Reframing Sacred Values

Scott Atran, Robert Axelrod

In Theory

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Sacred values differ from material or instrumental values in that they incorporate moral beliefs that drive action in ways dissociated from prospects for success. Across the world, people believe that devotion to essential or core values — such as the welfare of their family and country, or their commitment to religion, honor, and justice — are, or ought to be, absolute and inviolable.

Counterintuitively, understanding an opponent's sacred values, we believe, offers surprising opportunities for breakthroughs to peace. Because of the emotional unwillingness of those in conflict situations to negotiate sacred values, conventional wisdom suggests that negotiators should either leave sacred values for last in political negotiations or should try to bypass them with sufficient material incentives. Our empirical findings and historical analysis suggest that conventional wisdom is wrong. In fact, offering to provide material benefits in exchange for giving up a sacred value actually makes settlement more difficult because people see the offering as an insult rather than a compromise. But we also found that making symbolic concessions of no apparent material benefit might open the way to resolving seemingly irresolvable conflicts.

Scott Atran is research director in anthropology at CNRS — Institut Jean Nicod in Paris, a presidential scholar in sociology at the John Jay College of the City University of New York, and a visiting professor of psychology and public policy at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His e-mail address is satran@umich.edu.

Robert Axelrod is Walgreen Professor for the Study of Human Understanding in the department of political science and in the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. His e-mail address is axe@umich.edu.

We offer suggestions for how negotiators can reframe their position by demonstrating respect and/or by apologizing for what they sincerely regret. We also offer suggestions for how to overcome barriers by refining sacred values to exclude outmoded claims, exploiting the inevitable ambiguity of sacred values, shifting the context, provisionally prioritizing values, and reframing responsibility.

Conflicts that Appear Intractable

Sacred values differ from material or instrumental values in that they incorporate moral beliefs that drive action in ways that seem dissociated from prospects for success. Across the world, people believe that devotion to essential or core values — such as the welfare of their family and country, or their commitment to religion, honor, and justice — are, or ought to be, absolute and inviolable. Such deeper "cultural" values that are bound up with people's identities often trump trade-offs with other values, particularly economic ones (Carmichael et al. 1994).

In this essay, we focus on questions related to the current Israeli–Palestinian conflict but also employ a wide range of historical examples from international politics. Our intended audience is those scholars and practitioners who are interested in understanding and resolving conflicts that involve, or seem to involve, inviolable values. We hope our findings will be useful to negotiation practitioners of all kinds including mediators, diplomats, third-party neutrals, as well as the leaders and the publics directly involved. We also hope that researchers who seek a deeper understanding of the problems and possibilities for resolving seemingly intractable conflicts will find our research useful.

Our analysis begins with the interest-based approach pioneered by Roger Fisher and William Ury (1981).[1] While the importance of framing is well recognized in the negotiation literature, surprisingly little has been written on how the process actually works.[2] With this essay, we seek to fill that gap by analyzing how one frame can displace another. While we discuss a wide variety of historical cases, we also draw on experimental evidence from random samples of three stakeholder publics deeply engaged in the same conflict, namely, the contemporary conflict between Israel and Palestine. The process of randomly surveying these three publics contrasts with the more common practice of relying on self-recruited

American college students (e.g., Baron and Spranca 1997; Tetlock, Kristel, and Elson 2000). In addition, we interviewed leaders involved in this conflict to see how their responses compared to the responses of their constituencies. Most important, our study of framing and reframing suggests a number of ways to overcome barriers to conflict resolution when sacred values are engaged.

Differences in sacred values are an important part of many fundamental political disputes and tend to make disputes much harder to resolve (Susskind et al. 2005; Bazerman, Tebrunsel, and Wade-Benzoni 2008). Counterintuitively, understanding an opponent's sacred values, we believe, offers surprising opportunities for breakthroughs to peace. Because of people's emotional unwillingness to negotiate sacred values, conventional wisdom suggests that negotiators should either leave sacred values for last in political negotiations or should try to bypass them with sufficient material incentives. Our empirical findings and historical analysis suggest that conventional wisdom is wrong. In fact, offering to provide material benefits in exchange for giving up a sacred value actually makes settlement more difficult because people see the offering as an insult rather than a compromise. And leaving issues related to sacred values for last only blocks compromise on otherwise mundane and material matters.

Seemingly intractable political conflicts — in the Middle East, the Balkans, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, and beyond — and the extreme behaviors often associated with these conflicts, such as suicide bombings, are often motivated by sacred values. Consider, for example, the view of martyrdom as a sacred duty expressed to us by Sheikh Hamed Al Betawi, a judge of the *Shari'a* Court of Palestine and a former preacher at Al Aqsa' Mosque (the Jerusalem mosque that represents the third-holiest site in Islam): "A martyr fights and dies for dignity, nation, religion, and *Al 'Aqsa.*' In the Koran, the book of *Al-Tauba*, verse 111, tells us that Allah brings souls to Paradise killing the enemy and getting killed — that is the sacred principle of *jihad*" (Al Betawi 2004).

Nevertheless, there have also been significant historical instances in which sacred values have motivated peacemaking, which Egypt's Anwar Sadat expressed in his autobiography, *In Search of Identity* (1977). He recounts that the October 1973 War allowed Egypt to recover "pride and self-confidence," which freed him to think about the "psychological barrier" that was a "huge wall of suspicion, fear, hate and misunderstanding that has for so long existed between Israel and the Arabs." Based on his own experience in jail, he felt that "change should take place first at the deeper and perhaps more subtle level than the conscious level. . . . We had been accustomed . . . to regard Israel as 'taboo,' an entity whose emotional associations simply prevented anyone from approaching it." He ultimately decided on a personal visit to the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and to the

Israeli Knesset "in fulfillment of my claim that I would be willing to go anywhere in search of peace. . . . I regarded my mission in Israel as truly sacred" (Sadat 1977: 304).

Appeals to sacred values, then, can motivate both war and peace. The issue for conflict resolvers is to determine how sacred values appeal to war and how they can be reframed to appeal to peace.

In this time of great uncertainty in the Middle East, we went to the area to conduct a scientific study on the values underpinning political conflict. We based our questioning of senior Israeli and Palestinian leaders on a recent series of surveys with hundreds of Palestinians and Israelis that dealt with some hypothetical trade-offs for peace that have been discussed or proposed in negotiations. Our research findings and discussions with leaders indicate that violent opposition to compromise over issues that people consider sacred actually *increases* when material incentives to compromise are offered. Support for violence *decreases*, however, when an adversary makes symbolic gestures that show recognition of the other's core values (Atran, Axelrod, and Davis 2007a; Ginges et al. 2007). Symbolic gestures may then allow and facilitate political negotiations that also involve material trade-offs.

Here we take a deeper look at the issues at stake, informed by analysis of the recent history of political conflicts both in the Middle East and in other areas of the world. The role of *sacred values* in political conflict is often seriously misunderstood. Sacred values are certainly critical to the maintenance of seemingly intractable rivalries. Our approach suggests that a creative reframing of these values may often allow symbolic concessions that can help resolve long-standing disputes, be they religious, ethnic, or cultural.

Rational versus Devoted Actors

Ever since the end of the Second World War, "*rational actor*" models have dominated strategic thinking at all levels of government policy (Gaddis 1995) and military planning (Allison 1971). Rational actor models have always had serious deficiencies as general models of human reasoning and decision making because human behavior can never be reduced purely to rational calculation. But in a confrontation between states, and especially during the Cold War, these models were arguably useful in anticipating a wide array of challenges and formulating policies to prevent nuclear war. Now, however, we are witnessing the rise of *"devoted actors,"* such as suicide terrorists (Atran 2003), who are willing to make extreme sacrifices that are independent of, or seem all out of proportion to, likely prospects of success.[3] This is most evident for the most tenacious conflicts that are grounded in cultural and religious opposition rather than those based primarily on political competition for resources. Nowhere is this issue more pressing than in the Israeli–Palestinian dispute, which people across the

world consistently view as one of the greatest dangers to world peace (Pew Research Center 2006).

Efforts to resolve political conflicts or counter political violence are still often based on the assumption that adversaries make rational choices. Such assumptions are prevalent in risk assessment and modeling by foreign aid and international development projects, and by American diplomatic, military, and intelligence services. For example, the membership and performance of the principal forum for U.S. foreign policy, the National Security Council (NSC), which includes close policy coordination with the National Economic Council, demonstrates that policy decisions should result from instrumental choices by goal-oriented political and economic actors. The U.S. National Security Strategy statement (U.S. NSC 2006) explicitly states a commitment to "results-oriented planning" that focuses on "actions and results rather than legislation or rule-making." It embodies a clear focus on practical consequences rather than on moral principles whose consequences may be indeterminate.

"Look at the NSC's composition, which determines the direction of U.S. foreign policy," says Richard Davis (2007), a former director of terrorism prevention at the White House Homeland Security Council. "It is institutionally structured within a narrow intellectual frame weighted to consideration of practical costs and benefits in terms of our national economy, intelligence, military, and law enforcement. There is limited provision for missions of health, education, or human services that represent our values." An apparent exception to lack of concern with matters related directly to human welfare is NSC monitoring of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). But even here, the NSC is most concerned with USAID programs that have strict budgetary cycles and are often considered as tactical means for advancing strategic interests.

"We can't afford to wait for tsunamis to demonstrate that the U.S. does not always act in its own self interest," Davis noted. Indeed, unscheduled U.S aid to Indonesian tsunami victims in early 2005 may represent the only event since the invasion of Iraq that dramatically increased favorable opinion of the U.S. in a major Muslim country, as well as the perception that combating terrorism was not a uniquely U.S. problem. The implications of the Pew survey, as suggested in the summary report by Pew, was that through tsunami relief in Indonesia's Aceh province, the United States demonstrated to the Indonesian public that America could act in ways that were not exclusively in its own self-interest. Indonesians became more willing to see U.S. actions against terrorism in the region as not necessarily only a matter of promoting U.S. interests. People began to dissociate U.S. interests from terrorism and to consider terrorism a problem in its own right (Pew Research Center 2005).

Here, one might be tempted to argue that U.S. policy is not sufficiently rational, that the provision of health, education, and human services foreign

aid has nothing to do with promoting values as such but is simply another way to "buy" peace. Nevertheless, the more that one side perceives another's initiatives to be strongly motivated by self-interest, the less likely it is that those initiatives will succeed in gaining trust in highly charged cultural conflicts. For example, following the massive earthquake in Azad Kashmir on October 5, 2005, the United States began providing humanitarian aid to victims. When we interviewed villagers about this aid in May 2006, however, many pointed to Apache helicopters that parachuted in supplies and ubiquitous USAID signs as evidence that the United States was trying to buy their support without engaging them personally. In contrast, Kashmiris praised the many hundreds of Cuban doctors who tended patients in remote villages for their "selfless" devotion to others, noting that the Cubans came and left with no self-promoting speeches or signs (Kashmir 2006).

Many conflicts cannot be treated exclusively in terms of *realpolitik* or the marketplace. To most of us, the thought of selling or endangering one's children or betraying one's country for money (or for almost anything else we can imagine) is morally abhorrent, and most of us would be outraged and disgusted by someone willing to offer such a trade-off for our children, our country, or anything else we may value as "sacred." As we have seen, when people are asked to trade sacred values for material rewards they tend to react with outrage and anger (Baron and Spranca 1997; Tetlock 2003). Nevertheless they are sometimes able to accept privileging one sacred value for another, such as devotion to religion versus devotion to family.

Sacred Values

Sacred values are moral imperatives that seem to drive behavior independently of any concrete material goal. They often have their basis in religion, but such transcendent core secular values as a belief in the importance of individual morality, fairness, reciprocity, and collective identity (i.e., "justice for my people") can also be sacred values. These values will often trump economic thinking or considerations of *realpolitik*.

For example, the U.S. Senate recently raised the bounty offered for information leading to the capture of Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden to fifty million dollars (Anonymous 2007). It is doubtful, however, that this new increase will have greater sway than previous increases among the people living along the Afghan–Pakistan frontier who may know his whereabouts. Even the poorest Pashtun tribesman in the area will defend to the death an ancient code of honor known as *pashtunwali*. Its third tenet, *melmastiya*, refers to hospitality as a sacred duty and requires protecting valued guests at the risk of one's own life. Violating this code means repudiating tribal identity for one's self and one's family.

Devotion to some core values may represent universal responses to long-term evolutionary strategies that go beyond short-term individual

calculations of self-interest but that advance individual interests in the aggregate and long run (Lim and Baron 1997). This may include devotion to children (Hamilton 1964), to community (Durkheim 1912/1995), or even to a sense of fairness (Hauser 2006). Other such values are clearly specific to particular societies and historical contingencies, such as the sacred status of cows in Hindu culture or the sacred status of Jerusalem in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[4] Sometimes, as with sacred cows (Harris 1966) or sacred forests (Atran, Medin, and Ross 2005), what is seen as inherently sacred in the present may have a more materialistic origin, representing the accumulated material wisdom of generations who resisted individual urges to gain an immediate advantage of meat or firewood for the long-term benefits of renewable sources of energy and sustenance.

Political leaders often appeal to sacred values as a way of mobilizing their constituents to action (Varshney 2003) and as a least-cost method of enforcing policy goals (Goodin 1980). Political leaders also invoke sacred values as a least-cost method of discrediting adversaries, for example, when U.S. politicians accuse one another of disregard for "the sanctity of marriage" or of usurping "God's gift of life." What works as sacred in one society is often entirely ineffective and mundane in another. When Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad publicly embraced and kissed on the hand an elderly woman who used to be his schoolteacher, Iran's ultraconservative *Hezbollah* newspaper intoned: "This type of indecency progressively has grave consequences, like violating religious and sacred values" (ABC Online 2007). Contrast the Iranian example with the kissing expected of American candidates on campaign tours. A rallying cry to protect sacred values in one culture can be utterly innocuous in another.

Many policy makers, however, argue that all so-called sacred values are only "pseudo-sacred" because in a world of scarce resources there is always room for trade-offs (Hoffman et al. 1999): people cannot really devote all of their time, energy, and life to upholding any one such value. Even apparently "irrational" behaviors arguably reflect "rational" calculations of the holdout's long-term interests, however incomprehensible those interests appear to others. Consider the angry resistance of the impoverished Lakota Sioux to offers of hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation for the Black Hills that the U.S. government has claimed ownership of since 1877 (Lazarus 1999). The Sioux say that claims on their land are claims to their identity as a people. Another example is Adolph Hitler's "principled" refusal to maximize material benefits for war. To uphold the scientifically baseless but sacred value of "racial purity," Hitler vehemently refused the equivalent of hundreds of millions dollars in payoffs to racially reclassify a relatively few Austrian Jews (Eidinow and Edmonds 2001).

In these and other examples, the actors may be described as "holding out" for greater benefits, such as eternal glory over worldly greed, where, for them, glory is a more rewarding and hence more rational outcome. But such

interpretations only obscure the issue by giving post hoc interpretations of any seemingly irrational behavior (in the sense of immunity to material trade-offs) so as to fit a rational actor model. No explanatory or predictive power is thereby gained.

Given these interpretations of apparently irrational behavior, one might be tempted to think of protected values, including sacred values, as self-serving "posturing" or part of some strategy for longer-term economic or psychological benefits (Baron and Spranca 1997). It is true that sacred values are sometimes exploited by politicians for their own material interests or some greater future gain, such as enhanced personal reputation, prestige, and votes. Nevertheless, the seeming intractability of certain political conflicts and the reality of violence associated with these conflicts, such as suicide bombings, compels negotiation scholars and researchers to pay greater attention to the nature and depth of people's commitment to sacred values.[5]

Apparently Irrational Conflict

One reason resource-deficient revolutionary movements can compete with much larger armies and police forces is the willingness of members of these movements to delay gratification and sacrifice themselves for a greater cause. Consider the founding of the United States: without calculating the probability of success, a few poorly equipped rebels knowingly took on the mightiest empire in the world (Dickinson 1768).[6] The Declaration of Independence concluded with the words: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

Matters of principle, or "sacred honor," are enforced to a degree far out of proportion to any individual or immediate material payoff when they are seen as defining "who we are." Revenge, "even if it kills me," between whole communities that mobilize to redress insult or shame to a single member go far beyond individual "tit-for-tat" (Axelrod and Hamilton 1981) and may become the most important duties in life. This is because such behavior defines and defends what it means to be, say, a Southern gentleman (Nisbett and Cohen 1996), a Solomon Islander (Havemeyer 1929), or an Arab tribesman (Peters 1967). The Israeli army has risked the lives of many soldiers to save one or a few as a matter of "sacred duty," as have certain elite U.S. military units (Bowden 2000).

Of course, sincere displays of willingness to avenge at all costs can have the long-term payoff of thwarting aggressive actions by stronger but less committed foes. Likewise, a willingness to sacrifice for buddies can help create greater *esprit du corps* that may lead to a more formidable fighting force. But these acts far exceed the effort required for any short-term payoff and offer no immediate guarantee for long-term success.

To study possible trade-offs between sacred values and material rewards, in 2005 we talked with families and supporters of Palestinian suicide bombers. We asked about the amount of compensation that their society should give to the family of a suicide bomber. We found that willingness to allow compensation decreased as the amount offered increased: one hundred thousand dinars is significantly less acceptable than ten thousand dinars, and one million dinars is much less acceptable (Atran 2007a). Follow-up interviews clearly point to a willingness to accept minimal compensation for loss of a family member (who may be a helper or wage earner) and one's home (Israeli retaliation often includes destruction of the bomber's house). Nevertheless, Palestinians see more substantial payments to families as unacceptable, even disgusting, because they would create the impression that the martyr had acted as a materially calculating actor rather than as a martyr devoted to a moral cause.

In conjunction with Israeli psychologist Jeremy Ginges and Palestinian political scientist Khalil Shikaki, our team surveyed more than twelve hundred Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and found differences between those Palestinians who refuse political compromise because they believe it violates sacred values versus those Palestinians who do not (Ginges et al. 2007). Both groups overwhelmingly support suicide bombings that may include the killing of civilians. Each group was given a hypothetical choice to delay a suicide bombing to save the lives of an entire Palestinian family or to delay a suicide bombing to save only the sick father.[7] Palestinians who do not consider political compromise to violate sacred values expressed the rational preference of trading off an obligation for the sake of the entire family rather than for the father alone. By contrast, the sacred values group was more likely to express willingness to delay a suicide bombing if only the sick father would benefit rather than to save the lives of an entire family, including the father (Atran 2007b).

These examples also highlight what we call moral framing. When considering delaying a martyrdom mission in order to help a sick father, the trade-off is allowed within an overarching moral frame of social duties and (material) attempts to balance duties. But when considering delaying a mission to save one's own family from retaliation, only the bombing mission itself falls within the moral frame of duty, and avoidance of retaliation is considered a cowardly and immoral act. In this case, the higher the costs, the less likely there is willingness to compromise in the performance of duty.

Consider another example of insensitivity to quantity or material balance. Recently, a group of Holocaust survivors traveled to Maidenak Death Camp in Poland on what they considered a sacred mission to search for mementos of those killed by the Nazis. "We've spent a million dollars so far to find rings worth maybe $100 retail," said an organizer of the expedition. "But the objects tell a powerful story. There is no way that a modern

person can understand the experience, but looking at an object. . . . Its rescue gives us all an opportunity to connect with the people here and their sacrifice" (Roberts 2005).[8]

It is the "who we are" identity aspect that is often so hard for members of one culture to understand regarding another. Nevertheless, understanding and acknowledging other peoples' values may help to avoid or resolve even long-standing and deep-seated conflicts. Consider, for example, the pacification of postwar Japan. Many in the wartime U.S. administration and military considered the Japanese Emperor a war criminal who should be executed. But wartime advisors such as anthropologists Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, as well as psychological-warfare specialists in General Douglas MacArthur's command (Dower 1999), argued that preserving, and even signaling respect for, the Emperor might lessen the likelihood that the Japanese, who regarded him with religious awe, would fight to the death to save him. Moreover, his symbolic weight could, and would, be used by the occupation government to bolster moderate and pro-American factions in postwar Japan.

Consider as well, in this regard, the case of "ping-pong" diplomacy between the United States and China. As expected, the Chinese won match after match against the visiting American table tennis team in 1971. In the United States, ping-pong is considered a "basement sport" so there was little at stake. In contrast, table tennis is a sport of national prestige to China (Eckstein 1993). So, at little cost to itself, the United States was able to provide something of great symbolic value for the other side. This exchange contributed to a historic breakthrough in Sino-American relations during the Cold War.[9]

Sometimes the symbolic value of a gesture that is weighty to the parties directly involved may seem trivial to an outside party. If France allowed Muslim students to wear headscarves in public schools, which is now prohibited, beneficial effects could reverberate throughout the Muslim world. For most Americans and their political leaders, this would not be a significant concession — Muslim and Jewish headgear in public schools is commonplace and uncontroversial in the United States. The problem, however, is that in France, unlike in the United States, signs of physical and religious distinction in school are considered to be an affront to the symbolically defining value of French political culture ever since the French Revolution, namely, a universal and uniform sense of social equality (however lacking in practice). "The only community is the nation," declared former French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin (Anonymous 2005) — an uninterrupted national sentiment that dates to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762). Indeed, the American ideal of cultural diversity is perceived by a broad political spectrum in France as an attempt to force an alien notion of community and identity between the only two moral entities that are widely recognized in France: the individual and the state (Roy

2004). This example shows that recognizing one another's sacred values is not a transparent process, even for allies and for members of societies that seem similar in so many other ways. More importantly, it illustrates that recognizing and showing respect for another's core values is easy or even possible only if doing so does not entail compromising one's own core values.

Symbolic Concessions

When we brief policy makers around the world on our research, they often readily acknowledge their own values as sacred yet fail to appreciate adequately the sacred values of others. We are often surprised to hear, after the briefing is finished, that "of course it's all about [sacred] values." And despite the institutional preference for rational choice thinking, we find that ordinary people in surveys around the world also tell us that sacred values are important to them.

To measure emotional outrage and propensity for violence, our research team asked about various peace deals involving compromises over issues integral to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. For this analysis we used three samples from the West Bank and Gaza. The first was a sample of 535 Palestinian refugees, the second was a sample of 719 Palestinian students, and the third was a sample of 601 Jewish adult settlers residing in the West Bank and Gaza (Ginges et al. 2007).[10] The proposed compromises were exchanging land for peace (asked of settlers), sovereignty over Jerusalem (asked of students), the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their former lands and homes inside Israel (asked of refugees), and recognition of the validity of the adversary's own sacred values (asked of all three groups). We proposed material incentives, such as significant payments to individual families, credible offers to relocate or rebuild destroyed infrastructure, and so forth. We found that such material offers to promote the peaceful resolution of political and cultural conflicts backfire when adversaries consider contested issues to reflect sacred values. Material offers to make concessions that were seen as violations of sacred values were perceived as insults. But we also found that symbolic concessions of no apparent material benefit might open the way to resolving seemingly irresolvable conflicts.

One senior member of the National Security Council responded recently to our latest briefing in this way: "This seems right. On the settlers [who were to be removed from Gaza], [Israeli Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon realized too late that he shouldn't have berated them about wasting Israel's money and endangering soldier's lives. Sharon told me that he realized only afterwards that he should have made a symbolic concession and called them Zionist heroes making yet another sacrifice" (Atran, Axelrod, and Davis 2007a).

A further illustration of how sacred values can lie at the heart of deep-seated political disputes comes from Isaac Ben Israel, a former Air

Force general and current Knesset member in Israel's ruling coalition: "Israel recognizes that the [Hamas-led] Palestinian government is still completely focused on what it considers to be its essential principles. . . . For Hamas, a refusal to utter the simple words 'We recognize Israel's right to exist' is clearly an essential part of their core values. Why else would they suffer the international boycott . . . and let their own government workers go without pay, their people go hungry, and their leaders risk assassination?" Hamas's Ghazi Hamad, then spokesman for the Palestinian government, told us: "In principle we have no problem with a Palestinian state encompassing all of our lands within the 1967 borders. But let Israel apologize for our tragedy in 1948, and then we can talk about negotiating over our right of return to historic Palestine." In rational-choice models of decision making, that something as intangible as an apology should stand in the way of peace does not readily compute.

A closer look at apologies in political conflicts indicates that such concessions may not be so much deal makers in themselves, as means of facilitating political compromise that may also involve significant material transactions. One telling example concerns the negotiations between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1951, before Germany began reparations payments and before diplomatic relations were established between the two countries (Lustick 2006). In 1948, the newly established State of Israel was in dire economic straits. But Israel and the World Jewish Congress refused to demand direct compensation from Germany for the property of murdered European Jews. Any official recognition or contact with Germany was morally anathema, no matter how actively opposed then-German chancellor Konrad Adenauer and others in his government had been to the previous Nazi regime, and no matter how desperate the need for the money to help consolidate the Jewish state.

With the West's acceptance of the Federal Republic, Jewish insistence on a world boycott of Germany seemed politically untenable. Despite recognizing the political weakness of its international position, Israel insisted that before any amount of money could be considered, Germany must publicly declare contrition for the murder and suffering of Jews at German hands. On September 27, 1951, Adenauer delivered a much anticipated speech at the Bundestag, the German national parliament, acknowledging that "the Federal Republic and with it the great majority of the German people are aware of the immeasurable suffering that was brought upon the Jews of Germany and the occupied territories during the time of National Socialism. The overwhelming majority of the German people abominated the crimes committed against the Jews and did not participate in them." Although this symbolic concession to Jewish sensibilities was only half-hearted — because, in fact, the majority of wartime Germans at least acquiesced to Nazi actions — it was enough to start the reconciliation process between Israel and Germany.

Of course, recognition of sacred values will not lessen tensions if the recognition is perceived as not merely half-hearted but actually insincere. Take, for example, the U.S. administration's apology for the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In May 2004, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld offered "my deepest apology" to "those Iraqis who were mistreated" (Garamone 2004). He then went on to claim that mistreatment was not the fault of U.S. policy, purpose, or principle, but of a few wayward soldiers whose behavior was "inconsistent with the values of our nation, inconsistent with the teachings of the military, and it was fundamentally un-American." As historian Elazar Barkan notes, this hedging of regret at the abuse of the prisoners with regret of Arab misunderstanding of American culture "did not quell the critics." The apology was angrily dismissed as insincere by large segments of the Arab and Muslim world (Barkan 2006).

Mustafa Zahrani, an Iranian scholar and former top diplomat, told us recently that "symbolic statements are important if sincere and without reservation. It was important to us that the United States show consideration and respect for our culture. But in 2000, I was with the mullahs in Mecca when [then-Secretary of State Madeleine] Albright seemed to apologize to Iran for past offenses but then said [in a memorandum] 'despite the trend towards democracy, control over the military, judiciary, courts and police remain in unelected hands.' Our leadership interpreted this as a call for a coup inside our country" (Atran, Axelrod, and Davis 2007a).[11]

Symbolic gestures do not always stand alone, unhinged from all material considerations. Rather, they often help to recast a moral frame that determines the scope and limits of possible material transactions and negotiations. Consider, in this regard, attempts by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to reach agreement following the 2000 Camp David Summit. Then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak had expressed readiness to state regret for the suffering of Palestinian refugees who fled or were expelled during what Israel calls its "War of Independence" and what Palestinians call "the Catastrophe" (*al-Nakba*) and to perhaps accept shared responsibility, but not primary responsibility (as Palestinian leaders insisted). U.S. President Bill Clinton was further prepared to declare publicly the need to compensate and resettle refugees, without requiring Israel to accept refugees into its own territory or to acknowledge responsibility for their sorrow (Gresh 2001).

At Taba in January 2001, the Palestinian delegation formally continued to insist on Israel recognizing "its moral and legal responsibility for the forced displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian civilian population during the 1948 war and for preventing the refugees from returning to their homes." Palestinian negotiators downplayed this insistence when Israel acknowledged willingness to express some responsibility for Palestinian suffering in the wake of Israel's creation and to allow for a symbolic return of a limited number of 1948 refugees into Israel itself (Lustick 2006).

Unfortunately, the timing was wrong. Clinton was handing over power to George W. Bush, and Ehud Barak was about to be replaced by Ariel Sharon. The new leaders wanted to revise the decisions of their political rivals.[12]

With these historical considerations about failed negotiations and our previous experimental findings about sacred barriers to conflict resolution in mind, the members of our team went to the Middle East to compare the responses of leaders to the responses of their publics. From February to March 2007 we talked to leaders of Hamas in Damascus and Gaza, Fateh in Ramallah, and Israel in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (Atran, Axelrod, and Davis 2007b). We probed directly issues of material trade-offs and symbolic concessions. Leaders responded in the same way as their publics, except that for leaders the symbolic concession was not enough in itself but only a necessary condition to opening serious negotiations involving material issues as well. For example, Musa Abu Marzouk, the former chairman and current deputy chairman of Hamas, said "No" to a trade-off for peace without granting a right of return, a more emphatic "No, we do not sell ourselves for any amount" when offered a trade-off with a substantial material incentive (credible offering of substantial U.S. aid for the rebuilding of Palestinian infrastructure), but "Yes, an apology is important, but only as a beginning. It's not enough because our houses and land were taken away from us and something has to be done about that" (Abu Marzouk 2007).

In a parallel line of questioning, we asked Binyamin Netanyahu, a former Israeli Prime Minister and the current opposition leader in parliament, "Would you seriously consider accepting a two-state solution following the 1967 borders if all major Palestinian factions, including Hamas, were to recognize the right of the Jewish people to an independent state in the region?" Referring to symbolic concessions as well as security benefits, he answered, "OK, but the Palestinians would have to show that they sincerely mean it, change their textbooks and anti-Semitic characterizations, and then allow some border adjustments so that Ben Gurion [Airport] would be out of range of shoulder-fired missiles" (Netanyahu 2007).

As Ariel Merari, Israel's former chief hostage negotiator, told us: "Trusting the adversary's intentions is critical to negotiations, which have no chance unless both sides believe the other's willingness to recognize its existential concerns" (2007). Indeed, recognition of some "existential values" may change other existential values into material concerns, "since the PLO's recognition of Israel, most Israelis no longer see rule over the West Bank as existential."

Overcoming Sacred Barriers

Sacred values provide the moral frame that delimits which agreements are possible. For the most part, members of a moral community — be it a family, ethnic group, religious congregation, or nation — implicitly share their community's sacred values. Thus, there is usually no need to refer to

these values or even to be conscious of them when pursuing trade-offs or negotiations within a community. Sacred values usually become highly relevant and salient only when challenged, much as food takes on overwhelming value in people's lives only when it is denied. Direct threats to a community's sacred values are most apparent when different moral communities come into conflict.

Conflict becomes so intense as to appear irresolvable when different communities frame values in ways that make them seem incompatible with each other. But what often makes values incompatible is the way they are applied to the here and now. While values can be held firmly, their application depends a good deal on how they are understood, and what they are taken to imply, and these interpretations and applications of sacred values are not always fixed and inflexible. Indeed, sacred values that seem incompatible within certain frames may actually become compatible when reframed.

In what follows, we offer some advice for reframing sacred values in order to overcome barriers to conflict resolution. We base this advice on our empirical findings and historical analyses.

Refine Sacred Values to Exclude Outmoded Claims

Article 32 of the Hamas Covenant (1988) highlights "Zionist scheming . . . laid out in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*." *The Protocols* is a notorious anti-Semitic tract forged by Russian Czarist police. In private, Hamas leaders grant that *The Protocols* may not be a statement of fact. By explicitly renouncing its endorsement of *The Protocols*, Hamas could demonstrate that it no longer wants others to see it as anti-Semitic. Likewise, Israel could distance itself from the old Zionist slogan that Palestine was, "A Land without People for a People without Land."[13]

Our talks with leaders on both sides indicate awareness that their current positions involve outmoded and historically inaccurate claims. They also acknowledge that were the other side to renounce such blatant falsehoods, this could lead to a psychological breakthrough. Overcoming historical precedents and emotional barriers to renouncing even patently false claims, however, may require neutral mediation by those who understand both sides. Even then, it takes time. According to Lord John Alderdice, a principal mediator in the Northern Ireland conflict, it took nine years of back-and-forth for this to happen in Northern Ireland (Alderdice 2007a and 2007b).[14]

Exploit the Inevitable Ambiguity of Sacred Values

Reframing values may require creative ambiguity and involve asymmetry in the way each side perceives the reframing. For example, during World War II the U.S. government promised the American people and its allies that it would accept nothing less than "unconditional surrender." But the government and people of Japan were adamant that the Emperor must

be preserved. Realizing this, the United States reframed the meaning of "unconditional surrender" by making clear that it would graciously allow the Emperor of Japan to retain his title and liberty.

People often apply the "same" sacred values in different ways, which facilitates creative use of ambiguity. Many Americans consider "equality" to be a core value, a gift from God, and a self-evident truth as stated in the Declaration of Independence and codified under the law in the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Historically, though, popular and legal notions of equality have varied considerably and continue to do so: from voting privileges only for property-holding white males to "universal suffrage," and from "separate but equal" education for whites and blacks to "equal opportunity" for all men and women.

Religious values are particularly open-textured in this way (Atran 2002), however much people believe their interpretation to be the only literal or right one. In Judaism, the religious commandment to "Keep the Sabbath Holy," whose violation in biblical times was punishable by death, continues to undergo radical reinterpretation: in today's Jerusalem, a chief dispute between Orthodox versus Reform Jews is whether God allows driving on Saturdays. Or, take the biblical commandment "Thou Shalt Not Kill" — many U.S. conservatives believe it warrants both an antiabortion agenda and capital punishment, whereas many U.S. liberals consider this commandment to warrant abolition of capital punishment and a pro-abortion rights agenda. American political leaders who seek election or to govern from the center must learn to finesse seemingly contrary interpretations of sacred values in creative ways.

For both Israelis and Palestinians, "The Land" is sacred, with Jerusalem at its center. Israelis simply refer to their country as "The Land" (*Ha-Aretz*), whereas for Palestinians "Land and Honor" (*Ard wal 'Ard*) are one. Israeli political leaders creatively reinterpreted the historical scope of "The Land," first to justify claims on Gaza and then to justify leaving it. If Palestinians, who simply refer to Jerusalem as "The Holy" (*Al Quds*), can reframe their idea of the city to include only its Arab suburbs and part of the Temple Mount (*Haram Al-Sharif*), then Israel might be willing to accept the Palestinian capital there. Constructively reframing the issue of Jerusalem in this way need not call into question "the strength of attachment" to the sacred value of Jerusalem.

For Muslims, the meaning of *jihad*, or "Holy War," can be interpreted in radically different ways, whether as an inner mental struggle for the preservation of faith or as physical combat against external enemies who threaten Islam. For supporters of militant Islamist groups whom we have surveyed, including members of Hamas and Indonesia's *Jemaah Islamiyah*, *jihad* is the "Sixth Pillar" of Islam, which trumps four of the five traditional pillars (almsgiving, pilgrimage, fasting, and prayer); only the pillar expressing faith in God stands up to *jihad*. For many other Muslims, there is no

such "Sixth Pillar," and professed belief in it may be heretical and blasphemous. Given the popular and political division of Palestinian society today, Palestinian leaders must carefully navigate meanings of *jihad* without alienating major segments of Palestinian society or the outside world.

This issue of reframing *jihad* is currently an important consideration in Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism efforts. As one senior Saudi official (2008) recently told us:

> During the Afghanistan war [with the Soviets] we praised the *mujahedin* and Bin Laden in our newspapers everyday. He was the leader of the Arab heroes. *Mujahedin* entered our vocabulary in a positive frame. Then we said he was bad. The people were confused. Before a hero and overnight a bad man. We had to reframe *jihad* to distinguish "moral *jihad*" from the *Takfiri* ideology [a "rejectionist" view of Islam, including rejection of *Wahabi* and *Salafi* ideology which prohibits sowing discord, or *fitna*, among Muslims; *takfir* means "excommunication" and preaches that those who do no follow jihad are *kuffar*, or "infidels," including Muslims who are excommunicated and so can be killed]. The mujahedin had been heroes for us, and for you [America] in Afghanistan and now they were terrorists . . . and we had to have a way of reframing *jihad* in order to show that the Takfiri way of *jihad* was different, their training, ideology, tactics.

Shift the Context

One way leaders can navigate through the muddle of meanings that attend sacred values is to shift the context so that one sacred value becomes more relevant than others in a specific context. At West Point for example, cadets acculturate to two competing "honor codes." There is a formal one, which requires telling the truth and obeying the orders of hierarchical superiors, and an informal one, which entails loyalty to peers. Army leaders understand that at times they must carefully balance vertical loyalty to commanders against horizontal loyalties to comrades, for example, by not punishing cadets who refuse to snitch on their buddies.

We spoke with Sheikh Hassan Yousef, a West Bank Hamas leader currently detained in Israel's Ketziot prison, about suicide bombers. "Suffering and humiliation make it understandable, even animals defend themselves to the death," he told us. "But God created people to live, not to die. We have to find an exit. We need a dialogue of civilizations, not a clash of civilizations. No mother wants her child to die" (Atran 2004). Then-Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya expressed a similar sentiment to us (Atran 2006). These Hamas leaders clearly mean here to appeal to our common understanding of humanity as being equal to, or greater than, Islamist calls for martyrdom. Of course, on other occasions and in other circumstances these same leaders may reverse priorities, for example, when they feel possible windows of opportunity for a breakthrough to the

outside, such as international recognition or aid, are closed to them. Such changing appeals do not necessarily represent either "flip flops" in thinking or hypocrisy but a fluid and changing appreciation of values according to how circumstances can be framed in terms of them. That is part of the paradoxical nature of sacred values, "eternal" and morally absolute, yet widely open to interpretation.

One way to shift context is to change a value's scope from the here and now to an indefinite time in the future. In the 1920s, for example, the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin moved the goal of a world victory for communism to an indefinite future when he declared communism in one country to have priority, contradicting Lenin's views that the imperial powers were about to destroy themselves in historical time.

Ami Ayalon, former head of Shin Beit, Israel's counter-terrorism and internal security agency, expressed to us his view that Hamas's proposals for a *hudna*, or provisional armistice, could be moving in this direction (see Atran, Axelrod, and Davis 2007c). Consider that the first *hudna* was the eighth-century Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, a nonaggression pact between Mohammed and the Quraish tribe. The founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, originally offered a ten-year *hudna* in return for complete withdrawal from all territories captured in the Six Day War and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. At various times, Yasin stated that a *hudna* was renewable for thirty, forty, or one hundred years, although it would never signal recognition of Israel. Ahmed Yousef, political adviser to then-Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, told us that there is no limit in principle to how many times a *hudna* might be renewed. He compared Hamas's practical willingness to live alongside Israel to the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) willingness to accept a permanent armistice with Great Britain while still refusing to recognize British sovereignty over Northern Ireland. Of course, the IRA never refused to recognize Britain's existence, and many Israelis believe that Hamas's refusal of recognition and permanent peace indicate that any *hudna* will just be a smoke screen to allow military preparation for an eventual attack on Israel. For Ahmed Yousef, an indefinite *hudna* in no way contradicts Hamas's refusal to recognize Israel. But for Ami Ayalon (who recently lost the vote for leadership of Israel's Labor Party to Ehud Barak), a *hudna* that disallows military preparation for an attack on Israel and does not *explicitly* rule out some future form of recognition can allow dialogue.

Provisionally Prioritize Values
Fulfilling one sacred value may require delay in achieving others. To save the American Union, President Abraham Lincoln was willing to postpone emancipation. Similarly, Israeli leader David Ben Gurion was willing to accept a partition of Palestine that left Israel without control over historical Judea or Jerusalem in order to attain statehood. Lincoln and Ben Gurion

both wanted the delay to be only provisional. Nevertheless, in later life Ben Gurion argued against settlement in the West Bank and Gaza. This example suggests that prioritization of current values may allow for a change in the scope of values over time.

Yasser Arafat, who headed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), steered that organization to officially recognize Israel. But Fateh, the PLO's largest contingent, also headed by Arafat, has never renounced its guiding principles and goals. These include, in Article 12 of Fateh's constitution, the "complete liberation of Palestine, and eradication of Zionist economic, political, military, and cultural existence" (Fateh 1964). In a related vein, Hamas's Ghazi Hamad noted that although Hamas may continue to call for an end to Israel, a Hamas-led government could officially acknowledge Israel if a majority of Palestinians expressed this desire through a popular referendum. "There is a difference between a political party's principles and obligations of a government," he told us. "After all, not everything in the Republican Party platform is United States government policy."

Previous Israeli governments were never entirely convinced that Arafat's commitment to the PLO position on recognition of Israel trumped the Fateh Constitution's prohibition of recognition. The current Israeli government rejected the idea that the Hamas-led government would possibly "allow" recognition of Israel as a Hamas ploy to mask its real intentions to destroy Israel. But several senior members of the present Israeli government and opposition to whom we spoke consider Palestinian president and current Fateh leader Mahmoud Abbas to be sincere in recognizing Israel's right to exist and in wanting peace, despite the persistence of nonrecognition clauses in Fateh's constitution. This suggests, again, that pragmatic prioritization of one value over another, however provisional to begin with, may facilitate a more permanent realignment of values.

Demonstrate Respect Where Possible

One way to demonstrate respect for the other side's sacred values is to avoid insulting the other side with offers to buy off their core values with money. As we have seen, offering material trade-offs for core values can backfire and actually increase moral outrage, disgust, and propensity for violence.

Another relatively low-cost way to show respect for other's values is to find things that mean much to the other side but little to one's own side. In the case of "ping-pong diplomacy" that we discussed earlier, the United States demonstrated respect for Chinese sensitivity about receiving equal treatment on the world stage by demonstrating that America does not always have to better China in matters that the Chinese care for.

As an example of a relatively small symbolic step that may have big implications, consider the recent approval by the Israeli education ministry of a textbook for Arab third graders in Israel that for the first time describes Israel's 1948 War of Independence as a "catastrophe" for many Palestinians

and their society. In a recent op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune*, Rami Khouri, director of the Issam Fares Institute at the American University of Beirut and editor-at-large of the Beirut-based *Daily Star*, echoed a growing sentiment that

> this may be the first tangible sign that the Zionist Israeli establishment is prepared to move in the direction of acknowledging what happened to Palestinians in 1948, which is a vital Palestinian demand for any serious peace-making effort to succeed. Israelis in turn would expect a reciprocal Palestinian acknowledgement of Israel's core narrative (Khouri 2007).

It is noteworthy that the revised textbooks are only for Arab children, not Jewish children, which is why, above, we characterized this symbolic step as "relatively small." If Jewish children also learned this revised history it would better signal a sincere concession. But such a concession, though still relatively easy to implement, carries increased risk for undermining part of Zionism's moral narrative among the next generation. Undertaking the added risk may require an offsetting symbolic gesture from the other side. As Binyamin Netanyahu intimated, a change in Palestinian textbooks that omitted reference to Jewish perfidy since the time of Mohammed could reciprocally signal a sincere change of heart.

Still another way to demonstrate respect for the "who we are" aspect of a sacred value is to use the other side's preferred name: for example, the People's Republic of China rather than "red China," Israel rather than "the Jewish entity," or the Palestinian people rather than "Palestinian Arabs."

Apologize for What You Sincerely Regret

An apology should be consistent with one's own core values while simultaneously demonstrating sensitivity to the values of others. Unfortunately, an apology that is viewed as insincere can make matters worse. A good example is Japan's repeated apologies for atrocities committed in World War Two. China dismissed Japan's apologies and practically froze relations between the two countries when Japanese Prime Minister Junishiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine, a shrine that honors Japan's 2.5 million war dead but also includes fourteen convicted Class-A war criminals (People's Daily Online 2006; Onishi 2007).[15]

Likewise, a qualified apology can be seen as worse than none at all. We have seen this in the case of the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib. When the United States apologized only for the acts of a few wayward soldiers, the result was angry dismissal by many in the Arab and Muslim world (Barkan 2006).

Without the acceptance of responsibility, apologies may not work. For Palestinians, Israel's continued settlement activity has been inconsistent with steps made toward recognition of Palestinian rights, including acknowledgment of some responsibility for the 1948 "catastrophe" and

recognition of the plight of Palestinian refugees. For Israelis, in turn, the Palestinian Authority's failure to prevent armed attacks on Israeli civilians has been inconsistent with Palestinian overtures of recognition of the right of the Jewish people to an independent state in the region. The result is distrust of the other's sincerity by both sides. Symbolic gestures provide openings only if consistent actions follow.

One way to assess whether or not an apology might work is to float it through back channels or try it out in private. As we have seen, the Federal Republic of Germany's apology to the Jewish people took serious negotiation before finally reaching a text acceptable to Germany and sufficient for Israel.

Reframe Responsibility

In the winter of 2008, Israel was unable to prevent numerous rocket attacks coming from the Gaza Strip. The continuing attacks were a challenge to Israel's sovereignty and honor. The Israeli government had a choice about whom to hold responsible. It chose to hold responsible Fateh as well as its rival, Hamas, even though Hamas had control of the Gaza Strip. In other words, Israel chose a frame that held Palestine as a whole responsible for what any of their factions did. Framing the situation this way had the advantage for Israel of putting pressure on Hamas not only directly, but also indirectly through Fateh. But if Fateh had little leverage on the actions of Hamas, then holding Fateh as well as Hamas responsible would not be effective. Indeed, holding Fateh responsible would risk undermining Fateh's policy of restraint toward Israel.

Alternatively, Israel could have reframed the situation so as to hold only Hamas (and its allies in Gaza) responsible for the rocket attacks. Reframing the situation this way would have forgone whatever leverage Fateh might have had over Hamas but would have the advantage of sustaining the understandings with Fateh that have led to a relatively low level of attack from the West Bank. Which frame would best serve Israel's interest in the long run would depend on whether Fateh had effective capacity to pressure Hamas *or* could get such capacity if pushed hard enough. In general, the choice of how to frame responsibility for an action from the other side is implicitly a matter of strategic analysis even more than a question about which frame is more accurate as a description of who caused the action to be taken.[16] Of course, Israel was not completely free to choose any frame it wished. In particular, holding only Hamas responsible would not have been tolerated by those Israelis who refused to make any distinctions among Palestinian factions as long as Israel's sovereignty and honor were being challenged.

A Possible Key to Impossible Conflicts

Reframing sacred values presents special difficulties and opportunities for overcoming barriers to seemingly intractable conflicts. The difficulty in

reframing issues that involve sacred values lies in the people's general unwillingness to concede that they will ever abandon, or even significantly change, their attachment to a sacred value. Doing so would likely be seen as tantamount to abandoning or altering core social identity. The opportunities for reframing issues that involve sacred values arise from the fact that their propositional content is generally open-textured, somewhat the way metaphors are. This is particularly true of religious values, which survive in time and spread in space because they are readily reinterpretable in ways that are sensitive to changing contexts (Atran and Norenzayan 2004).

In sum, our empirical findings from the Middle East and our historical examples suggest an approach to seemingly intractable political conflicts that differs from received wisdom about "business-like" negotiations. Asking the other side to compromise a sacred value by offering material concessions can make matters worse, not better. Our evidence shows that both the public and its leaders may interpret such material offers as an insult. Surprisingly, however, our survey results and discussions with leaders indicate that even materially intangible symbolic gestures that show respect for the other side and its core values may open the door to dialogue in the worst of conflicts.

Finding ways to reframe core values so as to overcome psychological barriers to symbolic offerings is a daunting challenge. But meeting this challenge may offer greater opportunities for breakthroughs to peace than hitherto realized. The difficulty in creatively reframing sacred values may provide a key to unlocking the most deep-seated conflicts.

NOTES

1. In particular, rather than focus on positions, we focus on the parties' underlying interests, including the protection of sacred values, and rather than bargaining over positions, we focus on recognizing and acknowledging the sacred values involved in order to invent options for mutual gain.

2. Graham Allison (1971) shows how bureaucratic interests can affect the "face of an issue." Kingdon (1995) shows how "policy entrepreneurs" can get an issue on the national agenda by advocating particular problem definitions and proposals.

3. We do not wish to imply that devoted actors are irrational. Devoted actors use the logic of appropriateness (I choose something because I think it is appropriate for perceived rules and/or to what I consider to be my identity) rather than the logic of consequences (I choose something because of its anticipated consequences) (March and Olsen 1989). Of course, to protect an important value, a consequentialist might wish to appear to be using the logic of appropriateness (Schelling 1960).

4. For work on overcoming cultural barriers in negotiation see Lederach (1995), Grove and Carter (1999), and Bazerman, Tebrunsel, and Wade-Benzoni (2008).

5. A useful website on intractable conflicts is at http://www.beyondintractability.org/index.jsp?nid=1, accessed March 19, 2008.

6. In the aftermath of opposition to the 1765 Stamp Act, which many colonists saw as a violation of the "rights of free men" to the principal of no taxation without representation,

England's Parliament continued to insist on the principal of taxing its colonies but tried to mollify opposition by imposing only moderate duties. The supposedly innocuous nature of the taxes, argued John Dickinson in *Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania* in 1768, masked their true perniciousness: "Nothing is wanted at home but a PRECEDENT, the force of which shall be established by the tacit submission of the colonies . . . IF Parliament succeeds in this attempt, other statutes will impose sums of money as they choose to take, *without any other* LIMITATION *than their* PLEASURE."

7. The results are based on two surveys of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Both were conducted in person. One was a sample of 535 refugees interviewed in December 2005. The other was a random sample of 719 Palestinian students surveyed individually in fourteen Palestinian university campuses throughout the West Bank and Gaza in May–June 2006, a month before the Israeli re-entry into Gaza. The student sample consisted of approximately equal numbers of students who self-identified as Islamists (50.1 percent) and nationalists (49.9 percent), of males (49.9 percent) and females (50.1 percent).

8. In experiments in which psychologist Douglas Medin offers people an exact material replication of their wedding ring, as well as a significant cash bonus, they generally do not accept the bargain. Those who trade are usually in the process of getting a divorce or are foreign spouses of Americans from cultures in which rings are not symbols of the sanctity of marriage.

9. Note that cricket matches between India and Pakistan are not likely to have such an effect because cricket has more or less equal value for both countries, so that game becomes zero-sum, with only a loser and a winner.

10. For details of the first two surveys see endnote 7. The third survey sampled 601 Jewish adults residing in the West Bank and Gaza (settlers). This sample was selected via random digit dialing procedures in which all telephone numbers had an equal probability of selection. This population consists primarily of people who moved to the West Bank and Gaza after the 1967 war for economic benefits or religious/ideological beliefs and who occupy significant tracts of land that would make up a Palestinian State and who generally refuse to leave. The survey was carried out in August 2005, a few days before the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

11. See also Pollack (2004) and World Federation of Scientists (2007). On January 7, 1998, the new "reformist" Iranian president Mohamed Khatami stated in an interview with CNN: "I do know that the feelings of the great American people have been hurt, and of course I regret it." He reiterated Iranian grievances against the United States but went on to compare in a very positive vein the current process of nation building in Iran with the heroic age of American nation building in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On April 12, 1999, at a formal dinner at the White House President Bill Clinton stated with pointed reference to Iran: "I think sometimes it's quite important to tell people, look, you have a right to be angry at something my country or my culture did to you fifty or sixty or one-hundred or one-hundred-fifty years ago. But that is different from saying that I am outside the faith, and you are God's chosen."

12. An important question here is whether the very act of apology was partly responsible for the loss of support for Barak (and Khatami; see endnote 11). Public support on the issue may first have to be sounded out or prepared.

13. This expression was coined by Israel Zangwill a century ago. The point Zangwill was making was that the Arab population of Palestine was not a distinct nationality.

14. On issues related to framing in the Northern Ireland case see also Grove and Carter (1999), Byrne (2001), and Stephenson, Condor, and Abell (2007).

15. Another telling example of a failed apology concerns Japan's attempts to compensate the aging victims of its wartime sexual slavery. In 1995, Japan set up the Asian Women's Fund to pay out money to former "comfort women" in South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines. But the Japanese government stressed that the money came from "citizens" and not from the government itself, arguing that postwar treaties absolve it from all individual claims related to World War Two. The governments of Taiwan and South Korea rejected payments from the fund, accusing Japan of failing to clearly take moral responsibility in "atoning" for its treatment of the women. For general advice on apologies, see Goldberg, Green, and Sander (1987). On the conditions for success of an apology in health care disputes, see Robbennolt (2005).

16. This analysis applies the idea of rewarding positive acts as well as punishing hostile acts. For a sophisticated treatment of the long-run effects of alternative frames, see Dennett (2003).

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