

The obvious link between and vicious circle from conflict to lack of development and vice versa need not be belabored. Lack of development can and does lead to grievance that can result in violent conflict. Likewise, no one will dispute that violent conflict in Sri Lanka, southern Sudan, Angola, or Colombia inhibits economic and human development. Numerous studies attest to the point.

For today's purposes let me conveniently separate conflict into three stages or phases. Regarding the pre-conflict phase, one asks what are the generators of conflict (e.g., lack of development, the presence of natural-resource based rent economies), and economists have a good deal to say about that. Regarding the conflict phase, from onset to settlement, economists also have much useful to contribute, especially when examining the conditions of bargaining over negotiated settlement. And regarding the post-conflict phase, issues of reparations, reconstruction, resettlement of refugees, reintegration of soldiers, reorientation of the economy from war to peace, and revival of the economy at large demand economists' skills as well.

What interests me for today's Roundtable however is this question: what are the determinants that would motivate people in non-conflict societies to come to the aid of their neighbors in conflict? I identify six determinants:

1. *Information*. There must be information that something is amiss, and there are two aspects to this. First, ignorance and, second, apathy. Without information (ignorance) about a neighbor in conflict, non-conflict neighbors will not do anything at all and any humanitarian instinct that might exist will simply not be activated. With information, nonetheless nothing might be done (apathy or, more charitably, incapacity).
2. *Noise*. Noise that spills over to, and is costly for, non-conflict neighbors is a form of information. For example, refugees streaming from one country to another impose costs on the recipient country. The more noise, the more one might expect neighbors be willing to help.
3. *Distance*. One would expect, *a priori*, that the less distance, the more informed and caring neighbors are and, conversely, the more distance, the less informed or caring they are.
4. *Relations*. Distance is mediated when relations exist over long distances. For example, former colonial ties or existing immigrant groups whose national origin lies in conflict countries will make the former colonial power or immigrant-host country more tuned to aid the conflict country.
5. *Other neighbors*. If one neighbor yells in my right ear, and another in my left ear, I might be expected to be distracted from either one of them. The more noise multiplies from diverse sources, the less I may be inclined or able to come to their assistance.

6. *Yourself*. Finally, what would motivate me to come to my neighbor's aid also depends on the noise level in my own home. The more in number or intensity are my domestic problems, the less I will be willing and able to come to my neighbor's rescue.

If the above is a general theory or diagnosis, what might be the treatment? Let me briefly examine the six determinants for the specific case of the United States of America to learn if there are any obvious levers for intervention in the many conflicts around the globe.

1. Regarding ignorance, it is certain that economists could do a bit more to relieve it than they do, both in the classroom as well as in the general public discourse, but there is little that economists might be expected to do to relieve widespread popular apathy. Still, for the US at least, I am not particularly hopeful that economists will be able to do much to galvanize public demand for well-meaning and well-considered US government intervention in overseas conflict. To the contrary, it is ignorance and apathy that permits various US governments to get away with policies that are often not well-meaning or well-considered.
2. Regarding noise, oceanic distance sees to it that the US does not receive nearly as large a share of refugee streams as other countries do (Rwanda to Congo or Balkans to Germany, say). Not surprisingly, US media pay vastly more attention to boat-people arriving in Miami from Haiti but not to humanitarian catastrophes taking place elsewhere. On this score, too, I would not expect the US people or its government to take much action regarding conflicts elsewhere.
3. Regarding distance, I just explained that noise recedes over long distances. Unless noise can be transported in other ways, say via disruption in raw materials and energy markets, or interference with shipping lanes, or acts of terrorism committed in the US on account of foreign grievances, the US will remain fairly stuck between a set of effective earmuffs.
4. Regarding relations, the US is of course no colonial power. There is good reason why there are French troops in the Ivory Coast and why the Portuguese fret about Angola and the Brits about its former colonies and why the Dutch retain an intense interest in Indonesia. Moreover, the US nowadays applies a rather more selective immigration policy. Nonetheless, those who are already here, the Irish, the Tamils, those of Jewish background, and others, have shown intense involvement with conflict in the countries of origin. In the Irish and Middle Eastern case they have managed to receive representation of their interests through the US government, a representation not leading to sprite resolution of the underlying conflicts there. I would predict that the US government might become a more honest, welcome, and credible broker of peace in the Middle East if the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim communities in the US were to become politically more active here.
5. Regarding *other* neighbors. The far neighbors, it turns out, are too far (distance)

and the US near neighbors, Mexico and Canada, it turns have no particularly drastic problems that would divert US attention. As a result, the US populace is in fact a bit hard of hearing, a problem that then carries over to its elected representatives in government. One would expect a fair amount of narcissism in US political life and that, I think, is what in fact we observe.

6. Regarding the US own problems. Geographic isolation and narcissism combines with some very real US domestic problems that jointly drown out concern for people elsewhere.

This sort of analysis suggests why the US, i.e., its citizens and their government, do so relatively little, why there is relative lack of motivation, relative lack of incentive to intervene in conflicts elsewhere. The Somalia intervention was spurred when the crisis there made it, in aberration, to the US television screens. Tellingly, the US withdrew as soon as the TV pictures got unpleasant (US soldiers dragged through the streets). Similarly, the US intervened in the Balkans only once the crisis there threatened to involved NATO partners Greece and Turkey. Likewise, as explosive as the Kashmir situation is, the US does not possess direct vested interests there – as it does in the equally explosive case of North and South Korea where the US therefore takes a much more active role.

So, the way forward for the US then is perhaps to think again about development rather than conflict. This, essentially, is also the conclusion of Joseph Stiglitz and Paul Collier in their respective contributions to the *ECAAR Review 2003* (of which I am chief editor). But neither of them specifies *what* sort of development and *how* to go about it. Indeed, Neil Cooper – also in the *Review* – argues forcefully that the very sort of development that the West prefers and fosters – based on free markets, open borders, uninhibited capital flows – is the very development that gives rise to much of the resource-based conflicts we see, certainly in Africa. As producers and consumers we partake in and help finance these conflicts through demand for oil, diamonds, coltan, timber, cocaine, and other products.

In conclusion, one of the things that I learn from the Conflict and Development debate, is to take a renewed look at development objectives, policy, and strategy as precursors and possible precipitators of conflict. To cite but one example, agricultural subsidies in the US and EU amount to roughly \$350 billion a year. In contrast, aid flows amount of about \$50 billion. Deliberately and sanctimoniously undermining the (scant) livelihood of the poor can be expected to lead to legitimate grievance and conflict.

Thank you.