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AI and the Future of Mediation

Exploring the Art of Algorithmic Conflict Resolution

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Yasir Atalan

Benjamin Jensen

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A Report of the CSIS Futures Lab

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CENTER FOR STRATEGIC &
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Center for Strategic & International Studies
1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-887-0200 | www.csis.org

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Executive Summary

As wars grow more frequent and last longer, so too do demands for mediation, even as durable settlements remain hard to reach and even harder to sustain. Mediation capacity, a key diplomatic instrument, has not scaled with this rapidly expanding need. Many mediation teams remain small, time constrained, and short on secure analytical support. Yet mediators' core tasks remain the same: managing information and building trust so that bargaining can occur.

Constantly changing conditions that determine whether negotiation space exists and if agreements can hold mean that mediators are compelled to continuously diagnose and recalibrate their processes. Fluctuating conflict dynamics shape parties' willingness to negotiate, pushing mediation teams to track shifting perceptions and to use confidence-building steps to open talks. With the commitment fears of conflict parties guiding whether deals survive transition, mediators must establish careful verification mechanisms, phased implementation, and clear obligations that reduce process vulnerability. Furthermore, mediators have to look out for spoilers (groups and individuals seeking to disrupt the peace process itself) and be aware of potential veto points, when the withdrawal of one key player would mean the end of all negotiations. These pressures have only intensified as conflicts have expanded into the digital realm. With the introduction of information and communication technologies, decision time has become compressed, audience costs amplified, and shared informational baselines destabilized through disinformation and misinformation.

Artificial intelligence (AI) enters the conflict space as a double-edged capability. Large language model (LLM)-based tools can reduce the workload associated with conflict mediation through rapid

information synthesis, document translation, and scenario exploration. Moreover, once agreements have been made, AI systems can support monitoring, verification, and implementation. At the same time, AI can magnify risk by enabling artificial—altered or created de novo—media, accelerating disinformation and increasing the chance of misrepresentation or confidentiality failure. Any tool that saves time but undermines neutrality, confidentiality, or process control is a liability.

To assess where AI can realistically help mediators, the CSIS Futures Lab and the Doha Forum convened a workshop of more than 45 mediators and technology experts, which included a short survey and a scenario-based exercise. Three findings stand out. First, mediators experience the greatest strain from complex actors and fragmented information, both of which challenge information management and negotiation design. Second, trust, confidentiality, and the risk of misrepresenting party positions dominate concerns about AI adoption. Third, participants emphasized the importance of human agency and workflow alignment, suggesting that AI's most credible role is to augment mediator-controlled processes rather than replace human judgment.

Based on the workshop findings, this report points to four linked recommendations for moving from enthusiasm about AI to its responsible adoption in conflict mediation.

- 1. Build mediation-specific evaluations.** Test AI on real mediation tasks and failure modes, not generic benchmarks. This includes actor and issue mapping, position summarization, handling local language, and producing source-linked outputs. Evaluation of AI-enabled tools should be done alongside red teaming to assess the risk of manipulation, data leakage, and other security vulnerabilities.
- 2. Invest in mediator training and operational rules.** Tools only help when users can scope tasks tightly and review AI-generated content with discipline. Training should be paired with clear rules on what data can be entered, what outputs can be shared, and how human decisions and overrides are documented.
- 3. Leverage partnerships for secure adoption.** In an increasingly dispersed mediation landscape, with an increasingly larger mix of state and nonstate actors, AI-enhanced mediation cannot be built in isolation. Partnerships between NGOs, international institutions such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and foreign ministries are necessary to share best practices. A small multi-stakeholder working group could align ethical data access, accountability, and secure deployment standards, while reducing incentives for fragmented, incompatible tool development.
- 4. Start with a pilot scenario simulation tool.** A narrow, workflow-aligned pilot scenario can establish data structures, evaluation methods, and iteration loops with mediators. Scenario generation is a practical entry point because it supports preparedness and negotiation option expansion while keeping political judgment and process ownership in the hands of humans.

Taken together, these steps operationalize the core lessons from the workshop: AI can improve mediation capacity only if it is designed around real mediation workflows, deployed securely, evaluated with respect to mediation-specific risks, and kept firmly subordinate to human trust building and political judgment.

Introduction

The world is more dangerous in 2026 than it has been at any point in the previous 20 years. Conflicts are rising in number and spreading across regions and issue areas. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program recorded 61 active conflicts involving at least one state in 2024, nearly double the number from only two decades prior.¹ Recent quantitative analyses reveal rising numbers of state-based conflict and persistent violence spreading across regions and becoming more protracted.² The humanitarian footprint of this environment is similarly large, with recent reports documenting record-high forced displacement levels.³

Despite a lack of durable settlements, negotiations remain common. Organizations tracking peace negotiations have identified more than 170 peace processes occurring between 1990 and 2024.⁴ With the increasing number of conflicts, existing conflict resolution resources at the state and international levels are under growing strain, creating pressures for a new era of mediation support. Diplomacy increasingly rests upon the ability of formal and informal parties to support complex negotiations.

Structural conditions compound the challenges mediators confront when trying to create a space for negotiation.⁵ In conflict resolution, “ripeness” reflects the optimal timing for seeking a resolution and tends to occur when there is a stalemate and/or some event that leads both parties to prefer negotiation to continued violence. If ripeness is absent, parties hold out because they either expect future battlefield advantage or face high domestic costs for negotiating with the enemy. This dynamic requires mediation teams to track shifting perceptions and use confidence-building steps to create negotiation space. When commitment concerns and fears about the future dominate, parties worry about exploitation after demobilization, necessitating robust design sequencing,

verification, and clear obligations that make compliance safer than defection. Fragmented and multi-faction conflicts mean that there are multiple parties capable of derailing implementation. Mediators must constantly manage coalitions and preserve credibility across constituencies to prevent conflict-resolution derailment by veto players (those whose consent is required to resolve the conflict) and spoilers (those whose own interests drive them to disrupt the peace process itself). In other words, getting parties locked in a conflict to sit down at the negotiating table is one of the most complex diplomatic tasks imaginable.

With the rapid spread of digital communication tools, these pressures have only intensified as the digital space has increasingly become part of contemporary conflicts. Cyber operations and computational propaganda are now the norm in war.⁶ Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have reshaped political conflict by enabling new forms of contestation between conflict parties. Social media has become a tool for signaling, mobilizing, and pushing competing narratives, increasing audience costs and constraining flexibility in negotiations.⁷ In practice, digitally networked conflicts compress decision timelines, amplify reputational pressures, and destabilize shared informational baselines. This raises the burden on mediators to verify claims, manage narratives, and protect the legitimacy of the peace process.

These dynamics also make information environments easier to manipulate. Parties can flood public channels with selective claims, produce documents meant to confuse timelines, and push narratives designed to change outside perceptions.⁸ Because mediation teams tend to remain small, work under tight time constraints, and have uneven access to reliable information, challenges involving the digital landscape often multiply.⁹ An already difficult task can quickly become an almost impossible diplomatic effort.

Despite such constraints, mediators still need to perform the same core work, including building trust between conflict parties, serving as transmitters of information, and establishing processes to support negotiations.¹⁰ To do so, they diagnose interests, manage communication, build trust, and help parties move from opposed positions to workable agreements. Mediators' work is best understood as combining information management and trust building under the structural conditions that shape what is politically feasible. The means by which mediation teams collect, synthesize, and employ information is very much a diplomatic art.

Given these dynamics, capabilities such as LLMs provide mediators new tools to support sensitive negotiations. On the positive side, LLMs can quickly synthesize large bodies of text, translate across languages, and help mediators track how positions and draft agreements evolve over time.¹¹ These data-based functions map onto core mediation tasks such as reading past agreements, preparing briefings, and keeping agreement draft language consistent across iterations.¹²

On the negative side, however, AI can threaten the already fragile dynamics of trust by lowering the cost to generate synthetic or artificial media (e.g., propaganda and misinformation) and by spreading manipulated audio, video, and documents across the war zone and beyond. The result can create attribution challenges and erode confidence in evidence.¹³ These risks matter because a tool that saves time is not useful if it also increases the probability of leaks, misrepresents a party's

position, or undermines the mediator's procedural credibility. For example, consider the risks of inadvertently misrepresenting positions during tense negotiations. An AI system that summarizes a conflict party's "red lines" from past statements but subtly reframes a conditional position as a firm refusal could lead to a spiraling series of unintended outcomes. In another possibility, skewed data could be circulated inside the mediation team, prompting the mediator to table proposals that parties might actually accept and even trigger accusations of bias when a side's original stance is misrepresented. Understanding these risks, the central question becomes how AI can help mediation teams manage information and prepare for peace talks without creating new vulnerabilities that undermine diplomatic efforts to resolve deadly conflicts.

Increasing conflict numbers and the spread of persistent violence means that there is an urgent need to identify the challenges mediators face in digitally contested conflicts and, furthermore, to assess which AI-enabled functions could realistically help support formal and informal diplomatic negotiations. To meet this call, the CSIS Futures Lab, in partnership with the Doha Forum, convened a workshop with over 45 participants, including experienced mediators, diplomats, and technology experts. The workshop combined a short, structured survey with a scenario-based exercise that placed participants into a plausible mediation setting and asked them to evaluate concrete tasks, trade-offs, and failure modes under time pressure and information uncertainty. The aim was to identify where mediators feel the most strain, which AI functions align with real workflows, and which failure modes would be disqualifying given the centrality of trust and confidentiality in peace negotiations.

The workshop produced three key findings. First, participants emphasized information complexity and conflict representation challenges including actor mapping, position tracking, and the risk of information distortion. Second, participants stressed trust, ethics, and security. These concerns focused especially on confidentiality protection and the political damage that follows from perceived bias and/or deliberate leaks designed to sabotage negotiations. AI is, therefore, a governance problem as much as it is a capability problem. Tools must be secure, auditable, and resistant to misuse before they can be integrated into sensitive workflows, and AI is, at its core, a tool. Third, participants emphasized the centrality of human agency, arguing that AI should augment mediator-controlled workflows rather than substitute for political judgment or trust building. Any tool must remain subject to the humans who use it.

These findings point to four recommendations. The first is to build mediation-specific evaluations that test AI tools on the tasks that actually matter for real mediation processes. These evaluations should include accurate actor and issue mapping, the capacity to produce position summaries that do not distort meaning, and the ability to handle local language. The second recommendation is to invest further in training and operational preparedness related to AI-enabled mediation efforts. Such training would enable potential users to more effectively scope tasks for which AI can play a role and to establish best practices. The third is to develop partnerships and governance efforts that match mediation's sensitivity. Along these lines, efforts should proceed using a small multi-stakeholder working group with the goal of aligning legitimacy, ethical data access, and secure deployment. Finally, short-term efforts should include building an initial pilot tool to evaluate potential AI tools and

the ways in which they could be utilized. Based on workshop recommendations, the tool should focus on scenario simulation, allowing conflict parties to better understand possible alternative futures and pathways to stable peace. Additionally, the process of developing this tool should establish an initial methodology for proper data collection and system evaluation.

The AI-mediation agenda is timely because the mediation landscape is widening, creating both new demands and new opportunities. Governments, multilateral organizations, NGOs, and regional actors are working to convene peace talks, broker ceasefires, and find ways to keep local violence from becoming regional instability. A mix of actors such as the United States, Qatar, Turkey, and Finland actively employ multiple tracks of diplomacy that are outside of UN mandates to mediate conflicts.¹⁴ Nonstate organizations are also taking initiative in the organization of peacebuilding efforts.¹⁵ Within this context of expanding participation, AI's integration into the evolving mediation ecosystem holds the potential to be a highly effective tool. However, any AI involvement must be properly evaluated with respect to mediation-specific risks and designed to strengthen information management and trust building, not replace them.

This report proceeds in four parts. First, it reviews the research on mediation success and failure and the ways new technologies shape mediation practice. Second, it describes the Doha Forum workshop design and how it was used to identify mediator pressures and AI-related concerns. Third, it describes the workshop findings, highlighting the themes of information complexity, trust and security, and human agency. Finally, this report maps a way forward that prioritizes evaluation, governance, and workflow-aligned tool development so that AI can expand mediation capacity without weakening process credibility or human control and oversight.

Mediation Under Pressure

Information, Trust, and AI in Digitally Contested Conflicts

Mediation is typically defined as a third party, noncoercive intervention that helps conflict parties communicate, structure bargaining, and explore agreements without imposing a binding legal judgment.¹⁶ The core rationale for mediation comes from bargaining theory.¹⁷ According to this model, conflicts are bargaining failures that persist because opposing parties cannot credibly share information about capabilities and intentions, or because they cannot credibly commit to future restraint after concessions, like demobilization or power-sharing.¹⁸ Under these conditions, direct talks are risky and politically costly. Third parties (mediators) become functionally necessary because they can help solve bargaining failures and improve prospects for settlement by reducing information problems, helping parties explore trade space, and shaping credible commitments.¹⁹

The effectiveness of mediation frequently depends on credibility and perceived neutrality. If parties do not trust the mediator's handling of information, or suspect possible bias, even viable proposals may fail to lead to a sustainable agreement. For this reason, mediators must excel in building trust and managing information.²⁰ Only when a mediator is accepted as credible and neutral can mediation teams establish effective negotiation processes, which may include establishing monitoring capacities, political guarantees, and channels for information sharing. However, the ability of mediators to build a successful negotiation space is bounded by structural dynamics, which—though not eliminating agency—can determine the parameters within which mediators operate. In practice, structural constraints can determine when a mediation attempt fails, whether a settlement is imaginable, and who has the capacity to block it.

STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS ON MEDIATION

Structural factors that directly affect mediator strategy can be grouped under three broad mechanisms. First, timing and perceptions shape if and when parties are ready to negotiate. Second, commitment problems influence whether any settlement can survive implementation. Finally, fragmented and complex conflict structures shape how many veto—or failure—points exist and how easily a process can be derailed. Each of these factors translates into distinct information and trust challenges for mediators.

Ripeness and timing constrain mediation by increasing uncertainty about power and intentions, forcing mediators to manage evolving information and carefully build trust before negotiation space can emerge. Parties rarely negotiate seriously until they recognize what some call a “mutually hurting stalemate”—that is, when their situations reach a point that forces them to see negotiation as a more desirable path forward than continued fighting.²¹ As long as conflict actors believe that continued fighting has the potential to improve their relative positions in a conflict—whether through battlefield momentum or anticipated external support—they have incentives to delay compromise.²² Such dynamics are further reinforced when core issues are framed as indivisible or existential, such as territory, political status, or justice.²³ This is because flexibility or offering concessions under such framings can carry high costs from political constituencies.²⁴ Talks that begin absent ripeness or without adequate sequencing and confidence building, therefore, can raise reputational costs and even entrench maximalist positions, both of which hold the potential to derail peace efforts.

For mediators, ripeness constraints imply that their initial task is not about drafting an agreement but rather about shaping conditions so that talks become politically feasible. A key determiner within the negotiation framework is what can be put on the table, when, and in what sequence. Mediators can sometimes help ripen a situation through confidence-building measures and new agreement options that reframe belligerents’ cost-benefit calculations.²⁵ They can also work toward softening maximalist positions by building working trust, creating face-saving narratives, and managing constituencies, especially where agreements must be sold to fragmented coalitions.²⁶ Such efforts can include humanitarian access arrangements, localized ceasefires, prisoner exchanges, and mechanisms that create repeated interaction between conflict parties and that reduce worst-case assumptions.²⁷

The second structural constraint mediators face comprises commitment problems. These issues force mediators to manage deep uncertainty among players about future compliance, requiring all sides to build trust through transparent agreement sequencing, monitoring, and information management. Efforts at addressing commitment fears can reduce concerns about exploitation during vulnerable transitions from conflict to peace.²⁸ During conflict resolution, even if terms are acceptable in the near term, actors may fear future defection following demobilization, territorial withdrawals, or institutional reforms. As a result, agreements can collapse without credible guarantees and verification.²⁹ The breakdown of Angola’s 1991 Bicesse Accords, where weak enforcement mechanisms and mutual distrust led parties to hedge and, ultimately, to return to war, illustrates how the absence of credible third-party guarantees can unravel a settlement.³⁰

When commitment fears dominate negotiations, a mediator's role shifts from facilitating dialogue to creating a process that makes compliance safer than defection. This requires phased implementation that reduces exposure at each stage, third-party verification and monitoring to deter violations, and transitional governance arrangements that distribute authority while institutions adjust to peace.³¹ High-quality negotiation frameworks become essential for successful mediation. To that end, mediators must clarify obligations, timelines, and dispute resolution mechanisms so that ambiguity cannot be strategically exploited; this is particularly true in the digital domain. Mediators must embed agreements within broader political and social constituencies to raise the domestic and reputational costs of defection for each conflict party.³² This is why much of the practice-oriented literature treats mediation less as a single summit and more as a managed process that turns bargaining uncertainty into workable options.³³ Each of these tasks expands the mediator's informational burden, as it requires detailed tracking of compliance risks, internal factional dynamics, external patron influence, and credible monitoring arrangements across multiple stages of implementation.

Finally, a conflict's complexity can constrain mediation as multiple actors, veto (failure) points, and competing narratives intersect. Such complexity forces mediators to intensify information management and carefully enable trust across fragmented coalitions to prevent agreements from collapsing under pressures from internal dissent, external manipulation, or both. Contemporary wars are rarely fought by two unified actors with stable preferences and centralized control. Research on modern-day conflicts reveals how many conflicts are fragmented across multiple armed groups, shifting factions, militias, and external actors, each with distinct incentives and internal divisions.³⁴ Fragmentation can weaken leaders' abilities to deliver compliance; it also increases the likelihood that agreements will be challenged from within coalitions or that their ranges will be narrowed in any acceptable agreement.³⁵

This complexity opens room for spoilers—actors who believe peace threatens their power or interests—to use violence, disinformation, and political mobilization to undermine negotiations.³⁶ For example, scholars have found that pro-government militias, whose wartime benefits typically decline under peace, often intentionally prolong conflicts.³⁷ The internationalization of conflicts further complicates this landscape as international actors can disrupt bargaining processes by introducing political objectives that differ from the drivers of subnational conflicts.³⁸ In such settings, bargaining becomes a multilayered process in which preferences shift, alliances evolve, and narratives compete. The information space can thus become part of the battlefield, as propaganda, disinformation, and selective leaks raise the perceived costs of compromise and delegitimize negotiation efforts. These dynamics are tragically and vividly illustrated by evidence of the relationship between radio propaganda and ethnic violence in Rwanda.³⁹

Conflict complexity imposes an additional, and distinct, burden on mediators—they must deal with coalitions and anticipate veto behavior. Moreover, mediators must manage narrative control and prevent post-agreement sabotage. This is why, in practice, mediation often happens in a multitrack framework, ranging from track 1, which focuses on official bargaining among power holders (such as political leaders), to track 3 (community- or grassroots-level peacekeeping work).⁴⁰ Yet, this

framework also complicates the prospect for peace, as peace processes can fail when multiple parallel initiatives produce incoherence or duplication.⁴¹ In this environment of conflict complexity, mediators do not simply manage negotiations. They must ensure that commitments are not vetoed by internal dissent, that external actors do not exploit incoherence, and that public narratives do not undermine trust in the process. Consequently, information management becomes central to process design. This is particularly true in an era where conflict dynamics increasingly unfold across digitally networked communication systems that amplify volatility, compress decision time, and expose negotiation processes to real-time narrative contestation.

DIGITALLY CONTESTED CONFLICTS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIATION

Mediators' information management challenges are even further intensified in digitally contested conflicts. This is because ICTs can reshape bargaining incentives, public perceptions, and a conflict's information landscape. Technologies ranging from social media to commercial satellite imagery can alter how actors coordinate, signal resolve, and contest a peace process's legitimacy.⁴² As a result, the mediator's work of information management and trust building has evolved to be about more than what happens inside the negotiation room. Mediators must also coordinate across public information channels that can rapidly harden positions or delegitimize a peace process.

ICTs affect mediation through three mutually reinforcing mechanisms: compressing bargaining timelines, amplifying audience cost, and destabilizing shared informational baselines. First, ICTs add additional burdens on mediators by condensing bargaining timelines, thereby limiting the room for confidence-building measures. When communication becomes cheap and fast, it can also become easy to solve the collective action problem among political constituencies, introducing additional risks to peace negotiations.⁴³ For instance, ICTs can be used to broadcast calls for political mobilization, identify meeting points, move resources, and sustain political participation at low costs.⁴⁴ In conflict settings, this can increase recruitment and speed up escalation because groups can form and act before opponents and authorities can respond.⁴⁵ For mediators, the volatility and decreased deliberation time resulting from ICT involvement can result in narrowing the room available to create confidence-building measures. With faster escalation cycles and coalition mobilization, both facilitated by ICTs, mediators will have less time to verify claims, assess shifts in conflict dynamics, and manage information during negotiations.

Second, ICTs can multiply audiences and increase reputational exposure, raising the audience cost on conflict participants (i.e., the political costs of not following through on public commitments).⁴⁶ For example, social media allows actors to communicate simultaneously to three different audiences: their own supporters, their opponent's supporters, and external constituencies, such as diaspora communities, patrons, and international media. This multi-audience signaling structure can incentivize public posturing. Leaders often adopt harder rhetorical positions online to avoid appearing weak or divided, even while privately exploring compromise.⁴⁷ Armed groups may exaggerate battlefield momentum or frame the opposing side as illegitimate to shape perceptions of power balance.⁴⁸ The Colombian peace process is a good example, as the agreement was promoted and debated across social media, creating a difficult-to-manage information environment.⁴⁹ Similarly, armed groups may use social media to claim battlefield momentum or portray the other

side as illegitimate with an eye toward influencing perceptions as to how the conflict is proceeding.⁵⁰ Perceptions matter because bargaining often depends on shared beliefs regarding relative strength and what concessions are politically tenable, both of which can change—or be changed—as the conflict proceeds.⁵¹ When those beliefs are shaped by competitive online messaging, mediators may face more performative negotiations and less willingness to reveal true constraints.

Finally, ICTs can destabilize mediation efforts through the fragmentation of the information environment. Disinformation enabled by digital technologies can impact trust and (mis)perception in ways that increase the burdens on mediators to manage information spaces. Coordinated networks can flood platforms with consistent false claims, for example.⁵² Moreover, algorithmically enabled disinformation can be tailored to specific communities, factions, or geographic areas to exploit existing grievances and increase intra-coalition distrust.⁵³ Spoilers can also create uncertainty about what is true to the point that parties revert to worst-case assumptions.⁵⁴ Scholars have outlined how misinformation and disinformation can shape beliefs and perceptions in ways that degrade deliberation and decisionmaking, especially when fact-checking processes are slow, contested, or just not trusted.⁵⁵ These dynamics can raise the perceived risk of compromise, reducing flexibility, increasing polarization, and making it easier for spoilers to claim betrayal and derail the peace process.⁵⁶ Trust in mediation is especially vulnerable to information fragmentation because it is partially procedural. Through digitally enabled information operations, a party or spoiler can circulate claims that the mediator is biased, that secret side deals exist, or that draft language is politically untenable.⁵⁷ These dynamics can make the conflict parties less willing to share information privately in the future, impeding the peace process.

Despite such risks, ICTs can also support mediation and peacebuilding efforts, including by enabling inclusion at lower cost. Remote consultations and hybrid formats can bring together civil society actors, local leaders, and technical experts who cannot safely travel or be publicly seen.⁵⁸ Additionally, digital activism can offer bottom-up conceptions of peace while social media can provide a platform to deescalate tensions by allowing community members to express their visions of future “peace-promoting norms.”⁵⁹

ICTs also have the potential to facilitate monitoring and verification. Geospatial data and open-source reporting, for example, can help establish situational awareness, improve monitoring of peace deals, and support implementation planning for conflict resolution.⁶⁰ Yet, such ICT facilitation must be approached with caution, as scholars warn that digital systems may increase uncertainty if parties dispute the credibility of sources or if data is selectively presented.⁶¹ For example, maps are not neutral mirrors of reality, and they can privilege certain kinds of data over lived experience.⁶² The upshot of ICT involvement is that technology can support peace process design, but ICTs must be paired with careful judgment about what information is reliable, what participation is safe, and how digital traces affect participant security.⁶³

AI AS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

AI enters this digitally contested environment as a multiplier of informational considerations rather than as an independent factor. AI-enabled tools can magnify the positive and negative effects of ICTs due to their capacity to automate information processing and content generation. In terms of

risks, generative systems reduce the skill and time needed to produce plausible fake audio, video, and documents.⁶⁴ Accordingly, AI-enabled systems impact conflict resolution by increasing the risks of manipulated media that can confuse attribution, inflame tensions, and undermine confidence in evidence.⁶⁵ The 2022 Zelensky surrender deepfake provides an example of an attempted intervention into wartime morale and decisionmaking through synthetic video content.⁶⁶ Even when quickly debunked, as that particular deepfake was, such events illustrate the potential for harm. The goal of manipulated media is to create a short window of confusion, amplify it through platform sharing, and force authorities and mediators into reactive verification.

A parallel risk is what is referred to as the “liar’s dividend.”⁶⁷ As awareness of deepfakes spreads, actors can use that awareness to deny authentic evidence by claiming it is AI generated. With enough public uncertainty, denial becomes plausible. This post-truth environment creates conditions for mediation in which parties can deny previous statements and responsibility for agreement violations, or reject evidence presented in implementation monitoring. AI-enabled tools, and the growing awareness of their capabilities, mean that mediators face even harder commitment problems and more difficult verification challenges.

On the positive side, however, AI can facilitate the efficient reading, sorting, and updating of information under time pressure. LLM-based systems can support a range of information management tasks, including multilingual summarization, position tracking across written drafts, and the rapid synthesis of which actors play a role in the conflict. These capabilities link directly and positively to mediator workflows, especially for small teams.⁶⁸ Second, AI tools can play a significant role in convening and inclusion practices. Digital participation is much easier with AI as it can reduce language barriers through translation. In addition, AI-enabled tools can expedite the summarizing of large-scale stakeholder input into structured themes for negotiators. One example comes from the Libyan peace process, where AI-enabled digital dialogues conducted with the UN Support Mission enabled large-scale consultations with Libyan citizens. These dialogues allowed mediators to engage broader segments of the population and identify areas of public consensus.⁶⁹

Additionally, AI tools can help mediators in the pre- and post-mediation phases. In the pre-mediation phase, teams can use AI models to generate alternative pathways for peace that can be simulated prior to negotiations, increasing the options that are considered for any negotiated settlements.⁷⁰ These tools can also play a role in early warning systems to predict conflict dynamics beforehand.⁷¹ With respect to the implementation and monitoring phase of mediation—“post-mediation”—AI systems facilitate the handling of the large data streams often associated with monitoring compliance and violation patterns.

In short, AI offers a double-edged tool in mediation: While AI may exacerbate an already challenging information landscape, it can also support mediator efforts. The capacity to reduce information burdens, increase inclusivity, and assist conflict parties in imagining scenarios that may lead to peace can offer real benefits to mediation teams. That said, the risks are highest when AI increases opacity, accelerates disinformation and misinformation, or weakens confidentiality. AI’s impact on mediation is therefore conditional. In conflicts defined by compressed timelines, public audiences, and fragmented information, even minor technical failures could produce outsized

political consequences. This helps explain why AI adoption remains cautious in mediation contexts. AI-enhanced mediation is only viable if systems are explicitly designed to operate safely under the aforementioned pressures and to align with real mediation workflows rather than imagined ones.

It is precisely this gap between technical capability and operational trust that motivated the Doha Forum workshop. Rather than debating AI in abstract terms, the workshop brought mediators and technologists together to examine specific mediation tasks, identify where AI can responsibly augment human judgment, and determine where its integration should remain constrained. The objective was to move from speculation to structured assessment of how AI tools perform under the information and trust pressures that define modern mediation.

Workshop

Exploring AI in Mediation Under Pressure

The preceding discussion established two core propositions. First, mediation is fundamentally a problem comprising information management and trust building under the structural constraints of issue ripeness, commitment problems, and information fragmentation. Second, digitally contested conflict environments intensify these pressures by compressing decision timelines, amplifying audience costs, and destabilizing shared informational baselines. If AI is to play a constructive role in mediation, it must operate effectively within these constraints to address real problems faced by mediators.

A 2025 workshop on AI and mediation, organized by the CSIS Futures Lab and the Doha Forum, was designed to examine how these informational and trust-building pressures manifest in practice and whether AI can realistically alleviate them. More specifically, the workshop explored information-related tasks mediators experience as the most burdensome, including time scarcity, information overload and fragmentation, the tracking of actors involved in a conflict, and the handling of sensitive data. The workshop also aimed to identify the most consequential AI failure modes—ranging from confidentiality breaches to reputational risks—that could weaken perceptions of neutrality or diminish a party’s sense of ownership over the process. This aspect of the workshop moved the discussion from theoretical claims about AI’s potential to an applied assessment of its viability under real mediation constraints.

To operationalize these objectives, the workshop combined a structured survey with scenario-based simulation. Forty-five participants took part in the workshop survey and discussion groups. Among them, approximately 30 participants had direct experience in mediation practice,

including formal peace negotiations and peacekeeping missions. The remaining participants brought technical expertise in AI, data systems, and technology deployment. The workshop design intentionally focused on bridging these two epistemic communities, whose priorities and experiences often diverge.

The workshop proceeded in two stages. The first stage consisted of a short survey designed to capture baseline perceptions of ongoing mediation pressure points and AI-related concerns. Participants were asked to identify where mediators feel the most strain, what risks they associate with AI use, and what design features would be necessary for reliable AI adoption. This phase provided quantitative snapshots of practitioner priorities. The second stage centered on a fictional but realistic mediation scenario. Divided into four breakout groups with a balanced mix of mediators and tech experts, participants were told that they were part of a small mediation team preparing for talks in a fragmented civil conflict with multiple armed actors, internal factions, and external patrons. The subsequent group discussions allowed workshop organizers to collect qualitative evidence complementing the survey results. The scenario was designed to reflect the structural constraints discussed in the literature review outlined above, including uncertain issue ripeness, commitment fears, coalition fragmentation, and digital narrative contestation. A brief description of the scenario is as follows:

The Republic of Cordova is a lower middle-income country in a coup-prone region with weak checks on executive power and recurrent protests in the capital. Inequality between a coastal elite and a neglected interior has widened over time. A fast-growing youth population faces limited employment opportunities as rural livelihoods shrink, driving rapid urbanization and expanding the recruitment pool for armed groups. Climate stress compounds these pressures. Additionally, water insecurity along the River Salen has intensified due to upstream dams and erratic rainfall. Disputes are spreading among farming communities, pastoralists, and state authorities. These tensions sit on top of older ethnic and regional cleavages. Minority groups in the interior accuse the central government of exclusion, abusive security operations, and broken promises related to decentralization and resource sharing. Over the last eight years, Cordova has experienced a low-intensity civil conflict, with clashes primarily occurring between the national army and two major armed movements, though local militias control parts of the interior. The capital experiences repeated cycles of protests and repression. Several ceasefires and dialogue initiatives have been attempted and collapsed.⁷²

Workshop participants were directed to imagine themselves within a UN-mandated mediation effort preparing indirect talks among the central government, the two armed movements, and a coalition of civil society, militia groups, and community leaders. The mediation team was described as small by design, including a lead envoy, two political officers, a gender adviser, and a few national staff. Participants were notified that as technical support, the UN Mediation Support Unit planned to leverage an LLM tool hosted on a secure UN server to reduce concerns regarding data leakage and confidentiality. Participants were instructed that this tool had the capacity to process documents uploaded by the mediation team, summarize historical conflict data, and represent conflict party positions.

Overall, the workshop had three main goals:

1. Assess whether AI could reduce the information burdens mediators face across key phases of a peace process.
2. Stress-test how AI might create new risks that undermine trust, especially through confidentiality failures, bias creation or perception, or misrepresentation.
3. Explore the practical design requirements and near-term recommendations for building AI-enhanced mediation tools that fit real workflows while remaining subordinate to mediator control.

WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Results from the Doha workshop revealed three broad conclusions regarding information management and AI's potential roles in mediation. First, both the survey results and the group discussions revealed that mediators experience their greatest strain from having to manage fragmented information, complex actors, and shifting issue agendas. Second, trust vulnerabilities, especially misrepresentation and confidentiality breaches, dominate concerns about AI use. Third, successful AI integration depends less on technical sophistication and more on alignment with real mediation workflows and the preservation of human judgment.

The first major finding directly mirrors complexity and fragmentation concerns identified within the conflict resolution literature discussed above. When asked where mediators feel the most pressure, participants identified “complex actors and issues” as the top response (26.7 percent of responses), followed closely by “trust and perception” (24.4 percent), and then an increasingly fragmented information space.⁷³ Conflicts tend to unfold across coalitions, shifting alliances, and multiple veto points, and this is reflected in the concerns that workshop participants identified.⁷⁴ Participants emphasized that modern conflicts involve shifting alliances, overlapping agendas, and competing narratives across multiple arenas.⁷⁵ Managing this complexity requires continuous tracking of positions, party red lines, political constituencies, and external patron influence.

Technologists framed the challenge differently but pointed to the same constraints. Their primary concern was understanding real-world mediation workflows (38.1 percent of responses) and managing data quality and sensitivity (28.6 percent). They pointed out that tools built for abstract conflict models risk misalignment with how mediators actually operate under uncertainty. The survey findings suggest that useful AI systems must be capable of recognizing local dynamics, culturally embedded language, and evolving narratives. Without contextual grounding, automation can increase epistemic risk rather than reduce informational burden.

Breakout discussions elaborated on issues of complexity and information management. Experienced mediators noted that AI tools may inadvertently underrepresent certain viewpoints or overrepresent already dominant perspectives, potentially complicating efforts to reach an optimal settlement. As suggested by some participants, local dialects in particular may be underrepresented in LLM training data, leading to risky performance issues if misunderstandings occur.⁷⁶ From both mediation and technical standpoints, these concerns were consistently framed as data quality problems, with participants pointing most often to language gaps in existing LLMs and the

absence of conflict-specific datasets. For example, technical experts suggested that labeling and standardizing the required data could be a challenging task, but that it was a necessary step for AI-enabled tools to perform as desired.

The second major theme of the workshop centered on the fragility of trust. Participants identified the mishandling of confidential information (33.3 percent) as the leading AI-related concern, reflecting the fact that successful mediation depends on secure channels and protected exchanges. As identified in the literature discussed previously, in environments shaped by digital surveillance, audience amplification, and disinformation, any leak (real or perceived) can be weaponized.⁷⁷

Table 1: Survey Results on Perceptions of Mediation Challenges

Mediators		
Question	Most Common Response	Share of Responses
What are the biggest pressures mediators face?	Complex actors and issues	26.7%
	Trust and perception	24.4%
What are the biggest concerns regarding the use of AI in mediation?	Misrepresenting positions	36.7%
	Mishandling confidential information	33.3%
Technologists		
What are the biggest challenges technologists face when supporting mediators?	Understanding real-world workflows	38.1%
	Data access, quality, and sensitivity	28.6%
If AI is used, what is the single most important thing to get right?	Continuous feedback from mediators	40.0%
	Strong data protection and governance	20.0%

Note: For each question, several choices were presented. Participants selected up to three choices for each question. There were 45 total participants.

Mediators repeatedly stressed that the representation accuracy of party positions is nonnegotiable. A small shift in wording can alter perceived intent. This concern was highlighted by the survey results—the single largest fear regarding AI use was “misrepresenting positions” (36.7 percent). During breakout discussions, participants noted that in digitally contested environments, misrepresentation does not remain technical: It quickly becomes political. In a reputationally volatile environment, a single distorted summary or misattributed claim can circulate rapidly and

undermine confidence in neutrality. If parties doubt that their positions are being represented faithfully, they may reduce information sharing, limiting the negotiation's success. If they suspect algorithmic bias, they may interpret procedural choices as political favoritism.

Regarding the matter of trust, group discussions raised concerns about the black-box reasoning of AI models. Mediators emphasized the need to understand how AI outputs are generated and the requirement to retain authority to override them. Overreliance on AI tools was viewed as a risk not only to effectiveness but also to legitimacy. If parties perceive that decisions are driven by opaque algorithms rather than accountable human judgment, trust may erode. Additionally, data security was a major concern. Without clear protections for sensitive data, mediators suggested they would have minimal confidence in an AI-enabled system and, therefore, hesitate to use it. Breakout discussions revealed further participant concerns, including that such a system could be vulnerable to compromise by state or nonstate actors seeking to sabotage or manipulate a peace process. That said, the local hosting of AI-enabled tools could offer some mitigations.⁷⁸ Such discussions raised ethical issues related to data protection, safeguarding the information of conflict participants, and the possible poisoning of data sources.⁷⁹

Legal and accountability concerns also emerged throughout the workshop. Some participants with technical backgrounds observed that in building a tool intended for use in mediation processes, developers effectively insert themselves into the conflict environment. As a result, developers have accountability and ethical responsibilities for how the tool affects negotiation dynamics. That means in the future, private sector organizations could take advantage of these vulnerabilities.

From a technical perspective, survey results indicate the acknowledgment of these risks and, consequently, the need for continuous feedback from mediators (40 percent of responses) and strong data governance (20 percent). These findings reinforce the point that AI must be embedded in transparent, reviewable processes, with strong pre-deployment evaluation.

The need to preserve mediator agency emerged as the third priority in addressing potential AI usage. Participants rejected the notion that AI should function as an “agent” that sets agendas or predicts outcomes. Instead, they preferred framing AI as an assistant that supports analysis while leaving human political judgment intact and predominant. The emphasis on preserving human agency reflects the understanding that mediation depends on relational trust and political judgment. According to participants, structural constraints addressed in the academic literature, such as ripeness, commitment fears, and fragmentation, require context-sensitive interpretation that cannot be automated without risking legitimacy. In digitally contested environments, where small procedural errors can escalate rapidly, visible human control becomes a safeguard against misrepresentation and reputational collapse. Participants' preference for an “AI assistant” rather than an “agent” therefore does not reflect technological conservatism, but rather the recognition of mediation's trust-dependent nature.

Along similar lines, participants stressed that an AI support tool must enhance a mediator's ability to perform their role, not detract from their capacity to build trust between conflict parties. For instance, as surfaced in breakout discussions, many participants felt that AI tools could never




replace the central role of human connection that frequently shapes negotiations and trust-building processes. Relatedly, mediators expressed interest in tools that support their domain expertise but cautioned that workflows must remain human driven. Several participants also expressed concern that potential overreliance on such tools could diminish the relational and interpersonal skills essential to mediation. These concerns were often described in generational terms, with some noting that younger mediators may be more likely to adopt AI tools readily while older generations may be more skeptical.

In addition to the three aforementioned priorities, participants proposed narrow and function-specific use cases for AI-enhanced mediation. The most consistently emphasized use case revolved around scenario generation and counterfactual exploration. Scenario approaches are widely used in policy and organizational settings to investigate multiple plausible futures rather than a single forecast, especially under uncertainty.⁸⁰ As Barma et al. noted, “scenarios are plausible and textured stories that help imagine how the future political-economic world could be different from the past in a manner that highlights policy challenges.”⁸¹ Moreover, negotiation research shows that counterfactual thinking shapes how people evaluate negotiated outcomes, which helps explain why structured “what if” exploration can change how parties perceive options and trade-offs.⁸²

Mediators in particular noted that parties often become “stuck” in their current understanding of a conflict, making alternative outcomes seem unreachable. By leveraging the stochastic nature of LLMs, participants felt that generating plausible “future worlds” could help demonstrate the viability of different outcomes and even reinvigorate stalled negotiations.⁸³ This capability could be applied across track 1, 2, and 3 processes to broaden how conflict parties and communities imagine possible futures. The workshop’s emphasis on scenario planning is directly associated with scholarly discussions of issue ripeness in mediation, where mediators must identify or help generate moments of political action based on parties’ perceptions of shifting opportunity windows.⁸⁴

Additionally, in terms of viable use cases, participants highlighted the value of a system capable of mapping key actors, issue areas, and structural drivers of conflict. Participants felt such a system could help mediators rapidly understand the parameters of a conflict, including factors such as access to natural resources, infrastructure stresses, or historical governance arrangements. Participants also noted that AI could support early process design by identifying relevant stakeholders for dialogue and surfacing how public narratives, past agreements, and institutional arrangements shape the negotiation environment. Similarly, an AI-enabled tool could help identify potential spoilers, highlight likely roadblocks, and point to opportunities for productive engagement. Along these lines, AI could provide a mechanism for reducing informational ambiguity while supporting commitment-enhancing design through improved drafting discipline, clause comparison, and monitoring logic. This aligns with the broader scholarly finding that formal, public, legalized agreements and third-party monitoring can increase reputational and enforcement leverage.⁸⁵ Table 2 summarizes these potential use cases for AI.

Table 2: Identified Potential Use Cases for AI in Mediation

 Pre-Mediation	 During Mediation	 Post-Mediation
Summarize past agreements and extract lessons learned	Maintain an issues ledger across drafts	Turn the final text into audience-ready summaries
Map actors, interests, issues, and potential spoilers from vetted sources	Check draft consistency across definitions, obligations, timelines, and implementation steps	Track obligations against reported events and statements and flag compliance risks
Build a source-linked timeline and flag contradictory claims	Flag gaps in proposals such as verification, monitoring, sequencing, and dispute resolution	Produce debrief notes and lessons learned for future mediation teams
Generate scenarios to expand pathways, sequencing options, and interim steps	Draft parallel legal and political framings of the mediator’s solution space for both sides	Generate implementation risk scenarios and contingency options

TOWARD AI-ENHANCED MEDIATION

From a design perspective, the three priorities translate into specific demands related to AI-enabled mediation tools. These requirements include systems that can synthesize fragmented information sources without distorting them, that do not risk the confidentiality of the parties, and that are function specific while directly addressing information challenges. Workshop participants suggested that the most useful role for LLM-based tools is not to “solve” conflicts, but rather to reduce burdens that often slow down small negotiation teams. The findings of the workshop led to four recommendations, three focused on enabling efforts to increase AI adoption among mediators and one related to outlining an initial AI-related pilot.

The first enabling factor centers on evaluation. If an AI tool is meant to support mediation, it needs to be tested in a manner that reflects actual mediation tasks and risks. Here, tool evaluation and the development of use-case specific benchmarks—datasets and related studies crafted to assess model capabilities—will be fundamental.⁸⁶ In practical terms, this means developing benchmarking efforts focused on whether models can map conflict actors correctly, summarize positions without distortion, and handle local languages or culturally coded signals. The CSIS Futures Lab has focused on generating evaluations of LLMs in critical foreign policy tasks, an effort that must be expanded to meet future conflict mediation needs.⁸⁷

Ensuring effective AI-enabled tools also means testing security and resilience through red teaming, specifically focusing on factors such as whether a system can protect confidential information, resist manipulation, and avoid producing claims that are not supported by relevant data. These testing

procedures should happen before any pilot is integrated into mission support to reduce operational risk. If, for example, a system cannot comprehend local slang, shifting cultural contexts, or ongoing public signaling from conflict parties, it risks misrepresenting key issue positions and undermining the broader settlement process. Importantly, evaluation must go beyond generic model comparisons. The standard for implementation in the field should be an AI-enabled tool's practical performance in real workflows, in particular focusing on factors such as whether the tool improves mediation performance without introducing new mistakes. Appearances matter, as legitimacy—primarily determined by the perception of the participants—matters as much as accuracy. If the tool is *perceived* as biased, opaque, or unsafe, it will not be used, or it will be used in ways that create unwanted risk.

The second recommendation aimed at facilitating AI-enhanced mediation comprises user training and preparedness. Some mediators will be skeptical of AI. Such skepticism is understandable given the confidentiality requirements of mediation and the political sensitivity of negotiation settings. A realistic next step is to treat AI literacy as part of capacity building. LLM tools are only useful when users know how to effectively scope tasks and critically verify outputs. This is especially true during active peace talks, when drafting support and proposal reframing can influence the tone of discussions. User training should therefore focus on narrow use cases, LLM-prompting of best practices, and disciplined output review processes. Moreover, training should establish clear organizational rules about what data can be entered, what outputs can be shared, and how to ensure human accountability and ultimate authority.

The third enabling recommendation is that AI adoption within mediation contexts should leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships. The mediation landscape is widening, with a growing number of state and nonstate actors investing in convening and mediation capacities alongside traditional institutions such as the United Nations.⁸⁸ This creates both opportunities and coordination problems. If AI-enabled tools are developed in isolation, they risk becoming incompatible with the security, accountability, and legitimacy requirements of successful peace processes. Because the United Nations can set operating rules, define security obligations, and clarify accountability, the UN system remains a natural anchor for any tool intended to support UN-mandated envoys. At the same time, countries that convene dialogues and fund mediation efforts can support safe testing environments and help connect technology developers to mediators and local experts, parallel to the UN system. A small working group would be a practical mechanism for working out how to align these currently disparate pieces. The working group could select one or two case studies where partners can ethically access material, build curated datasets that reflect local languages and conflict dynamics, and define benchmarks that measure what matters for mediation performance.

The way ahead will require collaboration across a variety of stakeholders, including civil society organizations (such as think tanks, NGOs, and universities), foreign ministries, international organizations like the United Nations, and technology developers (see Table 3). Within this multi-stakeholder environment, think tanks and universities are key domains of expertise in conflict and peace studies. Therefore, those organizations should serve as core players in developing an

evaluation infrastructure for AI-enhanced mediation tools to ensure that any developed benchmark has high fidelity to real-world conflict resolution parameters.⁸⁹

Foreign ministries could act as key facilitators in providing quality mediation data from which a working group could design, test, and evaluate relevant AI-enabled systems, as well as contributing diplomatic and mediation expertise. Governments can also help finance tool development where private sector incentives are weak, as commercial returns on conflict mediation tools are likely to be modest. In addition, international organizations, such as the United Nations, can confer global legitimacy on the process of developing a working group to explore tool development and use case applications, driving momentum and participation following the initial workshop described here. Finally, technology companies, as centers of technical expertise, could advise and consult on solving technical issues and provide guidance on required data structures and evaluation methodologies to ensure better tool performance. Through sustained and coordinated engagement between these actors, the field can move from exploratory workshops toward a durable, legitimate, and technically sound AI-enhanced conflict mediation system.

Table 3: Roles and Stakeholders in Building AI-Enhanced Mediation Tools

Stakeholder Category	Examples	Core Expertise	Primary Roles in AI-Enabled Mediation
Civil society organizations	Think tanks, NGOs, and universities	Conflict and peace studies; research and evaluation	Lead development of evaluation frameworks and benchmark frameworks; ensure high-fidelity alignment with conflict resolution parameters
Foreign ministries	National diplomatic institutions	Diplomacy and mediation practice	Provide high-quality mediation data; contribute subject-matter expertise; facilitate funding for tool development where private sector incentives are weak
International organizations	United Nations	Global governance and legitimacy	Confer international legitimacy; coordinate ongoing working groups; drive global participation and momentum following initial convenings (e.g., Doha workshop)
Technology developers	Private technology companies	Technical system design and AI development	Advise on technical challenges; develop robust tool evolution methodologies; design secure systems; guide data structure requirements for performance optimization

The final recommendation focuses on building a scenario generation tool as an initial use case for an AI-enhanced mediation. This tool should use AI-enabled scenario simulation to help conflict parties explore alternative pathways to peace. Developing this pilot should focus on establishing clear guidelines for data collection and data standardization. This will require detailed engagement with conflict parameters, as well as working with experienced mediators and technical experts to ensure that the dataset employed is structured in a way that adequately captures a conflict. Establishing a robust, generalizable methodology for data collection and structure will be key for expanding any AI-enabled mediation tool to additional cases in the future. Additionally, in conjunction with partner organizations in the mediation and NGO spaces, this early tool should be run through pilot tests to establish a viable product that, through experimentation in the field, can be iterated and improved upon over time.

Conclusion

Contemporary mediation remains essential as conflicts become more numerous, protracted, and politically complex. The core insight from scholarship on mediation and peace negotiation is that agreements are impeded not only by political differences, but also by bargaining failures rooted in uncertainty, commitment fears, and fragmented coalitions. Mediators can overcome these constraints and create negotiation space by managing information, building trust, and sustaining process legitimacy across multiple constituencies. These tasks have become harder as conflicts move into digitally contested environments where ICTs compress decision timelines, amplify audience costs, and destabilize shared information baselines.

AI-enabled tools have the potential both to exacerbate these challenges and also provide substantial advantages in information management. Against this backdrop, the Doha Forum workshop clarified both the potential and the limits of AI in mediation practice. As the recommendations from the workshop demonstrate, participants consistently identified complexity and trust as significant pressure points, reflecting the dual burdens of tracking actors and issues while protecting negotiation credibility. Participants also drew clear red lines around AI failure modes. Misrepresentation of positions and mishandling confidential information were treated as disqualifying because even small errors can trigger accusations of bias, empower spoilers, and shrink the negotiation space. At the same time, participants saw value in narrow, mediator-controlled AI uses that reduce the information burden and that improve process discipline, including synthesis, position tracking, draft consistency, and scenario exploration. The strongest design-related need from technologists was that tools must be built for real workflows and sustained through continuous user feedback.

This report's recommendations follow directly from the workshop's findings and engagement with the peacebuilding literature.

- 1. First, AI-enhanced mediation tools must be evaluated against real-world mediation tasks and risks.** These include, but are not limited to, the representation of party positions, source-linked traceability of information, the management of linguistic and cultural contexts, and the ensuring of security with respect to system manipulation and confidential data.
- 2. Second, mediators need training and operational rules that support disciplined use under pressure,** including clear limits on data entry, best practices for model prompting, and maintaining accountability for decisions.
- 3. Third, governance and partnerships are necessary** because the challenges involving legitimacy, data access, and secure deployment cannot be solved by any single institution. An initial small multi-stakeholder working group offers a path to align standards, ethics, and technical development.
- 4. Finally, a scenario generation pilot tool offers a practical entry point into system development.** A pilot system would support mediator preparedness and expand plausible negotiation outcomes without displacing human judgment. Additionally, such efforts could create an early conduit for establishing data standards, evaluation design, and iterative testing procedures.

If pursued with these safeguards, AI can improve mediation capacity by preserving time and attention for the human work of trust building, political judgment, and process ownership that remains at the center of effective conflict resolution.

Considering the key findings from the academic literature on peace mediation with the results from the Doha workshop reveals that AI has the potential to play a productive role in conflict mediation. This positive role, however, will require more than simply giving mediators access to novel technologies. Instead, successful implementation of AI-enabled mediation will be built on ensuring new technological tools enable mediators to better understand conflicts, manage spoilers, and build trust between conflict parties to help in solving key commitment problems.

Conflict resolution will remain human work, grounded in trust and judgment. AI cannot supply empathy or political legitimacy, but it can preserve time and attention for the parts of mediation that only humans can do. Used carefully, AI can expand mediation capacity without changing who owns the process.

About the Authors

Yasir Atalan is a deputy director and data fellow in the Futures Lab at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). His research focuses on technology and international security, with particular emphasis on how artificial intelligence is reshaping conflict dynamics. Dr. Atalan examines how AI agents can be responsibly integrated into defense and foreign policy systems by enabling agentic decision-support workflows. He also studies the changing character of warfare and civil-military relations. Atalan's research has been featured in *The New York Times*, CNN, the *Financial Times*, BBC, *Foreign Policy*, Business Insider, War on the Rocks, and Defense One, as well as in peer-reviewed journals. He also serves as a faculty fellow at the Center for Data Science at American University, where he contributes to computational social science initiatives. Previously, he worked as a replication analyst for the journal *Political Analysis* at Cambridge University Press. He received his PhD in political science from American University, an MA in Middle Eastern studies from King's College London, and a BS in political science and international relations from Bogazici University.

Benjamin Jensen is director of the Futures Lab and a senior fellow for the Defense and Security Department at CSIS. At CSIS, Dr. Jensen leads research initiatives on applying data science and AI and machine learning to study the changing character of war and statecraft. Under his leadership, Futures Lab has pioneered building AI applications into wargames and innovative scenario exercises. The exercise topics range from major war, competitive strategy, and national mobilization to economic security, energy politics, and national resilience. He is also the Frank E. Petersen Chair for Emerging Technology and a professor of strategic studies at the Marine Corps University School of Advanced Warfighting (MCU). At MCU, he leads a research program on future war and teaches seminars on modern operational art and joint-all domain operations. Dr. Jensen has authored five

books, including *Information at War: Military Innovation, Battle Networks, and the Future of Artificial Intelligence* (Georgetown University Press, 2022), *Military Strategy in the 21st Century: People, Connectivity, and Competition* (Cambria, 2018), *Cyber Strategy: The Evolving Character of Power and Coercion* (Oxford University Press, 2018), and *Forging the Sword: Doctrinal Change in the U.S. Army* (Stanford University Press 2016). He also served as senior research director for the U.S. Cyberspace Solarium Commission and is a reserve officer in the U.S. Army, with command experience from platoon to battalion. Dr. Jensen graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and earned his MA and PhD from the American University School of International Service.

Ian Reynolds is the postdoctoral fellow for the Futures Lab in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Ian holds a PhD in international relations from American University's School of International Service. His research focuses on the intersection of technology, science, and international security. Ian's dissertation addressed the history and cultural politics of integrating artificial intelligence into military decisionmaking processes in the United States. From 2022 to 2023, he was a pre-doctoral fellow at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation and the Institute for Human-Centered AI. Ian's work has appeared in publications including *War on the Rocks*, *E-International Relations*, and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.

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