

Professor Brian Mandell (Carleton University)

Professor Mandell's presentation sought to outline the conceptual considerations of the workshop and stressed the importance of establishing a common terminology. Two of the key concepts to the workshop were identified as "hurting stalemate" and "the ripe moment" (refer to Appendix B for a review of the key concepts). It was hoped that these concepts would be rigorously examined in workshop discussion. Are these concepts generalizable? What is their relevance across different conflicts and contexts? From whose perspective is a moment ripe--the participants' or outside observers'? Whereas the literature has tended to focus on the nature of the issues, the modes of intervention, and the qualities of mediators, it was noted that the timing variable had recently attracted attention, especially in terms of escalation dynamics (see, for example, the workshop presentation by Lorealeigh Keashly and Ronald Fisher).

Mandell asked whether there is, in fact, a ripe moment. According to William Zartman, a ripe moment depends on a "hurting stalemate." If this is so, then the crucial question is; how do we know it when we see it? A characteristic that has been associated with "hurting stalemate" is a flare-up in hostilities followed by a "grinding crisis" in which there is no apparent prospect of returning to the status quo ante. Often the conflict at this stage is at too low an intensity to attract third party intervention. An important consideration at this point is how third parties could be motivated to intervene. A conflict moves into a hurting stalemate when it reaches a plateau or deadlock, in which neither side is able to achieve its aims unilaterally, no possibility of escalation or "winning" exists, and both sides realize the unacceptable rising costs of being locked into a dead end. Under such