The policymaker and the psychiatrist work toward the same end: the mediation and resolution of conflict. Both deal with types of perception, factors that influence perception, the nature of communication, and the character of the decision-making process.

Foreign policy emerges from a nation's perceptions — and misperceptions — of itself and other nations. It reflects the attitudes of the nation as a whole and those of its individual decision-makers. Psychiatry explores the perceptions and misperceptions, conscious and unconscious, that determine human behavior. There has been a growing recognition that the insights of the psychiatrist and those of the policymaker can converge to provide a deeper understanding of the sources and manifestations of international conflict.

This was clearly perceived by Albert Einstein. 50 years ago this July, when he wrote to Sigmund Freud that:

It would be of the greatest service to us all were you to present the problem of world peace in the light of your most recent discoveries, for such a presentation might well blaze the trail for new and fruitful modes of action.

Anwar Sadat went to Jerusalem five years ago where he addressed the Knesset and asserted:

Yet there remains another wall. This wall constitutes a psychological barrier between us, a barrier of suspicion, a barrier of rejection: a barrier of fear, of deception, a barrier of hallucination without any action, deed or decision... A barrier of distorted and eroded interpretation of every event and statement. It is this psychological barrier which I described in official statements as constituting 70% of the whole problem.

Einstein's challenge to Freud marks the first significant challenge to the relatively new science of psychiatry to address its theory and experience to the problems of human survival. The statement of Anwar Sadat marks the first time that a world leader has indicated that psychological barriers play a significant role in the continuation of conflict between nations. The 45 years that elapsed between these two statements were marked by a repeated series of world tragedies, each illustrating the consequences and power of unperceived psychological factors.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to 1932, psychiatrists who wrote on the subject of conflict did so in terms of a general acknowledgment that psychiatry held potential implications, yet undiscovered, beyond the individual psyche. Freud, for example, was pessimistic about redirecting man's aggressiveness but did recognize, in Thoughts for the Times of War and Death, that psychiatry's insights would not always be limited to consideration of the individual human being. Alfred Adler recorded his observations on
the psychological dynamics of war while serving as a
doctor in the Austrian army during World War I.
Following that war, William Alanson White expressed
his hope of stability in international relations in *Thoughts of a Psychiatrist on the War and After*, stating that "some
psychological speculations regarding the principles in-
volved may not be out of place."

A clearly definable point of historic significance was
reached with Einstein's 1932 correspondence with Freud.
Einstein's work lay outside the field of psychiatry; he was
in a unique position to comprehend the destructive
potential of modern technology and the already serious
possibility of a second world war. It is therefore
significant that when the League of Nations, seeking new
approaches to peace, asked him to initiate correspondence
with intellectuals, he chose to write to Sigmund Freud
and to pose the question: "Why War?" Freud's hesitant
response was far from encouraging, but one thing was
certain — the correspondence opened communication
between the disparate fields of psychiatry and foreign
affairs.

In 1935, the Netherlands Association of Psychiatrists
prepared a document that became known as the
Netherlands Manifesto. It was signed by 339 psychiatrists
from 30 countries and sent to government officials
throughout the world. Four years before World War II,
the Manifesto proclaimed:

We psychiatrists, whose duty it is to investigate the
normal and diseased mind, and to serve mankind with
our knowledge, feel compelled to address a serious word
to you in our (capacity as) physicians. It seems to us that
there is in the world a mentality which entails grave
dangers to mankind... We psychiatrists declare that our
science is sufficiently advanced for us to distinguish
between real, pretended and unconscious motives, even in
statesmen.

Formal replies to the Manifesto were received from
19 nations. Absent from the list were Germany,
Italy, and Japan.

Four months before the attack on Pearl Harbor,
Dr. George H. Stevenson delivered a presidential
address on "The Psychiatric Public Health Aspects
of War" to the American Psychiatric Association.
Intended as a guide to psychiatrists' future efforts,
the speech asked that the profession turn its energy
toward preventive psychiatry and that it assume
"responsibility for international mental health." In
response to his appeals, the Association formed a
committee on international relations.

In 1946, as part of the William Alanson White
Memorial Lectures, General G.B. Chisholm delivered
a series of addresses on "The Psychiatry of Enduring
Peace and Social Progress." He observed:

That the states of emotional health of the individuals
determine the internal organization, consistency, and the
external relations of the community in terms of actual
survival has become obvious to every thinking person.
The texts of the lectures were submitted to many highly
placed government leaders.

General Chisholm's remarks did not go unheeded. A
growing psychiatric constituency was becoming fully
aware of the individual's interdependence with the
community and the nation. Dr. Harry Stack Sullivan
observed, "Psychiatry is becoming too important to
society at large to be restricted in use to the monastic
world in which it was nurtured." Dr. William Menninger
declared in 1947:

We need to develop more medical statesmanship so that
our findings and recommendations can be presented to
leaders in high councils in many fields of activity. Can we
and should we undertake this? We can no longer evade a
decision on the matter.

In 1949, the American Psychiatric Association released

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an official position statement to the general public and
government leaders. It presented the Association's
concern for the tenuous ties between nations, its distress
over the ephemeral nature of peace, and its discipline's
interest in conflict beyond the level of the individual:

The American Psychiatric Association is seriously
cconcerned about the unusual psychological features
which are a part of the present international tensions. It
believes it has a duty to offer a statement of these matters
for the attention of national leaders in all countries and
for the general public, whose health and welfare are
intimately related to international tensions.

In 1964, the Committee on Social Issues of the Group
for the Advancement of Psychiatry released its document,
"The Psychiatric Aspects of the Prevention of Nuclear
War." The effort clearly indicated an increasing interest
in the area of international relations. "We hope to indicate,"
the introduction stated, "how various psychological
problems interact significantly with social realities and

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how they mutually reinforce, alter, or lessen the influence of each other. As behavioral scientists we cannot but be mindful of how, throughout history, social realities have been based on a fusion of objective phenomena with aspects of human irrationality.

The remainder of the 1960s witnessed an increasing flow of ideas on war and on man’s relations with his fellow man at the international level. Dr. Bryant Wedge published “Psychiatry and International Affairs”; Dr. Judd Marmor wrote on “The Psychology of Man in a Warless World”; the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry released reports on “The Psychiatrist and Public Issues” and “The VIP with Psychiatric Impairment”; Dr. Jerome Frank published Sanity and Survival; and Dr. Howard Rome observed in the American Journal of Psychiatry that “the new turn in psychiatry is to an examination of large-scale problems.”

In 1969, Senator J. William Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, initiated a series of hearings on the “Psychological Aspects of Foreign Policy.” “It is believed by many that wars begin in the minds of men,” he said. “I am inclined to view it that the mysteries of political behavior have their origin in the mysteries of the human mind, and yet an examination of the human mind in order to understand our own political behavior has heretofore not appealed to either the public or to political leaders.” He continued, “It may be that we are frightened by the possibilities that might be revealed by some self-examination.”

In April of 1970, the Institute for Psychiatry and Foreign Affairs was established in Washington. The objectives of the Institute are:

1. To examine the psychological and cultural dimensions of international conflict and international cooperation.
2. To explore the relevance of psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, sociology and other behavioral sciences in defining and addressing the individual and governmental problems involved in the conduct of foreign policy and international relations.
3. To afford stimulating circumstances for dialogue, national and international, between persons in the human sciences and those in government.
4. To encourage and conduct research in the relevance of cultural attitudes and modes of human behavior to the understanding and shaping of foreign policy.

In cooperation with other institutions around the world, the Institute sponsors conferences which have brought together psychiatrists, political analysts, historians, politicians, and diplomats.

The American Psychiatric Association established its Task Force on Psychiatry and Foreign Affairs in 1969. The Task Force sponsored study groups and symposia on arms control, the Cyprus situation, and the India-Pakistan war. From 1973 to the present, it has focused its efforts on the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 1973, the APA strengthened its commitment to exploring the relationship of the two fields by establishing a Standing Committee on Psychiatry and Foreign Affairs during the presidential year of Dr. Jack Weinberg. Dr. Weinberg had been interested in the work of the Task Force for some years, and felt that it was now appropriate that the APA recognize formally the significance of this work by the creation of a standing committee. Since its founding in 1977, this Committee has focused its efforts on the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has sponsored two major international conferences, and a series of meetings.

THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

The October 1973 War transformed not only the political strategic, but also the psychological configuration of the conflict. In the course of a series of meetings, psychiatrists, political analysts, and policymakers studied specific ways in which this stage of the conflict, like those preceding it, had produced a hardening of the adversaries’ animosities. Discussion focused in large part on how events had brought about radical reversals in the Arab’s and the Israeli’s self-perceptions: How the Arab’s successful attacks constituted “an assault on fear itself,” causing an upsurge in Arab self-esteem; how the Israeli sense of humiliation brought about a rapid emotional shift from a certain arrogance and overconfidence to grief, protectiveness and insecurity. There emerged a hope that, as Arabs and Israelis were forced to recognize in one another human dimensions they had previously attributed solely to themselves, each would become more psychologically equipped to enter into dialogue on interpersonal and diplomatic planes.

In November 1977, Anwar Sadat made his historic visit to Jerusalem and addressed the Knesset. The newly formed APA Committee on Psychiatry and Foreign Affairs decided that a fact-finding mission to both Israel
and Egypt was the next logical step in its work. A two-phase mission to the Middle East was organized. In January of 1978, five psychiatrists visited Cairo to engage Egyptian policymakers, social scientists, journalists, and fellow psychiatrists in dialogue concerning the details of the peacemaking process and the longstanding problems of coexistence. This visit was followed by a parallel visit to Israel in March of 1978. The Committee members met with Israeli political leaders, diplomats, psychiatrists, and political scientists. Both of these trips strengthened the Committee’s commitment to the work and demonstrated fully that dialogue between specially trained psychiatrists and policymakers is not only possible, but may be quite fruitful.

The first major meeting of the new Committee was held in Washington in January of 1980.* The conference was built around three delegations: Egyptian, Israeli, and American. Participating in the Egyptian and Israeli delegations were psychiatrists who had worked with their American colleagues for several years prior to the meeting. However, of special significance was the inclusion of diplomats, historians, politicians, and military men. The participants lived together almost continuously for the week of the Conference.

The Washington Conference stimulated both the Egyptians and the Israelis to create working groups capable of further participation in the process. Subsequently, visits between Egyptians and Israelis continued and strengthened the personal relationships that had begun in Washington.

In July of 1981, the second major conference was held. Due to the increasingly tense political situation in the Middle East, it was felt that a more neutral location was advantageous, and thus the meeting was held in Switzerland.

By this time, the American delegation had been joined by a consultant from the US Department of State, and both the Israeli and Egyptian delegations had two diplomats of permanent ambassadorial rank. This inclusion of senior members of the diplomatic community has long been an established part of the process. It is critical that the contributions of psychiatric theory and experience be continuously examined in the light of diplomatic practice and political reality. The Geneva Conference* occurred simultaneously with a flare-up of hostilities in Lebanon. Against the very real backdrop of war, the issues were discussed with a renewed sense of reality and urgency.

It is important to recall that this work began immediately after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and has

*The Proceedings of this conference are forthcoming.
continued through the Yom Kippur War, the Sinai disengagement process, the Camp David Accords, the return of the Sinai, and the various outbreaks in Lebanon and the West Bank. Each of these situations has produced new and different strains on the group which have forced a continual process of psychological growth and commitment.

In addition to the intense intellectual and professional effort made to examine the conflict between Arabs and Israelis, the following levels of interaction add to the complexity of the already deeply emotion-laden subject matter:

- Individual interaction and personal psychology.
- Cultural, ethnic and religious background.
- Group dynamics, including inter- and intragroup interaction.
- National identity and loyalties.
- International politics and conflict.

Even with this brief and schematic description of the process, it is easy to perceive the difficult and recurrent problems which face the continuation of this process. However, we are pleased to report at this time that the process continues. The work of this Committee has been established in the field of psychiatry and foreign affairs, is growing, and has excellent prospects for the future.

In attempting to understand how this group has continued to grow and function successfully, we have observed the following essential dynamics:

- The Committee has developed a close and trusted relationship among its members.
- Its membership has remained essentially constant over the past seven years. Two members of the group have collaborated in both the APA Task Force and the Committee over a period of 14 years.
- All members of the group have had either a bicultural background, training in relations between cultures, or a major cross-cultural experience prior to their participation in the group.
- All members of the group are deeply committed to the continuation of the process over time, without which there can be no possible hope of success.
- Critical to the successful functioning of the Committee has been the continuing presence of a single APA staff member who is constantly available as center of communication and planning of logistical support, and who fully understands the diversity of Egyptian, Israeli, and American cultures.
- The Committee, by both its unique history and shared experience, has been able to process the dynamics not only of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also the dynamics operating among the Israeli, Egyptian, and American delegations.
- Only by this ongoing effort to understand intergroup dynamics could the process survive the tensions, hostilities, and overt outbreaks of rage which inevitably mark this kind of meeting.

Thus, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Einstein’s appeal to Freud, it is safe to say that from a very sporadic and uncertain beginning, this new field (and we now choose to call it a field) of psychiatry and foreign affairs is now established and growing, and has every indication of increasing its diplomatic expertise and theoretical sophistication.

We are pleased that this work has resulted in a much clearer understanding of the three major dynamics of international conflict: victimization, dehumanization, and the intergenerational transmission of historic enmity. Until we understand fully these three engines of war, whose causes are deeply rooted in both individual psychology and national experience, we cannot break out of the unending repetition of international conflict.

Is it not possible that 50 years after Einstein’s appeal to Freud we have begun to isolate and examine those “strong psychological factors which paralyze all efforts to stop wars” as the first step in freeing us from their grasp?

Is it not possible that we are now beginning to move forward to attack “the psychological barrier between us — the barrier of suspicion, rejection and fear?” We can only hope that we have in some way begun the fulfillment of Einstein’s challenge and Sadat’s vision.