

# Ending Terrorism – By Words Alone?<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Every caring human being wants to say farewell to terrorism. By faith, every Moslem should want peace. Indeed those familiar with the work of Fethullah Gülen can not help but share his view that no Moslem can be a terrorist and no terrorist can be a Moslem. But is faith and committed dialogue sufficient to end religious hatred or to put an end to terrorism? Is that a realistic choice?

The short answer provided by this paper is “yes”. Armed peace is not peace. Traditional conflict research studies show us that even the most intractable conflicts are ended by processes of dialogue not by military might. Of course the military has developed awesome technologies for tracking and executing those who challenge states through manufacturing horrific atrocities. But such processes have the unhappy ability to breed more people willing to continue such hatred than those they destroy. The continuing war in Iraq is a case in point. The human cost of such methods is not even counted by the US military who only quantify their own casualties not those of local people – only the NGO’s are counting Moslem fatalities and these now number over an estimated 600,000.

More sophisticated conflict researchers say that terrorism can only be eradicated if the causes of terrorism can be eradicated. There is a need to rebuild civic society and populate it with hope rather than hatred, but how? The teaching of Fethullah Gülen on such matters has been both simple and

heartfelt – by committed education of youth, by committed realisation of truth in the material world. Teachers from the Movement are already helping to create a new generation of quality teachers and educators who will make a difference, but it goes beyond that--part of a committed dialogue evidenced by many examples.

The sad truth is that most political killings are effected through small arms and light weapons and most small arms are traded by the big five nations on the UN Security Council. There is little transparency or truth in such transactions which hang rank with hypocrisy. Each transaction is financed through banking systems which take no account of the consequences. Yet in contrast, Islamic banks are run according to an ethical code which does not invest in arms, alcohol or environmental damage for profit. Ethical conduct is seamless.

In the turbulent times to come, there is no military solution to terrorism and political violence: only committed dialogue which can transform enmities into dialogue. At the heart of this process is education so that future generations are not poisoned by the conflicts of the past. This presentation maps Gülen's pronouncements on conflict, violence, dialogue, wisdom and respect, on to broad theories of conflict resolution and finds them largely congruent. Committed dialogue and education to facilitate it will enable us to build new civic societies more concerned with peace, justice and sustainability than greed. The paper looks for ways to extend that peace bridging process between Asia, Europe and beyond – as if people mattered.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every caring human being wants to say farewell to terrorism. By faith, every Moslem should want peace. Indeed those familiar with the work of Fethullah Gulen, can not help but share his view that no Moslem can be a terrorist and no terrorist can be a Moslem. But

is faith and committed dialogue sufficient to end religious hatred or put an end to terrorism? Is that a realistic choice?

The short answer provided by this paper is yes. Armed peace is no peace. As I write this paper, I am aware that small arms will be involved in murdering another human being at the rate of about 1 every single minute. Traditional conflict research studies show us that even the most intractable conflicts are ended by processes of dialogue not by military might. Of course the military have developed awesome technologies for tracking and executing those who challenge states through manufacturing horrific atrocities. But such processes have the unhappy ability to breed more people willing to continue such hatred than those they destroy. The continuing war in Iraq is a case in point. The human cost of such methods is not even counted by the US military who only quantify their own casualties not those of local people – only the NGO's are counting Moslem fatalities and these now number over an estimated 650,000.<sup>2</sup>

More sophisticated conflict researchers say that terrorism can only be eradicated if the causes of terrorism can be eradicated. There is a need to rebuild civic society and populate it with hope rather than hatred, but how? The teaching of Fethullah Gulen on such matters has been both simple but heartfelt – by committed education of youth, by committed realisation of truth in the material world. Teachers from the Gulen movement are already helping to create a new generation of quality teachers and educators who will make a difference but it goes beyond that: part of a committed dialogue evidenced by many examples.

The sad truth is that most political killings are effected through small arms and light weapons and most small arms are traded by the big five nations on the UN Security Council. There is little transparency or truth in such transactions which are rank with hypocrisy. Each transaction is financed through banking systems which take no account of the consequences.

Yet in contrast, Islamic banks are run according to an ethical code which does not invest in arms alcohol or environmental dam-

age for profit. Ethical conduct is seamless. But to-date the practical case for constraining the arms trade which fuels massive human rights violations, is being made more forcibly by NGO's such as IANSA and Amnesty International, than by any government.<sup>3</sup>

In the turbulent times to come, there is no military solution to terrorism and political violence: only committed negotiation which can transform enmities into dialogue. At the heart of this process is education so that future generations are not poisoned by the conflicts of the past. This presentation maps a selection of Fethullah Gulen's pronouncements on conflict, violence, dialogue, wisdom and respect, on to broader theories of conflict resolution and finds them largely congruent. And yet an earlier version of this paper was rightfully critiqued by peer reviewers who suggested that it was interesting but the various sections did not quite cohere. I think that really is the core of the paper – we have a Gulen movement aware of its need to change to meet global challenges and part of that is a dialogue with critical friends. And yet there are still significant gaps in the ways we organise knowledge for such alternative perspectives to be fully assimilated. Probably the core question stimulated by that critique is whether or not the Gulen movement is yet fit for purpose? No one who has met the practitioners, teachers, followers supporting businessmen and scholars, can for a moment, doubt their sincerity.

So providing alternative perspectives o the movement is not a process of attacking its integrity or validity. It is more about trying to both understand and assess whether as yet the movement is adequately equipped with the tools to meet the Global Challenges of the title.

Committed dialogue and education to facilitate it may enable us to build new civic societies more concerned with peace, justice and sustainability than greed. The paper looks for ways to extend that peace bridging process between Asia, Europe and beyond – as if people mattered. It ends with some practical suggestions on a

way forward to building a more comprehensive toolkit to meet some of those global challenges which lie ahead.

## 2. PROJECTING PEACE

Churchill famously said “Jaw-Jaw is better than War-War”, at a Whitehouse Luncheon on June 26 1954, but it was a perception based not on praxis but the legacy of the bloodiest war in human history. Modern wars are not just costly in human lives, they are ruinously expensive with the economic, political and social fallout creating a fertile breeding ground for more of the same in the future. According to the Federation of American Scientists, using figures from the Congressional Research Service, the war in Iraq from 2001 to present, cost an estimated \$653 billion, which is equivalent to spending about \$8.7 million every week, since the Prophet Mohammed was born, in 570 A.D.<sup>4</sup> Major Powers have certainly become efficient in their ability to Project War. My colleague Professor David Webb of Leeds Met’s School of Applied Global Ethics, posed the challenge: how can we better project peace? By that he meant not just in theory but practically, pragmatically, and in a measurably effective way. In that sense such words need to be more than just rhetoric, they must also bring the warring factions to think in a new way and to paraphrase of the view of the Norwegian peace researcher Professor Johan Galtung, want for their enemy what they want for themselves.

Gulen has also spoken and written extensively about the need demonstrate love and tolerance, if we are to progress towards a global civilisation (Gulen 2006). His humanistic discourse is based on a highly moral dialogue of civilisations. (Gulen, 2007)

But how effectively can this be translated into actions which make a difference? Do Gulen’s deliberations have a truly practical focus or is it mere preaching? And if his pronouncements are more that just admonishments to do better and be a better Moslem, given our Zeitgeist, could the Gulen movement reframe them with

insights from conflict theory and resolution practices, to make it more effective in creating peaceful change through dialogue?

### 3. CONFIDENCE BUILDING

We are told that the Prophet Mohammad was raised illiterate; all his life he could neither read nor write. And yet today, between 1.3-1.5 million people focus on the power of his words. Even before he was recognised as 'The Prophet' the record shows that people had a high regard for his remarkable integrity, his words were seen as always true, so much so he became known by the name of the Trustworthy.

Here is a core value behind every negotiation: is the other trustworthy, are their words and behaviour consistent? If the answer is yes, then progress is facilitated, since both parties are assured that words and behaviour will become one. Such confidence building measures are essential for all peace building and conflict resolution matters. The work of Gulen in this regard is important much because he sees Islam as a work in progress, not set in stone. Its core values for peace have the potential to be translated into a positive dialogue which can enable the creation of a shared purpose in conflict resolution.

In the selected readings and quotes from Fethullah Gulen which follow, the focus is on these aspirations as objectives, with some analysis of how these aspirations are translated into strategies and tactics for implementation. Where gaps are found, the paper seeks to discover whether the classical teachings form peace and conflict resolution theory can add practical insight into processes which can make those aspirations real, and which negative processes are to be avoided if the goal itself is to be implemented. Here the emphasis is not about a comprehensive deconstruction of the work on dialogue of Gulen, nor that of conflict theory and praxis. The paper is more about whether or not the overlapping insights can yield useful means for identifying how the aspirational words of Gulen might find resonance in much of conflict theory. The

purpose of such an assimilation exercise is to essentially enable the dialogue which Gulen has initiated, to follow and grow further alternative perspectives and insights, which is the overarching theme and goal of this conference.

In the sections below, the paper takes specific spiritual teachings of Gulen on dialogue, tolerance, love and education and attempts to discover how similar understandings of the issue in contemporary conflict theory have attempted to operationalize them via. practical solutions and systems thinking, which focus on the best processes for making these shared ideals real.

The important focus here is to discover what other insights can inform us when best efforts at dialogue fail, do not go to plan, unravel and potentially die. Much of these insights are associated with the wisdom of recognising when a conflict situation is ripe for resolution and when they are not.

Such timeliness is important but it is not always obvious and sometimes simple persistence is the key. As Senator George Mitchell, (patron of our new peace and conflict resolution centre in Leeds and broker of the Northern Irish Peace agreement) has said, "There were several hundred days of failure but only one Good Friday." Continuing dialogue is the only common ground that prevents any such progress dwindling to nothing. Yet it is so much more difficult when attempting to bridge both cultural and religious differences and sometimes mutual incomprehension.

#### 4. A GULEN PERSPECTIVE ON PEACE & CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

Can Fethullah Gulen's perspectives on such complicated issues be framed as an approach or easily summed up? Certainly not by this author...and yet through his writings, teachings and interpreters some powerful common moral, philosophical and humanistic strands emerge. The starting point is the ened for understanding. Authors such as Carroll (2007) highlight the need for understanding espoused by Gulen, in terms of interfaith dialogue which is viewed as an

imperative duty rather than an academic responsibility. Such dialogue might seem obvious especially in ‘a time of terror’ when there are inherent dangers of polarizing peoples’ perceptions of threat along religious or ethnic lines.

But is it just another humanistic discourse based around the themes of human value and moral dignity; freedom, education, responsibility and a plea for an ideal humanity? Carroll answers yes, in part, but concludes that Gulen’s emphasis on the inherent value of each and every individual as being higher than the angels, but this value is ascribed to God and not merely a rational matter. As such, Gulen begins to define an approach to human rights which is based on tolerance, love understanding and dialogue rather than expediency, hypocrisy or self serving.

And yet the practical applications of such humanism are bound by political and social contexts – especially in Turkey where authoritarian structures can fetter development of genuine dialogue in favour of state sponsored ideologies. Gulen roots his approach in the need for freedom, he says:

*“We need to be more free thinking and free willed. We need those avst hearts who can embrace impartial free thinking, who are open to knowledge, sciences and scientific research, and who can perceive the accord between the Qr’an and the Sunnatullah in the vast spectrum from the universe to life.”<sup>5</sup>*

But what Carroll identifies in her thought provoking book is that Gulen reads this ideal in terms of responsibility and he reads this responsibility in terms of an enlightened activism – his “consciousness of responsibility.”

*“Action is the most important and necessary component of our lives. By undertaking particular responsibilities through continuous acting and thinking, by facing and bearing particular difficulties, almost in a sense, by sentencing ourselves to do all these, even though it may be at the expense of many things, we always have to act, to strive if we do not act as we are, we are dragged into the waves caused by the thrust and action of others, and then we are forced to act on behalf of others. Remaining*

*aloof from action, not interfering in the things happening around us, not being a part of the events around us and staying indifferent to them is like letting ourselves melt away, like ice turning to water”.*<sup>6</sup>

Therefore this commitment to action is seen as an ethical and moral commitment rather than an expedient or utilitarian option. Nevertheless, we are left with the challenge of efficacy. What processes are adopted to judge the effectiveness of a particular choice of actions, what audit or reflective process is established to assess the extent to which specific approaches yield different outcomes, or is it all left to prayer?

In speaking to such issues in the specific context of the information age and the clash of civilisations, Fethullah Gulen himself is circumspect and aware of both temporal and spiritual dimensions in willing peaceful future change:

*“We live in a world where causality and certain other laws are operative, if we act without taking such laws into consideration we are in danger of falling into determinism. However, Muslims, by using their will, are able to consider the causes carefully enough so that someone looking from the outside world would think that they are acting only according to laws of causality. On the other hand, regarding results obtained from actions, Muslims should be so completely submitted to and trusting in God’s will that someone looking from the outside would think that they have completely rejected causes.”*<sup>7</sup>

This would appear to be in direct conflict with contemporary conflict theory but it is not. Gulen has said himself, that:

*“Acting in this way shows that on the one hand, causes are very important and everything humanity does should definitely be planned around them and put into effect accordingly. ... (However) “..they should also know that they have not personally achieved any success themselves , rather all success is directly from God.”*<sup>8</sup>

So for Gulen, it is important to be aware of causal sequences without egotistically glorifying in any intended outcomes. How are we to seek such wisdom? His response suggests pursuing organised

knowledge or science and regrets Islam's relative neglect of this important area in the past:

*“To a large extent, we have been particularly neglectful of the scientific obtained during the fourth and fifth century A.H. (after the Hegira) that is based on the Qur’an and we have turned our backs on the very important dynamics that could keep us on our feet. Personally I have always been saddened that the madrasses got rid of Sufism, of what can be called Islam’s spiritual life. Later their decrease in interest in the experimental sciences and the eventual expulsion of the same contributed to our falling far behind the newly scientifically developing countries. So the neglect we showed in the past should be made up for, and our tomorrows will be built on knowledge, and everything will take its strength and power from knowledge.”*<sup>9</sup>

Gulen goes on to call for knowledge expansion and calls for a new approach to the life sciences. *“There is a need for a new way of thinking today, a new approach to the sciences, a new life philosophy and new educational institutions. New generations should be mobilized at every period of their lives, from kindergarten to high school and from there onto university. Since everything will obtain power from knowledge in the future, it will only be possible to build knowledge for the future with this kind of effort.”*<sup>10</sup>

Could part of that organised knowledge come from conflict resolution and peace building theory and praxis which provide a set of applied actions which can and do yield consistent changes which actually deliver concrete results?

Gulen's answer to human conflict in all his writings: is love, mutual understanding, tolerance, dialogue and education. Again and again, Fethulla Gulen draws these themes to the fore. For him they are fundamental and he says *“other things are accidental.”*<sup>11</sup>

Of particular significance to this author is Gulen's adherence to a philosophical position of non-violence when confronted with opposition, both tactical and moral: In 'Love & Tolerance,' He cautions:

*“We must be as if “without hands against those who strike us and without speech against those who curse us. If they try to fracture us into pieces even fifty time, we still will remain unbroken and embrace everyone with love and compassion. And with love toward one another, we will walk toward tomorrow.”<sup>12</sup>*

Many commentators on Gulen’s teachings also underline his emphasis on tolerance as a precursor for peaceful co-existence. For example in the Dialogue Society/Leedsmet conference series, Yilmaz stresses Gulen’s role in “social-cultural activism” because of his “exemplary role of establishing dialogue and building peace between Muslims and non-Muslims. For Yilmaz, here we have peace being built up at a micro level. Gulen like Rumi before him, both made intercultural dialogue “their main tool of social innovation and conflict resolution for social inclusion, coherence and peaceful co-existence.<sup>13</sup>

But Yilmaz also recognizes that such an approach does not receive universal recognition, with many opponents seeing Gulen’s rapprochement with the Catholic Church as traitorous. Handling such wilful misinterpretations of Gulen’s thought will be a future challenge for the movement both within and without Turkey.

Writers in the same volume, such as Richard Penaskovic, see Gulen as a bridge between Islam and the West<sup>14</sup>, whilst others such as Klas Grinell see him as transcending such divisions, for him Gulen goes beyond boundaries and is a “border transgressor<sup>15</sup>.” For others like Nazila Isgandarov, Gulen’s approach can facilitate a dissolving of the identity crisis many Muslims face in the West,<sup>16</sup> a process which according to Fatih Tedik and Araxas Pashayan,<sup>17</sup> will help motivate Muslims to integrate and assimilate into Western Societies.

For Karina Korostelina, Gulen takes this further by using dialogue as a source for peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians in a secular state. Here Gulen’s approach is about heuristic process. Even though there are differences between East and West, dialogue can create the capacity to find “relatedness in people who are vastly different from us.”<sup>18</sup> Such an approach is very near to that of the pioneer Peace Researcher Professor Johan Galtung, who says that

in peace negotiations we should want for our enemy what we want for ourselves. Marrying this ideal with praxis is extremely difficult.

Others such as Robert Hunt, have highlighted the need to more fully explore Gulen's contribution to the dialogue of religion and science, whilst recognizing key issues about relative legitimacy. Hunt recognises that *"neither Gulen nor his followers have truly engaged scientists who are philosophers of science. Scholars like Richard Dawkins, Steven Weinberg, Carl Sagan and others pose a serious challenge to any religious approach to understanding. The legacies of Said Nursi and Fethullah Gulen will help Muslims meet this challenge but are not themselves sufficient. Closely related to this must be an exploration of Gulen's teachings to post-modernity."*<sup>19</sup>

Hunt goes to the nub of the problem when he discusses the challenges of placing the Gulen movement in context, especially given the proven commitment of Gulen movement participants to engage the multi-religious dimension of globalization through interfaith dialogue. Hunt cogently argues the problem of competing meta-narratives and identifies the pitfall in the face of such meta-narrative claims, that all dialogue can cease because *"from within a meta-narrative there is no need to listen to the other."*<sup>20</sup>

The paradox for Hunt is that *"at the same time, globalization is rapidly making dialogue between holders of meta-narrative claims a near existential necessity. Western scholars have been working diligently on this problem for some decades. A distinctly Islamic contribution would be of great value in understanding how Muslims can fruitfully relate to globalization."*<sup>21</sup>

The truth 'that is' and the truth 'that should be' are two very different worlds. Gulen's favoured approach has involved reform through education. If as Victoria Levinska tells us, the acquisition of modern knowledge is mandated by Islam itself, then holistic education has been Gulen's way.<sup>22</sup> Is there any evidence of success? The short answer is yes, the evidence is both magnificent in its level of individual achievement by both pupils and teachers but also filled with promise for the potential it holds for transforming civil societ-

ies. But that potential it has to be said, will remain as potential without a very clear set of policy initiatives to use such education and its positive effects to yield the social changes which can lead societies in transition away from division and the janus-faced threats of terrorism and authoritarianism, to truly sustainable futures.

One of the most interesting papers presented at the London 2007 conference was that of Dr. Victoria Clement on her work on Gulen Schools in Turkmenistan.<sup>23</sup> Clement provides strong evidence of the success of the networking model of Gulen schools in the former client states of the old Soviet Union. "The underlying methodology of conveying *terbiya* (character building) has been for the teachers to embody spiritual ideals and impart them through model living (*temsil*). She quotes Gulen on this methodology:

*"Those who lead the way must set a good example for their followers. Just as they are imitated in their virtues and good morals, so do their bad and improper actions and attitudes leave indelible marks upon those who follow them."*<sup>24</sup>

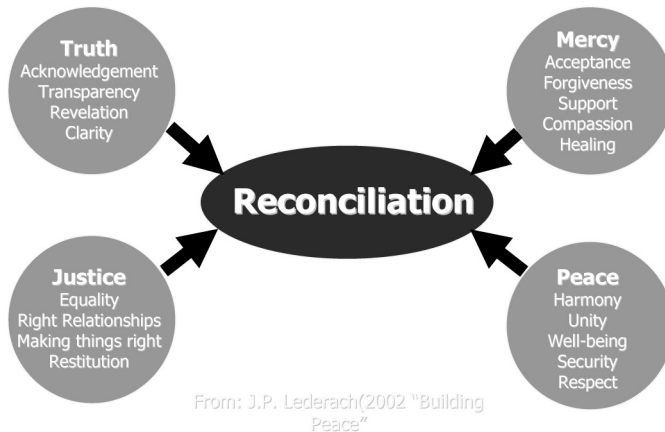
Clement highlights the powerful role of this teaching to transform and bootstrap civil society to a new and more intelligent level and how Gulen's philosophy successfully plays out in situ. Ozcan Keles has further clarified this heuristic process of implementing Gulen's work on Human Rights by doing, by lived example and making sure everyone is involved through discourse.<sup>25</sup> Gulen's educational programmes are showing that transformation is possible, civil society can be rebuilt on the basis of the highest moral values. If there why not here?

## 5. CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT THEORY & GULEN

Here is the challenge to both the Gulen and the wider peace movements. Can a truly Islamic approach to peace building based on tolerance, mutual understanding and dialogue, find resonance with largely Western contemporary conflict resolution theory and praxis? And is this a way to explore and practically implement some of the

visionary insights of Gulen, that science or organised knowledge become a light towards implementing peace based on a loving approach, as if people mattered.?

The purpose of this paper is to raise some of these connections and contemplate on the various crossovers of Gulen's thought, with contemporary conflict theory. Because the outcome is meant to be provisional rather than formal, illustrative rather than definitive, the peace resolution texts chosen by the author are his schools current teaching materials. There are of course a further host of publications, texts and analyses that have not been covered. The purpose here is simply to encourage the conference participants to engage in dialogue with some alternative peace perspectives. Hopefully we can identify sufficient common ground to open up new areas of communication and knowledge transfer to enable more like-minds to guide us in the uncertain times to come. But even a brief look at the literature which follows, shows just how much common ground there is, eg Lederach(2002) (See Figure 1.), below:



**Figure 1.**

Figure 1., shows a rationale for post conflict reconciliation, which would sit well with any lecture from Fethulla Gulen – and it might be impossible to say it might not have come from him. And

yet the movement, though it does play roles in mediation within and outside Turkey, is not yet involved in direct post conflict resolution. But for the sake of illustration, let us explore some of the processes advocated by some contemporary conflict resolution writers and see how well they fit the spirit and writings of Gulen on tolerance, forgiveness and dialogue.

## 6. CONFLICT RESOLUTION ROLES

E.g., Laue (1990) identifies five main conflict intervention roles, namely:-

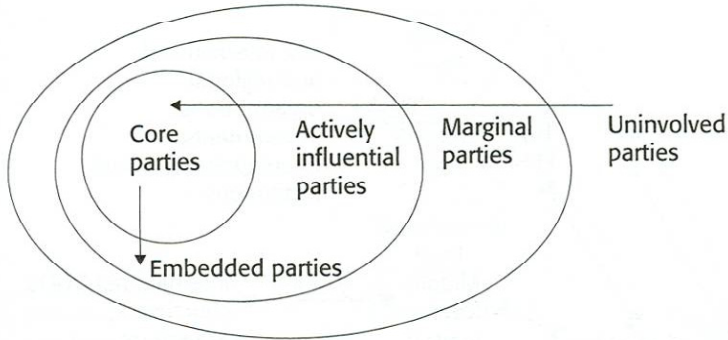
- **The activist:** who is in, and almost of, one of the parties in a dispute
- **The advocate:** who works on behalf of one of the parties but is likely to play a less ‘hard game’ than the activist (e.g. a diplomat working on behalf of one party);
- **The mediator:** whose ultimate advocacy is for the process rather than any of the parties;
- **The researcher:** who might see the intervention as objective or neutral but who alters the situation when they become involved (e.g. journalist or crisis observer);
- **The enforcer:** who have formal powers to sanction the parties (e.g. arbitrators, judges, police)

Are there any parallels in the Gulen movement? How do members of the movement currently involve themselves in the practicalities of peaceful co-existence when it isn’t quite there yet?

Peace researchers such as Encarnacion et. al. (1990), have modelled such third party intervention (See Figure 2.), stressing:

- a) How external parties may become core parties as they become increasingly involved and;
- b) The importance of ‘embedded parties’ from inside the conflict who can play key roles;
- c) A shift in seeing third party intervention as primary responsibility of external agencies to internal peacemakers – need

to build constituencies and capacity within societies to handle conflict situations over a period of time



Source: from Encarnacion et al., 1990: 45

**Figure 2.**

Peace researchers Ramsbotham et. al, (2006) stress that realizing such objectives requires the implementation of eight principles, namely:

- The Principle of Impartiality
- The Principle of Mutuality
- The Principle of Sustainability
- The Principle of Complementarity
- The Principle of Reflexivity
- The Principle of Consistency
- The Principle of Accountability
- The Principle of Universality

Reflect on just how consistent these principles are with what Gulen is teaching. Their principle of :

- (i) “**Impartiality** demands that the interests of all parties must be taken into account;
- (ii) **Mutuality** means intervention should be seen as being likely to do more good than harm for conflict parties. It also demands indigenous initiatives are empowered and

there is no damage to local economies and local cultures are respected;

- (iii) **Sustainability** requires interveners must be prepared to stay the course and commit required resources;
- (iv) **Complementarity** suggests that efforts of interveners should complement each other for the greater good of the parties in conflict. Interveners should not limit diversity but should prohibit damaging rivalries, unnecessary duplications and failures of communication;
- (v) **Reflexivity** says that Interveners need to examine their motives, aims and interests. What constituencies do they represent? What kinds of advocacy do they pursue and why? On what authority do they act? What resources of power and influence do they bring?;
- (vi) **Consistency** means that in similar circumstances equal provocation or challenge should result in equal responses. Outcomes should stand up to accusations of hypocrisy and double standards;
- (vii) **Accountability** should always govern relations between interveners. Conferral of legitimacy (by what authority) vs transparency and accountability (who judges the judges?). There will always be difficulties of 'impact assessment' but these are vitally needed for learning lessons and improving performance;
- (viii) **Universality** requires due attention to internationally endorsed values which should also be cross culturally endorsed." (Ramsbotham, 2006)

When intervening in a conflict, there are five essential approaches, namely: the conquest approach; the avoidance approach; the bargaining approach; the quick-fix approach and the role-play approach, including everyday causes of conflict at work, school, family or community. Weeks (1992) suggests there are eight steps in forming a partnership to conflict resolution, essentially:

- Create an Effective Atmosphere
- Clarify Perceptions
- Focus on Individual and Shared Needs
- Build Shared Positive Power
- Look to the Future, then Learn from the Past
- Generate Options
- Develop “Doables”
- Make Mutual Benefit Agreements

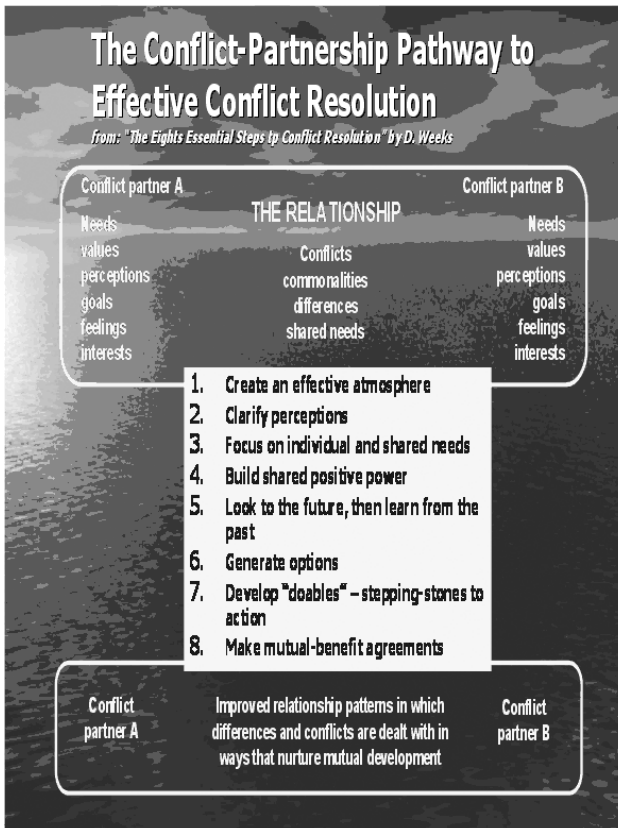


Figure 4.

These are very pragmatic, and replacing certain words with synonyms eg, effective atmosphere equates with tolerance, build

shared positive power equates with love: such steps could easily have come from a Gulen seminar,(See Figure 4).

For Weeks, there are certain guiding principles which again echo the love and tolerance teachings of Gulen eg Think “we,” rather than “I versus you” - working together helps solve conflicts; try to keep in mind the long term relationship; good conflict resolution will improve the relationship; good conflict resolution benefits both parties; conflict resolution and relationship building go hand in hand. It is worth exploring three of these steps in a little more detail: Weeks suggests:

#### 6.1 Step 1 Create an effective atmosphere

- “Personal preparation -- do all you can to ready yourself in positive ways to approach issues honestly and openly;
- Timing -- choose a time that is best for all parties involved - when no one is feeling pressed to move on or pressured in other ways;
- Location -- as important as when you meet - best to pick a place where all parties can feel comfortable and at ease;
- Opening statements -- try to start out on a good note - good openings are ones that let others know you are ready and willing to approach conflict with a team-like attitude that focuses on positive ends & they should also ensure the trust and confidentiality of the parties involved;

#### 6.2 Step 2 Clarify perceptions

- Clarify individual perceptions involved in the conflict – you can’t solve a problem if you don’t know what it is about
- Sort the parts of the conflict - ask what it is about
- Avoid ghost conflicts - get to the heart of the matter and avoid side issues
- Clarify what, if any, values are involved
- Recognize that the parties involved need each other to be most effective

### 6.3 Step 3 Focus On Individual & Shared Needs

- Expand on shared needs
- Realize that you need one another in order to successfully resolve conflicts
- Be concerned about meeting others needs as well as your own
- When you take the time to look, you will recognize that individuals often have common needs
- Power is made up of people's outlooks, ideas, convictions, and actions
- A positive view of power enables people to be most effective
- A negative outlook on power proves disempowering - instead of "power with" it encourages "power over."

### 6.4 Build positive power

- Positive power promotes building together and strengthening partnerships
- When parties in conflict have this outlook, they can encourage each other to use shared positive power
- This gives an ultimate advantage to all involved because each person's positive energy is being drawn upon for a worthwhile solution.

Even a brief glimpse at such principles suggests an essential congruence between conflict resolution theory and Gulen's teaching. But is it enough to end violence with words?

## 7. DYNAMICS OF RECONCILIATION

Weeks and other peace researchers have suggested practical ways of breaking out of a conflict driven mindset. One way they have done this is by generating new options:

- "Try free-flowing options:
  - make new suggestions

- write them down
- wait to discuss them till they're all out on the table
- group similar options together
- narrow down the list
- Ask first for the conflict partner's options -- listen and learn.
  - predict possible outcomes
  - look at all ideas, no matter how silly they may seem
  - Imagine
- Identify Key Options; these are ones that will:
  - meet one or more of the shared needs
  - meet individual needs and are compatible with other's needs
  - use mutual positive power
  - improve the relationship
  - be at least acceptable but preferably satisfying to all involved
- When looking at options, don't let past experiences cloud present perceptions and decisions" (Weeks, D. 1992)

For anyone that suggests this is impractical, then look at the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland. All sides new that there was no military solution – the military option was the most expensive both in terms of human lives and in terms of economic costs.

Dialogue is the ultimate end game. If we look at statements from senior British commanders say for example in Afghanistan, where the commander of UK troops, Brigadier Mark Carleton Smith said "talking to the Taliban was the only way forward." "We're not going to win this war," Brigadier Mark Carleton-Smith said yesterday. "It's about reducing it to a manageable level of insurgency that's not a strategic threat and can be managed by the Afghan army. We may well leave with there still being a low but steady ebb of rural insurgency."

Words alone? Well as the US has learnt to its bitter cost in both Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, the best way to negotiate peace with

foreign cultures is through dialogue rather than bombs and bullets which offer the worst of all worlds. In the aftermath of conflict, the teaching of peace researchers such as Ramsbotham et al (2006), suggest processes which again are compatible with Gulen.

- Reconciliation- restoring broken relationships and learning to live non-violently with radical differences
- Ultimate goal of conflict resolution
- Ending of direct violence makes conflict resolution possible, negotiation between overlapping interests opens the door to settlement and the overcoming of structural injustice, creates an enduring space within which further transformations can occur...

But what about the real snarls that help sustain bitter conflicts, or when there has been hideous atrocities or when there seems to be no hope for reconciliation? What should be done about such injustices? Weeks suggests:

- Clearly state when you think an injustice has been done
- Do it in a way that encourages positive behaviour and successful resolution
- You could:
- Ask what alternate behaviour could have been used.
- Ask them to put themselves in your shoes to understand how you were affected by their behaviour.
- Focus on the positive by reminding them of past examples when their fair behaviour resulted in good partnership resolution.

Sometimes the parties involved hate each other so much that some form of mediation is required.

For Weeks (1992):-

- “Mediation is a course of action that involves a neutral third party who mediates between both sides in a conflict with the goal of achieving a form of agreement and closure;

- Mediation or any other form of conflict resolution does not necessarily equate to a nice ending for all concerned;
- Often the meeting of all needs and wants is impractical or not viable for other reasons;
- Mediation DOES mean however that the process used to resolve a conflict matches the conflict itself and that a mutual conclusion is reached which both parties can adhere to;
- It is important to stress to the parties in conflict that one of the key rewards of the mediation is an end to the conflict itself;
- Other rewards may be forthcoming but cannot be guaranteed.”

Figure 5 from Ramsbotham(2006) illustrates this process of de-escalation:

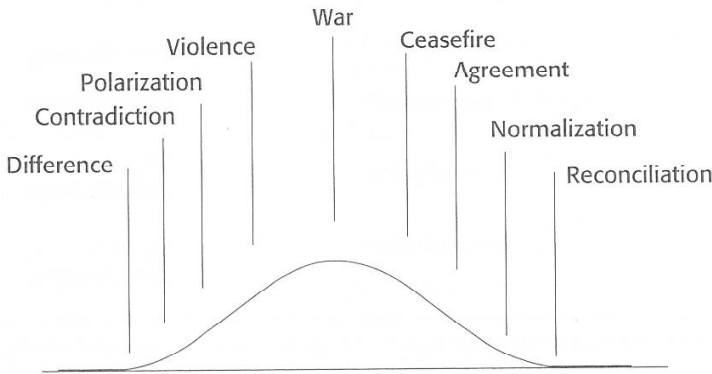


Figure 5.

Of course the Writers & Journalists Foundation, need no instruction in mediation. Quietly, behind the scenes, they have been involved in some difficult but successful conflict dialogues and mediations. So the purpose of this paper is perhaps a little more ambitious. It is asking is there more to understanding what can be done about human conflict and peace through dialogue than simply reading the words of Fethullah Gulen? Gulen himself has provided

an answer. Science and organised knowledge are important to realizing philosophy which is necessary but not sufficient.

So what is this alternative perception of the Gulen movement saying? In essence it is that what the Gulen movement is doing through dialogue towards peace is necessary but not sufficient. To be sure, this conference is evidence if evidence were needed of the movements willingness to reach out and listen to external voices. Dialogue has certainly been precipitated, even before the conference began. A key issue is about the adequacy of the response. Can it equip the movement with a better toolbox to protect and advance the meaning of a living Islam at a time, as the conference theme suggests, unprecedented global challenges?

We are meeting in Washington which is named after a terrorist on Britain's most wanted list, when America was just another unwilling colony of ours. Times change. Following their war of independence(1775-1783), a treaty was signed in Paris recognising American sovereignty over what were once British territories. Now we stand shoulder to shoulder against what are seen as largely Muslim terrorists. Times change. As the conference meets we will now know the identity of the new American President. Unless we are to endure the clash of civilisations so simplistically predicted by Huntington, there will have to be dialogue. All sides will have to learn from each other. In "The Statue of Our Souls" Gulen (2005) speaks very strongly in favour of the necessity of renewal:

"The Islamic community needs a resurrection; it needs a serious reform of its mental, spiritual and intellectual faculties. To use a more positive expression, it needs to be revived, combining serious efforts to preserve the original principles of the religion with extensiveness and universality as far as permitted by the divine decrees, so that it meets the needs of people from all walks of life, in all places and times, and so that it embraces the whole of life"

So how is this resurrection advocated by Gulen to be achieved? Is it inconceivable that through dialogue this terrorist war will end in reconciliation too? The short answer has to be yes – no matter how

impossible or implausible that sounds now. However, the polarization which precedes such dialogue is a real risk to the Gulen movement because of the stereotyping it engenders. Ushering in a new world order is always fraught with difficulties. As I was writing this paper, a friend on the marvellous Metaphorum website reminded me of this with a quote from Machiavelli which was a favourite apparently of the genius, Professor Stafford Beer, to which that group is dedicated:

“It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favour; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it. Thus it arises that on every opportunity for attacking the reformer, his opponents do so with the zeal of partisans, the others only defend him half-heartedly, so that between them he runs great danger.”

So returning to the plea of my external reviewer for coherence: what I offer as a beginning here is the idea that we have in the peace and conflict research communities, organised knowledge on conflict resolution. If we are to prevail over this period, a cross fertilization of these different way of knowing and being is vital for creating a sustainable peace. And yet, in these turbulent times, especially given the current machinations in Washington, this place of power, we will need to be mindful and eternally vigilant.

In inviting alternative perspectives on the Gulen Movement, the organisers of this conference have shown themselves to be aware of the need to use critical friends to help precipitate the resurrection of Islamic ethics of which Gulen has spoken. So far, to a large extent academic peace research has not really engaged in dialogue with the spiritual movements for peace represented by the

Gulen movement. That has to change. Thus there is a clear and coherent objective: not a clash of civilisations but a rapprochement and a dialogue between networks both spiritual and temporal, who wish to make a difference.

If this is a fair dialogue, it is up to those both within and without the Gulen movement to respond with good will. The School of Applied Global Ethics at Leeds Met is more than willing to enter into this dialogue. However, it is now more important than ever to widen the contact of the Gulen Movement with the wider peace and reconciliation movements in Europe. Towards that end, and in full discussion with our European colleagues, it is our hope to be able to invite the movement to come to Leeds to engage in a special conference of the European Peace Research Association (EuPRA) in 2010.

## NOTES

- 1 The author would like to thank and acknowledge the help of his colleague professor dave webb in compiling the conflict resolution aspects of this paper from our taught courses.
- 2 [http://web.mit.edu/CIS/pdf/Human\\_Cost\\_of\\_War.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/CIS/pdf/Human_Cost_of_War.pdf)
- 3 <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT30/011/2008/en>
- 4 <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natscc/RL33110.pdf>
- 5 Gulen, 2005
- 6 Gulen, (2005) 59
- 7 Gulen (2006) 255
- 8 Ibid
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid 256
- 11 See e.g. Gulen (2006), 71-73
- 12 Ibid 54-7
- 13 (Gulen conferences 2007, p.25).
- 14 Ibid, p193-200
- 15 Ibid,pp203-213
- 16 Ibid, pp215-227
- 17 Ibid, pp.229-246
- 18 Ibid,p.271
- 19 Hunt & Aslandogan, 2007, 6.
- 20 Ibid.

- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Gulen conferences 2007(b), p. 333
- 23 Gulen conferences 2007(a) pp. 572-584
- 24 Ibid p.581
- 25 Gulen conferences 2007(b) pp. 447-470
- 26 For a refreshing insight into this process see Campbell B.(2008) ,Agreement, The State, Conflict and Change in Northern Ireland, Lawrence and Wishart, London.
- 27 Observer October 6, 2008
- 28 Guardian, October 7, 2008

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