

Conflict Prevention: Theory in Pursuit of Policy and Practice

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AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME AND GONE?

The world seems to be getting more dangerous. Terrorism and the 'war on terrorism' are straining relations between Muslims and the West. Despite interstate wars being in decline, five attacks by a state on another have occurred in the new century. Competition for oil and other essential natural resources makes inter-state wars over territory, viewed as a thing of the past (John Mueller, 1989), more imaginable. Confrontations over nuclear weapons have arisen with North Korea and Iran. Longstanding arms control regimes are unraveling. Further intra-state conflicts could erupt, as closed regimes face violent oppositions; fledgling democracies destabilize; and post-conflict countries fall back into war (Gurr and Marshall, 2005). Trends such as environmental degradation, climate change, population growth, chronic poverty, globalization, and increasing inequality risk future conflicts (e.g., CNA, 2007).

Facing such threats, governments and international bodies could be pursuing how to

prevent escalation of emerging tensions into wars, thus avoiding the immense human suffering and problems that wars always cause, both for the countries involved and the rest of the world.¹ Compared to the huge costs of war, the costs of preventing it are dramatically less.² Many people are convinced the horrific human costs of the current Iraq War were avoidable. Statistical research on third-party diplomacy also supports the belief that acting before high levels of conflict intensity is better than trying to end them (Miall, 1992: 126; Berkovitch, 1986, 1991, 1993).³ To try to head off more future conflicts seems possible, moreover, for armed conflict has declined since the end of the Cold War, in part because of an 'extraordinary upsurge of activism by the international community that has been directed to conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding' (Human Security Report, 2005: 155).⁴ Indeed, conflict prevention is now official policy in the UN, the EU, the G-8, and many states (Moolak, 2005: G-8). It has been tried in places where the risk of conflict was present but they were averted, such as South Africa, Macedonia, the Baltics, Crimea,

and the South China Sea.⁵ In short, prevention is not simply a high ideal, but a prudent option that sometimes works (cf. Jentelson, 1996; Zartman, 2001: 305f; Miall, 2007: 7,16,17).

Given the evidence that inaction is wasteful and preventive labors can bear fruit, international actors could be collecting and applying what has been learned from recent experience to manage the tensions around the world from which future conflicts will emerge: mitigating sources of terrorism and extremism; averting genocides and other mass atrocities; buttressing fragile governments; reducing weapons of mass destruction; alleviating competition over oil and water; and defusing inter-state rivalries such as China–Taiwan and among the major powers. Yet these actors show little interest in building on recent accomplishments to reduce the current risks (e.g., the deterioration of Zimbabwe and possible renewed war between Ethiopia and Eritrea).⁶ Why this apparent gap exists between the promise of conflict prevention and its more deliberate pursuit is the puzzle this chapter seeks to unravel.⁷ The following sections seek to get beyond conventional answers by examining three facets of conflict prevention that define its current status: concepts, activities, and impacts. The conclusion sums up the state of the art and offers ideas to advance it.

WHAT IS CONFLICT PREVENTION? A DISTINCT PERSPECTIVE

As the idea has come into vogue, ‘conflict prevention’ and synonyms such as ‘preventive diplomacy’ and ‘crisis prevention’ are bandied about more loosely. New government units and non-governmental organizations have sprung up that tout the term in their logos. To be *au courant*, established organizations add it to mission statements. But though ‘conflict prevention’ may now be heard more often than the previously dominant ‘conflict resolution,’ it is not clear whether the activities carried out under this new rubric are actually new. Despite the ambiguity due to the idea’s rise to fame, however, close analysts have hammered

out a core definition. Knowledge can cumulate when people use the same terms for inquiry.

Conflict prevention applies to peaceful situations where substantial physical violence is possible, based on typical indicators of rising hostilities. Everyday spates where no blood is spilled, or public controversies that get so rancorous that social groups stop communicating are socially unhealthy, but much less grievous than states or groups about to kill each other with deadly weapons.⁸ A coup d’etat is less grave than the genocide of hundreds of thousands of people.⁹ Though thus narrowed to conflicts with potentially wide lethality (hereafter ‘conflicts’ for short), specialists’ definitions have varied in two main respects: a) the stage or phase during the emergence of violence when prevention comes into play; and b) its methods of engagement, which are geared to the differing drivers of potential conflicts that preventive efforts address.¹⁰

Moments for prevention

Conflict prevention has been distinguished from other approaches to conflict mainly by *when* it comes into play during a conflict, not *how* it is done. When UN Secretary General Hammerskjöld first coined ‘preventive diplomacy’ in 1960, he had in mind the UN keeping superpower proxy wars in third-world countries from escalating into global confrontations. When the end of the Cold War brought unexpected intra-state wars such as in Yugoslavia, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali extended Hammerskjöld’s term in an upstream direction to mean not simply keeping regional conflicts from going global, but from starting in the first place (UN, 1992). This conceptual breakthrough shifted the moment for taking action back to stages when non-violent disputes were emerging but had not escalated into significant violence or armed conflict.

Just how far back in the etiology of conflicts might preventive action go to work? Leaving the pre-violent period open to a possible infinite regress might extend it to causes as primordial as original sin or

as dispersed as child-rearing practices, thus dooming the concept to impracticality.¹¹ To mark a beginning point when pre-emptive actions first become practicable, Peck (1995) usefully delineated early and late prevention. The former seeks to improve the relationship of parties or states that are not actively fighting but deeply estranged. Left unaddressed, such latent animosities might revert to the use of force as soon as a crisis arose.¹² Late prevention pertains to when fighting among specific parties appears imminent.

Boutros-Ghali also extended conflict prevention downstream to actions to keep violent conflicts from spreading to more places. But because such 'horizontal' escalation seemed to go beyond averting the rise to violence ('vertical' escalation) and thus to include containing open warfare, some analysts worried that it implied suppressing physical violence at any subsequent stage in an armed conflict. This would conflate it too easily with actions in the middle of wars (even though Boutros-Ghali offered the separate term 'peacemaking' for those). Bringing prevention into the realm of active wars would eclipse its proactive nature behind the conventional interventions that occur late in conflicts, for which terms like conflict management, peace enforcement or peacekeeping were more fitting. This merging would vitiate the pre-emptive uniqueness of prevention compared to those other concepts (cf. Lund, 1996). It would forego the opportunity to test the central premise that had animated this new post-Cold War notion: that acting before violent conflicts fully breaks out is likely to be more effective than acting on a war in progress. To think of prevention as occurring while wars are already waging not only disregards most people's connotation of 'prevention,' but would relegate the international community to remediating costly war after costly war in a perpetual game of catch-up, foregoing the chance to ever get ahead of the game. While some analysts continued to apply prevention to any subsequent level of violent conflict (Leatherman et al. 1999), most now confine it to actions to avoid the

eruption of social and political disputes into substantial violence, keeping the emphasis squarely on stages before, rather than during violent conflicts.

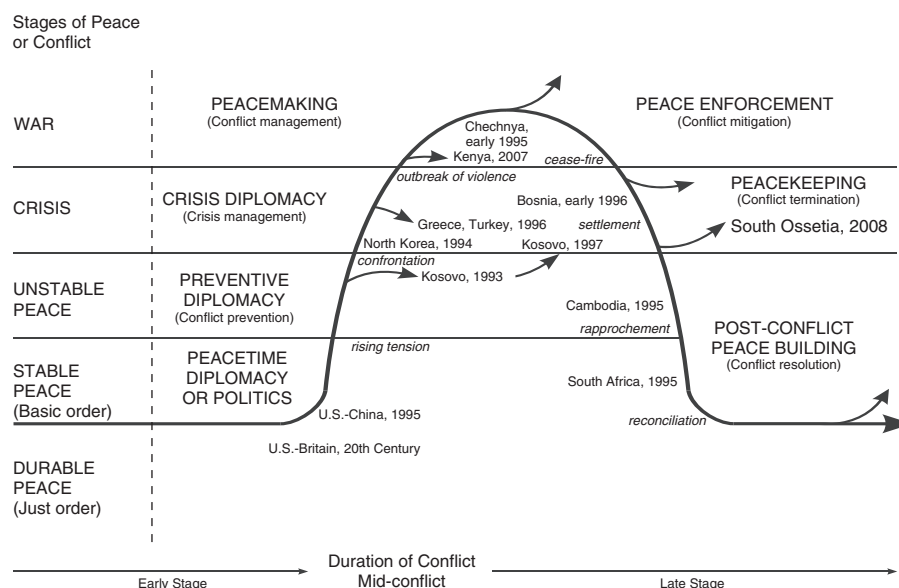
In particular, the focus of this chapter is 'primary prevention' of prospective new or 'virgin' conflicts, where a peaceful equilibrium has prevailed for some years, but fundamental social and/or global forces are producing new controversies, tensions and disputes.¹³ However, imperative later interventions are for minimizing loss of life, they are less humane and likely more difficult because the antagonists are organized, armed, and deeply invested in destroying each other.¹⁴ Graph 15.1 locates this particular moment in conditions of unstable peace and distinguishes it from actions at other conflict stages.

Methods of prevention

Notions of prevention have also varied with regard to the means of engagement, but here too a consensus has emerged. The tools used depend on which causes of conflict are targeted, and thus which providers of tools get involved. Boutros-Ghali listed early warning, mediation, confidence-building measures, fact-finding, preventive deployment, and peace zones. But subsequent UN policy papers of the 1990s (e.g., 'Agenda for Development') greatly expanded preventive measures to a panoply of policies that address the institutional, socio-economic, and global environment within which conflicting actors operate – as diverse as humanitarian aid, arms control, social welfare, military deployment, and media.¹⁵ It can now involve almost any policy sector, whether labeled conflict prevention or not. Recent UN usage of 'preventive action' (e.g., Rubin, 2004) is better suited to this range of potentially useful modalities.

Direct and structural instruments

To classify its array of methods, intercessory initiatives aimed at particular actors in manifest conflicts are distinguished from efforts to shape underlying socio-economic



Graph 15.1 Basic life-history of conflicts and the phases of engagement

conditions and political institutions and processes. The former ‘direct,’ ‘operational,’ or ‘light’ prevention (Miall, 2004) is more time-sensitive and actor- or event-focused – for example, diplomatic demarches, mediation, training in non-violence, or military deterrence – and seeks to keep divisive expressions of manifest conflicts from escalating, and thus it targets specific parties and the issues between them.¹⁶ Integral also is ‘structural’ or ‘deep’ prevention, meaning actions or policies that address deeper societal conditions that generate conflicts between interests and/or the institutional, procedural and policy deficits or capacities that determine whether competing interests are channeled and mutually adjusted peacefully. These more basic factors make up the environment within which contending actors operate and thus policies toward them can create constraints or opportunities that shape what the actors do. Diverse examples are reducing gross regional disparities in living standards, reforming exploitative agricultural policies, and building effective governing institutions.¹⁷ These structural targets make prevention more than simply

avoiding violence, or ‘negative peace,’ but rather aspiring to positive peace. In pragmatic terms, it means being able to meet the inevitable arrival of disruptive social and global forces with the ability to bring about change peaceably (cf. Miall, 2007). In recent years, for example, it conflict prevention has been integral to the larger post-Cold War agenda of creating peaceful democratic states out of societies in transition from authoritarianism and patrimonialism (Lund, 2006).

Accordingly, the actors that may be involved in prevention have expanded from official emissaries to a host of third-party governmental and non-governmental actors in social, economic, cultural, and other agencies, such as within the UN system; international financial institutions; regional organizations; and major governments through bi-lateral development and security assistance. Nor is it limited to the governmental world but may include NGOs, the private business sector through trade, finance, and private investment (Ouellete), even celebrities. Preferably, prevention starts through the efforts of the government and other actors in

the countries where violent conflicts might emerge. Secretary General Annan deemed this multi-tooled, multi-actored, multi-leveled concept a 'culture of prevention.'¹⁸

Ad hoc and A priori instruments

A less recognized expansion of prevention extends it 'up' from actions directed at specific countries facing imminent conflicts (*ad hoc* prevention) to include global- and regional-level legal conventions or other normative standards, such as in human rights and democracy. These regimes seek to influence entire categories of countries or agents, where violations might contribute to conflicts although no signs of conflict have yet appeared (*a priori* prevention). Whereas the former actions are hands-on ways (either direct or structural) to respond to country-specific risk factors, the latter are generic international principles agreed on by global and regional organizations as guideposts that whole classes of states are expected to stay within. There are two varieties: a) supranational normative regimes, such as human rights conventions, and b) international regulations of goods that may fuel or ease conflict such as arms, diamonds, and other trade. Examples of a priori direct prevention are the International Criminal Court and War Crimes Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, which are believed effective in deterring future crimes against humanity, not just prosecuting those who have already committed them; the OAS's proscribing of military or executive coups as threats to democracy; and international regulation of arms transfers. Adherence to international standards and rules before any violations occur is conflict prevention where such violations could lead to violent repression, resistance, and conflict.¹⁹ This socializing of governments in international expectations has been applied most vigorously in eastern and southern Europe (e.g., Schneider and Weitzman, 1996; 15), where the EU, NATO, OSCE, and Council of Europe uphold similar standards. Analogous compacts are being tried through NEPAD, the USA's partnership for African Development.

To illustrate the wide range of possible methods for conflict prevention, Table 15.1 lists illustrative possible prevention instruments under these cross-cutting categories.²⁰

Despite this variety of moments and methods for prevention, a core concept has emerged. Not a specific instrument, conflict prevention is a distinctly pro-active *stance* that, in principle, many actors could take to respond to unstable, potentially violent situations before violence becomes the way tensions and disputes are pursued. Not a single technique, it is a *disposition* toward incipient stages of conflict that may draw upon a repertoire of responses that would help to keep tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and armed force, to strengthen capabilities of parties to resolve issues peacefully, and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce serious disputes.²¹ The challenges this expansive notion poses for timeliness, coherence, and efficacy are discussed in later sections.

Conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation

In the context of the school of conflict resolution that emerged in the 1970s, this post-Cold War concept marked new conceptual ground. Differing stages and intervention tools for conflict were implicit but not theoretically central concepts, and the terms in that field still tend to be used interchangeably for any stage. Founders such as Boulding envisioned a global network of 'social data stations' to monitor and warn about emerging conflicts, but in the Cold War context of the time, conflict resolution came to mean addressing already-tense international crises, or active internal wars, rather than keeping them from starting in the first place.²² Another founder sought to greatly deepen the causes of conflict to include "basic human needs" (e.g., Burton). Yet, the chief instruments the field has promoted are confined to interactive techniques such as problem-solving workshops or other direct intercession, all of which engage small groups representing parties already tied up in manifest conflicts. Structural and a priori prevention have placed

Table 15.1 Taxonomy of illustrative conflict prevention instruments

	<i>A Priori Measures</i> (Generic norms and regimes for classes of countries)	<i>Ad Hoc Measures</i> (‘Hands on’ actions targeted to particular places and times)
Structural Measures (Address basic societal, institutional and policy factors affecting conflict/peace)	Standards for human rights, good governance Environmental regimes World Trade Organization negotiations OAS and AU’s protocols on protecting democracy International organization membership or affiliations	Economic reforms and assistance Enterprise promotion Natural resource management Decentralization, federalism Long-term observer missions Group assimilation policies Aid for elections, legislatures Human rights and conflict resolution education Aid for police and judiciary Executive power-sharing Security sector reform
Direct Measures (Address more immediate behaviors affecting conflict/peace)	International Criminal Court War Crimes Tribunals Special Rapporteurs for Human Rights Arms control treaties Global regulation of illegal trade (e.g., Kimberly Process for ‘conflict diamonds’) EU Lome and Cotonou processes on democracy, governance, and human rights	Human rights capacity-building Inter-group dialogue, reconciliation Conditional budget support Fact-finding missions Arms embargoes ‘Peace radio’ Good offices, facilitation, track-two diplomacy ‘Muscular’ mediation Preventive deployment Economic sanctions Threat of force Rapid reaction forces

this micro-focus within the macro-focus of the larger processes of nation and state-building, in which interactive techniques are only one among a much larger set of instruments.

Prevention by other names

Table 15.1 reveals also that many de facto direct, structural and generic preventive instruments may not be recognized as such because they operate under aliases. Historically, the Congress of Vienna, League of Nations, the United Nations system of agencies, Marshall Plan, European Union, and NATO and other security alliances were all established to reduce the potential for future inter-state or intra-state conflicts and are thus fundamentally preventive (Lund, 1996a, 1997). During the Cold War, détente and co-existence, arms control treaties, and the CSCE sought to keep the tense superpower relationship from erupting into conventional or nuclear war. Since the Cold War, many

other policies and institutions encourage peaceful management of disputes, such democracy-building and as rule of law programs, nuclear non-proliferation, and regional organizations.²³ Whether any of these tools explicitly bear the term conflict prevention is immaterial, as long as features are built into them that perform prevention effectively. Conflict prevention is also at stake in current debates over current potential crises, such as Iran’s nuclear plans, although those words are not used (Ignatius, 2006). All in all, one answer to our question of why it seems that prevention is not tried more often is that it may actually be operating, but under other labels.

WHAT IS BEING DONE? A WELL-KEPT SECRET

The examples so far show that conflict prevention is neither hypothetical nor new.

Although Darfur, the Russia–Georgia conflict, and other unaverted conflicts reflect a frequent failure to act when violence is growing, significant effort has been devoted to preventive action and capacity-building, especially since the ending of the Cold War.

1. Early warning and advocacy

From Quincy Wright to Paul Collier, leagues of social scientists have identified causes of inter-state and intra-state conflict. Databases track the global trends and locuses of conflicts (SIPRI, Human Security Report, 2005) and assess the prospects for conflict or peace in particular countries (e.g., the former Conflict Prevention Network). Some country risk indicators and early warning systems are university-based and open-sourced (e.g., CIDCM, CIFP), and some provide political risk assessments commercially. Helped by the connectivity of the Internet, NGOs issue periodic alerts to official bodies and the public, with recommended responses (e.g., International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Alert, the former Forum for Early Warning and Early Response [FEWER]). Intergovernmental and bi-lateral agencies have set up in-house systems (UN, OSCE, USAID, CIA, ECOWAS, IGAD). More recently, USAID outlined a ‘fragile states’ strategy including a ‘watch list’ to identify priority countries for attention. In short, what one book foresaw as an ‘emerging global watch’ seems to be gradually taking concrete shape (Ramcharan, 1991).

Conflict prevention defined above has been taken up by several successive non-governmental programs,²⁴ and was studied and promoted by the Carnegie Commission. In public advocacy, the Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is seeking to capacitate NGOs for early warning and peacebuilding. Efforts are being made to sensitize private corporations to the impacts their commercial activities may have on conflicts, negatively or positively (Wenger and Möckli, 1991). A recent initiative, ENOUGH, is seeking to garner public support for action in Darfur and other African mass atrocities.²⁵

Though such efforts to rouse public support for preventive action are useful in the long run, they depend on media coverage of remote events and a distracted public that is touched only by highly emotive material (cf. Kristoff, 2007), and so are prone to belated responses, not pro-active ones. Preventive action has to become largely a full-time professional and governmental endeavor.

Policy agenda

Since the 1990s, more and more intra-state conflicts have burdened the UN and other organizations’ humanitarian caseload, the number of UN peacekeeping missions has far exceeded all previous ones since the UN was founded, and the financial costs in post-conflict countries have mounted. As over and over, new conflicts caused human suffering and diplomatic and peacekeeping travail, world leaders and organizations were increasingly swayed by the appealing argument that it would be more humane and cost-effective to try to keep as many bloody and devastating wars as possible from occurring at all. Conflict prevention came specially to the fore after the embarrassing failures by the UN, the USA, and others to stem the massive genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Numerous conferences on particular wars or peacekeeping issues solemnly concluded that what really ought to have happened was more vigorous effort at the outset to avoid such conflicts from occurring in the first place.

Conflict prevention entered the official policy statements of the USA and other major governments, the UN, the EU, and many regional bodies. The title of the 1999 annual report on all the activities of the UN system summed them up as ‘Preventing War and Disaster.’ Conflict prevention was the topic of two UN Security Council discussions in 2000 and 2001; a priority urged in July, 2000 by the G–8 Okinawa Summit; and the focus of major reports of the UN Secretary General in June, 2001 and 2006. Since 9/11, the notion that failed states breed extremism and conflict added to this impetus under the rubric of preventing state failures, and the

UN has sought to promote more pro-active attention on conflict and other global threats (e.g., UN High Level Panel Report on Global Threats).

Initiatives on the ground

Prevention has gone considerably beyond exhortation and policy into actual efforts in specific countries. Though little-publicized, direct and structural activities have been applied in such diverse places threatened by conflict as Slovakia, Indonesia, and Guyana. These activities range from bi-lateral and regional high-level diplomacy (e.g., by ECOWAS) to NGO projects in peace building at the local level, such as dialogues, peace radio, and inter-ethnic community development programs, to mention a few. The UNDP local community development program in southern Krygyzstan was explicitly entitled 'preventive development.' Again, many programs in potential conflict settings are intended as conflict-preventive but not so labeled, like the UN good offices' efforts with the Myanmar regime, and the World Bank offer in 2000 to help fund land reform in Zimbabwe as its political crisis over land worsened.²⁶

Institutional capacity-building

Ongoing response mechanisms have been set up to trigger actions automatically based on risk criteria, at least in principle. The UN Secretariat, the European Commission, and inter-governmental, regional, and sub-regional bodies have staffed small units to watch for early warning signs and consider preventive responses. At UN headquarters, the Secretariat's 'Interagency Framework Team for Coordinating Early Warning and Information Analysis' identifies countries at risk of conflict and applicable UN preventive measures. In addition to the most active regional mechanisms of the OSCE and OAS, all African sub-regional organizations have agreed to prevention mechanisms (e.g., AU; ECOWAS; IGAD; SADC; ECCAS). Although many are not fully operational,²⁷ some have been used to respond to threatening situations, such as in Congo-Brazzaville and Guinea-Bissau.

Ahead of foreign and defense ministries, major development agencies have taken the lead in intra-state conflict prevention. Countless training workshops have been carried out by the UN for staff and donor implementing partners.²⁸ NGOs and universities offer institutes for training in conflict analysis and 'peace and conflict impacts assessment.' Conflict and peace-building units exist in all major development agencies including the World Bank. These agencies have supported numerous assessments of the conflict drivers and peace capacities in particular countries. While they have funded unofficial diplomatic initiatives, such as in Georgia, Uganda, Senegal, and the DRC, their preventive efforts have been shifting from specially dedicated activities such as dialogues to 'mainstreaming' conflict and peace-building criteria into all development sectors, such as agriculture, health, education, economic growth, environment, youth, democracy- and state-building, civil society building, as well as security sector professionalism, and into the full programming cycle from assessment through design, monitoring, and evaluation. USAID's Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management is producing practical 'toolkits' that provide lessons learned about how to address typical sources of conflicts arising from issues such as water, minerals, forests, land, youth, human rights, and livelihoods (e.g., CMM). Consultants are tasked with doing assessments of programs for their effects specifically on conflicts and peace (e.g., Lund and Wanchek, 2005) and how they might be improved or at least 'do no harm' by inadvertently exacerbating risk factors (Anderson, 1999). A host of practical analytical tools have been developed for these assessments and formulating appropriate program designs,²⁹ published in practical guides. These present the typical sources of conflicts, how to assess the impacts of programs on conflict, and how they might be improved. The UN and some donor and multi-lateral organizations are also trying to incorporate conflict-sensitive development into country-wide development strategies such as PRSPs and the UN's CCA and DAF.

Changing norms

New international norms appear to be emerging, albeit slowly and tacitly, that affirm an international obligation to respond to potential eruptions of violence, especially genocide. As successive bloody wars have hit the headlines, one no longer hears that they are inevitable 'tragedies' resulting from 'age-old hatreds.' Instead, concerns are voiced that the calamity could have been avoided, and about what went wrong and who is responsible. UN Secretary General Annan and US President Clinton both acknowledged that they could have acted more vigorously to halt the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Parliamentary public inquiries were held in France and Belgium on the roles that their governments may have played in neglecting or worsening the genocide, and in the Netherlands about the roles of their forces under the UN during the atrocities at Srebrenica. In 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty asserted a 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) ordinary people who are at risk of crisis or conflict.³⁰ This duty rests first with sovereign governments about their own citizens, but if states are unwilling or unable, the responsibility to intervene to protect those in harm's way devolves to the international community.³¹ R2P may become a critical impetus for conflict prevention, for the Commission argued that the duty to protect also 'implies an accompanying responsibility to prevent' such threats (ICISS, 2001: 19).

Governments in potentially conflict-prone countries often object to this trend as undue interference in their domestic affairs, especially as it implies possible military intervention. But the more that late and possibly non-consensual armed interventions are justified and necessary to halt atrocities, the more acceptable earlier and consensual preventive engagement may become as an alternative. Moreover, the norm of outside responsibility for avoiding threats to citizens is gaining some hold in such countries as well. The African Union now includes a fifteen-member Peace and Security Council that if authorized by the Assembly can deploy

military force in a member state in the event of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Though such authority to stop a humanitarian calamity or genocide is very late prevention, this moves upstream in the conflict cycle the point at which involvement is considered legitimate without a government's consent.³²

In sum, conflict prevention is now more common. In addition to these explicit efforts, much of it is hidden in plain sight under other rubrics such as nuclear arms control, democratization, non-violent regime change, people power, power-sharing, conditional aid, and counter-terrorism. Though such activities can contribute to preventing conflict, they are taken for granted and not registered in the conflict prevention column. Media tend to report on wars, not how peace is maintained much of the time.³³ The failures to prevent in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo are widely reported, the successes in Albania (Tripodi) and Romania (Mihailescu) go unnoticed. This lack of awareness outside professional circles of advances and achievements may deflate the preventive enterprise, perpetuating unwarranted pessimism regarding its value. So another part of the answer to our question as to why conflict prevention is disregarded is that lack of awareness of what is actually being done keeps it off the table of actions that could be taken in current potential conflict situations. If one does not believe an activity exists, one does not consider it an option or devote resources to it.³⁴

Obstacles

Despite incremental progress in pro-activism, international actors often fail to apply vigorous measures to unraveling societies when they are first significantly threatened by social turmoil, state breakdown, gross human rights violations, and violence. In one study to ascertain the most active third parties in the early stages of recent conflicts, the U.N. and the USA led other third parties, but the responses occurred at late stages of crisis or actual war and in salient arenas such as the Middle East

(Moller and Svensson, 2007: 17). U.S. foreign policy debates constantly dwell only on the narrow question of how “tough” to be toward enemies and whether to go to intervene militarily here or there, thus totally ignoring the options available before such adversaries are created and crisis points are reached. Although humanitarian and development aid have increased, resources earmarked for conflict prevention, with the exception of a few dedicated funds, have not.

Dispersion of wills

The conventional explanation of why major international organizations do not respond to potential conflicts is a ‘lack of political will.’ But this is vague and does not explain how it can be that preventive actions sometimes *are* taken. While it may be assumed that Western publics are opposed to the use of force abroad to stop genocide or humanitarian crises, it is not clear they would balk at strengthening the capacity to avert crises and avoid later costs. (Jentleson, 1996: 14). Public opinion is also not the final arbiter, for political leaders can circumvent or influence it. Several recent prevention decisions have been taken quietly with little or no wider consultations (Lund, 1999). In 2002–3, the USA’s handwringing throughout the 1990s about humanitarian interventions and disdain for nation-building were quickly swept aside with regard to Iraq by White House arguments justifying the more drastic and costly choice of preventive war and forceful regime change.³⁵

More often, the problem may be that there is an *excess* of political wills. The major powers and international community are present extensively in most developing countries, including those vulnerable to conflict. This presence takes many forms such as diplomatic missions, cultural activities, health and education and infrastructure development, trade and commerce, military assistance, as well as efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and civil society. But this multitude of activities building schools, training nurses, assisting elections, digging wells, teaching good business practices, you name

it, is pursuing a variety of differing policy goals that are not necessarily supportive of conflict prevention. If many actors are already engaged in conflict-prone places, often in sizeable numbers, the problem is not what is commonly depicted as receiving an early warning from some remote country and then pressuring international actors to rush to it before a crisis erupts. International actors are *already there*. Yet each mission is expending energy and resources in many dispersed directions other than preventing violent conflicts. An effective prevention system does not operate in potential conflict areas because *everyone is busily pursuing other mandates*. While some of these conflict-blind activities may help, some enable or worsen conflicts.

Even the most prevention-relevant activities listed above are too segmented. Early warning and conflict indicators come up through separate reporting channels and program desks, such as for human rights, humanitarian aid, and development, arriving at differing definitions of local problems and interpretations of conflict causes. This information is not synthesized to reveal possible overlap and complementarity. For example, genocide prevention is advocated as if it is a separate problem from intra-state conflict. But most genocides by far occur during wars (Harff, 2003), and wars are hard to stop, so the best way to prevent genocide is to prevent the wars in which they usually arise.

Clash of professions

Lying behind the problem of disparate wills are differing values and paradigms of separate disciplines and professions such as conflict resolution, peace studies, human rights, economic development, political development, and security studies. Contradictions arise over the often-inescapable need to make tradeoffs between these fields’ desirable but competing goals. The prevailing Western liberal model often assumes that the democracy, human rights, rule of law, free markets, and economic growth are all compatible with one another and with peace. But in many situations,

such compatibility does not hold, yet there is no common understanding or procedure for prioritizing goals at differing stages of conflict.

These value conflicts reflect differing worldviews of diverse professionals regarding how to conflict. Diplomatic, military, and security communities often ignore the need to address underlying, longer-term factors that contribute to conflicts, as they pursue predominantly elite-oriented and state-centered approaches to already armed conflicts. On the other hand, development agencies and NGOs generally fail to recognize the need for sufficient diplomatic clout or other forms of power to confront the immediate drivers of intra-state conflicts, such as political leaders who can mobilize popular followings and armed groups. On their part, the human rights community often takes a legal-judicial approach to exposing violations of human rights principles and punishing the guilty – justice over peace – whereas the conflict resolution school emphasizes stopping violence, strengthening human relationships and achieving reconciliation.³⁶ But these philosophical differences lead the various fields to elevate one value above others and pursue differing policy goals, thus frustrating the achievement of effective overall prevention strategies. All good things do not necessarily go together. Empirically speaking, one kind of leverage without others may have serious limits or cause harm (see the following section). What is required is recognition that no one value necessarily can be achieved absolutely; compromises need to strike balances between competing values in differing circumstances.

These dissonances may be getting more crossfield attention, however. Procedurally, efforts to achieve policy coherence are being made by country-level coordinators such as the UN Secretary General's special representatives and UNDP resident representatives. Whole-of-government efforts are reflected in such entities as the US State Department's new Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. Inter-agency harmonization is being attempted by the UN's

Peacebuilding Commission, at least for post-conflict countries.³⁷ Some development agencies are funding non-official diplomacy initiatives that are intended to influence domestic power politics, while the notion of 'soft power' encourages diplomats and military officials to explore the utility of development and other non-coercive policies. In sum, another part of the lack of sufficient proactive response is the dispersion of international activities and goals already in countries threatened by violence. The problem is not deploying them anew. A downside of the expansive notion of prevention is that these various activities are pursued with no procedures for galvanizing them into concerted prevention strategies. Alternatively, a considerable multiplier effect would be achieved if the multiple efforts in a given country were each made more 'conflict-smart,' for their aggregate impact would be more potent. Conflict prevention might be largely a matter of re-engineering the many diplomatic, development and other programs that already operate in developing countries so that they serve conflict prevention objectives more directly and in a more concerted way (Lund, 1998a).

WHAT KINDS OF PREVENTION ARE EFFECTIVE? GETTING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Much extant research looks at failure: countries that faced potential violent conflict, and where no preventive effort was tried or opportunities were missed (e.g., Zartman, 2005). However, the simple antidote to 'act early' has given way to a deeper concern about getting those actions right. This is because misapplied preventive efforts, even if timely, may be worse than taking no action at all. (cf. Lund, 1998a). Thus, the growing research on 'success' – preventive actions that were tried and no escalation occurred – is especially policy relevant. Instruments in the potential prevention toolbox are not *ipso facto* effective, for that hinges on which is applied when, where, and how.

Basic ingredients

The first wave of this research looked mainly at preventive diplomacy (direct prevention), and thus relatively late stages of confrontation (e.g., Miall, 1992; Manuera, 1994; Lund, 1996). It suggests convergence around elements that appear to be associated with effective avoidance of violence:³⁸

1. Act at an early stage (Miall, 1992: 198), that is before a triggering event (Wallensteen, 1998: 15), "early, early, early" (Jentleson, 2000: 337).
2. Be swift and decisive, not equivocal and vacillating (Wallensteen; Jentleson, 2000: 343; Hamburg, 2002: 146; Harff, 2006: 6).
3. Use talented, influential international diplomats who command local respect (Jentleson, 2000: 336; Miall, 1992: 193).
4. Convince the parties that the third parties are committed to a peaceful and fair solution, and oppose the use of force by any side (Jentleson, 2000: 341).
5. Use a combination of responses, such as carrots and sticks, implemented more or less coherently (Hamburg, 2002: 146–47; Wallensteen, 1998: 15; Jentleson, 2000: 336; Leatherman, 1999: 182–94; Zartman, 2005: 14; Byman, 2002: 217).
6. Provide support and reinforcement to moderate leaders and coalitions that display non-violent and cooperative behavior Zartman, 2000: 310.
7. Build local networks that address the various drivers of the conflict, but avoid obvious favoritism and imbalances (Wallensteen: 15; Jentleson, 2000: 336; Hamburg, 2002: 147; Leatherman, 1999: 199).
8. If necessary to deter actors from using violence, use credible threat of the use of force or other penalties such as targeted sanctions (Jentleson, 2000; Zartman, 2005: 202).
9. Neutralize potential external supporters of one side or the other, such as neighboring countries with kin groups to those in a conflict (Miall, 2000; Hamburg, 2002: 147).
10. Work through legitimate local institutions to build them up (Wallensteen: 15).
11. Involve regional organizations or regional powers, but don't necessarily act entirely through them (Wallensteen: 15) Jentleson: 339; Miall: 198).
12. Involve major powers that can provide credible guarantees, but use UN or other multi-lateral channels to ensure legitimacy

(Jentleson: 337; Wallensteen: 15; Hamburg, 2002: 147; Leatherman et al. 1999: 216; Zartman, 2005: 13).

The studies also find that certain local and regional conditions significantly enhance the chances of success (e.g., Miall):³⁹

1. Domestic leaders who are relatively secure and feel a self-interest in stability, and thus are open to third parties facilitating or mediating emerging disputes.
2. Major factions that show some mutual ability to manage societal disputes and carry out public policies that benefit all communities.
3. Accommodative policies and procedures such as voting systems and opportunities for political participation that blunt the impact of grievances felt by one side or the other.
4. Relations between major political groups that have been peaceful in the recent past.
5. One side is not much more powerful than another.
6. Weak group solidarity or political mobilization within one of the protagonists, such that they cannot mobilize beyond a certain level.
7. The country is small and relatively dependent on the international community economically, politically, and militarily.

Toward a theory of prevention: timing and sequencing

While very useful, these findings do not reveal the utility of particular instruments at different stages. It is widely accepted that different interventions are needed at different moments (e.g., Lund, 1996: 191; Rothchild CAII, 1996: 44). As indicated, it is also believed that several kinds of instruments are needed. But such a multi-pronged strategy cannot mean everyone doing everything in every stage and place. More is not necessarily better. Consequently, the leading current research question being urged for the field is which *mixes* of differing instruments are most effective in which stages of conflict and contexts, other things being equal (e.g., Miall, 1992; Nicolaides, 1996; Harff, 2005).⁴⁰ Case-studies and 'large n' quantitative studies have begun to mine recent experience (e.g., Rubin,

1998, 2004; Nicolaides; Rowsbotham and Miall; Leatherman et al.,)⁴¹ to get at this issue. Differing levels of analysis, typologies, and cases have impeded the task of cumulating and verifying findings, and many are partly deductive rather than empirical (e.g., Lund, 1997; Leatherman; Kriesberg, 2003; Rothchild, 2003: 45). Nevertheless, gathering up what extant findings and grounded reasoning suggest so far can provide useful heuristic guidelines for policymakers about which combinations of instruments to apply to the early stages of conflict.⁴²

To explore the available evidence, we examine below what research suggests are most useful of the basic types of prevention at each of three distinguishable early phases of conflicts. These phases lie in the realm of unstable peace between a peaceful equilibrium where conflicts are managed predictably, on the one hand, and tensions are beginning to escalate into confrontation, significant violence or organized armed conflict, on the other (cf. e.g., Mitchell, 1981; 2006; Lund, 1996; Lund, 1997; Kriesberg, 2003; Ramsbotham and Miall, 2005).⁴³ To frame the following discussion, we pose here a familiar assumption that “soft” measures must be followed by “hard” ones, the more a conflict escalates – e.g., diplomacy must precede the use of force. The UN Charter envisions that the procedures in Chapter Six for peaceful settlements of disputes may have to be followed by the more coercive measures in Chapter Seven of sanctions and peace enforcement. Others subscribe to this graduated ‘ladder of prevention’ (Eliasson). Similarly, regarding interactive conflict resolution methods, the contingency model hypothesizes that the greater the intensity of conflict, the more that non-assertive techniques of facilitation must give way to the directive techniques of mediation, arbitration and adjudication (Fisher and Keashly, 1991).

Latent conflicts

These arise when exogenous or endogenous changes are generating underlying but unacknowledged strains among societal groups but

they have yet to mobilize to express their interests.⁴⁴

A priori instruments: structural and direct

As described earlier, one prominent a priori instrument involves global and regional organizations promulgating standards or regulations backed by incentives in order to encourage present or prospective member states to respect human rights, adopt democratic procedures, settle disputes peacefully with their own minorities and neighboring states, or submit to restrictions on terms of trade (e.g., Lund, OECD-DAC, 1998; Jentleson, 2000: 338; Hamburg, 2002: 147; Cortright, 269–72).⁴⁵ The evident effectiveness of this instrument in reducing potential causes of conflict seems to derive from the conditional incentives offered to leaders who have already subscribed to particular norms, at least nominally, and are already in power *before* particular conflicts ensue, thus avoiding the difficulties of intervening where parties have already violated the norms and become entrenched in opposed positions on specific disputes. When agreeing to them, a regime’s future stakes are not immediately apparent, compliance can be voluntary, there is time to adjust a country’s policies, and individual actors cannot argue they are being singled out. If the penalties for violations are significant, ‘the sunk costs borne by the parties ... are not so overwhelming as to dwarf the public good provided by the institution’ (Nicolaides: 60, 46–48). A possible negative side-effect occurs if the benefits of incorporating some states into international organizations and excluding their neighbors intensifies tensions between ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ (Bonvicini, 1996; 9; Shambaugh, 1996).⁴⁶

Ad hoc structural instruments

Vigorous structural measures can help specific governments to alleviate underlying socio-economic sources of conflicts or institutional and policy deficits that keep countries from addressing those problems meaningfully and peacefully. When in the 1980s, international lending institutions began to pressure developing countries to privatize

para-statal, reduce public spending, remove price subsidies, stabilize monetary systems, and liberalize trade regulations (Muscat, 2002: 196), the rationale was not solely economic productivity and growth, but political stability, an implicit theory of peace. In fact, considerable large 'n' research suggests that economic liberalization such as free trade policies are highly correlated with lower levels of poverty, and that development correlates with lower levels of conflict (e.g., Hegre et al., 2002; Goldstone et al., 2003). Failing to enact reforms, on the other hand, is likely to deepen poverty and inequities that increase the chances for upheaval.

However, critics argue that structural adjustment measures can increase political instability and thus risk of conflict, especially in the poorest countries by reducing income and increasing competition among prospective losers and gainers during de-statalization. In this view, globalization increases vulnerability to complex humanitarian emergencies by liberalizing trade, increasing capital mobility, raising debt, lowering commodity export prices, and reducing foreign direct investment (e.g., Rapley, 2009). In countries with governments run by ethnic minorities such as Sri Lanka, for example, elites can hold onto their position by securing access to privatized industries. If other minorities are shut out, the economic inequality, or at least its perception, produces inter-group resentment and tensions (Chua, 2003).

This debate revolves in part around differing time frames. To derive the ingredients of peace from ahistorical econometric methods that pinpoint the highest correlations among indicators in large numbers of countries *ex post facto* is not to understand how these correlations came into being over time and the ways that the variables actually behaved and interacted within particular countries.⁴⁷ Though austerity measures may provoke violent protests in the short run, the evidence of political instability is mixed and context-specific (Muscat, 1995). Such adjustment policies may not create fundamental threats to regimes (Bienen, 1986). In fact, early policies

toward natural resources, trade access, diversification, corruption, price shocks, and ethnic quotas can boost growth (Collier, 125–40).⁴⁸ Whether such policies mitigate or worsen conflict also depends on how these international and domestic policies are designed, introduced, and implemented.⁴⁹ Social safety-net programs can be used to compensate groups that are especially hard-hit by short-term effects of economic austerity.⁵⁰ In any case, normal policies of international lending institutions applied automatically without tailoring them to each country context may be especially destabilizing in the poorest and least capable states.⁵¹ In short, economic reform may have better chances of success at this stage, than when politics are more polarized, but they need to be conflict-sensitive and accompanied by compensatory measures.

As against such conditional aid,⁵² donors also provide outright aid such as in health and education to alleviate social needs and thus encourage economic activity. Such support programs are believed to have stabilizing effects because they can create new markets and increase social interaction (Cortright, 1997; Collier, 134). A drawback is that such assistance is implemented through divisible projects and programs, so benefit allocations may reflect the differential access of a society's ethnic groups, causing 'horizontal inequities' (Stewart,), especially where prebendal or patronage mechanisms distribute resources and life chances as is common in Africa. When the competitive pressures of democratization arise, ruling parties have especially strong incentives to use social and economic programs to win and reward supporters. Thus, conflict-blind aid intended to alleviate poverty may actually privilege certain and identity groups and intensify inter-group rivalries (Graham, 1994).⁵³ Donors often find that even well-intentioned support may visibly affect the relative position of politically significant groups in a society and thus exacerbate the sources of conflict (Collier, 138). Where there are politicized ethnic divisions, aid programs may contribute more to conflict than do macro-economic

reforms because they are more or less 'lumpy'.⁵⁴ Implementing programs through multi-group and locally-run mechanisms may help to avoid obvious partiality and bridge such cleavages (e.g., Anderson).⁵⁵

Both economic reform and outright aid are less likely to provoke conflict if developing societies have *institutions* that manage the social strains and inequalities that globalization can cause (Rodrik, 1997). As many donors concluded that structural adjustment could not work unless bolstered by effective governance (Stokke, 1995: 26), the latter became another entry point for structural conflict prevention. International agencies now widely subscribe to the view that democracy-building is an effective way to achieve domestic stability.⁵⁶ Again, the evidence arises from strong cross-sectional statistical associations in a large number of countries between democracy and peace between and within nations (e.g., Russett, 1993). At the stage of latent conflict, such support for building institutions that can regulate emerging social conflicts is promising (Nicolaides: 53). Some countries like Indonesia though ethnically fragmented have taken genuine steps toward popular democracy and maintained relative stability.

However, views that any steps toward more democracy are gains for conflict reduction (e.g., Diamond, 1996: 40–8) do not recognize that democratization also risks destabilization. Studies of actual dynamics of change in particular countries find that the risk of conflict often rises during periods when authoritarian systems are shifting to more pluralistic structures (e.g., Mansfield and Snyder, 1995a,b).⁵⁷ Alternatively, transitioning polities may remain 'partial' or 'illiberal' democracies (Ottaway, 2003; Zakaria, 1997) in which the regime's hold on power is not challenged, political and civil rights are abridged, and representation occurs through informal power-sharing within cliques. If such autocratic or oligarchic regimes ('anocracies') continue to resist meaningful democratic reform, they could simply stagnate economically as well as politically, inviting state breakdown and violent conflict.

At the same time, it is unclear whether such regimes necessarily lead to stagnation and violent conflict or can evolve gradually toward more openness and stability. Informal power-sharing among less than fully accountable political leaders, though falling short of formal democracy in a Western sense, does not lead inevitably to conflict.⁵⁸ In fact, intra-elite co-optative bargains, though less than ideal by Western standards, may be a pre-requisite for political stability and thus eventual development (e.g., Rothchild, 2004, Byman). So once again, the likelihood of conflict may be determined more by whether governments make accommodative adjustments, such as allowing for some political activity (cf. Cramer and Weeks, 2002: 41f).⁵⁹ Positive discrimination programs to increase access of minorities to government jobs and services can co-opt group resentments (Rothchild, 2004: 47). These diverging scenarios make the current national politics in authoritarian countries such as Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Egypt, and more pluralistic but weak systems like Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, crucial focuses for early warning and conflict prevention.⁶⁰

Appropriately, especially since 9/11, analysts have looked increasingly to 'supply-side' programs that support institutions of the state to make governments more effective from the inside. Several analysts argue that before representative democracies can function effectively, basic institutions of the state need to operate effectively.⁶¹ Fragile and failed states need to have effective ministries, local authorities, and judiciaries delivering health, education, roads, sanitation, and justice.⁶² State strengthening includes professionalizing a country's security forces, both to restrain them from abusing its citizens and enable them to provide security.⁶³ National laws also need to provide guarantees such as property rights (Kapstein, 2004), enforce policies governing the economy, establish regulatory agencies such as for banking and trade, and respect civil and political rights and criminal laws through courts,⁶⁴ including protections for minorities and other limits

on arbitrary power: 'constitutional liberalism' (Zakaria, 2003).⁶⁵

On a broader plane, much research has weighed the utility for preventing ethnic conflicts of constitutional engineering that allocates political authority through differing options: unitary systems versus federalism, autonomy or partition; presidential versus parliamentary systems, and proportional versus plural electoral rules (see e.g., Horowitz; Wimmer, 2004). Federalism is often presented as a possible means of conflict resolution or prevention, for devolving policymaking can shield minorities and be more responsive to regional or local interests. But decentralization has both calmed and divided societies (Siegle and O'Mahony, 2007). Proportional representation and winner-take-all voting helped in South Africa and not in Northern Ireland. Again, how such differing arrangements affect the risk of conflict in a given country depends on other particular factors, such as the political relationship between contending identity groups and the politics of change.

In sum, all such economic, political and constitutional structural changes envision ultimate states of affairs that, if attained, would undoubtedly reduce conflicts significantly. But the challenge is *getting to* these endpoints without destructive conflict. In the short run, reforms such as structural adjustment and majoritarian elections are not always feasible, and can be counter-productive if applied too quickly or with insufficient attention to a country's balance of power, political economy, and potential for backlash and deeper polarization. Liberalizations that fragment power have to be balanced by stabilization that consolidates it (cf. Paris, 2001), such as state and societal institutions with authority to reconcile competing interests and force compromises. Many ideal liberal-internationalist solutions set aside the difficulties and pitfalls of getting reforms adopted and do not calculate the risk of destabilization in view of the capacities of differing societies for peaceful change.⁶⁶ Merely prescribing ultimate ideals is as useful as a doctor advising an

obese patient with heart trouble to 'lose weight.'⁶⁷

Ad hoc direct instruments

Structural policies do not necessarily engage the specific stakeholders in emerging national conflicts, although they require consent or at least toleration by host governments where they are applied. Critical to their adoption and implementation are the processes and channels through which governing elites make decisions about them, steps that affect the prospects for social conflict. This reality thus calls for direct forms of preventive engagement even at this stage of latent conflict.⁶⁸ But despite the frequent obeisance expressed to the idea of engendering 'local ownership,' structural programs often treat the leaders in a country not as active agents of change but automatons who respond to incentives and disincentives in some Pavlovian stimulus-response international experiment.

Obviously, direct prevention is premature if no conscious sense of a serious prospective harm or opportunity is present (Berkovitch; Nicolaides 1996: 52). Where societies see no serious problem that needs fixing, it is hard for third-party would-be preventors to explain why they are needed. Pointing to a conflict of interests might actually destabilize the situation (Kemp: 50ff).⁶⁹ Or, if no aggrieved parties have stepped forward, it is unclear whom one can talk to. But once underlying problems are beginning to surface as contentious issues, direct engagement fostered by trusted third parties is best carried out *within* existing institutions and ruling processes, thus giving standing regimes the chance to respond in ways that do not immediately threaten their status while allowing them to address emerging problems. State elites acting early on to deal with structural conditions can be effective prevention (Rothchild, 2003: 46). Whether or not governments have accepted inter-national standards through agreements they have signed, they may take umbrage at criticism and dismiss outside pressure. But fact-finding missions from institutions such as the UN can overcome resistance, especially

if complemented with direct support that addresses the deficiencies (Rothchild, 2003: 46–7). As it is better to foster compliance than rely only on ex post condemnations of deviations (Nicolaidis, 1996: 54), multi-lateral organizations have also moved from simply promulgating and pressing standards on a government to hands-on assistance. The Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, for example, has shifted from simply monitoring human rights to helping governments comply, through creating national institutions that build human rights capacity. A related approach is the Lome consultations the EU holds with governments in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific for incrementally establishing democratic institutions, thus allowing for flexibility regarding which countries are expected to meet which benchmarks by when.

Manifest limited conflict

The stakes of conflict increase when wider forces of change elicit awareness of conflicting interests and energize affected groups, issues come into the open, and potentially diverging positions are decided upon and voiced (Miall, 2007). Accepted forms of protests may be underway as well as irregular acts, including violence. The aim is both to prevent confrontations that escalate, hardening of positions and polarization, rising fears, and mutual defensive measures that create security dilemmas and to find bases for cooperation. For some, this is the most strategic moment for prevention, as the tasks of earlier and more basic structural prevention are seen as too demanding and complex (Ottaway and Mair, 2004). Some rawness of sores of discontent may be needed to expect positive change to occur (cf. Stedman, 1995). Structural measures continue to be useful – but now, less for alleviating the underlying sources of the conflict than as ‘purchase’ (Rothchild, 2003), to ‘sweeten’ an agreement, that purveyors of direct prevention can use tactically.

Direct measures thus become more essential. Opposed groups often have little inclination to

initiate mutual engagement, at least until they fail to achieve their objectives unilaterally through first trying coercive or violent means. Still, some may seek outside help at this early stage more often than may be realized (Nicolaidis, 1996: 49), as when the Barre regime was under challenge by various clans. Direct methods through which third parties can intervene peacefully include the classic array of official and non-official interactive methods. All these are intended to get parties in closer contact and communication for more accurate information about mutual interests and needs, dispel ignorance and fear, and expose them to more options, possibly leading to agreements (e.g., Rothchild, 2003: 46; Zartman and Rasmussen, 1997).⁷⁰

One direct approach uses non-binding interactions such as various types of conflict transformation workshops that precede, follow or operate under or alongside official ‘track one’ diplomacy or political processes (Fisher, 2005; cf. Ropers, 2005). Rather than take up substantive issues to seek settlements through adversarial, judgmental approaches, these gentler methods or ‘soft mediation’ (Nicolaidis, 1996: 51) create a non-threatening milieu to simply facilitate inter-party communication, thus expecting to elicit more committed participation and pave the way to locally decided and ‘owned’ accommodations (e.g., Zartman and Rasmussen). One study found that extensive mutual communication rather than hard bargaining has been more effective (Bercovitch, 1998: 243). In 2003, for example, UNDP and Guyanese leaders agreed to a whole series of governmental and civil society dialogues that resulted in the country’s first ever non-violent elections in 2006. Success may depend greatly on whether they are spearheaded by prominent outsiders who command respect (Lund and Myers, 2007). Yet, even if a small society and government is immersed in workshops, if improved relationships are not translated into legal and policy changes that institutionalize and uphold agreed rules even on stormy days, the usual political styles can return (Lund and Myers, 2006). It is difficult to instill new habits unless they are embedded in locally

run institutions (Nicolaidis, 51). A point is reached when the question is whether a body politic adopts such habits on its own without third-party therapy. Such non-formal methods are not intended as alternatives to tougher approaches, but complementary (Fisher, in Zartman and Rasmussen, 1997: 241).

A innovative hybrid of *a priori*, *ad hoc*, structural and direct engagement that lies between non-formal facilitation and formal mediation is the work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), an office mandated to become proactively engaged in ethnic disputes arising in the 1990s. The first able incumbent and his successors have made innumerable visits to Eastern Europe and newly independent states to meet with leaders and minority groups. They facilitate dialogues, recommend policy remedies to chief executives and parliaments, and show how OSCE norms may apply, including drafting model legislation. Only very rarely have they publicly pressured the parties, but crucial to the success that many analysts judge this innovation has often had in reducing divisive tensions and eliciting accommodation is the eventual reward for good behavior of economic aid and membership in the EU, NATO, and other Western bodies (e.g., Hopmann, Mychajlyszyn).

Still, leaders in conflict-vulnerable societies and weak states are often disinclined to compromise and/or they affirm positions and agreements they cannot enforce (Nicolaidis, 1996: 52). If their recalcitrance breaks off communication or thwarts opportunities for joint problem-solving, third parties may need to get more directive by engaging parties in 'muscular mediation' or formal negotiations with teeth (e.g., Jakobsen, 1996: 24), such as proffered aid or 'coercive diplomacy,' such as threats to cut off aid (Rothchild, 2002: 48f), impose economic sanctions, or use force (e.g., George, 1994: 199).

Military measures can also be used for direct prevention, but not yet in the form of a threat or actual use of force. The usual foreign policy debate over 'force versus diplomacy' tends to pertain to high levels of confrontation. But before that stage,

the overlooked but promising instrument of preventive deployment (Nicolaidis, 44f) can act as a deterrent by inter-positioning forces even before any hostile actions have occurred. The only clear example has been UNPREDEP, the UN force that posted 1100 troops along Macedonia's border with Albania and Serbia from 1992 until 1999. Though its firepower could not withstand a Yugoslav army attack, UNPREDEP created a tripwire that would likely trigger more forceful responses. Its removal in 1999 was followed two years later by an insurgency that originated in border areas UNPREDEP had once patrolled (Lund, 2005). As significant, it had a calming effect on domestic inter-ethnic relations (Lund, 1997).⁷¹ Similarly, peace zones secured militarily can contain actual or potential conflict by cordoning off specified areas, with or without the consent of a government (Nicolaidis 45), such as in Northern Iraq under Hussein.⁷²

Escalating violent conflicts

Positions are hardening, relationships breaking off, parties disengaging. Irregular expressions of grievances grow into wider violence, foretelling possible organized conflict. Major hostilities look imminent. The aim is to avoid an irrevocable spiral.

To pre-empt increasing intransigence, invoking and enforcing *a priori* norms might still be effective. Less than totally punitive measures can activate those in the country who support peaceful resolution. But using coercive diplomacy in the absence of a clear pattern of overt violence or gross violations of norms may be seen as unfair and illegitimate (Nicolaidis, 1996: 44) because it presumes actions would occur for which the evidence is equivocal. Another mistaken reflex is to try to address the supposed 'root' causes of a conflict such as ethnic or religious differences, economic disparities, or lack of democracy, as if they mainly now drive the violence. But such *ad hoc* structural measures are less and less useful as well as feasible, when it is the violence that drives violence. What is

most urgent is to halt the spiral through potent political and military direct prevention.⁷³

The tougher tools of formal diplomacy, though difficult, may arrive at short-term settlements to buy time such as ceasefires (Nicolaidis, 1996: 52; Rothchild, 2002: 54; Heldt, 8). These are more likely to be effective to the extent a strong mediator or team is skillful in instilling the parties with an urgent sense of the costs that can come from further bloodshed (Rothchild, 2002: 55). They also work better if accompanied by potential rewards that buy off the parties and help them fulfill an agreement, including the offer of development aid (Cortright, 1998, Rothchild, 2002), and/or punishments that pressure them to agree. Where there is asymmetry in power between the parties, measures to strengthen the power of the weaker party may budge the stronger.

Where the parties remain obdurate, coercive diplomacy such as sanctions or threat of force may be needed to reverse undesired actions or compel desired actions. Threats of the use of force were used when, for example, Presidents Bush and Clinton issued several warnings to President Milosevic not to support any armed activity in Kosovo as he had in Bosnia. Such threats are more likely to be effective if issued before possible escalations of hostile actions occurs, or if they follow immediately upon initial manifestations of violence (Nicolaidis, 44–5), not *ex post facto*. Threatening to expel a state from an international organization is less effective once significant investment in a violent course has occurred. The more that the conflicting parties inflict physical harm on each other, they cannot just back down the ladder they climbed up, for mutual hurt and increasing fear remain (Mitchell, 2005; cf. Rothchild, 2002: 51). By the same token, indictment by a war crimes tribunal is not likely to prevent the perpetrator continuing to fight, and can be counter-productive, once they are named and being hunted down, as they have no incentive to refrain from fighting, unless some provision allows amnesty. If sanctions are actually used, they must be comprehensive to be effective (Jentleson, 2000: 337). But such coercive

diplomacy is less applicable when the threat is a breakdown of a state since the source of the problem is hard to target (Nicolaidis, 42). Similarly, non-targeted sanctions have been widely criticized as having considerable negative side-effects for the general population while benefitting well-positioned elites.

One of the few joined debates in this scattered literature pertains to this stage: when are conflicts ‘ripe for prevention?’ Some analysts believe it more propitious to act before the outbreak of any significant violence. Violence ‘crosses a Rubicon’ from which it is very difficult to return (Jentleson, 2000), creating huge challenges for intervenors (cf. Edmead, 1971 cited in Berkovitch, 1996: 251). Others believe that some initial fighting that gets nowhere, a ‘soft stalemate,’ is needed before parties will no longer be tempted to try violence to see if it gets them gains (Berkovitch, 1996: 251). Thwarted violence or blocked confrontation are thus needed to soften parties up to compromise.⁷⁴

Third-party willingness to use force can also influence the calculations of actors regarding their use of force. Much discourse in conflict prevention assumes military force to be antithetical to peace. Some NGOs that first stepped up to undertake conflict resolution responsibilities in threatened countries tend to oppose any form of force ideologically, or to downplay the role of any coercion in favor of non-coercive methods and policies such as diplomacy and, lately, development assistance. But some analysts suggest that sticks as well as carrots need to be exerted more or less simultaneously – with flexibility shown regarding what quotients of each are applied in specific situations (Jentleson, 2000; Byman, 2002: 219). ‘...while coercion rarely is sufficient for prevention, it often is necessary’ (Jentleson, 2000: 5). Deterrence through the threat of using force may often be a pre-requisite for effective negotiations and, by implication, structural initiatives. Threats of force can encourage allies within a country to spring up. Still, threat of force must be made clear and credible by clearly conveying a concrete demand and the certainty that non-compliance will be punished

(Jakobsen, 1996: 3), such as through possessing capabilities and having domestic and international backing that can be sustained. They also need to be targeted precisely at specific actors who might otherwise escalate their actions, be potentially more costly to the parties than their persevering, identify the proscribed behaviors, and be accompanied by realistic alternative solutions (Nicolaidis, 42–4).⁷⁵ The chances increase if the balance of power favors the threat sponsor and the value to the targeted actor of ignoring the threat is greater than the costs of compliance (Jakobsen, 1996: 3–5).⁷⁶

Alternatively, if the threat of force is not backed up with credible force when there is non-compliance, they run the risk of encouraging aggression by calling the bluff of the international actors (Nicolaidis, 45).⁷⁷ A lack of follow-through or half-hearted measures can embolden their target (Nicolaidis, 1996: 42–3) if that party comes to believe that the threat is empty. Empty threats toward Bosnian Serbs had adverse effects when the latter did not follow through in protecting safe areas such as in Srebrenica (Jakobsen, 1996: 24).⁷⁸

Actual use of force may be needed to limit emerging violence such as being visited upon a threatened minority group (Nicolaidis, 42). Several argue that timely introduction of a relatively small force in Rwanda in May of 1994 would have stopped Hutu extremists from continuing to carry out their plans to kill thousands of Tutsi and Hutu moderates (Feil, 1998; Feil (1998) cited in Jentleson, 2000: 16; cf. Melander, 10f.). But this has been questioned (Kuperman, 2000). The tactical question is what amount is sufficient to restrain or reverse the undesired behavior.⁷⁹

If violence does cease, security guarantees are in place and diplomatic processes are in play, neither freezing of the violence nor diplomatic agreement is sufficient by itself to move the actors to tackle the abiding political and socio-economic problems that occasion a conflict. For these, assistance is also needed for programs in institution building and development, now that they can operate in an environment that is basically stable and not constantly threatened by violence.

All in all, this quick review supports the notion that differing kinds of interventions are needed at particular settings and stages of conflict, and in certain combinations of hard, soft, and other kinds of measures. However, they complicate the simple sequencing that is often presumed: that the greater the hostilities in a conflict, the more that coercive measures are needed.

If one looks at the whole early period, the research does support a general picture in which increasingly coercive measures are needed to the degree a conflict escalates. However, the emerging literature qualifies that simple formula and adds altogether new elements to the equation. Before societal strains become salient, *a priori* regimes whose specific implications are unforeseeable but hold out attractive incentives can socialize leaders into international expectations. If enforced and resourced, these standards can foster structural and institutional changes that make more likely the peaceful management of transitional stresses from economic reform and democratization. But such liberalization needs to be accompanied by compensatory measures. Democratization needs incremental steps for effecting peaceful transition such as power-sharing arrangements, accompanied by conditional material aid for implementing changes. As political and policy disputes over such changes inevitably arise, sympathetic international envoys or missions with significant authority can usefully enter the picture, much earlier than usual, to midwife their resolution – playing ‘good cop’ by persuading incumbent leaders to inaugurate changes before they lose control. During such potentially unstable periods – contrary to the assumed sequence whereby military power is a last resort following the exhaustion of diplomatic efforts – security assurance may be essential for undergirding the ensuing domestic political negotiations. Where regimes choose to resist openings and move to repress them violently, firm coercive sanctions and credible threat of military force can deter them, and actual use of effective deadly force can halt their extremes. In short, the conventional scenario

(derived perhaps from a Cold War crisis paradigm in which sovereignty is supreme and engagement comes late in the form of diplomacy or military action) does not sufficiently factor in structural measures, hands-on institutional support and positive incentives, and deterrent military measures. Regrettably, however, as useful as all these research findings may be as guidelines to action, they are not followed because decisionmakers do not have such lessons at their fingertips.⁸⁰

NEXT STEPS: TAPPING THE POTENTIAL

To answer the puzzle this chapter first posed, conflict prevention is still a relatively marginal international concern for several reasons: a plurality of possible instruments and agents; its *de facto* operation under other names, lack of conceptual closure about stages and types of interventions; a lack of confidence due in part to dim awareness of the actual extent of recent capacity building and effective actions on the ground; dispersed activism globally and in a given country by diverse professions and overstretched governmental and non-governmental international organizations; and scattered research agendas and findings, yielding little usable guidance for would-be preventors. Yet, pro-active responses to head off potential conflicts are happening, and *prima facie* evidence suggests that combined with certain conducive factors, they can be effective. To tap the unfulfilled potential of conflict prevention, this state of the art could be advanced through three steps:

1. Consolidate what is known. Lack of sufficient knowledge does not excuse why more frequent and effective responses to incipient conflicts are not undertaken. Policymakers tend to ignore the useful knowledge that already exists. Professionals need to gain access to top officials to present promising options and evidence of their results. The main problem is not epistemological but organizational. We need not wait until social

scientists have found the universally highest correlations among the limited set of variables already most plausibly known as relevant before we continue as in the previous section to gather, synthesize, and disseminate the existing findings among policymakers and field practitioners. Enough is known to produce heuristic guidance, for even the most verified conclusions are cannot be implemented mechanically in any particular conflict setting, but used as action-hypotheses to be combined with astute political judgments. A structured framework could pull together the preventive instruments available with guidelines about which are likely to be most feasible and productive in what conditions.

2. Focus the knowledge on emerging conflicts. Conflicts do not emerge in Washington, New York or Brussels, but in particular developing countries at specific times. To have practical value, any gathered policy wisdom needs to be applied on the ground in real time. Many currently early-warning-identified poor societies and weak states (e.g., Papua, Kyrgystan, Guinea) would benefit from pro-active and concerted efforts that apply peaceful policies to avoid escalation to crises and violent conflicts. The country level is where the diverse agendas and tools are most clearly juxtaposed and concretely reconciled. This requires organizing consultations through which key actors (USG, UN, EU, regionals, governments, NGOs) can jointly assess the country situations and devise and implement diagnosis-driven targeted strategies, both at the field and desk officer level. Such processes would (a) apply conflict-sensitive indicators to identify systematically the most important short- and long-term risks in a country that are affecting the prospects for escalating conflict as well as its capacities for peaceful management of conflict; (b) identify what actions each actor can contribute within the strategy; and (c) consult the lessons learned from actual experience with various combinations of instruments.⁸¹ To harness their global influence, leading actors such as the USA and other governments, the EU, and the World Bank, in cooperation

with agencies in the UN system, could convene these multi-lateral country consultations to develop jointly formulated, analytically based, multi-faceted strategies. The processes could be linked to existing country-specific development planning procedures such as the PRSP and CAS, but should also involve diplomatic and military agencies as well as inside stakeholders.

3. Conduct more basic prevention research.

Though would-be preventors need not be inhibited by overly fastidious methodological standards, existing findings must be treated as preliminary hypotheses that research needs to test further.⁸² More rigorous and comprehensive policy research is still needed to establish what types of preventive actions at both a priori and ad hoc levels, in what combinations, are likely to have what positive or negative effects in different stages of conflicts and contexts.⁸³ Promising structural and direct instruments have received little if any research, such as positive incentives to governments to encourage compliance with accepted international norms, special envoys with preventive mandates such as the HCNM, institutional support for strengthening equitable state service-provision, and preventive deployment.⁸⁴

NOTES

1 Describing civil wars as 'development in reverse,' Collier lists the costs for the countries in conflict as military and civilian deaths, disease (HIV/AIDS, malaria), physical destruction, population displacement, high military expenditures, capital outflows, policy and political breakdown, psychological trauma, and landmines. The costs to other nations during and after conflicts include refugees, humanitarian aid, reconstruction aid, disease, increased military expenditures and tasks such as peacekeeping, reduced economic growth, illicit drugs, and international terrorism (Collier, 2003). Africa's two dozen internal wars in 23 countries from 1990–2005 are calculated to have cost \$18 billion a year, which could have gone to HIV/AIDS and other disease protection, education, health, and water infrastructure. 'Africa Wars Costs Billions,' a report by Oxfam can be found at www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/africa/10/11/africa.billions.ap/index.html.

2 Estimates have been made of the costs of interventions in recent wars compared with the costs if preventive action had been taken, and of the actual costs of preventive action taken in vulnerable societies that did not break out into wars compared with the estimated costs had war occurred. All showed huge possible savings. Prevention was significantly cheaper in all cases, with the ratios of prevention to war ranging from 1–1.3 to 1–479, an average of 1–59 (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999). In an estimate of Macedonia, the actual cost of UNPREDEP was \$255 million, or 0.02% of the estimated cost of \$15 billion for a two-year conflict (Thayer: 62). Chalmers finds all 12 of the retrospective and prospective conflict prevention packages that were estimated for the Balkans, Afghanistan past and future, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uzbekistan to be cost-effective (Chalmers, 2005: 6f.).

3 'High fatalities encourage further hostility and contentious behavior, and these diminish the likelihood of mediation effectiveness (just as they diminish the chances of an agreement in negotiations) (see Pruitt, 1981). Dispute complexity, which in any event is associated with lengthy, protracted conflicts and higher fatalities, also appears to be incompatible with successful mediation. ... dispute duration also has a strong inverse relationship with successful mediation, but only when it combines with fatalities and complexity' (Bercovitch, 1993: 688–689). The parties discover more and more grievances against each other, and more parties may join the fray.

4 The report claims that 'whatever conflict prevention policies were being attempted in this period were a dismal failure...[because] there were *twice as many* conflict onsets in the 1990s as in the 1980s... the rate of new conflict onsets between 2000 and 2005 has remained higher than it was in the 1970s and 1980s' (Human Security Center, 2006: 4). Yet, although each war since the end of the Cold War could be considered failed prevention, to reach such a conclusion requires factoring in all the situations with a high risk of conflict that did not break out due to various preventive efforts. This is an especially turbulent period. On the surprisingly low number of ethnic conflicts occurring as the Soviet Union broke apart, see Fearon and Laitin, 1996 who attribute the result to local self-regulating mechanisms (cf. Wallenstein and Moller, 2003: 15f, 19.).

5 One study counts 47 disputes since the end of the Cold War that had a history or likelihood of conflict but where third parties took action and no armed conflicts ensued in the following year (Wallenstein and Moller, 2003: 27).

6 In contrast, governments and institutes devote immense resources to learning how to avoid relapse into war in post-conflict situations (e.g., Stedman, 1995; Dobbins, Doyle and Sambanis, 2000). Yet all that work could be characterized as glorified ambulance-chasing, for it comes into play only after

wars have wreaked great damage. The imbalanced attention to post-conflict situations has been fed by the widely cited belief that the existence of future conflicts is one of the strongest predictors of future wars. Yet the empirical basis of that claim has shifted downward from 40 to 50 percent to around 23 percent (Suhrke and Samset, 1996). Even accepting the upper estimate, over 50 percent of wars are not preceded by earlier ones. Were prevention done more often, the market for the chapters in this volume on post-conflict peacekeeping, reconciliation, intractable conflicts, and civil war would shrink considerably.

7 Though some insights here may apply to potential inter-state conflicts, the chapter focuses on intra-state wars such as civil wars, insurgencies, uprisings, major inter-communal conflicts, genocides, politicides, and revolutions, and indirectly to fragile and failing states. Intra-state conflict may cause state failure (e.g., Somalia) or be caused by it (e.g., Zaire), and either phenomenon may occur without the other, (e.g., Colombia, Zimbabwe).

8 'Violence prevention' may be more apt, but that evokes trying to break up a gang rumble, nasty fight on the playground, or spousal dispute. For less harmful conflicts below the threshold of collective violence, 'dispute resolution' may be more fitting. The Carnegie Commission adopted 'preventing deadly conflict' (Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1997), which helpfully implies that the conflicts of concern might cause widespread bodily harm. This chapter does not cover the growing research on violent localized conflicts, such as pastoralist massacres and ethnic riots (see e.g., Horowitz, 1985).

9 'Conflict prevention' is actually a misnomer, for it implies avoidance of all conflict. If the classic definition of conflict is any real or perceived incompatibility between interests, not all conflicts are harmful and should be prevented. Conflict is normal in social and international relations and, as in the competition in politics, business, science, and the arts, is encouraged for society's benefit (cf. Kriesberg, 2003). What is to be prevented is not any conflict, but *destructive* and *violent* forms: wars between and within countries, oppression, inter-communal bloody quarrels – where few redeeming consequences can be imagined and productive alternatives exist.

10 We use 'engagement' to not conjure up the military connotations of 'intervention,' although military actions may be one method used (see below).

11 There was also concern about Boutros-Ghali's peculiar implication that disputes could or should be prevented from arising, for some can be constructive as long as they are conducted non-violently.

12 Some conflict theory makes room for addressing latent conflicts, and thus not restricting conflict to observable groups that are conscious of mutual incompatibilities (cf. Dahrendorf, 1959).

13 Of course, wars not prevented but ending can break out again. Though mid-conflict stages might be relegated to other terms, the violence pre-emption in prevention logically also entails keeping recently terminated wars from *re-erupting* (although Boutros-Ghali had designated this phase 'post-conflict peacebuilding'). Thus, prevention also is applied to avoiding post-conflict relapse. Because action at such a moment would come only after many lives have been lost, it is a fall-back option when earlier 'primary prevention' has failed. Such 'secondary prevention' in post-conflict countries has a vast literature and is addressed in several other chapters.

14 This focus still allows for deterrent or containment actions to protect a country that is threatened by the spillover of an already violent conflict in a neighboring country, as well as the cordoning off of localities within a country where war rages elsewhere within its borders.

15 Analysts since have demarcated several basic entry points for engagement in conflicts that are virtually parallel: lack of *resources*, lack of *protection* from violence, lack of *solutions*, lack of a *process*, and lack of *trust* (Lund, 1996: 140–43), conflicting actors' *behaviors*; the *relationships* between conflicting actors; the *capacities* of peaceful actors and processes; and the social and economic *environment* that affects conflicting actors and peace processes (Uvin, 2002); *structural* transformation; change in the *players* or personnel who have influence; *issue* transformation, or *personal* transformations of leading figures (cf. Miall 1992, 2008: 5).

16 Clearly, prevention cannot ignore 'the crystallizing agent...the personally motivated political actor who sees a described situation as vulnerable to his blandishments and ready for conflict...loose tinder lying around only excites pyromaniacs, it does not create them; they must pass by and see the opportunity' (Zartman, 1998: 1f).

17 Actually, Dag Hammerskjold had mentioned economic development programs as among possible tools for 'preventive diplomacy.' Such instruments of structural prevention could also be called preventive peacebuilding. This facet of prevention can address either manifest or latent incompatibility of interests.

18 Whether these various measures and actors are actually effective is a separate issue, however. That depends on their timing, design, targeting and other factors, discussed in a subsequent section.

19 Systemic and targeted measures may be combined in the same institutions, such as seen in the efforts of the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities to assist particular countries to meet the OSCE's general standards for human rights and governance, and in the OAS's automatic mechanism for dispatching an emissary to member countries where democratic institutions appear to be under threat.

20 This descriptive taxonomy draws from Nicolaides (1996), Lund (1996), and Rubin (2004). As seen, these forms may convey various degrees of positive incentives and negative disincentives, such as coercion, persuasion, support (e.g., Ball, 1992; Rothchild, 2002; Moller et al.).

21 Some argue that trying to trace the effects on conflicts of systemic and structural instruments is causally too indirect (e.g., Ottaway). But this ignores the extensive conflict research on their indirect sources and narrows the goals of prevention to negative peace. To focus only on highly time-sensitive measures also would narrow prevention to the acts of outside third-party intervenors and divert it from examining the benefits or harms that flow from many current international policies at the global level, such as trade policies.

22 Differing stages of conflict, such as emergence, escalation, de-escalation, (re)construction, and reconciliation, have since been adopted as an organizing framework by more recent conflict textbooks (e.g., Kriesberg, 2003; Miall et al., 1999; 2004).

23 An illustration of unacknowledged preventive action is found in a prestigious journal in which leading American scholars of ethics and international relations discussed how to deal with violations of human rights. While the articles mainly deal with the mid-conflict option of military interventions to save people from imminent slaughter and the largely *ex post facto* option of war crimes tribunals, a few passages imply that pro-active responses try to prevent gross human rights violations and conflicts such as genocide *before* they occur. Yet these passages never use the term conflict prevention or a synonym, treating the idea under rubrics such as the OSCE, democratization, a NGO culture of human rights, and transnational networks (*Daedalus*, Winter 2003).

24 The NGO, International Alert, had called attention to the need for conflict prevention in the 1980s and early 1990s, but the first post-Cold War project exclusively focused on it may have been the Preventive Diplomacy Initiative at the US Institute of Peace (USIP) in 1994–95, which grew out of a USIP/US State Department Study Group on Preventive Diplomacy in 1993–94. The subject was subsequently taken up by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict until 1999, the Center for Preventive Action at the Council of Foreign Relations from about 1995, the EU's Conflict Prevention Network of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik from 1996 to 2001, and since then, the International Peace Academy, the Woodrow Wilson International Center, and the Center for International Cooperation at New York University.

25 An earlier World Federalist project sought to generate broad-based interest in prevention through its grass-roots members.

26 There are often good reasons not to label such activities as conflict prevention, for that can

cause alarm, and instead, to use euphemisms such as national reconciliation and social cohesion.

27 Even ASEAN has addressed conflict prevention informally through the Asian Regional Forum, though under the rubric of inter-state military confidence building measures.

28 Week-long training workshops by the UN Staff College since 1998 have 'graduated' over 1800 staff from all major UN agencies, each of whom have been introduced to early warning, conflict, and preventive responses.

29 Other donor agencies (UNDP; DFID; USAID; SIDA; CIDA; the Dutch Cooperation Ministry and most other major multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies) have also carried out country conflict assessments through conflict offices that provide technical assistance to country missions. Trends are surveyed by Leonhardt (2000a, 2000b). Early examples of such an analytical tool are Lund et al. (1997) prepared for USAID; Lund (1999) for country desk officers of the European Commission, and Lund (2000) for the UN Framework Team. For a recent example and overview, see Clingendael (2005).

30 The UNSG 2000 report on prevention of armed conflict argued that the first responsibility for preventing conflict lies with the country itself. Similarly, analysts have proposed the concept of 'responsible sovereignty,' which implies state obligation and accountability to its own citizens in a way that is potentially enforceable by the international community. In this view, states have the right to sovereignty only in so far as they are willing and able to fulfill their responsibility to their own citizens by upholding their human rights and fulfill other basic needs.

31 Leaving the door open to possible intervention does not justify intervention by a state into another using just any altruistic rationale, such as loose claims that a regime has oppressed its people and they deserve democracy.

32 If R2P gains more acceptance, it would reinforce the shift occurring in the balance between the rights of sovereign states and the human rights of individuals. Article 2(4) in the UN Charter upholding non-intervention was intended mainly to protect states from military aggression by other states. But subsequent to the Charter, international conventions such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights established rights for individuals such as against torture and suppression of free speech their governments. The tension between these principles also occurs when large numbers of people are threatened by massive suffering, yet their own governments are unable to either prevent it or protect them from it. Since a responsibility thus exists for the international community to uphold individual human rights, the two sets of rights clash if sovereign governments are directly responsible for creating conflicts by carrying out massacres or oppressing their own people.

In fact, many more people have been killed in recent decades by their own governments than by other governments.

33 Another unheralded example is the OAS Secretary-General's recent efforts to mediate disputes between the government and opposition in Venezuela. Not simply an *ad hoc* discretionary mission, his action was required by a procedure the OAS adopted in 1991 that automatically activates a diplomatic response to possible threats to democracy in member states. In June, 1991, the OAS General Assembly adopted Resolution 1080, which bound the Secretary General and Permanent Council to immediate action in the event of a 'sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process or of the legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected government' of any of the OAS member states (OAS, 1991). Such threats trigger the agency's automatic and immediate response. The following year, the OAS was allowed to suspend a member state should its democratic government be overthrown by force (OAS, 1992). In 1995, Executive Order 95-6 created more specialized agencies to support democratic institutions, oversee elections, and promote dialogue (OAS, 1995). The mechanism also has been used to address attempted executive coups in Guatemala, Peru, and Venezuela.

34 In this light, the conclusion that 'conflict prevention is still more an aspiration rather than an established practice' (Human Security Report, 16) is glib and likely uninformed by how much preventive action actually has occurred.

35 Notwithstanding that the attacks on 9/11 provided a rationale for military actions against Afghanistan and Iraq, the extent to which the US public has accepted the lost lives and other sacrifices of the Iraq war, even under the subsequent rationale of establishing democracy, suggests that the power of the presidential 'bully pulpit' for promoting foreign engagement was previously underestimated or underutilized.

36 An illuminating discussion of how such contending approaches lead to different action prescriptions is found in Rubin, 2002, pp. 161-166. The tension between conflict resolution and human rights reflects a classic value conflict between peace, in the sense of avoiding violence, and justice (USIP, 2006). This antinomy is usually discussed in connection with mid- or post-conflict situations. As seen recently in northern Uganda, seeking to bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice might prolong a war if the violators can only avoid prosecution by continuing to fight. Where perpetrators have already committed egregious human rights violations, insisting they be brought to justice could be incompatible with conflict termination, because doing the first may delay or block the second. The pursuit of justice by enforcing human rights can often conflict with peace (in the sense of cessation of violence) where

powerful parties have to be accommodated if they are to be induced to desist from further human rights violations. A similar value conflict can arise between stability and political justice, in the sense of democracy, where authoritarian regimes face possible rapid transitions to more liberal systems and thus violent conflict is a risk (Lund, 2006). In essence, these are conflicts between negative and positive peace, the present and the future. The challenge is to understand how power is distributed and find an appropriate balance between staying engaged with offenders in an effort to transform them, while not enabling further oppression.

37 Precedents for closer consultations across development sectors exist in the aforementioned UN's Common Country Assessments (CCA) and Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Process (PRSP). But so far, these latter rarely build in as explicit criteria for the reduction of a country's conflict sources and strengthening of its peace capacities.

38 This research concerns the strategic question of which basic types of actions have what effects, not how to implement a particular tool. We also set aside which actors use which tools where (see Moller et al., 2007). The focus here is also more substantive than the widespread truisms that urge certain general attitudes and practices in preventive planning and implementation, such as: do an analysis of the situation; be flexible, engender local ownership; develop clear, comprehensive, and coherent policies; and involve women and youth (e.g., OECD-DAC, 2001). These generic reminders to practitioners are applicable to almost any international conflict or development activity, but offer nothing specific about what types of activities have what effects in what circumstances.

39 For example, in Estonia's 'success' story, where many of the international ingredients above were present, several local and regional factors also help to explain why the language and citizenship disputes between its Russian speaking population and ethnic Estonians did not escalate to violence. Russian identity never solidified despite conditions of exclusion. Russian elites were accommodated by the electoral system and the formation of ethnically polarized parties inhibited extremism. Electoral data show that Russian-speakers supported a range of Estonian parties, especially left-wing parties and the Centre Party, which showed willingness to cooperate with Russian speakers. Many Russians weren't registered to vote in the 1992 elections and after the 1995 elections, internal problems between Russian party leaders made them ineffective for a few years. This system tended to discourage politicians from resorting to ethnic stereotyping and public denigration of other groups. Meanwhile, political volatility in Russia distracted Moscow's attention from the 'near abroad' (Khrychikov and Miall, 1992: 204).

40 The most useful findings would be conditional generalizations in the form: 'If A (action), then B (impact), under x, y, and z (limiting conditions)' (cf. George, 1993: 120–125; Moller et al., 17f).

41 Some conflict-sensitive evaluations of individual programs and projects can also be useful as proxies for generic types of instruments (e.g., Lund, 2004, 2006).

42 Also useful for producing testable hypotheses would be generic theory in inter-group and international conflict, such as on the social psychology of conflict, techniques such as GRIT, escalation dynamics, the logic of collective action (mobilization), and cooperation theory. See Miall, 2007: 19–84.

43 The notion that conflicts go through certain stages and reflect overall cycles has been questioned (e.g., Berghof, 2006; Leatherman et al., 2000). True, like the shaded hues on a color wheel, distinctions among stages are not sharp. Nor are the phases completely objective. Movement through them is neither deterministic nor always uni-directional (e.g., Lund, 1996; Miall, 2007; Kriesberg, 2003: 370), and conflict indicators are not one-dimensional and uni-layered. Nevertheless, most analysts agree that conflicts reflect great variations in intensity and 'have a beginning, middle, and end' (Kriesberg, 2003: 22). While some conflicts are the unfinished business or re-configurations of previous conflicts, and so-called 'intractable' conflicts rise and fall over long periods of time, all conflicts are not simply episodes of previous conflicts. Where long periods with peaceful equilibriums set in, the subsequent conflicts are new. Thus, the notion of a life-cycle and phases is very useful.

44 As discussed above, conflict prevention includes efforts to address the underlying sources of latent conflicts. One of the most critical focuses for inquiry is how formal or implicit social contracts that have achieved some stabilizing equilibrium begin to unravel due to internal and external pressures. In particular, the post-independence years of new nations involve severe pressures and constraints that test their elites' political skills for establishing legitimate and effective states (e.g., Ayoob). It is also useful to put the recent intra-state conflicts into a historical perspective by recognizing that they thus existing formal or implicit social contracts are unraveling equilibrium.

45 In return for compliance, concrete benefits may be offered such as membership and aid and trade favors. Violations are subject to sanction such as exclusion from privileges or the organization (KN 48). Thus, countries need to be monitored to detect discrepancies so potential violations can be forestalled or penalties imposed for violations. Countries are periodically assessed for their progress in qualifying, and provisional arrangements mark their status and establish schedules for conformance (Nicolaidis, 47).

46 Exits from such organizations or their disintegration have been followed by use of force, even among former alliance members. Countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Taiwan entering international organizations have been seen as threats by rival states (Russia, the ROC, and PRC respectively), thus possibly increasing the risk of conflicts. This may abate to the extent that 'outs' are brought into the organization (Shambaugh, 1996).

47 See Sambanis (2003), Lund (2006) and Uvin (2005).

48 These different conclusions have to do in part with differing research methods, country contexts, varied degrees of adjustment policy, difficulties in obtaining data on impacts, and other factors (Cramer and Weeks, 2002: 44f).

49 Structural adjustment and stabilization policies may elicit conflict depending on whether governments are sufficiently inclusive and accommodative such as by allowing political activity, the extent they are done, whether they are transparent, the sharpness of divisions in society, and other policies (cf. Cramer and Weeks, 2002: 41f). For example, exporting of agricultural goods is more conducive to poverty and inequality and thus potential political instability, than is exporting manufacturing goods (Gissinger and Gleditsch, 1999; Collier, 126). In Yugoslavia, the debt crisis, decline in terms of trade, and global credit tightening in the 1980s, forced austerity and low living standards, but instead of adjusting, its leaders fell back onto ethnic nationalist appeals that weakened state authority and invited inter-republic conflict (Nafziger, 2002: 14, drawing on Woodward, 1995).

50 Social safety nets in Zambia and Chile were found not only to reduce poverty and increase political support for economic adjustment programs (Graham). In that way, they may help as well to maintain governmental legitimacy and political stability.

51 Among the recommendations to the World Bank, IMF, and WTO are less dependence of the poorest countries on them and their rules rather than other sources; and special policies regarding bi-lateral and multi-lateral transfers and agreements affecting trade, banking services, currency rates, and aid, such as for agriculture. These would cushion external price shocks and improve foreign investment, debt rescheduling, and capital movements (Nafziger, 2002: 5). There should be less concern about inflation rates and budget deficits, and more about building regulatory systems and economic institutions (Nafziger, 2002: 15). Domestic growth strategies need to stabilize prices and exchange rates and spending, create appropriate economic institutions, improving the ability of the state to collect taxes and provide basic services, agrarian reform and land redistribution, and securing property rights. Due attention is also needed to their effects on the poor, minorities, rural and working people, and women and children (Nafziger, 2002: 5).

52 Compliance to structural adjustment policies were often presented as a condition for budget support.

53 Aid allocations in Kenya and Sri Lanka from the 1970s to the 1990s reveal strong evidence that donor toleration of or participation in the practice of allocating benefits according to ethnic, tribal, and regional criteria helped to fuel later inter-communal conflict (Cohen 1999, Herring).

54 Donors may go along with such practices to soften the blow of economic adjustment, keep a working relationship with governments, or show results (Herring), but thus perpetuating group competition can fuel hostilities, especially when the economy declines. Aid in Kenya after President Moi's governing coalition came to power in 1978 shows how the geographic allocation of local development projects and monies as well as implementation choices such as awarding consulting and construction contracts, were largely shaped by the government's desire to expand and buttress the emerging Kalenjin-led coalition by rewarding past supporters and recruiting new members (Cohen). Because program aid was grafted onto a largely unreformed one-party state, it became subject to inter-ethnic patronage politics, and as multi-party political competition intensified, it indirectly contributed to the tribal strife later in the Rift Valley.

55 Although it deals with a mid-conflict situation, an illuminating example was established in Sri Lanka, where a donor financed irrigation project deliberately delegated to both Tamil and Sinhalese farmers allocation decisions and encouraged selection of their leaders on non-political grounds. Apparently, this kept the ethnic strife that was waging more widely in that country from spilling over into at least that project area (Uphoff).

56 However, the widely used terms such as 'governance,' 'democracy,' 'rule of law' and, more recently, 'state-building,' are such broad rubrics, they are not concrete enough to delineate specific institutions and alternative choices that might produce differing results. 'Demand-side' democracy promotion programs, for example, seek to make governments more accessible and accountable to their citizens. Thus, development programs may aid *representative* processes like elections and parties to expand access to government decision-making by the people, as well as help finance *executive and judicial service* functions that governments perform through public administration, courts and other regulatory functions, and security forces, to improve government services for the people.

57 Full-fledged democracies and autocracies are both the most politically stable. But partial democracies, and weak full democracies, are the most unstable systems, even more so than strong quasi-democracies (Goldstone et al., 2003). They have an irregular, non-institutionalized pattern of political competition that

tends to cause executive leaders to be constantly imperiled by rival leaders, and encourage elites to maintain themselves in power despite the existence of democratic procedures. One growing form in the developing world are 'anocracies.' If autocracy and democracy are placed at the opposite ends of a continuum, an anocratic regime possesses a mixture of democratic and autocratic features in the middle of that continuum. Anocracy may apply to an autocracy where electoral and competitive features are in place and to a democracy where existing procedural democratic features are undermined (Gurr, 1974: 487; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995: 9).

58 The pace of overall change in many post-Soviet states toward consolidating democracy had slowed significantly by 1998, prompting questions whether they were in transition at all but instead '... represent relatively stable new political and economic arrangements that are neither free market nor socialist' (Karatnycky: 2–4) – notwithstanding the fact that a few years later, three on the post-Soviet list – Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, and Ukraine in 2005 – experienced non-violent transitions from their first post-Cold War regimes to more liberal governments. Patrimonial, corporatist regimes can survive for long periods through currency stability, restraining the growth of the state sector, maintaining balanced budgets, and allowing export-drive growth (Karatnycky: 7, 9) Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, and Ukraine in 2005 – experienced non-violent transitions from their first post-Cold War regimes to more liberal governments.

59 Although oligarchical regimes may tend to adopt policies that favor their bases of support, not all elite-dominated regimes have opposed reforms and thus encouraged conflict, and fuller democracies are not always more inclusive. In Malaysia and Mauritius, governments led by political elites have made explicit decisions to work together in policy coalitions that addressed potential imbalances among ethnic groups, deliberately enacting redistributive policies that ameliorated inequities and pre-empted the emergence of inter-group resentments. A crucial question seems to be whether 'crony capitalism, monopolism, and corruption within such systems' as in the former Soviet Union will thwart sustained growth and provoke economic crises, and even then, whether they will open up to emerging interests that bring democracy peacefully, or instead, repressive measures will restrict human rights and democracy and plunge them into instability and civil conflict (Karatnycky).

60 At the local level, development tools such as participatory community development projects, which are ostensibly aimed at producing useful material benefits such as improved local infrastructure, are increasingly being used by donor agencies as ways to create social capital and capacities for conflict management. Through creating capable local civil

society leaders and organizations, they are thought to provide a yeast that over time may produce a middle class and professional ranks that help to develop a country and transform authoritarian societies. These programs may operate under the radar of a government or be tolerated as long as they do not stimulate activities that are seen by elites to threaten the status quo. But as such, they can be effective in regard to localized conflicts, such as over water or ethnic tensions, and thus as possible safety-valves, but not as leverage directly or in the short term on the national-level conflicts that have been typical of the post-Cold War period (Lund and Wanchek, 2004).

61 'An effective and legitimate state is essential not only to promote economic development but also for democratic governance' (De Zeeuw and Kumar, 2006). Before moving toward mass democratic participation, strong political institutions are necessary (Mansfield and Snyder, Zakaria).

62 This argument resonates with Fukuyama's helpful distinction between the *scope* of the state, or the extent it plays roles in the society and the economy, and its *strength* in carrying out whatever broad or limited roles it has (Fukuyama).

63 Security sector reform includes national or local bodies mandated to use deadly force; adjudicatory institutions, civilian management and oversight bodies.

64 While economic growth encourages the emergence of democratic institutions, the specific mechanism through which this occurs is not clear. Democratic politics do not spring spontaneously from creating opportunities for markets to operate, or if established, these institutions will not last without laws protecting individual rights. This is because most of the developing societies into which markets are introduced are governed by ethnic, clan, or other group loyalties that determine how public as well as private goods are distributed.

65 It remains unclear whether the object of such strengthening of the rule of law is institutional attributes or cultural values, how change toward the rule of law occurs, the effects of the changes, and what forms of assistance are most effective (Carothers, 2006).

66 Similarly: '...rather than a one-size fits all approach in foreign policies and aid strategies that presses for the same liberalizing reforms everywhere, individual countries need to be differentiated according to their capacity to absorb disruptive shifts in unregulated power and consequent instability without violent conflict. A more balanced, holistic, contextualized approach to fostering desirable change needs to be applied. Clearly, moves toward democratization and other reforms can themselves often be among the adaptive mechanisms that help ensure a peaceful transition in particular settings. But the overarching and overriding policy goal perhaps should not be simply democracy or human rights or markets,

at any cost. It should rather be *peaceful transition* toward, ultimately, more democratic, or at least legitimate and effective governments, increasingly more productive economies, and more humane societies' (Lund, 2001).

67 Another structural approach to domestic instability, not taken up here, works through ideological campaigns and other programs to engender social solidarity and cohesion by eroding the bases for divisive group identities (e.g., Byman, 2002: 100–25). Similarly, the concept of social capital has been advocated as a useful focus for conflict prevention and resolution (Morfitt, 2002). Instruments such as truth and reconciliation commissions, for example, are promoted as ways to prevent future conflict by balancing the yearning for justice with the need of societies to move on. But... 'while socialization can be a powerful tool when used in combination with appropriate resources and coercive incentives, socialization alone is a weak reed' (Leatherman: 188). Little rigorous research has been done on whether such instruments actually achieve reconciliation.

68 What applies to implementing development also applies to prevention: '...political will and indigenous leadership are essential for sustainable policy reform and implementation. No amount of external donor pressures or resources, by themselves, can produce sustained reform. It takes ownership, both of the policy change to be implemented and of any capacity building efforts intended to enhance implementation. Unless someone or some group in the country where policy reform is being pursued feels that the changes are something that it wants to see happen, externally initiated change efforts...are likely to fail. Such individual or groups serve as "policy champions" or "policy entrepreneurs"' (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 6).

69 'Preventive mediation is more effective when it is initiated early, but not before the parties' positions and interests have crystallized. It is impossible to guide the parties toward a settlement, facilitate discussion of issues, or structure the interactions until the full implications of a conflict, and the options related to it, are well understood by those involved. Early intervention should never become premature intervention' Bercovitch (1996).

70 Official forms include conciliation, good offices, mediation, negotiation, arbitration, and adjudication. Non-official forms are facilitation, dialogue, track-two diplomacy, pre-negotiations, problem-solving workshops, and leadership training. Subsequent chapters reflect the extensive study of these well-known methods, but mainly when applied at mid- or post-conflict stages as in official peace processes. Little explicit attention has been paid to which intercessory methods may apply best at incipient stages of conflicts (e.g., see Greenberg; Zartman). 'The question that scholars need to ask is the extent to which mediation practice and

negotiations theory need to be adapted when the ultimate goal is preventing deadly conflict inside states...' (Nicolaidis, 49–50).

71 It was deemed effective to a great extent because almost one-third of its 1100 troops were American.

72 Similarly, analysts have argued that small military protective corps can help to prevent escalation of violent conflict by protecting multi-ethnic governments that are under threat, as was needed in Burundi in 1993 and 1994, thus enabling them to function so as to prove their utility and legitimacy (Lund et al., 1997).

73 A critique frequently raised against the idea that prevention effectiveness can ever be demonstrated appears to pertain mainly to this stage of late and direct prevention. Despite the claimed successes, a widely uttered conventional wisdom claims it is not possible epistemologically to assess whether preventive action has made a difference. The argument is that there is no way to tell whether such efforts are effective because one cannot know whether the conflict in question would have otherwise escalated without them and so did not because of them. Since no violent conflict erupted, it cannot be assumed that it would have occurred if the preventive action was not applied. But combining conflict research, evaluation methods, and process-tracing can increase the plausibility of such arguments.

The critique is more telling when it comes to knowing whether specific violent acts would have occurred at a given moment if a given action of direct prevention was not taken. Analysts would not even try to claim success except where typical warning signs of violent conflicts are not actually present that have been gathered from extensive conflict research. Still, in such contexts, specific violent acts cannot be precisely predicted because they could occur or be withheld at the highly uncertain discretion of specific would-be perpetrators of violent acts. Targeted actors need to have intended to take the action that the preventive action identified as unacceptable but then cease doing so, but not for other reasons besides the preventive action, such as running out of resources. To establish that such perpetrators refrained from violence because of a given preventive action requires getting inside their heads to see how they interpreted their immediate circumstances and whether the preventive action or other factors played a part in their decision not to act violently. However, where actual acts of violence have begun to occur, analysis can show through process-tracing plausible causal link between its leading agents and their actions and the measures taken. In cases like Rwanda in May, 1994, the comparison between the capacity of direct military measures applied compared to the efficacy of a killing machine and its forces may not be definitive but it is not impossible to do. If low-level violence broke out, it

could be demonstrated how it was actually contained and kept from escalating due to the constraints of a deterrent force. Other plausible linkages can be argued regarding the influence on specific actors of other direct diplomatic or other actions taken toward them.

The objection is less daunting when applied to structural preventive measures because they deal with the proximate processes, behavior-conditioning factors, and deeper societal conditions that indirectly influence the probability of violent acts. Where such signs are present but violent conflict has not broken out, a host of institutions, processes, and incentives and disincentives may also be in place that preserve relationships and communication among disputing parties and otherwise shape the environment of incentives and disincentives in which actors make choices whether they will act in violent or restrained ways. If potentially violent conditions are present, and it can be shown that well-targeted, timed, and proportional preventive actions are directed at them that empirical research suggests have affected these particular conflict factors in like cases, the *prima facie* evidence makes it possible to infer with greater confidence that the actions are likely to have had some impact in lowering the relative *probability* of violence, especially if indicators such as level of hostilities or peaceful interaction between protagonists also show change following the intervention.

To expect definitive proof of such impact would be like going to the doctor after signs of possible heart trouble and dismissing his professional recommendation that you quit smoking, simply because the statistical link between cigarettes and heart disease does not always occur in every individual case, and so might not apply to you. Though technically correct, most prudent people would honor the professional's advice.

74 The notion is analogous to the 'mutual hurting stalemate' noted at levels of armed conflict as conducive to war termination, but this deadlock arises at lower levels of hostility based on a shared sense that a greater harm to them looms. What is at issue is how readily a point of sufficient mutual anxiety is reached even before the parties spill each other's blood. A substantial difference would seem to exist between stalemates after many people have been killed, than in, for example, a stalled but physically benign altercation such as in trade, environmental, boundary, arms control, and labor negotiations (e.g., Zartman, 2001: 4, 202; cf. Heldt, 8). Is some early threshold of bloodshed reached when it becomes qualitatively more difficult to dissuade the parties from avoiding a vortex of violence that becomes significantly harder to halt? Is such a threshold exceeded as well where low-intensity violence, even though it periodically subsides, as in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? In any case, to the extent such moments come late in an increasingly violent on and off again conflict, the less the action

is preventive, and the more it is management and termination.

75 Six major threats of the use of force were issued by the USA and its European allies to try to stop the fighting in Bosnia, but all failed until a bombing campaign against the Bosnian Serbs in 1995.

76 In Bosnia, deadlines were not issued, public controversy arose in the West over the possible use of airstrikes, publics were unwilling to provide ground troops, and the Bosnian Serbs were more motivated to pursue force than the allies (Jakobsen, 1996: 22–3). Because the Western powers did not see Bosnia as in their vital interests, they were not as willing to commit ground troops to stop the killing as the Serbs were willing to suffer the possible consequences of what were unconvincing threats of force (p. 25).

77 International actors must be prepared to apply either carrots or sticks to induce desired responses by the parties. The threatened must not be able to use force except at very high cost. If these elements are not present, the best fall-back option is not half-hearted coercion but seeking out opportunities to bring the parties into consultation that rely on persuasion.

78 Kuperman makes a related argument from the cases of Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo that a form of 'moral hazard' occurs when minorities that are weaker militarily than majorities but seek secession or autonomy provoke the majorities so that the latter retaliate. This repression prompts the international community to come to the minority's aid, and a local conflict thus becomes internationalized (Kuperman, n.d.; 2008). A similar hypothesis with regard to the possible role of well-intentioned international policies in fostering the onset of some conflicts is that '...a certain pattern has characterized the international responses to pre-genocide Rwanda, 1993–94; Burundi, 1993; Kosovo, 1992–98; and East Timor, 1999, and possibly other cases. The international community's sympathetic political championing of an ethnic minority's rights, such as through honoring unofficial referendums and denouncing the human rights violations of their oppressors, may tend to polarize the local political relations further by demonizing the perpetrators, and thus help to catalyze violence. The forces of violent backlash in those settings may be encouraged to pre-empt militarily the impending threat of political change, but the international community is not prepared to deter that reaction. Ostensible violence *prevention* can become violence *precipitation*, if well-intentioned advocacy of human rights promotion, provision of humanitarian aid, or other international measures are advanced on behalf of a vulnerable group, but actually puts them at greater risk by tempting the more powerful and better-armed forces of reaction to strike while they can pre-empt the forces of change, because adequate international provision is not made to protect their victims' (Lund, 1999).

79 Such forces will be more feasible as well as effective to the extent they have the approval of the government of the host country. Introducing such stabilization forces without such acquiescence may provoke violence instead, as was threatened when the OAU discussed sending a multi-lateral force into Burundi in 1998.

80 'The shift that needs to be consolidated is multifold: toward an increasingly insider approach to conflict prevention; toward earlier mediation; and toward bottom-up approaches aimed at societies as a whole.' (Nicolaidis 1996: 50).

81 NGOs such as FEWER, International Alert, and the International Project on Peace and Prosperity (IPPP) have acted as informal hosts and conveners of multi-actor consultations in countries such as southern Georgia, Kenya and Guinea-Bissau. UNDP country consultation projects are also catalyzing concerted preventive initiatives in threatened countries such as Fiji and Guyana. Given sufficient training over time in conflict assessments and conflict-sensitive programming, these processes might garner more discretion for the country level to decide on appropriate prevention decisions and strategies. The stovepipe structure of most development organizations has to be altered by giving more analytical power, policy authority, flexibility, and implementation resources to country missions and cross-agency bodies at regional and country levels, which is where necessary value tradeoffs as well as tactical decisions need to be made.

82 One key research question is how significant such the local and other non-intervention conducive factors must be for prevention to succeed. Many of these factors tend to be present in the more successful cases in Europe. So what is unclear is how effective or limited external intervention can be in the absence of such favorable endogenous environments, such as in Africa and Asia.

83 Such as through the new Uppsala MILC database on direct prevention measures vis-à-vis minor armed conflicts (Moller et al., 2007; Heldt, 2007).

84 These analyses need to be organized around distinct intervention categories and the levels and contexts in which they operate in order to cumulate knowledge and be subject to further testing and refinement. A consistent framework for presenting the lessons is needed to provide comparable profiles of different instruments. The categories most fruitful for comparative policy research should correspond to concrete, observable, alternative activities that correspond to choices that policymakers can actually make, and not remain abstractions. But they also cannot be based simply on descriptive, sectoral goals or program labels, which may prove analytically barren. Research designs also need a typology of contexts into which interventions are introduced, such as the level of hostilities, power balances of contending parties

(symmetric or asymmetric conflicts), and the degree of support. Although every individual application of a generic instrument encounters a unique combination of circumstances, it is possible to identify types of conditions whose variations seem to be most important in producing differing impacts, so as to apply findings to analogous situations.

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