

# THE DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT: A THEORETICAL STUDY



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## Abstract:

The article provides an in-depth theoretical examination of international conflict dynamics, analyzing its stages and evolution over time. It explores major models developed to explain these stages and emphasizes understanding the underlying causes of conflicts. Additionally, it discusses the interaction between conflict and peace concepts, highlighting their close interconnection and the challenges in distinguishing between them. Overall, the study underscores the importance of understanding international conflicts to address the challenges facing the international community effectively.

**key words:** International Conflict; Peace; Violence; The stages of international conflict.

## ملخص:

يقدم المقال دراسة نظرية عميقة حول ديناميكية النزاع الدولي، متناولا تحليلا شاملا لمراحل النزاع وتطورها عبر الزمن. إلى جانب أن المقال يتعمق في فهم النزاعات الدولية عبر النماذج الرئيسية التي طورت لشرح هذه المراحل، مع التركيز على كيفية فهم الأسباب التي تقف وراءها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك يستعرض المقال التفاعل بين مفاهيم النزاع والسلم، مؤكدا على التشابك الوثيق بينهما وصعوبة فصلهما كما يسلط هذا المقال الضوء على أهمية فهم النزاعات الدولية وتطورها لتحقيق فهم أعمق للتحديات التي تواجه المجتمع الدولي وسبل التعامل معها بفعالية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** النزاع الدولي؛ السلم؛ نماذج مراحل النزاع؛ العنف

## **Introduction:**

In a world full of transformations and complexities, International conflicts are among the most prominent phenomena posing serious challenges to the international community. The roots of these conflicts extend to various factors, ranging from cultural, economic, to political disparities. They are not merely armed confrontations but rather the result of complex interactions of several factors, spanning from minor regional conflicts to major disputes that shake global stability.

The complexity of the causes and motivations of conflicts, along with their diversity and interplay, has prompted researchers and stakeholders to seek general frameworks for interpreting the stages and dynamics of conflicts. These theories have varied and intersected significantly to the extent that each researcher finds a different framework for understanding the causes of conflicts, their resolution, and their evolutionary mechanisms. Therefore, the main problem around which the study revolves is: What are the models and theoretical frameworks that have attempted to explain the stages of international conflict? And what are the mechanisms of its evolution?

To answer these questions, the study is divided into two axes:

Axis One: The Stages of International Conflict; focuses on the stages of conflict and the models developed to understand these stages. It discusses various models that have attempted to provide a framework for understanding the stages of international conflicts, with a focus on analysing the interactions and factors influencing the development of these stages.

Axis Two: The Curve of International Conflict; addresses the study of the conflict curve and the interplay between conflict concepts and peace concepts.

The objective of this article is to explore the dynamics of international conflict, focusing on theoretical frameworks. It aims to study various models developed to understand the stages of conflict and the intersection of conflict concepts with those of peace, emphasizing their inseparability. Through this exploration, the study seeks to contribute to the academic understanding of the dynamics of international conflict and their impact on peace building efforts.

## **2. The Stages of International Conflict**

Violent conflicts represent an advanced stage in the evolution of the phenomenon of international conflict. At this level, actors fail to resort to peaceful solutions to resolve disputes; instead, they employ force and violence to achieve their objectives, attempting to dominate other actors or destroy any opposition they may encounter from those seeking also to pursue their own interests.

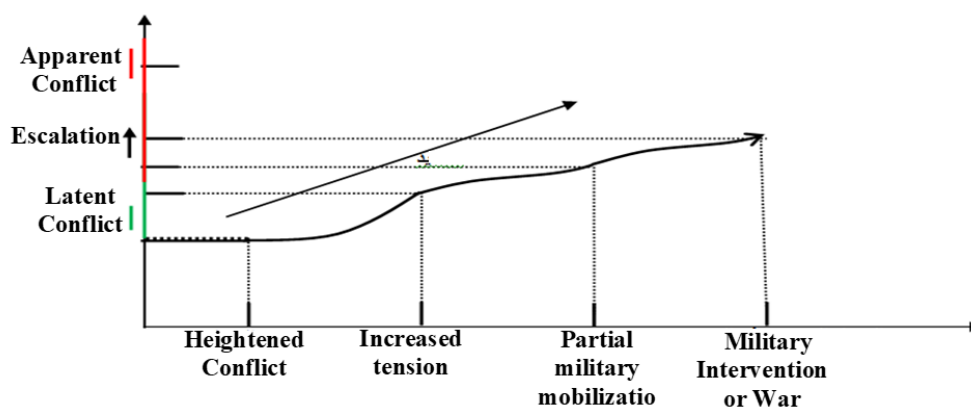
## 2.1 The Stages of Conflict in the Conflict Simulation Model (COSIMO)

The COSIMO (Shevchuk, 2013, p. 18) outlines the stages followed by the phenomenon of international conflicts, indicating that the “acute crisis” comes second in the category of violent conflicts, with its intensity linked to the use of violence resulting from clashes and overlapping interests. “War” is considered the highest stage of violent conflict, representing the most destructive means to attain the disputed issue or desired objectives. The transformation of conflict from latent to apparent is attributed to the contradictions that emerge in the environment followed by behaviours, this establish the stage of action and reaction, often characterised by highly violent activity.

## 2.2 The Stages of International Conflict According to “Quincy Wright “

Quincy Wright outlines in his book “*The Nature of Conflict*” (Wright, 1951, p. 193) the stages of conflict, starting from the emergence of contradiction, passing through the birth of differences, and then escalating tension in subsequent phase. In these two stages, the conflict remains latent without appearing. Then the conflict becomes evident as parties resort to threatening the use of hard power by partial mobilization of military force, in an attempt to handle the disagreements. Subsequently, the conflict escalates to another stage characterized by military intervention or war to enforce a resolution.

Figure 01: Quincy Wright’s Model of Conflict Stages



Source: (شنونف، 2019، صفحة 64)

## 2.3 The Stages of International Conflict According to “Oliver Ramsbothan”

Oliver Ramsbothan (Ramsbothan Oliver, 2011, p. 507) presents another model regarding the stages of evolution of international conflicts, referring to the stages of escalation and de-escalation. According to his perspective, war serves as the climax between these two stages; as illustrated in the following diagram:

Figure 02: O.Ramsbothan's Model of Conflict Stages



## 2.4 The Stages of International Conflict According to” C.R Mitchell”

The model presented by Mitchell in his book “*The Structure of International Conflict*” (Mitchell, 1981) is considered one of the best models; explaining how conflict interacts in its inception and development. This interaction encompasses the following components: the conflict situation, the conflict posture, and conflict behaviour. These components can be defined as follows: (حسين، 2017، صفحة 7)

**A. Conflict Situation:** This refers to the general state in which the conflict exists and is measured based on its scope, either in terms of the number of issues involved or its duration.

**B. Conflict Posture:** This reflects what each party seeks to establish and is measured in terms of its intensity.

**C. Conflict Behaviour:** This pertains to what each party does towards the other and is measured by success or failure.

These components interact with each other as follows (Niklas L.P, 2005, p. 8)

**1. Behaviour Influences Situation:** Successful behaviour leads to increased demands, thus introducing more issues, affecting the breadth conflict situation.

**2. Situation Influences Posture:** The longer the conflict duration, the greater the erosion of trust, which leads to intensify the conflict posture.

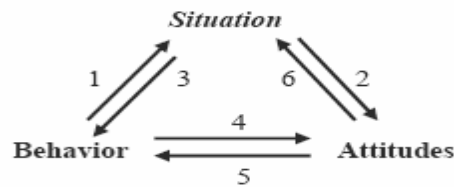
**3. Situation influences Behaviour:** When the conflict situation indicates a failure to achieve major goals, this prompts behaviour modification or making changes to achieve these goals.

**4. Behaviour Influences Posture:** Successful behaviour motivates, while failure leads to a desire for revenge. In both cases, the intensity of the conflict posture is affected.

**5. Postures Influence Behaviour:** The intensity of postures is what influences the adopted behaviour; the more severe the posture is, the more it leads to an escalation of violence in conflict behaviour.

**6. Postures Influence Situation:** The intensity of conflict postures leads to prolonged conflict duration, thus perpetuating the conflict situation.

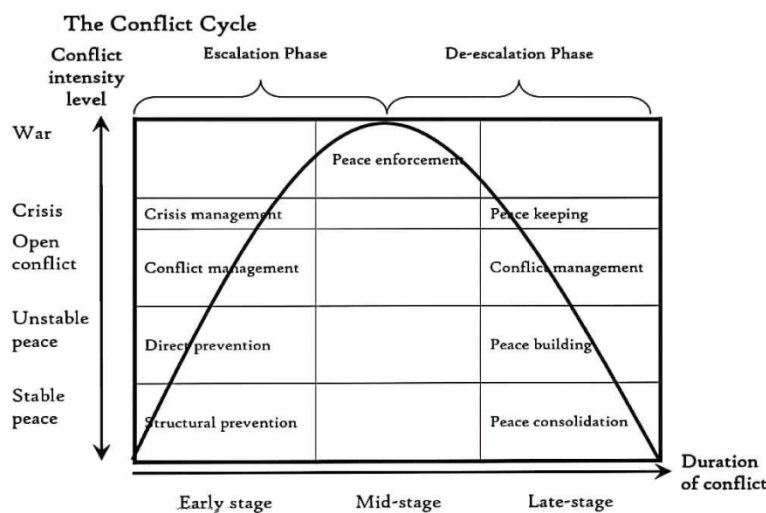
**Figure 03: The Interaction of the Three Components in Mitchell's Model**



Source: (Niklas L.P, 2005, p. 8)

Conflict goes through life cycle that evolves according to its intensity, beginning with stable peace and moving towards unstable peace, then open conflict, escalating into crisis, and ending in war. These stages are illustrated in the following diagram:

**Figure 04: The Life Cycle of a Conflict**



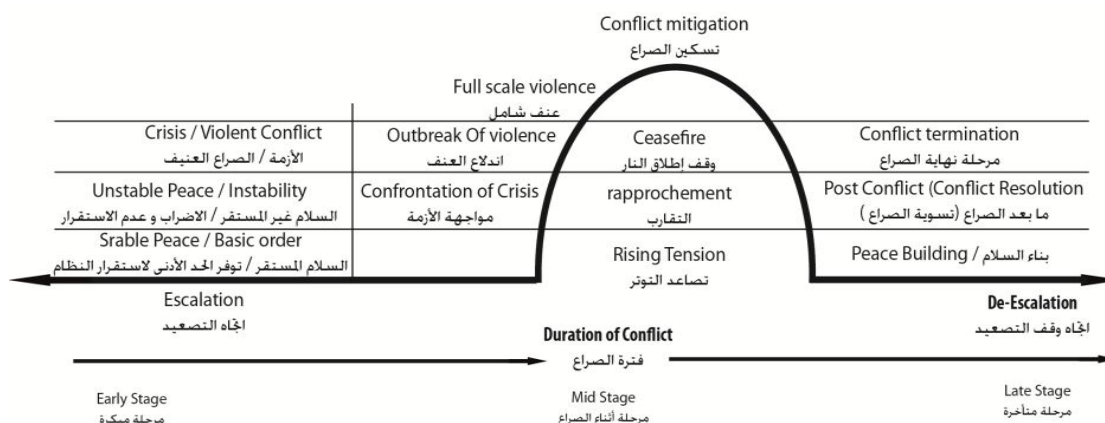
Source: (Niklas L.P, 2005, p. 11)

## 2.5 The Stages of International Conflict According to" Michael Lund"

Michael Lund also presents his model for the stages of conflict development under the title: *Basic Life-History and the Phases of Engagement*, illustrating the successive stages of conflict according to his perception of its evolution. He divided the stages of conflict into three: (Michael.S, 2001, p. 38)

- Early Stage
- Mid Stage
- Late Stage

Figure 05: Michael Lund's Model of Conflict Stages



Source: (خزندار، 2014، صفحة 127)

## 2.6 The Stages of International Conflict According to “Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK)”

In turn, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research presents a series of stages through which international conflicts progress, where it perceives the intensity of conflict as the prominent features across various areas of the world. The HIIK considers geographical area as the primary unit of analysis and distinguishes between five levels of intensity:

- Level 01: Dispute (Latent Conflict)
- Level 02: Non-violent Crises (Manifest Conflict)
- Level 03: Violent Crises (Escalated Conflict)
- Level 04: Limited War
- Level 05: War

Figure 06: The Intensity Levels of Conflict according to HIIK (HIIK)

| intensity Level | terminology        | level of violence     | intensity class  |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1               | dispute            | non-violent conflicts | low intensity    |
| 2               | non-violent crisis |                       |                  |
| 3               | violent crisis     | violent conflicts     | medium intensity |
| 4               | limited war        |                       | high intensity   |
| 5               | war                |                       |                  |

Source: (HIIK)

Nonviolent conflicts are referred to as having low intensity, such as contentious conflicts and nonviolent crises, while wars and limited wars are examples of high-intensity conflicts. The subsequent map illustrates the distribution of international conflicts according to their intensity levels across the globe.

Figure 07: Distribution of Global Conflicts by Intensity levels in 2022



Source: (Marit Brauschweig, 2023, p. 14)

## 2.7 The Stages of International Conflict According to “the Conflict Resolution Institute (RTC)”

The project “*Working with Conflict*” by the Conflict Resolution Institute presents a model or framework that defines the stages of conflict and their dynamics. There are five stages: (خزندان، 2014، صفحة 123)

1. Pre- conflict stages: In this stage, disparages or disagreements in interests or objectives emerge among two or more parties. However, at this juncture, the conflict is latent or not yet apparent. This stage is characterized by a mild state of tension.
2. Confrontation stage: Subsequently, the disagreement becomes more apparent as tension increases, and one party feels the need for field or operational engagement. This phase witnesses the adoption of various forms of adversarial behaviour towards the opposing party. Additionally, it is marked by polarization of positions and the formations of blocs among parties, evident both at the societal and interstate level.
3. Crisis Stage: This stage represents the climax or peak of the conflict, characterized by escalating tension or violence to its zenith. It constitutes the most perilous phase of the conflict, wherein the conflict becomes fully open in all its forms, dimensions, or possibilities, such as transforming into armed conflict or rupturing of relations.

4. Resolution Stage: This stage encompasses the outcomes or consequences of the conflict, wherein one party may emerge victorious or defeated, or where parties may reach agreements such as ceasefires in cases of armed conflict, engage in negotiations with the assistance of a third party, or achieve a settlement.

5. Post-conflict stage: This stage denotes the phase following conflict resolution, during which the conflict is addressed and its underlying causes are tackled.

## 2.8 The General Trajectory of International Conflict

It is important to note that the intertwined concepts associated with international conflict may themselves constitute a phase or several stages of conflict. The absence or the lack of international consensus may serve as the initial spark for conflict, which may evolve into an international dispute. Such disputes often give rise to tensions that can lead to crises, and if left unaddressed, may escalate into armed conflict. Additionally, the onset of war may commence with the absence of an initial international agreement between parties. Furthermore, the transition from one stage to another results in an escalation in both the scale and depth of the subsequent stage. This evolutionary trend in events describes the dynamic cycle of conflict (إكرام، 2010، صفحة 19)

*A. the Early Stage / the Initial Features:* This stage begins when a nation's behaviour directly or indirectly impacts the interests of other countries. In response, the affected countries resort to reacting to this behaviour. This response includes a range of options and strategies available to the second party, which may determine the fate of the conflict. During this stage, the concerned state engages in a confrontation characterized by presenting arguments, evidence, and clarification reasons, attempting to persuade external parties through peaceful means. Conflicts at this stage vary from one situation to another and from one area to another, often being resolvable.

Marcel Merle considers tension as the initial stage of conflict behaviour, where decision-makers experience moments of doubt regarding the behaviour of others, leading them to act in a manner that may provoke other countries

(مهنا، 2005، صفحة 601). Diplomacy plays a pivotal role in this stage, expressing a political pathway for resolving international conflicts, and the negotiation is its essence. Negotiation aims to reach an agreement that can guide and regulate the behaviour of the conflicting parties, meaning reaching an agreement satisfactory to both parties/actors. This is achieved when the negotiating parties adopt the principle of common interest or "win-win", focusing on what benefits both parties. Here, it is essential for the factors to assist each other in working together innovatively to reach specific agreements that benefit all involved (وجيه، 1994، الصفحات 77-78).

*B. the Advertising Campaign Stage:* When diplomacy efforts fail, a state initiates a propaganda campaign aimed at legitimizing and rationalizing its position, while portraying the opposing party as aggressive and depicting its demands as

illegitimate. This propaganda campaign takes place domestically and internationally, with a focus on the aggressiveness of the adversary. The parties' stance towards conflicting interests can manifest in various aspects during this stage:(الحوشي، 2009، صفحة 53)

-The first aspect involves one state expressing its will through assertion, claiming that its own interests must prevail. Consequently, it adopts a specific stance, or requests the other party to adopt a certain stance or behaviour that ensures the realization of the mentioned interests.

-The second aspect entails protest or rejection when the second party opposes the assertion made by the first party, resulting in a contradiction between assertion and protest.

In general, advertising is used in this stage to achieve two main objectives: defamation and undermining the reputation of the other party, portraying its goals and perceptions as unethical and illegal, and gaining internal and external public opinion support as well as garnering approval for future behaviour.

*C. the Peaceful Procedures Stage:* Each state begins to undertake some peaceful procedures, such as withdrawing recognition of the government or severing cooperative or diplomatic relations. This is recognized as one of the means in the UN Charter under Article 41 (ONU), which the Security Council may use as a tool to exert pressure on states threatening international security and peace (كرام، 2007، صفحة 146). The objective is to influence the other party/actor and compel it to change its position to reach an agreement that serves conflict management. Additionally, economic relations may be served, such as refusing to purchase goods produced by the hostile state, or implementing economic policies and measures against another state, such as focusing on tariff and customs tax policies.

One of the conflicting parties may exert influence against the other parties, such as the threat of punishment, which Holsti divides into two categories (K.J.Holsti, 1972, pp. 99-100) :

- Positive Threat: For example, when a state threatens to increase tariffs, sever diplomatic relations, or impose a ban or boycott on trade with the second state.

- Threat of deprivation: where the first state threatens to withdraw foreign aid, suspend grants, or any benefits granted to the second state.

*D. the Third Party Intervention Stage:* A third party intervene either to resolve the conflict or to support one of the disputing parties perceived as aggrieved. The aim of such intervention is to establish equilibrium and prevent warfare, provided that the intervention is conducted peacefully and diplomatically. External parties are defined as entities outside the conflict zone yet exerting significant influence therein. The degree of impact of these parties varies depending on their nature, characteristics, relationship with the conflict itself, and association with the involved parties. Peter T. Coleman (Coleman, 2000, p. 108) has delineated external parties into: (محمد، 2018، صفحة 51)

- Regional Parties: Encompassing neighbouring states and those with ethnic or familial ties to one of the disputing factions.

- International Parties Distant from the Conflict Zone: These are the actors who lack any geographic proximity or adjacency but have connections to the participants in the conflict.

In this context, external parties play a prominent role, especially in civil conflicts. This influence is manifested through the incursion of neighbouring states under the pretext of security threats posed by militias and rebel groups aligned with external actors. Consequently, external parties can contribute to intensifying local clashes by providing various forms of support. Furthermore, the involvement of external parties in a specific conflict renders the decisions of the direct conflict parties subject to regional and global environments that offer different types of support. This is particularly evident when these parties seek to influence events and gain more power or covet specific wealth or resources from the conflict zone.

*E.War*: is the resort to the use of armed force within the framework of international conflict. Clausewitz asserted that war is a social activity undertaken by a state as organized violence waged for its interests against another state. It is an activity for which populations pay a tremendous price in terms of casualties and vast expenditures of money without accountability (الخزام، 1999، صفحة 17)

### 3. The Curve of International Conflict

‘The Conflict Curve’ is a tool that helps clarify how conflicts evolve over time. It assists in understanding the interconnection of different stages of conflict and their relationship with relevant types of third-party intervention. Practitioners use this knowledge to identify effective intervention strategies (المهني، 2006، صفحة 5) and their timing. While ‘The Conflict Curve’ aids in analyzing the development of a conflict, the analytical framework helps identify the multiple forces driving a conflict at a particular point in time.

To understand the Conflict Curve, it’s essential to define the fundamental terms it encompasses, such as: perpetual peace, stable peace, unstable peace, and others. These terms are used to describe the state of relations between two countries or within groups within a country. When a potential conflict evolves, these terms are used to describe the various stages in the changing relationship between the parties/actors.

**3.1 Perpetual Peace:** represents the initial stage in the curve, reflecting the stability of peaceful conditions over time, which can be graphically depicted by a relatively long horizontal line. It encompasses high levels of cooperation and reciprocity, with no actual need for military defence measures among the parties. This type of peace may involve military alliance against common threats, yet “the positive peace” is grounded in shared values and objectives or goals, such democratic political systems and the rule of law, as well as mutual economic interdependence and engagement with the international community (الأمريكي). Characterized by a high level of communication and understanding among the

parties, each side aims to pursue its interests through peaceful and institutional means, without resorting to violence (والدراسات). Consequently, perpetual peace is considered a solid foundation for peaceful relations between nations, binding them together with shared fundamental values and economic and military interests that promote sustainable cooperation.

**3.2 Stable Peace:** this term describes a state of relations characterized by a higher degree of tension compared to that found in perpetual peace. It entails cautious communication and limited cooperation such as: trade, within a comprehensive context of fundamental system or national stability. Differences in values or objectives exist, with no military cooperation, yet conflicts are generally resolved through nonviolent and somewhat predictable means, with a low likelihood of erupting into full-scale war (المهني، 2006، صفحة 8). Communication and cooperation between parties decrease, occurring through a framework of fundamental systems, mutual respect, and a general absence of violence. Conflicting goals and values persist, and parties compete in various ways but within acceptable bounds. Disputes are handled non-violently, although the occurrence of violent conflicts at this level is practically improbable. (والدراسات)

**3.3 Unstable Peace:** if conflicts remain unresolved and tensions continue to escalate, the conflict may eventually enter a stage known as unstable peace, where tension and distrust among the parties intensify, but without the presence of widespread violence or sporadic violence. "Negative Peace" prevails because, despite the absence of armed deployment (or use), all parties regard each other as adversaries and maintain their deterrent military capabilities. The balance of power may prevent aggression, but the possibility of crisis and war remains (الأمريكي، السلام غير المستقر). Tangible tensions and accusations arise among the parties, which may escalate into intermittent open violence. Despite the low level of violence, coexistence is absent, and parties do not prioritize their mutual relations sufficiently, nor do they seek to establish safeguards to deter the use of coercion and physical violence to achieve specific goals. Peace appears weak here, with fluctuating levels of tensions. Parties seek to possess weapons for deterrence purposes, and agreements are unclear and easily disrupted.

Preventive diplomacy plays a pivotal role in this stage in averting conflict, and recourse is made to preventing action, as per Peter Wallensteen, to forestall potential threats or avoid the use of armed force by conflicting parties in a political dispute (الخزندار، 2011، صفحة 29). It is noteworthy that preventive conflict resolution, especially for violent conflicts, constitutes a fundamental aspect of peace and conflict studies. It represents a strategy encompassing various elements or practical and scientific procedures aimed at resolving, which includes: (كواشي، 2017، صفحة 62)

*A. the Presence of an Early Warning System:* entails a network of systems providing information regarding the potential risk of humanitarian disasters or

violent conflicts threatening international security and peace. There exists a direct correlation between the presence of an early warning system, the continuity of peace, and the strategy of conflict prevention. Enhancing the prospects of success in conflict prevention necessitates greater attention and focus on the development of early warning systems, alerting policymakers when and how to intervene effectively. (Reychler.Luc, 2000, p. 306)

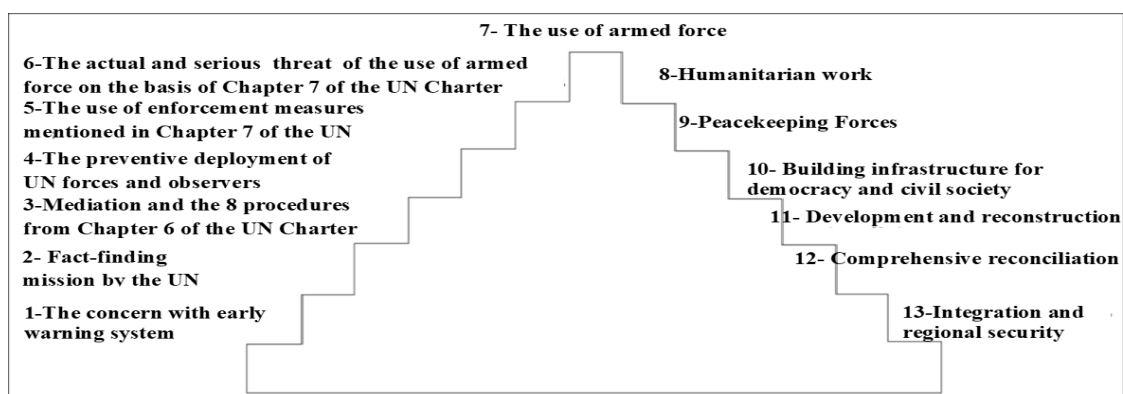
**B. Preventive Deployment:** refers to the deployment of UN forces in conflict areas to prevent hostilities over the long term between conflicting parties within or between countries. These forces also engage in humanitarian activities, which prevent conflicts between nations. This may extend to adopting preventive diplomacy to build trust between conflicting parties and provide early warning information to prevent conflicts, through field fact-finding.

**C. Demilitarized Zones:** involve disarming weaponry in conflict-prone areas. Establishing these zones and deploying peacekeeping forces there are key components of preventive conflict strategies

Furthermore, a study by the German GTZ Institute suggests that crisis prevention measures can occur before, during, or after violent conflicts. These aims to (الخزندار، 2011، صفحة 29): lessen the likelihood or severity of violent conflict and to bolster the development of peaceful conflict management institutions, structures, and cultures.

Ladder Ellison has delineated practical forms and mechanisms for conflict prevention and peace building, including six steps for preventing conflict initially and another six steps for preventing conflict recurrence in the post-conflict phase. The parallel figure illustrates that:

Figure 08: The Ellison Peace Scale



Source: (الخزندار، 2011، صفحة 40)

Where steps 1 through 6 refer to preventive procedures, step 7 denotes the use of armed force, and steps 8 through 13 signify peace building efforts.

**3.4 Post-War:** Following the success of peace efforts and the attainment of a settlement, conflicts diminish, and the ceasefire may be declared, facilitating the reduction of tensions and the transitions from a state of war to crisis. At this juncture, initiatives to prevent conflict escalation, uphold peace, and ultimately resolve the conflicts are set in motion. Consequently, parties involved can commence the arduous task of conflict resolution and the establishment of post-conflict peace. Through concerted endeavours, tensions can be mitigated to a degree where the relationship can be characterized as a stable or even perpetual peace.(المهني، 2006، صفحة 11)

Michael Lund, in his book “*Preventing Violent Conflicts*” (Lund, 1996, p. 220) introduces the Conflict Curve, a conceptual framework illustrating the dual nature of conflict as both violent and nonviolent concurrently, along with the dynamics of force utilization in escalating or de-escalating violent conflict over time. This curve serves to streamline the terminology and concepts utilized by conflict management experts, elucidating the interconnectedness of conflict stages and various forms of third-party intervention.

Lund elaborates on the construction of this curve in his book, detailing the tracing of conflict paths that evolve into violent conflicts across two dimensions: conflict intensity (vertical axis) and conflict duration (horizontal axis)

Figure 09: The Curve of Conflict



Source: (الامريكي، منحني الصراع)

The levels of peace or violence are observed to be divided into five stages: perpetual peace, stable peace, unstable peace, crisis, and war. The types of third-party intervention inherent to these levels encompass: diplomacy or politics in times of peace, preventive diplomacy, crisis diplomacy, peacemaking and peace enforcement, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peace building. As with any conceptual model, the attempt is made to somewhat simplify the curve from the complex reality, aiding in organizing concepts and understanding the dynamics of intervention, escalation, and de-escalation in conflicts:

A. *Peace Enforcement*: this term (Pillar, 2010) refers to the actions undertaken by armed forces under the authorization of the UN Security Council. It indicates the use of assets and military force in response to the failure of a ceasefire agreement, often surpassing the capabilities of peacekeeping forces. The definition of “*Peace Enforcement*” varies depending on the context, as it can also describe the use of military force to halt fighting and provide safe havens for civilians. Additionally, it is used to refer to strong procedures and measures taken to prevent violations of ceasefire agreements or to reinforce them in case of failure. (خيرة، 2018، صفحة 50).

B. *Peacekeeping*: denotes activities aimed at preventing war or violence by deploying neutral armed forces, unaligned with any party, with the objective of averting conflicts in a specific region. Former United Nations Secretary- General Boutros Boutros -Ghali defined it as: “*The presence and deployment of UN forces in a conflict area with the necessity of acceptance by the parties concerned*”. Legal scholar Virally views peacekeeping operations as: “*Preventive operations rather than coercive ones, conducted by the UN with the consent of the parties involved*”. (خيرة، 2018، صفحة 45).

The United Nations regards peacekeeping operations as the most effective tools available to assist host countries in transitioning from conflict to peace. Present- day multidimensional peacekeeping endeavours are tasked not only with maintaining peace and security but also with facilitating the political process, safeguarding civilians, assisting in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants, supporting electoral organization, protecting and promoting human rights, and aiding in the restoration of the rule of law. Authorization for peacekeeping operations is granted by the UN Security Council, with member states contributing troops and police officers. These operations are managed by the Department of Peace Operations in collaboration with the Department of Operational Support at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Currently, there are 14 ongoing peacekeeping operations, with the United Nations having conducted a total of 71 peacekeeping missions since its establishment in 1948. (ONU, ONU)

The utilization of peacekeeping operations is facilitated through the activation of Articles 14 and 36 (Nations) of the United Nations Charter, which delineate the modus operandi and implementation methods. It is noteworthy that peacekeeping operations are based on a set of principles. (خيرة، 2018، صفحة 47)

- a. *Consent of Parties*: Prior consent from the parties to the conflict must be obtained before deploying peacekeeping forces to ensure the feasibility of the mission’s success and to guarantee the cooperation of the involved parties.
- b. *Non-bias/ Impartiality*: Commitment to neutrality is essential to ensure the consent and cooperation of the conflicting parties. Therefore, peacekeeping forces must appear as impartial external parties.

c. Non-use of Force Except in Self-Defence: Peacekeeping personnel lack the authority to utilize military force and are equipped with light defensive weapons permitted only for legitimate self-defence purposes to ensure their safety and prevent them from becoming involved parties in the conflict.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the Nobel Peace Prize Committee awarded its prize to the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in 1998, “in recognition of the significant contributions made by these forces under extremely challenging circumstances, where they succeeded in reducing tensions in cases where negotiations for ceasefires were conducted, despite the absence of reaching a final peace treaty”. The committee added that “peacekeeping forces have made important contributions through their efforts towards achieving one of the fundamental principles of the UN, enabling the international organization to play a larger and more significant role in global affairs, thereby increasing the world’s confidence in it”. (Nations, United Nations Peacekeeping Forces)

C. *Peace building*: In the post-Cold War era, peace building has seen significant development in operations and initiatives, alongside the emergence of non-governmental organizations working in this field globally. Peace building aims to transform negative dynamics into constructive and balanced relationships, with a focus on turning arbitrary power into constructive shared power. (النمر، 2007، الصفحات 37-42)

Peace building refers to a set of procedures and arrangement that the UN must undertake to support efforts aimed at consolidating settlements and ensuring non-reversion to escalation after the conclusion of armed conflicts or international crisis. It is regarded as a counterpart to preventive diplomacy, which seeks to prevent the collapse of peaceful conditions. This process aims to eliminate all roots of conflicts-whether direct or indirect- that may lead to future conflicts. Additionally, it focuses on fostering long-term cooperative relationships and effecting changes in values, concepts, and institutions to achieve stability and long-term peace, transforming this change into a sustainable future vision for building a just perpetual peace among parties.(عائشة، 2020، صفحة 25)

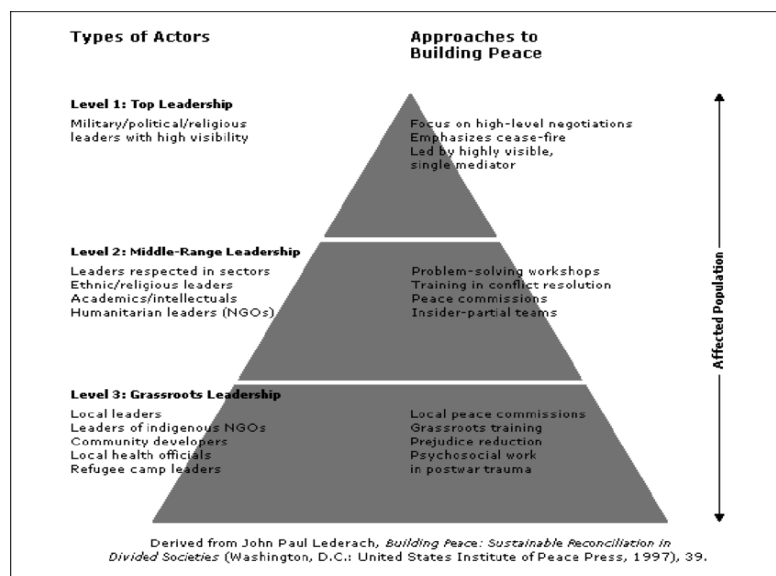
In a 1992 report titled “*Peace Plan*”, Boutros Boutros-Ghali presented his vision for enhancing and deepening the United Nation’s capacity to achieve a comprehensive and integrated concept for establishing international peace and security. This vision was similar to that expressed by Johan Galtung, where he postulated that peace building differs from peacekeeping and peace-making. It necessitates the creation of structures that eliminate the causes of wars and offer alternatives to them. It aims to create sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of violent conflicts and leveraging local capacities in post-conflict management.

In his work titled “*Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding*”, Johan Galtung assumes that peace building has a distinct

structure from peacekeeping and peacemaking. It requires the establishment of structures that address the root causes of wars and offer alternatives to them, aiming to create sustainable peace by addressing these underlying causes of violent conflict and utilizing local capacities for post-conflict management. (منصر، 2015، صفحة 381)

The concept of peace building shares several aspects with peacekeeping, as both are non –coercive in nature. After the end of the Cold War, peacekeeping missions witnessed an evolution, incorporating tasks related to peace building. Johan Galtung’s concept of peace building relies on distinguishing between negative peace (ending direct violence) and positive peace (the absence of structural or indirect violence). While negative peace is achieved through peacekeeping, positive peace can only be achieved through the absence of structural violence, which is accomplished through peacemaking and peace building efforts.

Figure 10: The Stages of Peace Building



Source: (Bank, 2007, p. 8)

Due to the dynamic nature of post-conflict environments, achieving recovery and sustainable peace proves to be a formidable challenge, necessitating coordinated efforts involving various stakeholders. Therefore, peacebuilding endeavours are multifaceted and involve a collaborative framework comprising diverse actors, as elucidated by numerous paradigms. These actors encompass both local and international entities. (خيرة، 2018، صفحة 61) As such, post-conflict peace building initiatives aim not only to prevent the resurgence of conflict but also to address the socio-economic and humanitarian repercussions resulting from violence. This endeavour is facilitated with the support specialized agencies, offices, and funds within the UN system, which bear the responsibility for socio-economic, humanitarian, and development interventions. However, the

effectiveness of such efforts hinges upon the availability of adequate human and material resources, as well as bolstering public confidence in the international institution. Additionally, the General Assembly assumes several pivotal responsibilities in this regard.(حسين ع.، 2010، صفحة 186)

### Conclusion:

In essence, the concepts of conflict and peace are intricately intertwined and cannot be separated. There are no definite boundaries between them. They constitute human concepts, practices, and interactions that vary in their contents and overlap within their boundaries, in light of the efforts of experts and practitioners, according to the nature of practical experience, especially by international organizations and active states. Consequently, conflict and peace processes represent a series of interactive operations in their objectives, procedures, motives, or outcomes.

And as a result, the study of the dynamics of international conflicts, the analysis of its stages, and the various models of understanding it offer valuable and comprehensive insights into the nature and evolution of international conflict. Similarly, the examination of the conflict curve and their interplay between the concepts of conflict and peace -as it is mentioned before- sheds light on the numerous challenges and opportunities associated with achieving peace and enhancing international stability. Through this comprehensive perspective, we can better understand the dynamics of conflicts and develop effective strategies for their resolution, working towards building a more peaceful and stable international environment.

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