International Peace Academy

From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN Capacities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict
Case studies in prevention

CASE STUDY POLICY REPORT

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I. Executive Summary

In the fall of 2000, the International Peace Academy commissioned a series of nine case studies examining the practice of preventive action. This study builds on earlier work by IPA identifying important issues for further examination in preventive practice.[1] The cases examined were representative of the broad and increasing scope of preventive action geographically and in terms of approaches deployed—from structural prevention to post-conflict peacebuilding as prevention. These cases were Kenya, Fiji, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Tajikistan, Burundi, Georgia (Javakheti), East Timor, Liberia, and Colombia. The cases are being edited and compiled for publication in a subsequent book; this report seeks to draw out central policy lessons for preventive action by the United Nations (UN). Important lessons can be drawn out with implications for each specific situation; more cross-cutting lessons for the UN and other preventive actors can also be derived from the collected cases.

Tools and strategies—to speak or not to speak preventively?

- Actors seeking to engage in preventive action face political and legal constraints in addressing the potential for conflict. Sovereignty is a key obstacle, particularly for the UN, where article 2(7) acts as an explicit bar to interfering in domestic affairs of states. Even where the obstacle is not legal, it may be political—strong militaries and offended governments can force preventive actors out of a nation. In Burundi, the ousted legitimate government requested UN intervention but did not receive it, in part because of the clear opposition of the military.

- Donors and other preventive actors face a key dilemma: they frequently need the consent of the host

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[1] Fen Hampson and David M. Malone, *From Reaction to Conflict Prevention: Opportunities for the UN System in the New Millennium* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002, forthcoming); Charles K. Cater and Karin Wermester, "From Reaction to Prevention: Opportunities for the UN System in the New Millennium," IPA Conference Report (New York: International Peace Academy, 2000).

state to act, and such states will likely not wish to be identified as at risk for conflict. Thus preventive actors may be compelled to avoid referring to conflict potential, or to use euphemisms:

- In Kenya, development actors, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), have sought to continue development work and avoid specifically referring to the government's role in fomenting clashes.

- In the Javakheti region of Georgia, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have sought to pursue early warning and preventive action through "research" and "development support".

- Such use of euphemism, paired with "quiet diplomacy" may be ineffective if not backed by a credible threat of aid withdrawal. Simultaneously, withdrawal of aid in tandem with negotiations can confuse governmental interlocutors and deprive the international community of important leverage.

- The failure of "quiet diplomacy" in Kenya illustrates the former risk as well as in part the latter; the obstacles to mediation by external actors who had already suspended aid to Tanzania illustrate the latter.

- Sanctions, then, have mixed results, whether they are trade sanctions or withdrawal of aid—they may be counter-productive if they isolate and alienate key actors, but they may nonetheless be the best, or only, tool available. They must then be applied effectively and comprehensively—sanctions in Burundi lost their impact when imposed regionally but not internationally; the absence of timber from the sanctions regime against Liberia has left open a key source of income for the Taylor regime.

- A risk of the use of euphemisms rather than explicit articulation of the risk of conflict is that international actors may inadvertently legitimize the status quo. If, for example, as in Tajikistan, they choose to continue humanitarian activities but fail to comment on a flawed election, a humanitarian goal may be achieved but a broader preventive goal may not be. However, such euphemism may be beneficial—the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities is

able to encourage change in governmental policies precisely by pursuing quiet diplomacy rather than embarrassing states publicly.

Tools and strategies—operational and structural prevention

Ultimately, structural and operational prevention have complementary roles to play. The cases suggest that too often one is emphasized at the expense of the other.

- The underlying causes of conflict must be addressed, ranging from poverty and inequality to flawed institutions. In the Javakheti region of Georgia and in Tajikistan, there is crucially weak state capacity. Strategies will need to focus on bolstering state capacities to simply function, lest more proximate causes encourage state disintegration. A key player in Fiji's recent constitutional crisis, which has not escalated as it might have done, has been a relatively independent judiciary responding to the coup.

- Conversely structural efforts are important, but will not suffice. Targeting proximate causes of conflict, such as ethnic tensions, economic decline, etc., is an important part of prevention. The experiences in Zanzibar/Tanzania illustrate that development and good governance strategies must be supplemented by specific responses to flawed elections and political repression.

Key actors—the UN, regional arrangements, powerful states

It comes as no surprise that preventive actors have differing comparative advantages, because of differing legitimacy, leverage, or access to information in relation to specific situations. In some instances, local suspicion of international mediation has been so severe as to bar serious involvement until recently—this is the case of Colombia. INGOs are less hamstrung by certain political considerations than the UN is, but also still have relatively little leverage.

- The UN can facilitate discussion—through observer missions, the deployment of Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSGs), etc. At the very least these enable dialogue to begin, but may do little more in the absence of political will to authorize more extensive preventive action. For example, the UN observer mission in Tajikistan promoted the

peace process, but in the absence of greater political and military commitment, could not keep or build the peace, instead relying upon Russian troops in the country. Diplomacy may need to be backed by firmer credible threats of force—it appears that the Indonesian military may have calculated that, diplomatic statements notwithstanding, the international community would not respond to the campaign of violence perpetrated in East Timor.

- Regional and subregional arrangements may play a role in conflict amelioration and prevention, if often by default. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping operation in Liberia came in the absence of serious international interest in responding to the civil war; that very weakness of interest, however, meant that ECOWAS had little capacity to maintain, enforce, or build peace, and Liberia thus slipped back to a second civil war.

- Powerful states can drive strategies in specific countries with good or ill effects on the potential for conflict. Russia's leverage in Tajikistan enabled a peace agreement to be reached, but a flawed one that did not address key issues and may have created spoilers for peace implementation. The US policy in Colombia, more focused on drugs than conflict, may also be counterproductive.

II. Learning from experience—cases and lessons

Each country or region facing real or potential violent conflict emerges from a unique political, historical, military, and cultural context that poses unique threats and unique challenges for preventive actors. Nevertheless, lessons that are learned in one situation may frequently be of great relevance for others. This section will briefly elaborate upon the challenges faced by the UN and preventive actors in each of the nine case studies and draw lessons from each. The concluding section will attempt to draw cross-cutting lessons from the cases collectively for preventive action in the UN system.

The cases

Kenya[2]

About two thousand Kenyans have been killed in violent attacks since 1991, which have often been called "ethnic clashes", but for which there are strong links to the ruling party. The international community has not officially recognized the role of the ruling party and government in inciting the violence, hampering the ad hoc efforts to forestall violence. Donors, too, have refused to publicly name the government as the source of the violence, recognizing that they might well be unable to continue important development work should they offend the government. Donors have also for the most part been reluctant to use the threat of aid withdrawal, reduction, or conditionality as a stick against the government. Most donors have suspended aid over issues other than conflict, with the exception of the Dutch, who did raise human rights concerns. It is not clear that their withdrawal of aid has had significant impact; it may be that having suspended aid over other issues, donors lost leverage.

UNDP may have lost credibility, having underplayed governmentally induced violence in the Rift Valley in 1994 in order to continue to supply relief; the project there collapsed in 1995. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Kenya has an interest in prevention, but this appears to have been less due to mandate than to the personal concern of the head of office. The UN is not alone in facing this dilemma; most actors in Kenya do not include conflict prevention in the description of their work, and do not confront the government on its role in the violence publicly or directly. The UN is limited by constraints of sovereignty—it is difficult to challenge a member-state instigator of internal violence. Many governmental donors are concerned with economic and political stability; the Kenyan government can placate them with promises of constitutional reform without halting policies that promote violence. The strategies that have been deployed by international actors in Kenya have thus not been well designed for conflict prevention—they have included important measures such a monitoring, humanitarian assistance, and dialogue with the government. Such continued "quiet diplomacy" appears to have been insufficient in the absence of the threat of more serious repercussions for the government.

Lessons from Kenya

- Donors, whether international or governmental, face a serious dilemma: they must seek not to offend the host government in order to continue development projects. Thus they may avoid engaging in conflict

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[2] Stephen Brown, "Quiet Diplomacy and Recurring 'Ethnic Clashes' in Kenya," in forthcoming IPA Prevention volume (2002).

prevention or avoid referring explicitly to the causes of violence.

- The UN, in particular but not alone, will have great difficulty confronting a sovereign host government such as that of Kenya where it is responsible for fomenting political violence. Thus the UN and UNDP, in particular, may shy away from specifically challenging governments that foster violence.

- Governmental donors may be slightly less hamstrung than the UN. They may seek to pursue other goals such as lesser political reform or economic stability which might incidentally have preventive impact. However, there is a risk that continuing to engage governments in this way may enable state leaders to continue conflict-inducing policies while offering half-measures.

- Quiet diplomacy strategies in the absence of serious "sticks" to back them up may be ineffectual. More forthright diplomacy and credible threats, such as withdrawal of aid, are also important tools.

Georgia/Javakheti[3]

There have been numerous conflict prevention activities in the Javakheti region in Georgia out of concern that it might follow the paths of other regions—South Ossetia and Abkhazia—in seeking to secede from the central government. The region contains common ingredients for secessionism: an ethnic minority in a compact region on the borders of a kin state (here, Armenia), and cultural and physical isolation from the rest of the country. It is worth noting that landlocked Armenia does not wish to provoke its neighbor, upon which it relies for transit, and thus it has tended not to provoke Georgian sensibilities over Javakheti. There is also a good deal of mythmaking occurring, with the perception that the neighboring Turks, and Meshkhetian Muslims being repatriated largely from Azerbaijan, pose a threat. While these facts alone may not be sufficient to provoke secessionism or conflict, there is fear that the likely removal of Russian troops could create an economic and security vacuum that could serve as a catalyst. Pressure by international actors may have inadvertently contributed to the potential for conflict—the US and others have pushed for the closure of the Russian base, and the Council of Europe conditioned Georgian membership upon the return of Meshkhetians.

Javakheti has thus received a great deal of attention, though largely by INGOs rather than international organizations. Most of that attention has, however, been couched in terms of development rather than conflict prevention, apparently out of a desire not to upset the Georgian authorities. The UN, of course, has a broader presence in Georgia—the focus is primarily on Abkhazia's secessionist conflict, for which there is a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and an observer mission for the cease-fire in that conflict—but far less presence in Javakheti, where most activities have been undertaken by INGOs. UNDP has, through the use of UN Volunteers between 1995-2000, sought to pursue structural prevention, through community-based projects and support for local NGOs, for example support for a local women's group to set up a kindergarten. OCHA has been contemplating greater involvement. The OSCE, in particular the High Commissioner on National Minorities, has focused on other regions of Georgia; there is an early warning project for Javakheti, apparently after Georgian authorities rejected the use of any prevention terminology. European Union activities through a humanitarian office in Georgia emphasize development over conflict prevention per se. External actors sought to offer humanitarian assistance; longer-term development remained more difficult, and the actors were unable to address political problems, including flawed parliamentary and presidential elections in 1999 and 2000. INGOs, notably FEWER, on the other hand, have tended to be more explicit about their preventive aims, largely through creating inter-communal dialogue, but tend to work with local NGOs and civil society, lacking access to or credibility with the political power-holders. Actors that are present on the ground also coordinate badly, in part because they view the problem of "Javakheti" in disparate ways—as a regional governance problem, as a political/ethnic problem, or as an economic/underdevelopment problem. Most efforts are too new for success to be ascertained definitively; there remains concern, however, that strategies that address only ethnic or economic issues will fail to deal with a serious structural problem—the weak Georgian state.

Lessons from Georgia/Javakheti

- International actors that need governmental tolerance or collaboration must tread carefully in referring to the potential for conflict and conflict prevention. Even actors that seek a more preventive

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[3] Anna Matveeva, "International Community Approaches to Structural Prevention," IPA Prevention volume.

mandate, such as the OSCE, may feel compelled to couch their activities in less political terms, as research and development rather than early warning and conflict prevention. This may serve as an effective shield for preventive activities; alternatively such use of euphemism may simply reflect an organization's constraints in acting in that country. INGOs can pursue prevention more explicitly, but are limited in terms of access or leverage.

• International actors, seeking political goals and in some instances pursuing their own interests (such as base closure and return and re-integration), may inadvertently contribute to the potential for conflict. Policies seeking to address a range of political, humanitarian and security interests need to be tailored to take account of such unintended consequences.

• Failure by external actors to explicitly attempt preventive activities can implicitly legitimize the status quo. They may pursue humanitarian goals, for example, while ignoring flawed elections. This may undermine the legitimacy of those external actors as perceived by local actors.

• Effective response to potential conflict and coordinated efforts can both be hampered by differential interpretations of what the problem on the ground actually is. Responses to risks of conflict deriving from ethnic, economic, or other sources clearly must be tailored to the risk at hand, and better assessments are necessary.

• Prevention efforts that target potential mobilizing factors for conflict such as economic instability, ethnic division, etc., are important but may fail in the absence of efforts at addressing structural problems, such as weak state capacity

Tanzania/Zanzibar[4]

Zanzibar is not an independent country but rather the product of a "complicated and controversial union" between Tanganyika and the two islands comprising Zanzibar to form the union government of Tanzania. The two islands have been undergoing a rocky transition to multiparty democracy since 1992. Multiparty elections in 1995 were not, according to international observers, free and fair. This occurred with the apparent

implicit support of the union government, and was accompanied by political violence and crackdowns on opposition groups. This prompted numerous donors to cut aid to Zanzibar. Donor governments have had limited leverage in mediation efforts. The Commonwealth Secretariat was involved in more sustained mediation efforts between 1996-1999, resulting in an agreement for a special envoy from the Commonwealth of Nations and reform of the electoral commission, known as Muafaka 1. The Zanzibari government abrogated the agreement and administered the elections itself in October 2000; many results were cancelled and re-run in November due to irregularities. Opposition-led demonstrations contesting the results were put down violently, leading to further clashes with the government in January 2001. Refugee flows to Kenya and international condemnation have served to embarrass the union government, but international efforts to respond to the political crisis that has the potential to escalate have been weak. A follow-on agreement, Muafaka 2, reached in October 2001, addressed key issues of electoral and judicial reform, though it has yet to be implemented.

The UN, through UNDP, monitored elections; unlike government donors it remained after the 1995 elections, seeking to engage the ruling union and Zanzibari governments. It has sought to avoid an explicit prevention mandate and to maintain neutrality between parties. The UN and the international financial institutions (IFIs) have emphasized poverty alleviation and good governance broadly rather than the political strife. The European Union (EU) has not generally played a great role, though one EU member state, the United Kingdom, was active in efforts through the Commonwealth Secretariat to seek a resolution to the political crisis. Government donor suspension of aid does not seem to have softened the position of the ruling party of the union and Zanzibari government; indeed this suspension is thought by many to have limited opportunities for diplomatic engagement with them. Mediation efforts will need to clearly recognize Tanzania's continued sovereign control over Zanzibar. Outsiders may be more effective through the use of a respected mediator— Martti Ahtisaari, in particular, has garnered respect as an EU emissary, and the Commonwealth of Nations has been active and could continue to be. Such diplomatic measures are needed to supplement development efforts that continue to address potential root causes of conflict.

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[4] Paul J. Kaiser, "A Multi-Level Analysis of Conflict Prevention Strategies: The Case of Zanzibar," IPA Prevention volume.

Lessons from Tanzania/Zanzibar

•   Structural efforts in development are important but are not enough; interim triggers must be addressed as well. This requires not just good governance strategies, but specific responses to flawed elections and the political repression, violence, and uncertainty that are attendant.

•   Withdrawal of aid is undoubtedly an important tool for donors, but may severely hamper mediation efforts. It appears that in Zanzibar it both limited their leverage and reduced their credibility with government interlocutors.

•   Preventive actors in the situation in Zanzibar have been limited by the fact that it is an essentially internal conflict—they must deal directly with the ruling party despite its intransigence.

•   An eminent emissary such as Ahtisaari who has already engaged government and opposition may be of value in pursuing future mediation. Common-wealth mediators have also had increased success in bringing parties to the table and reaching agreements, though implementation has been less successful.

•   Negotiations may also be facilitated by UNDP, which has carved out a "neutral space" in the country and might serve as a forum for the exchange of informa-tion and the development of common strategies for prevention

Fiji[5]

Fiji is a multi-ethnic state, with the majority almost evenly split between ethnic Fijians and Indians. The historical legacy of colonialism and the 1970 constitution have created and enshrined a number of political and economic distinctions between the two communities. Ethnic Fijians' "paramountcy" is established historically and in the constitution. Land tenure is accorded largely to ethnic Fijians, while Indians dominate the sugar industry and many small and medium-size businesses. The two communities have viewed each other with suspicion and hostility at least since independence, a situation that may have been further exacerbated by competition for political power in parliament, which divided along communal lines. Between 1970-1975, the propensity

towards cleavage was overcome by inter-elite ethnic accommodation and power-sharing, but this was through informal consensus and was ultimately undercut by the objections of ethnic partisan leaders. Separation continues to the present, extending to voluntary and religious associations as well, and hardening ethnic consciousness and boundaries. Two coups over the past two decades are of particular note—one in 1987 overthrowing an ethnically Fijian coalition government that was supported by Indian voters, and one in 2000 overthrowing an elected Indian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry. In each instance, the diplomatic response of the international community to the overthrow of an elected government was strong; whether the policies were tailored to effective conflict prevention is less clear.

After the 1987 coup, Fiji was expelled from the Commonwealth, condemned by international human rights groups and by regional trading partners, and suffered a significant loss of tourism just as investment sharply declined. Consistent political and economic pressure appears to have enabled the return to democratic rule. A new constitution, promulgated in 1997 following widespread consultation created a new voting structure designed to moderate ethnic appeals—that of ranking preferences of candidates rather than using simple pluralities. This new structure was placed, however, on top of old divisions. Elected in 1999, Chaudhry's government faced the daunting challenge of not only being the first headed by an ethnic Indian, but of attempting land reform; it was putatively in response to this reform effort that the coup was staged in 2000. Diplomatic response was swift, led again by regional trading partners and the Commonwealth. Other nations made harsh diplomatic statements but were wary of imposing trade sanctions; the UN sent a delegate to speak with the coup leader, but to no avail. The coup-makers were themselves removed from office by the military, and the interim government they set up, condemned by international actors and domestic NGOs alike as illegitimate, was ultimately found to be in violation of the constitution by the Supreme Court, and new elections were mandated. These were held in August 2001 with support from national donors and the UN. It is important to note that the two coups and the threat of wider conflict appear to have been defused in different ways—the 1987 coup-makers appear to have been responsive to international economic and diplomatic pressure, while the 2000 ones were more resilient and ultimately were displaced from within the country.

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5 Ralph Premdas, "Fiji: Problems of Peacemaking in a Multi-Ethnic State," IPA Prevention volume.

Lessons from Fiji

- Ethnic cleavages that are strengthened by colonial legacies and constitutional structures are not irreversible or inevitable. The inter-elite accommodation in Fiji (1970-1975) is indicative of tacit pacts between elites that can overcome, at least temporarily, apparent cleavages. These can be reversed, as they were in Fiji, by the manipulations of elite ethnic entrepreneurs.

- Institutional structures and constitutions may be well-devised but have unintended consequences. Proportional but competitive voting arrangements can reinforce communal divisions. Well-devised constitutions placed atop ethnic divides may not be able to withstand the manipulation of ethnic sentiment.

- However, the harm done by these institutions ought not be overstated; it was the Fijian military that removed its own coup-makers, and the reasonably independent judiciary that was able to remove the interim government from power and force new elections. Electoral arrangements that force collaboration among ethnic groups rather than encourage competition show some promise.

- International involvement through diplomatic and political pressure is of some, but perhaps only limited, utility. It had some impact on the coup-makers of 1987 and again in 2000, but perhaps equally or more important were the domestic forces pushing for a return to democracy.

- Domestic constitutional and electoral reforms, and a strong judiciary, played a key role in restoring or maintaining some degree of democratic order: this suggests that international efforts would be usefully deployed in capacity-building efforts. Specifically, such arrangements must seek to establish communal consensus and collaboration. A significant challenge is institutional—the thorny land tenure issue remains significant.

East Timor[6]

Following nearly a quarter century of occupation by Indonesia, the East Timorese went to the polls in a UN-conducted popular consultation, voting overwhelmingly for independence in August 1999. As is now well known, a wave of violence by pro-integration paramilitaries followed, resulting in mass killings and hundreds of thousands of refugees. This violence was, as subsequent evidence would demonstrate, supported and enabled by the Indonesian military, which under the agreements prior to the ballot retained control of security for the balloting. The risk of violence was forseeable, and measures were taken by the international community to avert it through preventive diplomacy; however, the Indonesian government's insistence upon maintaining control over security, enshrined in the agreements of 5 May 1999 establishing the process for the referendum, limited the UN's options. Real political constraints and incomplete information, along with limited will to act forcefully, greatly limited the UN's scope for preventive action.

The international community did attempt to engage in coordinated political pressure upon the Indonesian government to ensure that violence not break out. However, the UN and others agreed to the security arrangements out of fear that Indonesia would otherwise refuse to allow the referendum to go forward. The agreement in turn limited the size of the UN deployment, including the number of civilian policy components; at the same time Indonesia maintained control over security, refusing to withdraw the military. There was also limited knowledge about the threat—while it was understood that there was a danger of retaliation by pro-integrationist forces, there was little expectation that such coordinated and extensive violence was being planned, and less expectation that the Indonesian military would support such action in the face of the warnings it was receiving from the international community. There were, nonetheless, warning signs, evidenced by the increasing violence in the run-up to the balloting. The tool available to the international community, diplomatic and political pressure, appears to have been insufficient to deter the violence, although it was utilized at the highest level, by the US Secretary of State and high-level delegations from Australia and Japan, and by the SRSG Ian Martin. There may have been a lack of political will amongst member states to act militarily, but there was no test of will: the apparent need for more credible military action was not brought to the UN Security Council. In the absence of more forceful statements, backed by a genuine threat of the use of force, the Indonesian military apparently felt safe in disregarding diplomatic warnings.

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6 Tamrat Samuel, "East Timor and the Post-Ballot Violence of 1999," IPA Prevention volume.

Lessons from East Timor

- States are obstacles in situations where sovereignty is not a valid objection. Sovereignty per se was not a real obstacle in negotiating with Indonesia over East Timor—the occupation was not recognized as legal by the UN. However, the Indonesian military was present in East Timor, and the government's consent was politically necessary in order to carry out a ballot or effect the implementation of its outcome.

- The importance of developing worst-case scenarios in planning. There was genuine concern about, and preparation for, a violent backlash by anti-independence forces. The extent, coordination, and scope of the violence was apparently not expected.

- The need for more forthright communication between the Secretariat and the Security Council. It may have been that there was no political will in the Council to provide a significant force for East Timor before the ballot, but the Council was not asked to consider that option.

- The importance of credible international threats. In the absence of such a threat by the international community, the Indonesian military could apparently calculate that, diplomatic communications notwithstanding, there would not be serious reprisals against it for supporting post-ballot violence. While international actors believed that the military would not risk such reprisals, they may have failed to offer the signals that would convince the military that any significant response would occur.

Colombia[7]

The war in Colombia is the longest-running in Latin America, having endured for half a century, engendering millions of internally displaced persons, serious human rights violations, and facilitating dramatic growth in drug cultivation and trafficking. The protagonists, the government and the two major guerrilla groups (FARC and ELN)[8] have increasingly been confronted by another armed actor, right-wing paramilitaries with ties to the military, drug traffickers, and others. The deep-rooted civil conflict pre-dates serious drug cultivation and trafficking by several decades, though the drug trade does provide resources to the armed groups and gave rise to the paramilitaries. Since 1982, there have been repeated efforts by the government and major guerrilla groups to reach an end to the conflict. These were intentionally pursued without the aid of international mediation on the theory that the civil war was an internal question.

International participation in peace efforts has been largely absent until recently; more recently there has been more engaged international response, though that response has not always been very coherent. The US's interest in drug interdiction has driven its policy towards Colombia. In contrast the EU (and EU member states individually) has focused on human rights, the peace process, and institutional development. The US's "Plan Colombia" derives from a proposal by Colombian president Andres Pastrana, for US aid that would support the peace process and generate agreements with guerrillas who controlled zones where narcotics were grown—thus peace would be an anti-narcotics tool. Its initial form was one that could have contributed to conflict resolution and prevention, ranging from negotiations to economic measures through to institutional reform and post-conflict peacebuilding. The plan ultimately put forward by the US was the reverse—an anti-narcotics plan that purported to serve the ends of peace—emphasis was placed on fumigation and training anti-narcotics battalions. It was denounced by one rebel group as a veiled counter-insurgency plan. The EU has been increasingly opposed to this approach, arguing that it focuses excessively on drugs and not enough on promoting peace. The EU has sought to develop an aid package with an emphasis on human rights and humanitarian issues, and to promote dialogue amongst the parties. A five-country group of friends, including EU members and Cuba, has convened dialogues between civil society and the two key rebel groups. Negotiations with the two rebel groups proceed on separate tracks, complicating the process of reaching agreement. However, agreements on the creation of demilitarized zones were reached with each. These faltered in both instances—with the withdrawal of forces, the paramilitaries took over in a formerly ELN-controlled zone; the suspicion of the FARC of international monitoring of the demilitarized zone caused a breakdown in negotiations, though the zone is still demilitarized. The UN became more engaged in the late 1990s, creating a special office for human rights, an office of the High Commissioner for

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[7] Marc W. Chernick, "Protracted Peacemaking/Permanent War: International Involvement in Peace Efforts in Colombia," IPA Prevention volume.

[8] Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia and Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional.

Refugees, and appointing an SRSG to Colombia. The SRSG, Jan Egeland, began to open up channels of communication with various parties to the conflict, and may hopefully bring the negotiating processes together. The international community will continue to be limited in its efforts so long as neither side—government or guerrilla—accepts a formal international mediation role.

Lessons from Colombia

- Suspicion of international involvement by the parties seriously hampers mediation efforts from outside. This is more than the standard sovereignty bar; rebel groups opposed to international involvement can scuttle negotiations and agreements.

- Initially preventive plans can be converted into plans that address a single issue in service of one external actor. This appears to be the case with Plan Colombia, which as initially conceived placed primary emphasis upon the peace process, but which is now entirely oriented towards US policy interest in drug interdiction.

- A group of friends may have significant, if still limited impact, as with the demilitarized zones whose negotiation was enabled by the 5-state group for Colombia. However, where suspicion of international involvement remains high, implementation of agreements may remain problematic. Implementation is further hampered by the lack of credible threats to compel parties to do so.

- Coordinated strategies will eventually be necessary. European and group of friends efforts may lay the groundwork for greater UN involvement. US support for peacemaking and peacebuilding policy will also be needed, as it has greater leverage than other external actors on the Colombian military.

Tajikistan[9]

The conflict in Tajikistan is often wrongly ascribed to nationalism or Islamism, or portrayed as an ethnic one. The underlying cause was instead structural: Tajikistan emerged from Soviet rule with weak institutions and national identity and strong clan identifications; rapid "decolonization" sped rapid state failure. Splits were along regional clan lines, over competition for scarce resources; aspirations were not separatist and actions not ethnically-motivated. Violent protests by opposition groups turned to violent skirmishes; with the defection of a key military unit civil war broke out. Numerous opposition groups united under the banner of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), but other armed groups also proliferated. The continuing presence of Russia as a regional hegemon hampered initial international involvement; by the time there was international action the conflict had significantly escalated.

Peace talks were held with the support of INGOs who enabled a dialogue to begin; initially low-level talks were facilitated with the deployment of the UN observer mission in Tajikistan (UNMOT) in 1994. An interim regime, created in 1994 through the talks, did lessen the anarchy without creating strong state institutions—a "negative peace" was created. Peacekeeping activities were handled not by the UN, but by the Russian 201st Division. Elections since 1997 have been rigged and the president has increasingly consolidated personal and executive power at the expense of democratization. Russia, Iran, and Pakistan each had narrow national agendas in their involvement in Tajikistan, they promoted negotiation out of concern over regional instability; with declining international interests they became the de facto actors. A peace agreement was reached in June 1997 through the Inter-Tajik talks, imposed by external actors, in particular Russia and Iran, with the support of the UN. It was, however, flawed, institutionalizing domestic regional political inequalities. It excluded numerous minor clan factions and militias; in particular the Khodjent region, at the behest of Russia, was excluded. Elections since 1997 have been rigged, and the current president has consolidated a great deal of power. Further, there remains a risk of destabilization from neighboring countries in the Ferghana Valley, from spillover from the conflict in Afghanistan or unrest in Uzbekistan, as well as from drug traffickers using Tajikistan for passage because of its relatively porous borders. There is also a risk of further economic decline being compounded by shrinking international aid. These three potential sources of instability in Tajikistan—domestic imbalances of power, regional instability and economic decline—remain the greatest challenges for preventive actors in that country. While potentially preventive actors including the UN, OSCE, the IFIs, etc., view structural measures to address the root causes of potential conflict as vital, they are currently occupied with more urgent humanitarian measures. Currently stability is being maintained by the presence of some

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[9] Kathleen Collins, "Tajikistan: Bad Peace Agreements and Prolonged Civil Conflict," IPA Prevention volume.

46,000 Russian troops in Tajikistan. Internal and regional politics are being significantly reshaped by the conflict in Afghanistan: much as Russian interests have played a significant role there, now so too will American interests.

Lessons from Tajikistan

- The international community did not respond too late in Tajikistan, but it may have done too little. UNMOT was useful in promoting the peace process but did not have a larger political or military mandate.

- Neighboring countries Iran and Russia had their own interests in Tajikistan, but their interests in regional stability made them important actors in promoting the peace process and keeping the peace. They were able to play a political, and in the case of Russia, military role that underfunded UNMOT (now transformed into a peacebuilding office) could not. Russia continues to have great influence over the future of Tajikistan; its troops in the country are expected to protect against internal opposition and external threats.

- Endorsing flawed peace agreements engenders instability in the future. The UN may have had no choice—its mandate was to enable negotiation between the two main parties—government and opposition.

- The UN may also have been subject to pressure by Russia, which was necessary for a peace accord but opposed the inclusion of a key region in negotiations for its own reasons. This created the potential for a powerful "spoiler" to the peace process—the Khodjent region, with strong ties to Uzbekistan. The flawed agreement has paved the way for subsequent political abuses.

- Particularly in light of recent events, there is a need for continued engagement and preventive action, one that attends to the need for democratization internally, as well as addresses the regional threats of spill-over.

Liberia[10]

The Liberian conflict has its roots in ethnic divisions and the legacy of "repatriation" of African-Americans to Liberia beginning in the early 1800s, but is by no means a purely "ethnic conflict", driven as it is as well by inequality and manipulative, predatory leaders, seeking control of natural resources. The paper examines the first civil war that began in December 1989, with an armed insurgency led by Charles Taylor that sought to overthrow the regime of Samuel K. Doe. A second civil war, beginning a decade later, requires prompt action building on lessons learned to date.

Regional dimensions are central to both the causes of and responses to the Liberian conflict. Foday Sankoh and others in Sierra Leone are known to have supported Taylor's insurgency; Taylor has similarly provided support to Sankoh and mutual support arrangements threaten to spread conflict to Guinea as well. The UN and major powers lacked the will or capacity to act; the Organization of African Unity (the OAU, transformed into the African Union in the summer of 2001) lacked the capacity. It was, however, believed that this "internal conflict" posed a threat to stability in the sub-region: thus ECOWAS intervened with a military observer group (ECOMOG). ECOWAS itself was split over the deployment of ECOMOG, with Nigeria supporting it and Cote d'Ivoire opposing it. ECOMOG's presence was actively opposed by Taylor, who viewed it as a threat to his eventual control of the state and attacked the force. ECOWAS took the lead; the OAU did appoint a special representative, and the UN eventually established a mission there, but with a limited mandate. International actors mediated some 17 peace accords; each time Taylor reneged on an accord there was no serious action. The conflict formally ended in 1997, leading to democratic elections won by Taylor. Taylor refused to allow peace-building activities such as disarmament and security-sector reform, allowing only a good governance program that was not independently run. The failure to consolidate peace enabled the return to conflict in 1999. A second round of conflict in Liberia has thus far been confined to the north of the country, feeding a belief in some quarters that this conflict will be more localized. Preventive action has, accordingly, focused rather narrowly, not upon the internal conflict itself so much as Taylor's attempts to destabilize the region, and thus upon the sale of so-called "blood diamonds" that continue to provide him revenue. However, the sale of timber is not banned, and thus Taylor's war-making resources remain significant. Effective preventive action needs to address the internal conflict as well as the sub-regional situation.

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[10] George Clay Kieh, Jr., "Conflict Prevention in Liberia," IPA Prevention volume.

Lessons from Liberia

• Demonstrating political will is vital but difficult. ECOMOG gained some credibility by withstanding early attacks by Taylor's forces. However, the failure to punish Taylor for abrogating numerous peace accords greatly lessened the credibility of the international community. Taylor was thus able, once elected as president, to block serious attempts at peace-building and consolidation.

• In the absence of such serious attempts at peace-building, in particular disarmament and security sector reform, a return to conflict is likely. Taylor blocked these efforts, claiming that as a sovereign state Liberia was able to proceed autonomously; while this violated the peace agreements ECOWAS capitulated.

• Regional conflict complexes pose significant threats. Certainly the mutual support of Taylor and Sankoh enabled the rise of each. The international community's attention has thus been on the potential for increased sub-regional instability. However, attempts to address the regional dimensions of conflict ought not ignore domestic conflict and the possibility of its spread, as appears to be the case in Liberia at the moment.

• Sanctions and other measures to curtail the use of natural resources for warmaking need to be more comprehensive. This means that not only diamonds but timber must be included in the regime; more broadly the network of Taylor's collaborators including money-launderers and suppliers of arms will need to be controlled.

Burundi[11]

Since its independence in 1962 Burundi has suffered political chaos and violence. Political dominance by the military and competition for political power and scarce economic resources between the ethnic Tutsi and Hutu have contributed significantly to continuing cycles of violence in the country. Until the elections of 1993, the Tutsis dominated political power, including the presidency. International actors including the UN, OAU, national governments, and INGOs have sought, with mixed results, to mediate the recurrent conflict. The study examines mediation and negotiation attempts in three periods—October 1993-July 1996, July 1996 to June 1998, and June 1998 to August 2000. Violence broke out in October 1993 following a coup that overthrew the first Hutu president and brought a short-lived experiment in electoral democracy to an end. Each ethnic group had its own political party and military counterpart; extreme ethnic mythmaking on each side generated paranoia and "pre-emptive" violence.

In the first period, regional actors responded with a small unarmed OAU observer mission, which was all that the government would accept or the weak organization could support. Julius Nyerere, acting as "international facilitator", led negotiation efforts on behalf of the region, the OAU, and the UN. The UN was also limited in its capacity to intervene militarily: the SG did recommend a force in response to a request from the legitimate government (in exile). However, the Burundi army objected on sovereignty grounds and the proposal failed to gain support, not least because of concerns about mission clarity raised by the US following the Somali debacle. The UN thus complemented OAU efforts with a small mediation team, headed by SRSG Ahmedou Ould Abdallah. His efforts led to an amended constitution, new elections, and the election of another Hutu president in 1994, who was killed in a plane crash just 4 months later. The SRSG was again instrumental in negotiating the creation of a coalition government with a Hutu president and a Tutsi prime minister. Carter Center initiatives sought to develop regional confidence-building measures, rather than direct mediation, but did help facilitate Nyerere's selection. The political track and the OAU observer mission were curtailed by a coup in July 1996. In this second period, not only was the president overthrown, but the constitution was suspended, as were the political parties and the national assembly. At this point only Nyerere remained engaged in Burundi; in addition the Community of Sant'Egidio sought to mediate, but did not seek to complement the regional initiative. The OAU's prevention mechanism strongly condemned the coup, and economic sanctions were imposed by its members, but not by the international community more broadly. The results of sanctions appear to have been mixed, further isolating Burundi and undermining negotiations and Nyerere's standing as a facilitator, but ultimately resulting in reinstatement of the national assembly and the political parties. The Burundi government preferred to utilize the Sant'Egidio

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[11] Mohammed Omar Maundi, "Burundi," IPA Prevention volume.

initiative, in which they could interact with opponents sequentially and in which regional actors were not important; these negotiations also broke down. The OAU and regional efforts returned to the fore; regional actors questioned whether the government was acting in good faith, viewing the use of Sant'Egidio mediation as a diversionary tactic. In the final period analyzed, the Arusha peace process, begun in 1998, resulted in a peace agreement in August 2000. This process was a regional one, largely because regional leaders recognized the potential for spillover, and at least believed themselves to be better informed about the root causes of the conflict and motivations of the actors than others. The process benefited, too, from the presence of eminent personalities—Nyerere was succeeded by Nelson Mandela as the facilitator. However, the success of the process ought not be overstated—it produced a peace agreement without stopping the fighting. It might nonetheless be viewed as a partial success simply because it drew nineteen parties to the negotiating table and garnered an agreement. There has not yet been a cessation of hostilities, or the creation of a transitional government, as called for by the accords.

Lessons from Burundi

- Regional actors have at least two possible advantages in addressing conflict—incentives based upon their own proximity to the conflict, and a better understanding of the motivations of the parties to the conflict. Distant NGOs, for example, such as the Community of Sant'Egidio may be of use, but may also be manipulated by one or more parties to the conflict.

- The utility of sanctions will be limited if they are imposed regionally but not internationally. They may also have counter-productive effects in that they may isolate or alienate key actors. Nonetheless, at least in Burundi they seem ultimately to have contributed to pressure on the government to restore the national assembly and political parties

- Legal barriers to action are not the only ones. Despite a request by the legitimate, if ousted, government, to intervene, the UN did not, facing opposition from the military and lacking support from key countries such as the US after the debacle in Somalia.

- Protracted multilateral negotiations are arduous, but

play an important role in confidence-building and generating changes in attitudes. The peace process in Burundi can be judged at least a partial success for its role in drawing parties to the table and garnering an agreement, even if the ultimate goal of conflict termination has yet to be achieved.

III. Conclusions—preventive strategy in a complex world

While the cases clearly demonstrate the importance of context-sensitivity in developing preventive strategy, some lessons can be drawn across cases, with implications for the future.

A central lesson is that there is a delicate balance to be struck by nearly all preventive actors with regard to the nature and intensity of preventive action engaged in. At times quiet diplomacy may prove quite useful. Explicit preventive strategies or strongly worded diplomacy may simply offend, rather than persuade, the target state to behave differently. However, diplomacy can be too quiet. Failure to address the potential or actual conflict at all, however, does not serve preventive ends and may discredit external actors. Similarly, aid suspension and other sanctions may well be important tools, providing leverage over governments. Sanctions must also be carefully tailored to affect the appropriate target. Such judicious use of sticks may be important strategically. However, once such sticks have been utilized, preventive actors may lose their diplomatic leverage. If utilized, sanctions must be reasonably comprehensive, lest wide holes in the sanctions net diminish their impact upon the target. On the flip side, use of carrots as incentives must also be carefully targeted: for example aid packages may be conditioned on specific political concessions.

There is a balance, too, to be struck in the nature of preventive action. The cases demonstrate the need to engage in structural prevention, addressing root causes such as poverty, weak state capacity, inequality, and ethnic tensions along with more proximate causes such as humanitarian, political, and economic crises or mobilizing leaders. Resource scarcity may dictate that humanitarian crises are addressed but underlying structural problems are not; such band-aid solutions address important problems but will not serve to prevent the next crisis or engender positive peace; international actors may also lose credibility in focusing on such operational prevention. By the same token, funneling

resources solely into structural prevention while turning a blind eye to escalating tensions and conflict will also fail. A balanced solution would, not surprisingly, pursue both simultaneously.

The UN has unique capacity to facilitate peace processes, in particular through the use of observer missions, SRSGs, etc. These will need to be backed, however, by the credible threat of stronger political, military, or economic action in response to violation of agreements; this requires a stronger degree of political will on the part of member states as expressed through the Security Council than currently appears to exist in many cases. Regional arrangements may sometimes fill the breach, but they too may lack the resources to respond to violations of agreements. Powerful interested states may be the most effective in achieving solutions to crises, but

at a cost—the agreements may be skewed towards the interests of those powerful states.

Such balancing acts are complicated, and preventive action is constantly constrained by limited resources. Dramatic successes are hard to find—prevention must be seen as incremental and aggregative. "Ceasefires and peace agreements that last for limited periods but offer an opportunity to create an enduring relationship can be viewed as part of a larger dialectic leading to a peaceful outcome." So too with other features of preventive strategy—small steps in structural prevention may eventually serve to engender stability, while measures to address current instability may avert immediate conflict, providing the space for more comprehensive peacebuilding.

Description of research project

Introduction
As part of the International Peace Academy's multi-year research and policy development project entitled *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN Capacities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict*, nine case studies were commissioned. The key policy-relevant conclusions that emerge from these cases are distilled in this report; the case studies themselves will be published as a *project of the International Peace Academy* in late 2002. The goal of the research project was to draw out practical lessons for the UN system as it seeks to address a wide array of global risks and challenges in conflict prevention based on rigorous and methodologically sound case studies.

The design
The research design was developed internally based on wide consultation with UN staff members across the system, and vetted and refined by an expert committee comprised of academics and practitioners in prevention from inside and outside the UN system.[1]

The study examined potential and actual conflict, and seeks to articulate 5 "phases of prevention" in order that responses to the risk of conflict might be better tailored to the threat at hand. These are not meant to treat conflict as having a life cycle, or a linear trajectory, but as devices to help to descriptively capture different types of risks of conflict, and different types of responses to them. These will be covered in greater detail in the edited volume, but are as follows: potential conflict, gestation of conflict, trigger/mobilization of conflict, conflict/escalation, and post-conflict. Each of these phases entails distinct opportunities and challenges and may be addressed with tools and strategies that may in some instances be appropriate only for particular phases, and in others be appropriate more generally.

From design to cases
The IPA convened the case study authors in January 2001 to discuss the research design, and the issues raised by each case, prior to the initiation of the studies by the authors. Continuing dialogue was maintained with the authors while they pursued their field research through the use of an internet listserv, enabling the further development and sharing of ideas amongst the participants. Upon receipt of the first drafts, the IPA reconvened the case and analytic authors in June 2001 with a UN adviser to further discuss the substance of the cases, and ways in which insights from them might be sharpened to maximize their utility for the UN system. Authors engaged in further revision based upon these discussions, after which each case was sent for review to two independent experts: a country expert with knowledge of conflict prevention, and a person with experience, currently or formerly working at the UN with knowledge of the case.[2] The cases were then revised one final time in light of these reviews.

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[1] The author is grateful to the members of the expert group for their input and advice. Any errors, of course, are ascribable to the author alone. The advisors who gave so generously of their time and insights are Claude Bruderlein, George Downs, Michèle Griffin, Mark Hoffman, Rick Hooper, Michael Lund, Andrew Mack, Laila Manji, Connie Peck, Barnett Rubin, Jack Snyder, and Stephen John Stedman. Special thanks are due to Michael Lund and Don Rothchild, who in addition to writing an excellent analysis of third party incentives for the volume has been an invaluable source of advice and support. Special thanks are also due to my colleague and co-editor, Karin Wermester, who has worked tirelessly on this project, and to my colleague Karen Ballentine, whose insights have been of great assistance in developing this project.

[2] The IPA is grateful to the excellent insights offered by the case reviewers, whose identities are kept anonymous.

About the authors

The authors for this project were drawn from around the world based on their research qualifications and particular expertise on the countries examined.

Dr. Stephen Brown, author of the Kenya case study, is a professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Marc Chernick, author of the Colombia case study, is a professor in the Department of Government at Georgetown University.

Dr. Kathleen Collins, author of the Tajikistan case study, is a professor in the Department of Government at the University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Paul Kaiser, author of the Tanzania/Zanzibar case study, is the Assistant Director of the African Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. George Clay Kieh, Jr., author of the Liberia case study, is a professor in the International Center at Grand Valley State University.

Dr. Anna Matveeva, author of the Georgia/Javakheti case study, is the arms and security programme manager at Saferworld.

Dr. Mohammed Maundi, author of the Burundi case study, worked in the Tanzanian foreign service and is at the Center for Foreign Relations in Dar es Salaam.

Dr. Ralph Premdas, author of the Fiji case study, is a professor at the University of the West Indies.

Dr. Donald Rothchild, author of the analytic paper on third party incentives and conflict prevention, is a professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Davis.

Mr. Tamrat Samuel, author of the East Timor case study, is a political affairs officer in the United Nations Department of Political Affairs.

About the program

From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN Capacities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict
Program Associate: Chandra Lekha Sriram
Senior Program Officer: Karin Wermester
Duration: September 2000 – June 2003

While preventing violent conflict has many advocates at a general level, knowledge about how it is to be done, under what circumstances, when, and by whom, remains significantly underdeveloped. This is partly a problem for analysts, whose techniques for assessing volatile situations and prospective remedies could be sharpened further. It is also a significant problem for organizations and institutions, whose practices, cultures, and styles of decision-making, and whose systems of learning and accountability, often inhibit effective responses to the complex environments in which conflict may turn violent.

In 2000-2001, IPA conducted an initial research and policy development project entitled "From Reaction to Prevention: Opportunities for the UN System in the New Millennium." The project aimed to determine the degree of consensus and discord in recent research on conflict trends and causes of conflict and peace, and to use these findings to help shape policy and action on conflict prevention within the UN system. We drew several conclusions from this initial work, including recognition of the urgent need to address the developmental aspects of conflict prevention. In light of this, IPA launched a three-year project entitled "From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN Capacities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict." The goal is to find opportunities to strengthen the conflict prevention capacity within the UN system. The project devotes considerable attention to structural prevention, emphasizing the role of development and capacity-building.

The profile of conflict prevention has been raised by the publication of the Secretary-General's report on the subject in June 2001. The development of this report engaged broad sectors of the UN community, including member states, and IPA contributed to the advancement of the concept prior to the report by holding a number of workshops and informal discussions, including a Security Council workshop. The project is organized around three interrelated components: policy development, networking, and research. Policy development involves briefings, workshops, conferences, and policy fora bringing together the UN and New York-based policy community with international experts and practitioners to discuss research findings and present new ideas. We seek to build networks of expert practitioners in the UN system and among the UN, member states, and relevant NGO personnel and academics in order to sustain and increase involvement in preventive efforts.

Research aims to identify the most appropriate tools, actors, and strategies for a range of preventive actions to be undertaken by the United Nations. Case studies of preventive action have been commissioned on the following nine countries: Georgia (Javakheti), Burundi, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Fiji, Kenya, East Timor, Colombia, Tajikistan, and Liberia. In order to develop cases that are both rigorous and as policy-relevant as possible, consultations have involved the UN system and its agencies, research institutes, civil society actors, experts, and others, developing guidelines for authors to give priority to the policy insights gained from cases. An edited volume of these cases will be published in 2002.

A policy report on lessons from the case studies will be disseminated to the UN and larger policy community in the fall of 2001. The report will seek to develop further ideas on best practices and policy recommendations in a wide variety of situations, identifying when and how various UN actors, in partnership with regional and subregional organizations, member states, NGOs, civil society, and the business community, can best further the prevention of violent conflict.

The prevention project is developing at least two events abroad. Both would examine how to strengthen the role of regional and subregional organizations. A workshop would examine collaboration and cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organizations with national and local governments and civil society actors to distill practical policy-oriented and operational suggestions. It would focus on the local/field perspective and seek to draw lessons from practical experience. A conference at a more senior level would build on insights gained from the workshop on what further steps can be taken to strengthen the role of regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention.

International Peace Academy