

# Chapter 14

## Transformative Leadership for Peace Negotiation

Mauro Galluccio

...The most important topic on earth: world peace (...) I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children—not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women—not merely peace in our time but peace for all time (...) Let us focus instead on a more practical, more attainable peace—based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions—on a series of concrete actions and effective agreements, which are in the interest of all concerned. There is no single, simple key to this peace, no grand or magic formula to be adopted by one or two powers. Genuine peace must be the product of many nations, the sum of many acts. It must be dynamic, not static, changing to meet the challenge of each new generation (...) For peace is a process—a way of solving problems.

President John F. Kennedy, Washington, D.C., 10 June 1963

### Introduction

This chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of international relations and specifically to interpersonal negotiations, as the main mechanism for managing and transforming conflicts. The literature on psychology applied to international negotiation has been progressing at a theoretical level, but we know much less about how to really master interacting cognitive and emotional processes to shape judgments and decisions in providing “operational connections” between different disciplines. The psychological cognitive-motivational approach applied in our theoretical framework (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008), together with contributors’ work in this book, could help in widening, and improving, through specific tailored training programs, the understanding of negotiating beliefs and relational behavioral abilities of negotiators to face conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity, and in helping to reduce the risks of negotiation failure in related contextual situations.

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Everybody agrees that peace processes cannot be nurtured by force. They can be better achieved by a process of mutual understanding. It was Gian Battista Vico who said, "For when man understands, he extends his mind to comprehend things; but when he does not understand, he makes them out of himself, and by transforming himself, becomes them" (Vico 1744, 1999, p. 160). Unfortunately, the world today is more complex and difficult to understand. We, therefore, need complex cognitive tools to face these realities. The challenges to peace that lie ahead of us have been, in some cases, unresolved from many decades. The world is geopolitically fragmented and the "division" of the great powers' areas of influence is an "ordered memory" of the past. It is difficult to think globally while facing challenges at a micro level capable of influencing the macro level, including regional disorders that do not display clear "situated" enemies and targets. This "confused" situation is reinforced by a modern paradox: an exponential and uncontrollable growth of bulimic political communication tools that have been developing at the expense and detriment of an anorexic human communication modality and in general of a correct information flux around the world. As a result, politicians often seem to be caught by surprise by the way that events unfold, as well as their speed. Unfortunately, maybe because of the general complex and ambiguous international framework in which events unfold, international actors seem to display a lack, or rigidity of leadership (Keller 2009; Reicher et al. 2007). We are witnessing difficulties to master and shape international events through this "mysterious" political construct called *global governance*, where main international actors seem to have worries about negotiating the "common translation and interpretation" of it (Eco 2003). This brings discordant and asymmetric beliefs and behaviors on how to structure international institutions, to set up mechanisms to handle the complexity of political relations, to give stability to working relationships, and to facilitate negotiating processes in order to "regulate" common international interests among states and other international actors.

Even most enduring alliances in the field of international relations are under strain because of events and policies (sometimes absence or lack of cooperation) and tools deployed to face them. A part of this discrepancy between the reality and governance could also be due to a reduced meta-cognition (Wells 2000) and to a specific lack of meta-cognitive and meta-representative mental functions of governors, advisers, diplomats, and policy makers (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). These mental functions are useful in humans to improve the mastery of an appropriate and timely ability to control events and face reality as it is (Falcone et al. 2003; Dimaggio et al. 2007). It is useful to clarify that meta-representative functions deficit is neither related to a deficiency of intelligence nor to poor public communication skills. Training and improved awareness about (also but not only) this deficit could start from the top (people who should lead and their advisers) through innovation and educational political strategies that can bring an improvement of cognitive and emotional resources of diplomats, governors, and negotiators in a way to spread this knowledge to populations as well. Thinking is understood to be an embodied process: We know things not just through our heads, but also through our actions and our bodily felt experience. Thinking, feeling, and acting are embodied, and all essays to understand behaviors without taking into account the cognitive and emotional processes could be deemed to fail in the

international arena, as well in all other contexts. This should be considered as a main political priority to be pursued in this century in the field of international relations if we want to improve the cognitive well-being of populations around the globe. As President Kennedy (1963) stated in his famous speech mentioned above, no nation is able to impose peace, no matter how strong it is. Peace must instead be the product of many nations (without, however, sidelining direct concerned actors). Could we enter a new era of conscious compassionate multilateralism? Maybe it is too early to speak of sustainable multilateralism until the main international actors reach a cognitive and political awareness, and can “digest” this multi-polar world in which we all live. A world as it is now, and not as it should be, or could have been.

On the international scene, for instance, I consider the new American President Barack Obama is demonstrating a talented, compassionate, and transformative leadership. His new, seemingly unstructured, doctrine (which, however, is well structured instead) seems to be based on a “win-win” political negotiating approach in applying problem solving modalities through global negotiations. It is certainly a strong merit of President Obama to have been talking in a transformative and inspiring way to the world since his mandate began (even before) (Obama, 2008, 2009a, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e, 2009f, 2009g, 2009h, 2009i, 2009j, 2009m, 2009n, 2009o). His cooperative and open minded attitude in “pushing” international actors to face and tackle the difficult common challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century could explain in part why he has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. The ripeness of his negotiating beliefs, attitude, and behavior is timely, appropriate, and characterized by a natural touch of awareness. He has called for a time of shared responsibility, a world where all the international actors are called upon to do their part in the interest of all humanity. In a time where there is a void of international leadership, President Obama’s inner relational capacity and ability to understand, and I would say remember “the other” viewpoint, shows his mental ability to master the important meta-cognitive function of *decentering*. This is the ability to assess interactive sequences, to assume (and remember) someone else’s point of view in the relational context (Aquilari and Galluccio 2008, 2009; Falcone et al. 2003; Dimaggio et al. 2007). Understanding others’ values and opinions gives him a cognitive and emotional advantage (I think his great experience with communities in his country has allowed him to develop his mental capital and now it is helping him a lot as president of the USA). He has been giving a sense of hope and psychological strength to people around the globe since the beginning of his presidential mandate. Moreover, President Obama is “preaching” cooperation among nations, men, and women, as a way forward nowadays to build peace processes. The important message President Obama has been trying to pass on, and that is the core of his political doctrine, is that everybody from the bottom to the top of the pyramid of power should be engaged in interpersonal negotiations to achieve a common ground from which to negotiate and mediate, with respect, mutual interests. President Obama has based his international strategic leadership on moving, for example, towards a world free of nuclear weapons, and delivered the message to the world through his famous speech given in Prague on 5 April 2009 (Obama 2009d) that could be seen as a natural complement of the speech given on 24 July 2008 in Berlin

(Obama, 2008) during his electoral campaign. Making poverty history is another of his firm intentions, together with other political issues Obama (2009h, 2009i). But the United States cannot solve problems alone on the global stage (Nye 2004; Moisi 2009). The reality is that they badly need “friends,” and friends badly need the United States (Kagan 2003). The world is interdependent, and we need to be able to manage the interdependence through peace negotiations, with political and psychological strategies, in strengthening international cooperation in order to solve common international problems. Alliances’ capacity building is more important in this historical period than ever before, and international negotiations should also help to build up sustainable working relationships. The way political leaders, negotiators, and mediators will manage these relationships is of great importance in order to foster international integrated cooperation and common coordinated problem-solving behaviors. Otherwise, peace will continue to lose precisely its most important operational modality: that of solving problems. In the world there are still too many people suffering or dying for causes that are easily treatable or through violent conflicts. Ending conflicts is just one of the moral imperatives to be achieved through international global negotiations. But until we all help to resolve problems around the globe, we will continue to be selectively and morally disengaged from the real world in which we all live (Bandura 2002, 2004).

## **International Organizations as Medium to bring Nations and People closer together**

In this particular historical period an illusion is coming to an end: that of controlling a world that by nature cannot be controlled anymore because it is a deeply uncertain and ambiguous world. A major challenge the great powers have before them is still that of negotiating and mediating the end of wars and violent conflicts in general, or even better, their prevention, and starting inclusive peace processes together with other international actors. This also means managing power with cognitive and emotional competence unfolding cooperative synergetic leadership in building alliances and restructuring common international institutions improving their problem-solving attitudes and behaviors. Indeed, until the moment we unfold strategies to help to resolve real problems we will not be able to start mindful and “healing” peace processes among people and nations as well. This institutionalization could stabilize expectations in many ways (Nye 2003) and foster international socialization (the European Union, through the performed functions of its institutions, is a “unique” and most advanced example of it) (Cooper 2004). The process could help to face the anxiety provoked by the uncertainty that characterizes world politics, providing better shared information and more structured communication, increasing mutual trust and general credibility, insofar improving international cooperation (Keohane 2005). Moreover, this institutionalization could help to improve the quality of political relations and stability through working relationships by providing international contexts where peace negotiations will be a part of the culture of such kinds of forums.

President Obama is aware that the United States of America (USA) can anymore to longer wage any kind of wars and nurture leadership alone in an isolated context:

If the USA were to do it, its destiny would probably be that of a “lonely stressed superpower” as seems to have been the case since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The past is no longer here (analogies may endanger decision-making processes) and the future is not real (the *worst case scenario*, which was the basis of the “famous” doctrine of 1% coined by former President George W. Bush and his vice president, Dick Cheney, is not tenable anymore) (Sunstein 2007). It is far better to live in present times having a strategic vision of the future, to handle with care, where policy-makers would need to carefully differentiate between their mental states and perceived future scenarios, understanding the latter as representations of reality instead of as reality in itself – therefore potentially wrong and at best probabilistic. The world is growing multipolar, and negotiating alliances’ capacity building could represent powerful strategic processes to solve common and shared international problems. The USA needs other international actors on its side (and they need the USA), to better manage the interdependence of modern times. Among alliances, the strengthening of the partnership with the European Union (EU) seems to represent a part of a strategic choice. It is also equally strategically important that the bureaucracy and decision-making procedures of leading international organizations could leave room for maneuvers for an improved institutional problem-solving attitude. It could be “interesting” to understand how international organizations’ contexts may psychologically influence their officials and to propose plans and training to handle and heal dysfunctional situations.

International organizations are fundamental pillars of the international architecture, but it also seems that they could need to improve their cognitive and emotional resources potential, whom could then support their members to better consider the importance of inclusiveness in decision-making processes and the intimate link between mental health and well-being when developing policies and designing interventions on global scale (Beddington et al. 2008). Any sort of exclusion or discrimination in international negotiations of real actors playing on that contextual stage runs the risk of gathering “around the table” people who are not directly involved in those discussed issues, and who may be not “legitimately appointed” to decide upon real problems. Talking about AIDS and climate change with powerless representatives from concerned developing countries would be meaningless; or having Middle-East and Afghanistan peace talks and operating a division between bad and good guys (leaving bad guys outside the door) could invalidate the best intentions in order to pave the road for reality-based compromises. The sad and frustrating reality is that, sometimes, we have international bodies that are paralyzed by their members’ negotiating behaviors, decision-making processes, internal procedures, and cultural closure, and hence their actions could be socially impotent, with actors overwhelmed by events and unable to transfer the negotiated results to the field.

Leaders around the world (and especially the USA) seem to be concerned with the difficult task of negotiating, in national and transnational contexts, inclusive strategies in a way to cede “absolute power,” to attract other countries. Sharing powers on the world stage means also sharing consequential responsibilities, looking for mutual interests, and resolving common problems: Peace is a way of solving

problems, and it should be done by all the actors, and not just by quartets, six party meetings, and G2 gatherings. It also means a proliferation of actors and a new geography of powers, with a consequential proliferation of pacific tools to handle international conflicts, where global negotiation and mediation will be playing decisive roles. Situations of structural uncertainty, an absence of effective authority and decision rules, and stalemates in unilateral means of solving problems and resolving conflicts are all conditions that call for negotiating alliances among main actors on the international scene (Bercovitch and Jackson 2001). This increases the social interest in managing conflicts in sustainable ways with scientific issues likely to provide the knowledge that will lead to more constructive conflicts resolution tools (Deutsch 2002; Kelman and Fisher 2003) and a better mastery of human interactions. If conflicts can be caught early on and managed effectively, they could be better contained and transformed. Strategic integrated process approaches used to solve problems is deemed of great importance as “The balance between war and peace may be a matter not of the nature of the differences that divide us but of *the process we use to resolve these differences*” (Raiffa 2002, p. 9).

### **Small and Flexible Teams of Negotiators Within International Institutional Frameworks: The Case of the European Union**

Peace negotiation represents, as never before, major tool to try to build up an implemented international cooperation around the globe. However, in order not to “amplify” the asymmetry in the negotiation contexts (poor countries with unskilled negotiating actors vs richer countries with experienced negotiating actors), there is a need to increase the cognitive and emotional resources of all actors, empowering their skills through integrated tailored training available for all of them (Galluccio, 2005a, 2005d). If negotiators are trained with all the available techniques and methods for them “to play the counterpart,” this will just produce or multiply asymmetric negotiations with consequential loss of hope and “disturbance” of social peace. Instead, inclusive negotiation strategies could be encouraged so as to foster and nurture working relationship capacity building through:

1. The establishment of international minimum training standards for negotiations.
2. The improvement of communication and meta-communication tools.
3. The mastery of mass-media tools and ability to channel communication but avoiding political propaganda.
4. The awareness of the powerful relational *momentum* represented by breakdown points in negotiation processes.
5. The ability to create *momentum* within negotiation processes and to channel them to the press and media in general (Aquilari and Galluccio 2008).

In thinking globally we should take care to develop operational, flexible mental and technical cognitive tools to also handle specific and complex locally based situ-

ations. Nowadays, conflicts have changed their nature (Aquilari and Galluccio 2009; Kaldor 2006). Today, around the world, there is not a prevalence of conflicts between states anymore, but rather intra-state violent ethnic conflicts. As environments and general political frameworks have changed, or are changing, roles international actors might play have been changing as well. Transnational corporations may be involved in local conflicts, and states may be confronted with more or less structured terrorist groups. The metaphor of the story of *David and Goliath* has never been more topical than today.

International organizations and their institutions could help to facilitate this role playing change process by implementing the capability to throw out their influence and cognitive-strategic thinking to try to help better face, negotiate, and resolve some of the problems of this multipolar world, where different centers of power may not always have cooperative attitudes (Galluccio, 2008). It could be useful to set up flexible teams of negotiators, mediators, and advisors, who are cognitively oriented and able to move back and forth (within the received negotiated mandate) with a certain degree of “intellectual” autonomy from the bureaucracy and procedures of international structures. International organizations could create inside their premises small, flexible, and structured teams of negotiators and mediators. Moreover, they could create training centers, composed by cognitive psychologists and psychotherapists, as well as political scientists, sociologists, negotiators, and mediators, to provide and coordinate different kinds of integrated and tailored specialized training courses for “carefully” selected subjects. At the same time, such centers could also play an important role as “guardians” with technical and cognitive competence (belonging to the organization and institutions) in assessing the work and proposals of external trainers and experts who could have contacts with these organizations. For instance, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union spend each year considerable amounts of money to train their officials on negotiation theory and techniques and related intrapersonal and interpersonal skills enhancing courses. Why do not create, instead, special cells for interpersonal negotiation and mediation training? Why not set up a team of specialized negotiators and mediators having received a specific integrated training in order to join negotiating delegations on different issues? To negotiate a ceasefire, or sit on a panel for investigating hidden dumping suspicions are two different issues, but both should be handled with care and compassionate competence with the aim of trying to build up working relationships.

International organizations and their institutions could also liaise/cooperate with specific external teams of negotiators and mediators, but they could do it with a different “cognition of cause.” Synergies will be mastered and assessed by public international institutional powers, which could also help more easily to avoid or limit general or sectorial “gaming the system” risks. Even in cases of violent conflicts, e.g., terrorist groups, such teams might be able to apply a sustainable communication back-channels strategy in a way to really influence the peace process in a politically proactive way by avoiding dangerous bureaucratic-political untimely standstills.

The European Union, for instance, sends European representatives with different regional competencies around the world to facilitate political dialogue and conflict

prevention or resolution. The kind of teams we have been describing could also be put at disposal to assist representatives with their tasks. The European Union Special Envoys and their advisers, if cognitively and emotionally empowered, could acquire added value as mediators of the organization and its institutions. The political and psychological process of transforming the conflict consists also of accompanying measures and techniques that can help to:

- Increase the cognitive and emotional resources of parties
- Challenge cognitive-behavior abilities and enhance cognitive-behavior modification
- Pave the way for reconciliation
- Monitor peace processes

These teams could be aiming to build trust through reciprocated knowledge among themselves and between the parties they are supposed to work with. They need patience and goodwill to manage endless negotiation processes and never-ending conflict mediations. They should have the modesty of being *super partes*, neutral, supranational, and to keep their size small, and be reliable cells within the European Union's larger institutional framework, and their credibility will be built and monitored by "the citizen." The European Union seems to be fit to perform this great task and lead by example because negotiating political strategies should comprehend:

1. Long term commitment without being guided by "political-business principles" (you know when you start the process, but you do not know when it will be ended).
2. Long term presence on the ground (we have the European Union delegations around the world, and this is a vital logistic element that is important for this strategy).
3. Moral and ethical authority based on a body of common high principles and values now also enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon.
4. A soft and mindful power, whose main tool is represented by *moral suasion*, able to mobilize third parties and build up working relationships and attract other international actors (nations, international organizations, NGOs, think tanks, universities, civil society as a whole, etc.). This way will enhance the ability to mobilize human network potential and institutional webs to help, through cooperative efforts, conflict resolution, and peace processes implementation.

## The European Union and US Negotiating Behaviors

The European Union has undoubtedly important negotiating and mediating skills and a great and invaluable internal experience in alliance capacity building, and it seems well "positioned" to lead on this international path in tandem with its member States. The "community method" oriented toward sustainable compromises within



the European Union has been greatly improved and implemented, and it has helped to construe internal coexistence and policy coherence. However, it seems as there is still something missing: an external global political recognition as “full” global player. This could be the right moment to rise and play a leading role on the international stage that President Obama seems to be offering to the United States’ special allies. It is time to act, because missing this political opportunity would be sad and frustrating, especially for the “European citizen.” The interdependence and interaction of two strategic partners, as the USA and the EU, through an improved cooperation process could bring fruitful results to the international community as a whole. Again, this is an historical period to face international challenges together instead of closing “external doors” and concentrating on domestic problems. Events unfold notwithstanding our willingness, but at the same time they prepare the field for seizing the opportunities globalization has brought for social structures as well. The USA can no longer guarantee international security and stability on its own because in order to address global threats it will need the legitimacy that Europe can provide (Kagan 2003). The EU could lead by example (that’s a rare art in politics) through open dialogue and shared common ground (its great internal experience). It could “export” the European Union Governance based on a sound institutional framework and political and economic solidarity between member states through peaceful negotiations and mediation processes. But talking about hard, soft, smart, and intelligent powers may well be wishful thinking if the EU member states lack the political will to go ahead. For the EU member States not to rethink and redefine the EU political role on the international scene would be politically myopic in that it would fail to prepare for the future and could condemn the organization to remain but a hybrid between an incomplete political union and a big economic free trade zone.

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, President Obama’s administration has achieved a real breakthrough in diplomacy and negotiating attitude and behavior. The president has been showing a rare political coherence on the international stage between his electoral campaign and ongoing presidency even if he is “pressured” by internal issues. He is offering to establish diplomatic working relationships with all international actors: with friends and especially with foes of the USA, towards whom, instead, President George W. Bush’s administration had taken rigid political stances and shown rigid and inflexible negotiating behavior. The great US negotiator Robert Gallucci (2002) said during an interview: “One of the things that’s very difficult, and I haven’t quite figured it out yet, and this (Bush) administration is not helping me figure it out, is how to bring the American people along to believe that negotiations can be an honorable way to deal with the national security issues.”

The history of international relations teaches us that negotiations and mediation have always been the most useful political and diplomatic mechanisms to solve international disputes (Bercovitch and Jackson 2001). The illusion of isolating adversaries in order to make them accept democratic rules:

1. Triggers rage (and other negative emotions).
2. Reduces trust and reciprocal knowledge.
3. Fosters hostility.

4. Freezes political positions and stances.
5. Increases the production of “Prisoners of Hate” (Beck 1999, 2002).

The ending of the cold war was characterized by two fundamental kinds of *momentum*: (1) the start of diplomatic relations between China and USA in the 1970s (despite China backing the USA foes during the Vietnam war), when former President Nixon took a decision to open the USA relations with China; and (2) the change of political attitudes between Reagan and Gorbachev in the 1980s. Moreover, both kinds of *momentum* were led by two US Republican presidents, and Mr. George Bush was a vice-president during Reagan’s presidency period. Also, what was the most important momentum for peace in the Middle East region? Considering former Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and his journey to Jerusalem, or former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his pursuit of the Oslo accords: Did they do the right thing in trying to negotiate a peace process? An attentive observer might point out that the two leaders in the Middle-East paid for the opening of peace negotiation processes with their lives, and Mr. Gorbachev left office under political pressures before the end of his term.

My sincere hope is that President Obama continues to look forward to negotiating and mediating on the international stage. I am here defending an attitude of negotiating and mediating common grounds for resolving international problems all together with shared responsibilities. If he will be able to reflect Kennedy’s view of peace processes he really might continue a dream President Kennedy had; and we will see whether it works. President Obama is spreading a culture of dialogue even in the most complicated and complex international political situations in some parts of the world. His remarks at the Pentagon Memorial, Arlington, Virginia on September 11, 2010 (Obama, 2010): “As Americans we are not – and never will be – at war with Islam. It was not a religion that attacked us that September day” demonstrate cognitive, emotional, and political rare qualities for an international leader. The strategy of inclusion is more difficult and uncertain than that of isolating enemies, but it can give a real chance to peace processes through negotiations. To think, feel, and act straightforward and to cultivate a culture of hope instead of a culture of fear, or even worse a culture of hate, represents a main breakthrough that could be able to mitigate this terrible love human beings seems to have for war (Hillman, 2004). Giving hope to our counterparts is better than strategically humiliating them by behaving in a way to make them fear us, which seems to be a politically unsustainable illusion likely to backfire more often than not.

## Interpersonal Negotiations

Negotiating sustainable alliances among different international actors is a formidable task for leaders and their advisers around the world. However, it seems especially a test for Mr. Obama’s presidency, measuring the degree of achievement or failure of his foreign policy, whose main doctrine seems to be based on the awareness of the inadequacy of the zero-sum beliefs, a precursor of the zero-sum game, and instead on the doctrine

of a “win-win” game to *negotiating without losers*. Throughout, the meaning of this “win-win” strategy needs to be specified in operational terms and discussed with all international partners. In fact, if it were (mis) interpreted unilaterally as a sort of masked zero-sum game it could cause even more damage among “friends and foes” by creating disagreement and disillusion. This in turn will determine a “preventive failure” of the strategy to negotiate a comprehensive, coherent, and inclusive global partnership to manage international cooperation among nations. The strategy will be a paying one if we are instead able to negotiate what is really at the core of all negotiations: reciprocal trust and confidence among the international community actors. The USA will be facing the hardest choice between the need to manage the power and the dilemma of relying on partnerships to ensure their homeland security as well. It should be honestly recognized that great powers may have common interests, but each of them have their own interpretation of what common interest means. Being aware of this anthropological, psychological, and political fact will help actors to adopt respectful positions and also sometimes *to agree to disagree* in a peaceful way, bearing in mind that their negotiating behavior may be perceived as aggressive and could prompt fear, rage, hatred, and consequential reactions from the other side (Aquilar and Galluccio, 2005).

“We are stronger when we act together!” This is the message President Obama carried on throughout his trip to Europe in the springtime of 2009. However, his most difficult task will be that of negotiating a common ground with his partners where duties and rights, joy and pain, charges and burdens, in one word, responsibility, will be equally shared, in order to define conflicting interests as a mutual problem to be satisfyingly resolved (Deutsch 2002), but where partners will be assured to be active subjects in political decision-making processes.

President Obama has received a Nobel Prize on a sort of blind faith for achievements, but we think also on courage showed in talking to the world the way he is doing (he will run for another presidential mandate within 2 years). However, the president in the near future could be more influenced, while talking to the world, by this dynamic of internal consensus. The world is characterized by a growing complexity, and the development of complex intrapersonal and interpersonal cognitive-emotional skills and of mental states mastery could be precious tools in leaders’ “hands” to manage this complexity. Investing in human capital through a specific cognitive training program could be part of a common strategic aim to improve alliance capacity building and coordinate international problem solving modalities.

## **Individual and Social Cognitive Mechanisms Influencing Decision-Making Processes**

“We of the Kennedy and Johnson’s administrations who participated in the decisions on Vietnam acted according to what we thought were the principles and traditions of this nation. We made our decisions in light of those values. Yet we were wrong, terribly wrong (...) I truly believe that we made an error not of values and intentions, but of judgement and capabilities.”

McNamara and Vandemark (1995: xvi)

President Obama's (2009n) Nobel lecture transcript shows clearly his awareness of certain "thinking errors" that could be harmful for the information system and affect political decision-making processes. He specifically speaks of "gaming the system," referring to some foreign nations: "...But it is also incumbent upon all of us to insist that nations like Iran and North Korea do not game the system." "Gaming the system" is an information manipulation strategy through which high level government decision-making could be guided by some members of government teams. They could selectively frame the information, or distort the type of different opinions of advisors through a proactive manipulation in order to misguide and voluntarily bias the information that will be allowed to a decision-making process. This behavior could be strictly linked to the phenomenon observed and described first by Janis (1982) as "groupthink," in which some persons from the team of decision-makers can act as *mindguards* in a way to opt, in the process of decision making, for a sort of secrecy of the information to the point of excluding experts, mass-media, and outside critics in order to retain unity and *esprit de corps*. Both in "gaming the system" and "groupthink," what seems to be in danger is the final decision about a certain issue that could be defective, because there is an incomplete survey of information endangering the decision making process and alternative courses of action. However, groupthink has been studied and found application first to US governments, especially during Kennedy's and Carter's presidencies (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Janis 1982). Gaming the system instead has been better assessed by the 2008 Pulitzer winner, Barton Gellman (2008), in a book on the US vice presidency of Dick Cheney, who apparently seemed to have this constant behavioral attitude in gaming the system.

Leaders and politicians in general should also be careful of cognitive distortions (thinking errors), in themselves and their counterparts, such as dichotomous thinking, selective abstraction, overgeneralization, arbitrary inference, labeling, tunnel vision, to name but few of them extensively treated in our previous book (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Beck 1988, 1995, 1999). Moreover, they should be aware of human cognitive interpersonal cycles (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Galluccio 2004, 2007; Safran 1984, 1998; Safran and Muran 2000; Semerari 2006); meta-cognitive and meta-representational functions deficit (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Dimaggio et al. 2007); the social mechanisms of selective moral disengagement (Aquilar and Galluccio 2009; Bandura 2002), applied also to the terrorism and counterterrorism actions (Bandura 2004); the Lucifer effect where common and usually peaceful people may develop a tendency to display harmful behaviors towards others, hurting them if "pushed" in this sense by an authoritative person (Zimbardo 2007; See Chapter by Francesco Aquilar, this volume); the phenomenon of the intoxication of power caused by the "Hubris Syndrome" described by David Owen as when "power has gone to political leaders and governors' head," wherein to many political leaders the very experience of holding office and substantial power for a certain length of time seems to infect them and undermine their mental stability and behaviors (Owen 2007).

## Aware Leadership for the Future

The importance of having in each political cabinet, or negotiating team, professionals and advisers cognitively oriented with characteristics and training briefly described along this chapter could represent a major tool to better assess final decisions (See Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). Professionals who know the importance of sustaining and advising leaders in decision-making processes, as for instance, to practically be concentrated on the present time, but be able to divide present situations from apparently similar analogous past situations (Houghton 1998; See Chapter by Don Meichenbaum, this volume). They could help to develop a timely and purposeful political strategy that is psychologically oriented, to aim to support leaders and decision-makers to master uncertainty and ambiguity present in international relations.

In our vision, these professionals could help to facilitate political processes by trying to implement cooperative attitudes and behaviors among international actors. This represents a powerful means to build and implement peace processes through interpersonal negotiations. Each negotiation should not be an end in itself. It should be rather a tool to develop processes of awareness and understanding of the other part's spoken and written words (Eco 2003), needs and actions in nurturing working relationships and creating security and stability in international relations. The personal traits and negotiating styles and behaviors of main actors, cognition, emotions, motivations, ways to communicate, values, principles, all have a direct impact on the negotiation processes and likely outcomes. As Bob Leahy timely states in this volume, "If we attempt to understand, empathize, validate, and find common ground we may find more than we bargained for: We may find peace." This should be the main and very difficult task of governors and their political advisers. But peace is not a static concept. It is rather a very dynamic and changing state of mind. How could we find peace and help others to benefit from it?

As I noted beforehand, the world has become a "global village," challenges and opportunities that lie ahead are complex and interdependent, and learning processes should continue throughout lives and careers. Those countries able to capitalize on their citizens' cognitive and emotional resources are countries that will prosper more and could help other countries to do the same (Beddington et al. 2008). Howard Gardner, of Harvard University and a distinguished contributor to this book, is concerned in his professional life also with the kinds of minds that people will need to develop if they – if we – are to thrive in the world during the eras to come. To meet this new world on its own terms, we should begin to cultivate these capacities now.

Gardner's (2006) five minds for the future are here summarized:

1. *The disciplinary mind*: Mastery of major schools of thought (including science, mathematics, and history), and of at least one professional craft.
2. *The synthesizing mind*: Ability to integrate ideas from different disciplines or spheres into a coherent whole and to communicate that integration to others.
3. *The creating mind*: Capacity to uncover and clarify new problems, questions, and phenomena.

4. *The respectful mind*: Awareness of and appreciation for differences among human beings.
5. *The ethical mind*: Fulfillment of one's responsibilities as a worker and a citizen.

To these minds we would like to add two important ones, the sixth conceptualized by Paul Gilbert (2009) (see Aquilar 2008a):

6. *The compassionate mind*: Because cruelty can flourish when our capacity for compassion is turned off, especially in specific environments.

The seventh one takes a stake from Buddhist tradition:

7. *The mindfulness*: We are part of a society with peoples and nations that seem to be concentrated on future time, losing sight that their present time will be the past of those who will come after them. Political advisers could make efforts to raise awareness among their leaders and staff in general of the importance of social-skills nurturing and resilience (in the face of stress) development, and collaborative-aware exploration of interpersonal behaviors, on "what is going on," *here and now*. This is a different, enlarged, and optimistic perspective, where the attention is on present states of mind, activating problem-solving modalities, and focusing on possible solutions, instead of recriminating on past interactions, or of dreaming too much in detail about the future that by definition it does not yet exist (Safran and Muran 2000).

## Negotiating Working Relationship

Internal and external peace, within and among negotiating teams, requires also human and technical skills to sense, detect, and master impairments, or minor "disturbances," in the quality of working relationships between actors involved in negotiation processes, with a particular attention to events such as agreements and breakdowns in negotiation. Now onwards, the attention will be focused on the latter because we think that the first has instead received more attention in the specialized literature (Fisher et al. 1991; Kremenyuk 2002; Raiffa 1982; Thompson 2006; Watkins and Rosegrant 2001). Each negotiating breakdown is characterized by a certain contextual environment, timing, intensity, duration, endurance, and particular history, depending on the issues at the stake. But it is also "influenced" by the mentality and personality of actors who are involved into the negotiation process, and by the working relationships, for the bad or the worse, they have been able to build up. Cases where a part may blatantly express strong emotions to the other part or even, precipitately leave the negotiating room are not so rare. Moreover, there are times where minor perturbations in the quality of working relationships may be extremely difficult to detect even for a skilled negotiator; nevertheless it is important to learn how to address them in a way to prevent, or transform conflicts. A working relationship building process may consist of three independent elements: (a) the relational bond between different parties; (b) the tasks and structure of the negotiation (i.e., the specific issues and actions in which parties are required to engage in); and (c) the goals to be achieved by the negotiation (i.e., final outcomes different actors would

like to achieve). The quality of negotiating relationships may be structured in function of the degree of agreement between parties about the goals and tasks of the negotiation. However, the quality of the relational bond between parties could also be affected by intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of the actors involved into the process (Argyle 1994; Safran 1998; Safran and Segal 1990).

The significance I give to a sound working relationship might lead some to conclude that negotiating techniques, tactics, and strategies are less important than the relational aspects. The complexity and subtlety of negotiation processes cannot be reduced to a set of disembodied techniques, because techniques gain their meaning, and in turn, their effectiveness from the particular interaction of individuals and issues involved in that particular contextual environment. The mutual impact of the different actors' behaviors into the process could ultimately be understood in terms of actors' mutual perception of interpersonal negotiating behaviors, and this perception could also be determined by the unique learning story of each single actor. One and the same negotiating behavior by an actor may thus be interpreted very differently by two or more different counterparts. While a party may perceive it in a way that promotes the negotiating working relationship, another one may perceive it in a manner that impedes it. This is because an actor's perception of the meaning of other's people actions is organized around interpersonal schemas that are based on past experience and generalized expectations about self-other interactions (Dimaggio et al. 2007; Guidano and Liotti 1983; Safran 1984; Safran and Segal 1990; Semerari 2006). These interpersonal schemas may be dysfunctional and may activate "negative" cognitive interpersonal cycles in which, for example, the expectations of an actor may lead to a negotiating behavior on her part that is likely to elicit predictable interpersonal cycles that may confirm her dysfunctional negotiating beliefs (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). Instead, if the counterpart with her responses is able to avoid being "entrapped" in the other side's interpersonal modality web, the latter could experience a positive "cognitive dissonance" in maybe challenging her dysfunctional expectations.

Here comes to the fore the importance of focusing attention on negotiating breakdowns, which could also occur at the moment where the counterpart's negotiating behavior and actions confirm the other actor's dysfunctional interpersonal schema (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Safran 1998). Hence, they are important events that may occur during negotiation processes, which demands a particular awareness and appropriate tools and techniques for fruitful investigations. A specific cognitive training programme, able to implement awareness on how to continue the negotiation, while "repairing" breakdowns, should provide actors with suitable cognitive and emotional skills. These acquired social skills could allow negotiators to better understand counterparts' negotiating behaviors in perhaps exploring together expectations, needs, beliefs, cognitive distortions, emotions, and appraisal processes that play a central role in an actor's dysfunctional cognitive-interpersonal cycles (Safran 1998; Safran and Segal 1990). The successful resolution of a negotiating breakdown can be one of the most influential means of transforming the conflict between actors to improve the quality of relationships, and could be a catalyst for sustainable individual and collective social changes. Instead, failure to adequately resolve a breakdown could lead to poor outcomes in negotiations and put relationships under serious strains.

Cognitive and emotional skills could also have the potential to improve the sustainability of negotiation processes by helping actors in some cases, for example, to clarify whether they really have been targets of a counterpart's "malevolent" action aimed at humiliating, demeaning, or patronizing them; or to put it another way, they have perceived and *felt feelings* of having been humiliated, demeaned, or patronized.

## **Breakdown Resolution and Alliance Building: Training Elements**

The mastery of meta-communication processes and improvements of meta-cognitive and meta-representative functions are powerful cognitive tools that could improve breakdown resolution chances. The human communication tool called meta-communication stands for talking about the communication, in other words, talking about what is taking place during the negotiation process. This strategic communication is, of course, a main tool to be unfolded in any interpersonal approach in our lives and it should be largely used in all negotiation and mediation processes. However, meta-communication becomes very useful in critical contextual moments, as when we have negotiating breakdown impairments. We will emphasize those aspects of a meta-communication process strategy that could be important to master in the process of breakdown resolution (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Safran 1998; Safran and Muran 2000), highlighting useful meta-cognitive functions and related abilities to be improved (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008; Falcone et al. 2003; Dimaggio et al. 2007):

- *Attending to breakdowns in the negotiating relationship.* The process of resolution cannot begin until the breakdown has been perceived as such by all involved actors. The correct perception of what is going on is essential and should not be underestimated. For example, diplomatic negotiators could be reluctant to communicate negative attitudes, emotions, or behaving accordingly (while feeling different emotions from what they are showing). This is because emotions are governed by "social norms" or should we say social expectations, and both reflect and sustain the social structures in which they develop (Parkinson et al. 2005; Thoits 2004). Hence, to notice working relationship impairments in advance and to try to prevent breakdowns can be problematic. A perceptual readiness should be nurtured through cognitive-oriented training to provide for an "early warning" system as a way to detect even the threat of a breakdown. Breakdown markers could facilitate the systematic identification of such threats and hopefully enhance conflict resolution possibilities (i.e., verbal and nonverbal communication/expression of emotions; indirect communication of hostility; rigidity in disagreeing about goals or tasks; presence of dysfunctional beliefs and cognitive distortions that could be manifested through avoidance maneuvers; "compulsive" self-esteem-enhancing operations; systematic non-cooperative attitude; etc.).

*Here comes to the fore the importance of the meta-cognitive function called "integration," which is the ability to reflect on emotional and mental states; to*



*consciously organize them in an ordered sequence; to structure a thought's hierarchy (by importance). This way, behaviors will have the consistency necessary for adaptation and the pursuit of goals "guided" by defined coherent individuals' identity;*

- *Implementing intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competence.* This is a fundamental step to be carefully assessed during the training program because cognitive and emotional competence represents a useful "human compass" for a better "orientation" at negotiators' disposal to be deployed all along the negotiation process. The ability of actors to recognize, express, and modulate emotions may provide important interpersonal information that could help implement the communication process. Moreover, the identification of one's own emotions is an important part of the process of accepting responsibility. It represents a useful tool to appraise the situation with "open eyes," and could bring an objective admission that this situation has been originated by the intrinsic interdependence of main actors. Unfortunately, if negotiators are not able to accurately recognize their own emotions at the least (notwithstanding that of the other side), their actions will be biased by factors outside their consciousness. Emotional awareness offers a flexibility of responses based on the particular history of interactions with the environment (Galluccio 2004). For example, a negotiator who is angry at his counterpart but is avoiding displaying that anger may nevertheless communicate it in subtle ways through his nonverbal language. In this view, situational determinants may determine emotional arousal; but these cannot be separated from the role an individual's cognitive processes may play, not only in interpreting the situations but also in generating many of them (Safran and Segal, 1990).

*Here comes to the fore the importance of the meta-cognitive function called "identification," which is the ability to appropriately recognize one's own and others' emotions; and identifying links between cognition (thoughts) and emotions (I feel inadequate because I think I am not well prepared to face certain issues in this negotiation); or between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions (I feel outraged because he is trying to patronize me);*

- *Accepting responsibility.* One of the most important components of awareness in resolving a relational breakdown and implementing peace negotiations consists of the negotiator acknowledging his or her role in the interactional process. The reason for this importance is that often when there is a breakdown, negotiators may become locked into a negative cognitive interpersonal cycle in which they are both trying to defend their actions and "justify" their negotiating behaviors. Instead, this situation could be unlocked if the negotiator is able to transform the conflict, by transferring it from a competitive to a cooperative playground. This is a collaborative activity and should include oneself in the description of the interaction in assuming responsibility for the role played and contribution given to the process of interdependence. This way, the situation could begin to shift from one in which there is a sense of "me against you," to one in which there is a sense of "we-ness" (Safran 1998). If the breakdown begins to be perceived as "our problem," a sense of connectedness may begin to develop (Galluccio 2004, Galluccio 2007a).

*Here comes to the fore the importance of the meta-cognitive function called “differentiation,” which is the ability to understand the mental states as representations of reality, therefore potentially wrong and at least probabilistic (distinguishing between reality and wishful thinking);*

- *Assessing interactive sequences with empathy.* Awareness of one’s own responsibility and contributions to the interdependence is very important. However, it could also be extremely fruitful for a negotiator to timely communicate empathic and compassionate feelings about what has been “detected” from the counterpart’s experience. This way, the counterpart may feel understood and could start a common exploration process to find out what is going on in the interaction. However, even if often the process of conflict resolution could be facilitated by this empathic communication, sometimes it could instead inhibit it. Our experience and direct observation on the spot has been that this negative dynamic of inhibition tends to happen when the counterpart feels patronized by the other part’s empathic response (which could be missing compassion) (see Paul Gilbert in this volume).

*Here comes to the fore the importance of the meta-cognitive function called “decentering,” which is the ability to assess interactive sequences, being able to assume (and remember) someone else’s point of view in the relational context. Decentering refers to acquired mental skills that allow individuals to see the perspective from which others relate to the world and to realize that their negotiating behavior may be “guided” by values, principles, and goals that could differ from ours and could also not be directly related to our interpersonal relationship dynamics;*

- *Mastering Uncertainty.* Addressing a breakdown could be a difficult task because you intervene to open up a scenario of crisis. This is a huge responsibility, even if it is intended as a step forward to implement the quality of the alliance between different actors. As experience shows, human beings attach different meanings to the same words. For example, our counterpart could have an emotion of fear just thinking about the word “crisis.” Sometimes, instead, addressing a “hidden” breakdown to try to prevent conflict escalation could be embarrassing, uncomfortable, and possibly a threatening experience because you know when you start to address it but you do not know: (1) if you will be able to handle it; (2) if it will work; (3) and when it will be ended. One should not allow uncertainty of the present time to make her/him uncertain on a long-period as well.

*Here comes to the fore the importance of the meta-cognitive function called “mastery,” which is the ability to intentionally intervene on one’s own thoughts, mental states and emotional states, in order to solve tasks, or master problematic states, in a way to adequately face complex situations. This could be seen as an improved cognitive and emotional awareness of oneself in the process of coping with distress in general and stressful interpersonal contexts, where reflective efforts are required to avoid feeling impotent (powerless) and giving up chances to actively contribute to ongoing interactions.*

Often leaders, diplomats, and negotiators may try to avoid open rifts by behaving as if nothing happened, even against the evidence. In doing so, they risk being moulded into the quicksand of a difficult meta-communication modality without

addressing the relational core of the rift and facilitating, on the contrary, the entrapment of actors into maladaptive interpersonal cognitive cycles. Instead, if they focus and are able to master a breakdown resolution they could have a better opportunity to enhance their relational competence and improve interpersonal negotiation skills, and they may gain confidence and hope that they could do it again in another negotiating context.

## A Cognitive Oriented Political Strategy

Our political and psychological strategy for peace negotiation puts forward four mutually reinforcing priorities:

- *Aware negotiations*: developing integrated training courses based on techniques, knowledge, and innovation; fostering cognitive and emotional resources, creative, analytical and social skills, and resilience improvement. Such training should be made available for all parties in order to master more balanced negotiation processes;
- *Sustainable negotiations*: promoting more cooperative, efficient, and ethical negotiation processes;
- *Inclusive negotiations*: fostering a broad framework for all actors involved in different issues; delivering, through interpersonal negotiations, socially cohesive results;
- *Balanced negotiations*: negotiating within alliances a common approach to problem solving that should be careful without being paranoid.

This strategy should be implemented through specific training tailored to different subjects involving governors, rulers, advisers, negotiators, etc., in order to:

- (a) Increase theoretical as well as experiential knowledge of cognitive and emotional dynamics within negotiation processes.
- (b) Encourage analytical reflection on negotiation processes that affect the quality of public life.
- (c) Enhance awareness of preferred as well as habitual negotiating styles and behaviors.
- (d) Encourage experimentation with negotiation methods that can be used to advance high-priority interests and values while protecting working relationships.
- (e) Support the formulation of strategies for improving interpersonal negotiation skills and managing international conflicts through peace negotiations.

Our far-reaching proposals for training politicians, negotiators and mediators aim to challenge and improve their cognitive-behavioral abilities. This could enable them to act as catalysts for social change, bringing sustainable benefits for individuals, societies, and nations. A cross-governmental approach might be beneficial. This could bring substantial changes in the nature of governance, taking into account the intimate link between mental health and well-being of peoples, when developing policies and designing interventions (Beddington et al. 2008). A specialized training at the heart of policy-making could provide benefits to citizens and nations alike.

## Conclusions

US President Obama's doctrine is based on a "win-win" approach, but this doctrine seems to lack a theoretical framework that defines techniques for "cognitive-behavioral modification" that is able to nurture mental changes in leaders, rulers, negotiators, mediators, and public opinion. An example of "cognitive-behavioral modification" could be that of using techniques based on cognitive psychology and psychotherapy to modify a political adviser's "war mentality."

President Obama's main political and human qualities can be summarized as follows:

1. No cognitive egocentrism;
2. No US-centrism;
3. Not excessively simplifying the world, unlike George W. Bush and Tony Blair, who both tried to simplify the world and seem to have displayed cognitive distortions and deficits with regard to meta-cognitive and meta-representative functions (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008);
4. Taking care of more underprivileged categories of citizens (from national health reform in the USA to policies in favor of poor people around the globe);
5. Seeking interpersonal negotiations without losers. This represents a basic element of our project. The only losers should be anti-democratic forces, criminals, and spoilers (foes and friends);
6. Using a gradual transformative approach to problem-solving. This approach, seems appropriate in order to avoid upsetting the economic and political equilibrium, and causing dangerous political imbalances worldwide;
7. Showing a calm and coherent anti-racist attitude that is strongly felt and mastered, which is a real and not rhetorical attitude;
8. Paying more attention to substance than form: President Obama is a remarkably informal leader.

In this context, from an outside viewpoint, a contribution to improving these skills might include:

1. Contextualizing issues for domestic audiences. President Obama's speeches at West Point and Brookings Institution (Obama, 2009l, 2009m), for example, could have been focused more on the interdependence of the actual world and on the necessity to implement cooperative strategies to manage this interdependence all together. A word about the "external world," even for these types of domestic speeches, could enhance cognitive awareness that the USA is no longer alone on the world stage when it comes to facing international problems.
2. Making changes at a reasonable pace. Although the US presidency lasts 8 years at most, sometimes President Obama could act with even more audacity ("the audacity of Hope", 2006) and show a bit more firmness towards certain interlocutors (foes or friends) without fearing internal lobbies.
3. Taking care of the explicit psychological aspects of interpersonal negotiations and including experts in cognitive psychology in his political staff. President

Obama is a politician who knows how to do his job and has a good knowledge of the political-legal system. He is also surrounded by skilled people. If he could enrich his staff with advisers who are familiar with cognitive psychology and psychotherapy, he would gain better tools for cognitive-behavioral modification, to influence the thinking of both his supporters and his opponents and pass on his political messages.

4. Helping to set up, together with all other international actors, a committee on international negotiation and mediation, to establish international shared rules on negotiations, and minimum training standards (with the help of cognitive psychologists, psychotherapists, sociologists, and political scientists).
5. Creating a space on President Obama's staff for advisers experienced in "predicting" trends and innovative thinking. As Howard Gardner loves to recall, at this historical stage human ideas change faster than before. This process of innovation does not just concern goods and services. It also applies to views and opinions (see Howard Gardner, this volume) including those of leaders, rulers, and negotiators, as well as public opinions. It could also help to change negative image representations through which certain nations perceive each other (see Olivier Faure, this volume).

Professionals' and political advisors' contribution to sustaining and "counseling" leaders in decision-making processes might include:

6. Helping political leaders to master the uncertainty of the modern era and to develop the cognitive and emotional mental health of nations.
7. Refining political and psychological techniques of persuasion to elicit and implement a peace-oriented attitude in public opinions, especially in non-democratic countries. Political control over non-democratic countries should not only come from the deterrence of weapons, but also from an "educated" public opinion within that country. Social psychotherapy can help populations in democratic countries (see Francesco Aquilar, this volume), but perhaps even more so in non-democratic countries, improving the mental resources of communities across the world.
8. Helping to choose the right negotiators, at the right time, for the right situation. We need "anthropologically appropriate" negotiators and mediators who can understand the thinking and the culture of their interlocutors.
9. Ensuring that the information and communication process is as transparent as possible. Civil society should be better informed if we want it to be more engaged in pressing governments for change and creating democratic societies based on diversity, tolerance, and equality.

Peace processes are largely a matter of cooperation and partnership between different actors (especially those directly involved in the conflict), who must play their own proactive roles among other actors in order to achieve mutually satisfying and sustainable negotiated results.

The future requires leaders who can actively influence peace processes through negotiation and implement the final results. However, we need to make sure that

negotiators are playing the same “game.” Unfortunately, today, often international negotiations resemble a situation where some of the actors are playing football, others rugby and others handball. The rules and timing are completely different, and finding common ground represents a virtually insurmountable challenge for those involved. That is also why we need minimum training standards for negotiators and mediators. It would be better to reach an awareness that all the actors in the negotiation process are interpersonally linked and play an active role in shaping working relationships. Believing negotiating behaviors improve without individual efforts could be *wishful thinking*. Believing that working relationships can deteriorate just because of the counterpart could sometimes be a demonstration of cognitive egocentrism and a lack of emotional competence.

Most of all, we need new methods and techniques for training leaders, negotiators, and mediators. This could have a significant impact on conflict resolution, helping to build a sustainable and lasting peace.

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