaking through commerce 4. Private Citizen, or peacemaking through personal investment 5.Research, Training, and Education, or peacemaking through learning 6. Activism, or peacemaking through advocacy 7. Religion, or peacemaking through

unto itself, with its own philosophy, purpose of language, attitudes, activities, diversities, culture and membership. At the same time, each of these worlds exists in the context of the other.”<sup>30</sup>

Harold Saunders in his research also divides the field into different arenas or tracks by which the peace process occurs. He identifies four arenas:

1) the official process, wherein representative of governments (or international organizations) work to reshape the political environment and secure agreements; 2) the quasi-official process, where unofficial groups closely related to the official process engage on the issues in ways to support negotiations; 3) the public peace process, wherein unofficial actors bring influential antagonists together in sustained dialogue to analyze the conflictual relationship, generate the will to change it, and develop scenarios and action steps from moving the peace process forward; and 4) civil society, wherein citizens and non-governmental organizations work in a variety of domains to reconnect all the sinews of society that have been severed by destructive conflict and to rebuild a peaceful reality.<sup>31</sup>

Though this arenas are more general than that of Diamond and McDonald’s division of the field it provides an understanding that there are several level to a peace process.

Similar to Diamond and McDonald, Chester Crocker et al highlighted “in their ground breaking work on multi-track mediation...a wide range of intermediaries now engage in conflict resolution work, including intergovernmental organizations, national governments coalitions of states, and a diverse collection of nongovernmental organizations in conflict resolution, humanitarian, development and religious domains.”<sup>32</sup> The Track Two diplomacy field has also been divided into broader terms where Track Two includes informal meetings between political elites, whilst the development of Track Three diplomacy deals primarily with grassroots efforts to influence wider societal change. Such initiatives could include having teacher exchange

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faith in action 8. Funding, or Peacemaking through providing resources 9. Communications and the Media, or peacemaking through Information

<sup>30</sup> Diamond and McDonald, p 5

<sup>31</sup> Fisher, “Coordination between Track Two...”, p68

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p66

programs, where teachers from the conflicting sides meet to discuss shared histories and learn about each others' cultural beliefs. The assumption is that the teachers would in turn return to the classroom with a changed perspective of the other and pass that knowledge onto the students.

### *Hard and Soft Track Two Diplomacy*

Track Two diplomacy can be dichotomous in that there can be both 'hard' and 'soft' track two initiatives. Agha *et al* notes that at the very least Track Two "talks are aimed at an exchange of views, perception, and information between the parties to improve each side's understanding of the other's positions and policies."<sup>33</sup> Soft Track Two is more in line with the social-psychological approach as the change is in the individual's perception of the conflict. A "desired outcome of Track Two talks is that participants widely share the impressions they gain in these talks among their formal or informal constituencies."<sup>34</sup> Those that they share their changed perceptions with could be government officials linked to the official peace process or it could be people at the civil society or grassroots level. What makes this 'soft' is that these projects are not aimed at producing a document that can be used by the official process, but to change hearts and minds about the other side. It is about building bridges through relationships that could potentially open channel for communications for potential peace processes. Put another way by Çuhadar and Dayton soft Track Two can be seen as 'process focused' initiatives, which "are designed to build relationships, trust, and mutual understanding among adversaries at both the elite and grassroots level to prepare the ground work for peace to take hold."<sup>35</sup> It can be seen as addressing social-psychological factors of a conflict.

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<sup>33</sup> Agha et al p3

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Çuhadar, Esra and Bruce W. Dayton, (2012), "Research Report: Oslo and Its Aftermath: Lessons Learned from Track Two Diplomacy" *Negotiation Journal*, p158

On the other hand there is ‘hard’ Track Two diplomacy which has a much more focused agenda, such as producing a written document. Here track two talks “might be to help negotiate political agreements between governments.”<sup>36</sup> By using the “informal standing of Track Two participants to initiate talks on sensitive issues that cannot be dealt with in formal settings or between parties that have not yet recognized each other and hence cannot engage one another in official negotiations”<sup>37</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton term these as ‘outcome-focused initiatives’ described as initiatives that are designed to generate ideas for political agreements that can be adopted by official diplomats.”<sup>38</sup> Though, as within all Track Two, initiatives agreements made at this level are non-binding for the parties as the aim is to move them directly into the official Track One level. Given the nature of ‘hard’ Track Two diplomacy these meetings are quite often secret, though some officials may be aware of the proceedings.

#### *Prenegotiation and Circum-negotiation*

Track Two diplomacy initiatives do not necessarily happen isolated from Track One. In fact, Track Two activities can be used as pre-negotiation or circum-negotiation to assist Track One negotiations. On official negotiations in peacemaking Harold H. Saunders notes that “crucial as it is, negotiation around the table is only a later part of a larger political process in which conflicts are resolved in a peaceful means.”<sup>39</sup> The Track One negotiations are only part of a bigger picture that is the peace process. He further states that “those who try to resolve conflict peacefully need to consider the context of a larger political process that deals with the obstacles

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<sup>36</sup> Agha et al, p3

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton, p158

<sup>39</sup> Saunders, Harold, “Prenegotiation and Circum-negotiation-Arenas of the Peace Process”, in Crocker, C., F.O. Hampson and P. All (eds.), *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1996 p419

to negotiation as well as the hurdles in negotiation.”<sup>40</sup> Peace goes beyond the ink on a formal agreement to involve the wider society, it is about relationships. Track Two diplomacy can be used as pre-negotiation. Long time practitioners of Interactive Conflict Resolution workshops “maintain that such interventions can make useful contributions in the prenegotiation, negotiation or post-negotiation phases of the peace process.”<sup>41</sup> Prenegotiation refers to “the times and tasks apart from negotiation that have the purpose of beginning, sustaining and nourishing a peace process by changing relationships and paving the way for negotiation or other peaceful steps to resolve conflict.”<sup>42</sup> Though Saunders prefers the “circum-negotiation the work that goes on around negotiation”<sup>43</sup> as he believes the prefix “pre” causes confusion as it limits activities to before the official talks. Track Two talks can provide avenues for contentious issues in the peace process to be discussed outside of the official realm so that when the official talks begin or are ready to address them there are ideas for potential resolution already. Equally implementing a peace agreement can be difficult as unforeseen problems arise, Track Two can assist the two sides in working on creative ideas to resolve them.

Similar to the concepts of pre and circum negotiation, is the idea of coordination or cooperation between the different tracks. As the perception of who can do it and exactly what diplomacy can look like, those who are involved have begun to pay attention cooperation and coordination. It is an increasingly “recognized that the prevention and resolution of complex conflicts depends on a wide range of activities by diverse actors and that coordination and cooperation maximize the opportunities from complementarily and synergy.”<sup>44</sup> Coordination and

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<sup>40</sup> Saunders, “Prenegotiation and Circum”, p419

<sup>41</sup> Fisher, “Coordination...” p69

<sup>42</sup> Saunders, “Prenegotiation and Circum...”, p421

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Nan, Susan Allen, and Andrea Strimling, “*Track I-Track II Cooperation*”, Beyond Intractability, January 2004, p1, available at: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/track-1-2-cooperation>

cooperation can be seen as the different tracks of diplomacy working together throughout the cycle of a conflict<sup>45</sup> to share information plan, discuss strategies to tackle difficult issues, and plan timing of the different initiatives. Saunders in his identification of the four tracks within the official peace process “calls for the development of a comprehensive strategy based on the complementary of the activities associated with each stream.”<sup>46</sup> Susan Allen Nan and Andrea Strimling, in their report of a 2003 symposium on Track One-Track Two Cooperation, identified four general types of coordination and cooperation that can be summarized into the following four points : “1) Communication (sharing information, sharing analysis); 2) Coordination (planning together, synchronizing), Cooperation (resource sharing, maximizing the impact of separate initiatives) 4) Collaboration (working in collaboration, maximizing the impact of joint initiatives).”<sup>47</sup> As the different tracks coordinate or cooperate with each other there is a great chance that the peace process will succeed.

### *Conflict Theories in Track Two*

Track Two initiatives often take shape by the methodology or objectives that the third party wishes to use or achieve. How practitioners design Track Two diplomacy initiatives are influenced by theories of conflict resolution. From the findings of their study of Track Two initiatives, after the Oslo Accords, Çuhadar and Dayton identify four categories of activities, based on theories of conflict, used by practitioners within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They note in their findings that they “found overlaps between each type and also found that sometimes

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<sup>45</sup> Crocker, Chester A., Fen Olser Hampson, and Pamela Aall, “Multiparty Mediation and the Conflict Cycle” in *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, Crocker, Chester A., Fen Olser Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds., Washington D.C., National Academy Press, 2000. The Conflict Cycle theory is that there are different stages or phases in a conflict. At each one of these phases the relationship between the each side of the conflict is different.

<sup>46</sup> Fisher, “Coordination between Track Two...”, p68

<sup>47</sup> Nan, Susan Allen, and Andrea Strimling, p7

practitioners use several of them in combination simultaneously or contemporaneously...”<sup>48</sup> The first given by Çuhadar and Dayton is the *Psychological approach*, which views “psychological factors as the most important causes”<sup>49</sup> of a conflict. Breaking down the psychological factors thus becomes the focus of the Track Two initiatives. The end goals include “overcoming negative stereotypes and images toward the other disputants, rehumanizing the other, eliminating intergroup prejudice, and building trust and empathy between the adversaries.”<sup>50</sup> The approach requires adversaries to come together from both sides to hear one another’s perspectives and beliefs. Ultimately the hope is that by meeting each other negative stereotypes will be challenged, and new understandings of the conflict will emerge from these meetings. In turn the participants “with these new understandings will...according to this theory, influence public opinion or be considered by people when they make decisions.”<sup>51</sup> This will in turn affect the rest of society as perceptions about the other side begin to change public opinion will grow in support of peace providing a wider constituency for a peace agreement.

The second approach is the ‘Constructive Approach’ which “focuses on the conflicting and competing historical narratives that lie at the heart...of the conflict.”<sup>52</sup> Robert R. Rotberg notes that “wars are fought over tangible resources and rights to and control over land, water, and minerals. Wars are also fueled by other palpable, grievances forced removals; episodes of ethnic cleansing; fears of being overwhelmed; objective or imagined security concerns; actual or invented slights...old sores are rubbed raw and revived antagonism.”<sup>53</sup> In the case of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict the two sides have different narratives about the events of the past one

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<sup>48</sup>Çuhadar and Dayton , p167

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton p168

<sup>53</sup> Rotberg, Robert “Building Legitimacy Through Narrative” in *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: Histories Double Helix*, ed. Robert Rotberg, Blooming and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2006, p1

hundred years, building lists of injustices or justifications for actions taken; each one a victim in the conflict. When trying to build sustainable peace conflict narratives, make it impossible to address past grievances and move forward.

In this approach “practitioners work with conflict narratives in order to reframe the stakeholders’ zero-sum views of the conflict into narratives that allow for mutual accommodation, compromise, and cooperation.”<sup>54</sup> Narratives affect how each side sees the other and the conflict itself. Confronting these conflicting narratives can be challenging particularly within a long embittered conflict. However it needs to be done to be able to have a sustainable peace. Often times this may mean creating a shared narrative.

Thirdly, Çuhadar and Dayton give the ‘*Capacity Builder’ Approach* which aims to “address the lack of conflict management skills and knowledge about the other side...the capacity builder views education and training as the main tools for conflict de-escalation.”<sup>55</sup> It is through training and education that “the capacity builder is seeking to “create agents” within each community.”<sup>56</sup> By creating these agents of change in society there are people at the grassroots level working for peace and creating a ready constituency for any official peace agreement.

Lastly there is the *Realist Approach* which “often deals with the “realistic interests” aspects of the conflicts and negotiable interests.”<sup>57</sup> The realist approach brings together adversaries on joint problem solving tasks on topics that are discussed at the official level. By working together on issues at the Track Two level “practitioners hope that by solving a joint problem together, participants will develop a degree of trust and understanding that contributes

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<sup>54</sup> Rotberg, p1

<sup>55</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton, p169

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

to peacebuilding.”<sup>58</sup> This builds confidence in the official process as well because there is the understanding that the two sides can work effectively together to reach creative solutions to the issues in the official peace process.

## **Transfer**

Numerous times in describing Track Two diplomacy the idea of having influence on or moving outcomes to the official peace process or track one was touched upon. Transfer as a concept within Track Two diplomacy simply suggests that the outcomes from Track Two initiatives move into the official peace process. Transfer “is usually defined as ‘how effects (e.g. attitudinal changes, new realizations) and outcomes (e.g. frameworks for negotiations) are moved from the unofficial interventions to the official domain of decision and policy making.’”<sup>59</sup> There is an assumption within the Track Two diplomacy field “that improved relations and jointly formulated ideas are transferred and incorporated into the society and/or the official policymaking process, thus, having an impact on a larger scale.”<sup>60</sup> Even if Track Two initiatives are “soft”, that its goals are to influence the greater society, there is a need to disseminate the outcomes to targeted constituencies. Initially it was thought that transfer would happen naturally, however, it soon became apparent that there needed to be some form of strategy on how outcomes would be transferred to the official peace process. Planning for transfer becomes something that practitioners should prepare for, from the onset of the Track Two initiatives. The strategy has thus become reliant on the conflict theory that has influenced the third party’s approach.

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<sup>58</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton, p170

<sup>59</sup> Çuhadar, Esra “Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy: The Case of Water and Jerusalem” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 46, no.5, 2009, p643

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p641

Initially, in the 1960's when John Burton was conducting workshops in Southeast Asia, transfer was seen as a more organic process. He "maintained that the realizations and options generated in workshop sessions would simply move into negotiations on implementation details, partly because participants were very close to decision makers and partly because the solutions would be obvious."<sup>61</sup> It was not until a decade later that the area of transfer really began to be thought about by practitioners as something that needed to be planned. It was realized that transfer was not as natural as it had earlier been thought, it was complex and difficult.<sup>62</sup> Kelman "noted that transfer involved two basic elements: the changes in individual perceptions, attitudes and so on that participant's experience, and the effect of these changes on the policy-making process."<sup>63</sup> It would "come to be known as "re-entry," which is defined as the issue of how those who have participated in Problem Solving Workshops, and whose attitudes have been altered by the experience, are affected when they "re-enter" their own side."<sup>64</sup> Re-entering into a society in conflict can be very difficult as the new perceptions and ideas that a participant has gained from a Track Two exercise are not immediately shared by the majority of the population. Thus there is a need to make a strategy on how disseminate the changed perceptions and ideas into a wider constituency.

Fisher provides a "schematic model of transfer [Figure 1: A Model of Transfer Effects] within the context of major constituencies and interactions that influence foreign policy in a situation of international (or intergroup) conflict."<sup>65</sup> Notably the schematic model focuses in the

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<sup>61</sup> Fisher, Ronald J., "Introduction: Analyzing Successful Transfer Effects in Interactive Conflict Resolution," in Fisher R.J. (ed), *Paving the Way: Contribution of Interactive Conflict Resolution*, New York; Lexington 2005, p5

<sup>62</sup> Jones, "Canada and Track Two..." p8

<sup>63</sup> Fisher, "Introduction:..." p5 also see Jones, p8

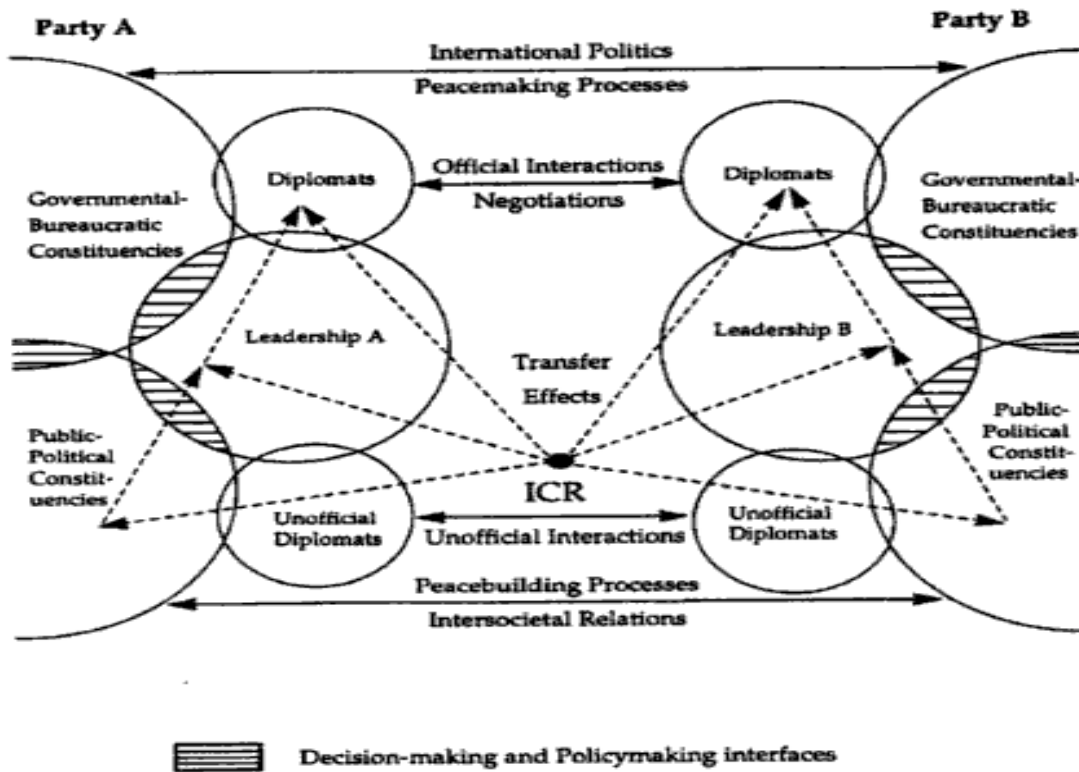
<sup>64</sup> Jones, "Canada and Track Two..." p8

<sup>65</sup> Fisher, Ronald J., "Introduction:..." p5

ICR methodology of Track Two diplomacy, yet it can easily be used to encompass all Track Two methodologies by changing the ICR label.

The figure provides a cross section of a peace process with all the various constituencies that are involved. It “distinguishes between international politics –that is, government –to – government interactions-and intersocietal relations-that is, interactions among all manner of transnational organizations and individuals...”<sup>66</sup> Fisher notes that “the lines of transfer effects from ICR workshops [or any Track Two initiative] run in three directions to constituencies and groups that have input into policy making”<sup>67</sup>

**Figure 1: A Model of Transfer Effects**



Source: Ronald J. Fisher (2005) “Introduction: Analyzing Successful Transfer Effects in Interactive Conflict Resolution” in Fisher, R.J. (ed.), *Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution to Peacemaking*, (New York; Lexington, 2005)

<sup>66</sup>Fisher, “Introduction...p5-6

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p6

Transfer, or more accurately the levels of transfer, is affected by the level of influence that participants in the various initiatives have within the conflict society. For example participants who hold or have held official positions in ‘leadership A or B’ in figure 1.1 are better connected to policy makers thus transfer if it occurs will reach into high levels of government. Participants who are at the grassroots level, academia or civil society will have influence on the ‘public-political constituencies.’ When looking at ‘hard’ Track Two or Track 1.5 diplomacy the dot would shift higher on the model to denote the aim of the talks and the level of the participants that are involved.

It should be noted that it is hard to measure levels of transfer in soft Track Two, as “they seek to affect more intangible factors of intractability, such as attitudes and relationships that are more difficult to measure, and whose contribution to change in the broader conflict environment is difficult to assess.”<sup>68</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton in their studies of track two post-Oslo Accords, group transfer strategies of dissemination into two categories ‘insider and outsider strategies’.

Insider strategies include

five strategies being employed by practitioners, sending artifacts (e.g. recommendations, information) to decision makers, selecting the ‘right’ participants (i.e. influential, representative, skilled), involving international participants and third parties for leverage purposes, establishing a functional role for the group (e.g. epistemic, policy advisory, etc.), and lobbying and advocacy.<sup>69</sup>

The insider strategy is more focused upon influencing the official peace process than the general public perception of the conflict. This means providing frameworks of potential solutions that can be passed onto the official track. It can be linked back to the idea of hard Track Two

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<sup>68</sup> Chingas, Diana “Track II (Citizen) Diplomacy”, Beyond Intractability, August 2003, available at: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/track2-diplomacy>

<sup>69</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton, p171

diplomacy by its objectives in the desire to see the outcomes moving into the policy making circles.

Outsider strategies ‘focus on disseminating the results of Track Two initiatives to a broader public in order to make an impact at the macro level.’<sup>70</sup> This strategy is not necessarily aiming to provide a framework from which future negotiators would work from but to bring change or influence change within civil society. Çuhadar and Dayton contended that these approaches seek to build mass support for the peace process or to move the stalled peace process forward by illustrating what is possible through unofficial diplomacy’<sup>71</sup> This is usually done through the use of mass media outlets.

Though they differentiate between the technical terms outsider versus insider strategies it does remain similar to Fisher’s model of transfer, where proximity of participants to power affects outcome. Çuhadar and Dayton note that outsider strategies “are often undertaken by practitioners who work with participants either from the grassroots level or from the media sector.”<sup>72</sup> Whereas insider strategies “the selection of the ‘right’ participants was clearly... preferred ...by practitioners...Oftentimes, the right people were a mix group of politically influential people and experts/academics.”<sup>73</sup> Thus the ‘right’ people will be more likely to transfer the outcomes to the leadership.

In the literature, when wanting to influence policy making in the peace process the right people appears to be the most effective way of achieving this transfer. However some scholars argue that there are problems with having such politically influential people involved in Track

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<sup>70</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton, p172

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p173

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p171

Two projects. Both Christopher Mitchell and Kelman “have argued that the closer the participants are to the decisionmakers, the more likely it is that they will be politically conformist and resistant to change. The further away they are from official circles, the more likely they will be flexible.”<sup>74</sup> As Track Two diplomacy is often used to get people away from the official political ideas of each side and think about the conflict in new ways, it would appear that participants should be some distance from decisionmakers. However, the desire to see the ideas formulated in the Track Two initiatives to the official peace process would suggest the participants who are closer to the leadership are the best option for it.

This of course presents a problem known as the *autonomy dilemma*<sup>75</sup> which is if participants are close to the government or a government is sponsoring talks then they could potentially impose restrictions on what is discussed or what positions are held by those involved. Such actions would jeopardize the purpose of Track Two talks, which are to be free spaces where adversaries can talk away from the political positions that have caused the official peace process to stall. The closer participants are to the government the greater the risk that discussions will be limited and face the same obstacles that have plagued official talks. Yet for the transfer of the outcomes to the official talks there needs to some proximity to the governments.

Çuhadar and Dayton also highlight another problem with using participants that have close ties to the leadership that they came across in the research. In their findings it showed that using the right participants does not guarantee transfer. They note that “conducting track two initiatives with influential people was not an adequate strategy by itself-to be effective,

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<sup>74</sup>, Çuhadar, p643

<sup>75</sup> Kraft, H.J., “The Autonomy Dilemma in South East Asia,” *Security Dialogue*, September 2000, 31, 3

additional actions were needed from both practitioners and participants.”<sup>76</sup> It was also noted that for transfer to occur even with influential participants who were actively seeking to promote the outcomes of the projects there needs to be an “openness to outside information by official negotiating team and leadership.”<sup>77</sup> Though the mistrust of outside information has long kept the peace process solely in the diplomatic realm Cynthia Chataway points to a growing understanding from diplomats that third party intervention plays an important role in the peace process. Diplomats, in Chataway’s study, “feel they now need private citizens, if only to extend their reach into societies where there may no longer be a career diplomat on the ground or where inter-societal will number in the thousands or more.”<sup>78</sup>

## **The Middle East**

### *History*

To do sufficient justice in covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the numerous track two initiatives that have occurred over the years is not within the scope of this paper. The purpose of this section is to give a brief history about the conflict itself and to highlight a few specific projects that have taken place.

The conflict in the Middle East has been a long a bitter struggle between two peoples claiming a piece of land. It has lasted for more than a century, when Jewish peoples from Europe began to immigrate to Palestine. In the late nineteenth century as anti-Semitism was strong in Europe, influenced by the waves of nationalism within the continent, Jewish thinkers, in particular Theodor Herzl, began to believe that the answer would lie in the formation of a

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<sup>76</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton, p172

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Chataway, p271

Jewish state. Herzl wrote in 1896 that “we have honestly endeavoured everything to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities and to preserve the faith of our fathers. We were not permitted to do so...but I think we will never be left in peace.”<sup>79</sup> Thus there was the formation of the concept of political Zionism. As mass migrations of Jews began to move into Palestine, confrontations took place between some of the new arrivals and local inhabitants. From this point until the 1948 War, numerous partition plans of the land were put forward to deal with growing tensions. However in the span of World War II and its direct aftermath there was an influx of European Jews to Palestine.

Given that the events of the Holocaust had shocked the world there was much sympathy for the Jewish cause of a national homeland. The 1948 War known as the Independence War on the Israeli side and al-Nakba (the catastrophe) on the Arab side, led to the birth of the state of Israel. The war resulted in refugees moving into the neighbouring countries and the West Bank which was under Jordanian control. Despite numerous attempts by the United Nations in its resolutions to see a sustainable and just peace return to the region tensions remained high. Subsequent wars occurred in 1967 and 1973 in attempts to regain lost land and address the Palestinian issue.

It was during the 1967 War, fought between Israel and her neighbouring Arab states, that Israel gained control over Gaza and the West Bank. Following this victory Arab leaders met in Khartoum Sudan and formed what would undergird their policy towards Israel for decades to come. Most notably the final communiqué stated the three noes “no recognition of Israel, no

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<sup>79</sup> *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, ed. Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, New York, Penguin Books, 2008, p 5

peace and no negotiations with her.”<sup>80</sup> There was a political impasse where the Arab States were not willing to recognize Israel and Israel waiting on the Arab states to make the first move.

Although efforts were made throughout the period leading up to the 1973 War to reach a peace settlement it was not until in its wake that a concerted effort is made. First attempts were made through shuttle diplomacy orchestrated by Henry Kissinger.<sup>81</sup> These early talks would eventually lead up to the Camp David Accords in 1979, signed by Egypt and Israel and backed by then American President Jimmy Carter. Camp David saw a peace agreement reached between Israel and Egypt and a plan outlined to see an autonomous Palestinian territory achieved along the 1967 borders. This plan would not be implemented, and as unrest grew by 1988 the first Intifada occurred.

Also during this time the Gulf War occurred that left the PLO at odds with both the United States and the Arab world. This put pressure on the PLO to “to consider political and diplomatic options rather than an armed struggle for which the wherewithal was evaporating.”<sup>82</sup> President George Bush had also made a promise to actively pursue a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “to gain the support of moderate Arab states against Iraq.”<sup>83</sup> Efforts made by the U.S. State Department, through numerous consultations, would lead to the Madrid Conference in 1991. The talks would breakdown down as there was political deadlock between countries on key issues.

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<sup>80</sup> Dowty, Alan *Israel/Palestine*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Malden MA, Polity Press, 2008, p117

<sup>81</sup> Brahm, Eric and Burgess, Heidi, “Shuttle Diplomacy”, Published at Beyond Intractability, November 2003, available at: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/shuttle-diplomacy>

<sup>82</sup> Dowty, p 139

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

A Track Two, or more correctly Track 1.5, effort would eventually lead to the Oslo Accords in 1993. The Accords would eventually fail to be implemented leading to the Second Intifada, followed by more attempts at peace including Camp David II in 2000 and the Taba talks in 2001 both of which tried to reach a final agreement on the status of Israel and Palestine, however, these two would not succeed. In 2003 U.S. President George W. Bush along with European Union, United Nations and Russian presented the “Road Map to peace in the Middle East”<sup>84</sup> a performance based outline that would eventually as each goal was achieved reach a two state solution. The Road Map would again be presented at the Annapolis Conference in 2007 which failed to achieve a lasting peace.

Contentious issues such as the right of return for Palestinian refugees both within Palestine and outside, the final status of the city of Jerusalem and the allocation of land have brought talks to halt on several occasions. The conflicting narratives of both sides make it difficult to reach adequate solutions to these issues. As time goes by in the conflict history becomes “the reservoir of resentment, the fount of blame. History legitimizes, history thus sanctifies.”<sup>85</sup> Every time one side acts to what they perceive as protecting their security, they add further fodder to the long list of growing injustices making coming to the table to negotiate any potential settlement hard.

### *The Harvard Project*

Track Two diplomacy initiatives or third party interventions have been occurring even longer than the official peace process. One of the longest running track two diplomacy initiatives in the Middle East is the Harvard Project, which was facilitated by Herbert Kelman. Agha et al

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<sup>84</sup> Full text available at <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm>

<sup>85</sup> Rotberg, p1

state that “beginning in the 1980s Kelman convened a number of meetings in an effort to explore whether there was sufficient common ground between the two sides.”<sup>86</sup> The first Camp David Accords had settled peace between Egypt and Israel and were given a framework of steps to be taken to solve the Palestinian issue. However it became clear that this was not going to be implemented, nor had the Palestinian Authority been invited to Camp David to negotiate. Kelman’s initiative was to bring the two sides together to begin difficult discussions about the conflict.

The Harvard project was soft track two as the goal of the ICR workshop exercises was not to hammer out a potential peace plan that would transfer into the official talks but to exchange peoples’ perceptions of the other and fears about the conflict. Having conducted one off workshops for a number of years, “Kelman and his colleagues developed a continuing workshop in which the same participants met regularly for several sessions.”<sup>87</sup> Kelman’s track two work “in the pre-Oslo era...provided Israelis and Palestinians one of the most extensive opportunities to exchange views and to understand each other’s concerns. Participants shared the impressions they gained in these talks with a wider constituency.”<sup>88</sup>

It was also a prime example of the use of transfer as “Kelman’s work involved multiple targets of transfer (political leaders, negotiators, governmental-bureaucratic constituencies, public-political constituencies) and multiple mechanisms of transfer (personal contacts,

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<sup>86</sup> Agha et al, p25

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

briefings, writings, speeches, interviews) ...”<sup>89</sup> In particular the continuing workshops in the early 1990s became foundational to the Oslo talks that became the Oslo Accords.<sup>90</sup>

### *Oslo Accords*

The results of the Oslo talks provided a major breakthrough in the Middle East peace process. What began as informal discussions or Track Two diplomacy quickly transferred into the official process. The “Oslo process changed the whole political architecture of the Middle East...the two bitter enemies in the center of regional conflicts, Israel and the PLO, became each other’s legitimate counterpart in peaceful negotiations seeking the end to an age-old dispute.”<sup>91</sup> It also marked a triumph for Track Two diplomacy as it showed that it was a valuable asset to official Track One talks.

There are numerous things that set the stage for potential peace talks in the early 1990’s. The first Intifada in 1987-8 had brought the Palestinian issue back onto the international stage. Two other major events occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s that affected Middle East politics; first the end of the Cold War which changed the balance of power as the Soviet Union had backed many of the Arab states. Second was the Gulf War in which the PLO had backed Saddam Hussein causing tension with the only super power, the United States. It also caused tension in the relationship of the PLO and the rest of the Arab world who had supported the coalition force’s mission in Iraq. Also the PLO leadership accepted United Nations Resolution 181, the Partition Plan of 1947 and United Nations Security Council Resolution

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<sup>89</sup> Fisher, Ronald J., “Coordination...”p74

<sup>90</sup> Agha et al.

<sup>91</sup> Egeland, Jan “The Oslo Accord: Multiparty Facilitation through the Norwegian Channel” in Crocker, C.A, F.O. Hampson, and P. Aall, eds., *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003, p 530

242<sup>92</sup>, which called for Israel to withdraw to the 1967 boundaries. By accepting these resolutions “the Palestinian mainstream formally endorsed the “two-state solution” to the conflict, envisioning a Palestinian state alongside the Jewish state, rather than in place of it.”<sup>93</sup> The acceptance of both resolutions was essential for the peace process.

Initial requests for potential secret meetings between Israel and Palestine came in early 1992. The Norwegians were approached by both Abu Ala’ head of the PLO Economics Department and Fesial Husseini a member of the Palestinian delegation to the official talks in Washington and asked to conduct informal talks. The official talks in Washington had stalled two years prior remained in deadlock. By December of that year the informal talks began.

The informal discussions, facilitated by the Norwegians, allowed the small group of three Palestinians and four Israelis to address the issues that had caused the official talks to stall. What they produced marked large concession on each side. The Palestinians “accepted the deferment of vital issues such as the future of Jerusalem and Israeli settlements within a phased process whose end result was yet to be negotiated.”<sup>94</sup> The Israelis also made large concessions, “for the first time Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people,”<sup>95</sup> until this point neighbouring Arab states acted as representatives in official negotiations. Israel “also agreed for the first time to transfer parts of what it considered to be ‘Land of Israel’ to

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<sup>92</sup> full text of UN Resolution 181 is available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/038/88/IMG/NR003888.pdf?OpenElement> Full Text of 242 available at: <http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1967/scres67.htm>

<sup>93</sup> Dowty, p138

<sup>94</sup> Agha et al, p25

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p30

Palestinian control.”<sup>96</sup> Those concessions were points that had acted as roadblocks to the official peace talks.

The participants on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides were highly connected to their respective leaders. Agha et al note that “an important factor accounting for the success of the Oslo talks was the character, background and connections of the individuals who conducted the discussions.”<sup>97</sup> The quality of participants allowed for the ideas to shift to the official talks in Washington. Though the Oslo Accords would eventually fail and be abandoned by the end of the decade, the process showed the potential role that track two diplomacy can play in the peace process.

#### *Other Cases of Track Two in the Middle East*

Other Track Two initiatives have focused in on particular issues that affect the peace process. Specifically on environmental issues where once a peace settlement is reached a plan needs to be in place for shared resources. For example in the early 1990s the Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) created a Track Two initiatives focused on addressing the issue of water in the region. The workshop aimed at “providing a forum for Israeli and Palestinian water experts to engage in problem-solving and to help them explore ideas, options, and solutions that would meet the interests of both parties.”<sup>98</sup> Other talks have been focused on more contentious issues such as the Israel settlements in the West Bank. In 1995 an initiative backed by the American Jewish Committee was an unlikely meeting of those living in the settlements and senior officials in the Palestinian Authority.<sup>99</sup> The talks, being so sensitive

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.,p37

<sup>98</sup> Çuhadar, p645

<sup>99</sup> Agha et al, p 90

they were code named Charlie, acting as a meeting of two groups ideologically opposite from each other. Meetings touched on what a peace settlement could mean for the settlers and to initiate a building of contacts between the two. Track Two diplomacy has acted as a conduit on many occasions for Israelis and Palestinians to meet when the potential for peace has seemed impossible.

### **Selection of Cases**

In addressing areas of transfer of Track Two diplomacy in the Middle East, particularly the Israeli Palestinian conflict, it was concluded that interviewing practitioners of track two in the region would be the most effective way. This conclusion was reached due to the lack of empirical evidence of Track Two transfer in the Middle East peace process. Track Two diplomacy initiatives are often held in secrecy making it hard to measure if their outcomes have reached the official peace process. In conducting the research, two practitioners were identified as potential contributors to furthering knowledge of track two in the region and of the potential of transfer. Next particular projects that the two practitioners had worked on were selected for them to be interviewed on. Two cases were selected to analyze transfer of Track Two diplomacy outcomes in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Both cases of transfer have occurred in the last ten years, when the official peace process was at a very inactive point. Each initiative was focused on the building of potential frameworks that could move into the peace process. In essence the two initiatives were hard Track Two as the goal was to produce a document that could be used in Track One. It can also be said that in both projects the third party used a realist approach as a theory of conflict resolution because the goal was to bring together both sides in problem solving workshops to jointly work on issues specific to a final peace agreement.

Interviews were conducted using the following set of questions:

- How was the Track Two project conceived?
- How did you structure the project?
- How did the project develop as it progressed?
- Did you think of the area of transfer as the project progressed?
- Did you work with people from the region to develop a model of transfer?
- Has transfer worked in practice the same as you envisioned it?
- Of the participants, were the majority of officials acting in an official manner, academics or other members of civil society? Did this affect transfer? Why?
- In retrospect what would you do differently in relation to transfer?
- What have you learnt from the project about Track Two?

The interviews were conducted to establish factors that the research showed affected the level of transfer that the outcomes would reach. First, it sought to understand how the Track Two initiatives began to discover how the third party was approaching the conflict resolution. Second, how the initiative developed. Did it progress as the third parties envisioned it would or did changes need to occur to facilitate better communications between the two sides? Lastly, to examine directly the idea of transfer, was it thought of from the early stages, how did the third party think it would progress and did the positions past or present affect potential transfer levels? It should be noted before moving into this section that ability to gain information about each project was not equal as one was at the point where it had become quite public and the was other still in limited exposure phase.

*Background: Jerusalem Old City Initiative and International Presence*

The first case is the Jerusalem Old City Initiative that has been ongoing over the past eight years. It was designed to examine one of the most contentious issues in the Middle East peace process, the old city of Jerusalem. The “Jerusalem Old City Initiative is developing creative options for the governance and management of the Old City of Jerusalem in preparation

for a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians.”<sup>100</sup> The conception of this Track Two initiative stems from two senior Canadian diplomats, nearing the end of their careers, discussing the idea of becoming involved in something that the government would not want to become involved in due to its controversial nature. Both former diplomats had been posted in the Middle East region throughout their careers and had worked together previously on the refugee working group for the Middle East with the Refugee Working Group as part of the post Madrid Multilateral Peace Process.

In looking at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to decide what kind of project they would do, they steered clear of refugees as there was already an apparatus in the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). There was also a feeling that the group did not have the technical knowledge to adequately deal with borders or resources. Having passed over these issues the focus shifted to the notion of Jerusalem. There was also background experiences to why Jerusalem was selected, having all been in the region when Camp David II occurred, “as professional diplomats we were absolutely appalled at the lack of professionalism all around...the fact that for an example the Israeli delegation admitted that when they heard Jerusalem was going to be discussed they did not have a single position paper...on what they were going to negotiate on their capital city.”<sup>101</sup> In the end Jerusalem was one of the key issues that caused Camp David to collapse.

The team determined that there were two distinct issues within the topic of Jerusalem; first there was the whole metropolitan city of Jerusalem with the divide of the east part of the city primarily populated with Palestinian communities and the west where the Jewish population was

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<sup>100</sup> “What we do: Project Overview” The Jerusalem Old City Initiative website available at: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/joci/>

<sup>101</sup> Interview A “The Jerusalem Old City” Interview with Kristen Carson, Ottawa, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012

primarily located. The second issue was the old city of Jerusalem “which can be defined in two ways. There is the old city, which is the city within the wall and then there is what the British called the historic basin or the holy basin”<sup>102</sup> which is the land immediately surrounding the old city. The project was initially narrowed to the holy basin as the focal point, and thus became the Holy Basin Project. The project would be narrowed down further to the Jerusalem Old City Initiative, as the team having consulted with experts felt that the walled old city provide a better focus as it contain three of the major holy sites, the Temple Mount, the Haram Ash-Sharif, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It also within its walls provided a mixture of the population, including Jews, Muslims and Christians. The interviewee noted that “we conceived of the idea that what we would try and do was to work on a scheme that might make it possible for them to conclude a peace agreement on the most sensitive parts of Jerusalem.”<sup>103</sup> It had become apparent within the official peace process that with the two state solution everything was to be divisible, this is problematic for the holy part of Jerusalem because key holy sites were either shared or overlapping making it impossible to divide without someone losing out.

The second project selected is a Track Two initiative examining what the possible role of an international security presence if a peace agreement between the two sides was going to be implemented. This is the more recent of the two cases as it has taken over the past four years; it also is much less public. A few years ago a German foundation became interested in addressing what an international presence would look like if a peace treaty would finally be reached in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The interviewee noted that “in all the various models of the peace agreement there is an assumption that for sometime during the implementation of the agreement

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Interview A

there would need to be an international presence on the border of Israel Palestine.”<sup>104</sup> The interviewee was then contacted by the foundation, having been a practitioner of Track Two diplomacy, their name had been given to the foundation as a potential facilitator.

The aim of the project was to look in depth at what the role of the international presence would look like if Israel and Palestine were able to reach a peace agreement. As noted earlier all models of potential peace agreements all included this idea that during the implementation of any agreement an international presence would need to be deployed to the region, however no one had given much thought or what that would mean and exactly what it would look like. The German foundation gathered into the working group Israelis and Palestinians who were retired officials and some that were still in an official position. Similar to the Jerusalem Old City Initiative this Track Two project involved other third party participants to lend expertise as they had experience in conducting peacekeeping missions and other international forces. These consultants were brought in for their expertise and to maintain a realistic understanding of what the international presence would be able to do within the group.

The group was tasked with outlining the specific role that the international presence would have, including identifying the issues that it would face within the context of implementing the agreement. What they came up with a matrix document, as it was it was felt that an international presence would need to be flexible at different times in the process of implementing it would take on different roles and in different places.

The project took the form of a classic Track Two workshop methodology with a series of four meetings that took place both offshore in Cyprus and locally in Jerusalem. It was during this

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<sup>104</sup> Interview B “International Security Presence” Interview with Kristen Carson, Ottawa, 12th June 2012

first meeting that the participants came to the conclusion that a matrix document would be necessary.<sup>105</sup> Their reasoning was that the mission was complex, as in, the discussion they had thought of not only would it take on three different roles but it would have three phases in which it would operate. The matrix document was set up to include these various roles, and under each role there were a series of eight questions that the participants thought would need to be addressed at each phase. The interviewee, who was acting as facilitator, was also responsible for writing a brief paper to capture the essential points in the meeting.

The third party directed the group so that it focused on technical issues instead of vague general concepts so that if the peace process was to restart the outcomes of the initiative could be presented as a framework that could be picked up by the official track one.<sup>106</sup>

#### *Project Progression Jerusalem Old City Initiative*

The initiative occurred in four phases; phase one the exploratory phase which lasted about two years of going out to Israel Palestine. The interviewee noted that “in retrospect we realized that...we had carved out a very broad network of people whose views on Jerusalem was that it was going to be a tough nut to crack but we should try to crack it.”<sup>107</sup> The initial study was published in to a book that both explained the problem of Jerusalem and presented the ideas in a non-confrontational way and presented to Israeli and Palestinian contacts. The book was given to the participants two weeks in advance to a gathering in Istanbul in 2005 where both sides came together to discuss the ideas presented to them by the third parties in a workshop setting. It was in this meeting that a Palestinian participant after consulting others gave the third party directives in how the project should continue to develop, noting that at this time there were

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<sup>105</sup> Interview B

<sup>106</sup> Interview B

<sup>107</sup> Interview A

elections in both Israel and Palestine thus for the next six months it would be best to let this settle. However they noted that the areas of security and governance were important and should be continued to work on by the third party. A Palestinian participant noted that this was the first time since the Taba talks that the two sides had discussed Jerusalem.

In phase two, building upon studies done in phase one that had already taken the thinking around security quite far, the third party felt that to bring the Israelis to even consider the plan security had to be addressed. Thus a working group on security was established and run for eighteen months and then a governance working group was established and run for eighteen months as well. In phase three, the final studies of phase two were taken by the working groups and condensed down to a ten page document. Then the fourth phase looked into the areas of property and archeology, which were added at a later date when the United States asked the project to continue.

With respect to the security working group, though the third party remained in lead, they realized that security was a very technical issue that they did not have knowledge about. Additional consultants from Canadian military, the RCMP and an American diplomat were brought into lend expertise and facilitate workshops. This team built a small group of Israeli and Palestinians to work with, with whom they consulted about the security issues that the old city would potentially face. Meetings were sometimes individual consultations with members of the group and other times they met as a group on a whole.

Interestingly in the first meeting, in Durham UK, the security working group came to a realization that classic Track Two structure would not work for this topic. A crisis had occurred in Israel and the Palestinians could not travel and the Israelis would not either, thus the meeting

only included core third party team and one Israeli. The interviewee noted that “given the topics and people we were discussing the classic way of doing track two...was not going to work given the total instability of the situation...we at the tail end of the intifada, there were crisis after crisis we could never be certain from one month to the next whether we could meet people as a group even in Israel/Palestine let alone off shore.”<sup>108</sup> With the situation as it was new tools had to be developed to make it possible to address the issue of security whilst being able to address the factor of instability on the process.

The team came up with commissioning people to do research to develop their ideas and put it into a report form. This tool became useful as the interviewee noted that “it helped participants to focus their thoughts and it also helped get away from needing to posture either to the people sitting across the table or the people sitting next to them...that you would see in an actual discussion.”<sup>109</sup>

This method continued and participants began writing their options and research, the third party noticed that people who had been “kind of suspicious or amused or indifferent once they began writing about the idea they began to understand the logic.”<sup>110</sup> Commissioning participants to research also assisted with local ownership of the initiative as it started to become their ideas instead of a Canadian initiative.

After a year of this process the third party took the research and compiled a two part document called *The Old City of Jerusalem Security Assessment* which presented ideas and proposed plans for the old city. Another meeting occurred in Istanbul where both sides met took

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<sup>108</sup> Interview A

<sup>109</sup> Interview A

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

the document and discussed it, eventually whittling it down to a smaller much changed second document on security for the old city.

At the same time the third party began to think about governance of the old city and how it would look. As they had been thinking about a shared governance structure to address the old city's complexities they found that there were no real experts on this subject. With the absence of the experts that had assisted in the designing of the security assessment the third party found itself taking a more active role in the studies of governance. Again studies were commissioned by Israelis and Palestinians to express their view of what a special regime would look like, another on holy sites, a third one on dispute resolution i.e. mechanisms to address conflict and a fourth set on social and economic conditions in the old city.

These studies created a body of work that the third party used to build a set of tools for the workshop participants to bring the ideas presented in the studies together. The working group meet on a monthly basis and each time that they felt they had a rough draft finished the group took it out for Israeli and Palestinian contacts to look over and critique, shaping it into a workable plan.

### *Project Progression International Presence*

The Track Two initiative on the international presence progressed as it had been envisioned by the third party. A primary factor of this could have been that both the facilitator and the participants were well seasoned in Track Two diplomacy exercises. Also a number of the participants had been involved in the official peace process.

As the project progressed the group created a matrix as they saw the international presence taking on specific roles and at specific periods in the process. The group thought that

the presence would also be required during three phases of pre-implementation of a peace agreement when a peace agreement was imminent , during the implementation of the agreements, and then in the post- agreement phase. The three roles included peacebuilding, monitoring and statebuilding.

### *Transfer in the Jerusalem Old City Initiative*

When the project began there was no notion of a Track Two process within the group, they saw themselves as a policy generating initiative. This was not far out of their realm as they were all former diplomats, diplomacy was what they did. It was not until they meet with a track two practitioner and discussed the theory behind it that they realized that it was indeed a Track Two initiative. It was not until this point that they actually heard of the term transfer, the team would have given it another name of advocacy.<sup>111</sup> However for the first five years the team remained in a mode where they wanted no publicity. Though they wanted to keep the project out of the general public's eyes they wanted to be completely transparent with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities in what they were attempting to do. The original plan was that transfer would occur through the participants' relations to their respective authorities and thereby producing the final documents to stakeholders in the peace process. They did produce a website where once the papers where done they were posted on it, however, the information was very controlled.

Four years in, the group began cautiously sharing the project when invited to speak to other policy think tanks. Due to their commitment to being transparent with governments they had continually shared their finds with the Israelis and Palestinians, as well they had continued to

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<sup>111</sup> Interview A

meet with Americans, the State Department, Congressional staffers etc, and sharing their work. With the Americans, during the Bush administration, though they met with them every year did not receive much interest, rather disbelieve that they had tackled such a controversial topic. It was not until Gaza fell to Hamas in 2006 that the Americans began to move on the peace process, holding the Annapolis Conference in 2007 in an attempt to revive the peace process, that interest in the initiative's work became intense. For the first year of the Obama administration the initiative had a lot of interaction with the Americans, partly because Israeli Prime Minister Olmert began using the initiative's material in his negotiations.

It was the Americans that encouraged the initiative to become more public in 2009, the interviewee stating that "their rationale as far as we can tell is that they liked our ideas, but they did not want our ideas to be their ideas. They wanted us to get our ideas out there so they could say they are responding rather these being American ideas."<sup>112</sup> Giving some form of local ownership to the initiative's framework, so the solution came from within the region instead of being imposed on it.

The Middle East Institute held a half day workshop to three hundred think tanks, NGO, and governments in which the group presented their work, to add credibility to their work they used one of the American diplomats that had worked with them to introduce them, before the team of three introduced the idea quickly. They followed that short presentation with a panel of eight Israeli, Americans and Palestinians talking about the ideas so it would not come across as the Canadians coming down to tell the Americans what to do.

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<sup>112</sup> Interview A

Initially the thought was that it would be a brown envelope passing of the results, i.e. when the final report was finished it would be passed to decision makers in peace process. However in the closing periods of the Bush administration in the United States the Obama transitional team requested to see the work that the initiative had been doing. This was due to the awareness of the project within government circles in the United States.

Originally they thought that when they came together, if there was a peace process that was in progress then they would deliver their findings to the negotiators on each side and no one else. The other extreme was to go public on a larger scale by going to the media in both Israel and Palestine. However, the latter option they thought was not a good plan “because in order for any of our ideas to be politically acceptable they needed to come from the leaders of those countries. The people needed to hear from the leadership not a bunch of Canadians.”<sup>113</sup> This would also allow for the idea have some legitimacy within the process as the ideas would appear to come from within society.

### *Transfer in the International Presence*

From the onset, the facilitator had thought about transfer; having been a seasoned practitioner of track two, they believed it was essential to plan for transfer. Given that the goal of the problem solving workshops was to produce a document that could be used in track one talks “it was very clear from the beginning that whatever did they needed to render something that could be given to governments.”<sup>114</sup> As the topic of their initiative was something that had been discussed in the official peace process, but only in vague terms, the purpose was to study it

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<sup>113</sup> Interview A

<sup>114</sup> Interview B

in-depth and have any framework they developed move in the official talks if and when they resumed.

As the workshops progressed the group, including the third party, realized the complexity of the matrix. The interviewee noted that “we realized that we had to have people go and talk to governments to make sure they understood it. We could not just take it and put it down in front of them.”<sup>115</sup> To effectively see potential transfer of the matrix into the government policy making circles the team “conceived the idea of the senior Palestinian and senior Israeli and a German General and myself (the interviewee as the facilitator), to go around the United States to have serious discussions with high-ranking people. This included people within the White House, the National Security Council, the State department and Defence who are involved in developing US policy towards the Peace Process and the Middle East. This tour was conducted in Europe meeting with similar institutions in European countries.

On this tour the third party thought it was necessary to appear only in the background and let the participants present their framework. This was to give it more local ownership to the outcomes, i.e. this is not something the third party had thought of, the agreement was made by the two sides thus making it plausible that in track one talks the two sides would accept a version of it. In transfer, stakeholders who are not directly impacted by the conflict are more willing to support a solution that has been thought of by the warring parties.

Both projects show the use of strategies that Çuhadar and Dayton identified as insider strategies including sending documents to decision makers, involving international participants (or consultants) and selection the ‘right’ participants.<sup>116</sup> The initiatives goals were both to influence

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Çuhadar and Dayton, p171

the official peace process rather than the wider society which is consistent with both the realist approach and Çuhadar and Dayton's insider strategies of transfer.

### *Participants*

In the literature there is support to the idea that the higher level participants have in society or the closer they are to the policy process the greater chance there is for the outcomes of a track two diplomacy project. This can be seen in Fisher's schematic model of transfer where the level of transfer is affected by the level of participants involved (see figure 1 p.21) The "more influential the participants and the more direct their connection to policy making, the greater the probability that...interventions, in a complex field of multiple causes, can have discernible positive effects on the process of conflict resolution."<sup>117</sup> There are of course problems that arise from having participants too close to the government, as mentioned earlier some scholars contend the closer a participant is to the policy making circles the more likely they are to take the official position in discussion. In the interviews, the theory that the societal level of participants has a direct link to the level of transfer that would be achieved appeared to hold true.

The international security team project interviewee supported the idea that the position that the participants had held or currently held were key to seeing material produced or ideas by the group moving into the policy making sphere. However, as there was no direct transfer plan for the participants in the region in terms of key targets or contacts picked out specifically for the project there was an assumption that the participants would pass the outcomes along to their respective constituencies. In this project then, the picking the 'right' participants became essential. The project had participants from both sides who had either held or were still active in

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<sup>117</sup> Fisher, Ronald J "Historical Mapping..." p62

their official positions. It was noted that those participants who were currently holding an official position observed more than participated in the discussion during the workshops. Within the course of the project it should be noted that the number of participants did not remain consistent, however there was a core set of eight or so that remained constant though the project. These participants had key contacts with the government and military which had an impact on the level that the outcomes would be potentially shared within the two parties.

In the Jerusalem Old City Initiative the participants involved were asymmetrical when comparing both sides.<sup>118</sup> The interviewee noted that asymmetrical aspect had both advantages and disadvantages in respect to the levels of transfer. On the Israeli side the participants former high officials, negotiators, foreign affairs advisors, political lawyers were mostly from the center. It also included former military officials, security officials, think tanks, academia and religious circles. The advantage of the Israeli side was that they are free to think and speak as they like, be creative and argue about ideas. However the disadvantage of the Israeli side in terms of transfer is it was always unclear how high the ideas were going in the government.<sup>119</sup> The transfer of the outcomes was dependent on the participants using their contacts to share the ideas being discussed and there was no way to measure if this was occurring at all. This again brings in the assumption of natural transfer that participants having been involved would willingly and freely share the outcomes with their contacts.

When discussing the Palestinian participants the interviewee noted that to be relevant then the participants need to be sanctioned by the authority and would be more likely to hold the official positions in the discussions. This could be an advantage as whatever was discussed in the

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<sup>118</sup> Interview A

<sup>119</sup> Interview A

meetings, would be discussed at the higher levels of the authority. The participants “were in some cases official in drag and some case officials not in drag depending on the meeting”, these included people who held positions in the PLO, pollsters, diplomats, lawyers and even members of the opposition. All were seen as either part of the regime or close to the regime. It was also pointed out that “although you were aware that you were dealing with a much more constrained group on the Palestine side your message was always going to be reaching high levels within the authority.”<sup>120</sup> Being part of the regime or close to it assisted in the area of transfer as the authority was well aware of the ideas being discussed. However in terms of the actually process of coming up with ideas it was difficult thinking outside the box, partially due to participants to the authority but also the Palestinians “have a more homogenous and broadly accepted narrative that they cling to because it is all they have.”<sup>121</sup> This could potential hurt the creativity in problem solving discussions, but appears to assist in what level of transfer is reached.

### *Practitioners*

In both cases the level or positions that the facilitators held had also had an influence on how far transfer of the outcomes went. This was particularly true in moving the outcomes beyond the respective governments in the conflict. Given that Israel-Palestinian conflict though, on the interface level, involves the two peoples, many other nations are stakeholders in the conflict; thus there is a greater constituency on the international level. The United States has traditionally been a close ally of Israel as it has been viewed a strategic location in the Middle East. Equally, Western Europe has also been a long time supporter of Israel, though not as staunch in its position as the United States. There are also the surrounding countries in the

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Interview A

region that have a vested interest in the outcomes of any peace settlement, particularly Jordan, Syria and Lebanon who play host to millions of Palestinian refugees. The importance of the peace settlement is far reaching and when looking at the transfer of outcomes in this particular conflict there is a need to look beyond the two primary stakeholders.

In the Jerusalem Old City Initiative the positions that had been held by the third parties had an effect on transfer of the initiative into official circles. All three of the core management teams of the project had previously held important diplomatic positions in the region. They retain contacts with former officials and officials within the two authorities. It also gave great access to the United Nations, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. State Department as all institutions were aware of the activities of the initiative. The interviewee noted that they were confident that due to the previous positions as diplomats that when the time came they would be able to get the findings into the right hands.<sup>122</sup> Equally the positions that were held both at present and in the past by the consultants that were used by the initiative to facilitate the various working groups worked towards seeing outcome to be transferred into a larger number of stakeholders' policy making circles. The consultants used in the security and governance workshops were well seasoned and respected within their fields, the region and by their governments.

Also, in the Track Two initiatives on the international security presence, the third party's position played a role in transfer to the wider stake holders. The facilitator had a reputation building in diplomacy circles both in the Middle East region and in North American that allowed doors to be open in North America and in Israel/Palestine. Contacts of the German foundation and consultants used for technical expertise also allowed for access to wider constituencies. This

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<sup>122</sup> Interview A

included former military officer(s) and diplomats that allowed for the ability to speak to policy makers in both Europe and the United States.

Track Two scholars have been divided on the whether it is essential for practitioners to have background knowledge of the conflict which they are intervening. Some like Burton argue that “it is well for the third party not to be or to include an area or regional specialist”<sup>123</sup> However other have argued otherwise that it is background knowledge of the conflict and region should be possessed by the facilitators.<sup>124</sup> Though these arguments are made to assess the facilitator’s ability to conduct the discussions, it can easily be used to study effects that a facilitator can have on transfer. In both cases the facilitators had expertise in the region either from a diplomatic career or as an academic and long-time practitioner of Track Two in the region. They also used consultants who either had expertise in the region or on the particular topic they were discussing. When it came to transfer the fact that the practitioners had both knowledge and expertise assisted the outcomes reaching important officials as it lent credibility to the initiatives work.

## **Conclusion**

Whether or not Track Two diplomacy has made a significant contribution to the actual Middle East peace process is hard to assess. This is due to many factors, one being the often secretive nature of the talks that is necessary to protect the participants in a protracted conflict. Second, it is difficult to map the journey that outcomes take once they have been shared by the participants to their respective constituencies. In theory the outcomes of Track Two talks that are ‘hard’ in nature should be easier to gauge compared to those of the ‘soft’ Track Two. However,

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<sup>123</sup> Rouhana, “Unofficial Third Party...”p261

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

this leads to the third factor which is that until the official peace process resumes in the Middle East there is no way to tell if the outcomes have either affected the greater society or been internalized by respective governments.

In both cases, in the analysis the outcomes that were produced in terms of developed frameworks did in fact make it into the hands of those in key positions of power. This was due to the relationships that both the participants and facilitators of each initiative have, allowing for access to influential people in the government allowed for outcomes to be present to larger constituencies. The international security presence initiative, in its selection of participants, choose people that had been involved in both previous Track Two projects and the official peace process. Though it was noted in this case that transfer was asymmetrical as participants on the Palestinian side were under more scrutiny by their authority, which allowed for a sense that outcomes were being potentially internalized. This, however, presented an autonomy dilemma as the Palestinians were less prone to think outside official political lines than the Israelis.

In terms of assessing the transfer of outcomes for the two initiatives to the official process there is some difficulty. The international presence initiative has only occurred within the last two years, when the official process has been at a low point, thus making it hard to gauge if the initiatives material has been transferred. The Jerusalem Old City Initiative had some notable success in transfer as during its earlier phases official talks were occurring. Notably Israeli Prime Minister Olmert appeared to be using material from the project in his negotiations. The initiatives work also drew the attention of the United States, who encouraged the team to go public with their outcomes. However in the case of Olmert there was no way to point to the material he was using was directly linked to the project.

In each case there was an idea of what the transfer strategy would be suggesting; that greater emphasis on the area of transfer is needed to provide practitioners with more substantive strategies of transfer. Track Two diplomacy's ability to influence the official process is dependent on ability of practitioners to plan instead of rely on an organic transfer of outcomes.

The question then becomes if the measuring of the results of Track Two diplomacy is so difficult, why should such initiatives take place? During the Jerusalem Old City Initiative the interviewee noted that “when I look at all the work that has been done and the meager results that we have to show for it I sometimes wonder if it has made any difference at all...so why do it.”<sup>125</sup> In a conflict that is genuinely protracted as the Israel Palestinian one is, the peace process needs to be thought of as more than just the official talks. Conflicting narratives, dehumanization and a long list of injustices plague any attempts at peace. Even though there is a lack of empirical evidence to show the effects that Track Two diplomacy has significant effect on the peace process, in intractable conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian one, it does provide an opportunity for both sides to begin talking. It creates a much needed space to move away from the politics of the official talks and engage in addressing major issues. It is a place where solutions can be conceived and debated by both sides without governments needing to commit to them.<sup>126</sup> Depending on how protracted the conflict Track Two can serve as a meeting place between the different sides to begin a process of re-humanizing each other.

Although Track Two diplomacy can never, nor should it, take the place of official talks it can be a useful tool. Creating a sustainable peace should not be limited to the official track; it requires the society to engage in the process. Given that the Middle East peace process has

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<sup>125</sup> Interview A

<sup>126</sup> Jones, Peter “Filling a Critical Gap or Just Wasting time? Track Two Diplomacy and regional security in the Middle East”, United Nations Centre for Disarmament Research, 2008  
Available at: <http://www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2726.pdf>

continually run into political deadlock over key issues Track Two offers a mechanism that can assist in coming up with potential solutions and reaching a peace agreement that offers a sustainable peace.

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