

The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution

MANY VIOLENT CONFLICTS and their resolution in the world today pertain not only to security matters but also to the definition of ethnic and national communities.¹ Beyond issues of sovereign boundaries and territorial security, these conflicts also directly affect the lives and well-being of diaspora communities in far-off lands that share ethnic ties with the people engaged in the conflict. Hence, the resolution of such violent conflicts often requires addressing an audience beyond the immediate geographic boundaries of the conflict's arena.

The diaspora's role in homeland conflict perpetuation and conflict resolution can be so powerful that homeland leaders ignore diaspora preferences at their own peril. In confronting the kin state's conflict, the diaspora attempts to promote its own view of the ethnic community's identity and interests, a view that is not always congruent with the view of the homeland authorities. As we have seen in previous chapters, diasporas are important players in the economics and politics of their countries of origin as well as in the production and articulation of their homeland's national identity. Yet despite the growing recognition of their role as transnational players, few studies have focused on their specific impact on conflict resolution (or peace processes) that involve their homelands. Those that do tend to view diasporas mostly as detrimental to such processes, often failing to appreciate a diaspora's potential to advance peace negotiations. Many also overlook the complexities concerning the negotiation of identities between homelands and diasporas in such processes. In fact, some of the narratives that are prevalent among diaspora communities may challenge the dominant ideology at home. In other cases the multiple forms of nationalisms and kinship identities that

emerge in the diaspora can play a positive role in checking and counteracting the vicissitudes of the homeland's nationalism. This dynamic is particularly, but not uniquely, evident in the Armenian and Jewish diasporas. Their behavior and its effects on Armenian-Azeri and Palestinian-Israeli peace efforts in the last decade show that conflict resolution in communal conflicts is often not just a two-level, but "a three-level game of peace-making."² The diaspora becomes a key constituency of concern for homeland leaders, their homeland's adversaries, the governments of their host states, and, through their international diplomatic activities, for other states as well.³

The following discussion of diasporas and conflict perpetuation and resolution does not concentrate on refugees and exiles who represent, in a sense, personified consequences of a violent conflict. Nor does it concern "stateless" diasporas or irredentist and secessionist groups that reside in a "near abroad" and wish to reconfigure the boundaries of existing states to include their current places of residence within their desired homelands. Such communities tend to view themselves (or are viewed by their kin states) as "kidnapped victims" and thus have an inherent and direct stake in a particular outcome of their homeland's conflict.⁴ The focus, instead, is on far-removed diasporas that are well established and organized in their countries of domicile and who have embraced life outside their ancestral homeland. These groups are removed from the arena of the conflict and are generally not making territorial or communal claims on their own behalf. Rather, homeland-related conflicts have only an indirect impact on them. As such, these types of groups reflect the important phenomenon of *transnational communal politics*, defined both by the states in which these communities reside and by the ethnicity of the group in question.

Based on a theoretical perspective that is rooted in the constructivist insight that the identities and interests of states are both flexible and mutually constitutive, several propositions about the identities and interests that engage diasporas in homeland communal conflicts are noteworthy. The first of these propositions addresses the general role of identity and diasporas in international affairs. This in turn leads to an examination of diasporas as "third-level" players in the peace negotiations determining the fate of their homelands.⁵ Finally, four interrelated concerns of group identity and interest that affect diasporic attitudes and activism toward peace negotiations in their homeland regions require further attention. In particular, the discussion focuses on identity and interest issues either "over there" (i.e., in the real—or symbolic—homeland) or

“over here” (i.e., inside the host country), including the difficulties of maintaining the identity of both the people and the homeland, the competition for leadership of the transnational community, the struggle to defend organizational or bureaucratic interests, and the challenges of preserving social or political status in the host state.

Diasporas in International Relations and the Question of Identity

Diaspora communities identify themselves, and are identified by others, as part of the homeland national community. This notion that homeland and diaspora constitute one people is especially strong for relatively weak, new, or reconstituted states. In the case of new and weak states, the national identity was often “held in trust” by the diaspora during the years of foreign domination.⁶ Diasporic communities may personify the national community even after the (re)establishment of an independent nation-state. They may embody the experience of calamity and suffering stemming from dispossession and the loss of the homeland, while also becoming the standard-bearers for the ideals of recovery and restoration.

A community’s view of itself as a people or a nation is not static but shifts with time and circumstance.⁷ The “national interest” shifts along with national and kinship identity. As Peter Katzenstein points out, “definitions of identity that distinguish between self and other imply definitions of threat and interest that have strong effects on national security policies.”⁸ With regard to Armenia, Ronald Suny writes, “National histories may be investigated, not so much to discover the ‘real’ story behind . . . the Armenian-Azeri hostility in Karabakh . . . but rather . . . to assess [how] particular conceptualizations of nationhood contribute to notions of national interest and threats to national security.”⁹ Indeed, the historical narrative of the Jewish people as preordained to “dwell apart” (*am levadad yishkon*), coupled with the Holocaust creed of “Never Again,” have shaped Israel’s sense of “national security exceptionalism.”¹⁰

Of course, the very notion of a unified people that stretches across frontiers is complicated, since in international relations, a state can, in principle, represent only the people living within its boundaries. In reality, neither the diaspora nor the homeland community ultimately dominates the process of constituting and communicating national identity. Indeed, a certain degree of flexibility can be preserved because of the distance between homeland and diaspora; each can, to a degree, put its own spin on the national narrative and live out their shared identity in its own

way. The degree to which one influences the other depends on their relative strength, which is determined by, among other things, monetary flows, cultural productions, community leadership, and transnational political parties. Sufficient areas of overlap exist for homeland-diaspora ties to be quite close despite differences of emphasis in the ethnonational narrative. This is evident, for example, in the vibrancy and pride of American Judaism, whereas the traditional Israeli-Zionist version of Jewish history insists that only in the Jewish state can authentic Judaism survive, sheltered from the pressures of assimilation and the onslaught of anti-Semitism that endangers Jews in the rest of the world.¹¹

While kinship identity can be negotiated between homeland and diaspora, the structure of modern international relations gives the prerogative of constituting, elaborating, and implementing the national interest to the state. Indeed, states may consider their diasporic kin as part of their national security equation under the premise of mutual responsibility. Israel, for example, declares itself, by law, responsible for the well-being of all Jews around the world. It also regards the Jewish diaspora, and especially Jewish-Americans, as one of Israel's strategic assets.¹² The new state of Armenia has made similar claims. Such attitudes in the homeland, however, can create resentment, engender the fear of dual loyalty, and even strengthen calls for greater participation on the part of the diaspora in homeland politics. Armenian-American scholar Khachig Tololyan, for example, complained that, in Armenia, "They want service and money from diasporans, not thoughts or opinions."¹³ All in all, governments may construct the national interest with the explicit intent of protecting the whole kin community, both diaspora and homeland. Yet in practice, struggles often erupt between homeland and diaspora groups over the definition of the nation and therefore over the proper balance between the interests of the homeland and those of the people.

Because many diasporas demonstrate an impressive capacity for independent action with important international ramifications, peace negotiations must be viewed as a political activity that engages more parties than the usual "domestic" and "diplomatic" categories. The notion that international negotiations are a two-level game rather than merely a government-to-government interaction was originally developed by Robert Putnam in the late 1980s. In Putnam's view, state leaders balance two competing spheres at once in an international negotiation; they must satisfy both domestic political constituencies and also meet the negotiating counterpart's minimum demands.¹⁴

The analysis of the Armenian, Jewish, and other cases suggests that,

when active diasporas exist, they cannot be viewed simply as a domestic constituency within their host state but must also be recognized as an independent actor in the conflict resolution process. These diasporas appear to have made peace negotiations into a three-level game for their homelands' leaders. Those leaders who tried to limit the negotiations to a two-level framework have suffered. Host states and other third parties realize the independent role of diasporas as political actors in homeland conflicts and try to influence them accordingly.

Jeffrey Knopf recognized the necessity of expanding the two-level game concept when analyzing bilateral security negotiations, such as the talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. He develops the two-level game framework into a "three-and-three" framework, encompassing transgovernmental, transnational, and "cross-level" interactions between combinations of government leaders and domestic constituencies. His analysis shows that using three levels rather than two enables the analyst to explain outcomes not predicted by unitary-actor approaches to international relations.¹⁵ Knopf's "transboundary connections" are particularly relevant to the analysis of ethnic conflicts, where relevant constituencies naturally extend beyond state borders. Indeed, diasporas act as more than just domestic constituencies within their countries of domicile. They also function as an important "domestic" constituency for homeland political leaders and, moreover, as trans-state players, acting on behalf of their entire people in interactions with third-party states and international organizations.

Diaspora Activities in Pursuit of National Security

The connection between a sense of endangerment to the homeland and the sense of diasporic peril may be definite or more psychological. The diasporic connection with events at home may be largely social and psychological, through the diasporans' identification with their homeland's aspirations and struggles. Homeland conflicts can also affect diasporas more directly: economically, socially in terms of their self-image and how their host society views them, and even through physical threats directed against them by those groups engaged in the conflict against their homeland kin. Indeed, whether "stateless"—aspiring to establish an independent sovereign state in a claimed homeland—or "state-based"—with kin communities already forming a majority in their own established nation-state—diasporas are affected by homeland conflicts even if they live far

from the arena of violence.¹⁶ These ties and the psychological identification of diasporas with their kin states explain the high stakes they perceive in homeland conflicts, and they lead diasporas to search for an active role in the continuation or resolution of such conflicts. The type and degree of their activities are determined by their political and social status, their host society's and host government's views of the conflict, the political and social character of their kin state, and the diaspora leaders' perception of how conflict resolution affects the people's identity and future.

The national interests articulated by the homeland government with respect to the resolution of a violent conflict with a neighboring state or an internal ethnic minority can have a significant impact on the identity of the transnational community. Disputes erupt between diasporic elements and homeland authorities not only over the definition of nationhood but also over the conceptualization of the homeland's territorial boundaries, often a critical component both in conflict perpetuation and conflict resolution.

For example, consider a state that gives up its claim to a piece of historically significant territory in order to achieve peaceful relations with a neighboring state. Diaspora and homeland citizens often have different attitudes toward the implications such policies have for ethnic and national identity. For many homeland citizens, territory serves multiple functions: it provides sustenance, living space, security, as well as a geographical focus for national identity. If giving up a certain territory, even one of significant symbolic value, would improve security and living conditions, a homeland citizen *might* find the trade-off worthwhile. By contrast, for the diaspora, oftentimes a territory's symbolic functions outweigh its security value. A territory's practical value (and, indeed, the practical value of peace with a former rival) is not directly relevant to the diaspora's daily experience. In such situations, altering the geographic configuration of the homeland state for the sake of peace may be more disturbing to some diaspora elements than to some segments of the homeland community. In precisely this vein, a rupture opened in 1999–2000 between many Jewish-Americans and Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak over his acceptance of a U.S. peace plan that called for giving the Palestinians sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Several Israeli analysts of the Jewish-American diaspora expressed their concern “that a hand-over of the Temple Mount and parts of Jerusalem threatens to undermine the Jewish identity of American Jews and tear away at the already delicate fabric of their relationship with Israel.”¹⁷ Malcolm

Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, declared:

In future years, all of us will have to answer to all our children and grandchildren when they ask us why we did not do more to protect their heritage and safeguard Har Habayit [the Temple Mount]. . . . Israel has a right to make decisions that affect its security. All Jews have a right to discuss it, but it's up to the government of Israel. The Temple Mount is a different issue. It belongs to all Jews, it is the inheritance of all Jews, and all Jews have a vested interest in it.¹⁸

Indeed with the collapse of Oslo and the rise of Ariel Sharon to power, Hoenlein's position became the official position of the Israeli government. In his February 20, 2003, message to the Conference of Presidents, Prime Minister Sharon declared that although he believes that American Jews should not determine what should be Israel's final boundaries because "you do not live here," when it comes to "the struggle for Jerusalem" the diaspora voice is as important and legitimate as the voice of Israeli Jews.

[W]hen it comes to Jerusalem, it is an entirely different thing. . . . Jerusalem is yours no less than it is ours. When it comes to that, then you have to participate in this struggle, and you have to raise your voices. . . . We here in Israel are only custodians. We are keeping the holiest place of the Jewish people. We are custodians. It belongs to you no less than to ourselves. . . . All of us together—us here, and you there—we are guardians of Jerusalem for future generations, and therefore, it is your responsibility no less than ours.¹⁹

Certainly, there is no consensus among Jewish-Americans or Israelis regarding the concession on Jerusalem.²⁰ Yet, overarching tendencies do characterize the two groups. Different priorities, functions, and meanings assigned to the homeland territory by the diaspora versus the homeland citizenry can lead to tremendous tensions over peace policies. This is also the case for the interaction between the Armenian homeland and diaspora.²¹

When the conflict is hot and the homeland is under severe threat, diaspora concerns about the homeland's existential survival are paramount, and divergent opinions may be subsumed under a broader show of support. But when the possibility of peace arises, homeland-diaspora

debates and power struggles reemerge. This can also happen in reverse order. In the summer of 2000, as the Camp David peace summit took place, Jewish-Americans demonstrated publicly both for and against the peace process.²² But once violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians began in September 2000, and especially following a series of deadly suicide bombing attacks inside Israel, Jewish organizations closed ranks to demonstrate their unified support for Israel.²³ When peace negotiations are a real option, differences in the diaspora's and the homeland's conceptions of the nation imply different conceptions of the national interest, and thus distinct views on policy toward the ongoing conflict.

The homeland political elite may have an ambivalent view of how much it should take diaspora concerns into account in formulating domestic and international policies, particularly those that relate to ongoing conflicts. To a large degree, homeland leaders and publics feel that their direct stake in the outcome of their conflict with their neighbors should trump any diaspora preferences. On the other hand, they often have come to rely on the diaspora's political clout and financial assistance, at home and internationally. As Elihu Saltpeter noted, "The children of Diaspora Jews will not have to fight if war breaks out here' is a view that doesn't hold much water since Israelis do expect American Jews to intervene on Israel's behalf in their own political system."²⁴

The homeland-diaspora nexus is such that on some occasions the diaspora may feel threatened by homeland decisions; in others, the homeland may feel that diaspora preferences threaten national goals. In 1992, for example, a Labor-led Israeli government took office shortly after AIPAC had gone to the mat with the Bush administration to support settlement-building activities in the West Bank and Gaza. The new prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, flew almost immediately to the United States to confront the AIPAC board, telling them that he rejected their traditionally heavy involvement in Israel's bilateral relations with the U.S. government, and that he would prefer to handle those relations himself.²⁵

In this homeland-diaspora tug-of-war to define the national and the people's interest, many voices inside and outside the state feed off one another. Indeed, an increasingly important aspect of kinship politics is the transnational coalition. The diaspora-led Armenian Dashnak is an early example, once serving as the leadership organization of Armenians worldwide and quickly establishing itself as a political party within Armenia when the new state was formed. The Young Israel movement is a more recent example. This grouping of nationalist Orthodox synagogues

in North America and Israel and a spin-off of the U.S. organization, the National Council of Young Israel, serves (among other things) as a means of mobilizing religious nationalist opinion both in the diaspora and in Israel against territorial concessions to the Palestinians.

Nevertheless, the motivation and interests in the two centers of domicile are, for many segments of the community, fundamentally different in light of their different circumstances. Being removed from the arena of violence, those diaspora segments that are fully integrated into their host societies may feel more desire to settle a long-standing violent dispute than the homeland government, especially if the homeland's policies conflict with values adopted by the diaspora in their country of domicile, and if their host state is pressing for a settlement. Reform Jews in the United States, for example, promoted a Palestinian-Israeli rapprochement in part because they viewed the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as belying the liberal political principles that underlay their identity as Jewish-Americans and which, they argued, were the foundation of Israel's natural and close alliance with the United States. By contrast, religious Zionists in the United States, whose identity as an ethnic group in American society is much less important to them than their religious identity, opposed the peace accords because they required Israel to relinquish land that the religious community considered part of the biblical patrimony and a necessary vehicle to fulfill Israel's redemptive function.

The largest mainstream Armenian organization, the Armenian Assembly, is far more supportive of conflict resolution in Karabakh than the deeply nationalist Dashnak.²⁶ Whether diaspora members are fixated on the wrongs of the past or are ready to consider new prospects of change has much to do with their host state's surroundings and the shifts of generations. Ethnic diasporas in the United States have often absorbed a great deal of America's multicultural ethos and liberal social values, and indeed sometimes try to export those values back to their homeland. This tends to make diasporas see their position as seconding peace efforts when they are supported by the U.S. government.

Types of Diasporic Support

Diasporic support of the homeland during conflicts can be critical to the homeland's well-being and its very existence. Diasporas provide a lifeline of resources and weapons, serve as a source of recruits, act as a propaganda platform, and lobby to influence host governments and other international players.²⁷ Shedding blood for the homeland is not com-

monly associated with far-removed diasporas, whose activists are often perceived as “standing on principle” from afar while their homeland kin pay the physical price. Yet there are many cases of direct participation by diaspora members in homeland violent conflicts, including active participation in the kin-state military or homeland insurgencies. In recent years diaspora members of the Kosovar Albanians, Croats, and Sri Lankan Tamils have returned to participate in the respective struggles of their homelands. According to the Independent International Commission on Kosovo, “It was the Kosovar Albanians in the diaspora who became the most radicalized part of the Kosovar Albanian community and were to create the KLA.”²⁸ Byman et al. note that “some of the most significant diasporas of today, like the Indians and Sri Lankan Tamils, have begun to exercise unprecedented clout in the affairs of their home countries, akin to the Jewish diaspora in the U.S.,” and that “the more activist elements among these larger immigrant communities . . . have more rapid and visible means of calling attention to issues of interest in their home countries than ever before thanks to the communication and information technology revolution.”²⁹ One scholar who analyzed the specific impact of the Internet and pro-Eelam Web sites with respect to the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora observed that these sites “preserve the form of the nation as territory for the LTTE and those who want to believe in its mission” and that

this works for all those nationals of Tamil Eelam who click onto <eelam.com> from New York, Oslo, Sydney, or Amsterdam, who have no wish to return to Eelam, no wish to live there, but who must believe in it if they are to keep living where they are. . . . For them, Eelam is real; it is lived—not as a place but as an image. And for them, eelam.com exists at the intersection of cyberspace and Eelam, at the intersection of an extraordinary technology of representation and the imagi-nation.³⁰

The relations between Israel and diaspora Jewry remain the paradigmatic case of such interactions. When Israel’s vulnerability once again became the central theme of Jewish existence after the breakdown of the Oslo Process, a large majority of Israeli Jews said that they considered diasporic demonstrations on Israel’s behalf essential to their physical and psychological well-being.³¹ Yet even though Israelis have come to rely on the diaspora in times of peril, the diaspora itself is never monolithic and will not automatically support homeland official policies. In the Armenian case, diaspora money was instrumental in mobilizing Armenian pub-

lic opinion against President Ter-Petrossian and his peace efforts with Azerbaijan and Turkey, ultimately forcing his resignation. In Israel, the religious-nationalist campaign against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1994–95) was largely financed by diaspora sources. In late 2000, Prime Minister Ehud Barak lost diaspora (and Israeli) support over his agreement to a U.S. peace proposal—in the face of a Palestinian terror campaign—that would have yielded Israeli sovereignty over religiously significant areas of Jerusalem to the Palestinians. Most recently, in November 2005 the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* reported that left-wing American Jewish leaders encouraged U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice to intervene aggressively in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute over the Gaza border crossings, “telling her this would gain the support of American Jews, they urged her to take a tough line against Israel, especially on issues such as a settlement freeze and dismantling illegal settlement outposts.”³² Abraham Foxman, director of the Anti-Defamation League, questioned the wisdom of such diasporic involvement, maintaining that it was more common for diaspora liberal or left-leaning organizations—such as Israel Policy Forum, Americans for Peace Now, and sometimes the Reform Movement—to lobby the administration to exert pressure on Israel. As we have seen, however, all sides of the diaspora political-ideational spectrum feel they can oppose the Israeli government in the name of Jewish and Israel’s well-being and all in pursuit of a “true” peace. This leads us to the important question of “who speaks on behalf of the Jews” and what distinguished “peace spoilers” from “peace harbingers.”

Who Speaks on Behalf of the People?

The debate (inside and outside the homeland) about whether diasporic segments “have the right” to publicly oppose an official position of the homeland’s elected government—in favor or against a war or a peace deal with its external enemies—is always contentious. Benedict Anderson opines that while diasporas “find it tempting to play identity politics” with respect to their home states, “this citizen-less participation is inevitably non-responsible—our hero will not have to answer for, or pay the price of, the long-distance politics he undertakes.”³³ Many claim that those who do not reside inside the homeland and who do not serve in the army should stay out of the homeland’s high politics. When it comes to Israel and American Jewry, diasporic politics (left and right) tend to reflect Israeli internal divisions on foreign policy and potential peace deals with the Arabs. The question of whether American Jewry should

reflexively support Israel's officially articulated policy or have the right to publicly criticize Israeli official policy often splits the diaspora and intensifies division between its activists and their counterparts inside Israel who often recruit them.

Since the 1980s, political divisions within Israel and among Jewish-Americans on peace with Arabs grew wider. In the 1990s the government of Yitzhak Rabin, while enjoying support for the Oslo Peace Accord among most Jewish-Americans, also became the target of venomous opposition from more conservative sectors of the diaspora. In addition to outright hostility directed at government officials, diaspora groups that opposed the peace process financed a public relations campaign against the accords, gave financial support to the Jewish settler movement in the occupied territories, and established U.S. affiliates of key right-wing Israeli parties to support their political campaigns against Rabin and his Labor Party successors.³⁴ When a similar split reappeared after Ariel Sharon's decision to pull out from settlements in Gaza, rabbi Dr. David Luchins, a prominent leader of America's Jewish Orthodox community—which usually holds right-wing positions on yielding territory in peace deals with Palestinians—condemned those in his camp who rallied in New York against Sharon. His criticism was based not only on his conviction that diaspora members do not have the right to be players but only an audience in the homeland's politics, but also on his concern that when a Jew criticizes Israel for its policies the outside world cannot understand the nuance of criticism based on affinity and concern for the homeland well-being. Comparing Israeli politics to a baseball game and Israeli citizens to the teams, he said, "American Jewish Zionists have box seats, and we have the right and obligation to support our team. But we are not playing. Only members of the team, even those who are benched, have the right to take part in the team meetings. We fans talk strategy, but the only ones with the right to decide matters are the team members."³⁵

This position, however, is not shared by many other diaspora activists, left and right. Even more interesting, homeland decision makers tend to implicate diaspora members in their decisions on peace negotiations and even endow the diaspora with an authoritative voice. For example, the Jewish-American diplomat Dennis Ross, the former chief negotiator for the U.S. Middle East Peace Team who now chairs the Institute for Jewish Policy Planning, founded by the Jewish Agency, recently called on Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the State of Israel to grant diaspora Jewry an official consulting status when it comes to Israel foreign policy that affects the entire Jewish people.³⁶ This vision is a far cry from the

vision of Israel's founder David Ben-Gurion, who always stressed the centrality of the state over the "temporary" existence of the diaspora. Yet Ross's message is now endorsed at least rhetorically by the Israeli government itself. Thus, when Ariel Sharon addressed Jewish leaders in New York shortly after becoming prime minister in 2001, he told them that if Israel weakens or disappears their comfortable lives as American Jews would not be the same. He added that diaspora Jews should raise their voice in defense of Jerusalem since "the future of Israel [and Jerusalem] is not just a matter for Israelis who live there: Israel belongs to the entire Jewish people. And Israel would not be what it is today if it were not for the efforts of all Jews worldwide."³⁷

In the case of Jews and Israel the concept of a collective security dilemma—and the corollary idea of mutual responsibility (*kol Israel arevim ze baze*)—extending beyond the Jewish state boundaries is well established. It was recently reinforced once again by concomitant waves of Middle East violence and anti-Semitism. For many Jews inside and outside Israel, the terror and anti-Semitic attacks of the last few years and their global aftermath of uncertainty, insecurity, and shifting alliances merely confirmed that Jews were in the most uncomfortable of binds. The developments of recent years represented a truly global crisis for many Jews. In the case of American Jewry, their deep involvement in Israeli security constantly leads to charges of undue Jewish influence on U.S. foreign policy beyond Israel specifically. Many allege that the diaspora led by so-called Jewish neoconservative leaders has distorted U.S. policy to serve primarily Israeli security interests and not necessarily the national interest of the United States. These charges emerged immediately after September 11 and grew more insistent during the lead-up to the war in Iraq in 2003.

Two assumptions are at the root of widespread apprehension regarding Jewish influence on U.S. foreign policy. The first assumption is that Jewish opinion is cohesive enough to find expression in a specific opinion or policy; the second is that neoconservatism is essentially Jewish, or at least that its origins and purposes are more Jewish than anything else. Closely examining these assumptions, one quickly finds that Jewish opinion is so diverse, Jewish influence so multivalent and contradictory, and neoconservatism so fundamentally liberal democratic as to render highly dubious any talk of a neoconservative U.S. foreign policy as an expression of Jewish opinion. Nevertheless, mainstream American media felt compelled in recent years to discuss neoconservative Jewish influence, even if they defensively concluded that the diversity of American Jewish voices

makes such a “Jewish” perspective chimerical. Yet, the very fact that they problematize the issue shows not only how deeply ingrained the fears of Jewish power are but also inadvertently gives credence to those charges. This point was manifested in a *Washington Post* article regarding the fear of an anti-Semitic backlash in light of allegations of Jewish influence in the Iraq war. It observed that Jewish-Americans are “deeply divided over the wisdom of invading Iraq [and that] . . . Jewish groups have taken a broad range of positions. On the left, Rabbi Michael Lerner, head of the San Francisco-based *Tikkun* community, called this week for nonviolent civil disobedience if war breaks out. On the right, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations declared in October that it supports the use of force. The far larger, centrist groups representing the bulk of Reform and Conservative Jews have straddled the fence, endorsing military action only if the United States exhausts all diplomatic alternatives.” Yet the article goes on to analyze Jewish neoconservative influence in the White House including Wolfowitz, Feith, Abrams, and Perle.³⁸

Peace Spoilers or Peace Harbingers?

The term *peace spoiler* must not be regarded as self-evident. Certainly it implies an attempt to thwart the achievement of peacemaking at all cost, yet it perhaps should also include those who enter peace processes without genuinely seeking such results or even those who prematurely seek peace at all costs notwithstanding the evidence that by engaging in the process of peace they may in fact exacerbate the conflict. In turn it becomes imperative that the success of a peace process depends upon effective mechanisms to manage spoilers. Early research relating to peace spoilers centers around the work of Stedman who defines them as “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.”³⁹ With reference to diasporas, it is more meaningful that the act of spoiling be viewed along a continuum that ranges from high levels of support (when diasporas act as catalysts) to extreme levels of hostility (when diasporas act as spoilers) toward a negotiating process or settlement.

It has been suggested that when compared with their homeland kin, diasporas are more hard-line nationalistic and more maximalist in homeland-related conflicts. Writing in 1860, English politician-historian Lord Acton observed that “exile is the nursery of nationality,” and that nationality arose from exile when men could no longer easily dream of return-

ing to the nourishing bosom that had given them birth.⁴⁰ Certainly, many political exiles and their diasporic constituencies have historically played an integral part and often led in the struggle for political independence in their claimed homelands. They have influenced the shaping of new nation-states that were born out of wars (notably exiles during World War I) or the nature of postwar governments in already established states (as in the case of Iraq after the downfall of Saddam Hussein). Their success has been often ensured by their alliance with foreign victors.

Political exiles who have struggled while abroad to return to their native land are only one segment of a diaspora. Yet even those who reside away from the (real or historic) homeland on a permanent basis are often driven toward deep involvement in homeland international affairs and particularly wars. Motivated by ethnic affinity, communities abroad feel a genuine sympathy for the struggles of their brethren elsewhere. Diaspora members may feel a sense of guilt that they are safe while those left behind are enmeshed in bloody conflict. In some cases evidence suggests that “diaspora harbor grievance for much longer than resident populations,” and since they “do not themselves suffer any of the costs of conflict, [they] have a greater incentive to seek vengeance than the resident populations.”⁴¹ Also being much wealthier than resident populations in their kin countries, diasporas are much better able to finance conflict. From the point of view of international stability, Collier warned recently that “the global effort to curb civil wars should focus on reducing the viability—rather than just the rationale—of rebellion.” To do so, he added, “governments of rich nations should keep the behavior of diaspora organizations in their borders within legitimate bounds.”⁴² Collier also argued that both governments in postconflict countries and the international community should develop strategies for reducing the damage done by diasporas in postconflict societies, in order to reduce the risk of conflict repetition. Such strategies might focus upon co-optation, persuasion, and penalties.⁴³

Yet just as far-off diasporas play important roles in supporting violent conflicts involving their homeland states, they may also play a critical role in conflict resolution. For years Irish-American organizations flooded Ireland with money for weapons as well as lobbying within the United States. Led by the Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAID) with thousands of members and numerous branches throughout the United States, the Irish-American diaspora gave the Provisional Irish Republic Army (IRA) millions of dollars for weapons. In the early 1990s new Irish-American organizations began pushing their kin in Northern Ireland to search

for a peaceful solution (while successfully lobbying the White House to get involved in the Northern Irish cause).

The shifting views of the diaspora encouraged the IRA leaders to embrace a new direction. This shift in turn reinforced the more peaceful strains among the diaspora. As the IRA began to abandon the armed struggle in the 1990s, it created a new group to raise money in the place of the [militant] NORAIID . . . [that] was unwelcome after the ceasefire, as the IRA sought to have its representatives work directly with U.S. political leaders.⁴⁴

During the years of the Oslo Peace Process, many Jewish-American groups also acted as unofficial emissaries in the efforts to open new diplomatic channels to countries that had no diplomatic relations with Israel. They lobbied to lift the Arab boycott, to reward Arab and Islamic states that normalized relations with the Jewish state, and to encourage others to do the same.⁴⁵ These missions were not always undertaken with the prior approval of the Israeli government; indeed, at times both the Jewish and the Armenian diasporas have undertaken international political initiatives that conflicted with the desires of their homeland governments. The clearest examples in the Jewish case during the 1990s were the activities of diasporic elements to push the U.S. government to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to the chagrin of Israeli officials. Indeed, American Jews who opposed the Rabin government's concessions to the PLO went as far as questioning the Israeli government's loyalty to the Jewish people.

In the Armenian case, the homeland government does not officially oppose diaspora efforts to win international recognition of the Armenian genocide, but it often finds that these efforts complicate its bilateral relations. For instance, the Armenian government had very little to do with the Armenian-American lobbying groups that successfully pushed for a ban on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan (known as Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act), which has now withstood a decade of State Department efforts to have it overturned. Diasporic activities may also help set the ideological parameters of a homeland conflict and the requirements for a termination of hostilities.⁴⁶ Armenians in the United States and France, for example, are responsible for instilling into the current Armenian-Azeri conflict an echo of the Armenian genocide. Ultimately, the genocide also became the central "chosen trauma" of the Armenian state.⁴⁷ It was increasingly invoked when Turkey extended its support to Azerbaijan, another Turkic country. Turkish moves to support Azerbaijan in the

Karabakh conflict were seen by the diaspora “as the logical continuation of a long-term policy to keep Armenia helpless and vulnerable . . . [that] at a convenient moment it can, perhaps, seize upon an excuse to eliminate the little that was left of the historic Armenian territories.”⁴⁸

Host states, particularly Western democracies, take into account the interests and political power of diaspora communities in formulating policies toward homeland conflicts. For example, regardless of France’s official reluctance to consider itself a host country for immigrants or a breeding ground for ethnic identity, it cannot escape the U.S. style of manifestation of diasporic politics.⁴⁹ U.S. interest in the conflicts in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, between Armenia and Azerbaijan, India and Pakistan, and between Israel and its Arab neighbors are all heavily influenced by the strength of well-organized ethnic diasporas in U.S. politics. Because of U.S. leadership in encouraging conflict resolution in these regions, homeland governments rely on diasporic aid to influence foreign policy in congenial directions. U.S. decision makers, for their part, try to commission diaspora leaders to promote U.S. interests in the homeland and U.S. preferences for the way the homeland’s violent conflicts are resolved. In India, the Indian-American community is currently seen as enhancing Indian foreign policy and security goals as well as contributing toward its economic development. The Government of India’s *High Level Committee Report on the Indian Diaspora* states: “A section of financially powerful and politically well connected Indo-Americans has emerged during the last decade. They have effectively mobilized on issues ranging from the nuclear tests in 1998 to Kargil, played a crucial role in generating a favorable climate of opinion in Congress and defeating anti-India legislation there, and lobbied effectively on other issues of concern to the Indian community. They have also demonstrated willingness to contribute financially to Indian causes, such as relief for the Orissa cyclone and the Latur and Gujarat earthquakes, higher technical education and innumerable charitable causes.” The report continues, “For the first time, India has a constituency in the US with real influence and status. The Indian community in the United States constitutes an invaluable asset in strengthening India’s relationship with the world’s only superpower.”⁵⁰

Even the adversaries of kin states recognize and try to confront or work with diasporic forces involved in the homeland conflict. After the defeat of the labor government in Israel’s 1996 elections, the PLO reached out to liberal Jews in the United States to try to sustain the progress of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. However,

the efforts of Palestinians and other Arab officials to use Jewish-Americans as a lever on the U.S. executive branch, Congress, or the Israeli government were undermined when Arafat lost all credibility as a result of the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process. Azeri officials, for their part, name the Armenian-American lobby in Washington as the primary obstacle to peace in the Caucasus and to developing U.S.-Azeri relations.⁵¹ Azerbaijan has cultivated the Jewish organizations in Washington as allies to counterbalance Armenian lobbying efforts. The Turkish mission in Washington also devotes immense resources to combating the Armenian diaspora's lobbying efforts.⁵²

Determinants of Diaspora Attitudes toward Conflict Resolution in the Homeland

A diasporic community's attitude toward potential peace deals involving its kin state stems from the interrelated concerns of identity and interest inside and outside the homeland. Five main concerns can be identified that influence diasporic postures toward conflict resolution efforts in their homeland, including a concern to maintain their ethnic identity as they conceive of it; competition with the homeland for leadership of the transnational community; organizational or bureaucratic interests stemming from diasporic organizations; and the diaspora's other political interests and goals in its host state. A final countervailing consideration in judging diasporic attitudes on conflict resolution and peace settlements is economics, in particular the prospects that peace agreements may hold for the protection of diasporic assets and investments in their homeland.

Maintaining Identity

The ethnic identity of a diaspora group is made up of elements that are shared with their kin in the homeland (historical, social, and cultural ideals) as well as other elements that are unique to the diaspora and derive from its separate experiences. The diaspora's identity is also affected by the degree to which its leaders (and members) are actively engaged in domestic affairs in the homeland. All the symbols of homeland sovereignty—a currency, stamps, the military, a flag, and the like—are ingredients that may reinforce the identity of the diaspora kin just as they cultivate and sustain the national identity of the homeland's citizens. The "wholeness" or inviolability of the homeland's territory is also a key marker of the nation's well-being for the diaspora. Thus, an interstate

conflict or internal separatist movement generally becomes a major ingredient in diasporic identity.

A threat to the homeland's survival from conflict serves as an important mobilizing force for diasporic communities, enabling them to build institutions, raise funds, and promote activism among community members who might otherwise allow their ethnic identity to fade to the level of mere folkways. This is especially true for diasporas who are part of the rich and accommodating tapestry of U.S. multiculturalism. Zvi Gitelman argues that the open nature of U.S. society has led the Jewish diaspora, similar to many other ethnic Americans, to lose much of the content of their ethnocultural and religious identity and create instead "a highly individualized ethnic [Jewish] identity." This dynamic "further erodes commonality of experience, the 'mutual understandings and interpretations' that are the substance of 'thin' Jewish content."⁵³ The fate of the homeland's violent conflict can thus play an important role in the diaspora community's ability to maintain and nourish its own ethnic identity.

Since the threat to the homeland is a powerful tool to mobilize diaspora community members to fund diaspora organizations and engage in political activity in the host state, peace itself can threaten diasporic identity. After the signing of the Oslo Agreement in September 1993, Arthur Hertzberg wrote that, with peace in the Middle East, Israel would no longer remain Jewish-America's "secular religion," and the diaspora would have to reshape its identity and institutions to meet domestic U.S. challenges.⁵⁴ Indeed, during the Oslo Process, many diasporic organizations began to ask what their source of political recruitment would be in the era of peace and what would compel them to remain Jews if the danger to Israel receded.⁵⁵ It was in this context that some sounded the alarm that "the declining needs of Israel will contribute to the steady decline of Jewish giving, weakening American Jewish institutions and accelerating the rate of [Jewish] assimilation."⁵⁶

The eruption of mass violence in the Middle East in the fall of 2000 deeply affected the thinking and organizational efforts of the majority of Jewish-Americans that had generally become accustomed to think and act in a "peace" mode. Jewish-American organizations that had spent the better part of the 1990s learning to focus on domestic challenges and searching for new roles in the changed political environment produced by the Oslo Accords quickly reverted to their pre-Oslo programming and rallied to Israel's side as the extent of the danger to Israel became clear. After nearly a year of violence, Mort Zuckerman, chairman of the Confederence of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, commented that

“one of the things Arafat has accomplished is a greater degree of unity among Jews in Israel and [the United States]. There is a wider degree of support and unanimity within this community than has existed in a long time.”⁵⁷ This new posture of Jewish unity has also generated a significant resurgence of Jewish donations to ensure Israeli security and economic viability.

Moreover, if a homeland government chooses to pursue reconciliation with a historical enemy, diaspora communities may feel that their identity as historical victims of that enemy is under threat. To the extent that an Armenian rapprochement with Turkey requires deemphasizing the genocide issue, for example, it threatens the identity of diaspora Armenians. As Khachig Tololyan and Krikor Beledian aptly remark, “The diaspora . . . has the Genocide as its point of departure. It clings to the memory of the Catastrophe; the more distant the memory becomes, the more the diaspora seems to write about it.”⁵⁸ If the Armenian state, the international embodiment of “Armenianness,” decides to lower the genocide on the list of national priorities, it is by implication devaluing diaspora Armenians as part of the transnational Armenian community.

Contesting the Leadership of the Transnational Ethnic Community

In transnational ethnic communities, the very notion of the national interest is often contested: diasporas may believe that national politics should take their preferences and situation into account, while homeland elites may wish to vest national politics entirely within the institutions of the nation-state. The leadership of the diasporic Armenian Dashnak Party rejects any distinction between native Armenians and diasporans as “insulting,” while former Armenian president Ter-Petrosian saw Armenia and the diaspora as “two different polities.”⁵⁹ The Dashnak and the Armenian government in this period struggled mightily over who represented Armenian interests in settling the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Indeed, the Armenian-American diaspora is perhaps the example par excellence of homeland-diaspora rivalries over leadership and national interest because of the diaspora’s overwhelming role in sustaining Armenian national identity during the years of Soviet rule. As noted before, for a long time, the Armenian national cause was upheld by the diaspora, specifically by the Dashnak Party, which served as a sort of “government-in-exile.”⁶⁰ The Armenian diaspora, especially its highly mobilized U.S.-based community, has always been dedicated to home-

land affairs, often serving as a critical lifeline for Armenian security and welfare needs. By the mid-1990s, “contributions to Armenian relief from the Armenian [diaspora] community amounted to \$50 million to \$75 million a year.”⁶¹ Razmik Panossian has written that, since the time of Armenia’s independence from Soviet rule in 1991, “*sending financial and material aid to Armenia has become [the] operative paradigm of homeland-diaspora relations*” (italics in original).⁶² The government of Ter-Petrosian sought to control the diaspora fund-raising efforts under a government-controlled Armenia Fund—allegedly to “keep politics out” of the process of the building of the country but actually to neutralize the influence of traditional diaspora parties. While the more moderate diaspora parties generally lent unqualified support to the Armenian government, the Dashnak bloc and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation assumed an opposition role.⁶³ The Dashnak, with its pan-Armenian orientation and long-established prominence in carrying the torch of Armenian nationalism, challenged the home regime’s monopoly in defining Armenia’s national interests vis-à-vis Nagorno-Karabakh, its relations with Turkey, its religious and cultural practices, its national mythology (particularly with regard to the Armenian genocide), and even the very notion of Armenianness.

The emergence of the independent state of Armenia itself challenged the status of the diaspora within the transnational Armenian community, and the new state brought a new set of interests to the discussion of Armenian foreign relations. The diaspora leadership has little reason to consider repairing relations with Turkey, for example, but the weak Armenian state has strong incentives to do so. Turkey has been forced by circumstance to recognize the harm diasporic activism can wreak on its bilateral relations with Armenia, the United States, France, and other states where diaspora activists have managed to put the genocide issue on the national political agenda. Yet the Turkish government held Armenia’s present leadership responsible for the ongoing recognition campaign. At the same time, Turkey has been trying to use direct negotiations with the Armenian government over the genocide issue to de-fang the Armenian diaspora’s capacity for independent action. In 2001, Turkey announced that it had “opened a direct diplomatic channel” with Yerevan to discuss the genocide issue.⁶⁴

The U.S. government has also found Armenian diaspora activism to be a confounding factor in its foreign policy. When the U.S. House of Representatives neared passage of a nonbinding resolution recognizing the genocide, Turkey threatened to halt U.S. military flights from the

Incirlik air base that were used to enforce the northern no-fly zone over Iraq.⁶⁵ Likewise, after the French National Assembly unanimously passed a law recognizing the massacres as genocide in January 2001, Turkey curtailed its relations with France, a fellow NATO member and a prominent member of the European Union. In similar and ironic fashion, the Azeri and Turkish governments have both improved ties with Israel in part as a way of compensating for their lack of a strong diaspora in the United States. By cozying up to Israel, they have tried to win the support of Jewish diaspora organizations on Capitol Hill and fracture the Jewish groups' previously close ties with their Armenian counterparts. The Azeri ambassador to Washington said: "We understood that we needed to make friends in this country. We knew how strong Jewish groups are. They have asked us about the condition of Jews in our country. I helped them to go to Azerbaijan and open Jewish schools. They came back with [a] good understanding [of the conflict]."⁶⁶ Thus, the son of the Azeri president announced in 1999 that "we now have a lobby in the United States and that is the Jewish community."⁶⁷

*Organizational and Bureaucratic Interests in
Homeland Conflicts*

Diasporas may have organizational or political interests in their host countries that are affected by the homeland conflict or its potential resolution. Settlement of a homeland conflict may threaten long-cherished political institutions in the diaspora community. Some have argued that if the Arab-Israeli conflict were resolved peacefully, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) would likely see its mission greatly diminished, along with its membership, its funding, and its level of attention from elected officials in Washington.⁶⁸

The diaspora's support and influence may initially be called upon both by the homeland government and by the host state's government as each seeks to influence the other's policies in a congenial direction. However, once a conflict is settled, the high-level meetings and phone calls may abate, and diasporic community leaders find that both their internal communal prestige and their external levers of influence degrade as a result. In addition, the struggle between different diasporic camps over homeland peace policies may become an extension of their broader competition for position and power among their ethnic constituents and within host state politics. Within the Jewish-American and Armenian-American communities, multiple organizations compete for time and attention on

Capitol Hill and other corridors of power. They likewise try to link themselves to political allies in the homeland so as to increase their prestige there.

Concerns about Political and Social Status in the Host Society

In many cases, the policies of homeland authorities with respect to their ongoing violent conflicts may also impinge on diaspora communities' political or social status in their host society. When kin states violate norms that are valued by the host state (such as, for the United States, democracy or human rights), diasporas are often implicated or held accountable morally and politically. The U.S. government and perhaps even the U.S. public may expect diaspora leaders to persuade or pressure their homeland government to alter its policies in a more congenial direction. Israel's democratic system of government has certainly made proud ethnic identification and activism easier for Jewish-Americans. On the other hand, to the extent that the young state of Armenia fails to combat corruption and consolidate its democracy, this makes diaspora lobbying work more difficult and threatens the strength and degree of U.S. support for Armenia. It also limits the degree of financial support the Armenian-American diaspora is willing to provide.⁶⁹

The homeland's policies toward violent conflict can also impinge on the diaspora's ability to achieve cherished political goals as well as affect its status. This is especially true when the homeland government rejects U.S. policy preferences in dealing with the conflict or a potential peace process. The violence sponsored by Palestinian nationalist and Islamic movements during many years, and Arab states' endorsement of that violence, severely hampered the ability of Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans to ingratiate themselves with America's elected leaders. Finally, homeland conflicts and peace efforts can confront diaspora leaders with a dilemma of dual loyalties and torn allegiances. When the George H. W. Bush administration threatened to withhold loan guarantees to Israel unless Israel agreed not to spend the money in the occupied West Bank and Gaza in 1991, Jewish-American advocacy organizations were forced to choose between their good relations with the U.S. foreign policy establishment and their loyal support of Israeli policies in its conflict with the Palestinians. Most chose to support Israeli policy at the cost of incurring the wrath of their U.S. partners. But after the bilateral U.S.-Israeli confrontation was resolved and the loan guarantees were put into place, many of those same organizations joined the effort to pressure

the Israeli government to adopt a different attitude toward settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza.

Economic Interests in the Homeland

Just as they invest in helping their kin in homeland conflicts, diaspora members often find economic opportunities and advantages in their kin states, especially those emerging out of long years of backwardness and adversity. Thus they may be motivated to take part in efforts to resolve conflict and to sustain postconflict reconstruction, as happened with Irish Americans for a New Irish Agenda (ANIA). While the Irish members of ANIA helped in facilitating the Good Friday Agreement and served as “stakeholders serving their homeland, which had been torn apart by violence. . . . Their motivations were not completely altruistic . . . [as a] peaceful Ireland would also open the door to lucrative investments.”⁷⁰ In the cases of Eritrea, Bosnia, and Sri Lanka, some studies report that diasporic economic links and investments helped to herald peace processes. And yet, with the money they send home, diasporas can also increase the risk of renewed conflict in the years immediately following an upheaval.

Conclusions

The survey and analysis provided here allude to a very mixed picture regarding the impact of diasporas on conflict resolution and the role they play as peace spoilers or catalysts. A few observations would be pertinent. In the resolution of interstate conflicts (with or without a distinct minority dimension) kin states must address both domestic and far removed constituencies that may promote or hinder a political settlement. During negotiations with external enemies, political debates that take place within the nation-state often include diasporic constituencies that are geographically removed from the homeland and yet have a strong voice and interest in the conflict and its outcome. The diaspora activists who are *outside the state but inside the people* have weight on the international scene because of their stature, means, institutions, and connections. Moreover, the fact that third parties that are not ostensibly connected to the conflict may see diaspora activists as potential allies in advancing their own causes further enhances the diaspora’s stature. Such visibility and prominence also come at a price. If the conflict flares up, the diaspora may be seen as culpable.

The interaction between diaspora and homeland constituencies (pre-

or poststatehood) in conflict resolution is dynamic. Diasporas are not merely agents fulfilling the orders of their homeland leadership. More often they are architects and initiators of policy, especially, but not exclusively, in intrastate conflicts when a minority is seeking secession or irredentism. Sometimes both parties to an international conflict have diasporic constituencies that may play a positive role, as facilitator, or a negative role, raising obstacles to dialogue. Diaspora leaders on both sides may also open a channel of negotiations. The diasporas' propensity to serve as facilitators or spoilers of negotiations both depends on and affects the homeland governments' (or nonstate aspirants') readiness to compromise or continue the conflict. Homeland governments that are permeable to diasporic influence always have to calculate to what extent the diaspora will support or oppose its policies. In some cases, the diaspora is not just the homeland's tail but may dominate the wagging. The understanding that diasporas are important players in the conflict brings third parties to address them and their interests.

The diaspora's own identity issues with regard to the homeland and their countries of residence shape their understandings of the conflict. These understandings fluctuate in accordance with their concern for current and pragmatic agendas or the saliency of history and memory in their communal identity. Some may argue that the diaspora has the luxury of dwelling in the past, while at home, governments and people must occupy themselves with issues of day-to-day existence. Yet others maintain that the diaspora's faithfulness to issues of kinship identity reminds the homeland of its historical obligations to preserve certain values that are crucial to the nation's *raison d'être*. In applying their own identity concerns to the homeland's policy, diaspora elements may consider how the homeland may be a source of pride abroad, or alternatively, how it may become a source of embarrassment. This observation is valid regardless of the individual's position about the conflict and regardless of his investment in his kinship identity.

Finally, emphasizing one or the other trend of diasporic involvement as spoilers or catalysts in conflict resolution is too simplistic. Whether diaspora spoil or whether they act as catalysts in supporting peace processes remains a more complex issue that is closely tied to the representation and leadership of the homeland. The extent to which diaspora members are empowered over the homeland voices is a function of many elements of the host state, home state, economics, and the viability of organization, all of which have an impact upon the direction of diasporic influences. It is evident that a diaspora's role in homeland conflict per-

petuation and conflict resolution can be so powerful that homeland leaders would ignore diaspora preferences at their own peril. Moreover, one must consider seriously the view that a diaspora and its leaders are not just careless nationalists. In fact they may be better placed to view the conflict in the homeland precisely because of their remoteness and being outside the range of fire. This argument considers diasporic voices as more realistic and therefore at times less willing to accept “false” compromises. In the latter case their alleged spoiling is in fact an eye-opener, saving their kin in the homeland from themselves—a view that was expressed by key Jewish leaders in the United States who opposed Oslo because of the risks involved. All in all, the larger the diaspora and more diverse its perspectives, the greater is the likelihood that its members produce conflicting views that mirror debates in the homeland rather than dictate them.