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Trends. Diplomacy, Time, and Conflict

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The nature of time may be the bailiwick of theoretical physicists or research neurobiologists, but time's properties too often affect conflict, diplomacy, and conflict resolution. How is this? The phenomenology of human perception is anchored to the present, even if the content of perception may be about the past, present, and future. The same is the case with any perception of conflict as the target of behavioral intervention--as well as perceptions of behavioral intervention.

As just one example, behavioral interventions may include the development and authorization of political documents about civil and human rights, geographical boundaries, the rule of law, the role of religious ideology, or the status of languages and cultures. The development and authorization occur in the present. Consequences of development and authorization occur in many presents--only one of which is the present of the moment, the rest being in the future. And perceptions of development, authorization, and consequences also occur in many presents--even as these perceptions possess content from the past, present, and future. Yet more and more often in a post-Cold War environment, psychological motivators of conflict possess cognitive and emotional content mostly from the past. Surely this seems to be the case according to analyses of the motivation of ethnic Albanians fighting and supporting fighting against Macedonian government forces in northern Macedonia.

The nature of time--as it bears on human phenomenology--presents seemingly insoluble problems for rational and logical approaches to conflict prevention and resolution. The same nature may present a partial basis for the role of irrational and illogical--or, perhaps, "other-rational" and "other-logical"-phenomena in the political world. (See Campbell, S. S., Murphy, P. J., & Boothroyd, C. E. (2001). Long-term time estimation is influenced by circadian phase. *Physiology and Behavior*, 72, 589-593; Hammer, J., & Cirjakovic, Z. (April 30, 2001). Tetovo Dispatch: Borderlines. *The New Republic*, pp. 24-26; Khalsa, S. B. S., Jewett, M. E., Duffy, J. F., & Czeisler, C. A. (2000). The timing of the human circadian clock is accurately represented by the core body temperature rhythm following phase shifts to a three-cycle light stimulus near the critical zone. *Journal of Biological Rhythms*, 15, 524-530; Varela, F.J. (1999). Present-time consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6, 111-140.) (Keywords: Conflict, Diplomacy, Intervention, Time.)