



Program Director:  
Radha Kumar

# DELHI POLICY GROUP

*Program on Developing Durable Peace Processes & Partners*

## *Simulation V*

### **Simulation Exercise** *Ending the Violence*

**The Scenario—A Scenario for Peace**  
(This simulation is based on an abstract scenario)

## Summary

**Place:** somewhere in **Asia**, a territory which is situated at a strategic and civilization crossroads, that is, between three or more countries and three or more ancient religious and cultural communities, and is a semi-autonomous or recently annexed (more than 50 years ago) part of a larger federation.

**Population:** No more than five million, demographically mixed (three religious, ethnic and/or linguistic communities) and territorially dispersed (that is, territory not easily divisible into three without enormous displacement of people).

**Nature of Dispute:** Territorial and Communal, that is, a push for an independent homeland—secession from the federation—that is supported by the majority community but disputed by the two minority communities, who threaten they will seek their own homelands if secession is accepted.

**Context of Dispute:** Transition from an authoritarian system to a democratic one, for example, from colonialism to independence, from communism to democracy, from domination to self-rule.

**Roots of Conflict:** Use of policies of divide and rule by previous regime(s), resulting in creation of communal or sectarian organizations claiming to be true representatives for transfer of power, and therefore seeking to thwart or de-legitimize the other group's claims to self-determination.

## Brief Description of the Conflict

Your region was annexed to (or reluctantly joined) a larger federation for geopolitical reasons more than fifty years ago. The federation authorities negotiated an arrangement that granted a large degree of autonomy to you, and promised to recognize your sovereignty in imaginative ways, but the agreement was rarely observed and was marred by persistent distrust between your leadership and the federal authorities.

Your people are divided over whether and what kind of sovereignty they want. While the bulk of the majority community (45%) want independence, the bulk of the two minorities (35% and 20% respectively) are afraid that they will be dominated by the





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majority and will lose what little protection they have from the federation. Up until ten years ago, the vulnerability of the minorities kept the majority in the federation, despite unhappiness at federal domination and perceived discrimination. But worsening relations, rigged political processes, and a growing body of educated and unemployed youth with aspirations for a better life, triggered an armed uprising ten years ago, to which the federal authorities responded by sending in their troops.

The civil conflict has dragged on, and has polarized the three communities. One minority was driven out of the majority localities in your region, and the armed groups have massacred other minorities at key political moments. Though popular support for the insurgency has faded, armed groups have proliferated, and have been joined by foreign fighters. The years of conflict have destroyed administration and the rule of law, and there is now an unholy nexus of criminality and corruption between politicians, administrators, armed groups and security forces (especially the local police).

Though there have been prior efforts to end the conflict they have been hesitant and cautious and have quickly fizzled out. Now the federal and regional authorities are showing signs of greater commitment to finding a lasting settlement: they are seeking a cease-fire with the armed groups while showing readiness to open talks with the separatists. These efforts are still cautious, and depend on what the responses are from the different actors who can make or break peace negotiations.

### Brief Description of the Actors

1. You are a leader of the oldest political party in the area, that once had a following amongst all three communities in the region but now has to fight with your main constitutional rival party and the separatists for support within the majority community (which is itself a narrow majority, around 40%), and you have been in power on and off, both independently and in coalition. Your party had negotiated a semi-autonomous position for your region within the federation fifty years ago, but the agreement was observed more in the breach, and you allowed yourself to be pushed into unfair compromises with the federal authorities. Your party has lost a great deal of its credibility. But now there has been a ten-year long civil conflict, and the people want peace. The federal authorities too are ready to reconsider their counter-insurgency policies, control Human Rights violations, and renegotiate autonomy, but only if the armed self-determination groups agree to cease-fire.



You are now in the opposition, and so you have a chance to regain the political space that you lost through compromise with the federal authorities by being more radical than your rival party that is now in power. At the same time, there is now a chance to establish a durable peace process on the ground, and seek a cease-fire, which you need more than anyone else, because it is your cadre that are continuing to be targeted by the armed groups (your party is still the most secular and inclusive one). However, despite your sacrifices, if there is a durable peace process, it is your rivals that will collect the credit. How do you respond?



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2. You are a leader of the main separatist/independence group, which is a coalition of about a dozen similar groups. You were originally in an armed organization, but left when you decided armed resistance was not going to win your cause. Nevertheless, you still have some contacts with militant groups, and have been approached by an emissary of the federal authorities to ask if you will use your contacts to probe the possibility for a cease-fire. You do not trust the federal authorities – having been previously approached by them and cooperated, only to be left high and dry at the last moment. However, if you can help get a cease-fire, and be seen to have played a role in getting it, you will regain a great deal of the popular support you lost during the civil conflict. And you might earn a seat at the table when a lasting settlement is negotiated.

However, these gains depend on whether you support a peace process and how actively you are willing to engage in one. You have little reason to trust either the federal or regional authorities, who still believe you are marginal to the political process, whether it be for war or for peace. In the past their attitude has led you to play the spoiler – breaking off a cease-fire or boycotting local elections. But now you have a new opportunity to regain some initiative: the authorities have offered you talks for a lasting settlement, provided you help negotiate a cease-fire. How do you respond?

3. You are the recently elected head of the federal government. You know you have a historic opportunity to find a lasting settlement—the people want peace, the militants lack support and are divided, many of them want an honorable surrender, the international community will back you in a peace process—but you have inherited a legacy of mistrust, and counter-insurgency has been the dominant federal policy for the past decade and more. If you can achieve a settlement that will keep the seceding area within the federation while giving them autonomy, your party as well as the opposition will back you. But in order to achieve such a settlement, you have to draw the separatists and armed groups into negotiations, and you have to talk a language of self-determination, both of which will subject you to criticism from the opposition as well as many within your own party. Your security and intelligence forces also tell you that they are well on the way to containing the armed groups, while the local ruling political party assures you they have begun to marginalize the separatists.

Recently, however, you have received signals that the separatists might be prepared to enter into talks. How do you respond?

4. You are the head of the federal security forces in the area. Your troops were sent in ten years ago to quell an uprising, and still haven't been able to leave. The uprising has been decimated but it has been replaced with a dozen or more armed groups prepared to fight to the finish, with a hard-line ideology. No matter how often you break them up, they re-form, largely because, as you have said over and over, there is no political policy for a lasting settlement. In the meantime, partly because they have been there so long, and partly because they regard the local residents as hostile, your troops have been grossly violating Human Rights and have become trigger-happy. Your own policy in countering the armed groups, too, has become permissive of torture and custodial death.





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You want to be able to withdraw your troops, because you are worried about the effects on morale, but you don't believe it is possible to do so unless there is a cease-fire in place. You are also anxious to ensure that any cease-fire is tied to a long-term demobilization and decommissioning plan, because in the past short-term cease-fires have allowed the armed groups to re-arm and recruit.

The federal authorities are pushing you to rollback your counterinsurgency policy to pave the way for a cease-fire, but they do not yet have an overarching political policy in place, nor have they opened talks with the separatists. How do you respond?

5. You are the leader of the biggest and oldest armed group fighting for an independent state, and originally had a large support base in the majority community (but not amongst either of the two large minorities). You have come close to a political settlement with the federal authorities, based on autonomy, and have at various points negotiated a cease-fire, but at each point the deal has fallen through due to mistrust. In the ten years of civil conflict, a number of more radical, religious-minded armed groups have emerged who have massacred minorities and have been far less protective of civilian life than you were. Because of their religious affiliations, these groups have mobilized more support—especially arms and money—than you have, and their methods of attack, bombs, grenades, suicide missions, have forced you into more radical postures. You are not happy with them, but you are dependent on them, and you do not dare enter cease-fire negotiations without their support.

In the meantime, your cadres are pushing you to find an honorable exit through a cease-fire. The dwindling support for insurgency in the area means that your cadres lack the food and shelter that they could earlier call on. As a result many of them have taken to forcibly seeking food and shelter (coercing reluctant villagers at gunpoint), as well as cash for security, and so a large number of your cadres have been criminalized.

Now the federal authorities have approached you once again to discuss a cease-fire, and they are willing to involve the separatist leadership in the negotiating process. But you are not on good terms with the political leadership of the separatists—in the past they forced you to call off a cease-fire because they had not negotiated it. How do you respond?



6. You are a leader of the minority community that was expelled from the political heart of the area, where most of the majority community lives, when the insurgency began ten years ago. Despite your tireless efforts, neither the federal nor the regional authorities have done much to create conditions for your return, or even protect the people and property left behind. In the past you have protested peace initiatives between the federal authorities and the separatists because they have not included measures for your community's safety or right of return; and the idea of federal troops' withdrawal is anathema to you because you fear that whatever little remains of your community in the area will also be driven out. You would like a cease-fire but not if it entails troops' withdrawal, as it inevitably will.





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The federal authorities are now telling you that any troops' withdrawal will be phased, and tied to the end of violence, and that your community will be consulted.

The regional authorities now say they want members of your community to return, but they have created an enclave for returns (a "safe haven") that will leave your community vulnerable to future attacks should the situation again worsen, as it is likely to given the overall destruction of administration and rule of law in the area. The separatists have not taken any meaningful steps to reach out to, or reassure, your community.

You have established a strong voice with the federal authorities, but only as a naysayer. You can break a deal, but you still do not have the voice to help make one. The general will for peace has created a new opportunity for you to develop a positive voice in the region, and the best way to do so is to support the rollback of counterinsurgency methods (which have mostly hit the majority community). But can you muster the support for this?

7. You are a leader of the Diaspora that has supported the insurgency with money and arms, and occasionally training and recruits. Though you have received disquieting reports that the armed groups have become criminal and sectarian, killing their own people, you have remained a loyal supporter because of federal obduracy to what you see as legitimate claims to self-determination. Now though you are beginning to believe that the federal government might indeed be committed to finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Because of the support you have given them, you have some influence with the separatists and the armed groups, as well as a powerful influence over other members of the Diaspora. The federal and local authorities have asked you to use your influence to persuade the separatists and armed groups to a cease-fire, but they are not willing to commit themselves to your proposals for a settlement, which include formal tokens of sovereignty. They have, however, indicated that they would be prepared to negotiate de facto self-rule. Are you prepared to trust them and use your influence?

**(The organizers of the simulation are advised to assign names to the territory and actors)**

