

To Act or Wait: A Two-Stage View of Ripeness

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This paper examines different conceptions of ripeness to evaluate their usefulness to war termination theory and practice. After examining the objective and subjective elements of ripeness, it suggests that the first definitions can be linked by using bureaucratic decisionmaking models and “two-table” negotiating models. This article concludes that ripeness can be enhanced through a systematic combination of its objective and subjective elements within a framework of possible policy options and intervention actions. It stresses that collaboration and communication between Track I and Track II intervenors is the key to transforming ripeness from a condition to a goal.

Keywords: ripeness, war termination, intervention

The Question of Ripeness

What does it mean to say that a conflict is ripe for resolution, or that the right time has come to seek negotiations? Why should one time be any better than another, and if it is, what makes it so? These are some of the basic questions that come to mind when examining the phenomenon known as “ripeness.” There is a common-sense notion that intervention into violent situations, or negotiation of violent conflicts, is more likely to succeed at some times than at others or in some situations or sets of circumstances rather than others. Following the lead of I. William Zartman, this notion has come to be called ripeness, and much thought has been given to ways to define, identify, codify, and predict when it will occur in different conflict situations. However, while believing in its premise, many authors have differed in their definition, placement, and application of ripeness to the venue of conflict termination.

For this work, I believe that the question is not when to intervene, but how to intervene at different times. For instance, the governmental level intervention into Northern Ireland’s conflict was largely successful because of the work that had been done by Track II, unofficial, intervenors behind the scenes. Often, Track II interventions help to create some of the conditions necessary for the sense of “ripeness” required for a successful Track I intervention. In contrast, the Clinton-inspired intervention to press for final status talks can be seen as an example of a situation that was “unripe” for Track I, official or governmental, intervention, as can India’s intervention into the Sri Lankan conflict in 1986–87. In these cases, either little background work had been done or the conflict was actually more “ripe” for the intervenors than for the parties themselves.

In order to “unpack” a clear understanding of ripeness and my framework for linking the work of Track I and Track II intervenors, we will first need to examine the concept itself for its usefulness. I will examine the question of

ripeness by first identifying ripeness through its major definitions. Then subsequent variations by different authors will be presented with an eye toward the evolving characteristics of ripeness and the different levels of utility presented by the different definitions. Next I will examine the conditions necessary for ripeness as defined by our authors; particularly in light of the question regarding induced or coerced ripeness. Finally, I will present my framework for combining the different definitions of ripeness into a continuum of practices available to various levels of intervenors and policymakers.

The Many Types of Ripeness

Ripeness has become a popular topic within the diplomatic community and academics concerned with war termination, with many people either expounding its virtues or exposing its weaknesses. First we will examine three major proponents of ripeness, including the person who first coined the term. Then we will look at the works by others who have rewritten or re-defined ripeness.

The first set of authors has tended to define ripeness by “objective” criteria, including such things as crises and stalemates. The second group has tended to focus on “subjective” elements, most especially the perception that the time to negotiate has come, or the parties’ perception that they can get more from negotiating than fighting. While the difference between the two conceptions of ripeness is often slight, the objective/subjective emphasis has implications for intervention by outside actors seeking to assist a peacemaking process.

Objective Ripeness: Internal & External

The idea that some times are better for successful intervention than others is neither new nor shocking, merely common sense. However, it wasn’t until I. William Zartman tried to identify the conditions under which an attempted intervention might have more success that the concept of ripeness was born. According to Zartman, a ripe moment is characterized by a mutually hurting stalemate, with either an impending or just-avoided catastrophe producing either a deadlock or decline in fighting, and the presence of a valid spokesperson(s) for the parties creating a perception to both parties that there is a way out (Druckman and Green, 1995; Zartman, 1995, 1998). This is a fairly narrow definition that Zartman expands by further defining the conditions of catastrophe that need to be present to propel the parties toward a negotiated solution. These are dubbed the consummated crisis, the escalating crisis, and the grinding crisis. Each has its own characteristics, playing a central role in generating the “ripe moment” in which the conflict may be successfully negotiated. The consummated crisis is characterized by a sudden flare-up of hostilities followed by a defeat and return to the status quo. The escalating crisis consists of a series of mini-crises, each peaking at a more volatile level, and the grinding crisis comes into existence after a flare-up results in a new status quo stalemate (Zartman, 1989:263–66).

Zartman describes ripeness as a perceptual event that is necessary, but not sufficient, for the beginning of negotiations. When the parties reach one of these conceptual moments—and both of them must reach it—then each perceives that unilateral action is more costly than conciliation, thereby provoking a shift in the parties’ attitudes and a willingness to look for a negotiated solution. The role of the third party is to recognize the onset of ripeness and to act within that moment to encourage both parties to enter into negotiations. This explanation of a ripe moment seems to assume a sort of passivity wherein interested third parties must let violence and carnage continue until the ripe moment appears, or risk exacerbating the conflict through premature intervention. One

example of an ill-conceived intervention was India's imposition of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Accord. That intervention into a manifestly unripe situation has, arguably, only hardened the positions of the parties involved—especially the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, or Tamil Tigers)—and made subsequent interventions more difficult.¹ However, Marieke Kleiboer states that Zartman's definition is not quite so restrictive, and that not only can ripeness be created with skill but in the cyclical process of conflict several ripe moments can appear (Kleiboer, 1994:111).

Another noted author who has studied the issue of ripeness is Richard N. Haass, who takes a different tack by stating that ripeness is anything but a natural condition with one or more of the elements required being absent from the equation (Haass, 1990:139). Haass's four prerequisites for ripeness are (1) a shared desire to come to agreement, (2) the ability of leaders to come to an agreement and sell it to their constituents—either through their own personal strength or the group's weakness, (3) room enough in the negotiations so that the parties can claim they protected their national interests, and (4) a negotiation process that is acceptable to both parties (Haass, 1990:27–28). Haass, like others, believes that ripeness is an essential ingredient for a successful, or substantive, negotiation. However, he believes that policymakers must be aware of times when ripeness is not present, because the best they can hope for in such situations is to keep the conflict from escalating. This definition, unlike Zartman's, looks at ripeness as an internal political issue rather than as an inter-party perception. As such, it manages to capture an important property in negotiating the end of wars—namely, that each side is made up of different factions—but implicitly misses some of the inter-party perceptual dimensions captured by Zartman and others.

One way to link the two areas of intra-party and inter-party is to use a modified version of Putnam's "two tables" model of analyzing international agreements. The use of this model may show that the correlation between perceptions of ripeness for each party at the inter-party level must fit within the "win-sets" for ripeness at the intra-party level (Putnam, 1988:428). Thus we would find that the perceptions of ripeness at the intra-party level would have to mesh enough for the principals of each side to carry that sense of ripeness to the inter-party level. This would mean that for ripeness to be genuinely perceived at the inter-party level, it would have to be perceived by enough elements at the intra-party level to successfully enter negotiations without the possibility that any sizable groups *within* each party would act as spoilers to derail the negotiations or subsequent peace agreements (Putnam, 1988:436–37). In the context of successful conciliatory gestures, Mitchell (2000) has suggested a set of strategies for reducing intra-party disagreement about engaging in negotiations, essentially expanding Putnam's "win-set." This set of strategies includes insulating conciliatory gestures from pro-conflict groups, reducing the effectiveness of those groups, and creating a climate for conciliation. This last area addresses the issue of ripeness in two ways, first by suggesting that climate creation involves a broadly shared perception that options other than fighting exist—subjective ripeness—and a shift in perceiving the opposition as a potential partner in the search for a negotiated solution (Mitchell, 2000:245).

The policies that Haass suggests are appropriate for "non-ripe" moments are similar to those of Zartman in that they seek to lessen the chances of further escalation, as well as create conditions for ripeness at a later time (Haass, 1990:29). Furthermore, Haass firmly believes that these types of interventions into unripe situations must be made at a minimal level, else they risk becoming counterpro-

¹For a more detailed analysis of India's intervention see Hancock, 1999.

ductive by leading the parties to believe that they do not have some very tough decisions to make (Haass, 1990:139). This type of confidence-building strategy, building toward ripeness, has its advantages, but Kleiboer points out that these “away from the table” types of incentives may not work in manifestly unripe situations, such as when fighting was taking place in Yugoslavia; leading to the question of a ripe time to try and induce ripeness (Kleiboer, 1994:113). My own contention is that limiting ripeness-inducing actions to those in the diplomatic realm stifles the usefulness of the term and our ability—whether we are official or unofficial intervenors—to influence the conditions of conflict in an attempt to induce ripeness. For example, looking at the same Yugoslav/Bosnian situation, one might infer that the U.S. tacitly allowed arms and men to flow to the Bosnian Muslims and Croats in the hope that they would equalize their power with that of the Bosnian Serbs, leading to conditions favorable to ripeness (Rieff, 1995:77).

Building on Zartman’s basic ideas on the perception of actors with regard to the mutually hurting stalemate, Stephen John Stedman proposes that ripeness should be defined by looking at each of the parties as sets of disparate actors rather than as monolithic entities. As Kleiboer suggests, this analysis falls in between Zartman’s inter-party perspective and Haass’s intra-party perspective (Kleiboer, 1994:111). With reference to the mutually hurting stalemate Stedman posits that it is not always necessary for both principal actors to perceive it. Stedman shows this process in the 1979 Lancaster House negotiations to end Zimbabwe’s civil war. In this example, the principals believed that they could still win the conflict militarily. However, their respective patrons—Mozambique and South Africa—perceived the stalemate and pressured their clients to accept a negotiated settlement (Stedman, 1991:236–37).

Another major difference between Stedman and Zartman is the former’s treatment of the necessity for the actors to believe that they can no longer achieve their preferred goals before they can recognize the moment as ripe. Stedman, again, uses the Zimbabwean example to show how each of the principal parties—once pressured to join the negotiations—believed that they could win decisively at the ballot box: the black parties through their majority position in society and the white party through its co-optation of Bishop Muzorewa as a black figurehead who would protect their economic positions (Davidow, 1990). Stedman’s final notion of the perception of ripeness is that the military actors on both sides must perceive the mutually hurting stalemate (especially in cases when the patrons are unable to exert sufficient force to bring the parties to the table), although this perception is not enough by itself to create ripeness (Stedman, 1991:238). Stedman, like Haass, pays more attention to the internal factors of ripeness and to possible indicators for when and why ripeness might arise. One such indicator is often the role of leadership and changes in leadership during the conflict process. Stedman’s observations regarding leadership and ripeness conclude that a change in leadership can lead to a settlement if such a settlement is in the practical political interests of the new leader.

Louis Kriesberg also pays tribute to the notion of ripeness in *International Conflict Resolution*, stating that there are both internal and external pressures that can contribute to creating a ripe moment. The main issue for Kriesberg is that each actor must see the utility of entering negotiations rather than continuing the conflict. Sources of utility can come from a need to appear willing to enter negotiations (either to one’s own constituents or to powerful external mediators); the aforementioned mutually hurting stalemate; the expectation of clear mutual or complementary benefits arising from negotiations; or the possible effects of other conflicts taking more importance and acting as an impetus to resolve the conflict under question (Kriesberg, 1992:145–47). This definition harkens back to Zartman in that it is primarily concerned with the inter-party rather than intra-party issues, although it does touch upon the intra-party issues

with acknowledgement that a leader may have to appear willing to enter negotiations in order to placate supporters who want negotiations. However, each of these four authors places a primary importance upon political conditions—even if explained as perceptual political conditions—that frame ripeness as an external and somewhat objective condition necessary for successful negotiations.

Subjective: Psychological Ripeness and Willingness

Moving from an objective, conditional approach to a more subjective, state-of-mind approach, Peter Coleman and Marieke Kleiboer define ripeness and its usefulness to conflict termination in a more flexible manner. Coleman defines ripeness as an individual level “commitment to change the direction of the normative social processes of the relations towards deescalation” (Coleman, 1997:81). In this sense, Coleman looks at ripeness from a motivational, rather than objective, viewpoint. In his model the motivation to achieve a change in relations toward de-escalation—namely, ripeness—can be explained through the use of Pruitt and Olczak’s multimodal MACBE model. This model, which stands for Motivation, Affect, Cognition, Behavior, and Environment, leads Coleman to make a number of propositions about the nature of conflict and the creation of ripeness. These propositions are based upon the idea that, in violent protracted conflict, destructive behavior becomes a normal process. He additionally proposes that the reversal of these conflicts toward de-escalation constitutes a significant change in the individual (or individuals) and that change in acts must be preceded by a change in the individual’s motivation and view of the conflict. Coleman defines ripeness as “located just beyond the neighborhood range of unripeness, at the point where the individual makes a commitment to change the direction of the normative social processes of the relationship towards de-escalation” (Coleman, 1997:93).

The main question surrounding Coleman’s definition of ripeness is whether it defines ripeness or the decision to quit, which some have assumed to exist separately from ripeness as a psychological factor, leaving ripeness as a political factor. However, the inclusion of motivation as a primary ingredient, signaling or possibly inducing ripeness, provides a perspective different from the strictly political interpretations of the previous authors. This sense of motivational ripeness is drawn from Pruitt and Olczak’s work on solving intractable conflicts and shows a clear difference of opinion on the question of whether ripeness creates the conditions for successful negotiations or whether ripeness is a condition for successful negotiations (Pruitt and Olczak, 1995:70).

Perhaps this confusion is why Marieke Kleiboer foregoes the term ripeness and puts forth the idea of willingness to describe the necessary, but not sufficient, condition for successful de-escalation and negotiations. This is because Kleiboer regards the efforts of Zartman, Haass, and Stedman as not paying sufficient attention to the subjective issues surrounding ripeness. In Kleiboer’s view ripeness, in the end, appeals to the willingness of the main parties to engage in the search for a peaceful settlement. Ripeness, then, becomes defined as the moment when all important parties to a conflict become willing to search for that settlement (Kleiboer, 1994:115). However, beyond noting that the objective definitions of ripeness tend to imply that conflicts can be managed at some times and not at others, Kleiboer does little to expand upon the notion of willingness by adding a clearer definition or any examples.

Conditions for Existence

As outlined above, the central issues surrounding ripeness center around two axes. The first is whether the conditions for ripeness are objective or subjective.

The second axis depends somewhat upon the first and centers on the issue of whether ripeness is merely a naturally occurring phenomenon or can be induced through manipulation by third parties.

Subjective Objectivity

A critique of the definitions of ripeness must pay attention to the fact that each author, while recognizing the validity of other elements inherent in ripeness, tends to fixate upon either the objective or subjective aspects of the process. The first set of authors focuses almost entirely on the objective criteria of mutually hurting stalemates, catastrophes, or enticing opportunities, paying less attention to how these things might, or might not, change the perceptions of the participants to the conflict. The second set focuses almost exclusively on the subjective element of how the change in perception is actually ripeness rather than the inducements of changing objective conditions.

This dichotomy between the two groups is problematic for several reasons. The first group appears to take it for granted that the change in objective conditions will precipitate a change in perceptions, without explaining how it will take place or under which conditions it might not take place. The second group focuses on the change in perceptions, ignoring the necessity for a change (or imminent change) in objective conditions to precipitate it. This dialectic between what happens and what it means has not been emphasized by those writing on ripeness, leaving the reader with unfinished impressions of what ripeness consists of and its utility to conflict resolution.

If we are to examine the process of ripeness as separate from the decision to quit, then we must look first to the changes that take place in a conflict over time, and examine how those changes affect the decisionmaking patterns of the parties. One weakness of Zartman's definition of ripeness is that it views the parties and the creation of ripeness as structural, lacking a clear relationship between ripeness as an objective event—such as a military reversal of fortune—and the change in subjective perceptions of ripeness on the part of the participants. I posit that the objective definitions examining the structural changes can be married to the psychological definitions used by Coleman and Kleiboer, with some additions. Those additions stem from Mitchell's examination of four relevant types of structural ripeness, namely, the hurting stalemate, imminent mutual catastrophe, entrapment, and enticing opportunity. The first two were covered above—indeed, they are considered as part of one model for Zartman—but the idea that entrapment or enticing opportunity are models of ripeness needs to be explored.

In the first, entrapment, the focus is upon how the costs of a conflict can actually keep the participants from perceiving ripe moments, or if they do, from acting on them (Mitchell, 1995:42). This is due both to the nature of rationality—wherein the costs of continuing a painful conflict can be seen as less than admitting that “all was for naught”—and to the types of decisionmaking stages that leaders go through in protracted conflicts. The four stages in this type of decisionmaking are (1) pursuit and belief in victory, (2) spending more to justify previous costs, (3) minimizing one's own losses while inflicting maximum punishment on the enemy, and (4) complete exhaustion and the search for a way out. This model shows the elements of decisionmaking and the stage at which a party may move from not recognizing ripeness to its recognition. This occurs in the shift between stages 3 and 4 and usually requires a trigger event to shape the recognition. A triggering event is required because of the incremental nature of most parties' decisionmaking processes (Mitchell, 1995:48). This incremental nature has its roots in a mixture of Bureaucratic Politics models, wherein events must precipitate a change either in leadership, in the mindsets of existing leaders,

or in the balance of power between different factions (Mitchell, 1981:159–61). These changes often allow governments to utilize face-saving strategies in their acceptance of either loss or goal diminishment in the course of a peace process.

Mitchell's analysis of the linkages between the objective and subjective illustrates the central role that decisionmaking plays. In the four models he examined—and Coleman's social-psychological perspective—incremental decisionmaking links structural changes with the internal shift signaling ripeness or willingness of the parties to begin negotiations (Mitchell, 1995:49). The shift in psychological perception of the conflict is not wholly dependent upon structural changes and, in fact, the relationship between psychological perception and structural change can almost be described as dialectical, that is, both elements must be present and must interact with one another to create ripeness or willingness.

To Act or To Wait?

Now that we have linked the structural elements of ripeness to the psychological-perceptual elements, we turn to the question of whether ripeness can be induced, or whether we must merely await the proper conditions for action. This question has had major implications for the conflict resolution field and which definition of ripeness a theorist or practitioner prefers. Therefore, I would like to examine each of these definitions in the light of what their authors, and others, perceive to be the proper conditions for intervention and the possibility of inducing ripeness.

As stated above, ripeness as described by Zartman seems to have the most rigidly defined set of criteria for its presence. Therefore, one might conclude ripeness cannot be induced in any meaningful way, or that meaningful inducements require such large structural changes that only the most powerful of third parties can hope to have any success. This is certainly the case with U.S. involvement in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, where Secretary of State Henry Kissinger helped to induce ripeness through his control over the flow of badly needed war supplies to Israel (Kriesberg, 1992:75). This poses somewhat of a quandary for Track II intervenors and negotiators who lack the same level of political power or access to resources. What then does ripeness, or at least Zartman's definition of it, say to these individuals? Zartman discusses the role of the third party in only the most general of terms. In his vision, the two elements of ripeness consist of a structural change followed by a perceptual shift in both parties. Unfortunately this shift is unlikely to occur in both parties at the same time, so one of the most important functions for the third party is to hold one party's changed perception in place until it is shared by the other side, or perhaps communicate that perceptual change to the other side in the hope that it might spur ripeness in the other party (Zartman, 1998:19).

Richard Haass, by contrast, proposes that third parties at all levels still have a part to play when ripeness is not present. However, these parts are best played away from the negotiating table and should concentrate on confidence-building measures designed to encourage the creation of trust and, possibly, a ripe moment (Haass, 1990:146). This, at least from a practitioner's standpoint, is more realistic when considering what can and cannot be done during unripe moments, as well as being more promising for the creation of ripe moments by interested third parties.

Kriesberg introduces the interesting notion that the definition of ripeness used has a relationship to the identity of the third party and the scope of action available to that party. Under this idea, the definition of ripeness is more limited when examined by the U.S. government as an official third party than when examined by unofficial third parties, such as university professors who involve themselves as mediators. This is because the U.S. government has vastly more

resources in both the diplomatic, military, and economic realms, so if it decides to intervene, it is usually done with the expectation that it will do so on a large scale, with more expectations for success. This limits U.S. perceptions of when they can intervene successfully, due to the consequences of failure, and consequently limits their definition of ripeness.² One clear example of the different levels of ripeness and their correlation to different third parties can be found in the Oslo Accords. Although the United States was aware of the negotiations that led to the Accords, they could not put to use their prestige as a third party (the conflict was not ripe for them) until the negotiations were almost complete. By contrast, the Norwegians, who had a lot less to lose if negotiations failed, were able to intervene and offer their services much earlier. Along another tack, even if we decide to accept a stricter definition of ripeness, by looking at the nature of the intervening party, we can estimate the possible consequences of failure of intervention and, thus, calculate—in the vaguest sense of the term—the willingness of the third party to intervene into unripe situations to induce ripeness.

Another author, Jeffrey Rubin, apparently has some difficulty accepting the notion that ripeness cannot be induced. Although very few of those writing on the subject advocate a position of complete passivity, Rubin notes that there is a tendency to use ripeness as an excuse for doing little or nothing (Rubin, 1991:239). Instead, he urges us to find ways to induce ripeness through the use of diplomatic carrots, sticks, incentives based upon the sharing of information regarding underlying interests, and forms of pie expansion. One form of pie expansion is, of course, expanding resources to meet the needs of both parties, although where those resources might come from remains problematic, particularly in the case of some land disputes. Another method of pie expansion comes from the re-examination or reframing of the problem to allow new insights and, possibly, new solutions aimed at letting parties find ways to back down from intractable positions while saving face (Rubin, 1991:240–41). Although currently unsuccessful, suggestions for resolving the conflict surrounding Jerusalem have focused on reframing notions of sovereignty to divide the political from the military and the religious. Another suggestion for the creation of ripeness is to induce the parties to make a series of small, irreversible commitments with the idea of creating a de-escalatory entrapment process, as opposed to the usual escalatory entrapment process (Rubin, 1991:242). However, the difficulty with this proposition is that the movement from escalatory entrapment to de-escalatory entrapment—involving the making of commitments—itself necessitates the presence of ripeness.

These examples suggest that the inducement of ripeness is a laudatory and worthwhile goal, but not in every case nor through the use of every method. I tend to agree with Kriesberg's belief that the methods of inducement and intervention will depend heavily upon the nature of the intervenor and their scope of possible action. The more powerful the intervenor, the more careful they must be when seeking to induce ripeness through the use of carrots and sticks. While a powerful intervenor's efforts might be more assured if successful, their failures are more likely to have grave consequences both for themselves *and* for the parties to the conflict. Therefore, in my opinion, it may be prudent for third parties of varying strengths to coordinate and cooperate to the extent that less powerful intervenors—with more scope for action—intercede first to expand contacts and build relationships with an eye toward developing a perception of ripeness. Later the more powerful third parties can motivate the process through the judicious use of incentives and, perhaps, the presentation of enticing opportunities. The work of the first set of intervenors need not wait until Zartman's structural conditions of ripeness exist, while the work of the latter is likely to

² Brief interview with author, April 22, 1998.

bear more fruit under such conditions, combining to create a push/pull dynamic toward the opening of negotiations.

Ripeness at Two Levels: A Framework for Implementation

The suggestion for an integrative framework to bind the two views of ripeness with the different types of third parties takes its impetus from the work of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy. Although the entire multi-track diplomacy framework is too cumbersome for this analysis, its main premise is that one of the most difficult problems facing intervenors is the barrier between state-sanctioned third parties and nonstate actors of various stripes (Diamond and McDonald, 1996:156–67).

This barrier to communication and collaboration between state-centered and nonstate intervenors is what needs to be broken down in order to bridge the gap between the two views of ripeness examined in this paper. In Table 1 I have diagrammed a number of activities that state and nonstate actors can do to engender ripeness, take advantage of ripe conditions, and transmit information back and forth to assist in the overall intervention process.

Activities listed in the top left and bottom right quadrants are those associated with the normal functions of Track I and Track II intervenors. For Track I intervenors, activities such as providing or restricting aid, bringing parties to the table for official negotiations, providing peacekeepers, and mediating or facilitating official inter-group negotiations are the norm. For Track II intervenors, typical activities include facilitating contacts between parties when official contacts are not possible (“back channels”), fostering cross-communal activities at the grass roots level, and hosting problem-solving workshops with concerned “pre-influentials” from both sides.

TABLE 1. Intervention Activity by Condition and Intervenor Type

		<i>Objective Conditions</i>	<i>Subjective Conditions</i>
		Physical conditions present such as mutually hurting stalemate, catastrophe, or impending collapse	Perceptual belief that conciliation and negotiation will prove more fruitful than conflict. Must be shared by leaders and a base of constituents (Putnam's 2 tables)
Track I Intervenor	Governments or intergovernmental coalitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide or restrict aid. • Bring parties to table for negotiations through persuasion/coercion. • Provide peacekeepers. • Mediate/facilitate inter-group negotiations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parties to examine other options for conflict termination. • Make conditional offers of aid (pie expansion). • Keep channels of communication open to Track II intervenors. • Provide funding for Track II interventions.
Track II Intervenor	NGOs and others, representing the gamut of unofficial intervention actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep back channels of communication open between different sides. • Provide information to Track I officials about subjective ripeness conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate contact between opponents/enemies. • Fostering cross-communal activities at grassroots levels. • Problem-solving workshops with concerned “pre-influentials” from both sides.

A new set of activities are listed in the top right and bottom left quadrants of the table. These activities are designed to bridge the gap between the two levels of ripeness and to facilitate the normal activities of both Track I and Track II intervenors. The hardest part about this set of activities is, of course, creating and sustaining the communication and cooperative links between the two different categories of actors. Although the end goals of both sets of actors are quite similar, their worldviews can be quite different. While each seeks peace, and each believes that the work of the other is necessary, neither seems to understand the nature of their interdependence. Instead, each sees their own task as paramount and tends to give little attention to assisting the other.

Efforts must be made to bridge this gap and create a level of trust between state-centered actors and nonstate intervenors. Workshops designed to create a forum for communication, along with codes of conduct and confidentiality, are among a few suggestions of necessary steps to increase collaboration. Additionally, state-centered actors need to be educated about the usefulness of collaboration with nonstate intervenors. As outlined in Table 1, state-centered actors have the resources and connections to assist Track II diplomacy. By both encouraging parties to examine other options for communication, informing Track II intervenors of party willingness to engage their services, and the provision of funding for an extensive, and often expensive process, states can help to engender a sense of subjective ripeness without putting their prestige on the line.

For their part nonstate actors can be deal facilitators by keeping the back channels of communication open between the official parties they cannot communicate with publicly, such as the services provided by Father Reid in Northern Ireland between the IRA and the British government (Mallie and McKittrick, 1996:3). Additionally, Track II intervenors can provide confidential evidence to their government counterparts regarding party willingness to engage an official diplomacy. In this way the peace process can move forward, sometimes slowly, but without the problems that result from inopportune interventions by over-eager government actors.

Encouraging state and nonstate actors to collaborate, or at least communicate, in engendering a sense of ripeness is not a simple task. However, a better understanding of both the objective and subjective elements of ripeness underscores the importance of this collaboration. Given that the resolution of any deep-rooted social conflict will never be easy, it seems obvious that if Track II intervenors can help to engender a sense of subjective ripeness and communicate that to potential Track I intervenors, then subsequent interventions may have more of a chance at success. Additionally, if the objective conditions of ripeness appear, or are created, but the parties do not believe they have anything to gain from negotiations, then as we can see from the Sri Lankan case, Track I interventions are far less likely to succeed. Therefore, potential Track I intervenors could greatly benefit by supporting, financially or otherwise, the efforts of Track II intervenors to prepare the parties for the possibility of a negotiated solution. In this sense, helping to engender a perception of subjective ripeness can motivate the parties and their constituents to participate in negotiations when enough of the objective conditions exist or are created. The important element of ripeness can be seen in this motivational value to the parties by convincing them that the time to negotiate is now and that the opportunity offered is better than the current conflict. With careful collaboration between Track I and Track II intervenors, ripeness presents itself as an aspiration or a goal on the road to negotiation, rather than as a roadblock through its absence.

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