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This brief summarizes the primary findings of the conference as interpreted by the rapporteur, Eric Eggleston; the roundtable organizer, Angela Bruce-Raeburn; and cochairs Lee Feinstein and Tod Lindberg.

Participants neither reviewed nor approved this brief. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of its recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

Advancing Transatlantic Linkages on Responsibility to Protect and Mass Atrocity Prevention

A critical component of mass atrocity prevention is the ability of like-minded, politically influential, and operationally capable allies to develop and implement cooperative strategies. One avenue for pursuing this type of cooperation is focusing on the role of longstanding transatlantic partnerships. By examining the existing policies, institutional capacities, bureaucratic blockages, differing understandings, and shared interests related to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and mass atrocity prevention, it is possible to propose additional steps for supporting common security objectives. Transatlantic allies have built an important strategic and historical relationship, including affirming their commitment to cooperative action to prevent atrocities through vehicles such as the World Summit outcome document endorsing R2P. Yet, practical strategies and plans for cooperative action have lagged behind aspirations and normative frameworks.

At the 55th annual Strategy for Peace Conference, from October 15–17, 2014, near Washington, DC, the Stanley Foundation convened a group of 30 US government and international officials, mass atrocity specialists, and civil society representatives to examine the current state of transatlantic cooperation and explore avenues for enhanced collaboration for atrocity prevention. Participants brought a wide range of expertise to bear on the questions posed and investigated both normative and operational challenges to increasing cooperation between states and among international organizations and civil society actors on both sides of the Atlantic.

Wide-ranging discussions across many sessions drew on the practical experience and diverse perspectives of presenters and participants to evaluate the current state of cooperation and atrocity prevention and generate a host of avenues for further dialogue and research. Draft documents and previously published papers served as starting points for discussion on four main areas: the United Nations' role in atrocity prevention, the practice of US atrocity prevention policy, the connections between development and atrocity prevention, and evaluating atrocity prevention practice through the lens of the intervention in Libya. In addressing this diverse set of entry points to transatlantic cooperation and a wide array of questions, notable common themes emerged across issues, while discussions on specific subjects generated suggestions on how to address existing gaps in policy and practice.

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Participants focused on four key elements for advancing a transatlantic agenda on the Responsibility to Protect and mass atrocity prevention:

- **Shared focus on and understanding of prevention:** In examining the roles of the United Nations, the United States, and development in atrocity prevention, as well as the case of Libya, participants agreed that the primary focus remains on response to threatened or ongoing atrocities rather than on preventing them before they begin. To move international stakeholders closer to prevention objectives, cultivating shared conceptions of preearly warning indicators and actionable upstream prevention toolkits would be a significant step forward.
- **Developing shared diagnostic capacity:** The most frequently discussed gap in capacities that could potentially be addressed through transatlantic cooperation was shared diagnostic assessments of at-risk situations.
- **Learning from challenges and maturing norms and institutions:** Participants recognized the progress that has been made in integrating R2P and atrocity prevention at the conceptual and, to a lesser degree, operational levels. The track record of these processes to date is not the final word on prevention, and the limited successes and shortcomings present avenues for continued learning and improved methods.
- **Critical inflection points on the horizon:** With the upcoming changes in leadership at the United Nations and in Washington, institutionalizing prevention structures and mainstreaming practice will face a critical juncture in the coming years.

The United Nations and Atrocity Prevention

The United Nations presents a critical avenue for pursuing transatlantic cooperation on atrocity prevention. The issues raised during the discussion focused on continuing to develop R2P as the primary framework for prevention within the UN system. Participants examined ways transatlantic players could push for greater mainstreaming and common understandings, create space for engagement and dialogue on prevention, and address operational challenges and shortcomings at the United Nations. Participants put forward normative-level critiques and recommendations as well as operational suggestions for areas for further research and conversation through the lens of transatlantic cooperation for prevention.

Participants noted that the next several years could be a key turning point for R2P and prevention at the United Nations as the successor to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon defines his/her agenda and the ten-year review of R2P begins. In addition, the Rights Up Front initiative is a means to situate these issues at the heart of decision making by connecting the Secretariat to practitioners working at both the regional and national levels. In order to move a prevention agenda forward at the United Nations, participants noted that it will be critical for powerful actors within the organization to signal a demand for mainstreaming prevention across the UN system.

The challenges discussed during this session indicated the difficulty of confronting atrocities and the prices of success and increasing acceptance of the R2P norm. The original conception of R2P was a tremendous leap forward for prevention, but there were inherent shortcomings. As participants noted,

it was too state focused and therefore missed critical aspects of prevention, including the role of civil society actors and the impact of individual decision makers in implementing the responsibilities to which they agreed.

General consensus emerged that strong progress has been made for embedding the normative elements of atrocity prevention in the UN system; however, progress in operationalizing the principles remains uneven. Participants discussed the differences between interventions done under the auspices of Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter as they relate to prevention and the challenges that chronically underresourced and understaffed missions have in fulfilling their mandates to protect civilians.

In examining the role of the United Nations in atrocity prevention, participants were asked to apply a transatlantic perspective and assess opportunities and impediments in the current system. In examining this dimension, they focused on opportunities to move the needle from response to prevention and ways to enhance operational aspects of atrocity prevention. Transatlantic cooperation offers the potential to engage key actors well before the “early warning” phase and to take action long before these issues appear on a formal agenda at the United Nations through the multiple points of intersections with at-risk countries.

A critical component of successfully moving toward prevention is developing shared diagnostic capacities among like-minded, capable actors. Essential aspects of this analysis include deep understanding of the context and participatory assessments. Additionally, a common lexicon and understanding of prevention, mitigation, and protection of civilians are essential for effective analysis and implementation among actors at the United Nations, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Multiple commentators indicated the need to increasingly recognize the impact of domestic politics in countries on the receiving end of an R2P intervention rather than only raising the issues in relation to US and European contexts.

In discussing next steps for transatlantic cooperation at the United Nations, participants focused on moving the needle from response to prevention through UN instruments. Opportunities for supporting that shift include creating a shared diagnostic capacity for assessing atrocity risk; creating forums for engaging powerful states, regional players, and

countries involved; sequencing actions along the pre-early warning, early warning, and response spectrum and further conceptual development; and research based on practical experience and lessons learned. The logical means for coordinating these activities is the Office of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and R2P; however, additional resources will be critical to any movement on next steps.

The United States and Atrocity Prevention

The United States remains the most forward leaning country in developing domestic policy and structures for atrocity prevention as well as a leader in prevention efforts on the international stage. President Barack Obama declared that preventing mass atrocities is a core national security interest and moral responsibility of the United States in inaugurating the administration’s efforts. However, progress to date remains measured. Structures for preventions, most notably the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB), have been created, but the complex processes driving atrocities continue to result in the intentional killing of civilians in many conflict-prone countries. The focus of this session was on the potential for transatlantic actors to learn from the experience of the United States and to critically examine the next steps for improving US capacity for prevention and response.

In assessing US efforts to date, participants discussed lessons that could be derived from progress on creating prevention structures and impediments that have limited results to date. These subjects included dedicated budgetary and human resources for prevention; shared understandings of what is meant by prevention and early warning, as well as the toolkits available to policymakers and mechanisms for connecting recognition of an at-risk situation to response; and limitations on transparency for investigating successes and failures of these efforts.

Despite these challenges, participants recognized the value of US efforts for modeling these policies even if direct replication is not possible among transatlantic partners. Additionally, the APB and prevention policies of the administration more broadly were identified as a process that can continue to be refined if support for those efforts were maintained. Toward that end, participants discussed a variety of options for augmenting current efforts and institutionalizing the progress that has been made.

The recommendations offered by participants included additional statements from senior officials that atrocity prevention remains a priority for the

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administration; increasing transparency through the publication of a declassified version of the National Intelligence Estimate on the global risk of mass atrocities and genocide; creating congressional mechanisms for addressing the subject; and microinstitutionalizing expertise and operational responsibilities with relevant agencies. To promote greater transatlantic cooperation, participants discussed developing joint diagnostic and assessment forums; fostering dialogue on thematic aspects prevention, such as incitement or enablers; and examining national support mechanisms for R2P focal points.

Development and Atrocity Prevention

Mass atrocities are said to be the antithesis of development. This session looked at how development writ large is able to help inoculate societies against the onset of mass atrocities, respond to humanitarian crises, and assist in recovery and transition after these events. In that regard, the transatlantic landscape presents multiple entry points for this discussion and has the potential to include a range of actors deeply involved in development but not necessarily viewing their work through an atrocity prevention lens of analysis.

Development presents opportunities for information sharing and shared diagnostic assessments as well as operational mechanisms for reducing the risk of mass atrocities. Development actors tend to be on the ground, gathering information to inform their work and forming relationships with local actors. Recognizing and communicating information at these levels makes development professionals a potentially strong node for connecting the dots for early warning and taking preventative action. Development actors also have critical roles in prevention, mitigation, and recovery. Through programs seeking to prevent conflict and build resilience, provide humanitarian assistance and assist political transitions, and support transitional justice and trauma-healing activities, development touches each phase of atrocity response.

While development offers avenues for prevention and response, its activities are not without risks. Whereas countries with established institutions and economic systems tend to be at low risk for atrocities, states in transition have presented serious challenges to development objectives. Development professionals should consider how to balance the need to build stronger state institutions and gain legitimacy for their aid-effective programs without supporting corrupt or discriminatory regimes. In a worst-case scenario, these efforts may inadvertently augment the capacity of perpetrators to commit atrocities or increase the motivation to maintain their hold on power.

Expanding cooperation and communication among the full spectrum of development actors presents an opportunity to move away from crisis response and toward prevention. The existing organizational infrastructure and activities of development agencies, including multilateral activities around the Millennium Development Goals and Rights Up Front, make the synergies between development and atrocity prevention a promising avenue to pursue. The potential for transatlantic cooperation on development for atrocity prevention is significant; however, it may first require taking an inventory of this landscape to map out the most fruitful avenues and platforms for pursuing this agenda among the diffuse efforts of numerous actors.

Drawing out the nexus between atrocity prevention and development requires fleshing out the conceptual and practical overlaps at each phase.

Participants' suggestions included creating forums for joint assessments with transatlantic and Global South perspectives represented and connecting the negative development impacts to the need for prevention. Additionally, participants indicated the need for ongoing cooperation during the assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation phases of development programming and stated that development for prevention is not simply a technical solution. These will be deeply political endeavors, and they need to be approached with an acknowledgment of the political consequences at the forefront of coordination efforts.

Evaluating Atrocity Prevention: The Case of Libya

The NATO-led and US-supported action in Libya in 2011 is frequently cited as an example of a successful intervention to protect civilians under the auspices of R2P that subsequently exceeded its original mandate to include removing the regime of Muammar Qaddafi. However, evaluating atrocity prevention through this case draws out a much broader range of issues than this narrative takes into account. In the final session of the Strategy for Peace Conference, participants held a wide-ranging discussion on Libya as a case that demonstrates the need for further development of R2P as it continues to be more accepted and a greater focus on developing more robust doctrine and practice for prevention.

While the case of Libya is often seen as involving the implementation of a doctrine of intervention, participants discussed this case as illustrative of the need for and absence of a comparable prevention doctrine. While Libya is an example of action, where clear, credible, and imminent threats against civilians galvanized momentum, participants noted that as a whole, the international community is still focused on response rather than having a strategic approach to prevention.

In evaluating Libya as an example of atrocity prevention, participants indicated that the normative quality of R2P is aspirational and should not be expected to have textbook outcomes in practice. As part of a growing process for a young norm in international affairs, it should be expected that putting it into practice will create new challenges. For R2P, these challenges include a greater understanding of the responsibilities incumbent on states and the international community before and after interventions to protect civilians. Participants emphasized that the role of day-after planning has only increased with

the scrutiny over Libya and indicated that this will remain a central issue for decision makers considering atrocity prevention, response, and recovery policy.

The fact that the intervention in Libya took place under the auspices of NATO is not an insignificant aspect of evaluating prevention and indicates the central role for like-minded and capable actors in response operations. Participants agreed that the United States is the essential leader in most cases, even if it is not the main operational player; however, there are limits to what any US administration may be willing and able to do. The transatlantic cooperation and coordination role is essential for burden sharing and leveraging the fullest possible capacity among the international community for prevention and response.

A crucial point for participants was that Libya demonstrates the need to move the focus from response to prevention. Once the danger is imminent, missions are more complicated and costly, and they only present least-worst options for stopping would-be perpetrators. Among the recommendations, many participants focused on continuing to learn from the Libyan example by consulting additional players such as the African Union, Brazil, and South Africa for their postintervention analyses. In particular, how to build accountability mechanisms into an intervention process once a mission is authorized was an important question for future atrocity response operations. Participants also noted that the case of Libya highlighted the need for in-depth assessments with the participation of regional and local perspectives for a deep understanding of the context, including domestic political dynamics.

Conclusion

Transatlantic cooperation on atrocity prevention is one critical dimension for leveraging the full scope of capabilities to reduce the risk of these crimes being committed and to end violence against civilians once it has begun. The goal of calling on this segment of the international community is not an exercise in exclusivity, but rather a means for greater collaboration among like-minded, capable states. Having greater cooperation among traditional donor states then sets the table for more-productive engagements at the United Nations, with development agencies, and with regional organizations and domestic actors.

The approaching transitions at the United Nations and in the United States make the next few years a critical period for R2P and atrocity prevention. Each

secretary-general determines his or her priorities and signature issue and is unlikely to select the same ones as his or her predecessor, so where R2P and prevention fall on the agenda will be important to watch. Similarly, a new administration in Washington will need to be educated on these issues as new priorities are defined.

While the conversations during conference sessions touched on a wide range of subjects, a core set of needs for continued research and collaboration emerged, with particular ramifications for transatlantic engagement. Principal among them is a need for a shared, participatory process of diagnostic and analytical assessment of atrocity risk and action. One potential way to create that type of transatlantic forum would be for development agencies to flesh out the conceptual and operational linkages for upstream prevention, crisis response, and postcrisis recovery.

Participants also cautioned about the increasing connection between counterterrorism/countering violent extremism and atrocity prevention. While similar root causes of atrocities may make a case for interrelated upstream prevention, the operational elements and implementers downstream are increasingly problematic for practical and political reasons. In both theory and practice, this reality presents many unknowns and challenges for transatlantic cooperation. Discussing the issue, participants recognized that crises around the world had outrun the practitioners' thinking on the subject and that this fact was likely to be a consideration for prevention, mitigation, and recovery efforts for the foreseeable future.

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In addition to extensive conversations around opportunities for transatlantic cooperation at the government level, participants also emphasized how critical parallel tracks among nongovernmental actors are for successful prevention at preearly warning, early warning, and mitigation phases. In particular, contributions to assessment, including utilizing a state responsibility-to-protect framework, stood out as providing a strong role for like-minded civil society actors.

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Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Participants attended as individuals rather than as representatives of their governments or organizations.

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Our programming addresses profound threats to human survival where improved multilateral governance and cooperation are fundamental to transforming real-world policy. Current efforts focus on policy improvement to prevent genocide and mass atrocities, eliminate the threat of nuclear terrorism, and drive collective and long-term action on climate change. The foundation also works to promote global education in our hometown of Muscatine, Iowa, and nearby.

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