



The Challenges of State Fragility for US and Global Security in an Interdependent World

The Stanley Foundation's
50th Strategy for Peace Conference

October 15–17, 2009
Airlie Center, Warrenton, Virginia

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CHALLENGES OF

Introduction

Parsing the Global Problem of State Fragility

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The Stanley Foundation used the occasion of its 50th Strategy for Peace Conference (SPC) at Airlie House Conference Center in Warrenton, Virginia, to go beyond the well-worn debates over which bureaucratic agencies or departments should have more funding or authority, instead addressing the major (often implicit) political/conceptual hurdles still blocking structural changes in US policies and toolkits toward the most fragile, weak, and failing states in the international system. In a Track 1 1/2, not-for-attribution format, participants were asked to assess the core question, “What does it mean for the United States to treat state fragility, in all its forms and guises, as a strategic security challenge on the same order as nuclear proliferation or competition with rising powers such as China?”

Whether one calls it effective peacebuilding, effective conflict prevention, sustainable development, state building, or institution building, this conference assumed that the core international security task is for US policies and toolkits to start addressing directly the roots of weakness and conflict, so as to work with the international community to bring the weakest states to a place where they are on an upward, rather than downward, evolutionary path. Across three separate and simultaneous roundtable discussions among US officials, US experts, and experts and officials from the United Nations, Europe, and elsewhere, the 50th annual SPC challenged participants to think about the problem as more than just giving more money to extant bureaucratic structures, or giving new seats on the US National Security Council to currently disempowered actors. Participants were also challenged to go beyond concepts associated with traditional development, which may unduly assume fully functional state structures and/or which may not treat root conflict drivers that continue to render traditional development measures ineffective.

Ultimately, across both a bevy of working papers and dialogues, participants were faced with the conceptual and political task now

facing the US policy community in “real time”: What does “US national security” mean in a world where up to 60 states are already severely underdeveloped and in danger of getting worse across several social science indicators, increasing the chances of widespread state failure beyond current high-profile cases such as Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, or Pakistan? What policy tools, modes of security thought, and plans for operational action are required in a world where the worst threats to both US and global security may come from state weakness rather than state strength?

US Strategies for Conflict Prevention, Conflict Mitigation, and Long-Term State Building in Africa and Beyond

The event was deliberately split into three dialogues and sets of working papers that looked at different “angles” or “points of entry” into the strategic problem of state fragility:

- **Forging a US Strategy for Strengthening Fragile States.** This roundtable examined the conceptual and political challenges of crafting a truly “grand” strategy for holistically addressing state fragility in all its global aspects, but with limited US power and resources in mind.
- **Stabilizing States in Crisis: Leveraging International Capacity.** This roundtable looked more precisely at the problem of states that are sliding into (or are already in) total crisis and failure, with special attention given to the ability of the United States to leverage the real or nascent capacities of actors such as the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, and other multilateral partnerships.
- **African Security and the Future of AFRICOM.** This roundtable concentrated on the current difficulties and conundrums (military and political, bureaucratic and budgetary) facing America’s newest regional command in a continent housing most of the 40-60 most fragile states in the world.

This introductory piece will summarize the intent, arguments, and results for each roundtable and subject area, followed by the actual working papers and the full dialogue results from each discussion.

STATE FRAGILITY

Forging a US Strategy for Strengthening Fragile States

The aim of this roundtable and the associated working papers was to stimulate in-depth discussion and practical policy recommendations on how the United States can develop a holistic strategy for strengthening fragile states. Currently, the US approach to fragile states does not reflect the urgency of the problem, which affects approximately one-third of the world's population and some 40-60 at-risk states (depending upon how one defines "at risk"). The 2002 National Security Strategy asserted that failing states are more of a threat to national security than strong states. Yet the strategic importance of the issue is not sufficiently matched by our capacity to address it. There is no single office in the national security structure that is mandated to focus on the full breadth of the problem and that carries sufficient authority to orchestrate a holistic, interagency approach—nothing comparable, for example, to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to deal with environmental problems, the Threat Reduction Initiative to deal with nuclear proliferation, or Homeland Security to deal with natural and man-made disasters.

Instead, each agency takes its own approach to weak and failing states (WFS), using its own framework, methodology, and tools. As a result, the US government has a fragmented "stovepipe" structure, in which each bureau treats the issue as a subset of its own agenda rather than as an important subject area in its own right. WFS are viewed as a subset of the developmental, military, or diplomatic structures, and are then divided into pre- and post-conflict crises requiring different policies. This segmented approach does not grasp the challenges inherent in the full life cycle of internal conflicts, with the result that the military has ended up with the principal responsibility for solving the problems of state building and stability operations.

The authors of the two working papers for this roundtable, Kenneth Menkhaus and roundtable chair Pauline Baker, responded to this gap between clear global operational needs and existing US capacities by recommending both US conceptual and bureaucratic advances that, in their intent and scope, are similar to past US doctrinal documents such as NSC-68 and the creation of the National Security Council (NSC). In the realm of conceptual, political, and strategic advances, for example,

Dr. Menkhaus argues that an integral component of a new US strategy for strengthening fragile states should, as a first order of business, create generally agreed-upon typologies of state fragility and failure that allow for more coordinated and purposeful planning. As argued by Menkhaus, the US policymaking process lacks *broadly agreed-upon* typologies in assessing four crucial areas: (1) the *degree* of fragility or failure; (2) the *type* of fragility or failure; (3) the *likely impacts* of these latter two variables on US and global security interests (on a case-by-case basis); and (4) the feasibility of US and international policy objectives toward a given state. In the absence of creating these intragovernmental typologies and the resulting assessments, participants largely concurred with Menkhaus's conclusion that it is impossible to say with any certainty which fragile states should receive what type of aid and when and how they should receive it.

In the realm of structural or bureaucratic advances in US capacities, Baker argued for the creation of a new Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Security in the NSC with the necessary staffing, budget, and authority to develop and implement a comprehensive US strategy for fragile states. In her view, the directorate would allow for a more strategic consultation process with Congress that would establish criteria for US engagement, or nonengagement, in fragile states, including diplomatic, economic, and military options that can be utilized throughout the full "life cycle of a conflict" for *both* prevention and response. Such an entity would also help the United States form an international coalition of partner organizations and countries that could join in developing strategies, coordinating interventions (nonmilitary and military), providing resources (including rapid response mechanisms to ensure that early warning means early action), and building local institutional capacities for good governance in high-risk states.

Overall, this roundtable struggled with the fact that state fragility is, paradoxically, neither a new international reality nor limited in its scope; state fragility has, arguably, often been the norm, both historically and in today's world. This inherently presents problems for national security planners who know that the challenges presented by fragile states are increasingly pressing and negative in their effects, but also are contending

with a finite set of US and international resources and capacities for dealing with the problem. As fittingly summarized by Menkhous,

State weakness has been a problem for as long as the state itself became an increasingly universal form of political organization, and has increased with the dramatic expansion of Newly Independent States during the wave of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s.ⁱ Indeed, a compelling case can be made that it is the modern Weberian state that is the exception.ⁱⁱ Conditions of state fragility have worsened in the past two decades. Yet what is new is not fragility but rather international concern over the security threat posed by failed and fragile states, especially since 9/11.

However, this is hardly a case for throwing one's hands in the air and saying the United States (with others) can do nothing but react to the worst crises as they come up—as is arguably now the case, with the United States and its friends and allies largely prioritizing just a few worst-off cases for “treatment” based on specific threats of jihadist terrorism or piracy. Indeed, as the reader can see in the results of two days of intensive roundtable discussions, the participants of this roundtable discussed specific policy recommendations that range from the most “grand strategic” or macrolevel in nature to the mid- and micro-level areas of political thought, bureaucratic roles, and operational action.

Stabilizing States in Crisis: Leveraging International Capacity

The principal assumption of this roundtable and associated working papers was that the United States (and the international community more generally) will sooner or later face another crisis caused by acute instability and conflict in one of the many weak states in the world. The objective was to identify where and how current international capacities in three critical areas—rapid political, security, and humanitarian assistance—could be harnessed more effectively by the United States to stabilize states in crisis. This analysis, in turn, also identified obvious areas where the United States itself should purposefully strengthen its own crisis response, conflict management, and conflict mitigation capabilities.

Furthermore, this roundtable asked the qualitative and quantitative question, “How can the United States work with global and regional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), major nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), allies, donor states, and others to manage and mitigate crises in a way that *will eventually allow for truly sustainable state ownership and capacity building* down the road, during a future post-conflict peacebuilding effort?”

In answering such questions, the roundtable was split into four main sessions: (1) late early warning—how the United States and others can work ahead of time to put in place methods of cooperation that do not leave the international community completely blindsided by conflict escalation, even in cases where full conflict prevention fails; (2) focused humanitarian interventions to stop conflict; (3) focused and feasible military interventions; and (4) effective political interventions.

The authors of three different working papers examined separate, but linked, facets of this complex security equation. First, as noted by Michele Griffin in “Rapid Political Response: A View From Turtle Bay” (i.e., the UN view of the global challenge), it is important to think about “states in crisis” from the standpoint of chronic social conflict as much as traditional conceptions of civil war or formal armed conflict between internal armies: “Civil wars and organized rebellion are widely thought to be on the decrease...whereas organized crime, narco-violence, piracy, terrorism, and other types of transnational or subnational violence are on the rise.” Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind the new, evolving international context of rising powers and a multipolar world: “We appear to be in the midst of a realignment of global power relations, with traditional powers less able to assert their agendas...and emerging or resurgent powers more effectively blocking but not yet consistently playing a leadership role. This greatly complicates the nature of the demands placed upon the United Nations and the support it receives to meet those demands.”

Within this context, Griffin argues for a political commitment by all UN members to use the full toolbox that the UN agencies and departments have already created in response to state fragility. The extant set

of UN concepts, doctrines, and operational tools among myriad agencies includes ideas for pressing forward on the true long-term political resolution of conflicts in troubled states, institution building in fractured societies, and provision of durable security in chronically insecure environments. However, to empower, fund, and apply these evolving tools, the member states themselves (especially the P-5) must understand, accept, and embrace the full agenda of conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution. As summarized by Griffin,

If we are to do better at averting crises and at resolving them more durably, tools such as peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be regarded as part of a political solution, not alternatives to one. Too many years of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance without sufficient attention to the political track have turned out to be a very expensive band-aid, and in too many places the end result has been backsliding into conflict.

Nobody can afford these partial responses anymore. The annual peacekeeping budget now stands at nearly \$8 billion, just as the global financial crisis and pressure on the militaries of developed countries mean available funds and troops are diminishing. Recent studies have found that 15 years' worth of development aid to Africa was effectively cancelled out by the cost of war (much of it preventable) on the continent. Preventing and resolving conflicts—rather than simply stabilizing them and ameliorating their effects at great cost—requires political solutions. We can only deliver those solutions if we have the tools and the political commitment to do so.

Also necessary for resolving such problems is rigorous and trustworthy early-warning mechanisms at the subregional, regional, and global levels. Such mechanisms (and ideally, their firm connections to political decision-making processes at some level) are required so that brewing political, social, and material conflicts in individual fragile states do not explode without any prior action or knowledge by other countries, whether the other interested parties would be next-door neighbors, fellow members of a continent, major powers, or all members of the United Nations.

David Nyheim's paper delves deeply into the operating realities of two of the world's most advanced early-warning systems: "ECOWARN," run by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and the Conflict and Early Warning Response Mechanism (CEWARN) run by the subregional Intergovernmental Authority on Development in East Africa. Although considerable progress has been made by both of these institutions and by major powers and the United Nations—relative to where the world was when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989—Nyheim concludes that for true crisis prevention and mitigation to take place reliably when states are on the verge of failing, much more needs to be done in the way of:

- Rigorous and analytically valid early-warning *methodologies*.
- The gathering of reliable, accurate, timely, and comprehensive *data* for early warning.
- Early-warning *staffing* (i.e., human capital).
- Early-warning *financing*.
- Effective *response* mechanisms.

As summarized by Nyheim himself:

- Warning reports are of variable quality—drawing on poor information sources, with often unsubstantiated analyses, and weak recommendations on what should be done in response (with recommendations that are sometimes irrelevant to responding institutions).
- The “delivery systems” of responses, as embodied in the mechanisms and instruments available to many governmental and intergovernmental institutions, are still immature. They are slow, reactive, overly bureaucratic, disjointed from warnings, and rarely can help launch timely and effective responses.

Finally, former Marine Ron Capps argued that the United States must undertake much more specific institutional reforms to reconcile US global interests in fragile states with declining US resources and (potentially) declining public support for foreign interventions of any kind over the long term. After examining current capabilities and shortfalls in US military response mechanisms—and with the

problem of “limited resources” in mind—Capps recommends that US policymakers concentrate on three key strategic tasks: an assertive restoration of order in a state beset by violent crisis; protection of humanitarian relief operations in crisis-state contexts; and reacting to a mass atrocity in a crisis state. In furthering the development of US capacities for these three broad missions, Capps extensively reviews existing institutional capacities *outside* the United States which, he argues, the United States can and should draw upon in a more preplanned, concerted fashion. Capps pays special attention to the extent and evolving capacities of the United Nations, NATO, the African Union, the European Union, and finally, the follow-on to the Shanghai Cooperation Council, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Finally, Capps argues persuasively for very focused, outcomes-oriented funding and training efforts by the United States to increase the capacities of such institutions (where international politics allows), thereby ensuring that other multilateral actors themselves are in a better place to take on additional burdens across these three mission areas. Thus, the question is not just one of “What can we, the United States, hand over to others?”, but rather, “What can we, the United States, do to *build up other institutions* so they can be better multilateral partners in the future in crisis state situations?”

The full working papers, as well as the principal results of intensive expert and official discussions begin on page 50.

African Security and the Future of AFRICOM

This roundtable assessed AFRICOM’s future strategic role and identity. In doing so, it examined how the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), as a relatively new unified regional command, can play a crucial supporting role for larger sustainable development, peacebuilding, and conflict prevention on the African continent.

The conference agenda tackled the challenges of coordination and cooperation with extant US agencies as well as a plethora of IGOs, international NGOs, and African civil society. The history of how other regional commands have met these and other policy and security challenges were a pertinent part of roundtable discussions.

Questions that were asked in open, not-for-attribution roundtable discussions included:

- What are Africa’s major security challenges and how does AFRICOM help to address them?
- Where is AFRICOM at present, and where could it (or should it) go?
- How might AFRICOM assist with comprehensive, whole-of-government approaches to supporting African security?
- Is US military aid in Africa connected to basic security sector reform? What are the opportunities and challenges in better aligning military security with law enforcement, justice, and human rights?
- What is AFRICOM’s role in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration?
- How are Pacific Command (PACOM) in Asia, or Central Command (CENTCOM) in the Middle East, related to the question of state fragility in their geographic areas of responsibility? With what lessons for AFRICOM’s future evolution and roles?
- How have the geographic commands in other regions related to other US agencies such as US Agency for International Development, Department of State, Department of Commerce, and so on in searching for comprehensive solutions? Are there best practices for these commands?
- How might AFRICOM support greater sustainable development, peacebuilding, and conflict prevention within the Department of State and USAID, the National Security Council, Department of Treasury, and other parts of the executive branch?
- How does AFRICOM link up with IGOs such as the United Nations, including UN peacekeeping mandates in Africa? What role may it have beyond simple humanitarianism (US “hearts and minds” interventions) and hard military strikes against terrorist cells?

- Overall, how can AFRICOM best be guided and supported in a way that it adds to, rather than detracts from, the larger agenda of dealing successfully with state fragility?

Rather than answer these questions up-front with specially commissioned working papers, participants instead broadly shared their own most recent analyses on these challenges as inputs into the two days of discussions. To review this evolving literature, see the Stanley Foundation Web site at stanleyfoundation.org/SPC50. The full policy recommendations, findings, and conclusions from this roundtable dialogue begin on page 99.

Conclusion

Facing the Inevitable Security Challenges Emanating From State Fragility

The need for the United States to leverage the capabilities of international organizations to help prevent, manage, and resolve crises in fragile states has, arguably, never been higher. The US military is overstretched and the willingness of the American public to support additional foreign commitments is extremely limited. Besides the benefits of burden-sharing, partnerships with international organizations can provide much-needed legitimacy to stabilization efforts.

However, to get to a place where timely, effective, well-coordinated, and reliable multilateral actors toward fragile states are the norm rather than the exception in international security politics, the United States must get beyond well-worn debates about which bureau gets how much money, or whether a “czar” should be appointed for the issue. Rather, US policymakers need to identify the major political/intellectual hurdles blocking more holistic approaches and move forward with practical policy recommendations on how to integrate solutions to the many difficult challenges involved.

This volume, reflecting two days of intensive discussions and probing analytical efforts by some of today’s top thinkers in the field, offers key next steps in this regard.

Endnotes

¹ It is worth noting, however, that the “newness” of states correlates only partially with state fragility. Many of the original 51 member states of the United Nations in 1945 rank among the most fragile states in the world; some have broken up and no longer exist at all. The USSR and Yugoslavia no longer exist; Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, and India were among those that lost a portion of territory to secessionists; and Haiti, Lebanon, Colombia, El Salvador, Iraq, Honduras, and Guatemala are among the many original member states that at some point have suffered prolonged crises of internal war and state failure.

² Alex de Waal, “Protecting Civilians in Fragile States,” Presentation to Oxfam-Novib, The Hague, 21 September 2009.

Keynote Address

By Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson
Bureau of African Affairs, US Department of State

First of all, I salute all involved not just tonight, but over these many years, for making this 50th anniversary Strategy for Peace Conference possible. To Stanley Foundation Chair Richard Stanley, your ongoing dedication and commitment to bring peaceful solutions to the world's problems is a fine testament to your family's legacy. We have many shared Iowan roots among us. Although we aren't in Iowa this evening, luckily we have the best of Iowa here with us tonight.

It is a great honor for me to be at Airlie House to talk with all of you about the Obama administration's policies and hopes for Africa. I would like to use this occasion to have a conversation with you. For those of you who know me, that's my style. I much prefer a give and take rather than a formal presentation. With all of you experts here this evening, I warn you now that I expect a very lively discussion. But let me begin with some brief remarks to give you a sense of the direction that the administration's policies towards Africa are likely to take.

I have spent my entire professional life working on and in Africa. The opportunity to serve as the assistant secretary of state for Africa in this administration is a dream come true, the dream of a lifetime. I feel especially fortunate and pleased that there are so many others here in this room who share my passion and engagement on issues related to Africa. This encourages me to believe that working together, we can have the strength to make a substantial difference in our relations with Africa and improve conditions for the people of Africa.

In the four months since I became assistant secretary, I have seen President Obama's strong, continuing and personal interest in what happens on the continent. I know that he will give Africa a much greater priority among our foreign policy interests. We are already seeing this manifested in travel to the continent by administration offi-

cials—including the president's own travel to Ghana. Our Ambassador to the United Nations, my former boss, Susan Rice, visited five African countries in June. Deputy Secretary of State Jack Lew visited Ethiopia and Tanzania in July. And Secretary Clinton made an extensive—and truly successful—seven-country, 11-day trip to Africa in August.

President Obama engaged with many African heads of state at the United Nations General Assembly in September when he hosted a luncheon meeting for them in New York. He also met with the African leaders who attended the G-8/G-20 meeting in Pittsburgh. All of these are clear indications of a strong commitment on the part of the administration to make Africa a central part of our thinking with respect to America's foreign policy engagement.

The president has made clear that, despite the serious challenges confronting Africa today, we are hopeful about the continent. We believe in Africa's potential and its promise. We remain committed to Africa's future. And we will be strong partners with African people and African governments.

The world of geostrategic politics continues to shift as the world community leaves behind the challenges and the chessboard of the Cold War era. We have moved towards a future that is more global, more resource-conscious, and more affected by transnational issues. The challenges of health, disease, security, food scarcities, energy needs, and uneven preservation of the planet's resources confront every nation on every continent. Given Africa's natural resources, its human capital, its importance on issues such as climate change, health, and security, it is no wonder that the president says that the 21st century will not be shaped merely in the capitals of the traditional superpowers, but by the continent of Africa and its leaders as well.

We cannot ignore the role that Africa and its people must play in the international community. The administration sees Africa as a fundamental part of developing solutions to the challenges we face, especially the challenges that confront the African continent. We envisage a much stronger partnership in which cooperation, mutual respect, and mutual responsibility are the foundations of success between the

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United States and Africa and its many diverse nations. We believe that African countries and their people must take the lead, must look to a brighter future, and must examine themselves frankly to allow us to be honest and open partners together.

The president has acknowledged that considerable progress has been achieved in many parts of Africa. But he has also noted that a good deal of the continent's potential has yet to be fulfilled. In the 1960's, some African countries had growth rates and per capita income levels higher than many countries in Asia. Kenya, for example, had a per capita income higher than Korea in 1960. But, they have not sustained this promise and have fallen far behind Asia and other emerging markets. We must acknowledge that much of Africa is poor and its people disadvantaged by ineffective governments, weak infrastructures, natural and man-made disasters, and corruption. These have robbed the people of Africa of their opportunities to succeed.

But that is only part of the story. Now in the 21st century, we are beginning to see some budding success stories. We need to nurture these and enable them to blossom into self-sustaining models that can be replicated across the continent. Changes have occurred to disprove the reigning stereotypical views that we see all too often in the media. We must seek out and publicize the progress that is occurring to give hope to others and encourage investment in people and countries. That is critical.

Our policies will emphasize mutual responsibility. Our commitment will be measured not merely in monetary and programmatic assistance, although the president has pledged substantial increases in our foreign assistance to Africa, but will also be gauged in ways that further our mutual interests. Success will not be determined by our remaining a source of perpetual aid so that people can just scrape by. We must judge our efforts by whether we build partnerships and local capacity to help develop and reduce the need for assistance in the future.

Our new partnerships with Africa will focus on five areas of critical importance that reflect America's core values and interests, as well as

issues of significance and importance to Africa. I will touch briefly on these and we can discuss them more in depth when I have finished this presentation.

First, we will work with African governments and civil society to strengthen democratic institutions and protect the gains that have been made in many places in Africa in the area of democracy and governance. This includes rule of law, constitutional norms, democratic principles and privileges, the creation of greater opportunities, and the ability to peacefully change governments.

Second, as we have done historically, we will work for sustained economic development and growth across the continent. I do not need to explain to this audience why this remains a critical and essential part of American policy, as well as an interest of the entire international community. We have numerous programs and institutions to undertake this particular challenge. And we will use every tool at our disposal, and hope to encourage some nontraditional ones, to become more engaged and involved with fostering a more prosperous Africa. Without growth and development, especially that of open markets and the institutions and laws of a market economy, prosperity will not be achievable over the long term. One of the cornerstones of President Obama's vision for a better future, a better world for our children, is a global economy that advances opportunity for all people. Economic growth will not be sustained or shared unless all nations embrace their responsibilities, both as members of the international community and within borders where economic disparity can hold back vast segments of citizens. Opportunity must be available to all.

Third, we will maintain our historical focus on health issues with a particular emphasis on public health and the strengthening of African delivery systems to provide the kinds of access, treatment, and prevention that remain essential for progress in most other areas. We view this as a basic building block to achieving our other objectives. There is no question that the need for improved health care is vast. And the challenges exceed our own resources and capacities. But we hope to work intensively with our global partners and institutions to ensure that this sector remains a top priority. We

intend to make every effort to ensure that resources are deployed and spent in a coordinated and complementary manner that multiplies the impact across the continent.

Fourth, we will continue to work with the international community and African states and leaders to prevent, mitigate, and resolve interstate conflicts and disputes. To the extent we have the ability to become a player, we will also work to mitigate and end internal disputes such as those in Sudan, Somalia, and the Eastern Congo so that greater stability and security can lead to improved living conditions for those countries and their citizens. Each conflict generates poverty, disease, refugees, death, destruction, and regional destabilization. Africa cannot afford these calamities, and we will not ignore them. We will work with our friends to bring about greater regional and local security. We will seek partners who share our concerns to end these man-made tragedies.

Before moving on to the fifth and final area of critical importance we see in our relations with Africa, I would like to briefly mention a program housed in the Bureau of African Affairs that some of you may not be familiar with. Given that it supports the goal I outlined above and promotes the multilateral security approach we are here tonight to explore, I think it is worth taking a few minutes to discuss “ACOTA.”

I promise you I did not coin this acronym, but inherited it. ACOTA is the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program. It originated in 1997 to enhance the capacity of African partner nations to participate in multinational peace support operations in Africa. The program provides extensive field training and equipment for African peacekeepers and multinational force personnel.

An ACOTA partner’s participation in a peace support operation normally falls under a mandate from the United Nations, the African Union, or another regional organization. As an international partner, ACOTA seeks to complement and support British, French, Dutch, Canadian, EU, and other allied peacekeeping and training efforts. ACOTA programs also stress human rights, HIV/AIDS awareness,

combating gender-based violence, child exploitation, and trafficking-in-persons. As of September 2009, ACOTA has provided training and equipment to over 170,000 African peacekeepers in 24 partner countries. These countries, in turn, have sent peacekeeping contingents to varied missions across the continent, including UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in Sudan, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Liberia, and Somalia.

ACOTA exemplifies how we can work together with African partners to ensure a more secure and peaceful continent. Although I am proud of my bureau’s efforts and accomplishments across the board, ACOTA is a program that merits special praise.

Now I would like to return to the core areas of mutual concern between the United States and Africa. Let me repeat the four I previously mentioned—strengthening democratic institutions; sustaining economic growth; improving efforts in the health sector; and resolving interstate conflicts and disputes.

Fifth and finally, the 21st century has brought new transnational challenges to Africa that were previously prevalent mostly outside of the continent. These global issues have now come to infect Africa with the same virulence that they have appeared elsewhere. Narco-trafficking, climate change, illegal exploitation of maritime resources, and energy security are all eroding our ability to meet the historical challenges that have faced Africa. We intend to address these issues in Africa with our African partners with the same seriousness that we have addressed them in our own country and elsewhere. We have learned that these are global challenges, transnational challenges, and that we cannot afford to ignore them wherever they are.

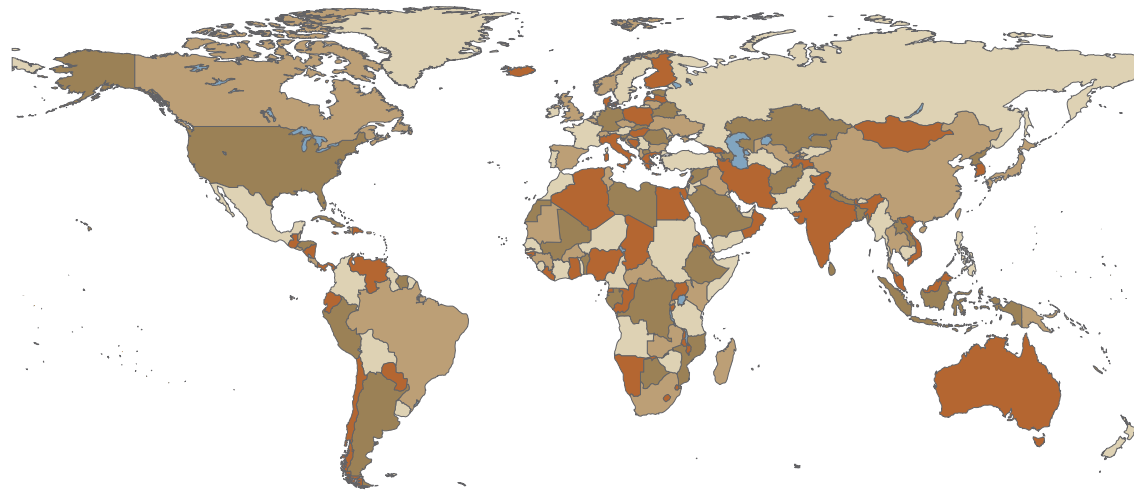
The selection of President Obama as the recipient of this year’s Nobel Prize for Peace Award signals that his vision for a better world is validated at the very highest levels of the global community. As President Obama stated in his remarks at the United Nations General Assembly a few weeks ago, “more than at any other point in human history the interests of nations and peoples are shared.” Forums like this bring together those like us who are committed to find global solutions to

global problems. They are not easy to find. Implementing them is even harder. But with the knowledge and creativity in this room tonight, we continue to work for Africa's progress. And we will continue to urge Africans to take responsibility for Africa's progress.

To reiterate what I said at the beginning of my remarks, we remain optimistic and hopeful about the continent. We believe in Africa's potential and its promise. We remain committed to Africa's future. And we will be strong partners with African people and African governments.

I promised at the very beginning that this would be more a conversation and a discussion than a speech. And I am going to stop right here and allow Vlad to come forward so we can proceed with the Q&A. During the Q&A, I hope that you will take the opportunity to ask specific questions about things that I have not mentioned or to clarify anything that I have. Please let's let the dialogue and the conversation begin.





Forging a US Strategy Toward Fragile States

By Jessica Rice, Rapporteur
Intern, Fund for Peace

Eight years after the 2002 US National Security Strategy stated that failing states constitute more of a threat to national security than conquering states do, US policy still does not reflect the urgency of the problem. No single office in the US government has a mandate to focus on the full life cycle of conflicts in fragile states, incorporating both early warning and post-conflict reconstruction into their portfolios. Each US government agency tackles the problem independently. Furthermore, the lack of a coherent strategy toward weak and failing states is mirrored by uneven, and often deficient, capacities to deal with them.

A group of experts discussed this deficiency at a roundtable that was part of the Stanley Foundation's 50th Strategy for Peace Conference, held October 15-17, 2009, at the Airlie Center in Warrenton, VA. The experts advocated a more strategic approach to fragile states, focusing on two prevailing themes: 1) the need to elevate the issue so that it receives higher-order attention on par with other major transnational issues, as does the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with climate change or the Threat Reduction Initiative with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, and 2) the need for a compre-

hensive and coordinated approach to fragile states, building beyond existing military and development agencies to include other US government agencies, local actors within the states of concern, allies, and regional organizations.

Key Findings and Recommendations

- Enunciate and implement a broader understanding of US interests that incorporates dangerous transnational trends involving fragile states. The creation of an integrated strategy for strengthening states requires a better understanding of US interests beyond counterterrorism. In particular, US leaders should broaden the scope of "US and global security" to include other transnational issues and actors such as illicit smuggling (arms, drugs, people), endemic criminal violence (not just "armed conflict"), transnational financial corruption or "dirty money," severe environmental degradation, and other phenomena that fuel state instability across the developing world and threaten the global order upon which all countries' prosperity and security depend.
- Broaden the scope of US security strategy beyond military responses, in part by focusing strategy on conflict prevention rather than crisis

STATE FRAGILITY

response. This would mean a world in which the United States would more reliably cooperate with other international actors to slowly build up resilient states as a more sustainable approach to challenges such as terrorism, with a core emphasis on rule of law and capacity building of key public institutions beyond the security sectors alone.

- Reconcile US goals, interests, and implementation plans toward individual fragile states. It is too often the case that diverse US agencies, toolsets, and guidelines compete with each other within the same fragile society. For instance, democratization programs may have the ultimate goal of “constraining the state,” in terms of empowering contending civil groups, stemming human rights abuses, and ending corruption, while counterinsurgency or counterterrorism tools often strengthen the power or extent of state agencies and leaders without placing as much emphasis on other nonmilitary goals.
- Adopt more sophisticated regional approaches to ensure reliable conflict prevention. The United States tends to focus on states that are imploding or have already imploded. However, if this is done without considering the wider regional context, the result can be a hopscotching, ad hoc, destabilizing policy of throwing tremendous resources into the worst-off regional cases while largely ignoring the needs of the failed states’ own fragile neighbors. Resources should instead be strategically spread out across an entire subregion, with a view to preventing conflict from spreading across borders and strengthening those societies that have not yet succumbed to all-out conflict.
- In creating a new US strategy, produce broadly agreed typologies of state fragility and failure that allow for more coordinated and purposeful planning. Currently, the US policymaking process lacks broadly agreed typologies in assessing four crucial areas: (1) degree of fragility or failure; (2) the type of fragility or failure; (3) the likely impacts of these latter two variables on US and global security interests (on a case-by-case basis); and (4) the feasibility of US and international policy objectives toward a given state. In the absence of creating these agreed intragovernmental typologies and resulting assessments, it is impossible to say with any certainty which fragile

states should receive what type of aid, and when and how they should receive it.

- Establish a more integrated and effective self-evaluation mechanism. A cultural shift toward self-evaluation is needed across the entire US government, because US agencies tend to learn serious lessons only from catastrophic failures (as, say, in parts of Iraq or Somalia) rather than less drastic “run-of-the-mill failures.” From the strategic level to in-country teams, agencies should be encouraged to incorporate lessons learned and institute mid-course corrections as required.
- In evaluation, take both a macro-level and a micro-level view. While the evaluation and measurement of success are important, the United States tends to define challenges in terms of phases and projects, which treat fragile societies as linear problems with stepwise, short-term solutions. But building capacity in fragile states and managing conflict risks is often in reality a “circular problem,” with inevitable and sometimes unpredictable second- and third-order effects of US and multilateral actions toward a target society, requiring flexible (and flexibly funded) mid-course corrections.
- Fund the creation and maintenance of greater country and cultural expertise outside of US intelligence agencies. The United States needs to redevelop the kind of in-depth country expertise and cultural sensitivity that characterized USAID during the Cold War. This capability, since the 1990s, has been institutionalized in the intelligence community but has decreased among Foreign Service officers or policymakers. Furthermore, agencies need professional training in preventing and mitigating crises, which is rare among members of the geographical bureaus of the Department of State and Department of Defense (DoD).
- Make early warning real. The first requirement in addressing a fragile state’s particular “life cycle of conflict” is a reliable predictive analytical capability to determine when best to respond, based on credible research and a systematic assessment methodology. But to leverage predictive capabilities, there must also be the structural capacity to decide how to respond, and with what tools, as well as with which

international partners. In other words, responses to early-warning signals must be institutionalized. This requires bureaucratic or “pol/mil plans” which move decision making quickly through the chain of command to the president.

- Create diplomatic DARTs. As part of the above goal, the United States should create the diplomatic equivalent of disaster assistance response teams (DART): standby diplomatic teams ready to deploy when unexpected or sudden crises emerge. Once in-country, such teams could then help other external actors shape a long-term strategy to mitigate the conflict.
- Create rapidly deployable international police forces as well as sustainable police trainer teams. As part of instituting the rule of law through security sector reform (or even just to create a minimally safe environment for humanitarian aid workers to operate during periods of armed violence), a cadre of international police and police trainers is desperately needed for rapid deployment to states experiencing corrosive, chronic violence. Such violence often occurs at a level that does not qualify as “war” or “armed conflict,” but nonetheless can weaken societies to the extent that attacks on foreign workers, conflict escalation, atrocities, and/or the rise of terrorist groups are all possibilities. Participants agreed that the international demand for police and police trainers far exceeds the supply.
- Work internationally to change those parts of the financial, trade, and natural resource governance regimes that disadvantage diverse fragile states across regions. US strategy and planning should also be expanded to incorporate economic and environmental factors, including trade agreements, environmental degradation, and natural resource exploitation, to examine, concretely, how they may be related to a state’s fragility. There is a disconnect between the conclusion of international trade agreements and how they impact problems on the ground in individual fragile states, in terms of healing divisions in civil society, ensuring political stability, or stemming corruption. For instance, natural resource exploitation in the global economy still leads more often to domestic corruption, social divisions, and conflict than to sustainable growth.
- Work diplomatically across the spectrum (intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], regional organizations, bilateral relationships) to create more long-term predictability and reliability in provision of international aid for the entire “life cycle of conflict” in fragile societies. Currently, 75 percent of all peacekeepers come from only 25 percent of all countries, and deployment of other civilian assets (police, engineers, health workers, and the like) is often ad hoc and episodic. Even international development aid has become increasingly “volatile,” with some fragile states utterly dependent upon only one or two donors. Meanwhile, many UN agencies, such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), are hampered in taking on sensitive tasks such as security sector reform (SSR), which inevitably involves some “taking sides” in terms of police training, justice reform, and human rights. Multilateral action outside of the usual UN channels must, therefore, become more purposeful, strategic, and sustained.
- As part of the above goal, leverage the capacities of rising and regional powers in finding and implementing multilateral solutions. Several strong and increasingly prosperous middle-to-rising powers have, thus far, not matched their contributions of police, peacekeepers, or other international rapid-deployment capabilities with their increasing “international weight” in forums such as the G-20. The United States should work diplomatically with such states to get past the cultural, domestic political, and even regional geopolitical impediments that stand in the way of them “punching at their weight.”
- In addition to leveraging the capacities of rising and regional powers, leverage important transnational and intranational actors in plans for strengthening particular fragile states. The views and capacities of diaspora populations are often central to achieving state stability, and “clusters of competence” in subregions of countries often exist, sometimes in “hinterland areas” that may be partially beyond state control or state influence. The United States, with other international actors, must work harder to identify and incorporate these transnational and intranational “clusters of competence” in all areas, including health, agriculture, public security, and justice.

- To achieve all of the above: concretely address the huge shortfall in US civilian capacities for engaging and strengthening fragile states. Despite all of the revolutionary developments in America's counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy, the military is still not the right agency to do tasks such as SSR, which includes systematic reform of the judiciary, police, and penal systems; the "reintegration" component of "disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration" (DDR) in recent post-conflict societies (in which combatants must become normal citizens again with gainful employment); agricultural development in crucial rural areas; public administration and public finance capacities for best use of international aid; and so on. The creation and support of these public capacities in fragile states remains fundamentally a civilian task, but congressional funding does not recognize this reality.
- Finally, to address the US civilian-military capacity gap seriously:
 - o Survey current capabilities. Conduct an inventory of government capabilities and activities relevant to fragile states and state building to create a baseline of current assets.
 - o Improve outreach by civilian agencies to Congress. Despite these needs, civilian agencies lag far behind their military counterparts in engaging and educating Congress on the realities of engaging a world in which up to a quarter of all states are so fragile that they may be hampered in using normal development aid effectively. In the end, much of the success of a coherent strategy hinges on better congressional outreach.
 - o Incentivize the creation of a culture of "risk acceptance" in US civilian agencies that work on fragile state problems that do not have short-term solutions. This means implementing new training programs and creating new organizational incentives—via new role definitions and pay structures—to entice civil servants toward working in, and on, some of the world's most persistently fragile environments, in which risk management, conflict prevention, and the steady building of state institutions and rule of law are a constant process rather than a well-defined, project-driven outcome.
 - o Incentivize prevention. As one participant put it, "The problem is that prevention has disincentives: if it fails, you are blamed; and if it succeeds, there is no praise." If there is no reward system for prevention, then the focus will always be on mitigating risks of ongoing crises rather than solving problems early.
 - o "Fund the mandate." Any new organizational changes made with the express intention of creating greater US capacity to engage fragile states must have the funding and authority to carry out new mandates.
 - o Increase discretionary and contingency-based budget authorities for civilian officials. Given the ever-shifting nature of fragile state conflict dynamics and the long-term goals of institution building in fragile states, some portion of funding should be flexible, with reasonable and effective amounts available to senior civilian managers for reacting to unforeseen contingencies and opportunities. The military already receives such discretionary funds, but civilian funding largely remains rigid, incremental, stove-piped, and narrowly project-based.
 - o Establish a new National Security Council (NSC) directorate. Toward all of the above US political, organizational, and strategic ends, the roundtable discussed creating a new directorate within the NSC that would focus exclusively on fragile states security themes such as conflict prevention. It would be responsible for overseeing implementation of the integrated strategy for strengthening fragile states, encompassing programs in the State Department, USAID, military services, other relevant agencies, NGOs, and non-US actors.

Crafting a New Strategy for Strengthening Fragile States

Broaden the Scope of US Strategy Toward Fragile States Beyond "Security" and Military Responses.

Experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as elsewhere, have resulted in the military bearing the principal responsibilities for state building and stability operations over the past several years. This imbalance

between civilian and military roles is exacerbated by the wide variance in funding between the DoD and other agencies, especially the State Department.

Much of the current US capacity for state building is housed within the Defense Department. The tendency, therefore, is for strategies toward failed states to conflate “security” and “military” problems, thus viewing the US military as the primary response mechanism. Furthermore, there is a tendency to focus on “victory” and “winning,” which are military terms, instead of on “progress” and “success,” which are broader terms that imply looking at a country as a long-term challenge with multifaceted solutions.

Demilitarizing the problem allows the United States to evaluate precisely what is being accomplished in a fragile environment. While security is often an acute challenge, the answer may not always entail a military response. We need to widen our perspective to explore a wider range of tools.

Decoupling “intervention” from “sending in the military” is particularly crucial for changing our responses to weak and failing states. Intervention can appear in many forms. Ceasing to equate “intervention” with military operations widens the scope of US strategy to look at a diversity of response options.

Focus Strategy on Conflict Prevention Rather Than Crisis Response

In crafting a new strategy, experts and officials should be wary of “points of reference” in regard to “people whose entire frame and experience is Iraq and Afghanistan.” As one roundtable participant put it, US strategy toward weak and failing states has operated like a “light switch,” where attention is drawn to crises that emerge suddenly, and then withdrawn as soon as the crisis “light” is turned off. This has led to short-term responses that deal with conflict once it has broken out, when it is far more costly and difficult to mitigate.

Conflict prevention should be the strategic goal for strengthening fragile states—dealing with challenges in pre-conflict states in order to prevent acute crises—and it should be part of a comprehensive

strategy that directs both civilian and military responses. Indeed, recommendations from the recent US Marine Corps Joint Urban Warrior exercise highlighted risk mitigation as an intrinsic part of the military’s conflict-shaping capacity, and the lesson learned was to emphasize the education of decision makers and campaign planners on advanced prevention concepts.

Create Long-Term Strategies That Support Responsible, Resilient States as a More Sustainable Approach to Security Challenges Such as Terrorism

A focus on conflict prevention inherently requires a long-term strategy, allowing a strategic vision for longer than just the “crisis” stage. One roundtable member characterized US response to conflict as “strategic meandering”: dealing with crises in a reactive manner, declaring “success” when the crisis is “solved,” and then leaving, allowing problems to fester or resurface. Another participant described US policies and tools as “fads” that changed every few years.

Several roundtable members mentioned that aid plans tend to have five-year terms (one member stated that not a single five-year plan in the past 60 years has succeeded), whereas many of the problems that need to be solved require much longer to produce lasting results. In particular, the group said that a police force built from scratch needed 10-20 years to become self-sufficient. Therefore, the strategy for a recovering country, for example, Liberia, where confidence in the police force is critical to producing sustained security, should take a minimum of 10-20 years.

Furthermore, one of the by-products of “strategic meandering” is that once a crisis is “resolved,” resources are no longer allotted and the United States no longer maintains consistent access to keep tabs on whether progress is really being made. One of the most evident ways the United States loses visibility is when embassy staffs are cut in countries that are no longer deemed crisis areas, reducing the United States’ ability to monitor the situation over the long term. This often leads to a recurrence of violence, and sometimes, as in Haiti, a recurrence of military intervention.

Another by-product of the short-term approach is the inability to gauge the effect of development assistance on the receiving country, especially when the assistance is abruptly reduced or withdrawn. When attention turns away from post-conflict countries that are “recovering,” funding can become more volatile or drift toward a primary donor, which may exacerbate certain situations or empower certain actors. A long-term strategy should help countries deal with expectations of external support, international aid dependency, and changes in funding.

In sum, rather than focus solely on countries in imminent crisis, the United States should help countries that are on an upward trend but are still fragile. This is as important for conflict prevention as is addressing those on the downward slope. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is a successful program that is based on this premise. Such an approach should also be part of the United States’ National Security Strategy (NSS) as a demonstration of the commitment to preventing conflict in fragile or weak states, not just the ones that have collapsed into conflict.

Improving Prediction Capabilities and Making Early Warning Real

The chain of conflict prevention has several links, all of which need to be strong for a prevention strategy to succeed. The first requirement is a reliable predictive analytical capability to determine when to respond. It should be based on credible research and a systematic assessment methodology.

Once we have the predictive capabilities, we need the structural capacity to respond in a timely fashion. In other words, an early-warning system that “rings the alarm bell” must be institutionalized in order to head off the worst consequences before violence breaks out. This means that there needs to be a bureaucratic or pol/mil plan which moves decision making quickly through the chain of command to the president for a decision to act.

Finally, when a decision to engage is made, the United States needs to have the operational capacity to respond, and the tools with which to craft and implement an effective response. Policymakers need the

capacity to decide which tools to use under the circumstances, including before a situation is a near-term crisis. Current US approaches to conflict prevention focus on imminent or active crisis situations and rarely conceive of interventions—diplomatic, economic, or military (peacekeeping)—before a crisis erupts. Moreover, most practitioners only look at their piece of the conflict life cycle (e.g., post conflict). Pre-conflict, ongoing conflict, and post-conflict operations should be brought together in a more meaningful way.

Determining US Interests: Deciding When and How to Act

A state must have the operational capabilities to respond (a toolkit), in addition to the strategic ability to know when, and how, to access the right tool in that toolkit. While every state has its own needs, the first step in the conflict prevention chain calls for having a way to identify when to respond, and a methodology for determining which approach to take. In looking at the need for focus and prioritization of US strategy, the group came up with different typologies of fragile states based on the degree of failure and the risk to US interests. Both need more refined analysis, but are a good place to start.

The first step is to identify a state as “at risk,” based on its degree of state failure. The second step is to identify the type of state failure to better frame the problem. The third is assessing the type of threat the state poses. The fourth is determining how to engage the state, based on its capacity and the willingness of the host government to cooperate. (For the full treatment of these four tasks—fragile state identification and ranking; categorization by type of failure; assessing the threats to international security; and determining engagement—see the referenced working paper chapter in this booklet).

In the end, clear and agreed typologies are needed for the next level of US strategic discussion and decision making about the global problem of state fragility and its ramifications for US interests. For instance, in some states, the goal may be counterinsurgency, in which “transformative state building” is judged to be unnecessary or unrealistic. In other cases, the goal may be long-term institution building in the public finance or health care sectors. Other states may require “all of

the above”—but, be ranked differently in terms of both (1) relevance for US and global security concerns; and (2) feasibility of achieving state-building objectives.

In order to bring all of these pieces together, we need a better “mission statement” for US strategy toward fragile states that includes a discourse on US interests and values. It is critical to determine what we are trying to achieve, and what we mean by the phrase “national interest.” The roundtable agreed that there is profound confusion over exactly what policymakers and the US public think is the national interest.

In particular, there are real conflicts between how the national interest in fragile states is (or should be) defined, leading to ambiguity over precisely what we are trying to accomplish. For example, in Iraq or Nigeria, do we want good governance or secure access to oil? Can both goals be included, or are they competing? What about the numerous cases in Asia and Africa where there are short-term, tactical counterterrorism, and counterinsurgency goals?

In many such cases, there is a corresponding need to support and strengthen civil society and state institutions without creating a “strongman state.” The latter is a particular danger when considering the “dual-use” nature of US military training, military aid, and internal police training to central governments which often are, to some degree, lacking in domestic legitimacy and can be highly corrupt. In such cases, US military training, equipping, and aid could be utilized by central leaders either in service of rule of law or in service of a predatory, autocratic leadership.

In this regard, there may be some cases of state failure or fragility where there is a fundamental conflict between short- and long-term goals. For instance, democracy assistance is often meant to “constrain the state”—i.e., the domestic government in the target society—over the long term in service of involving civil society actors and building up public needs infrastructure such as health, education, agriculture, and utilities. Conversely, counterterrorism assistance is often meant to strengthen the state apparatus without trying to transform its relations with its own society.

In addition, strategy for dealing with the challenges of state fragility should be expanded to include regional approaches and ways to address transborder drivers of conflict. For instance, the United States tends to zero in on states that are imploding or have already imploded, with particular strategic interest due to Islamic fundamentalist groups or important resources. However, if this is done without considering the wider regional context, the result can be a hopscotching, ad hoc, ultimately destabilizing policy of throwing tremendous resources into the worst-off regional cases while ignoring the needs of the failed states’ own fragile neighbors. In this regard, resources should be strategically spread out across an entire subregion or regional environment, with a view to keeping conflict from spreading across borders and strengthening those societies that have not yet succumbed to all-out conflict.

Finally, the conflation of “national interests” with “national security interests” confuses the picture, especially when, as stated above, national security is linked to deploying the US military. Other factors beyond national security often drive national interest, but they are frequently more difficult to articulate. Overall, the experts at the roundtable agreed that these interests and threats need to be articulated in the NSS in order to show where our focus should be vis-à-vis fragile states.

Incorporating Transnational Actors and Issues

Other issues not normally associated with conflict management need to be part of the discourse, including both positive and negative impacts, so that we do not get lost in the weeds and lose our global perspective. The dialogue on failed states should be expanded to include new vulnerabilities brought on by globalization, such as climate change, infectious diseases, and transnational crime. These factors should be part of the conflict analysis.

For instance, one participant suggested that it is more useful to focus on “armed violence” than simply on conflict, including the violent offshoots of criminal activity, dirty money, violence based on youth bulges and high unemployment, and other forms of substate or antistate violence. Furthermore, preventing violent conflict and mass atrocities of any type should be identified as inherent to our vital national interests.

But this means, ultimately, a greater international capability for rapidly deployable international police forces as well as sustainable police trainers for deployment to fragile state environments, both in pre- and post-conflict situations. As part of instituting the rule of law and functioning public institutions, or just protecting humanitarian aid workers in violent areas, police and police trainers are desperately needed for rapid deployment to states experiencing corrosive, chronic violence at a level that does not yet qualify as “war” or “armed conflict” or “civil war,” but nonetheless can, and does, weaken societies to the extent that state failure and conflict escalation are possibilities. Currently, the international demand for police and police trainers far exceeds the supply. For instance, in terms of US capacities for police training (including instituting human rights), USAID has lost roughly 360 staff who had been dedicated to this goal, with only a partial capability now residing in the US Justice Department. This latter trend, in turn, was based in part on the negative human rights outcomes of USAID “public safety” programs with internal security services in Latin America during the Cold War. As one participant offered, however, “it’s time to get beyond Cold War legacies in terms of US involvement in these areas.” There was some mention of the DoD increasingly being pressured by these operating realities in fragile states to go into new areas such as police recruitment, training, and equipping, but participants as a whole believed that the DoD was the wrong agency to take on this task.

The scope of an integrated US strategy for strengthening fragile states should also be expanded to incorporate economic factors and transnational economic activities, such as trade agreements, remittances, and migration, and how they are related to a state’s fragility. For instance, many countries cite the removal of trade barriers and food subsidies imposed by trading partners and international donors as an important means of dealing with their internal instability, so it is important to engage the trade and agricultural sectors in this dialogue. One of the roundtable participants asserted that there is an absolute disconnect between larger trade agreements and how they impact problems on the ground, both positively and negatively. Another factor is the impact of migration and remittances on the

fragile state; often they have a significant impact on how the state is able to recover from conflict.

Furthermore, we should expand who we work with in crisis countries, incorporating sectors and actors that are not usually associated with conflict. In some cases, it may be necessary to disaggregate the state and choose which partners to work with. Such analysis also allows us to look at the system and its components and weigh the impact of our actions, incorporating the “do no harm” principle.

As one participant pointed out, almost all countries have “clusters of competence,” even if the central government itself is challenged in terms of legitimacy, administrative reach, or finances. Looking at countries “vertically” (at different levels within the host country) may reveal municipal leaders in Somalia, for instance, who can be constructive even where the central government has failed. (At the same time, one participant noted that the United States has an unfortunate tendency to empower corrupt and predatory warlords, or local militia leaders, in the service of short-term goals such as counterterrorism rather than longer-term goals of institution building, rule of law improvements, and more empowered central leadership; thus, it is important to define at the outset what is meant by “clusters of competence.”)

Ultimately, it is important to evaluate what we are trying to build and/or rebuild; careful analysis may reveal some instances where the state is not viable or appropriate. In such cases, the international community may be better off multilaterally and cooperatively selecting a couple of “required” or “key” sectors of the society and state to focus on together, with an eye on mitigating risk and managing conflict rather than ending it outright.

In Somalia, for instance, a “mediated state” may be the outcome, in which different territorial or social enclaves cooperate in a rough confederal arrangement with the central government to provide rule of law, security, and health and human services. This reality describes many stable developing states today, but the concept of a mediated state does not follow the strict “Westphalian model” that most Western

leaders, rising powers, and middle powers in the international order recognize. In places such as Afghanistan, a “hybrid state” solution, incorporating traditional systems and local powerbrokers that are already in existence at local levels, may be implemented—essentially, a “patchwork quilt” style of governance.

While such approaches may result in state structures that look unfamiliar to Western actors, recognizing informal polities on their own terms will allow the international community to incorporate governance structures that may already be working and thus, ultimately, be more successful. It will also allow international actors to factor in civil society groups or individual leaders who are “willing and able” to provide some positive change away from chronic instability, and who may not always be official state actors. For instance, local groups in rural areas (“hinterlands”) may have their own contextualized and sustainable expertise and tools in areas such as agriculture.

Thus, efforts should also be made to strengthen traditional actors that have an important role in state building, or in improving elite capacity, which is one of the more difficult areas for outsiders to influence. Military-to-military exchange is also one intervention point that can have a positive effect, especially if the relationship focuses on professionalizing the local military. The same applies to strengthening administrative capacities.

In sum, while these recommendations are themselves highly state-centric, US strategy should be expanded to deal with more than just states as partners in state building. NGOs, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, can have a dramatic impact in fragile states; we may be missing part of the story if we only talk about what other states do.

Developing Agency Training and Culture

As argued by another participant, “Begin with the principle that civilian agencies need adaptable tools and funding mechanisms, in which there is a need to figure out how to make conflict prevention as much of a priority as conflict resolution.” This means better early response, in turn requiring better relationships with legitimate

nonstate actors. It also means maintaining some combined civilian, police, and military presence during post-conflict environments for the requisite amount of time, without being eager to leave and prematurely declare “mission accomplished.”

However, participants agreed that current US and global institutions are not built for flexible response; US organizational incentives do not reward adaptability. As one participant put it, “The problem is that prevention has disincentives: if it fails, you are blamed; and if it succeeds, there is no praise.”

Overall, in order to foster better analysis of weak and failing states, the group highlighted the need for capacity building within US government agencies. In particular, the United States needs to develop greater country expertise and cultural sensitivity, which has been institutionalized in the intelligence community, but is not as prevalent among Foreign Service officers or policymakers. The United States must develop experts in fragile states. Furthermore, agencies need professional training in preventing and mitigating crisis, which is rare among members of the geographical bureaus of the Department of State and Department of Defense.

It is important to reward risk taking, innovation, and adaptation (much as in the private sector), rather than penalize them. This culture shift would also encourage a comprehensive approach to US strategy, rather than the usual competition for funding and recognition among agencies. Incentivizing cross-agency assignments and in-country postings in fragile states would tap into the resources of motivated personnel who are discouraged under the current system. In order to foster change across departments and agencies, rewarding adaptation should be systemic and transparent.

Some participants argued that we should look at how Congress is addressing these issues, i.e., there tends to be a competition between regional and functional approaches (e.g., armed services vs. subcommittees on regions). The regional versus the functional approach also divides the State Department, thus hampering integration and coordination.

Establishing a Self-Evaluation Mechanism

Along with incentivizing risk taking, a cultural shift toward self-evaluation is needed across US agencies, because US agencies tend to learn serious lessons only from catastrophic failures (as, say, in parts of Iraq or Somalia) rather than less drastic “run-of-the-mill failures.” Therefore, from the strategic level to in-country teams, agencies should be encouraged to incorporate lessons learned, self-evaluations, and possibly mid-course corrections as required. Mechanisms for self-evaluation and determining lessons learned need to be integrated into all of the new actions described at the beginning of this report. For instance, a new directorate in the NSC could include a strategic research unit to look at lessons learned in order to gear strategies toward what has gone well.

Furthermore, the United States has a tendency to define challenges in phases, which treat them as linear problems. Looking at a failed state as a “circular problem,” with constant relooks, prevents the tendency to check off successes and move onto the next problem. It also will help us to determine how each agency fits into the larger strategy, preventing a “stovepipe” approach. Finally, it will allow the United States to take into account the inevitable—and sometimes unpredictable—“second- and third-order effects” of US and multilateral actions toward a target society, thereby allowing for longer-term risk management and mitigation as an ongoing process rather than a black-and-white, one-intervention-solves-all-problems approach.

In addition, a key component of any strategy toward weak and failing states is to define success or the “end state,” and what the expected outcomes are at each stage of the conflict intervention cycle. The next step is then to revisit the situation and reexamine the intervention criteria to determine if the objectives need to be redefined at different stages.

Leveraging the Capacities of Rising and Regional Powers in Finding and Implementing Multilateral Solutions

Currently, major powers tend to put a “damper” on the states in their periphery being strong contributors. One example consists of the United States in South America and the Organization of American States (OAS). However, Southeast Asia is slowly getting beyond

“ideational strictures” in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) politics and discourse, with some promise in generating greater regional and global inputs into fragile state situations. Overall, both general capabilities and niche capabilities could be important in meeting what is essentially a problem of 21st-century global governance. In this context, regional hegemons should be seen as valued contributors, not as threats.

In terms of current global realities, 31 states now implicitly adhere to a “crosscutting Western agenda”—loose, informal, implicit cooperation along similar values. These states tend to share burdens or take on “special cases” of fragility in regions such as Africa without relying on formalized institutional interests, politics, and capabilities, as seen with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and other agencies in New York. One participant proposed that, rather than seeing this as a problem to be solved, it should be accepted as a de facto global division of labor, in which a multitude of developing countries such as India and Pakistan lend troops to formal DPKO operations while members of this other informal, global, Western coalition contribute their own forces more directly into areas where there is some overlap between strategic security interests and genuine human rights concerns.

However, more can be done to expand contributions in both camps. As put by one expert, “Brazil is a huge holdout on peacekeeping and police. South Korea and Japan are coming on line, but there could be more discussion on how to increase their activities. In Asia, Japan, China, and South Korea are held back by the negative perceptions harbored by the other sides becoming ‘militarized.’ This may also be true of Vietnam, which has heavy military capabilities, but contributes engineers only.” Other participants noted that language and cultural barriers can get in the way of a rising power contributing something other than skilled engineers or health workers; one prime example of this latter dynamic is South Korea.

In sum, nascent military and nonmilitary capabilities exist, but much more international diplomacy will be needed to strategically increase the contributions of rising power centers. Finally, the new focus on the

G-20 holds out some hope that more sustainable norms surrounding natural resource governance could be created, effectively integrating environmental issues and challenges into the global trade regime, including the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Other Requirements for an Effective Policy

Survey current capabilities. Participants recommended conducting an inventory of government capabilities and activities relevant to fragile states and state building to create a baseline of current assets. In other words, we need to take stock of what we are already doing and what capacities we have that relate to fragile states around the world, and then use those as a starting point for discussing what we need to develop. As one roundtable member pointed out, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) is already performing some of these functions, but lacks the resources to do them all. Examining the architecture will allow us to identify not only gaps, but also areas that can be strengthened to make better use of our resources.

Engage international and NGO partners. Taking stock of existing capacities should be broadened beyond just US government assets to include international and nongovernmental partners. Thinking of our capabilities only in terms of the US government ignores the contributions of private foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, whose activities strengthen failing states. Furthermore, looking at global capabilities allows us to leverage relationships that regional partners may have (for instance, Australia's relationship with Indonesia or the United Kingdom's approach to fragile states led by its Department for International Development). We also need to engage partners who may be better than we are in certain areas. The military, for example, distinguishes "supported" from "supporting" relationships; in the latter case, someone else takes the lead. Reinforcing someone else's efforts allows for multiple engagements and permits burden-sharing, but it would require the United States to recognize that solutions do not always have to involve us or have us take the lead.

Broadening the scope even further, the United States should look for ways in which states at risk achieve progress on their own. Some areas, such as Somaliland, an enclave within Somalia that is not inter-

nationally recognized, are at peace; figuring out ways to offer a supporting role for the progress made there may allow us to play a constructive role in stabilizing the failed state of Somalia.

Create diplomatic DARTs. Another idea offered was to create a diplomatic equivalent of a disaster assistance response team (DART), which could rapidly deploy in response to crisis situations. Once in-country, such a team could be mandated to shape a long-term strategy to mitigate the conflict. The US government could have standby diplomatic teams ready to deploy when unexpected or sudden crises emerge, as when former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan successfully intervened in 2008 to broker a power-sharing agreement after the violence in the wake of the Kenyan election killed over 1,000 people.

Increase and sustain strategic interagency dialogue. Greater attention needs to be given to fostering increased interagency dialogue at the strategic level, not just at the operational level, to look at the problem of fragile states as a collective government challenge. Right now the approach is very fragmented, with different agencies setting different priorities, metrics, and definitions of success, based on their own methodologies and goals. The objective should be to create a strategy for unity of purpose that is both simple and easy to communicate across different bureaucratic cultures, serving as a focal point for efforts that otherwise tend toward stovepiping. Experts also recommended developing a set of guidelines for agency-specific engagement within the strategy, in order to identify core competencies, promote better division of labor, and foster collaboration. Time also factors into interagency relations, as different sectors look at problems over different timelines, and therefore measure their own success separately. A comprehensive strategy should provide a common vision for all of them.

Establish a new NSC directorate. The roundtable discussed the creation of a new directorate within the NSC that would focus exclusively on conflict prevention and sustainable security. A key part of its mandate would be the creation of a comprehensive US strategy toward fragile states. Such a directorate would also oversee the implementation and coordination of the strategy, including the State Department, USAID, military services, other relevant agencies, NGOs, and non-US agencies.

While some coordination may be occurring now on an ad hoc country-by-country basis, or in the field, the emphasis within this new directorate would be to make sure that all agencies have a shared strategy which would ensure unity of effort and, at the same time, be capable of being tailored to the needs of each country. Today, fragile states are addressed within the NSC as a subset of other directorates or problem areas, such as development, stability operations, humanitarian operations, or multilateral affairs. This ensures that there is no cohesive strategy, but rather pieces of a strategy that are not often connected.

Create a more comprehensive public narrative. A more comprehensive public narrative on the importance of failed states will be essential to the success of any US strategy. The group cited the need to convey to American audiences the reasons why politicians and citizens should be concerned about fragile states, and to perhaps change the focus from convincing people it matters to convincing the public that it is solvable or, in some cases, manageable. Since September 11, 2001, the narrative has been too narrow, defining US interests in strictly terms of fighting terrorism. The discourse should also explain to the American people what leads to terrorism. The positive narrative that responds to American interests would focus on the rule of law, which Americans understand, over the narrow security dialogue.

Improve outreach by civilian agencies to Congress. In the end, much of the success of a coherent strategy hinges on better congressional outreach, and changing the tendency to view funding for weak and failing states as “foreign aid.” Participants noted that it is easier to get funding for crises than contingencies or prevention, and immediate concerns outweigh long-term objectives in funding priorities. Discussion of how Congress should play a larger role in developing a US strategy led to the notion that this will facilitate funding in these areas. The group suggested that the administration should mirror the military’s relationship with the Senate Armed Services Committees, with the State Department stepping up its communications with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Conclusion

The United States needs to act quickly to forge a strategy toward fragile states that incorporates a variety of actions, including:

- Raising the amount of attention the issue receives, creating a directorate within the NSC dedicated to this problem.
- Conducting a survey of the elements of US power that can be integrated into a strategy.
- Integrating “nontraditional” conflict drivers and risk factors into US policy planning and implementation, including endemic territorial disputes among intrastate groups, resource competition (e.g., water, timber, land), youth violence, climate change, corruption surrounding natural resource exploitation, and environmental degradation.
- Engaging international and NGO partners, going beyond ad hoc calls for support to include more detailed and informed analysis and recommendations for exactly which international actors (IGOs, states, NGOs, transnational diasporas, businesses, international financial institutions) should carry which burden.
- Forming diplomatic rapid response teams that can react to early warnings of impending or sudden outbursts of violence.
- Fostering strategic interagency dialogue.
- Sharing information more reliably and effectively.
- Aligning the geographical maps that agencies use for coordination.

In addition, experts urged the US government to form a comprehensive strategy that will strengthen US capacity to have a:

- Predictive analytical capacity supported by robust research.
- Structural (bureaucratic) capacity to make timely decisions based on early-warning indicators and analyses.

- Operational capacity to respond with a toolbox of measures.
- Planning capacity to decide which tools to utilize under which circumstances.
- Political will to predict and prevent conflict, respond promptly, and build long-term sustainable security through competent, legitimate, and representative states.

These five elements underline the importance of a comprehensive approach to forging a fragile states strategy which would move beyond the current fragmented and uncoordinated approach. At present, no strategy exists to guide all US agencies and promote unity of effort in the field. This said, while an overarching strategy is needed, it must be agile enough to be tailored to each country's situation.

These recommendations go further than the usual “whole-of-government” approach or the focus on “interagency coordination” that policymakers focus upon at the moment. Instead, the United States needs to reach out within the US government and beyond, to other actors—in the host country, internationally, and in different domains not normally involved in fragile state discussions, including specialists on environment, natural resources, and illicit economies. It is imperative that we act on these recommendations, and create a strategy that is continually reviewed and improved.

To start addressing these challenges, participants offered several tactical suggestions for immediate consideration:

- Promote an interagency Coordinator's Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization. The unit should be an integrated State USAID bureau and attached to the Office of the Secretary of State, but have at least one-third of officers from USAID. It should incorporate the conflict prevention functions of USAID/DCHA's (Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance) Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. It should also include military planners seconded from the geographic combatant commands and the US Joint Forces Command, coordinated with the Office of the

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the relevant appropriations subcommittees. All of these connections should then be leveraged to promote a broader training program in conflict management for state and USAID Foreign Service officers as an appropriate investment in conflict reduction.

- In terms of institutionalizing both crisis prevention and effective crisis response, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) International Academy for Peace is one possible, specific actor that could start the long process of reforming US civilian capabilities.
- Meanwhile, there is an immediate need for a training setup for deployment of existing civilian staff to crisis or fragile areas, despite a current lack of country, cultural, and crisis management expertise. As a model that works, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) currently has ambassadorial seminars with country experts to prepare ambassadors. In the short term, ramping up these seminars could help create a dynamic roster of experts to train people over several days on “the basics” of a given case: cultural mores; intrastate political, social, and economic divisions; and so on.
- Finally, it is impossible to get away from the fact that US policy-makers will need to continue to use the much greater resources of the military for some time, as civilian capacities ramp up over at least 5-10 years—despite the real danger of militarization of foreign policy.

This report summarizes the primary findings of the conference as interpreted by the rapporteur, Jessica Rice and chair, Pauline Baker. It contains their interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

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Forging a US Policy Toward Fragile States

By Pauline H. Baker

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Responding to 21st-Century Security Challenges

Except in high profile crisis situations, Washington rarely attempts to develop an integrated, government-wide strategy to prevent conflict and state failure, in which the National Security Council sets overall objectives and figures out how to bring relevant tools of influence to bear in the service of unified country strategies. More commonly, the United States engages individual fragile and failing states in a haphazard and “stove-piped” manner, pursuing separate bilateral diplomatic, aid, defense, trade, and financial relationships, each reflecting the institutional mandates and bureaucratic priorities of the relevant agencies. The United States needs to rationalize and upgrade its fragmented approach to monitor precarious states and develop new mechanisms to improve the chance that early warning actually triggers early action.

—Stewart Patrick, “The U.S. Response to Precarious States: Tentative Progress and Remaining Obstacles to Coherence,” *Center for Global Development Essay*, Washington, DC, July 2007.¹

Of the many foreign policy challenges of the 21st century, one of the most complex and unpredictable is the problem of fragile and failing states which often lead to civil war, mass atrocities, economic decline, and the destabilization of other countries. “The Coming Age of Insecurity,” as *Foreign Policy* characterized the political era stemming from such challenges, not only threatens civilians, but endangers international peace.² Since the 1990s, such crises have become more prominent on the agendas of the major powers, intergovernmental institutions, humanitarian organizations, and of the vulnerable states themselves. Indeed, while the number of violent conflicts, particularly interstate wars, has declined after the end of the Cold War, the duration and lethality of internal conflicts are rising. Casualty figures are considerably higher when “war deaths”

beyond the battlefield and deaths as a result of infrastructure destruction are included.³ While Iraq and Afghanistan have dominated the public discourse on fragile states, the problem is confined neither to these countries nor to their neighbors. Indeed, global trends in civil conflicts are likely to present more, not fewer, challenges to international peace and security, particularly in states with a history of instability, demographic pressures, rich mineral resources, questionable political legitimacy, a youth bulge, economic inequality, factionalized elites, and deep-seated group grievances.

Yet for all the talk of the critical importance of such challenges, the US government lacks a comprehensive strategy and overall set of objectives to prevent weak states from failure. While many US agencies are engaged in activities related to the prevention of state fragility, their efforts are typically fragmented among different priorities, goals, and frameworks.⁴ In sum, the terminology of conflict risk varies; the metrics of successful interventions are not uniform; and operational functions are usually divided into pre- and post-conflict phases, with analysts rarely looking at the full life cycle of a conflict. Although weak and failing states were identified in the 2002 US National Security Strategy as a high-priority threat, the National Security Council (NSC) does not have a directorate dedicated to coordinating and supervising an integrated approach to fragile states; rather, it tucks issues pertaining to weak states under categories, such as development, humanitarian affairs, stabilization, or democratization. As a result, the focus is diluted, agencies are left to decide how to approach the challenges in their own ways, and no strategy or unified approach is developed. In essence, we make up our response as we go along, country by country, crisis by crisis.

Government specialists dealing with such crises are scattered among numerous agencies and departments. Most early warning analysts reside in the intelligence community, although conflict analysis was supposed to have been a function of the State Department’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Instead, its primary function has shifted toward the recruitment of civilian government workers for deployment in conflict zones. Consequently, with no “institutional home” for developing a US strategy for fragile

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states, there is no shared methodology, conceptual framework, or analytical approach that integrates lessons learned for interagency unity of effort. Most government efforts are instead directed toward operational functions, linking agencies once they are up and running in the field.

State-building experts tend to be area specialists based in the Department of State and in some units of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (e.g., Conflict Management and Mitigation or CMM) as well as the Department of Defense. They focus on post-conflict⁵ events, such as the Pentagon's focus on military stabilization, or USAID's emphasis on economic reconstruction. Their efforts are valuable, and have produced results, such as the 2005 Essential Tasks Matrix for post-conflict reconstruction developed by S/CRS in collaboration with six other agencies. This operational tool categorizes a range of tasks for practitioners on the ground once the decision to intervene has been made, but it is no substitute for a comprehensive strategy designed to prevent or mitigate conflict in fragile states.

Counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts present even more complex challenges to US policy in fragile states. Military exigencies in Iraq and Afghanistan have skewed perceptions on fragile states, as operational imperatives have superseded strategic understanding of what must be done for long-term state building. Sometimes these goals are compatible; sometimes not. For example, in order to subdue insurgencies, the United States has decided to train, equip, arm, and use local proxy forces or sectarian militias. While understandable as a short-term military tactic, the use of these militias could destabilize the host government in the long term if they are not demobilized or integrated into the state's security structures. Iraq is an example of this phenomenon, with the Sunni Awakening forces feeling marginalized by the Shiite government, which has failed to keep its promise to absorb some 100,000 fighters.

Given the shortage of civilian personnel knowledgeable and available to engage in state building, the military has ended up shaping early-warning and state-building policies while also conducting security and

reconstruction operations on the ground. In many ways, the military has boldly taken on the most advanced work—investigating the drivers of violence, deploying to contain the violence, and implementing state-building tasks to avoid a recurrence of violence. The armed services have vastly more resources, are better organized, and have institutionalized planning and evaluation mechanisms that other agencies lack.

However, the results focus on war-fighting goals. The emphasis in counterinsurgency doctrine on protecting civilians has narrowed the gap between military and civilian needs on the ground, but the gap remains nonetheless. This merging of functions makes it difficult to measure the results of state building, establish benchmarks for progress, or institutionalize interagency coordination. The lack of consensus on the metrics of success, in turn, undermines public confidence in the state-building exercise.⁶ Except in rare cases of enlightened commanders and policymakers ordering integrated efforts in their particular areas of responsibility, the US response to preventing conflict and building functional states remains incoherent, stovepiped, and uncoordinated.⁷

The current remedy to this situation is to encourage “interagency coordination.” But the US policy deficit on fragile states is due to more than the lack of coordination, or a paucity or imbalance of resources. These are the symptoms, not the cause. Rather, the deficit originates from *a failure to conceptualize the challenge correctly* and develop a holistic strategy for dealing with the phenomenon of state failure *as a new class of conflict*. Such an approach must not only be whole-of-government, but whole-of-society, or comprehensive, taking into account the entire range of actors who populate the landscape of shattered societies: local authorities; nonstate actors; spoilers; criminal networks; communal, religious, and ethnic-based groupings; international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); illicit economies; and the private sector. Also needed is a unified decision-making structure comprising US departments that not only *act rapidly in a crisis* but, more importantly, *act before a crisis*, using early-warning and state-building skills that can be adapted to individual cases. Previous attempts to develop such an approach have either been ignored when

new administrations took office, or failed to generate sufficient financial and political support to remain afloat.⁸

The United States needs to make fragile states a higher-order priority in the hierarchy of national security concerns, comparable in importance to such issues as weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, climate change, and energy self-sufficiency. To achieve this, the following steps need to be taken:

- Create a new Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Security in the NSC with the necessary staffing, budget, and authority to develop and implement a comprehensive US strategy for fragile states.
- In consultation with Congress, establish criteria for US engagement, or nonengagement, in fragile states, including diplomatic, economic, and military options that can be utilized throughout the full life cycle of a conflict for both prevention and response.
- Form an international coalition of partner organizations and countries that could join the United States in developing strategies, coordinating interventions (nonmilitary and military), and providing resources, including rapid response mechanisms, to ensure that early warning means early action, and to build local institutional capacities for good governance in high-risk states.
- Create a unified US political/military plan embracing all agencies of government that need to be activated when policymakers decide a fragile state should be engaged in an emergency situation in which conflict has broken out, or when a strategy for preventing such an emergency is adopted.
- Conduct regular evaluations in each country in which the United States is engaged in a state-building strategy to measure progress, draw lessons learned, and determine when the country is confidently on a trajectory toward sustainable security, laying the basis for a gradual exit strategy.

- Formulate a public diplomacy campaign that explains the policy and its rationale to the public, the international community, and the affected populations.

How We Got Here: From "MOOTWA" to Hybrid Operations

During the early 1990s, the United States regarded the problems of fragile states mainly as humanitarian tragedies. Indeed, when the US military began to deploy forces in response to outbreaks of violence in internal wars, either to evacuate civilians or stabilize the situation, these actions were described as short-term deployments similar to natural disasters and termed *military operations other than war*, or MOOTWA (moo-twa). This acronym conveyed both the low strategic significance attributed to such missions at the time, and a fundamental misunderstanding of what is involved in mitigating the consequences of internal wars and building functioning states.

Attitudes shifted dramatically after the attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Launched by Al Qaeda, then based in Afghanistan—a poor and highly factionalized state—the attacks were planned and executed by a terrorist group that, in essence, had taken control of a failed state. From its Afghan base, Al Qaeda was able to consolidate its organization, train its fighters, and propagate an ideology of religious fundamentalism that rationalized mass murder.

The main long-term threat comes not merely from the organization but from the environment which allows it to operate. Of course, extremist groups operate in strong states as well as weak ones, but in the former, there are institutional capacities to limit their movements and activities. Weak and failing states permit extremist groups and predatory elites to thrive, largely with impunity.⁹ The people who suffer most are usually not the enemies of such elites, but the populations trapped under their control.

Approximately one to two billion people in sixty nations are living in fragile or failing states.¹⁰ These states display a variety of dysfunctions, including: (1) the lack of physical control over their territories; (2) a loss of a monopoly on the use of force; (3) an inability or unwill-

ingness of the governments to protect and provide basic social services to their citizens; (4) insufficient political legitimacy for leaders to make authoritative decisions for the society as a whole; and (5) an inability to function fully and responsibly in the international system.¹¹ Power vacuums in such states may be filled by militias, traffickers, criminal groups, drug cartels, and other illicit networks that erode state sovereignty from within.¹² Alternatively, predatory political elites who capture power can drive countries into institutional decay, eroding sovereignty from the top. Though they may have the trappings of *strong states*, such states are merely strongman states that often collapse when their leadership is removed. In weak or strongman states, stability is a function of the life of the regime, not of the integrity of state institutions.

The international community tends to neglect such threats until they erupt as major crises or become *complex humanitarian emergencies*. By that time, they may be too serious or too complicated to resolve without military intervention.¹³ Such neglect led to Afghanistan being taken over by the Taliban and, by extension, Al Qaeda. Likewise, a short-term intervention, such as Somalia in 1992-1993 to break a famine, turned into combat operations that killed 18 Americans and 1,000 Somalis. The result was a rapid withdrawal of UN and US troops and subsequent neglect of the country. Today, after fourteen failed attempts to create a new government, Somalia remains the quintessential failed state—"the most dangerous place in the world," according to one report.¹⁴ Among other things, its lawlessness has given rise to an invasion by a neighboring state, US attacks on alleged Al Qaeda-linked militants, and booming piracy in the Gulf of Aden, one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world.

Even more frightening is the prospect of a failed state with nuclear arms. Pakistan's possible disintegration represents a scenario in which nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of Al Qaeda or the Taliban. North Korea's breakdown could likewise result in nuclear weapons ending up in the hands of as yet unidentified criminals or predatory warlords. Mexico has become the subject of a new debate over whether it, too, is becoming a failed state as a result of the vicious attacks by drug cartels, including a record number of beheadings,

kidnappings, and murders of state authorities. The label of *failed state* is probably inappropriate, as Mexico has stronger institutions than is usually recognized. But whichever states are, or are not, included in the category of weak and failing states, the United States is not prepared to deal with these 21st-century threats, wherever they arise.

The frequency and complexity of such crises has gradually transformed MOOTWA into a more realistic conception of *stability operations* or, more recently, *hybrid operations*.¹⁵ The change of nomenclature signifies a dramatic shift in thinking, at least by the military, from an exclusively humanitarian to a more complicated humanitarian/security perspective.

Much has been learned in the interim. Building on the 2002 US National Security Strategy, which asserted that "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones,"¹⁶ the 2008 US Stability Operations Army Field Manual 3-07 stated that "[the] greatest threats to our national security will not come from emerging ambitious states but from nations unable or unwilling to meet the basic needs and aspirations of their people."¹⁷ The idea that state building rests on the security and well-being of the civilian populations rather than on the elimination of insurgents or terrorists is a milestone in military thinking, even though there were antecedents in earlier counterinsurgency doctrine. This has led to three other major assumptions:

1. US stability operations will last longer and claim more of the military's resources than conventional combat operations;
2. Such crises will require a military role before, during, and after combat operations across the full life cycle of the conflict;
3. Success (defined as sustainable security, not military victory) will depend not only upon military prowess, but upon "the capacity of the other elements of national power, leveraging the full potential of our interagency partners."¹⁸

Thus, what has evolved from the challenges of fragile states is a new hybrid form of combat that goes beyond traditional concepts of guer-

rilla warfare and counterinsurgency operations. Civilian protection is no longer merely a tactic but a core military objective, and a “civilian surge” for state building does not merely follow military operations in a post-conflict stage, but constitutes a key part of hybrid operations that define “success.”¹⁹ Indeed, state building might be an effective conflict prevention strategy with the potential to obviate the need for military intervention in many states, if it were to begin early enough.

Dramatic changes in nonmilitary thinking are also occurring. A booming industry has emerged in early warning, with new methodologies, technologies, watch lists, civilian-based alerts, and case studies. An equally intense flood of interest has emerged on post-conflict state-building strategies, focusing on the ingredients of reconstruction, such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of militias, humanitarian relief, elections, refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) resettlement, economic growth, transitional justice, police and military training, civil service support, the rule of law, and good governance. Private foundations have allocated funds to spur innovations in these areas, and governments worldwide are exploring ways to foster interagency coordination, manage sequencing, measure progress, stimulate economic growth, develop civil society, and “win hearts and minds.”

As laudable as this shift is, government thinking lags behind. Because government responses to early warning (which often become late warning) are slow, they invariably tilt toward coercive measures based on hard power interventions or threatened sanctions, while state building relies more heavily on civilian functions, based on soft power assets and incentives. Chester Crocker, a Georgetown University professor and former Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, commented:

This isn’t about “hard power” versus “soft power.” It’s about “smart power” that connects the dots between our brains, muscles, and dollars to craft integrated responses to strategy. Without smart power we’ll continue to be good at blowing things up, and to struggle with the more complicated mission of winning the peace.²⁰

A Surge or a Slump in Attention?

Some observers have wondered whether or not systematic early warning is really needed, maintaining that the problem is not a lack of awareness of looming disasters, but a lack of the political will to act. Others have questioned whether a state-building approach is the best path to peace, noting that other political remedies, perhaps at the local level, might be preferable, and that state building is sometimes harmful for peace, as it can cause a revival of violence. For instance, as the debate on Afghanistan illustrated, some US experts and politicians have argued that our goals should focus only on the terrorist dimension, because truly dedicated state building would risk drawing us into a prolonged military and political engagement reminiscent of Vietnam.

In fact, much has been learned since Vietnam, but the global economic crisis has led some to question whether the progress can be sustained. Niall Ferguson, a history professor at Harvard, argues that the upheavals in weak and failing states are likely to receive less resources and reduced attention, despite mounting threats:

Most countries are looking inward, grappling with the domestic consequences of the economic crisis and paying little attention to the wider world crises. This is true even of the United States, which is now so preoccupied with its own economic problems that countering global upheaval looks like an expensive luxury.²¹

At the same time, while the economic downturn will undoubtedly present constraints, leaders cannot afford to stand back from a world that is collapsing around them, especially when their interests are affected by hostile forces that arise in such environments. Moreover, while war fatigue may be eroding support for long military engagements, other forces are converging for a more active agenda on these issues:

- The 2009 inauguration of Barack Obama has raised expectations of American leadership in this sphere. Obama’s administration includes advocates, such as Susan Rice, now US Ambassador to the United Nations, and Samantha Power, now on the National Security Council, both of whom are known to support more robust

responses to prevent genocide and mass atrocities and to ensure recovery in war-torn societies.²² US allies, the NGO community, and foreign policy analysts are likewise lobbying for stronger actions to protect civilians in danger. Thus, while there remain substantial limitations (including restricted resources in an economic downturn, war fatigue among the US public, and international distrust of US intervention), expectations of earlier and smarter responses by the United States, especially to protect civilians at risk, are rising. Those expectations were reinforced by the US support for the ICC indictment of Sudanese President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity (which was sustained even under the new Obama strategy of engagement with Sudan), the continuation of sanctions against the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe, and engagement in Afghanistan, despite continuing controversies over the right tactics in each case.

- There is increased advocacy from civil society for action, particularly to prevent genocide and mass atrocities.²³ Many advocacy groups are coalescing and cooperating, suggesting that civil society may be transitioning from country-specific advocacy toward a general antigenocide movement. Their efforts are mirrored in increased attention by leading think tanks, foundations, religious organizations, universities, and celebrities to antigenocide projects.²⁴ Thus, the constituency seems to be growing for more assertive US action to prevent and mitigate crisis situations, separate from counterinsurgency or counterterrorism policies.
- Operational military doctrine is changing. Operational guidelines for counterinsurgency operations (COIN) have likewise changed, making the protection of civilians, not body counts, the core measure of progress.²⁵ Projects funded by the US Department of Defense to measure the effects of stability operations include metrics on social well-being, economic development, the rule of law and governance, as well as security.²⁶ Military thinking in many other countries parallels this trend, with state building becoming a core function of stability operations and development programs.
- The demand for peacekeeping troops is growing. There were twice as many peacekeeping missions (with more than 5,000 troops) in

2008 than in 2002.²⁷ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission in Afghanistan is requiring more combat troops and economic reconstruction teams. African Union missions in Somalia and Sudan are undermanned and underresourced. Humanitarian aid workers are being attacked and forced to pull out of conflict zones when security threatens their staff. When aid workers are withdrawn, the need for peacekeeping troops rises.

- The United Nations has created more mechanisms to deal with peacekeeping, human rights, genocide, and norms of humanitarian intervention, including the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Mechanisms include a Peacebuilding Commission; a revamped Human Rights Council to replace the Human Rights Commission; an Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for the Prevention of Genocide; and the appointment of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on these matters.²⁸ The R2P principle is based on the notion that the international community has a responsibility to protect civilians when a state is “manifestly failing” to protect its population from war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.
- The record has not been impressive in averting mass casualties. Ever since the Rwanda genocide in 1994, frustration has mounted in civil society and governments around the world over the tepid responses to mass atrocities, violent conflict, and state decay in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Burma, and Somalia, among others. Nor has there been much progress in diminishing the risk of conflict in a range of other weak states, such as North Korea, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, that risk state failure, regional stability and, in the case of North Korea and Pakistan, nuclear nonproliferation.²⁹

Thus, the United States and the international community are confronting a unique paradox—a rising demand for more effective responses to instability precisely at a time when resources to accomplish this goal and domestic support are diminishing. Besides severe economic and political pressures, US policymakers face the internal test of how to overcome haphazard, stovepiped, and fragmented responses that we have in current operations, as Stewart Patrick has noted.

It is possible that both sets of problems may be addressed simultaneously, as policymakers struggle to do more with less. Economic constraints could drive the kind of efficiencies that have been needed all along. They could have the unintended consequence of concentrating our minds on how best to create integrated strategies that can more effectively link early warning and state building into a strategic approach that reduces costs and makes sense to the American public.

Four Fundamental Imperatives

To accomplish this, we must address four imperatives. These are neither meant to be an exhaustive list of issues, nor a solution to all of the complex problems we are confronting. Rather, they represent a tentative agenda of items that might be addressed successfully after the institution of new structural changes in US government organizations, policies, and strategic security concepts. These could include (for example) the creation of a new Directorate for Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Security in the NSC. The goal of any new structural changes would be the creation and implementation of an innovative comprehensive government strategy for preventing and managing conflict in fragile states.

To forge a US strategy toward fragile states, any serious changes in US organizations, security practices, and strategic concepts should do the following:

- **Improve the conceptual understanding of the nature of conflict, particularly by identifying the precursors of violence.** This will avoid the “Chicken Little Fallacy”: warnings that the “sky is falling” but not offering any way to avert it. Most early warnings lack the ability to guide policymakers on specific steps to take to avert mass violence. The usual calls for “increased diplomatic pressure” or for humanitarian interventions by the United Nations or the United States miss the heart of the matter—the actual drivers of violence. Even diplomatic interventions that have been regarded as successful, such as former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s mission in Kenya following the outbreak of violence after the 2007 presidential elections, did not settle the grievances that had sparked the fighting. Kenya remains tense and could backslide yet again if the power-

sharing agreement he negotiated unravels or the country’s underlying governance issues are not addressed.

- **End Stovepiping.** Each administration tends to reinvent the wheel. Since the end of the Cold War, each administration has created new plans, mechanisms, and bureaucratic agencies to handle complex emergencies and failing states. Within departments, bureaucratic reshuffling has led to a lack of coordination and redundancy. We need to pull all the relevant bureaus together in a way that is predictable, repeatable, and efficient, so each agency or policymaker knows what to do as soon as there is evidence of impending violence. On the one hand, we want to avoid ad hoc responses when killings break out, and the cookie-cutter state-building responses that follow when the bloodshed subsides. On the other hand, we must be wary of “one size fits all” planning; each effort must be tailored to the society in question.
- **Reframe the international “discredited democracy mantra” of the Iraq war era, which eroded credibility in US efforts to promote democracy.** Democracy needs to be nurtured, but in different ways in different environments. The promotion of democracy is not the same as state building, though the two are linked. In Iraq, democracy was pushed through military means over the objections of the United Nations. It was hastily advanced in the Palestinian territories through elections that brought Hamas to victory in Gaza. Elections—particularly if they are discredited by rigging—have also inspired conflict in Kenya, Afghanistan, Honduras, and Iran. One disgruntled Iraqi underscored this point after the January 2009 provincial elections, saying that he would rather live in an honest dictatorship than in a democracy based on fraud. In divided societies, other imperatives often are given precedence by the population, including justice, reconciliation, the rule of law, economic revival, education, anticorruption, and social well-being—in short, the functions of a working state.
- **“Get to Go.”** Create a structured decision-making process for rapid action when early-warning alarms are sounded. We must overcome unnecessary delays and diversions in responding to serious crises,

working with all our national assets, allies, and international organizations. Extensive work has been done to provide operational guidance in a peace or stability mission.³⁰ However, these attempts aim at post-conflict phases of engagement, do not link up with early-warning analyses, and fail to provide guidance on when to act. Decision makers need tools that show how serious the threat of violence is, whether mass atrocities are imminent, what kinds of actions might prevent escalation, what other nations and multinational organizations are doing, and what political/military plan would be put into effect if the decision to intervene is made.

Conclusions

Major intellectual, operational, bureaucratic, and budgeting challenges must be addressed to forge an integrated US strategy toward fragile states. It will not be easy. In real dollar terms, there has been roughly a 30 percent cut in personnel and resources in US aid and diplomacy for international affairs since the fall of the Berlin Wall, while there has been a dramatic rise in military spending. For every \$1 invested in diplomacy, the United States spends \$16 on military programs, excluding the expenditures for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.³¹ Even Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has called upon Congress to increase funding for the State Department to correct this stark imbalance.

However, this is not just a problem of funding. *A conceptual foundation* is needed for a holistic approach to sustainable security, to develop the operational principles and procedures for a whole-of-society approach, and to create the institutional infrastructure for smart power applications. When that is done, the justification for requesting or allocating more resources is likely to have more success and be more understandable to the American public.

This broad-based, holistic initiative could come from the NSC. Three recent reports have come to this conclusion. *On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security*, a 2004 report of the Commission for Weak States and US National Security sponsored by the Center for Global Development, and co-chaired by Stuart E. Eizenstat and John Edward Porter, recommended that the president “create an NSC

directoriate to reflect the high priority assigned to weak and failing states.”³² More recently, the National Defense University study, *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations*, argued that the burden of interagency coordination and strategic-level crisis action planning should be the responsibility of the NSC.³³ Similarly, a report by Refugees International maintained that “the current fledgling Interagency Management System is untested and, we believe, unlikely to prove successful in its current form. ...Getting this right will require executive oversight above the cabinet level—at the National Security Council or, perhaps, within the Office of the Vice President.”³⁴ As these authors point out, there has been enough drift on this vital issue. Leadership needs to come from the White House, and it needs to come soon.

The research for this paper was conducted with support from a grant from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) to The Fund for Peace. The original paper was presented as a working paper at the Stanley Foundation’s 50th Strategy for Peace Conference held at Airlie Center, Warrenton, VA, October 15-17, 2009. The views expressed in this paper are the views of the author and are not necessarily those of USIP, the Stanley Foundation, or The Fund for Peace.

Endnotes

¹ The essay from which this quote is taken also appears as a chapter in *International Responses to Precarious States: A Comparative Analysis of International Strategies with Recommendations for Action by European Institutions and European Member States*, Stefani Weiss, ed. (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2007).

² *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2009.

³ Kristine Eck, Bethany Lacina, and Magnus Oberg, “Civil Conflict in the Contemporary World,” in Magnus Oberg and Kaare Strom, eds., *Resources, Governance, and Civil Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2008). The most recent findings on these issues can be found in J. Joseph Hewitt, Jonathan Wilkenfeld, and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peace and Conflict 2010: Executive Summary*, Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, released September 25, 2009. The full report is available at www.paradigmpublishers.com. This study found that “over the past two years, the risks of instability and conflict have increased significantly in the regions of the world where those dangers were already high; [that] the number of conflict recurrences...has surged to unprecedented levels; [and that] even after excluding post-2003 Iraqi cases... total worldwide terrorist attacks have nearly tripled between 2000 and 2006.” In addition, the authors noted that “more than one billion people live in some 50 failed and failing states whose direct and spillover economic costs of \$270 billion are more than three times annual global development aid of \$80 billion.”

⁴ To take the notion of “state building,” for example, this author identified at least 34 different definitions and/or approaches used by scholars and practitioners. The term is often used interchangeably with *nation building*, *institution building*, *capacity building*, *post-conflict reconstruction*, *stabilization*, and *peacebuilding*. Some regard the process as being driven primarily by the host country; others by international or foreign actors. Some regard state building as a subset of achieving wider security and development goals, while others claim that providing security and developmental assistance is a prerequisite for the higher goal of state building. Some regard state building as a process that refers only to countries coming out of conflict (post-conflict reconstruction) while others see it as a process that can help countries avoid conflict (conflict prevention). Finally, some see it as a framework concept for the many different processes needed to reach long-term security (peacebuilding); others see it as focused on constructing the formal institutions needed for minimal governing functions (institution building).

⁵ The term *post-conflict* is often used incorrectly. Technically, it refers to the period after violent conflict has broken out, not to the period when conflict has already died down. In fact, many post-conflict operations take place in conflict zones. In those circumstances, state building often becomes secondary to counterinsurgency or counterterrorism goals.

⁶ I am using the term *state building* advisedly here to distinguish it from nation building. The first term refers largely to the construction of institutional capacities for good governance while the second refers to building identity with the nation as a whole among the people, something that outsiders cannot do.

⁷ One recent exception is the approach that Special Envoy Ambassador Richard Holbrooke has taken to Afghanistan. He has assembled a first-rate team of representatives from all the major departments—State, Defense, Intelligence, the FBI, Justice, Agriculture, Treasury, and USAID, plus scholars and nongovernmental area experts. However, when Ambassador Holbrooke formally introduced them at a Washington, DC, press conference on August 12, 2009, two aspects of his strategy remained vague: 1) how his new team would coordinate with the military effort on the ground; and 2) how he would measure progress. When asked how he will know when the United States is successful in Afghanistan, he responded: “We will know it when we see it,” seemingly ignoring President Barack Obama’s commitment to identifying clear benchmarks and milestones.

⁸ For example, Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, from the Clinton administration, attempted to lay out a political/military plan when a decision to intervene is made. Numerous other presidential decision directives have been issued, usually without much regard to what had been done in the past, and often irrespective of what other agencies are doing. The US Army’s field manuals have become some of the most authoritative and practical guidance for operational and tactical matters, but no single document presents a strategy of dealing with fragile states.

⁹ Some analysts have written that states which are too anarchic, such as Somalia, are not good environments for terrorists who need a certain measure of order to function. While that is true when fighting is going on over which the terrorists may not have control, they may have a strong foothold once a friendly regime comes to power. This is what happened in Afghanistan and could happen in Somalia.

- ¹⁰ “US Foreign Aid: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century” (White paper, USAID, Washington, DC, January 2004). USAID noted that one-third of the world’s population, or two billion people, live in unstable or fragile areas. The Failed States Index likewise estimates the populations living in at-risk countries at roughly two billion. Paul Collier, focusing on poverty rather than weak or failing states, has called attention to the “one billion stuck at the bottom...living and dying in fourteenth-century conditions.” Such poverty is a hallmark of a weak state which may be failing. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). The Institute for State Effectiveness writes that: “Today between 40 and 60 states, home to close to two billion people, suffer from a ‘sovereignty gap’: they are not able to perform the functions expected of a state in the 21st century.” <http://www.effectivestates.org>.
- ¹¹ The literature reveals different estimates depending upon various definitions used. This estimate is based on The Failed States, an annual assessment of the top sixty at-risk states published in *Foreign Policy* magazine. It may be accessed at www.foreignpolicy.com. For the analysis of all 177 states in the Failed States Index, go to www.fundforpeace.org.
- ¹² Obviously, not all weak and failing states become safe havens or transit points for terrorists and other criminal networks. The task of the analyst and policymaker is to identify which ones are candidates for such exploitation. Nonetheless, the generic point remains valid: the lack of a well-established legitimate government authority and institutionalized good governance offers attractive opportunities for illicit or criminal behavior by governing elites or nonstate groups.
- ¹³ The United States neglected Afghanistan after the Soviets were driven out of the country, allowing the Taliban and Al Qaeda to move in. Neglect has also been seen in other countries once immediate security threats are addressed, with state building given too short a period to take root. This then creates a cycle of recurring conflict, with repeated outside interventions that never seem to create sustainable security.
- ¹⁴ Jeffrey Gettleman, “The Most Dangerous Place in the World,” *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2009, p.62.
- ¹⁵ Various terms are used to describe military operations in fragile states: *stability, security, transition, reconstructions, complex, irregular war*, and *hybrid operations*. The United States uses these terms to refer to military operations which require collaboration among US Departments of Defense and State, USAID and other agencies, NGOs/IGOs and host national governments, and which present full-spectrum conflict challenges on the ground. The United Nations and other organizations refer to such operations as peace operations or peace enforcement under Chapter VII authority, in which US troops may, or may not, be involved.
- ¹⁶ “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” September 2002, p.1.
- ¹⁷ “Stability Operations,” Field Manual 3-07, October 2008, Headquarters Department of the Army, p. vi.
- ¹⁸ FM 3-07, Foreword. It is interesting to note that China, which is beginning to take on some modest peacekeeping responsibilities, describes such missions in its 2008 Defense White Paper as “Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTWA), using the same term that has now become dated in western usage. (See Cynthia Watson, “The Chinese Armed Forces and Non-Traditional Missions: A Growing Tool of Statecraft,” China Brief, Volume 9, Issue 4, February 20, 2009, The Jamestown Foundation.) Please note that *stability operations*, RSO (Reconstruction and Stability Operations), PSO (Peace and Stability Operations), *nation building*, *state building*, and *irregular warfare* are often used interchangeably.
- ¹⁹ See Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations* (Washington, DC: Published for the Center for Technology and National Security Policy by National Defense University Press, 2009).
- ²⁰ James Kitfield, “Clinton Needs Diplomats and Nation Builders,” *National Journal*, January 9, 2009, http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20090109_7025.php.
- ²¹ Niall Ferguson, “The Axis of Upheaval,” *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2009, p.58.
- ²² Although not all are confirmed as of this writing, the core group includes Susan Rice, Samantha Power, Gayle Smith, Michele Flournoy, Rick Barton, and Carlos Pascual, all of whom have written about the need for quicker and more effective responses or who have served in previous administrations in capacities where they took such positions.

- ²³ There are numerous examples of think tanks and human rights organizations pressing for action. A Genocide Prevention Task Force headed by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen, sponsored by USIP, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the American Academy of Diplomacy, called for the United States to put the prevention of genocide high on the foreign policy agenda and for the United States to take preventive action, along with international partners, in its first report. (“Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers,” December 2008). A January 2009 USIP project on “Passing the Baton: Foreign Policy Challenges and the Opportunities Facing the New Administration” convened four panel presentations focusing on early warning and state building. Activist groups, such as Enough, Save Darfur, and others, have consistently called for strong actions against genocide in the Sudan, as have celebrities such as George Clooney and Mia Farrow. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s first trip abroad was criticized by human rights organizations for downplaying human rights issues during her visit to China, where she pursued a strategy of cooperation on issues, such as climate change, rather than Tibet or political protestors within China.
- ²⁴ The Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Humanity United, Ploughshares Fund, and the Compton Foundation, Inc. are among the main donor organizations that have led the way in their Peace and Security and Conflict Prevention programs. A number of scholars have worked on these issues and individual donors, such as Milton Leitenberg and Peter Ackerman, have likewise supported efforts to reduce mass atrocities and promote peaceful nonviolent means of settling disputes.
- ²⁵ The latest doctrinal manual was the US Army’s new *Field Manual 3-07 Stability Operations*, a major milestone for Army doctrine as it provided the first practical roadmap from conflict to peace, including the role of the military in supporting broad US efforts in such missions.
- ²⁶ See, for example, *Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments*, a project sponsored by the Department of Defense, the State Department, USAID, and USIP. Michael Dziedzic, “Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE).” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA’s 50th Annual Convention, New York Marriott Marquis, New York City, www.allacademic.com/meta/p312164_index.html.
- ²⁷ Statistics from the *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008, the Center on International Cooperation*. For an excellent review of peace-keeping trends, see Donald C.F. Daniel, Patricia Taft and Sharon Wiharta, eds., *Peace Operations: Trends, Progress, and Prospects*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2008.
- ²⁸ See “Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Report of the Secretary-General,” 12 January 2009, A/63/677.
- ²⁹ See the 2008 Failed States Index for a list of the top sixty states at risk: www.foreignpolicy.com. For ratings of 177 countries, see: www.fundforpeace.org.
- ³⁰ See, for example, the State Department’s detailed list of stability-focused post-conflict reconstruction Essential Tasks List developed by the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS).
- ³¹ Kitfiled, op cit.
- ³² Stuart E. Eisenstat and John Edward Porter, Co-Chairs, *On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security* (Washington, DC: 2004), p.32.
- ³³ James A. Schear and Leslie B. Curtin, “Complex Operations: *Calibrating the State Department’s Role*,” in *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations* (Washington, DC, National Defense University Press, 2009), p. 110.
- ³⁴ Ron Capps, *Drawing on the Full Strength of America: Seeking Greater Civilian Capacity in U.S. Foreign Affairs* (Washington, DC, 2009) p. ii.

State Fragility as a Wicked Problem

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Framing the Problem of State Fragility

Our conception of state fragility is critical to our ability to fashion effective strategies in response. To date, however, our efforts to define, categorize, measure, interpret, and predict state fragility have been partial successes at best.

As with many important political concepts, state fragility is maddeningly difficult to pin down, all the more so because on the surface it appears so self-evident (and solvable) a syndrome. In reality, state fragility is a cocktail of causes and effects, a syndrome that has proven to be largely immune to quick, template-driven external solutions.

This working paper contributes to efforts to understand the policy implications of state fragility by advancing three arguments. First, it argues for the utility of viewing state fragility through the lens of “wicked” and “tame” problems, a notion first developed by systems analysts. Second, it proposes that we categorize and rank order fragile states not just by degree of fragility—though that remains an important task—but also by type of state fragility and degree of threat that it poses, in order to guide policymakers to select appropriate responses. Third, it proposes closer integration of two analytic enterprises—the state-building literature and the study of political dynamics of weak states—which have generally been separate conversations.

This paper argues that the most important analytic task is to determine the level of political capacity and will on the part of leaders in fragile states to address their government’s fragility. Governments that are willing but not able to address their fragility constitute a “tame problem” amenable to conventional state-building assistance—though still a potential problem if that newfound capacity is devoted to the abuse of its own citizens. But governments that are unwilling to strengthen their own capacity—a claim which on the surface appears

counterintuitive, but which is substantiated by a growing body of research on “shadow states” and “warlord states”—are best understood as “wicked problems” which will be impervious to conventional state-building assistance.

State Fragility as a “Wicked Problem”

Systems analyst Horst Rittel introduced the notion of “wicked problems” to describe complex planning and systems design challenges which, unlike “tame problems,” are not solvable.¹ The concept has subsequently been applied to other issue areas and may be an appropriate point of departure for our consideration of how to define state fragility and determine the sources of its “wickedness.”

Wicked problems possess the following traits:²

- There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem—that is, it is impossible to understand the problem until a solution has been found.
- Wicked problems have no stopping rule—since there is no definitive problem, there is no definitive “solution.” Problem solving stops when resources are exhausted and when a “good enough” outcome is reached.
- Solutions to wicked problems are not true or false, but better or worse, and are difficult to measure objectively because they are judged in a social context in which different stakeholders have different values and goals.
- There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem; every wicked problem is unique.
- Every solution to a wicked problem is a “one-shot operation”—there is no opportunity for trial and error. (As Rittel observes, “You cannot build a highway to see how it works.”)
- Every attempt to solve a wicked problem counts significantly. “You cannot learn about the problem without trying solutions,” notes Jeff Conklin, “but every attempted solution is expensive and has lasting

unintended consequences which spin off new wicked problems.”³ Put another way, the policymaker “has no right to be wrong” because of the high costs of failure.

- Every wicked problem is a symptom of another problem.

In contrast, a “tame” problem possesses a well-defined and stable problem statement; has a clearly defined stopping point, at which the solution has been reached; has a solution which can be objectively evaluated as right or wrong; belongs to a class of similar problems, all of which are solved in a similar way; offers solutions which are easily tried and abandoned; and comes with a limited set of alternative solutions.⁴

Practitioners with experience in international state-building assistance programs recognize that our organizations tend to approach state fragility as a tame problem. And yet those of us who conduct research on fragile states know that they can be, in fact, wicked. How, then, can we inject a greater appreciation for wickedness into the state fragility debate without making our analyses completely indigestible for policymaking processes and programming related to state building?

In the case of state fragility, the problem is not only wickedness, but ubiquity. The Fund for Peace Failed States Index 2009 lists 131 of 177 states as either critical, in danger, or borderline for state failure.⁵ Only a handful of states in the Global South—such as Chile, Argentina, Oman, Uruguay, and Mauritius—rank as “stable” on the Fund for Peace index. Even when more restrictive definitions are employed, leading monitoring projects typically identify 40-60 failed states.⁶

This reminds us that state fragility is neither new nor exceptional. Over forty years ago, Samuel P. Huntington’s classic *Political Order in Changing Societies* opened with this thesis:

The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government. The differences between democracy and dictator-

ship are less than the differences between those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, effectiveness, stability, and those countries whose politics is deficient in these qualities.⁷

State weakness has been a problem for as long as the state has been the universal form of political organization; it has increased with the dramatic expansion of newly independent states during the wave of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸ Indeed, a compelling case can be made that the modern Weberian is the exception.⁹ Conditions of state fragility have worsened in the past two decades. Yet what is new is not fragility, but rather international concern over the security threat posed by failed and fragile states, especially since 9/11.

Organizing Our Thinking: Typologies of Fragile States

There are numerous typologies and indices to help us conceptualize and, in some instances, rank order state fragility. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Typology by Degree of Failure

The most common approach to conceiving state fragility has been to categorize states according to their degree of fragility or failure. When state fragility was first recognized as a problem of global consequence in the early 1980s, both categorization and measurement were rudimentary. Observers eventually referred to weak states, juridical sovereignty, failed states, shadow states, and collapsed states to distinguish these from more effective governments, but had no systematic means of measuring the syndrome.

Efforts to understand state failure more systematically—in the hope of predicting and possibly even preventing it—have increased with the number and costs of international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. Offices in the United Nations, in the defense and diplomatic ministries of member states, in humanitarian aid agencies, and in dozens of think tanks featured world maps populated with color-coded thumb-tacks to track at-risk countries requiring close monitoring and, perhaps, contingency planning. Prevention of state collapse and armed conflict assumed an important play in

international priorities, both as a matter of principle (the “never again” promise in the aftermath of the Rwanda genocide) and a matter of good financial stewardship given the huge costs of state revival and peacekeeping.

This heightened concern about fragile and failed states and the various threats they pose led to much more rigorous empirical studies to identify the structural and precipitating causes of state failure, as well as much more ambitious efforts to establish “early-warning systems” (such as International Crisis Group’s “Crisis Watch”) to monitor and report on specific countries of concern.¹⁰ The result is an abundance of much richer information and analysis on fragile states.

One early example was the State Failure Task Force (since 2001 known as the Political Instability Task Force, or PITF), established in 1994 to assess and explain the vulnerability of states to instability and failure.¹¹ It has been followed by a number of other projects to measure, compare, and rank aspects of state failure, vulnerability, and performance, including The World Bank “Governance Matters” project;¹² the Fund for Peace “Failed States Index”; The Brookings Institution’s “Index of State Weakness in the Developing World”;¹³ and the Mo Ibrahim “Ibrahim Index of African Governance.”¹⁴ Many other projects are attempting to define and measure specific aspects of governance, such as Transparency International’s “Corruption Perceptions Index.”¹⁵ One recent survey describes the number of these types of governance performance indices as “in the hundreds.”¹⁶

This is neither the place to engage in a comparative assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of these projects, nor to consider the methodological and epistemological challenges of measuring aspects of governance and state stability—a small industry is already devoted to this. For our purposes, it is enough to make the following observations:

- Current research defining and measuring aspects of state performance and state failure constitutes an enormous improvement over the past and, whatever its imperfections, is a valuable tool for policymakers.

- The search for the most parsimonious set of governance indicators that matter most in measuring fragility remains a work in progress, though recent research has honed in on a few particularly salient factors. For the moment, most monitoring projects err on the side of comprehensiveness of indicators, producing lengthy lists of variables that can make it difficult for policymakers to identify priority issue areas.
- There is consensus on the general traits of state fragility and failure—the *syndrome*—if not on the specifics of how to measure them and weigh their relative importance. These include weak capacity to provide public security, rule of law, and basic social services; low levels of democracy and civil liberties; delegitimization and criminalization of the state; rising factionalism; poor, socially uneven, and declining economic performance; inability to manage political conflict; extensive interference by external actors; and, in some but not all cases, outbreaks of armed insurgencies.
- There is also significant similarity of findings for countries earning “warning” ratings across measurement projects focusing on state fragility, quality of governance, and conflict vulnerability. Put another way, the same set of countries tend to appear at the bottom of every ranking related to fragility, poor governance, and conflict vulnerability, despite different methodologies and measurements.
- State fragility is heavily concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa. Twenty-two of the twenty-eight weakest governments on the Brookings Institution’s Index of State Weakness in the Developing World are African.
- Though the same countries tend to be flagged as fragile or failed states in every monitoring system, they vary considerably across specific indicators. Some fragile states, like Zimbabwe, possess devastatingly poor scores across most indicators, and yet manage to avoid armed conflict; others, like Chad and Iraq, enjoy a stronger overall economic performance profile, and yet score very poorly in almost every other indicator.

Despite the advances these projects represent, a number of concerns and criticisms remain. One concern is that deterioration of fragile states—either into state failure or armed conflict or both—has remained difficult to predict. Many states are vulnerable, the data shows, but only some actually slip into serious levels of instability. Recent research suggests that “highly factionalized partial democracies” are most susceptible,¹⁷ but precipitating causes are highly situational and context specific.

A second concern is that the main findings of this body of research—that many to most states are at risk—may well be true, but provides no means of ordering priorities for policymakers and diplomats. The findings are overwhelming, given the enormity of the problem and the limited resources available to respond. In sum, these tools need to be supplemented with a means of ordering fragile states by the degree of strategic, political, or humanitarian impact they would have were they to fail—an alternative ordering discussed below.

Typology by Type of State Failure

“All stable nations resemble one another; each unstable nation is unstable in its own way,” noted Jack Goldstone and colleagues in their seminal PITF study of 2005.¹⁸ Variations in the type of state fragility and failure are important, as they pose different threats both to their own people and to the international community.

In the inventory below, these proposed types of state failure are not mutually exclusive—states can and do exhibit several of these features, in any combination. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is meant only as a point of departure for discussion. Importantly, these categories draw on political research that points to an often overlooked aspect of state-building initiatives—namely, that the government can be an active part of the crisis, and that state fragility may be seen by key local leaders as an acceptable or even optimal solution, not as a problem to be solved.

Complete or Near-Complete State Collapse. Cases of complete state collapse are rare, and, to date, have usually been temporary. Somalia stands as the most dramatic and prolonged example, having gone

without a functioning central government since 1991; Lebanon, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan are examples of shorter-term state collapse. Near-complete cases of state collapse—“paper governments” which enjoy a legal existence as a sovereign authority but which control only a portion of the capital city and which are entirely dysfunctional as an administration—are a variation on this theme.¹⁹ Haiti has at times met this definition; the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia certainly does.

Hinterland Failure. Some weak governments exercise adequate control over their capital and other valuable or strategic areas of the country, but lack either the will or the capacity to project their authority into peripheral parts of the country. This can often mean a third or more of the countryside is beyond the de facto control of the government; the government is little more than a “garrison state,” occasionally patrolling remote districts. Responsibility for day-to-day governance typically falls on the shoulders of local communities, which often rely on customary law or other hybrid governance arrangements. In some cases peripheral zones come under the control of criminal or insurgency elements; the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which has at times controlled a fifth of the territory of Colombia, is a case in point.

Because peripheries are often in border areas, this increases problems of cross-border smuggling and spillover of violence. In some cases states are simply too weak to project their authority into their remote peripheries, but this is often attributable to a lack of political will. As Jeff Herbst has persuasively argued, it is economically rational for state authorities, who enjoy juridical sovereignty over territory within their borders whether or not they “earn it” through governing, to avoid the high cost of projecting the state into thinly populated, expansive, uneconomic regions in their peripheries.²⁰ Only when those burning peripheries create security problems or political embarrassment to the government—or when economic assets like oil are discovered—does this calculation change and the government begin to exercise authority in its peripheries. Kenya’s recent efforts to improve its governance and security presence in its remote northern and northeast border areas have been driven, in

part, by the embarrassment caused by deadly communal violence there and rising security threats posed by spillover from Somalia.

Nocturnal Anarchy. Some fragile states manage to impose a modicum of law and order during the day, but are beset by serious criminal violence at night, at which point citizens must rely on their own systems of protection. The police are either unable to stop better-armed criminals or are criminals themselves. The expansive slums of Third World cities are, in this setting, beyond the reach of the state. Robert Kaplan's 1994 article "The Coming Anarchy" vividly depicted this type of state failure, pointing to the slums of West Africa's cities as examples.²¹

Deinstitutionalized State. Governments which have intentionally been gutted of their institutional capacity to govern, by the top leadership, constitute another form of failed or fragile state. As Will Reno has argued, leaders whose principal preoccupation is regime survival can come to view a well-functioning ministry as a potential power base for a rival, and hence go to considerable lengths to undermine and weaken governmental departments and branches.²² The judiciary is very often singled out in this regard and, as a result, is often far from autonomous and competent.

State Within a State. In many instances, states fail because autonomous political and security forces operate within the state structure and become a law unto themselves. This is most common with security forces, which can become deeply involved in lucrative criminal activities and predatory activities against parts or all of the civilian population.

Warlord or Criminal State. When major criminal operations or armed conflict are waged for economic gain and are sanctioned at the highest levels of the government, the state itself can be said to be a criminal or warlord state.²³ The literature on "new wars" suggests that state complicity in the perpetuation of war in pursuit of parochial economic interests, feeding off of plunder and resource diversion, is not as rare as one might think.²⁴ One of the most egregious examples of this type of warlord state was Liberia under Charles Taylor, who was arrested in 2006 for war crimes committed in Sierra Leone.

Delegitimized State. Some governments earn the status of a fragile state by losing or failing to earn legitimacy among most or all of the population. This is most commonly done by failure to provide basic security and core social services expected by the people (i.e., "performance legitimacy"), but can also be lost via patently fixed elections, failure to hold elections, blatant corruption, and high levels of repression and human rights abuses. Once legitimacy has been lost, the social contract that ties people to the state is eroded, and the state risks losing the allegiance of its citizens to other political actors.²⁵

Loss of legitimacy does not automatically produce armed insurgencies (as Zimbabwe demonstrates), or even protests. Faced with the choice of "loyalty, exit, or voice," some citizens—and even some leaders—may choose "exit," and simply recede from the grip of the indifferent state, creating alternative local systems of governance and security.²⁶

Financially Collapsed State. The root of some instances of state fragility is financial weakness. There are many variations on this theme: states that suffer catastrophic external economic shocks depriving them of much of their tax revenue base (including the current economic recession); that are systematically looted by kleptocratic leaders; that have been progressively weakened over time by onerous debt servicing; that are weakened in their ability to provide basic services by structural adjustment conditionality; or that were dependent on foreign aid which then was reduced or suspended.

Some of these conditions have involved deeply impoverished states that have never been viable without extensive external support. Even a very modest state structure in such instances involves levels of funding that local economies cannot shoulder. These are not so much fragile states as they are castles built on sand, vulnerable to rapid collapse were their foreign aid to be interrupted. The question of economic viability of some of the poorest fragile states is a sensitive, but unavoidable topic.

Besieged State. Fragile and failed states are often confronted by one or more armed insurgency, which can either be the result of other aspects of state fragility or the main cause of that condition. Some observers presume that armed insurgency is a defining feature of a failed state,

while others do not.²⁷ What is uncontested is that state failure correlates closely with the occurrence of armed conflict.

An important but sometimes overlooked aspect of armed violence in fragile states is the condition of chronic insecurity in which armed conflict blurs with armed criminality, and uncontrolled militias become indistinguishable from criminal gangs. This condition of “not war/not peace” can be invisible to outsiders who focus on warfare between insurgencies and the state, but for civilian populations—who are the main victims of these new wars—the condition is very real.

Mediated State. Fragile states which are “willing but not able” to govern sometimes reach negotiated understandings with nonstate authorities at the local level in what has been called a hybrid or mediated state arrangement.²⁸ These arrangements can be formal—as with the Government of South Sudan’s constitutional delegation of local-level authority to Bomas, or local chieftain councils—but are more often informal partnerships, as has occurred in northern Kenya between the government and local peace and development committees composed of civic and traditional figures.²⁹ This “outsourcing” of key sovereign functions of the state to nonstate actors can be problematic, raising questions of constitutional authority, due process, accountability, and basic human rights. But it can also be a very effective means of tapping into existing, legitimate, local authority, at least as a temporary measure, while a fragile state is being strengthened.

This practice is not to be confused with colonial policies of “indirect rule” in that the fragile state is *negotiating*, not *imposing*, an arrangement with local authorities. This type of fragile state is far more common than is often appreciated, and has even been considered an option by US government officials in Afghanistan as a means of tapping into customary law to indirectly extend the state’s weak judicial system into the countryside.³⁰

Transitional State. Fragile states can be vulnerable to armed conflict, afflicted by active armed conflict, or post-conflict. In the case of the latter, most contemporary civil wars have been ended via negotiated settlement, typically framed by a power-sharing agreement and the

establishment of a transitional government. This new phenomenon has produced several dozen transitional governments in the past twenty years.

Transitional governments are a very particular type of political system, arguably an entirely new category of state that the field of comparative politics is only slowly coming to treat as such.³¹ Transitional states are by definition fragile, both in their capacity and their ability to maintain a unity coalition. They are also burdened with executing some of the most politically charged decisions—“key transitional tasks” in the literature—imaginable. The crafting of a constitution, the establishment of regional or district borders, the resolution of outstanding conflict issues, and the holding of elections are monumental tasks, and dry kindling for renewed outbreak of violence and renewed state failure. Paul Collier’s findings that “the single greatest predictor of a civil war is a previous civil war” is especially relevant for transitional governments.³²

Typology by Threat Potential

The generic threats posed by weak and failed states are well known and have been repeated in innumerable think-tank reports and government strategy documents. But the famous observation in the 2002 US National Security Strategy that “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones” does not help us order the magnitude of different threats posed by fifty or more fragile states.³³ Each of the types of state fragility described above poses different kinds of threats to their own population, regional neighbors, and the world.

By categorizing fragile states, we can potentially make advances in ranking fragile states not by their degree of fragility but by the impact of their state of fragility on US interests, and by the impact their continued deterioration would have. This exercise is done on the assumption that US resources are limited and that, given the large number of fragile states, some “triage” is unavoidable. But it is also done in the knowledge that while the strategic impact of a state’s failure can be measured with some confidence, the political impact of a failed state cannot.

We need only look back over the past twenty years to see that imploding states which, at the time, appeared to have little strategic consequence for the United States and the world—Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, East Timor, and Darfur in Sudan, to name a few—took on a political life of their own, consuming far more time and treasure than anyone would have predicted. The US government has to consider both the strategic and the domestic political costs of an instance of state failure. Unfortunately, recent history has demonstrated that when the stakes are political, not strategic, the policy response is likely to be driven by political rather than strategic calculations. In that instance, policies which appear to be “doing something” about a crisis are often privileged over policies that might actually solve it.

The inventory below summarizes the most commonly cited threats or costs emanating from failed states, beginning with terrorist threats they may pose and concluding with the wide range of other threats. The actual prioritization of these threats is, of course, highly context-specific.

Takeover by a Radical Movement of a Failed State With Nuclear Weapons or Critical Economic Assets. A small number of fragile states are simultaneously nuclear powers or play a very sensitive role in the global economy. Were such a state to fall to a radical movement with a nihilistic or other ideological conviction which would justify use of the nuclear weapons or suspension of the country’s economic role, the results could be catastrophic. This worst-case scenario has been a matter of concern with regard to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, among others.

Terrorist Base. Fear that failed states will provide Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups with “ungoverned space” to exploit as a base have been a bedrock concern since 9/11. To date, Al Qaeda has used parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan as its base, both failed but not entirely collapsed states. Its only other base was Sudan from 1991 to 1996, as guests of the Sudanese government.

Affiliated Al Qaeda cells operate in a wide range of countries, from Kenya to Yemen to the Philippines to Indonesia. Available evidence suggests that terrorist groups prefer to situate themselves not in completely collapsed states like Somalia, which are nonpermissive

environments for all outside actors, but rather in weak states with governments that have corrupt and/or easily penetrated security sector forces and leaders who lack the capacity or will to launch a crack-down. In some instances weak, rogue regimes actively collude with the terrorist group (as happened in Sudan, 1991-1996).

Terrorist Safe Haven. A related concern is use of failed states as safe havens, where Al Qaeda and other terrorists can hide undetected. They are not looking to exploit a failed state as a base of operations in this instance, only to stay off the radar screen. Any state with weak police capacity and low levels of community policing—typically where governments have little legitimacy—can be used for this purpose. Large multiethnic cities with high numbers of foreign travelers and residents and expansive slums are attractive sites. Zones of complete state collapse are only viable as safe havens if a strong and reliable local ally is able to offer protection, as is currently the case with al Shabaab in Somalia.

Terrorist Target. Fragile states with weak policing capacity but a rich collection of soft targets—international hotels, embassies, shopping malls, etc.—constitute a particularly worrisome subcategory. It is also a major threat to states with vital economic assets—oil refineries, pipelines, major seaports—that if damaged or destroyed would have a devastating impact on the world economy.

Terrorist Financing. Weak states featuring high levels of corruption, weak policing, low capacity for monitoring business activities and trade, and valuable commercial opportunities (ranging from drug trafficking to diamond smuggling to more mundane businesses) are ideal for terrorist profit-generating activities, particularly if informal money transfer systems and money laundering opportunities exist.

Terrorist Recruiting. The record of recruitment into Al Qaeda clearly demonstrates that fragile states’ poverty and unemployment are not, per se, a catalyst for terrorist recruitment. The movement generally does better attracting disaffected and radicalized middle class students and professionals. Instead, it is predatory or repressive police states that have deeply alienated parts of their population

which are prime targets for terrorist recruitment in local communities. Pakistan, Egypt, and Morocco are examples of fragile states which have been rich recruiting grounds. Fragile states featuring weak security forces but where ethnic or religious communities feel shut out from political life and treated as second-class citizens have also been solid recruiting grounds.

Transitional Criminal Base. The same conditions that are conducive to terrorist financing (above) are attractive for transnational criminal elements, which thrive where they can pay off or infiltrate weak, corrupt governments and exploit poorly patrolled coastlines. Guinea-Bissau is frequently cited as an example of a “narco-state” in which profits from drug smuggling from Latin America to Europe dwarf government tax revenues and in which top government officials are implicated.

Spillover Threats. Spillover of a plethora of crises from failed states into vulnerable neighbors has long been a concern, in evidence as early as 1991, when Liberia’s state of collapse and warlordism led directly to the catastrophic failure of the state in Sierra Leone. The spillover of political violence from the genocide in Rwanda into the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1998 is unquestionably the most costly example if measured in human lives. Armed conflict and instability from Darfur has spilled into Central African Republic, and Chad is another more recent example.

All of these cases involve clusters of adjacent weak states, and poorly controlled border areas. They reinforce fears that individual cases of state failure can quickly become regional crises, and highlight the fact the fragile states have much less resilience against troubles coming across their borders from neighbors.

Humanitarian Crisis. The humanitarian costs of state failure, especially when accompanied by armed conflict and displacement, are well known. These costs are born mainly by the local population, of course, and have reached horrific levels in locations like the Congo, Sudan, and Rwanda.

In terms of impact on US interests, every administration since the George H.W. Bush presidency has found itself under profound polit-

ical pressure to take action which is politically risky and time-consuming in response to humanitarian crises, from Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq in 1991 to the ongoing crisis in Darfur. When public pressure to do something is intense, and when subsequent humanitarian interventions go wrong—the most dramatic example being the Somalia intervention in 1993—the political costs can be astronomical.

Refugee Flows. Fragile states that fall into protracted armed conflict almost always produce large refugee flows which impose considerable burdens on neighboring states and which can become onerous political problems for third countries (mainly in the West) where large numbers of refugees subsequently resettle, legally or illegally. The political backlash against the refugee/immigrant communities in some European countries has become a driver of European policy toward failed states.

Health Threats. Fragile states which have little or no capacity to operate public health systems and which possess large numbers of displaced persons crowded into unsanitary camps are petri dishes for the spread of new, virulent strains of diseases that can go undetected until they spread to uncontrollable levels. The Ebola virus scares emanating out of northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are cases in point.

Environmental Threats. Fragile states with high levels of corruption and/or a weak capacity to police their territory and coasts are vulnerable to toxic dumping, as recent stories from Ivory Coast have demonstrated. Weak states also lack the ability to regulate the harvesting of valuable rainforests and poaching of endangered species.

Piracy Threats. Piracy thrives off the coasts of weak and/or corrupt states that lack the capacity or will to stop pirates. The epidemic of piracy off the lawless coast of Somalia since 2005 is the most dramatic example, and has imposed costs on shipping companies and their crews, and has required the deployment of international naval patrols from two dozen countries.

Costs of Peacekeeping Operations. Failed states requiring international peacekeeping forces are financially costly. The total annual UN peacekeeping budget for 2008-2009 reached \$7.1 billion. This is only a tiny fraction of total military expenditures worldwide, but is sometimes cited by UN member states as a concern.

Typology by State Willingness and Capacity

Identifying “at risk” fragile states is a critical first step; classifying them by type of fragile state situation is a second; and assessing the type of threat they pose is a third. The final step is shaping strategies tailored to specific contexts. Here the critical distinction must be made between the willingness and capacity of fragile states to address their own weakness and the threats emanating from that weakness. This task draws on the findings of a growing body of academic research on war economies and the political economy of weak, deinstitutionalized states.

Willing but Not Able. The most permissive environment for external state building occurs in cases when a government is willing but not able to address problems arising from its own fragility. Seen through the prism of the “wicked problem” literature, a fragile state that has leaders willing but not able to fix the state’s weakness come close to being a “tame,” solvable problem. In this case, capacity-building measures—especially those designed to strengthen the military, police, civil service, judicial system, and executive branch leadership—are both appropriate and likely to bear fruit.

In that instance, it is critical to pinpoint the source of the government’s fragility. Capacity-building aid to a “willing but not able” government that possesses an extremely weak economy risks reinforcing, rather than resolving, its fragility if, in the process, a state structure is built which cannot be sustained except through greater dependence on foreign assistance. It is also imperative to have a clear answer to the question “*willing to do what?*” If the answer is to provide more effective public security, rule of law, and basic services to its citizens, then straightforward capacity-building programs are appropriate. If the government is willing to use improved capacity to monitor and prevent criminal and terrorist activities within its borders, but also intends to put that greater security capacity to use against its domestic

rivals, then capacity building must be tempered with strengthening of checks and balances and democratic constraints on the government.

Calls to strengthen the capacity of fragile states must always be attuned to the dual use of security sector power. A state with a more robust security sector which uses it against its internal rivals has not been strengthened—it has simply been changed from one type of fragile state to another. This is at the heart of the tension between democratization programs and capacity-building programs in fragile states. The two need not be at odds, and ideally are complementary, but in practice the balancing of the two is not easily done.

Able but Unwilling. Leaders of fragile states who are able but not willing to address their fragility are more problematic—more of a “wicked problem.” There are many variations on this theme. Some governments command substantial amounts of income (typically new oil revenues, as in Equatorial Guinea) which could be put to use in extending government services and improving public security, but political elites simply pocket those revenues.

In other cases, governments possess impressive levels of administrative and security sector capacity despite extreme poverty, but use that capacity to repress the population, in the process rendering the country more, not less, susceptible to eventual political instability. Eritrea is one of many such examples. These are cases which require greater levels of aid designed to promote accountability and democracy, but are the very sites where governments are least likely to welcome such assistance. Simply providing aid to improve capacity of this type of state is more likely to exacerbate the source of its fragility, and risks implicating donors in human rights abuses.

A third variation of this type of government is the predatory or warlord state, which is not only repressive but actively fomenting armed conflict among, and exploiting of, its citizens. Sudan’s indicted leadership is an example.

Unable and Unwilling. Governments which are both very weak and venal are a third category. These governments concentrate on their

own survival and, though poor, are content to feed off of the still considerable financial benefits accruing to those who claim juridical control of a state, however failed it may be.

In short, for leaders falling under this category, the costs of state building are too high and the risks too great. In contrast, state failure is a condition that the leadership can live with and knows best. Indeed, to the extent that state failure is a bigger concern to outsiders than to the government, it can use its condition of failure as a lure for state-building assistance which it then pockets for private gain. The recent acquisition by the Somali Transitional Federal Government of tens of millions of dollars of weapons and ammunition from the United States, much of which was subsequently sold on the open market (presumably making its way to the radical insurgency al Shabaab), is illustrative, and reminds us that for some governments, state failure is not a problem to be solved but a condition to be exploited.

Both types of “unwilling” fragile government pose wicked problems for external actors, and can easily lead to interventions which violate the principle “do no harm.” For instance, strategies which seek to build on “clusters of competence” within a fragile state may actually result in the political targeting of the aid-receiving group if the regime in question pursues its own goals of political survivalism via a policy of deinstitutionalization, as William Reno describes in *Warlord Politics and African States*. What the outside world sees as a potential building block for state building—a cluster of competence—the regime sees as a potential rival and threat, and quickly moves to excise from the state.

Conclusion

Conceiving of fragile states as either tame or wicked problems, based on close political analysis of the interests of the elites in control of the state, has several virtues. First, it reminds us to approach the willingness and capacity of the leadership of weak states as an empirical question to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, not as an assumption on which to base template-driven state-building policy. This observation forms part of a broader plea, articulated most recently by Mats

Berdal, that context is critical, and must be better understood by external actors seeking to promote state-building or post-conflict assistance.³⁴ Second, by highlighting the distinction between tame and wicked state-building challenges, policies that stand a better chance of success can be crafted. Put more directly, state-building policies designed for “tame” cases of state failure but applied in “wicked” cases are destined to fail and, possibly, to make things worse; basing policies on early assessment of the “wickedness” of a case of state failure may help prevent this.

Analytically, the notion of state building as a wicked problem is a stark reminder that our presumption that state failure is a crisis to be solved may not be shared by key local actors. Just as we have come to learn that semidemocratization and protracted conflict are conditions that local elites may actively promote and perpetuate, so too can the problem of state failure constitute a desired—or at least a “good enough”—outcome for some leaders of failed states. This may be an increasingly commonplace observation among political analysts, but it is not often incorporated into state-building templates, which almost always operate on the assumption that the leaders of failed states are committed to building the capacity of their government.

If this line of reasoning about state fragility has merit, it opens the door to a range of questions requiring further research. The first of these questions is analytic. How does one measure and assess levels of political willingness to address state failure? Must lack of political will to address state failure be viewed as an “either-or” condition (mirrored in the dichotomy of tame vs. wicked problems), or is it in fact a much more complex syndrome of mixed motives on the part of internally divided actors within the government?

The second question is prescriptive. It is easy to recommend not applying standard state-building programs in instances where state failure is a wicked problem. But what can be done in cases where state failure is wicked rather than tame? What can the international community do when a state’s condition of failure poses serious threats to its own population and to the wider world, but its leadership is indifferent to or complicit in that failure?

The international community has made significant advances on a related question—the rights and responsibilities of external actors when governments are unwilling to protect their own citizens from genocide, ethnic cleansing, or gross violations of human rights. The extensive debate and discussions which surrounded the formulation of the “responsibility to protect” doctrine may be required to generate useful policy recommendations for managing instances of “willful state failure.”

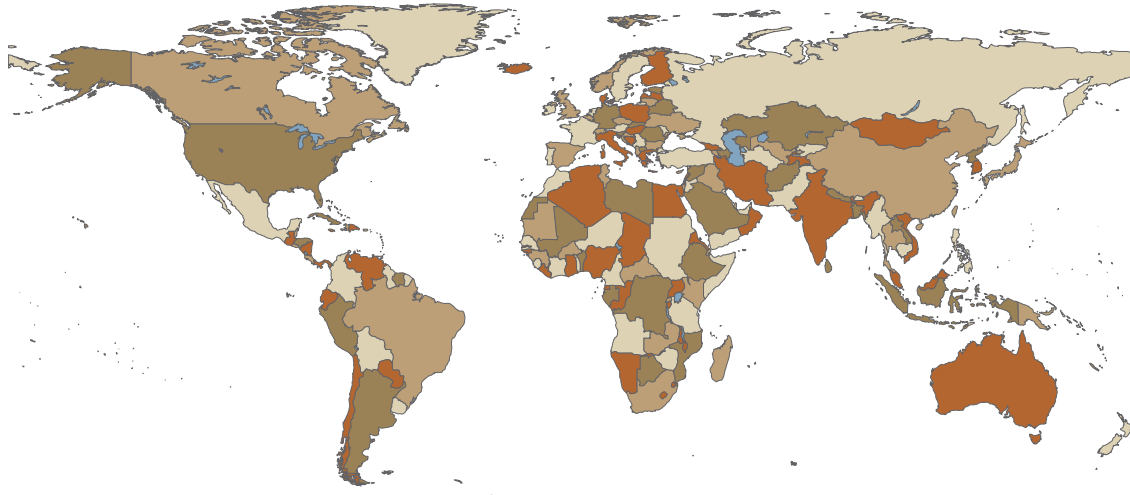
For the moment, our toolbox for responding to wicked state failure is limited. We can cajole, encourage, and shame the leaders in question; attempt to reshape the interests of political elites through the usual array of carrots and sticks; work around them, by searching for “clusters of competence” on which to build within the weak government; or, as had occurred in several places, work to replace incorrigible leaders in the hope that their replacements will exhibit a greater commitment to state building. These tools have, to date, had limited success, from Congo to Somalia to Afghanistan. New tools and new doctrines to deal with the specific problem of willful state failure are an important, politically sensitive, and essential task if the most intractable and most wicked cases of state failure are to be addressed.

This paper is revised from a working paper presented at the Stanley Foundation’s 50th Strategy for Peace Conference held at Airlie Center, Warrenton, VA, October 15-17, 2009. The views expressed in this paper are the views of the author and are not necessarily those of the Stanley Foundation.

Endnotes

- ¹ Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning,” *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973), pp. 155-59.
- ² A number of publications have sought to define and summarize wicked problems, building on Rittel’s original idea. This is an amalgam of several sources.
- ³ E. Jeffrey Conklin, “Wicked Problems and Social Complexity,” p 7.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- ⁵ See Fund for Peace, http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=391&Itemid=549; for an interactive map of this data, see Foreign Policy, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings.
- ⁶ Stewart Patrick, “U.S. Policy toward Fragile States: An Integrated Approach to Security and Development,” in Nancy Birdsall, ed., *The White House and the World: A Global Development Agenda for the Next U.S. President* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2008), p. 329. See <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/16560>.
- ⁷ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 1.
- ⁸ It is worth noting, however, that the “newness” of states correlates only partially with state fragility. Many of the original 51 member states of the United Nations in 1945 rank among the most fragile states in the world; some have broken up and no longer exist. The USSR and Yugoslavia no longer exist; Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, and India were among those that lost a portion of territory to secessionists; and Haiti, Lebanon, Colombia, El Salvador, Iraq, Honduras, and Guatemala are among the many original member states that at some point have suffered prolonged crises of internal war and state failure.
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- ¹⁰ Crisis Group’s “Crisis Watch” can be accessed at: <http://www.crisis-group.org/home/index.cfm>.
- ¹¹ Political Instability Task Force, George Mason University, <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/index.htm>.

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- ¹³ Brookings Institution, “Index of State Weakness in the Developing World,” accessible at: http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/02_weak_states_index.aspx.
- ¹⁴ Mo Ibrahim Foundation, “Ibrahim Index of African Governance,” accessible at: <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/section/the-ibrahim-index>.
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- ¹⁹ Robert Rotberg, “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators,” in Rotberg, ed., *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Washington DC: Brookings, 2003), pp 9-10.
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- ²⁴ Mats R. Berdal and David M. Malone, eds., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).
- ²⁵ Rotberg, “Failed States,” p. 9.
- ²⁶ Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).
- ²⁷ Rotberg, for instance, argues that “failed states are tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions....It is not the absolute intensity of violence that identifies a failed state. Rather it is the enduring character of that violence...” “The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States,” in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 5. Most of the systems monitoring state fragility and weakness rank Zimbabwe at or near the top of the list of failed states (for 2009) despite the fact that it suffers from no armed insurgency.
- ²⁸ Louise Andersen, Bjørn Møller, and Finn Stepputat, eds., *Fragile States and Insecure People? Violence, Security, and Statehood in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2007).
- ²⁹ Ken Menkhaus, “The Rise of a Mediated State in Northern Kenya: The Wajir Story and its Implications for State-building,” *Afrika Focus* [Ghent] vol. 21, no. 2 (2008), pp. 23-38.
- ³⁰ Thomas Barfield et al. “The Clash of Two Goods: State and Non-State Dispute Resolution in Afghanistan” (Washington: US Institute of Peace Press, 2006).
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Stabilizing States in Crisis: Leveraging International Capacity

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The International Policy Landscape for Crisis States

Since the end of the cold war, the United States and the larger international community have been confronted by a series of crises caused by acute instability and violent conflict in weak or fragile states. In many instances, such crises have necessitated costly interventions by the United Nations and the United States to stabilize and then rebuild the affected state. Ideally such interventions could have been averted (along with the need to disburse huge amounts of relief and reconstruction assistance) through a combination of proactive engagement to lower the risk of instability and conflict before it emerges and early preventive engagement to forestall escalation when it does. In practice, however, proactive and preventive engagement has proven difficult to accomplish for a variety of political and institutional reasons.

Without dismissing the necessity for more proactive and early preventive engagement to manage the challenges posed by weak or fragile states, the purpose of this roundtable—*Stabilizing States in Crisis: Leveraging International Capacity*—was to consider how international capacity can be enhanced to *respond rapidly to those states either on the verge of, or already in, a situation of acute*

crisis. Working papers and open discussions among participants focused on four key areas: international early-warning systems, especially in the “late early-warning stage,” designed to activate and guide more timely international response to an unfolding crisis; rapid political capacities, particularly in the area of fact-finding, mediation, and electoral support; rapid economic assistance necessary for financial stabilization and basic service delivery; and rapid international security assistance. Participants shared a variety of viewpoints and offered concrete recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

Improving Early-Warning Capabilities

- A new focus on drivers of conflict, and conflict prevention in general, in fragile states has taken root in the United States, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), and other countries, and this push for increased attention to what precipitates, escalates, and feeds conflicts should be encouraged.
- Community-based early-warning systems should be developed to supplement headquarter early-warning and early-response systems,

especially new systems that can tackle *micro-level conflicts* and broaden out and deepen coverage in *key hot spot areas* within and between national borders.

- More attention should focus on how to facilitate early response through preplanning and conflict assessment, including linking traditional and nontraditional sources of early warning. This includes:
 - o Enhancing dialogue between political scientists and hard scientists specializing in agriculture, environment, climate, and other realms (e.g., current warning mechanisms focused on grains and foodstuffs).
 - o Complementing well-known indicators covering economic, political, and security sectors by adding financial metrics on short-term interest rates and the decline in foreign direct investments (FDI), which could also provide a credible warning signal for crises, as has been the case for crises in Sierra Leone and Chad.
 - o Broadening the operational horizon of early-warning systems to include emerging concerns such as intrastate criminality and climate change.
- Greater attention should be paid to the way that early-warning capabilities are communicated and transmitted to policymakers to overcome political inhibition of early action. Additionally, it is necessary to improve the recipients' understanding of warning to ensure that their own foci and objectives are being met. Communication within government agencies can be abjectly flawed due to the inherent bias of national interests, which can redefine the threshold or gravity of a crisis.
- In the interest of a cross-disciplinary understanding of key terms, a closer examination of countries "at the tipping point" should be done to determine the specific characteristics of a country's fragility and vulnerability. Current early-warning systems typically disregard both a qualitative and intuitive analysis based on regional and local interactions. In particular, the systems do not consider the psychological or political dimensions that are often at the center of crises.

- Special attention should be given to the quality of the data which, if poor, can seriously undermine the credibility of the warning system or framework.

Strengthening Rapid Political Response

- Nimble, less risk-averse crisis response mechanisms can prevent the escalation of crises, and thereby avoid the need for expensive peace operations.
- International and national institutions need to be configured to enable actions that respond directly to the objective needs of a crisis, rather than to the needs, concepts, and definitions of organizational structures, funding arrangements, and institutions. The current reality is that actions toward crisis states are geared toward existing UN institutional architecture(s), rules, and modes of thought, rather than toward the objective needs of a crisis state.
- As a start, changes to some of the donor-based reporting mechanisms for grants could be simplified to facilitate faster and more effective cash disbursements. There is also a need to distinguish funds for emergency use—as has been the case in the humanitarian response field—from funds dedicated to standing capacities which are more tightly controlled and sealed. In particular, budgetary provisions earmarked for peacekeeping result in fewer funds being available for conflict prevention, mediation, or peace-building activities.
- The United Nations should continue to strengthen regional partnerships and regional capacity to engage in a variety of political responses to crises, including mediation, fact-finding and arbitration. The role of the UN Department of Political Affairs (UNDPA) to support regional organizations needs to be enhanced, including continued investment in the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) to enable successful political operations.
- In particular, there is a real need for experts who are available to jump into a situation when conditions are ripe for parties to accept a mediator. These experts should have the information necessary

to liaise and coordinate effectively with regional organizations. In these instances, acting rapidly and in effective coordination with local actors is critical to impeding an escalation of political and violent conflict.

Enhancing Rapid Economic Response

- Recognize that different planning/budgeting/funding systems (the one focused in the United Nations, those in capitals, and those focused in-country) have to be brought together, with built-in incentives for stronger coherence at every level. Two distinct macro-level systems exist, one based on creating a secure environment (including security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and police training); and the other based on economic prosperity through plans for long-term growth. Currently, these “two worlds” do not interact reliably or consistently.
- Encourage efforts to pre-position peacebuilding response capacity, both pre-positioned funds and rosters of qualified technical staff (national and international, including Diaspora).
- Design adapted rules that allow for fast allocation of funding and staff, and that ensure the best staff (especially the leaders at country level) are attracted to work in such countries, taking the necessary risks.
- Encourage institutions dedicated to managing economic shocks to focus on fragile states as a key constituency. For instance, the dangers of sudden shocks caused by price drops in key export commodities are underemphasized and underestimated. Economic crises of a longer-term nature are still emphasized over the conflict-escalating potential of short-term, sharp shocks.
- Improve the United States’ ability to work with international organizations and to contribute to international missions that will benefit its national security. Participants singled out USAID as an acutely risk-averse and underfunded organization, lacking in-house technical expertise required for true rapid response.

Improving Rapid Security Assistance

- The United States and its international partners should pursue immediate low-cost investments to greatly improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Specifically, investments in headquarter resources and equipment on the ground are desirable. A Peace Support Operations Training Center of Excellence within NATO can address critical shortages of strategic planners and Francophone staff officers as indicated by the New Horizons report.
- Encourage emerging powers to make more substantive contributions to missions. In particular, there should be incentives for countries that contribute a moderate or modest number of troops to increase their participation in peacekeeping operations, including G-20 countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, and Mexico.
- Multilateral efforts to build national security sector capacity should be encouraged, particularly in the area of rapidly-deployable police forces and police trainers. Serious consideration should be given to developing a UN Emergency Peace Service, which can serve as a rapidly deployable police and political expeditionary service. In the long term, these efforts could lessen dependence on UN peacekeeping missions.
- The United States should symbolically increase the number of peacekeepers and police officers with the United Nations. Currently, the United States deploys nineteen peacekeepers and eighty police officers across seventeen UN missions. Increasing these numbers will have two positive outcomes: it will represent a symbolic truce with troop-contributing countries that have been wedged in an acrimonious deadlock with donor countries over their role in peace operations; and it will enable the United States to become more actively involved in developing a doctrine on peacekeeping, which it currently cannot do without a significant presence on the ground.

Full Outcomes of the International Dialogue

Cross-Cutting Findings

Participants agreed that the role of multilateral and regional organizations is critical to formulating successful conflict prevention strategies and to responding to crises in fragile states. Multilateral

organizations have an invaluable comparative advantage in several important respects. They can confer much-needed legitimacy upon international responses, they have an extensive convening power that allows them to assemble diverse players typically viewed as impartial actors, and they can provide access to areas in which some national and private actors have difficulty operating.

However, despite these benefits, participants acknowledged that several significant challenges affect their performance in executing rapid and effective response to states suffering from instability or violent conflict. Some of the cross-cutting challenges highlighted by the panel include:

- **Need for both a comprehensive and sustainable crisis response framework:** Crisis response should not only harness the key actors and be sensitive to the main functional areas that need attention, but it should be carried out in ways that are sustainable over the long term. Too often, short-term responses undermine long-term solutions.
- **Lack of cohesion between organizations and within institutions:** Response mechanisms are too often internally fragmented. This is often reflected in a lack of definitional consistency on terminology (e.g. definitions for fragile states, peacebuilding, and other key terms). Greater efforts need to be made not only to coordinate different actors but also to ensure that, internally, they are cohesive in designing and implementing comprehensive responses based on as common a terminology and conceptual-operational framework as possible.
- **Funding shortcomings:** Available funding needs to be more flexible, mainly via rapidly disbursable funds with *higher risk tolerance* to reflect the priorities and preferences needed to achieve a rapid response. There is an imminent need to create mechanisms that enable rapid and flexible funding across the peace and security and economic development realms that reflects the urgency on the ground.

- **Planning and training deficit:** Currently, there are limited training capabilities and a lack of planning, and this presents challenges to ensuring effective institutional responses. Emphasis needs to be placed on preplanning activities and training of deployable staff to carry out responsibilities on the ground.
- **Moral hazard:** Crisis response often presents a variety of moral hazards, including elevating the role of illegitimate actors and encouraging spoilers.
- **Capacity shortfalls:** While there is consensus on how to respond to states in crisis, critical shortfalls remain in the needed key areas.

These points are explained and described in more detail below.

Early Warning

In the last ten years there have been mixed reviews on the effectiveness of early-warning systems. While some progress has been achieved in developing and institutionalizing early-warning mechanisms, the rapidly changing nature of threats and the speed at which threats have developed have created a widening gap that calls for further improvements in instruments.

At the conference, participants used an analogy with bubbles to describe the current status of early-warning systems. Where bubbles form and replicate as the soap and water are added to a bathtub, hostilities and points of conflict also develop as grievances multiply and are asserted more overtly. Eventually, once the water is drained from the tub, the bubbles sequentially and rapidly burst. As such, once small crises erupt, they cause a domino effect that leads to an untenable condition of insecurity and a larger crisis. Unfortunately, early-warning systems, thus far, have too often been unable to detect the onset of smaller incidents of violence, resulting in an untimely and ineffective response to larger crises.

Globally, numerous early-warning systems have been developed by governments, IGOs, and NGOs to assess a select group of indicators that evaluates a country's (or subregion's) level of instability. Of these,

the two regional early-warning mechanisms that experts consider the most advanced are the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) and the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), both of them in Africa.

In discussing these two regional mechanisms, conference participants were surprised by the unevenness of their analytical capabilities. Systems such as ECOWARN were criticized for attempting to measure too many metrics that were not based on predictability, but rather on a negotiated solution between states and stakeholders. Additionally, while the ECOWARN's regional coverage is broad, the system is marred by a lack of coherence in terms of data collection and analysis. Similarly, the East African Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) early-warning system, CEWARN, was also deemed ineffectual due to its patchy coverage of pastoral conflicts.

Moreover, at the most rudimentary level, the definitional consistency on terminology among the actors engaged in stabilizing states continues to present an overarching challenge to the effectiveness of early-warning instruments. The lack of consensus on the definition of basic terms, such as “fragility,” hampers the effectiveness of the analysis that feeds into early-warning systems.

To bolster a cross-disciplinary understanding of key terms, a closer examination of countries “at the tipping point” may help in determining the specific characteristics of a country's fragility and vulnerability. In some cases—as pointed out by one conference participant—such analysis could demonstrate that alongside well-known indicators covering economic, political, and security sectors, lesser-known metrics (such as financial metrics on short-term interest rates and the decline in FDI) could also provide a credible warning signal for crises (as was the case for the crises in Sierra Leone and in Chad). In this regard, conference participants agreed that the technical tools used to determine the onsets of crises need to be improved both in terms of their analytical integrity and their predictability. Special attention should also be placed to the quality of the data which, if poor, can seriously undermine the credibility of the warning.

Participants also commented on the need to consider the conceptual underpinning of early-warning systems. Certain technocratic assumptions in existing early-warning systems are often incomplete and disregard both a qualitative and intuitive analysis based on regional and local interactions. In particular, the systems do not consider the political, psychological, and political dimensions that are often at the center of crises. As a result, consideration of issues germane to the needs of the recipient population is often missed. Participants concluded that a better job has to be done in keeping the recipients at the heart of the warning analysis.

Participants were divided on the scope of coverage for early-warning systems. Some participants argued that early-warning systems have been excessively concerned with the emergence of armed conflict, and that other crises, including environmental, economic, and human rights-related conflicts, have been neglected. In this regard, there is a need to broaden the operational horizon of early-warning systems to include emerging concerns such as criminality and climate change. Despite acknowledging that early-warning systems could cater to a diffuse system that covers a broad range of crises, some speakers considered expanding the coverage of early-warning mechanisms a grey area that could result in a murky distinction between early warning and long-term development. For instance, some participants perceived climate change and crime as long-term developmental challenges, and thereby not themes for early warning. Additionally, the “abundance” of early warning, particularly from nongovernmental agencies, such as the International Crisis Group, raised questions about the extent to which all of these warnings were indeed necessary.

Moreover, there remain significant challenges in communicating early warning. Messages are sometimes considered perfunctory or weak, and at times result in the wrong information being delivered to the decision maker. In particular, communication within government agencies can be innately flawed due to lack of consideration regarding the population at the center of the crises, and by the inherent bias toward national interests which can redefine the threshold or gravity of a crisis. Some participants recognized that overreliance on national

intelligence structures, particularly in the United States, has led to some misplaced trust. Others agreed, noting that there needs to be an acknowledgment that state-based early-warning systems are not going to capture the breadth of activity that is at play in a country experiencing instability.

In general, conference participants questioned the effectiveness of current communication processes. In this regard, suggestions for increasing attention to *how early-warning capabilities are communicated and transmitted to policymakers to overcome political inhibition of early action* were viewed positively.

Many participants, however, admitted that blame cannot be solely placed on early-warning systems because our knowledge of the conflict often precludes an effective response. Participants expressed frustration with the lack of accurate and rigorous conflict assessment tools that are unable to link early warning with early response. Without adequate information, early response in a country is unable to provide the kind of assistance that would allow it to succeed. There is an urgent need to acquire, evaluate, and put information to work constructively in the context of a response network. However, the current process for conflict assessment does not guarantee that early response is being supported by a thorough and sound analysis. In this regard, improving conflict assessment capabilities by creating institutions at the national and subnational levels can improve our understanding of conflicts.

In addition, while the multilateral system is based on a coherent international framework that provides the adequate tools for response, the lack of political will, unfortunately, inhibits action. One participant noted that the lack of political will is most apparent within the context of a divided Security Council.

An additional speaker from the United Nations agreed, saying that, in her experience, it was never a lack of early warning that hindered action, but rather an obstacle in the political space. The speaker noted that in the last year the United Nations had been accused of failing in situations such as Kenya but, in fact, it was not a problem of early

warning, but rather that there was no entry point for action that the Kenyans wanted. The participant then listed other examples where this was the case, for instance, in Sri Lanka and Georgia there was also no possibility for political engagement.

Presently, conditions in Nigeria and Pakistan also present a scenario where, according to the speaker, the entry point will only be realized once the situation reaches a boiling point. Another participant concurred, noting that sometimes it was necessary to wait for the “middle bubble to pop,” citing the analogy of the bubble bath. Agreeing with the previous two speakers, a third participant pointed to the case of Macedonia, which had been on the verge of a major destabilizing event, but because the international community had intervened at the onset of a minor civil war, it had the resources to mitigate an escalation in the conflict and avert a crisis. The participant added that we needed a better international response to Kenya when smaller incidents erupted.

Several options were put forth on how to improve the current instruments for early warning. The most apparent was to promote and deploy third-generation early-warning and early-response systems that can settle micro-level conflicts and, in particular, broaden out and deepen their coverage in key hot spot areas. These mechanisms would complement international responses that are often too late, and sometimes inappropriate, in addressing crises in fragile states. Additionally, many participants called for a differentiation of roles—analysts, cultural translators, teachers; people who have a key understanding of the response side have to be engaged in the analysis. In this regard, enhancing dialogue between *political scientists* and hard scientists specializing in agriculture, environment, climate, and other realms could also result in a cross-fertilization of knowledge that improves the efficiency of current mechanisms. To facilitate this cross-dimensional approach, several participants proposed examining cross-sectoral best practices on early-warning systems, including mechanisms focused on grains and foodstuffs. The extensive experience and advanced equipment used by the intelligence community also provides viable models for monitoring and predicting the actions of interested parties, which could be harnessed to improve early-warning capabilities.

Political Response

The international political response architecture has been expanding its mandate to manage and oversee an increasing number of conflict-related challenges that have strained and outpaced the institutional capabilities of many institutions. On a yearly basis, international organizations can be counted on to support peace processes and political interventions that provide diplomatic solutions to a broad array of political crises such as electoral fraud and constitutional contestations.

The difficulty of effective response has been complicated by uncertain and changing environmental conditions; the United Nations and other international organizations have been partially ineffective in adapting to these conditions. In the last decade alone the pattern of violence has altered from civil wars to new forms of political violence such as terrorism, piracy, subnational violence, organized crime, and coups d'état.

The realignment of power relationships has also raised questions about the appropriate architecture for crisis response. Traditional western powers within the United Nations have been less able to assert their agenda, and yet the jury is still undetermined on whether emerging powers can convene to respond collectively to transnational threats and security challenges. The diffusion of decision making to informal coalitions and groupings, such as the G-20, also present some notional challenges to formal and established political institutions that have, historically, been the preeminent forum for policy formulation and crises response. In effect, these changes to the political landscape have curtailed the ability to gain consensus and implement basic capacities that enable a targeted political response to destabilizing conditions in fragile states.

Benefiting from its legitimacy and vast experience in the field of political violence, the United Nations remains the primary authority for peacemaking, mediation, preventive diplomacy, and political response. However, the organization has been unsuccessful in establishing a long-term and comprehensive crisis response strategy.

While recognizing that all facets of the organization, such as long-term efforts of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and economic revitalization, have to be linked to more short-term efforts such as peacekeeping, peacemaking, and other forms of crisis management, the organization has been unsuccessful in achieving consensus on a comprehensive and coherent strategy that ensures durable peace and stability in fragile states. In the first few years of his tenure, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has attempted to build political momentum on a comprehensive framework by issuing reports on mediation, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping in an effort to promote dialogue and creative thinking on how these sequential processes can be integrated and viewed as one formula that aligns all interested parties with the overarching objective of achieving and consolidating durable peace. The difficulty in realizing such an integrated strategy has been underpinned by deep-seated political alignments that are inherently opposed to changes in strategy toward fragile states and peace and security issues at the United Nations.

Moreover, the complexities of the administrative functions of the organization also pose numerous obstacles to marshalling resources and ensuring predictable financing for imminent political crises. In particular, budgetary provisions that are exclusively dedicated to peacekeeping make less funding available for conflict prevention, mediation, or peacebuilding activities. The stovepiped architecture will need to be radically altered to ensure that multilateral political response is part of a menu of response options that enables the delivery of solutions more effectively on the ground. In essence, this will entail configuring action according to the needs of the crisis, rather than organizational structures, funding arrangements, and institutions, as noted by one of the conference participants.

In addition to the lack of financing available for response, there is a gap in the flexibility of funding arrangements which prevent a rapid and timely response to burgeoning crises. Conference participants reiterated the need to encourage the development of nimbler, less risk-averse political response mechanisms that prevents the escalation of crises, and thereby avoids the need for expensive peace operations. As suggestions, conference participants proposed reconfiguring the funding vehicles so that they can be more risk-averse, and hence more

easily accessed and utilized. Furthermore, changes to some of the donor-based reporting mechanisms for grants could be simplified to facilitate faster and more effective cash disbursements. There may also be a need to distinguish funds for emergency use—as has been the case in the humanitarian response field—from funds dedicated to standing capacities which are more tightly controlled and sealed.

Enhancing the machinery for political response will also require a reassessment of the professional and technical resource capacities within the United Nations. In particular, there is a real need for experts who are available to jump into a situation when conditions are ripe enough for parties to accept a mediator. In these instances, acting rapidly is critical to impeding an escalation of political and violent conflict.

Numerous participants called for the establishment of a professional roster of experts that can be readily deployed for mediation work in conflict and post-conflict zones. Participants from the United Nations confirmed that the Department of Political Affairs has created a Mediation Support Unit (in 2006) which supports a standby team of mediation experts that are available for diplomatic negotiations at short notice.

Despite this mechanism, finding the right leadership remains a challenge, especially in Africa where credible mediators are already stretched too thin. Each mediator, on average, is negotiating three to four conflicts around the continent. This sometimes results in having to deploy weaker mediators who may not have a strong sense of the structural and root causes of the conflict and the intuitive ability to manage spoilers and leverage the situation wisely. Moreover, they can find themselves in a situation where they are competing with local mediators on the scene who benefit from an in-depth knowledge of the cultural and societal nuances. In order to solve this apparent problem, the United Nations has focused on building the “right team,” should one of the more sought-out mediators not be available. Building this capacity entails creating a roster of experts that undergoes a stricter vetting procedure and results in the recruitment of highly qualified staff, including special envoys and deputy special

envoys. Moreover, in an effort to create synergies within the UN system, UNDPA has also begun to consider the UNDP resident coordinator for mediation efforts should he/she have crisis management and response expertise.

Reacting to the apparent dearth of leadership for UN diplomatic missions, conference participants reiterated the need to support and engage renowned figures in conflict mediation. In particular, Kofi Annan’s work in Kenya received accolades, as did the work of Paul Collier, Wyclef Jean, and former President Bill Clinton in reaching a solution to the political crisis in Haiti and in engaging donors to pledge more funds to the war-torn state. However, participants also pointed out that, while the work of the mediator is extremely important in reaching a peace agreement, there is also a need for more high-level expertise once an agreement is signed and implementation begins.

In addition to supporting the financing and resource needs within the United Nations, there is a need to expand and strengthen regional partnerships as a strategic imperative to effective political response. Regional organizations, in particular, have a comparative advantage in that they are intimately engaged with networks of subregional and local actors, which facilitates their ability to analyze and assess the threat of crises. Their role and capacity should be strengthened to enable their participation in a variety of political responses, including mediation, fact-finding, and arbitration.

To enable this effort, the role of UNDPA to support regional organizations needs to be enhanced, including continued investment in the MSU to enable successful political operations. Agreeing with this suggestion, one conference participant noted with regret that, while the MSU has achieved many successes in the last few years, it nevertheless continues to lack the information and capacity to support and interact with regional teams and experts which, in turn, presents a real challenge for rapid response on the ground.

Several conference participants highlighted the danger of “moral hazard,” resulting from international diplomatic engagement, and called for a more nuanced approach to political response. In particular, if ille-

gitimate actors and spoilers are certain that the international community will objectively aim to forge a power sharing agreement, they may elevate their role in political negotiations. This threat is most pertinent in countries that have been witnessing an increasing number of unconstitutional changes in government which have exacerbated conditions of fragility. In such cases, a deeper understanding of the political, cultural, and sociological dimensions shaping the crises need to be analyzed and reassessed to formulate a differentiated set of response mechanisms.

Despite the wide-ranging obstacles to effective political response, participants were encouraged by the change in tone of the new US administration toward multilateral engagement and diplomacy. US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice has commented on the need for a comprehensive approach to peacekeeping that considers political solutions to conflict. In addition, the United States' critical financial support for UNDPA, as well as its partial repayment of long-overdue arrears, has enabled some space to implement key strategic initiatives within the United Nations.

Nevertheless, participants believed that the relationship will undergo a testing period as questions persist as to how the US government will be able to promote internal coherence and coordination within its own political architecture to ensure that it meets its multilateral commitments. Furthermore, participants wondered what instruments the United States will use to facilitate a more efficient political response by the United Nations, as well as how to integrate regional organizations more formally into the multilateral response architecture.

Rapid Economic Response

In the past decade, significant progress has been achieved in delivering effective economic responses to post-conflict societies. The ongoing leadership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) in economic recovery and the successful establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and its Support Office have enabled some viable opportunities for response.

However, appropriate mechanisms have not adapted quickly enough to respond to the growing challenges germane to post-conflict areas. Conceptual gaps that limit the establishment of a comprehensive framework for peacebuilding that can consolidate a durable peace and prevent the resurgence of violence continues to be a persistent challenge as noted in the section on "Political Response."

The most critical of these gaps is the failure to recognize the "two world syndrome," as stated by one of the conference participants. In essence, two separate and streamlined systems operate in post-conflict fragile states. One system is focused on ensuring that post-conflict countries "need external support to peace and security" to defuse any prospects that can lead to the reemergence of violence. Various mechanisms are at work within this system, including international peacekeeping and policing efforts that work to secure a tangible peace through programs on security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration of ex-combatants, prevention of natural resource exploitation, and the illicit trafficking of arms. Under this system, successful peacebuilding can best be achieved by ensuring a secure environment for economic recovery and relies on a top-down agenda, largely crafted in New York by the UN Security Council.

The second system entails a more country-focused process which considers a bottom-up approach toward post-conflict reconstruction. This system primarily engages experts from the development field to deliver solutions that address long-term efforts to armed conflict. Activities operationalized through this channel pursue broader measures that include political, institutional, economic, and development initiatives to engage the country in achieving rapid economic recovery and revitalization. The agents for this work are chiefly The World Bank, bilateral and regional donors, and civil society organizations at large.

While both of these systems are needed to ensure a viable path to peacebuilding, they too often operate with uncoordinated agendas under two distinct overarching umbrellas. Significant efforts have to be made to ensure that these two systems are brought together with integrated strategies that allow for operational synergies and results-

oriented benefits across agencies. Enabling this cooperation will require significant interorganizational dialogue that can facilitate the harmonization of processes and the creation of incentives at every level. In particular, UN member states would have to agree that they should have only one strategy for international response and that all national assets (financial, political, and military) should be aligned toward that goal.

While generally agreeing with this concept, some participants noted that integrating the “two worlds” will take both better leadership and a change in the institutional mandates of donor agencies. Furthermore, once the strategy is implemented, it will pose challenges as to who would be designated as the lead organization with the authority to act for all other donors in crisis conditions.

Participants also discussed some persistent and inherent flaws in the economic response mechanism that impede the fast allocation of funding and staffing (including ensuring that the best staff—especially leaders at country level—are attracted to work in fragile states). On funding, conference participants agreed that at a minimum, mechanisms releasing funds should be reevaluated, but that additionally there has to be some creative thinking about the strategy through which funds are released. Conference participants highlighted that not only the United Nations lacks the capabilities to respond rapidly; so do national donor agencies. One participant pointed out that USAID is well aware of its inability to move funds rapidly, but pointed to the lack of tolerance for risk that prevents the organization from doing so.

In this regard, pre-positioned funds were offered as viable options to accelerate the release of much-needed financing. Four such funds were discussed at the conference: the European Commission (EC) Instrument for Stability which consists of \$220 million to be disbursed within days for action in developing countries (with the exception of military and humanitarian crises); the UN Peacebuilding Fund, which consists of \$150 million designated to address the immediate needs of countries emerging from, and at risk of relapsing into, violent conflict; The World Bank State- and Peacebuilding Fund which readily disburses \$100

million per annum for state and local governance, and peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-prone or conflict affected situations; and the UN Development Programme/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery Overview (UNDP/BCPR) Conflict Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Funds, which also disburses \$100 million per annum to respond rapidly to natural disasters or violent conflicts.

Generally, conference participants believed that organizations should encourage donors to support pre-positioned funds as a means of responding effectively and rapidly to emerging crises. Numerous participants agreed that funds dedicated to responding to certain economic shocks had to be distinguished from funds that were used to respond to economic crises. In this sense, there is a great need to encourage institutions dedicated to managing economic shocks to make fragile states a key constituency, especially since a shock of a primary export commodity could increase the likelihood of violent conflict.

Personnel issues continue to be a challenge for work in post-conflict states. In particular, most crisis managers working in fragile states are not adept at resource management. In this regard, the UN secretary-general’s report, “Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict” suggested ways to improve staffing regulations for work in post-conflict situations, and these improvements have been gaining currency in the past few months. In particular, initiatives such as compiling a roster of leaders and experts on law and economic rejuvenation, who can be called upon in a crisis, would prove to be highly beneficial. This roster would enable organizations to make timely decisions that deploy the right person to the right scene.

One exemplary system is the UNDP’s SURGE (Supporting UNHCR Resources on the Ground with Experts on Mission) project, which convenes experts from various areas of expertise and UN departments and deploys them to crisis areas within days. In response to this suggestion, one participant pointed out that it is critical to identify the people with the skill set needed to work in near-crisis conditions. *Too many times rosters end up deploying people who are not qualified, but simply available*; this can aggravate the situation on the ground.

The secretary-general's report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict proposes finding people in the affected country rather than bringing people in from the outside. This, according to several conference participants, should be a central goal for organizations engaged in post-conflict economic response. The current metrics point to a 90 percent presence from the outside, versus a 10 percent presence of in-country experts. While these numbers cannot be dramatically shifted overnight, one approach may be to look for experts from the region who are trained and well-versed in the cultural, political, and linguistic requirements of the country in question, which would make them much more able to adapt to dynamic, unpredictable situations.

Participants reiterated the need for multilateral engagement with the United States. In particular, participants noted that the United States and United Nations could benefit from strengthening their relationship to enable economic recovery in countries of vital national interest to the United States, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia. In addition, while the Peacebuilding Commission has made significant political and operational inroads in assisting the four countries on its agenda—Burundi, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, and the Central African Republic—it is far from ensuring that solutions are tenable and country-specific. With the upcoming five-year review of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2010, the Obama administration will have a singular opportunity to provide substantive leadership in shaping the future work of the commission so that it can more adeptly address the key drivers of conflict and broaden its scope to engage in more countries that urgently need its support.

International Security Assistance

The current toolbox for international security response initiatives contains several instruments that have been beneficial to securing and maintaining peace in fragile states. The scenarios for which they have been created have varied, both in intensity and in ease of operation. Some of the scenarios highlighted at the conference, included the restoration of order, as was deemed necessary in Haiti in 1994 when the UN Security Council authorized member states to end the political crisis through the restoration of the constitutionally elected govern-

ment; the protection of relief, as was the case in Somalia in 1992 where there was a need to establish a safe space which would allow the United Nations to deliver humanitarian relief; and lastly, a response to mass atrocities, as was the case in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur, where mass killings, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing created a moral imperative for action.

The capacity to respond effectively to all three of these situations calls for a range of military capacity and professional expertise. The requirements can be divided into two categories: a professional military capacity, and a “non-kinetic” capacity, which includes policing, humanitarian assistance, and support for human rights, infrastructure, and economic development.

Depending on the nature of the operation, both dimensions are critical to the success of a mission. The best-established and most renowned international capacity is that of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which is second only to the US as the largest military force in the world. Since its establishment in 1948, the unit has been engaged in sixty-three missions mandated by the United Nations. The unit now employs over 116,000 peacekeepers in some seventeen missions, with a large majority concentrated in Africa and the Middle East.

While the strengths of the United Nations are unmatched given its legitimacy, depth of experience, and the cost effectiveness of its operations, the United Nations still faces some pervasive challenges, particularly in fragile states. One of the chronic challenges stems from the inadequate support missions receive from the UN headquarters. DPKO and its sister unit, the Department of Field Support (DFS), employ approximately 860 people, each of whom manages some 140 peacekeepers. Funding and resourcing, therefore, continue to remain short of the requirements needed by the United Nations to respond to security needs in countries emerging from conflict.

In addition, the termination of the UN Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) has limited the United Nations' ability to deploy at short notice a functional team that can respond immediately to a

UN Security Council Chapter VI resolution. As a possible strategic alternative, serious consideration should be given to developing a UN Emergency Peace Service which can serve as a rapidly deployable police and political expeditionary service, and in the long term could lessen dependence on UN peacekeeping missions.

Moreover, special attention should be given to the police capacity of peacekeeping missions. Efforts focused on deployment and/or training of in-country police are particularly starved of resources. Although there are 16,000 slots for police officers, only 12,000 personnel are on active duty. Additionally, many of the officers nominated by their countries fail to pass the United Nations' qualifying test for police officers due to inadequate training, and (in the US case) on human rights operational principles. The problem is amplified by the fact that many of the police officers on peacekeeping units come from countries with differing doctrines for policing; in practical terms, these disparities create operational difficulties in performing and executing the tasks they are meant to complete.

Besides the UN peacekeeping capacities, conference participants discussed the competency of military operations linked to regional organizations. While several such capacities are able to deliver an effective response to destabilizing conditions in fragile states, others got a mixed scorecard.

On the positive side, the European Union's military apparatus, which consists of fifteen standing groups designed to undertake autonomous rapid response operations, has a highly professional and readily deployable military capacity. Similarly, NATO also offers some effective mechanisms to operationalize military efforts. The strength of its capacity led participants to believe that it could be well-equipped to facilitate inter-agency cooperation, and provide much-needed training by establishing a Peace Support Operations Training Center of Excellence that could address critical shortages of strategic planners and Francophone staff officers as indicated by the New Horizons report.

Other regional forces continue to suffer from a lack of resources, and at times even an integrated strategy. For instance, the African Union's

(AU) military capacity has not met its expansion objectives partially due to a framework that is too weak to harness the advantages of its machineries under a single architecture. Despite its competent workforce, the military operations under the AU have proven ineffective once different parts are brought together.

Participants at the conference discussed the extent to which the United States could assist the UN peacekeeping operations and regional operations to carry out its missions more effectively and rapidly. In particular, participants noted that the United States and its international partners should pursue immediate low-cost investments that can greatly improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Investments in headquarter resources and equipment on the ground are desirable, especially for UN DPKO and the AU.

While all conference participants agreed that these initiatives would be extremely beneficial, some wondered whether the United States would demonstrate the leadership to pursue them. In particular, some participants perceived that the degree of interest demonstrated by the current administration for enhancing its engagement in multilateral military efforts is low. Others, however, including participants in government positions, declared that the Obama administration is steering a sea change in military policy and has begun to look at operations from a long-term perspective. The United States, as one participant noted, is shifting its lens from that of an intervenor to that of a more multilateral approach.

However, with the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the participant continued, the US government does not have the resources to commit to concrete initiatives. Participants from the United Nations, or engaged in work at the United Nations, welcomed the US commitment to assist peacekeeping operations, highlighting that the new administration's ability to pay its dues to the United Nations in full after many years of arrears was a remarkable act of multilateralism that has signaled a renewed partnership.

Some participants, however, while recognizing the difficulties the United States has in expanding its scope of activity given its exposure

to so many ongoing military interventions, suggested that the United States could symbolically increase the number of peacekeepers and police officers with the United Nations. The United States now deploys nineteen peacekeepers and eighty police officers across seventeen UN missions. Increasing these numbers will have two positive outcomes: first, it will represent a symbolic truce to troop-contributing countries who have been wedged in an acrimonious deadlock with donor countries over their role in peace operations; and second, it will enable the United States to become more actively involved in developing a doctrine on peacekeeping, which it currently cannot do without a significant presence on the ground.

Other participants suggested that in addition to increasing a US presence, the potential to harness the capacity of emerging powers could fill crucial deficits in funding and resources for UN peacekeeping operations. Currently, roughly 75 percent of UN peacekeepers come from 25 percent of UN member states, of which the largest suppliers are less-developed and fragile states, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. There is an opportunity to expand the role of emerging countries like Brazil, Indonesia, and Mexico in delivering more capacity to UN operations. In effect, the United Nations should be more active in encouraging substantive contributions through greater incentives to emerging powers that currently contribute a moderate or modest number of troops.

Conclusion

Important progress has been made in recent years to enhance the role and capacity of international organizations to respond to states in crises. There is now a shared understanding of the challenges and needed solutions. What is required now is greater attention to building capacity and ensuring timely and effective implementation. In particular, there needs to be more nuanced use of the available tools that reflect the distinctive elements of the given crisis.

Conference participants agreed that the changing nature of global transnational challenges and the geopolitical shift in power dynamics from a Western-dominated world order to one that considers emerging powers, will necessitate improved normative frameworks

and operational mechanisms that can more effectively and comprehensively respond to crises in fragile states. In this regard, participants hailed the sea change in US foreign policy and emphasized the value of the new administration's commitment and support for multilateral partners and solutions. With this transformation, there is renewed hope for reducing the tension between short-term crisis response imperatives and long-term solutions for sustainable peace.

This report summarizes the primary findings of the conference as interpreted by the rapporteur, Farah Faisal Thaler and chair, Paul Stares. It contains their interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

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In Our Stead: Developing and Enhancing International Security Assistance Capacities

By Ron Capps

Peacekeeping Program Manager, Refugees International

Back in 2011, just as the United States was exiting Iraq and beginning the stabilization drawdown in Afghanistan, American public opinion began its long, predictable swing toward isolationism. Of course, no one would ever call it isolationism today. But it is. So as we watch the ongoing violence and chaos threatening hundreds of thousands of people and looking more and more like the abattoirs of Rwanda and Darfur, American intervention seems unlikely. It is left to others to come to the aid of the victims.

Today, in 2009, it is not difficult to imagine such a commentary appearing on an Op-Ed page a few years from now. The world economy has been hobbled, thousands of Americans are dead in distant lands, and domestic politics are a blood sport. The internationalist-isolationist pendulum is swinging away from internationalism. Maybe it will stop at multilateralism; maybe not. What can we do now and in the next few years to help other international and transnational actors prepare to protect threatened civilians, stabilize a nation, or provide a secure area for humanitarian aid delivery?

This paper will examine some existing security intervention capabilities, a few likely scenarios where they might be needed, and what the United States can do to enhance existing, and promote additional, capacity. I use the term *security intervention* to cover a range of activities including international peacekeeping, reconstruction and stability operations, and military intervention. So we should take a moment to define these terms.

- *International peacekeeping* is a broad term encompassing operations “designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers,” which is the United Nations’ definition of peacekeeping. Peace enforcement, according to the United

Nations, “involves the application, with the authorization of the Security Council, of a range of coercive measures, including the use of military force.”¹ The term *peace support operations* is sometimes used to encompass both of these definitions.

- *Reconstruction and stability* (R&S) operations is a relatively new term that can include actions taken to help a nation “in transition from conflict or civil strife so [it] can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy, and a market economy.”² R&S operations employ a whole-of-government approach in which civilians deploy alongside military forces. The American military tends to take an expansive view of this type of operation: the ongoing counterinsurgency in Afghanistan appears to meet the Army’s definition of a reconstruction and stability operation.³
- Under *military intervention*, I include specific actions like a forced entry by airborne, air, or amphibious assault, and combat operations designed to disrupt, defeat, or destroy an enemy force. The US Army draws a distinction between *expeditionary* and *campaign* capabilities. An “expeditionary capability is the ability to promptly deploy combined arms forces worldwide into any operational environment and operate effectively upon arrival.”⁴ We will not include sustained military campaigns in our discussion. However, a military action “to deter violence at the interface or zone of potential conflict where tension is rising among parties designed to facilitate a political solution by avoiding or limiting conflict,”⁵ a preventative deployment, would fall under our definition of *intervention*.

Some Likely Scenarios

Any military activity is defined first by the mission—what is the force being ordered to do? Even a partial list of potential missions would be daunting here, so we confine our thinking to three broad missions: an assertive restoration of order; protection of humanitarian relief operations; and reaction to a mass atrocity.

Restoration of Order

In September 1994, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 940, authorizing member states to organize a multinational force to

reestablish “the legitimate authorities of the Government of Haiti.”⁶ US paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division prepared for what was planned as the largest airborne assault since the Second World War. The multinational force was to withdraw “when a secure and stable environment [was] established and [a UN mission had] adequate force capability and structure to assume the full range of its functions.”

A lead nation, acting with broad international support (in this case a UN Security Council Resolution), a potential forced entry, and high likelihood of violence characterize the first half of this type of operation. The initial assault requires a capacity to move a large assault force a great distance (strategic lift), plus the ability to bring overwhelming force quickly to bear (forced entry). In the second half of the action, the follow-on force will need to be of sufficient size and capacity to establish a stable environment for humanitarian and civil activities to proceed. Combat support and combat service support elements, like engineering (construction, power generation), quartermaster (logistic support), transportation (water and petroleum supply), and medical (hospital, public health) units are likely needs.

Protection of Relief

The classic example of this type of mission is Somalia in 1992, when the UN Security Council mandated a mission to “use all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations.”⁷ That mission should not be the model for future missions, but it is entirely possible that we will see this type of language again in a UN mandate. In 2007 alone there were at least 285 attacks on humanitarian aid workers in Darfur.⁸

A rapidly evolving situation in which humanitarian needs are tightly wrapped up with security concerns, aggravated by difficult environmental factors and huge numbers of civilians, are only some of the wild cards likely to be dealt to forces entering this type of operation. Commanders need the capacity to create a broad security umbrella under which aid can be delivered and recipients will have no concerns about being attacked after receiving the aid. Mobility, flexibility, and potential lethality are key attributes. Coordination with civilian agen-

cies, including humanitarian aid providers as well as local and national government (customs, ports of entry), will demand extensive civil-military cooperation.

Response to a Mass Atrocity

Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur: hundreds of thousands dead, often with international peacekeepers standing by unable to stop the violence—or not mandated by political authorities to do so. In the wake of atrocities, there is much hand wringing and finger pointing. But what if we want to intervene to stop a mass atrocity? What would that intervention mission look like? How would it work? I know of no established doctrine for carrying out these operations. Recently, the US Army’s Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute and the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard University have begun developing what they call a Mass Atrocity Response Operations (MARO) doctrine.

We can make a few assumptions. If the perpetrators of the atrocity are part of or supported by the government, the intervention will likely not be consensual. Thus, forced entry, rapid buildup and dispersal of forces, and mobility are important capabilities, as is the ability to distinguish perpetrators from victims rapidly and accurately. Historically, we know that the atrocities can occur across a wide area in unpredictable patterns demanding significant Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets and a rapid response capability. We can assume that some sort of investigation will follow the intervention and that soldiers will need training on handling human rights abuses, and that there will be a need for liaison with human rights and criminal investigators.

What Capacities Are Needed?

A Professional Force

First and foremost, any intervention requires a competent, professional force. Many nations field highly trained, professional armies in which many of the soldiers have significant combat, peace support, and stability operations experience. Unilateral intervention, however, is exceedingly rare and integrating forces from different national militaries under a coalition or alliance flag is a challenge. Doctrines vary; tactics, techniques, and procedures rarely match; and even terminology gets in the way of smooth integration. Often, national caveats—limitations

placed by governments on troops regarding participation in specific types of operations—abound. Further, individual contingent commanders may interpret mandates differently sector by sector in large missions.

Specialized competencies are also needed. As noted above, deployment against the will of, or perhaps even in opposition to, the host government may require the ability to deploy a large force quickly by air, land, or sea. The first troops to deploy may need to sustain themselves for up to six months with minimal infrastructure. Any force will need a logistics tail that includes medical, maintenance, motor transport, communications, and food service. Reconnaissance and surveillance, intelligence collection, plus analysis and processing, both at the tactical and strategic level, are absolute requirements.

And while tactical units (the battalions that make up the brunt of the force) arrive intact, staff officers often arrive individually and separately. The difficulty here is that these officers have not worked together before and may not have a common understanding of what they are required to do, or how they are to work together. On one recently formed peace support operation staff, primary staff officers had been trained in American, British, French, South African, and Nigerian staff schools.

Nonkinetic Requirements

Complex peacekeeping operations require much more than just military force. A force may need to integrate with civilian police, as well as staff with expertise in humanitarian support, human rights, gender, economic and infrastructure support, political analysis, and rule of law.

Civilian police are critical, and typically large numbers of police are needed in stabilization operations. Stability Police Units (SPU) perform “specialized law enforcement and public order functions that require disciplined group action. This includes civil disturbance management; VIP protection; hard entry and high-risk arrest; territorial patrolling; criminal intelligence and evidence gathering; countering organized crime, terrorism, and insurgency; mobile and static security of vulnerable areas; election security; prison security; and border patrol.”⁹ Absent formed police units, these tasks would be left to military forces or local police.

The ability of a nation or alliance to deploy quickly will depend greatly on early identification of the problem, quick and efficient political decision making, and an effective and well-established command and control structure. Once decisions are made as to mission, mandate, and force structure, the organization will require sufficient long-range air- and sealift capacity (or the ability to marshal it), functioning financial and administrative systems, and established operating procedures.

About Force Size

Structuring and building a force is too often a political decision rather than a military one. The idea of sending a few hundred peacekeepers into war-torn Darfur (a country larger than Iraq) is ludicrous, but that was what the international community decided to do in 2004—primarily because that was all that the Sudanese government would accept. The current prescribed force size is over 26,000, which is still too small.

In any of the scenarios posited above, there are models for proper structure and size that are helpful in our analysis. In Bosnia, in 1995, the Implementation Force planned for twenty soldiers per thousand residents; the same ratio was used for the Kosovo Force in 1999. Eventually, these ratios fell closer to ten troops per thousand residents.¹⁰

As the United States was planning for the invasion of Iraq, Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki put forward an estimate that post-invasion stabilization would require “something on the order of several hundred thousand” troops.¹¹ Given the ratio used by NATO in Bosnia and Kosovo, and Iraq’s population of 28 million, this figure should be 560,000 while the maximum number of troops in Iraq has been 183,000.¹² In Haiti, with a population of around nine million, the UN Stabilization Mission includes 9,158 military and police—a ratio of about one soldier to every thousand residents. Clearly, there is often a huge divergence between the number of troops needed and the number that political actors are willing to deploy.

Nations or alliances that intend to maintain stabilization operations beyond the immediate must also consider troop rotations. If, for example, 20,000 troops are deployed on a mission at any given time,

an absolute minimum of 60,000 are needed for a grueling three-way rotation schedule of one unit on mission, one preparing for the mission, and one recovering from the mission. A preferred sustained rotation schedule is five unit cycles in rotation, which would require at least 100,000 troops to field a 20,000 man stabilization force. Few nations have the standing army or combination of standing army and reserves to fill these requirements. Coalitions, alliances, and international organizations must fill the void.

What's Out There?

Given our assumption that the United States will be in a more isolationist position in the coming years, we should determine what rapid response forces exist globally in lieu of the American military.

It is important to note here that fielding a multinational observer force operating under the equivalent of a UN Chapter VI¹³ mandate will not overburden existing capabilities. A few thousand lightly armed international peacekeepers, such as participate in the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), deploying within manageable timelines is more of a political burden than a force generation burden. However, a complex operation, a major intervention, whether it is in the form of Reconstruction and Stabilization, a Mass Atrocity Response Operation, or Peace Enforcement,¹⁴ may require specialized troops and capacities that are in short supply. Some of the capacities described above, global strategic airlift,¹⁵ highly competent strike forces, and some specialized ISR platforms exist only in a handful of nations.

The United Nations

The first responder to most international crises is the United Nations. In mid-2009, the United Nations had about 116,000 international peacekeepers deployed on seventeen distinct missions. Only the United States, engaged in two wars, had more troops deployed under its flag. Of course, the United Nations has no integral military or police capacity and must rely on troop-contributing nations to provide the forces for peace operations.

The idea of a standing UN army, often called the UN Emergency Peace Service, surfaces regularly, but seems unlikely to come to fruition.

Questions abound over command and control, a loss of national control over deployment, a lack of deliberative action prior to intervention. Nonetheless, much commends the creation of such a capacity: quicker reaction time, clearer doctrine, and better coordination come quickly to mind. But what Ronald Reagan referred to as “an army of conscience” lacks international political support.¹⁶

Until recently the United Nations could call upon the Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) as its rapid reaction force. Ready to deploy within 15-30 days for Chapter VI missions (although troop contributors were prepared to discuss more robust missions), self-sustaining for 60 days, the brigade was prepared to remain in place for six months. The brigade stood down on June 30, 2009; there is no replacement force.

The United Nations’ strengths are in its legitimacy, depth of experience, and cost effectiveness. A United Nations peacekeeper costs about twelve cents to keep in the field for every dollar spent on US forces. But there are challenges, too. The staffs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) total around 859 persons, leaving the ratio of field to headquarters personnel at about 135:1. In contrast, the US Army’s XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters oversees the operations of around 88,000 soldiers with a headquarters cadre of about 1,600, a ratio of 55:1. DPKO and DFS have recently restructured and are working to improve mission planning and oversight, training, and lessons learned.

NATO

Militarily, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) offers the largest, best-equipped, and most competent military coalition in the world. Its rapid reaction force, the NATO Response Force (NRF), consists of a brigade-size land component with forced-entry capability, a naval task force, an air component capable of 200 combat sorties a day, plus a Special Forces component. The NRF can be used in Article 5 and non-Article 5 contingencies.¹⁷ Standing behind the NRF is the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) consisting of two United Kingdom divisions, and a division each from Germany, Italy, and Denmark, in addition to the headquarters elements.¹⁸

The alliance synchronizes member nations' and cooperating countries' acquisition of new equipment, the development of doctrine, and administration through more than 2,000 Standardized Agreements (STANAGS) designed to foster a high level of interoperability among military forces. Despite the number of languages in use (English is the de facto common language), system variances, and national caveats on mission, NATO's military system functions well. Given that it has had sixty years to perfect its operations, it should.

NATO fields a force of 64,500 in Afghanistan (International Security Assistance Force) and of 13,800 in Kosovo (Kosovo Force). A NATO mission in Iraq is training the Iraqi military and gendarmerie and, between 2005 and 2007, NATO provided training assistance to African Union peacekeepers in Darfur. The alliance has expanded to 28 member countries and 22 partner countries.

The European Union

Outside of NATO commitments, Europe can deploy forces under the European Union (EU) flag as part of the European Security and Defence Policy. The operational structures, or Battle Groups, are built around combined arms battalions with support elements; each has a strength of 1,500 troops and most are multinational. The 15 standing groups are designed to provide the EU with a capacity to undertake autonomous rapid response operations either on a stand-alone basis or for the initial phase of larger, coalition operations.¹⁹ According to United Kingdom documents, EU Battle Groups are "compatible with typical UN Chapter VII mandates."²⁰ The majority are ground forces, although there is a maritime force. Further, the ARRC (listed above as a NATO formation) can also deploy under the EU aegis.

At the strategic level, the alliance identified strategic lift (the ability to move large forces globally by air and sea) as a key capability gap as early as 2005. The EU maintains the Movement Coordination Centre Europe (MCCE) through which airlift, sealift, and land movement assets owned or leased by national militaries are coordinated and dispatched. In addition, once operational, the European Air Transport Command (EATC) will take control of the transport fleets of Belgium, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Spain,

Luxemburg, and the Netherlands as part of the European Air Transport Fleet (EATF). The EATF includes C-130, C-160, Airbus 400M, and C-17 aircraft.

As of August 2009, the EU had about 4,000 troops deployed in Bosnia, the Indian Ocean, the DR Congo, and Guinea Bissau. The council deployed a French-dominated force, the European Union Force (EUFOR), to Chad in 2008, which was relieved by a UN force, UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), in 2009. The EU Battle Groups should share compatibility and interoperability with NATO forces. France has organized a joint task force headquarters and other nations have offered niche capabilities including medical support and water purification units.

The African Union

Organized and chartered in 2002 as a successor to the Organization of African States, the African Standby Force (ASF) was formed by the African Union (AU). The ASF will provide the AU with what the United Nations lacks: a standing army under international control. Structured around Regional Economic Communities,²¹ the AU's Peace and Security Council developed a strategic road map that would have the ASF at full operational capability and ready to conduct complex peace operations by 2010.

Ongoing conflicts, continuing deployments, and funding shortfalls have plagued the implementation of the strategy. Development and training of the ASF does not appear to be on schedule. The AU mounted its first peace support operation deployment in 2003, to Burundi. AU member state troops dominate the hybrid UN-AU mission in Darfur, comprising the majority of the 13,700 soldiers there.²² Roughly 4,000 AU troops are stationed in Somalia.²³

While many African national contingents and individual soldiers and officers have significant combat and peace support experience, as an organization the AU lacks the depth of experience, interoperability, and capacity of NATO and many of its members' forces. That said, it is important to remember that the organization is only seven years old. A dearth of experience at the operational level plagued the

African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) on its initial deployment into Darfur in 2004. This was exacerbated by weak national and alliance administrative chains, the difficulty of absorbing funding and support for the force from donor nations, and the enormity of performing the task at hand in an environment like Darfur.

For the moment, an AU deployment would need buttressing. Most of the AU's national contingents lack the force structures to conduct a significant forced-entry operation or maintain a force in the field for a sustained period. Seventeen AU member states own C-130 aircraft, eleven own IL-76 aircraft, one owns both C-160 and Airbus A400M aircraft, and seven own AN-12 aircraft, but it is unclear how many of these are airworthy.

CSTO and SCO

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was formed in 2002 in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It includes seven former Soviet bloc nations.²⁴ The CSTO agreed in 2007 to broaden cooperation with Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),²⁵ joining the global strategic power of Russia and China—at least potentially. The CSTO also agreed in 2007 to organize peacekeeping forces and to allow member states to purchase Russian arms and equipment at competitive prices.

The alliance clearly possesses strategic reach, the capacity for forced entry, rapid buildup of forces and staying power.²⁶ But it does not yet appear interested in deploying that capacity globally in support of resolving an international crisis unless the crisis involves a member state.²⁷

Emerging Powers

Significant capacity also exists in emerging global powers. As of August 2009, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Nigeria were the top four contributors to UN peacekeeping missions with contingents in the 6,000- to 10,000-troop range. Obviously, China has significant military capacity. But China's participation in ten UN missions with 2,155 peacekeepers (military, observers, and police) placed it fourteenth on the list of troop contributors. Brazil placed twentieth on the

list with 1,342 peacekeepers. In contrast, the United States provided 221 peacekeepers (many of whom are police), placing our contribution seventieth, between Sierra Leone and Burundi.

Helpful US Actions

If American public sentiment does swing toward a more isolationist position, what can the United States do today and in the near term to increase and leverage international capacity? The list is, again, daunting. However, we can make a number of suggestions in areas where the United States could strengthen the capacity of our international partners to conduct stability operations, peacekeeping, and interventions.

Doctrine

As noted above, there is no doctrinal template for a force to intervene to stop a mass atrocity. Further, there is no clear definition of what protection means to a force commander regarding a civilian population. The United States must support efforts to define these actions and develop doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures for forces deploying under UN or other international organization mandate, or for coalition operations, and in ensuring that the doctrine is tested, refined, and disseminated.

It is unlikely that a US-centric program would meet with broad international acceptance since the United States has, for many years, been seen as bullying rather than cooperating in foreign affairs, and because the vast majority of international missions are conducted without US forces. Thus, a program led by DPKO, or perhaps by an objective think tank that enlists the participation of permanent members of the UN Security Council and major UN troop-contributing countries in conjunction with the US military, seems more likely to produce an acceptable and accepted document. The Henry L. Stimson Center has taken a role in starting this process through its Future of Peace Operations program. The US government can and should participate.

Further, the ongoing collaboration between the Carr Center for Human Rights and the Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) would seem to be helpful, but that process, based on

the US military's decision-making processes and planning systems, is too US-centric.²⁸ Involving the UN headquarters and other member states is crucial. We note that maintaining 10,000 peacekeepers on mission year after year, as several nations do, produces a great deal of experience among the officers and noncommissioned officers of an army. In the process of formulating doctrine, these nations should be consulted and that experience tapped.

Training

The United States provides training for foreign military and police through programs like Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA), through International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds, as well as through other temporarily authorized programs like Section 1206 funding and 1207/1210 funding.

However, there is more that can and should be done. ACOTA trains soldiers from 25 countries in Africa. This could and should be expanded to include non-African nations. A 100 percent increase, to 50 countries, seems a reasonable goal. ACOTA primarily uses contract trainers rather than active duty military. While there are positive and negative aspects of this decision, the United States should use direct military-to-military training when possible, especially at senior levels. There have been complaints that US trainers failed to teach to UN standards—and have not fully incorporated human rights training modules. If this is true, it must be remedied. The United Nations' Integrated Training Service (ITS) has developed modules that are provided to peace operations trainers. ITS has undertaken a complete needs assessment.²⁹ Once the new standards and modules are published, US training should adhere fully to the standards.

The Association of International Peacekeeping Training Centers now lists 136 organizations on its membership rolls. Many offer training, but only a few offer training for staff officers. Staff training is where the United States and our NATO partners have a significant comparative advantage and where our assistance could make a significant difference. The New Horizons report published by DPKO and DFS

noted a critical shortage of strategic planners and Francophone staff officers.³⁰ NATO has the capacity to remedy these shortages. Again, a US-led program would likely meet resistance and forfeit the experience and linguistic capacities of our NATO partners.

The NATO school in Garmisch-Partenkirchen Germany teaches a Peace Support Operations MD Staff Officer Course.³¹ The course is presented in English and is only three weeks long. This should be expanded and taught in French (and possibly other languages) as well. Lengthening and linking this course with the bilingual staff officer course taught at the École du Maintien de la Paix (EMP) in Bamako, Mali, seems a good fit. This effort should be expanded by developing these short courses into a full-length staff officers' course and creating a Peace Support Operations Training Center of Excellence.³²

The US Army Reserve includes training divisions with the mission to conduct everything from basic training to instructing students at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) level (now called Intermediate Level Education, or ILE). Brigades within these divisions could easily conduct staff training for individual staff specialties (such as personnel, intelligence, and operations), advanced staff courses like CGSC/ILE, and combined staff training exercises for international students using UN staff procedures. Further, training for staff noncommissioned officers (NCO), akin to the Army's Battle Staff NCO course, is needed. All of this could be integrated into the programs discussed above.

Equipment

Other critical needs identified by the New Horizons report include high-resolution observation/surveillance and night operations equipment. These are in short supply globally and are always needed in the field. The United States could supply night vision goggles, tactical unmanned aerial vehicles, and imagery analysis capability on a train-and-equip basis to selected troop-contributing countries. This would allow partner nations to create niche support units for peace support and stability operations.

The African Union's Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping logistics depot contains equipment for AU

field operations. The AU plans to create depots for each of its five regional economic community-supported brigades in the African Standby Force. As the United States draws down in Iraq and Afghanistan, useable equipment should be refurbished, donated and transported to these depots or to a US and AU jointly controlled facility (perhaps in Djibouti near Camp Lemonier) and from there to African Union peacekeeping missions.

Helicopters are a perennial and critical lacuna in peacekeeping. The French and British governments proposed a helicopter trust fund, now managed through the European Defense Agency and known as the Multinational Helicopter Initiative (MHI). Through MHI, participating nations exchange needed aircraft refurbishment and crew training, principally on Soviet-made MI-8/17 aircraft for newly integrated NATO and EU nations, in return for dedicated use of aircraft and crews on peacekeeping or stabilization missions. The United States could participate in this program as a funder, refurbisher, and trainer.³³

To go one step further, the United States could donate aircraft for use in peacekeeping missions. US forces recently retired the MH-53 and CH-46 model helicopters.³⁴ Dozens of these aircraft in long-term storage at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona could be refurbished and donated as Excess Defense Articles (EDA) to a nation with the understanding that the aircraft would be used in conjunction with the trust fund. Training aircrews and maintainers could be accomplished through Foreign Military Financing mechanisms.

Logistic Support

The US Congress has given the Defense Department broad “coalition support funds,”³⁵ and authority to “lift and sustain”³⁶ coalition forces into Iraq. Congress should extend these authorities to peacekeeping and stabilization missions. This is not without precedence: the United States provided in-kind support to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) through contracted logistics support in the form of camp construction and management, medical teams, food service, and transportation. Helicopter, vehicle, and communications support was provided for AMIS by Canada, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The US Air Force transported Rwandan troops to and from the mission.

Intelligence, Indicators, and Warnings

After the 1999 NATO bombing campaign in Serbia, the United States provided strategic intelligence support to the NATO Kosovo force (KFOR) by placing a National Intelligence Support Team (NIST) in Pristina. Clearly, intelligence-sharing relationships between the United States and NATO are well defined, but these could be developed between the United States and the United Nations, AU, or other alliance, and reasonably quickly for any needed coalition. In the Department of State’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research there is already a suboffice, the Humanitarian Information Unit, that provides unclassified imagery products and other intelligence support to humanitarian nongovernmental organizations. This model could and should be replicated and expanded.

The African Union has created the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) to provide policymakers with sufficient advance warning of impending crises. This is laudable, but the system will need support if it is to succeed. In 2008, the Genocide Prevention Task Force published the results of its work, including a discussion of “Early Warning: Assessing Risks and Triggering Action.”³⁷ Further modeling of previous atrocities and building templates for intelligence analysts will potentially provide policy developers and decision makers with longer planning times and more opportunities to intervene. The US intelligence services and our academic and think-tank communities have a role to play here.

Diplomatic, Political, Economic, and Financial Support

The United States should support ongoing reform and restructuring efforts at the United Nations by strengthening of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. These offices are understaffed, but principally need support for efforts to increase capacities, with particular attention to the Integrated Mission Planning Process.

The United States needs to be a good partner with other UN member states by continuing to pay its bills in full and on time. Further, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council with the power of veto, the US government has given its support to every UN peacekeeping operation. As such, the United States should

provide both monetary and in-kind support to every UN peace-keeping mission.

American support for the AU and to the ASF is crucial. Our mission to the AU should be robust and active. Our ambassador to the AU should engage whenever possible to offer diplomatic, economic, political, and military support. Some specific needs are identifying a long-term strategy for US-AU cooperation and tying that strategy to a reliable funding stream; training mid-level civilian officials in administration, conflict resolution, and mediation; and ensuring that our policies are in harmony with other leading partner nations like France, and with organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In developing international capabilities we should not neglect to increase America's own capacity. The reach of our intelligence services and diplomatic corps should allow us to identify developing crises early in their cycle. If we prepare ourselves to recognize impending crises through analysis we may find that we can reduce the spread of violence or instability before an intervention is necessary. Sadly, our civilian expeditionary force has been hobbled by long years of neglect. A US Government Accountability Office report in 2008 criticized the Department of State (which is responsible for managing security assistance) for numerous shortcomings, ranging from shortfalls in the delivery of funding and equipment, to deficiencies in the oversight of train-and-equip programs, to not screening trainees for past human rights abuses.³⁸ We should dramatically increase the size and capacity of our diplomatic corps at State and the US Agency for International Development.³⁹

Direct US Military Support

Absent US troop units taking part in an intervention mission, specialized US enabling capacities in engineering, medical, communications, and logistics could do much to enhance any operation. The US Military Observer Group-Washington (USMOG-W) controls individual officer assignments to the United Nations and the missions of other international organizations. USMOG-W is tiny and should be expanded greatly to allow more Americans to serve on international missions. A 2004 DoD directive restricts the assignment of US personnel to coun-

tries "where sufficient protections exist to ensure US personnel shall not be exposed to the risk of assertion of jurisdiction by the International Criminal Court (ICC)." This is bad policy. US forces should be part of every UN military deployment where they can make a valuable contribution.

Conclusion

I have listed the tangible actions the United States could take to improve international capacity for intervention, peacekeeping, and stability operations. The principles are relatively simple: develop doctrine, increase international capacity through train-and-equip programs, decentralize technology, and provide direct US support in areas where we have a comparative advantage. These few specific tasks are not a panacea, nor is this meant to be simply a wish list for international peacekeeping.

These actions are limited to military capabilities. Any intervention, if it is to be successful, will likely require much more than military force. Providing safety and security for a population, developing political processes, delivering basic services, restoring or even establishing core government functions, and participating in economic revitalization are not tasks for a military force. Expert civilian and police expeditionary capability is seminal to completing these tasks.

None of this mentions the question of political will. Although there is much that the United States can do to increase international capacity for security intervention, all the capacity in the world is useless without the political will to deploy it. Early warning, peacebuilding, and mediation can solve many problems, but there will undoubtedly be times and situations where a security intervention is necessary. When it happens, the international community will need to act quickly to authorize, mandate, and deploy an intervention force. The United States should lead that effort and ensure that others cannot and do not impede it.

Finally, throughout the paper I have used "could" and "should" quite a bit, so I should explain why. Of the many reasons why the United States "should" do these things, I would highlight three. First, stability

is in our national interest. The fewer wars, coups d'état, and genocides, the better off we all are. Second, unilateral action is often viewed as less legitimate than a multilateral response. Training, equipping, and promoting the capacity of other nations reduces the chance that we will be forced to act unilaterally. In addition, partner nations may have better access or ease of access to crisis states or regions than we. Third, building strong security relations with partner nations opens doors to other forms of discourse and exchange. By opening these doors, we enhance our political and economic power.

Endnotes

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² In 2004 the Bush administration created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization to “lead, coordinate, and institutionalize US government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy.” See <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/>.

³ According to US Army Field Manual number 1, *The Army*, reconstruction and stability “operations sustain and exploit security and control over areas, populations, and resources. They employ military capabilities to reconstruct or establish services and support civilian agencies. Stability and reconstruction operations involve both coercive and cooperative actions. They may occur before, during, and after offensive and defensive operations; however, they also occur separately, usually at the lower end of the range of military operations. Stability and reconstruction operations lead to an environment in which, in cooperation with a legitimate government, the other instruments of national power can predominate.” See <http://www.army.mil/fm1/chapter3.html>.

⁴ US Army, *Field Manual 3-0 Operations*, February 2008, 1-16. See <http://downloads.army.mil/fm3-0/FM3-0.pdf>.

⁵ Department of Defense Dictionary, Defense Technical Information Center, Joint Electronic Library, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/data/p/9574.html>.

⁶ United Nations, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 940 (1994)*, <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1994/scres94.htm>.

⁷ United Nations, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 794 (1992)*, <http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/scres92.htm>.

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This paper is revised from a working paper presented at the Stanley Foundation's 50th Strategy for Peace Conference held at Airlie Center, Warrenton, VA, October 15-17, 2009. The views expressed in this paper are the views of the author and are not necessarily those of Refugees International or the Stanley Foundation.

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- ¹⁰ James T. Quinlivan, Burden of Victory: The Painful Arithmetic of Stability Operations, *Rand Review*, Summer 2003, <http://www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/summer2003/burden.html>.
- ¹¹ *The New York Times*, Times Topics Erik K. Shinseki. See http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/s/eric_k_shinseki/index.html.
- ¹² Michael E. O'Hanlon and Jason H. Campbell, *Iraq Index, Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, <http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20090820.pdf>.
- ¹³ Chapter VI of the UN Charter deals with the "Pacific Settlement of Disputes." The Security Council often deploys *peacekeeping* missions under Chapter VI. See <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter6.shtml>.
- ¹⁴ A *peace enforcement* mission would likely be deployed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and authorized to use force to meet its mandate. See <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>.
- ¹⁵ The United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia own C-17 Globemasters; Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have ordered Globemasters. Russia and Ukraine own Antonov 124s, and significant numbers are in commercial service. NATO controls three C-17s under the multinational Strategic Airlift Capability; NATO has two AN-124s on full-time charter, two more on six-day notice, and a further two on nine-day notice.
- ¹⁶ Reagan called for "a standing UN force—an army of conscience—that is fully equipped and prepared to carve out human sanctuaries through force" in his December 5, 1992, speech to the Oxford Union.
- ¹⁷ Article 5 of the Atlantic Charter is the mutual defense pact stating that "an attack against one or more (members) in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." The Atlantic Council invoked Article 5 in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, the only time it has done so. NATO troops are in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Balkans under non-Article 5 deployments.
- ¹⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, Structure*, <http://www.arrc.nato.int/#>.
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- ²¹ In the east, Intergovernmental Authority on Development forms Eastern Africa Standby Brigade; in the west, the Economic Community of West African States will field a 6,500-man brigade out of its Cease-Fire Monitoring Group, in addition to a mission planning cell and a depot of available equipment; the Southern African Development Community will form a brigade and a contingent of civilian police; the Economic Community of Central African States is to form a small brigade of just over 2,100 troops; planning for and development of a North African brigade has sputtered, but as of December 2008, appeared to have been restarted under an AU structure called the North African Regional Capability. ASF headquarters is located with that of the AU in Addis Ababa.
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- ²⁴ They are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- ²⁵ Countries included are China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

- ²⁶ Russia and China have the world's second and third largest air forces, the largest army (China) and a reinvigorated blue-water navy (Russia).
- ²⁷ “[I]f a situation arises to threaten stability and internal security of any CSTO state, our organization will be able to solve it with our own forces without any external interference.” Statement issued by the CSTO headquarters. See http://www.kommersant.com/p812422/CIS_CSTO_Russia_Lebedev/.
- ²⁸ The framework developed to date is based on the Military Decision Making Process and the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System.
- ²⁹ United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Integrated Training Service (ITS)*. See <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/its.shtml>.
- ³⁰ United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping* (referred to as the New Horizons report), page 27. See <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/newhorizon.pdf>.
- ³¹ The author is a graduate of the course and has delivered lectures there on the role of civilians in peace support operations.
- ³² Italy hosts the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units.
- ³³ The US Air Force's 6th Special Operations Squadron already trains foreign military aviators and crews on non-US aircraft including the MI-8/17.
- ³⁴ The Navy retired its last CH-46 in 2004; the Marines continue to transition to other airframes and may fly CH-46s until 2014. The Air Force retired the MH-53 in 2008.
- ³⁵ See the 2002 Defense Emergency Response Fund; nations benefitting from this funding include Pakistan, Poland, Slovakia, Georgia, Lithuania, and Jordan. This funding requires concurrence of the Secretary of State.
- ³⁶ Section 1106 of the FY 2004 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act grants DoD authority to “provide supplies, services, transportation, including airlift and sealift, and other logistical support to coalition forces supporting military and stability operations in Iraq.” The authorities were continued under Section 1234 of the FY 08 National Defense Authorization Act. So far Poland and Georgia have benefitted from this funding. This authority does not require the concurrence of the Secretary of State, but should.
- ³⁷ Madeleine Albright and William Cohen, Genocide Prevention Task Force co-chairs, *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers*, Chapter 2.
- ³⁸ General Accounting Office, *Peacekeeping: Thousands Trained but United States is Unlikely to Complete All Activities by 2010 and Some Improvements Are Needed*, June 2008. See <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08754.pdf>.
- ³⁹ See also *Drawing on the Full Strength of America: Seeking Greater Civilian Capacity in U.S. Foreign Affairs*, Refugees International, September 2009, <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/policy/in-depth-report/drawing-full-strength-america>.



The Global Balance Sheet: Emerging Security Threats in Fragile States and Multilateral Response Capabilities

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Introduction

Since the early 1990s, the international community has seen significant development in the conflict early-warning¹ and response field—in terms of thinking, emergence of systems,² mainstreaming of key early-warning tools in decision making, and in the range of response mechanisms and instruments.³ Much of the impetus for this development came from international failures to prevent civil war (Balkans, Zaire) and genocide (Rwanda) in the 1990s. These origins have meant that, in practice, most operational early-warning and response systems started with a focus on understanding/tackling internal conflict and on promoting external preventive action.

The question posed and answered in this paper is whether current global early-warning and response capabilities, as they have developed over the last decade, are robust enough to meet the challenges presented in emerging security threats. It is argued that although much progress has been made in the conflict early-warning and response field, capabilities generally remain scattered and weak, and the now institutionalized focus on internal conflict (particularly grievance-based) has led to complacency in relation to new and emerging security threats. This is particularly true when it comes to *multilateral* warning and response efforts—both at the global and regional levels. The paper concludes that the global warning and global response architecture is weak and at risk of becoming overwhelmed by new security challenges.

The paper starts with a look at the current state of play at a global level—with a review of multilateral and nongovernmental early-warning systems, their coverage, perceived value, impacts, and limitations. It then examines two regional initiatives: Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) and Conflict Early Warning and

Response Mechanism (CEWARN) to illustrate the value and challenges of intergovernmental warning and response systems in Africa. Emerging security threats—particularly as they relate to criminalized conflict (armed violence), extremism/terrorism, and climate change—are subsequently reviewed with emphasis on their implications for current warning and response capabilities. The paper concludes by drawing implications for the global warning and response architecture of current challenges and emerging threats.

The Big Picture

If slightly restrictive definitions of conflict early warning are used, over 15 governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental systems are now operational (Table 1 on page 78).⁴

Among intergovernmental agencies, the most developed systems are found in Africa—particularly in the West African subregion (ECOWARN, run by ECOWAS) and in the Horn of Africa (CEWARN, run by IGAD). (See map on page 79).⁵

Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America have very poor early warning coverage—while Europe is home to the headquarters of several early warning systems.

It is possible to distinguish several generations of early-warning systems. *First-generation systems* (established in the mid-to-late 1990s) are focused on analysis and often have a mandate to promote evidence-based responses to conflict in the institutions they serve. *Second-generation systems* (early 2000s) combine analysis and advocacy in an attempt to catalyze responses of external institutions. *Third-generation systems* (post 2003) respond to threatened or ongoing violent conflict, while promoting evidence-based responses among other actors. Most first-generation systems will be headquarter-based; second- and third-generation systems place stronger emphasis on institutional proximity to the conflict areas they cover.

All systems deliver a set of early-warning products (based on qualitative and/or quantitative conflict analysis methods) that are linked to different approaches to catalyzing response. Most multilateral and

nongovernmental systems focus on different types of internal conflict, use grievance-premised analytical models, or detect levels of state fragility.

In practice and in perhaps simplistic terms, what this means is that research, information, and analysis are mainly concerned with *grievance-focused indicators* (e.g. poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation at the roots, and arms flows and power changes at the proximate level) and the management of political agendas. It also means that emphasis is placed on catalyzing external responses (partly emerging from an interventionist paradigm) to local conflicts.

On the positive side, these systems play important roles in the institutions that house them and for their target recipients. A recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) review⁶ of current early-warning and response systems lists these as follows:

- Crisis prediction enables proactive decision making, and establishes a stronger basis for evidence-based decision making on countries affected by crisis.
- Systematic country reviews and expert analysis set the stage for improved programming of responses.
- A shared problem definition of crisis-affected countries or regions sets the stage for more coherent interdepartmental/agency responses.

In addition, these systems have indirect and possibly direct impacts. However, aside from process-type and indirect impacts (e.g. improving the evidence base of decision making, or creating shared problem definitions), it is difficult to go beyond anecdotal evidence of direct impacts; not much research has been conducted to quantify how early-warning systems, to date, have directly affected responses, policies, and real-world impacts on the ground. Most of the direct impacts are attributable to *third-generation systems*—and in some cases, second-generation ones. The OECD/DAC review flags several examples:

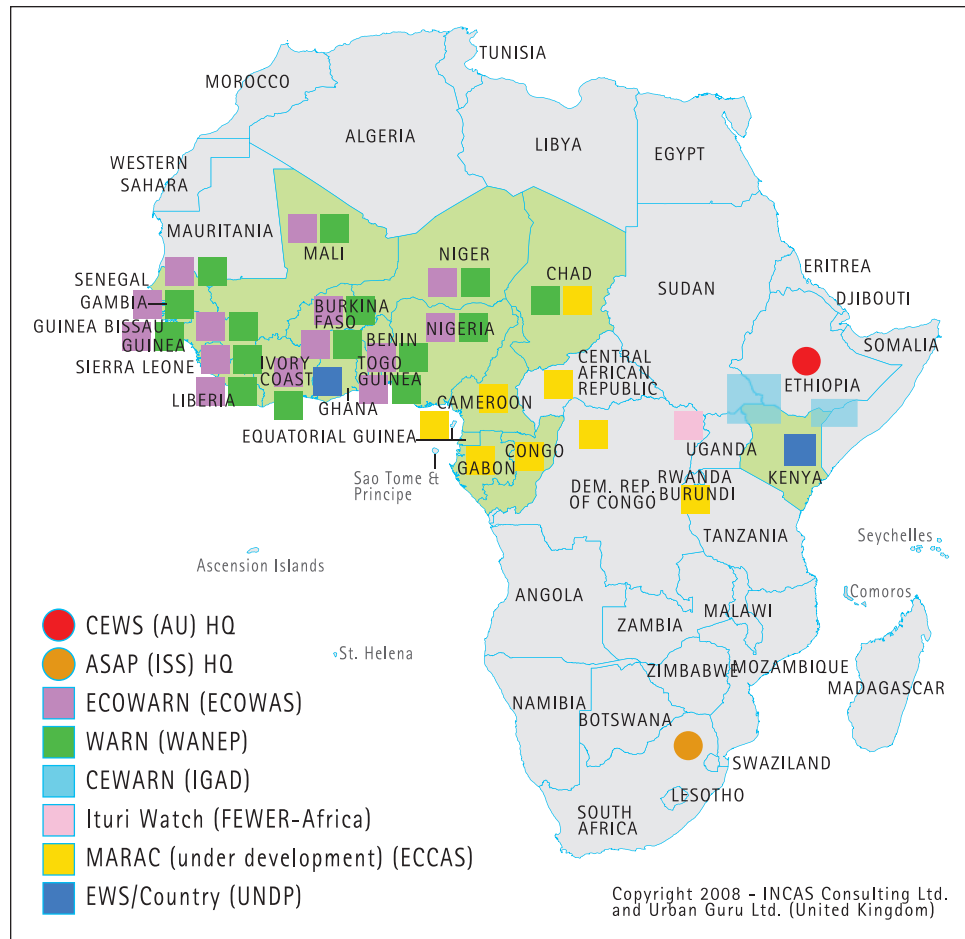
- The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's early warning to the crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—and prompt, as well as successful, preventive measures taken.
- ECOWARN efforts to avert crises in Guinea and Togo through regular warning reports and strong links with ECOWAS response mechanisms.
- Ituri Watch prevention of clashes between communities in the DR Congo by catalyzing local responses.
- FEWER-Eurasia contributions to reduced number of disappearances in Chechnya through monitoring and humanitarian dialogue.
- CEWARN prevention of pastoralist clashes through early detection and rapid transmission of information to key responders.
- FCE de-escalation of tensions at the microlevel in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka through monitoring and rapid response.

Challenges remain numerous, though—and for most early-warning systems, catalyzing response remains the most important hurdle. Among multilateral organizations, particularly those that run first- and second-generation systems, this hurdle involves three interconnected challenges: (a) weak early warnings; (b) immature response mechanisms and instruments (for reacting to early warning); and (c) personal, institutional, and political shortfalls. In concrete terms, these challenges mean the following:

- Warning reports are of variable quality—drawing on poor information sources, with often unsubstantiated analyses and weak recommendations on what should be done in response (with recommendations that are sometimes irrelevant to responding institutions).
- The “delivery systems” of responses as embodied in the mechanisms and instruments available to many governmental and intergovernmental institutions are still immature; they are slow, reactive, overly bureaucratic, and disjointed from warnings. They rarely can help

Table 1: Governmental, Inter-Governmental, and Nongovernmental Early Warning Systems

Governmental Early Warning Systems	Inter-Governmental Early Warning Systems	Nongovernmental Early Warning Systems
Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale (France): Système d'Alerte Précoce (SAP)	United Nations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCHA—Early Warning Unit; Humanitarian Situation Room (Colombia) • UNDP—Country-level early warning systems in Ghana, Kenya, Ukraine (Crimea), Bolivia, Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP), Balkans, Kyrgyzstan 	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER)–Eurasia (Russia): FEWER–Eurasia Network
		Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (South Africa): African Security Analysis Programme (ASAP)
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ): Crisis Early Warning System	European Union (EU): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Watch List 	FEWER–Africa (Kenya): Ituri Watch (Democratic Republic of Congo)
	African Union (AU): Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)	Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow): Network for Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning (EAWRN)
United States Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and National Intelligence Council: Instability Watch List 	Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC): Mécanisme d'Alerte Rapide pour l'Afrique Centrale (MARAC)	Foundation for Tolerance International (Kyrgyzstan): Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project
	ECOWAS: ECOWAS Early Warning and Early Response Network (ECOWARN)	Crisis Group (Belgium): Crisis Watch
	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD): Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN)	Foundation for Coexistence (Sri Lanka): Program on Human Security and Co-Existence
	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): Centre for Conflict Prevention	West Africa Network for Peace-building (Ghana): Early Warning and Response Network (WARN)



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launch timely and effective responses. (Two prominent examples of response systems are the European Union's Instrument for Stability and ECOWAS's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security.)

- The personal, institutional, and political factors that affect responses are the same today as they were decades ago (see Table 2 from the OECD/DAC report of 2009).⁷

In sum, the big picture is mixed. Despite the number of early-warning systems and response mechanisms/instruments that have been developed over the last decade, international capabilities remain scattered and weak—particularly outside of Africa. They do, however, provide important value-added for target recipients, and there is evidence of both indirect and direct impacts. Nonetheless, the warning-response link remains feeble—largely due to weak warnings, immature response delivery mechanisms, and a range of personal, institutional, and political shortfalls.

Emerging Regional Capabilities

A closer look at regional capabilities—particularly more developed systems in Africa—illustrates and gives nuance to current strengths and weaknesses of early warning and response capabilities. In the region, two systems are of special interest—the ECOWARN system run by ECOWAS in West Africa and the CEWARN system run by IGAD in the Horn of Africa.

ECOWARN

ECOWARN was born out of the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security (in 1999). Its objective is to engage in data collection, analysis, and the drafting of up-to-date reports on possible emerging crises, ongoing crises, and post-crisis transitions. The focus of the system is broad, covering violent conflicts, political instability, state fragility, human rights violations, and human security in the ECOWAS region.

As a *second-generation system*, ECOWARN activities consist of collecting and monitoring data, in addition to incident and situation reporting using quantitative (events-based) methods to produce situation updates. Qualitative (WARN/FEWER) conflict analysis methods are used to prepare more in-depth reports. The ECOWARN system benefits from access to multiple sources, including governmental and civil society field monitors (attached to Zonal Bureaus) and open source data.

The value-added of ECOWARN for its target audience is the ongoing feed of information and analysis into the ECOWAS decision-making

processes. This feed has recently been bolstered with the formation of a team of analysts that responds to queries and produces a range of reports—including more detailed conflict analysis reports using the WARN/FEWER methodology.

Hence, strength wise, the system has a growing analytical capability. It also has a fairly robust framework for processing data—data from open (web) sources and the Zonal Bureaus. On the response side, ECOWARN benefits from an institutional link to the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security (“the Mechanism”). The Mechanism enables a broad set of ECOWAS responses to crisis and has been deployed with varying degrees of success in Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Togo, and Guinea.

However, ECOWARN is facing several challenges:

- Although regional coverage is broad, it remains quite shallow and sporadic, both in terms of information collection and analysis. Each country has two monitors (one governmental and one civil society) to cover vast and often inaccessible areas, as well as complex issues. The analysts in Abuja do their best with limited

information, but find themselves often at great distance from the events they write about.

- The WARN/FEWER analytical method conceptually provides space to capture the dynamics of internal social, political, economic, and often grievance-driven conflict at the country level, but has two important restrictions: (a) greed-driven conflicts, such as in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (see Box 1 on page 81), where crime and a complex “political economy of violence” is key, but is not captured well by these systems; and (b) regional-level and cross-country dynamics such as weapons flows, trafficking of drugs, stolen oil, minerals, and the like are too complex to be addressed by the available analytical frameworks.
- In terms of *response to early-warning signals and analyses*, the ECOWAS Mechanism and institutional culture are predisposed to macro-level and reactive responses—rather than to proactive, preventive intervention. ECOWARN has already reported on micro-level dynamics such as district and provincial level violence in member states; however, even when such dynamics have the potential of escalating, they are rarely addressed by the ECOWAS Mechanism. This

Table 2: Personal, Institutional, and Political Factors that Affect Response		
Personal	Institutional	Political
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time and decision-making pressure• Competing priorities• Personal interest and experience• Knowledge and understanding of situation• Training and analytical skills• Decision-making ability• Risk taking profile• Personal relationships• Personal cost-benefit calculations and accountability• Available information and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institutional and departmental mandate• Budget availability• Turf considerations• Risk taking/averse culture• Personnel turn-over and institutional memory• Decision-making procedures• Available mechanisms and instruments• Accountability considerations• Security of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National/institutional interest and priorities• Alliances and special relationships• Enmities and competition• Party and constituency politics• Media coverage and “CNN-effects”• Advocacy pressure• Political cost-benefit calculations• Political consensus• Politicization of information

can be explained partly in terms of political sensitivities, limited resources (time, funding, human capital), and competing priorities. The result, however, is that real prevention remains elusive.

Box 1: Greed-Driven Violence in the Niger Delta

Over the last five years, the Niger Delta has seen a shift from, and a mix of, grievance-driven (among communities) and greed-driven (involving armed groups) violence. Whereas there is no doubt that grievances are both present and real at a community level, they now often serve as a fig leaf for criminal intent by armed groups.

The growth of armed groups in the region has been driven by a lucrative political economy of violence. This political economy involves illegal crude and condensate bunkering, armed robbery and kidnapping, mercenary activities, narcotics, and numerous extortion-related activities. It is compounded by a large number of weapons, high youth unemployment that ensures a steady supply of foot soldiers, an environment of lawlessness and insecurity, and the complicity of parts of the security forces.

CEWARN

IGAD's CEWARN was created on the basis of the CEWARN Protocol (in January 2002). Its mandate is to receive and share information concerning potentially violent conflicts as well as their outbreak and escalation in the IGAD region with particular attention to pastoralist (rural) and related conflicts. The geographical scope encompasses three clusters: (a) the Karamoja Cluster (cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda); (b) the Somali Cluster (cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia); and (c) the Afar/Issa Cluster (cross-border region of Djibouti and Eritrea).

As one of the first *third-generation systems*, CEWARN's monitoring and responses are driven at the local level—in the clusters themselves. Data is collected by field monitors and fed into a data-based monitoring system using CEWARN Reporter software—a system based on 52 indicators, which include structural data, climatic, and

environmental data. Alerts are issued as they occur, while a set of quarterly regional cluster reports, monthly updates, and situational reports are produced at the national level—then disseminated to the governments involved. Responses to alerts are either from local authorities directly, or managed by Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Units (CEWERUs) at the local and national level in member states.

The critical value-added of CEWARN is the preventive action taken at the microlevel when alerts are issued. However, it also provides an important platform for coordinated interventions nationally—and in some cases cross-nationally. Similar to ECOWARN, CEWARN provides a rich feed of information and analysis to IGAD member states—and to other actors (NGOs, donor states) in the region.

CEWARN's key strengths are in its network of monitors and responders in the clusters—and in the platform for response provided in the CEWERUs. The CEWARN head office in Addis Ababa, along with national counterparts involved in the preparation of analytical reports, maintains and manages an efficient system.

But CEWARN, too, faces several important challenges:

- Although the coverage of pastoralist conflicts is robust in the clusters, CEWARN is restricted to member-state agreed geographical clusters—and must tread carefully in looking thematically beyond pastoralist conflicts. In other words, CEWARN has important geographical and thematic constraints.
- Methodologically, emphasis is placed on 52 structural and climate/environmental indicators. Data provided on these indicators is analyzed quantitatively and, to a certain extent, qualitatively. However, there are two important limitations to this methodological approach: (a) indicators used cannot capture the current commercialization (and criminalization) of pastoralist conflicts—particularly large-scale commercial (and highly violent) cattle rustling; and (b) the methodology, along with political sensitivities, limits an understanding of extremist groups in Somalia and impacts of terror-

based violence on regional stability, particularly in cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.

- CEWARN has documented a range of CEWERU responses to alerts and can point to several success stories in terms of violence prevention. Although these responses are laudable, CEWARN remains largely reactive and engaged in immediate preventive interventions. Work on structural prevention, to address the root causes of pastoralist conflicts, is yet to start. This, however, will require deeper analysis than is presently the case—and will have to address greed-driven violence, as well as extremism and terrorism, in order to be effective. Furthermore, due to political sensitivities, coordinated cross-border responses, where two or more countries work together, have been limited.

Implications

ECOWARN and CEWARN are the most sophisticated early-warning and response systems in Africa—and from a global early-warning/response system perspective, Africa is currently the best covered continent. Both systems provide important value to their host institutions—in terms of a more robust evidence-base for decision making (ECOWARN and CEWARN) as well as immediate local-level prevention of pastoralist violence (CEWARN).

However, both systems face a range of challenges that reflect those seen in the global arena. The first challenge is one of breadth and depth of coverage; ECOWARN has broad coverage, but limited depth, whereas CEWARN has deep coverage, but limited breadth. The second challenge is that current analytical methodologies cannot offer an adequate understanding of greed-driven or criminalized (armed) violence, extremism and terrorism, or regional-level dynamics. The third challenge is that both systems remain reactive in their responses and do not tackle either the micro-level origins of conflict (ECOWARN) or their structural causes (ECOWARN and CEWARN).

The picture emerging is one of uneven and quite weak regional early-warning capabilities. Beyond geography, the technical base (information and analysis) in place is not conducive to effective responses on emerging forms of violence and the cross-border dimensions of

conflict. Despite the presence of response mechanisms (e.g. ECOWAS Mechanism and CEWERUs), their effectiveness is constrained by political sensitivities, their design, and the institutions that house them.

Emerging Threats

At a global level, three emerging threats to peace and security have important implications for early-warning and response systems. Two of them—criminalized conflicts (or armed violence) and extremism/terrorism—have been mentioned. The third, which is attracting an increasing amount of attention, is climate change.

Criminalized Conflicts (Armed Violence)

A milestone in research into greed-driven or criminalized conflicts was the publication by the World Bank of *Greed and Grievance in Civil War* (in 2000).⁸ In the report, Collier and Hoeffler argued that the “traditional” view that “grievance begets conflict, which begets grievance, which begets further conflict” (a view out of which many early-warning systems have been conceived), and that interventions need to reduce the level of grievance, has serious limitations. They proposed that *opportunities for material predation* are the key causes of conflict and “the grievances this generates induce Diasporas to finance further conflict.”⁹ Later work (e.g. by Murshed and Tadjoeeddin in 2007¹⁰) has amended this picture, contending that greed and grievance drivers of violence often coexist and reinforce each other. In all such analyses, the basic point is that the *political economy of violence* perpetuates and entrenches conflict.

Beyond criminalized conflict are situations of significant *criminalized violence*—termed by the OECD/DAC and others as “armed violence” situations, where armed violence is defined as “the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death, or psychosocial harm which undermines development.”¹¹ This type of violence is characterized by the widespread availability of small arms.

Taking this definition a step further, this paper defines *armed violence situations* as “either conflict situations characterized by a dominant political economy of violence and significant lawlessness, or areas controlled by nonstate actors where small arms are used widely to inflict

harm, injury, and death.” Using this definition, the terms *greed-driven* or *criminalized conflicts* will be replaced with *armed violence situations*.

A global look at armed violence situations shows the extent of the threat. (Table 3).

Table 3: Selected Countries Affected by Armed Violence			
Africa	Asia	Eurasia	Latin America
Sudan, Somalia, DR Congo, Mali, Nigeria (Niger Delta), Uganda, CAR, Chad	Afghanistan, India (Naxalite), Yemen, Uzbekistan, Thailand (South), Pakistan, Iraq	Russia (North Caucasus), Serbia, Georgia (Abkhazia) Palestine, Lebanon	Colombia, Ecuador (NBZ), Brazil, El Salvador, Haiti, Jamaica

Although armed violence has been recognized as an emerging threat, most of the research remains descriptive and analytical at a big picture level—and does not explain how to deal with these situations. The analytical and response tools that do exist and are used in early-warning and response systems were born out of the traditional view that grievance begets conflict, and are therefore designed to address mostly structural and grievance-based issues, as well as political dynamics. There is a wide knowledge gap that needs to be filled.

These shortfalls are apparent in the Niger Delta conflict. If ECOWARN’s research process and analytical method are used for the conflict in the Niger Delta, it will explain micro-level community conflicts, in addition to part of the conflict between the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and the Nigerian government. However, it will neither provide a clear picture of *greed dynamics*, i.e.

on the political economy of violence (oil theft, extortion rackets, piracy)—nor suggest how these need to be tackled.

Most of the tools for dealing with armed violence are within government, particularly within governments in countries affected by such situations. In Nigeria, the federal government has deployed significant resources to counter armed violence in the Niger Delta—with some success, although the jury is still out. However, not many governments are as resource-strong as the Nigerian government is, so the need for multilateral tools to deal with armed violence situations is urgent.

Extremism and Terrorism

Much of the debate on extremism and terrorism is linked to what is currently taking place in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, in the “war on terror,” and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. The problem, however, is actually much wider. Consider Large’s (2005) understanding of terrorism: a political, ideological, or religious act that is meant to inflict dramatic and deadly injury on civilians and to create an atmosphere of acute fear and despair.¹² Using this definition, if one looks at situations where terrorist acts are a key part of waging war, the list of countries where extremist groups use terrorism as a means of waging war expands significantly. (See Table 4 on page 84.)

Engagement with extremist and terrorist groups is operationally and politically sensitive. The tools deployed to tackle the threats that these groups pose to stability are mostly in the realm of counterterrorism. Nonetheless, the number of conflict situations where terrorism is used as a weapon of war is growing—partly due to asymmetries in power, and partly to the deliberate strategies by extremist groups.

This presents a formidable challenge to early-warning and response systems and to the conflict prevention community as a whole. Specifically, this raises the question of whether or not the conflict prevention community should even attempt to address this threat. Some will argue that engagement with extremist/terrorist groups is futile, politically unacceptable and not feasible, or that the security risks are too great. Others may focus on terrorist acts as tools of war, perhaps not

Table 4: Selected Countries Affected by Violent Conflict
Where Terrorism is Used by Extremist Groups

Africa	Asia	Eurasia	Latin America
Sudan, Somalia, DR Congo, Uganda Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Mali	Afghanistan, India (Naxalite and Kashmir), Yemen, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Thailand (South), Pakistan, Iraq, Indonesia	Russia (North Caucasus), Palestine, Lebanon	Colombia

too dissimilar from the historic use of landmines, and argue that engagement is a necessary precondition to stop the use of such tactics.

If one is to be pragmatic and consider the current political climate, engagement on the topic of terrorism is unlikely and not desirable for most early-warning systems, response systems, and conflict prevention organizations. However, despite political constraints, there is a need for a better understanding of extremist groups and terrorism, where relevant, in order to inform (and make more sensitive) the use of available mechanisms and instruments for response.

If we are to take a concrete example from the cases given above, how could CEWARN better inform CEWERU responses and decision making among IGAD member states on how to shield pastoralist populations from atrocities committed during cross-border raids by Somali extremists? The evidence base required for such decision making will not come from an analysis of structural indicators—or from current monitoring approaches. It will require different information sources (e.g. monitors in Somalia), modified analytical methods

(e.g. detailed stakeholder analyses), and an adjusted monitoring system (e.g. tracking cross-border movements).

The points made here are simple. First, extremism and the use of terror tactics are prevalent and increasing in many countries affected by conflict. Second, technical engagement on these issues will be required by early-warning and response systems to help protect populations. Third, such technical engagement means new information sources and adjusted methods and systems.

Climate Change Impacts

There is now broad agreement that climate changes are happening and that these will be felt through 2100 and beyond.¹³ However, although the broad impacts can be forecasted, there is a range of limitations to understanding likely subregional impacts—particularly in developing countries where data reliability is poor and collection on climate change is not systematic. Nonetheless, many developing countries will experience drops in food production, higher temperatures, more erosion and desertification, sea-level rises affecting crops and fishing, as well as extreme weather conditions.¹⁴

In March 2008, the High Representative and European Commission issued a report on climate change and its impact on conflict to the European Council.¹⁵ The report identified seven areas of concern:

- Conflict over resources such as water, food, and fish stocks.
- Economic damage and risk to coastal cities and critical infrastructure, including decreases of up to 20 percent of global GDP per year, damage to coastal areas that are home to about one-fifth of the world’s population, and damage to infrastructure supporting megacities, such as port facilities and oil refineries.
- Loss of territory and border disputes following receding coastlines and submergence of large areas.
- Environmentally induced migration, particularly of populations that already suffer from poor health conditions, unemployment, or social exclusion.

- Situations of fragility and radicalization in weak or failing states by over-stretching already limited capacities of governments to respond to the challenges they face.
- Tension over energy supply from intensified competition over access to, and control over, energy resources.
- Pressure on international governance from impacts of climate mitigation policies (or policy failures) that may drive political tension nationally and internationally.

We are not in a position to forecast these impacts at a subregional or subnational level. From the vantage point of early-warning and response systems, what this requires is the combination of databases and scenario-building techniques at national and subnational levels. However, very little of this thinking has been mainstreamed in agencies involved in early warning and response—and so there is a need to intensify work on projecting climate change impacts on conflict.

Implications

Two implications follow from this discussion of emerging threats:

- The emerging threats are real and widespread. Box 2 provides a “practitioner’s sketch” categorization of some of the violent conflict, armed violence, and extremism/terrorism situations present globally. (See Box 2 on page 86.)
- We are unprepared and technically ill-equipped to deal with these and climate change threats. We do not have the information sources, data collection systems, analytical methods, or response mechanisms to deal with the nature and scale of the problems that are and will be at hand.

The conclusions we can draw from this discussion on the big picture, regional capabilities, and emerging threats follow.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to take stock of what exists in terms of

global early-warning and response capabilities and to examine whether these are robust enough to tackle emerging security threats. It has done so by looking at multilateral and nongovernmental early-warning systems (coverage, perceived value, impacts, and limitations), and by conducting more detailed review of ECOWARN and CEWARN to illustrate the value and challenges of multilateral warning and response systems in Africa. It then discussed three emerging security threats—armed violence, extremism/terrorism, and climate change, and discussed the implications of these threats for current warning and response capabilities.

So what does it all mean for the global warning and response architecture? The discussion leads to the following conclusions:

The range of early-warning systems and response mechanisms/instruments developed over the last decade has not yet yielded robust international capabilities. However, there is important value-added that these systems provide, and there is evidence of both indirect and direct positive impacts. Still, the warning-response link remains feeble—largely due to weak warnings, immature response delivery mechanisms, and a range of personal, institutional, and political shortfalls.

In terms of regional capabilities, using ECOWARN and CEWARN as examples, the emerging picture is one of uneven and generally weak regional early-warning capabilities. Beyond geography, the technical base (information and analysis) in place does not promote effective responses to emerging forms of violence and the cross-border dimensions of conflict. Despite the presence of response mechanisms (e.g. ECOWAS Mechanism and CEWERUs), their effectiveness is constrained by political sensitivities, their design, and the institutions that house them.

At a global level, three emerging threats to peace and security have important implications for early-warning and response systems: criminalized conflicts (or armed violence situations), extremism/terrorism, and climate change. These threats are real and widespread. Existing early-warning and response systems are unprepared and technically ill-equipped to deal with them. The information sources, data collec-

Box 2: A Rough Categorization of Countries Affected by Armed Violence and Extremism/Terrorism					
	Violent Conflict	Armed Violence/ Violent Conflict	Armed Violence	Extremism/Terrorism	
Africa	Guinea Conakry	Sudan -----▶			
		Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Somalia		
	Cote d'Ivoire		DR Congo -----▶		
	Senegal (Casamance)	CAR	Uganda (LRA)		
		Chad	Mali		
Asia	Indonesia (Papua)	Myanmar	Afghanistan		
		India (Naxalite) -----▶			
			India (Kashmir)		
			Uzbekistan		
			Bangladesh		
			Thailand (South)		
			Pakistan		
			Iraq		
Philippines					
Eurasia	Turkey	Serbia (Sandzak and Presovo)	Russia (North Caucasus)		
			Palestine		
		Georgia (Abkhazia)	Lebanon		
Central/Latin America and Caribbean	Guyana	Colombia -----▶			
			Ecuador (NBZ)		
			Brazil		
			Haiti		
			Jamaica		
		El Salvador			

tion systems, analytical methods, and response mechanisms at hand are insufficient to deal with the nature and scale of these threats.

In conclusion: the balance sheet of capabilities versus threats shows a severe deficit. The international system has made progress on early warning and response, but emerging threats have evolved faster than the capabilities to manage them. For multilateral agencies as cornerstones of the global warning and response architecture, and for governments that believe in their value, this deficit should be a grave concern that needs urgent attention.

Endnotes

¹ The definition used here for *early warning* is that it (a) alerts decision makers of the potential outbreak, escalation, and resurgence of violent conflict; and (b) promotes an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflict.

² *Early-warning systems* involve regular and organized collection and analysis of information on violent conflict situations. They deliver a set of early-warning products (based on qualitative and/or quantitative conflict analysis methods) that are linked (directly or indirectly) to response instruments/mechanisms.

³ These are preventive instruments and mechanisms (political, economic/financial, social, security) that are deployed to manage, resolve, or prevent the outbreak, escalation, and resurgence of violent conflict.

⁴ D. Nyheim, (2009). *Preventing Violence, War, and State Collapse: The Future of Conflict Early Warning and Response*. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/DAC. Paris.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ OECD/DAC, (2009). *Armed Violence Reduction—Enabling Development*. OECD/DAC, Paris. Available at <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/4309151E.PDF>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, (2000). *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*. World Bank, Washington DC.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ S. M. Murshed, and M. Z. Tadjoeeddin, (2007). *Reappraising the Greed and Grievance Explanations for Violent Internal Conflict*. MICROCON Research Working Paper No. 2. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1116248>.

¹¹ OECD/DAC, (2009). *Armed Violence Reduction—Enabling Development*. OECD/DAC, Paris. Available at <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/4309151E.PDF>.

¹² J. Large, (2005). “Democracy and Terrorism: The Impact of the Anti.” Paper presented at the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security.” Club de Madrid, Madrid, 8-11 March 2005. Available at <http://summit.clubmadrid.org/contribute/democracy-and-terrorism-the-impact-of-the-anti.html>.

¹³ See http://ipcc-wg1.ucar.edu/wg1/Report/AR4WG1_Print_SPM.pdf.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ European Commission, (2008). *Climate Change and International Security*, paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council, S113/08. Brussels, March 2008.

This paper is revised from a working paper presented at the Stanley Foundation’s 50th Strategy for Peace Conference held at Airlie Center, Warrenton, VA, October 15-17, 2009. The views expressed in this paper are the views of the author and are not necessarily those of the Stanley Foundation.

Rapid Political Response: A View From Turtle Bay

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The Changing Global Security Landscape

We find ourselves at an unusually fluid juncture in international relations, with practical implications for how we do business. Patterns of political violence appear to be changing and growing more complex. Civil wars and organized rebellion are widely thought to be on the decrease—thanks perhaps in part to greater and more effective international crisis response—whereas organized crime, narco-violence, piracy, terrorism, and other types of transnational or subnational violence are on the rise. Electoral violence, coups and other contested, unconstitutional changes of government have experienced an uptick in the past eighteen months—think of Kenya, Zimbabwe, Honduras, Madagascar, Guinea, and Mauritania—although, in the longer term, coups have been in steady decline.

Traditional patterns of dominance and decision making are also shifting. We appear to be in the midst of a realignment of global power relations, with traditional powers less able to assert their agendas—at least in the UN context—and emerging or resurgent powers more effectively blocking concerted action, but not yet consistently playing a leadership role. This greatly complicates the nature of the demands placed upon the United Nations and the support it receives to meet those demands.

In this connection, there are signs of an emerging “regional preference” in peace and security, with regional actors taking on military roles and mediation leadership in many parts of Africa, and taking on major mediation roles in the Middle East, while the United Nations focuses on the civilian, support, or capacity-building sides. This trend is entirely welcome, as long as the resulting interventions adhere to certain norms and standards and deliver effective agreements. But it

undoubtedly comes at a PR cost for the United Nations, which more than ever shoulders a disproportionate burden of resolving the most intractable crises after other actors have failed.

We are also seeing a diffusion of the international decision-making architecture with not only regional but also ad hoc bodies like the G-20 and even the BRIC group (Brazil-Russian-India-China) gaining influence. While this allows for more focused solutions in some cases, it also complicates and diffuses the response to many global issues in addition to creating institutional competition and forum-shopping. This was particularly evident during the early months of 2009 as world leaders scrambled to respond to the financial crisis. That crisis has not just birthed the G-20, but will also have lasting reverberations for collective security. On the one hand, it means we have to do more with less. On the other hand, it might augur more outsourcing of political and security work to the United Nations, which is more cost-effective than unilateral responses or even “coalitions of the willing.” This would be a positive development but only if it is not seen as a way to do things on the cheap.

Finally, there is the return of the United States to multilateral fora, including but not limited to the United Nations. Within its first nine months, the Obama administration joined the Human Rights Council, agreed to pay \$2 billion in US dues, and made positive steps toward signing or ratifying key treaties. This new “do as I do” approach was most keenly felt when President Obama visited UNHQ for the opening of the 64th General Assembly in September 2009, chaired a groundbreaking Security Council summit on nuclear nonproliferation, and delivered the most persuasive and purposeful presidential pledge to multilateralism in many years. Perhaps more importantly, for the purposes of this discussion, the administration has explicitly chosen a policy of diplomacy and engagement over confrontation and isolationism, acknowledging that “real change can only come from painstaking, principled diplomacy” (Susan Rice, August 2009). For those of us who care about quick and effective response to crises, regardless of the institution or forum through which it might be undertaken, this is a momentous development. For the United Nations, which has been

attempting to build up a more robust capacity for rapid political response, it is a very good sign indeed.

The Machinery for Crisis Response: Existing and Evolving Realities

Surprisingly for an organization that is thought of as static and statist, the United Nations has a history of responses to political crises and conflicts that is marked by innovation and adaptation. To start, peacekeeping was not even foreseen in the Charter but has evolved into the multi-billion-dollar near-default solution to a host of internal and intrastate crises around the globe. No longer solely a mechanism for keeping warring parties apart, it has become the primary means through which the international community protects civilians, prevents mass atrocities, rebuilds shattered societies, extends the authority of the state, and even assumes transitional governance and service-delivery functions. (As a side note: whether this proliferation of tasks and expectations is a positive thing for peacekeeping is a separate question.) There are currently almost 116,000 personnel serving in 18 UN-led peace operations on four continents, with a direct impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people. This represents an eightfold increase in UN peacekeepers over the last decade.

Diplomacy—which comes in several nuanced variants such as preventive diplomacy, political response, peacemaking, or mediation—is an older art but has similarly evolved almost beyond recognition from the UN’s early years into a semiprofessional enterprise that is conducted by a variety of actors, of which the United Nations is the most active and experienced but no longer the sole, or necessarily lead, player. Throughout the organization’s sixty-four-year life span, the secretary-general’s (SG) “good offices” have provided an avenue for the peaceful resolution through diplomacy (albeit often backed up with other tools) of interstate wars, civil wars, border disputes, maritime disputes, constitutional disputes, electoral disputes, questions of autonomy and independence, hostage crises, assassinations, highly politicized criminal and judicial crises, and a vast range of other disagreements and problems.

Whereas peacekeeping by definition entails a deployment to the field, diplomatic and political responses are more flexible in their institu-

tional expression. They can be conducted at the highest level by the secretary-general himself, but are more frequently undertaken through a special envoy or the rapid dispatch of a fact-finding team or investigative panel. In other instances, the United Nations deploys a small political mission to the field (see annex).

The hallmarks of these diplomacy-focused responses are that they are smaller, quieter, and less expensive than peacekeeping. They do not typically involve the deployment of troops or police, and the core business is very often conducted behind closed doors. Success, when it comes, is and must be “owned” by the parties themselves, not by the broker of the peace. But these attributes have too often meant that the capacity for, and importance of, political response has been underappreciated.

That may be about to change. With more complex patterns of violence as well as a more complicated collective security decision-making landscape, not to mention an overall thrust toward doing less with more, the wise use of limited attention and resources has never been more important. In fact, the United Nations is already moving in that direction. For some time, there has been an evolution in what member states are asking of the United Nations and in the range and types of activities as a consequence.

Over the last year or so, the United Nations has supported more than 20 peace processes and responded to an even higher number of disputes that do not even reach the level of a formal peace process. It has undertaken—or supported regionally-led—rapid political interventions to stem sudden electoral and constitutional crises, getting things back on track and supporting return to constitutional order through power-sharing agreements or transitional elections in places such as Mauritania, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and Kenya. Preventive electoral missions and other confidence- and trust-building initiatives have been conducted in the context of transitional or fragile elections in Bangladesh, the Maldives, and elsewhere.

The United Nations used missions on the ground and regional presence for quick and quiet response to brewing situations as well as sustained engagement and forging of cooperative solutions where

disputes threatened to become violent (or more violent), for instance in West Africa, Central Asia, Nepal, Guinea-Bissau, and Iraq. It fielded high-level mediators to broker or support agreements in Democratic Republic of Congo, Northern Uganda, and Cyprus. The United Nations rapidly dispatched technical experts to support peace processes and institutional reform efforts in crisis-prone environments, e.g., power-sharing expertise to Cyprus talks; water-sharing expert to Central Asia and Afghanistan; police reform experts to Kenya; security experts to Nepal; human rights/transitional justice expert to Comoros. There is also a new set of innovative rule of law and investigative missions that have deployed at the request of member states to help with judicial and criminal issues that are sources of political tensions, including the Lebanon International Independent Investigation Commission (IIIC), the Bhutto Commission, and the International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG) in Guatemala. This is a wide and growing array of interventions and outcomes and not every case qualifies or is viewed as a “success.” Rather, they illustrate a more creative, agile, and proactive UN approach to political response and mediation.

But the machinery has not kept pace. As is so often the case, practice far outstrips policy or political consensus. Diplomacy’s star may once again be ascendant. But we have inherited a crisis response system that has long been the poor cousin to more high-profile humanitarian, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding activities, with predictable results in terms of available resources and capabilities. Political work is not easy to see, not easy to quantify, not easy to sell to skeptical treasuries and voters. This undercuts the ability to generate and sustain support, both politically and financially. At the United Nations, this problem has been most clearly manifest in the longstanding underresourcing of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

Since 2005, some of the imbalance has begun to be rectified. With the support of member states, DPA has embarked upon a necessarily long-term effort to reinvigorate its support from the membership, reshape its structures, bolster its resource base, and even change its institutional culture to be able to rise to the many, varied, and growing challenges confronting the United Nations in the areas of preventing and

resolving conflict. This has taken the form of intensive discussions with member states, resulting in:

- Some additional capacity at HQ.
- The establishment of a small Mediation Support Unit (MSU) and a standby mediation expert capacity.
- A new approach to preventing electoral disputes.
- Exploring options for more rapid and flexible funding.
- Greater attention to coherent UN responses and better management of political missions in the field.
- Stronger partnerships.

All of these will be covered in more detail below. In essence, it has been a two-pronged undertaking—to overhaul capacity and apparatus for response while simultaneously responding to needs on the ground. The analogy of fixing an airplane while it is flying at top speed is not misplaced.

In all of the cases where the United Nations is currently active, the membership is being pressed to make better use of the entire crisis response toolbox. If the international community of states is to do better at averting and resolving crises more durably, tools such as peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be regarded as part of a political solution, not as alternatives to one. Too many years of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance without sufficient attention to the political track have turned out to be a very expensive band-aid, and in too many places the result has been a resurgence of conflict.

Nobody can afford these partial responses anymore. The annual peacekeeping budget now stands at nearly \$8 billion, just as the global financial crisis and pressure on the militaries of developed countries mean that available funds and troops are diminishing. Recent studies have found that 15 years of development aid to Africa have been

essentially cancelled out by the cost of wars on the continent (many of which were preventable). Preventing and resolving conflicts—rather than simply stabilizing them and ameliorating their effects at great cost—requires political solutions. Those solutions can only be delivered with the necessary tools and the political commitment to do so.

To that end, as a stronger case is made for attention to political solutions in specific country situations, the UN Secretariat has also started to engage member states in a serious conversation about the crisis response machinery. The United Nations issued a series of reports on mediation, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping, with some common messages and clear “asks”: clear strategy and political direction; better mission planning and management; faster deployment; better delivery on the ground; readiness to respond when things go wrong; a higher degree of specialization; and more pre-positioned resources and capacities in key areas.¹ Above all, the United Nations is pressing for a real and lasting partnership with member states for the duration of current and future interventions and for due attention to political solutions so that long-term peace and an eventual UN exit are possible.

In addition, dialogue has begun with member states on establishing a global support platform for all peace operations—peacekeeping and political missions—and on fixing some of the most problematic parts of the budgeting process, particularly how political missions are funded and supported. Overhauling the United Nations’ sclerotic and deeply politicized mandating and budgeting processes will require an unprecedented level of trust and cooperation amongst member states, but it has to start somewhere.

Even as these important conversations get underway, the United Nations is developing a better sense of the principles that govern, and the pillars that support, their approach, as well as the peculiar advantages and disadvantages of being a global intergovernmental organization trying to do these things. These are covered in the next three sections.

Principles for a Better Political Response

The more the United Nations does, the better it has become at defining its role and preparing to do the job better the next time. It has

also tried to be conscious of the vast body of lessons learned from over sixty years of good offices and peacemaking work. The very first report of the secretary-general on mediation, issued in April 2009 (S/2009/189), distills some of the main lessons and principles learned over the years. While most pertain to formal third-party mediation, many hold equally for the growing array of other political responses and the political missions being undertaken.

Very briefly, these principles include:

- Resolving disputes in a timely manner.
- Establishing a lead actor.
- Selecting the most appropriate mediator/mediation team.
- Engaging the parties early.
- Structuring mediation to address the root causes of conflict.
- Using influence/leverage wisely.
- Managing spoilers.
- Accommodating peace and justice.
- Achieving peace agreements that facilitate implementation.
- Mediating throughout implementation.
- Strengthening regional capacity for mediation.
- Strengthening national/local capacity for conflict prevention/ resolution.
- Ensuring Security Council support for mediation.

The SG’s report also covered two areas that will be discussed in the next section: resourcing mediation efforts and providing mediation support. Both are key pillars of a developing political response system. The report was very well received by member states (Security Council debate of April 21, 2009), which suggests momentum in the right direction both in terms of thinking about mediation and the efforts to develop a better platform for doing it well and quickly.

Building the Pillars of Rapid Political Response

The effort to develop a more robust platform for rapid political response consists of eight key pillars: (1) a stronger core; (2) professionalizing mediation support; (3) preventive electoral assistance; (4) flexible funding for rapid response; (5) more proactive field operations; (6) facilitating system-wide and integrated approaches; (7) strengthening

regional partnerships; and (8) political action as part of a menu of crisis response options. It is still a work in progress but member states have, by and large, understood and supported the effort to date.

A Stronger Core—Improved Geographic Knowledge and Reach

Upon assuming office, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon laid out a vision of a more streamlined UN crisis-response architecture that would be underpinned by a stronger and more proactive political department. The DPA had long been woefully underresourced for the tasks it faced, with successive independent reports and evaluations attesting to an unsustainable trend of rising responsibilities and zero growth in resources. The secretary-general proposed that the DPA be strengthened (A/62/521 and Corr.1) and in December 2008 the General Assembly agreed (A/RES/63/261). DPA was given 49 new posts, bringing its total staff size to 269. Although this was fewer than half of the posts originally requested (and the department is still strikingly small given its mandate), the new complement still represented a significant bolstering of the core capacity of the department, notably in its regional divisions. The focus has been on recruiting people with more operational and project management skill sets, as well as filling gaps in geographic and linguistic capacities.

Professionalizing Mediation Support—Readily Available Technical Knowledge

The DPA'S MSU was established in 2006 and has grown rapidly into a system-wide asset that supports the mediation initiatives of the United Nations, member states, regional/subregional organizations, and other relevant partners by providing technical advisory, financial, and logistical support to current and prospective peace processes. The MSU is building capacity and a cadre of professionals within the United Nations and regional/subregional organizations for effective mediation, and serving as a repository of mediation knowledge, policy and guidance, lessons learned, and best practices. The MSU has been complemented with a Standby Team of Mediation Experts able to deploy to negotiations around the world on short notice, and to provide advice and assistance to mediators on peace process design, security arrangements, power-sharing, wealth-sharing, natural resource management, and constitution development.

Greater Focus on Preventive Electoral Assistance—Defusing a Common Flashpoint

In keeping with a more proactive approach to preventing conflict, and motivated by the lessons of events in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere, the United Nations has, of late, paid more attention to electoral disputes as potential flashpoints for conflict and to electoral processes as windows of opportunity for building peace and enabling political participation by hitherto marginalized groups. Concerted efforts have been made to seize on these moments and to assist member states through innovative mechanisms such as high-level electoral missions that have increased both confidence in the process and peaceful acceptance of the results.

Flexible Funding for Rapid Response—Being Able to Get on That Plane

In addition to grappling with insufficient resources, DPA continues to be bound by the rules and regulations for the UN Regular Budget, which were designed at a time when the United Nations was primarily a conference servicing organization rather than an operational entity whose members require that it be nimble and responsive to their needs. It has embarked on several related initiatives that will allow the DPA to respond rapidly to time-critical surges, emergencies, and mission start-up needs. These include better access for DPA to existing provisions and funds, such as the SG's so-called "unforeseen" fund and the Peacebuilding Fund, better start-up and support arrangements for its missions, and the launch of a rapid-response fund with unearmarked funds that are readily available.

Better Managed, More Proactive Field Operations—Closer to the Pulse

DPA currently manages 21 "special political missions." (Department of Peacekeeping Operations, by contrast, manages 18 peacekeeping operations.) The annual peacekeeping budget is nearly \$8 billion and the annual budget for special political missions is around \$400 million. In spite of the continued failure of member states to provide any resources for rapidly setting up these missions or for backstopping them from headquarters, the United Nations is making a concerted effort to get better at both jobs by tapping voluntary and other sources of funds and by using creative ways to find the necessary staff.

Missions are encouraged to utilize far more proactive approaches to nipping crises in the bud and responding rapidly to political problems, e.g., Guinea-Bissau or United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). Regional offices are particularly useful for this type of work.

System-Wide and Integrated Responses—Making Use of All Our Tools

Over the last 15 years, the United Nations has attempted to overcome its centrifugal predisposition (governance structures, business practices, rules, and financing that continue to produce incompatible mandates and disunity of purpose and action) by taking decisive steps toward system-wide coherence and so-called integrated missions in the field—in effect seeking ways to bring a very disparate set of tools and mandates to bear in the service of peace. The SG’s recent report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict describes many of these efforts—one key feature of which is to increase speed and effectiveness through pre-positioned capacity and resources in the areas where assistance is consistently requested: Security Sector Reform (SSR); rule of law; Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR); mine action; mediation; and electoral assistance. And it exhorts member states to do their part. If they do not speak with one voice across intergovernmental bodies, in capitals, New York, and on the ground—and if they do not put their money (and personnel and equipment) where their mouths are—then the internal fixes will not amount to much.

Strengthening Regional Partnerships—Sharing the Burden

The United Nations is working more closely than ever with regional organizations in the peace and security field: in a lead role, a supporting role, a burden-sharing role, in sequential deployments and, indeed, in several joint operations and mediation endeavors. Considerable attention and resources are being devoted to building up regional capabilities for this work, to sharing analysis and developing clear partnerships with them, and to considering ways to provide them with better, more predictable funding, maybe even from the assessed UN peacekeeping budget. Of course, a number of challenges remain, including distinct political, normative and operational environments as well as a wide variety of mandates, capacities, and structures. The United Nations is working with regional partners to tackle these challenges.

Political Action as Part of a Menu of Response Options

As the United Nations moves toward creating a nimbler, less risk-averse political department that can be relied upon to nip more crises in the bud and deliver more effectively in the field, member states are encouraged to engage in all components of the UN crisis-response architecture. The membership is keenly aware of the need to avoid an overreliance on peacekeeping and to improve the way that they select and use their available tools and resources.

The crux of the matter is that the United Nations needs to get better at configuring responses according to the needs on the ground rather than its own structures, funding arrangements, and institutions. This entails:

- Better analysis of demand (the situation on the ground) and supply (available capacities, political will, leverage, and partners).
- Greater clarity on what the objectives are and a willingness to stop short of fixing everything if the situation on the ground or the enabling environment do not allow (there are many options for lighter missions that stop short of full-blown peacekeeping, e.g., Nepal, Guatemala, or Nuba Mountains).
- A willingness to move quickly and take some political risks to nip a crisis in the bud.
- An openness to a more tailored, less cookie-cutter approach.
- Full use of the comparative advantages of all partners.
- A willingness to engage with parties who often request peacekeeping without full sense of other options.
- A readiness on the part of member states to continue to invest in pre-positioned resources, expertise, and partnerships for rapid response.
- A predictable platform of support for the UN mission regardless of its designation (peacekeeping or political mission).

- Globally available services in key areas such as electoral assistance and rule of law.
- Common procedures that enhance the speed and effectiveness of the response.

Some of these fixes are primarily technical or financial. Many are deeply political. To take hold, they require a renewed spirit of cooperation and trust on the part of the United Nations' member states. This will not happen overnight, but the dawn of a new approach in Washington has changed the dynamic in ways that might begin to make it possible. At the same time, the United Nations will always grapple with the political and structural challenges that are intrinsic to its intergovernmental, global, and multidimensional makeup. Our task is, as the Serenity Prayer says, to accept the things we cannot change, to change the things we can, and to have the wisdom to know the difference.

Coming to Terms With the Peculiarities of the United Nations

Perversely, the very characteristics that make the United Nations an indispensable component of the international crisis-response architecture are the ones that present us with an array of distinct challenges and limitations. On the positive side, the United Nations has global membership and reach. It can bring to bear an unmatched convening power and worldwide presence as well as the ability to bring international pressure and attention to bear on a given problem. It can help not only to mediate the peace but also to guarantee and implement it, deploying peacekeepers and mobilizing substantial international financial, humanitarian, economic, and social assistance. As with so many of the characteristics of the United Nations, however, this breadth of tools and mandates can be both a strength and a strategic weakness, since it leads to overly ambitious and unprioritized assistance, and very often confuses the parties as to which United Nations they are dealing with.

The United Nations offers a uniquely comprehensive dispute settlement system (General Assembly, Security Council, Secretary-General, Agencies, International Court of Justice), but this complexity also

presents a huge challenge, particularly when its different voices and instruments are used inconsistently or even at cross purposes. While political and human rights messages, for instance, can sometimes be used differently to good effect, more often than not parties will exploit or misunderstand the cacophony that occasionally emanates from Turtle Bay.

This situation can be a particular challenge for the secretary-general. In addition to Chapter VI and Article 99² of the UN Charter, the secretary-general's good offices work has a basis in the "Peking Formula," which provides an important interpretation of his space for personal initiative and action independent of the other political organs. But this is not an easy balance to strike, and member states do not always give the necessary space or refrain from using their megaphones even when such pressure is counterproductive.

Nor do most beneficiaries distinguish the secretary-general from the Security Council, particularly its more powerful members. This can be especially difficult if the council or one of its members has adopted an adversarial stance toward one of the parties, as happened in Somalia, Bosnia, and Iraq. The Canal Hotel bombing of August 19, 2003, brought home to the UN Secretariat that, regardless of how impartial (not neutral) they might perceive themselves to be, others perceive the United Nations differently—as a tool of the West, a hotbed of anti-Semitism, a hostage of North-South politics—and will often act accordingly. In an increasingly complex world, this has serious implications for effectiveness and security.

Explicit mandates for political response usually come from the Security Council or the General Assembly or from the parties themselves. Indeed, the consent of the parties is thought by many to be *sine qua non* of UN involvement. Whether or not there is formal consent, the United Nations is reliant on the will of the parties to be able to make a difference. If they do not want peace, it cannot be forced. If they do not want the United Nations on the ground, it cannot force its way in. The "muscle" of the Security Council is a mixed blessing and is, of course, used inconsistently.

The secretary-general is distinctive for being a normative mediator who stands for certain international standards. UN mediation is governed by the growing body of international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as new international criminal institutions and norms regarding the “responsibility to protect.” While these trends are positive, they can alter the potential for mediation and the willingness of the parties to negotiate, as has been the case in Sudan and Uganda. This is a challenge with which we are still coming to terms, at the level of policy and case-specific responses.

In this connection, the United Nations has always been positioned as willing to talk to all parties—but it is also an organization of member states. In the days of terrorist lists and proscribed groups, how easy is it to maintain this position?

More generally, outreach to nonstate actors is patchy and leverage with them is variable. The United Nations is risk-averse when it comes to taking action that might legitimize nonstate actors, especially armed groups, and yet engagement with them is needed. Another consequence of its intergovernmental nature is that the United Nations is easily limited or denied entry if a powerful member state declares a conflict “off limits” or is unwilling to bring pressure to bear.

Not least, thanks to the emerging preference for regional solutions, the United Nations has become the mediator of last resort for the most intractable conflicts. This unenviable position is a PR challenge.

Finally, the United Nations is only as powerful and effective as its member states want and allow it to be. Clear, unambiguous support of the Security Council—and unity of the P-5 in particular—is almost a sine qua non of effective political response by the United Nations. Other groups of interested states can also make or break a peace-making initiative. Even more, perhaps, than in the council, unity and support in the region—or at least restraints on meddling by neighboring countries—is paramount. Groups of friends—be they of the secretary-general, the peace process, or the country—have proliferated and often provide leverage, information, and resources. Such mecha-

nisms are not a panacea, however, but must be part of a wider strategy for international engagement in a peace process.

Part of this strategy must begin “at home,” within the UN system itself. The secretary-general is far more “secretary” than “general.” He does not enjoy full control even over the UN system, never mind the other actors (states, international financial institutions, regional organizations) that are often required to implement mandates. Too often, governments fail to speak with a single voice across the relevant committees in the United Nations, notably those that mandate and those that provide the funds.

Working With the United States

There is still one member state upon whose support the United Nations depends: the United States. The United States wields unparalleled influence on the United Nations’ peace and security activities through its role on the council, its contribution to the budget, and its political weight around the world. The United Nations cannot be effective without strong US participation and leadership, and the United States needs to see that the United Nations can be an important partner in addressing a whole range of regional and global problems. Recent signs are very promising in both regards.

There is in Washington a new administration that seems to believe sincerely in collective responses to global problems and in moving away from the long tradition of American exceptionalism. The signals given by President Obama at the General Assembly in September 2009—that the United States would continue to invest in more effective UN peacekeeping and in more energetic crisis prevention—were welcome, as was his frank acknowledgement that this involves hard choices and that a lot of the hard work has to be done in capitals, persuading ignorant or skeptical publics that solutions can, and should, be forged multilaterally. The United Nations welcomes, but is not naïve about the difficulties of propagating, a new domestic message on its utility, highlighting the burden-sharing aspects and cost-effectiveness of pursuing foreign policy objectives through the United Nations rather than unilaterally.

As for attention to political responses, US Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice made a point of mentioning during her confirmation hearings that there was a need for holistic approaches to peacekeeping that encompass ways to resolve problems politically. In the April Security Council debate on mediation, US Ambassador DiCarlo pointed to “a new [US] premium on energetic diplomacy to resolve some of the toughest issues we face.”

This new approach can already be seen in the US handling of issues on the United Nations’ agenda. The United Nations can be politically helpful in some hot spots where US security interests are very high: Iraq (holding elections, encouraging constitutional reform, providing formulas for resolving Kirkuk and other disputed boundaries, and trying to enlist the cooperation of Iraq’s neighbors), Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia.

The United Nations is also active in places where the United States would prefer not to, or cannot, act alone. In other cases, neither the United States nor the United Nations will lead, but both will inevitably be involved in coordinating and supporting the response led by a regional or other partner.

One of the qualities that defines the United Nations under these circumstances is the ability to be seen as impartial and to talk to people whom the United States finds it difficult to engage (e.g., Iran, Myanmar, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea [DPRK], Cuba, Hamas). To preserve that impartial identity, the United Nations needs to be understood and tolerated in Washington when it raises human rights concerns in Iraq, for example, or speaks up about civilian casualties in Afghanistan, or when proposing outreach and dialogue with groups who are outside the political process. That’s the United Nations’ job and trying to undercut that is shortsighted because it diminishes much of what the blue flag has to offer.

Another difficult balance to strike for Washington is giving good offices or mediation work the space and time that are often required, even when domestic political pressure to grandstand or threaten becomes overwhelming. In cases like Myanmar and

Zimbabwe, megaphone diplomacy by western powers has not always proven useful.

The United States also needs to move away from its tradition of starving the United Nations of resources. The repayment of arrears is a great start, as was the agreement nearly twelve months ago to allow a modest strengthening of DPA. But a more fundamental change in approach is needed. The United States has to stop equating reform with budget cutting. Reform is an investment, especially if it is designed to bring about a fundamental shift in the way the United Nations does business.

Working for a less confrontational and mistrustful atmosphere within the Security Council and between the council and the General Assembly should also be a US priority; this would have a significant impact on how the organization does business (and be helpful to the United States). Some ideas for how this might be done include:

- Engaging seriously on Security Council reform.
- Unilaterally pledging to refrain from use of veto in cases of genocide and serious human rights violations.
- Making concerted attempts to unite member states, including by finding common cause with Russia and China and by championing issues that matter to the Global South.
- Encouraging leadership from key regional powers (Brazil, India, Nigeria, and Egypt) on global issues and peace and security concerns beyond their own immediate regions.
- Proposing a serious dialogue within the Security Council on backing up mandates with resources and political will and, specifically, on costing of resolutions before approval.

There has been a noticed and welcomed change in the tone and content of the US engagement in Turtle Bay: Obama’s chairing of the Security Council summit was a first—and sent an important message

about his commitment to achieving US peace and security goals through the United Nations. However, his immediate departure thereafter for the G-20 meeting in Pittsburgh showed that some serious global issues will not be solved through the organization.

One of the issues that nobody disputes is best conducted through or with the United Nations is diplomacy. With the new approach of the United States and the more robust and ready capacity of the United Nations to act, even in the face of a more complex world, there is much reason for optimism.

Endnotes

¹ Report of the Secretary-General on enhancing mediation and its support activities (S/2009/189); Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881-S/2009/304); A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping, UN DPKO.

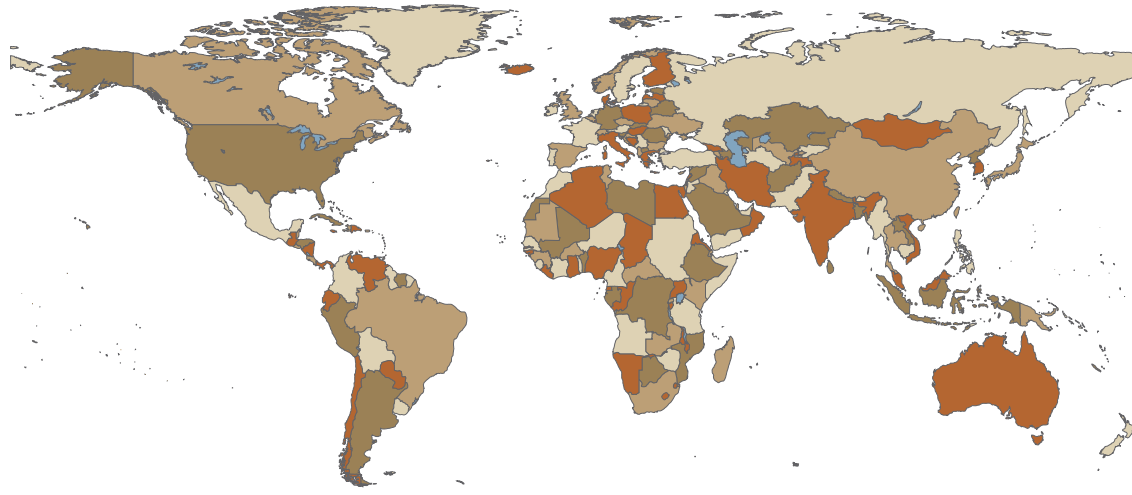
² The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice. (Article 33.1) The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. (Article 99)

Annex: List of UN Political Missions (of Which 21 Are Led by Department of Political Affairs)

1. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Myanmar
2. Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus
3. Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide
4. Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara
5. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Implementation of SC Resolution 1559
6. Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon
7. Monitoring Group on Somalia
8. Panel of Experts on Liberia

9. Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire
10. Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo
11. Panel of Experts on the Sudan
12. Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to SC Resolution 1526 (2004) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities
13. Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Resolution 1540
14. Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
15. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa
16. United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic
17. United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau
18. United Nations Political Office for Somalia
19. United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
20. Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission
21. United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission
22. United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
23. United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi
24. United Nations Mission in Nepal
25. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
26. United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq

This paper is revised from a working paper presented at the Stanley Foundation's 50th Strategy for Peace Conference held at Airlie Center, Warrenton, VA, October 15-17, 2009. The views expressed in this paper are the views of the author and do not represent an official position of the United Nations nor are necessarily those of the Stanley Foundation.



African Security and the Future of AFRICOM

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The United States' ability to address the complex and diverse security challenges of Africa requires a well-informed, well-resourced regional command. The establishment of a unified regional command (AFRICOM) represents an opportunity for the United States to reexamine and focus on its interests in Africa. Yet even its rollout encountered more confusion and suspicion than cooperation. Is the United States preparing to invade an African country? What are US security interests in Africa? What will be expected from the African states on the other side of this cooperative engagement?

At the Stanley Foundation's Strategy for Peace Conference on addressing the challenges of state fragility, the roundtable on African Security and the Future of AFRICOM reexamined Africa's security challenges from both the American and African perspectives. AFRICOM's task is to be effective where those two security lenses converge. One goal of the United States, for instance, is to identify and support its African partners and deal with mutual security concerns.

US and Regional Perspectives on Security in Africa

In dealing with security questions in the region, the United States

tends to divide Africa into two: North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Roughly speaking, these two halves are also split in terms of the relative focus on traditional versus human security challenges. The priorities in North Africa include counterterrorism and the threat of attacks by substate actors against US targets and interests. In sub-Saharan Africa, the emphasis is more on state institutions, trafficking, corruption, and their implications broadly for global instability. Despite these distinctions, both regions prompt concerns about ungoverned spaces, episodic and entrenched conflicts. States across the subregions of Africa are also important in terms of United States energy security.

The US has important strategic concerns over lines of communication and trade—for instance, the Suez Canal, the Sahel, and the Red Sea. Monitoring black markets and transnational networks along these pathways is central to counterterrorism and traditional security.

Combating piracy is a mounting concern for the United States and other countries that trade with African countries, but many of those governments themselves do not yet view it as an urgent priority.

Western nations have advocated the maintenance of coast guards and navies along the entire East and West African coasts because of the glaring capacity gaps. Yet such an effort would be very costly and could be undermined by local corruption. This leaves most African coastal waters unguarded and vulnerable to exploitation by criminal groups. Despite the shared transnational threats, security dilemma concerns linger that if one country develops a strong navy, then its neighbors will grow suspicious of that strength.

Conference participants noted that piracy may grow as a priority for African countries once its economic ramifications draw more attention. Indeed, there have already been examples. Liberia and Ghana, for instance, now want effective coast guards to protect their nations' resources and livelihoods. Nigeria and Benin are starting to build counter piracy and trafficking capacity. Key questions, however, remain. Where will the fiscal resources come from? How will the resources be guarded against being siphoned off through corruption? How can regional approaches be adopted?

For African states, the primary concerns are the threats of internal conflicts, state fragility, criminal organizations, corruption, and the breakdown of law and order. The growing youth bulge and related migration to cities are dark clouds over Africa's future. The scarcity of arable land and of irrigation is a powerful push factor for the movement of rural populations to cities. This is a risk factor for violent protests, and the associated insecurity, perhaps most visibly, in Côte d'Ivoire.

Corruption is a problem with its own complexities. In a number of African societies, government positions bring fairly high expectations of a shared good fortune in families, clans, and villages. Navigating between culture and progress-crippling corruption is a major challenge in this area. Conference participants asked whether new definitions and categories could help curtail corruption. The group recognized the corrosive impact of corruption on security and good governance from the other side of development and social capital: the "brain drain" problem, with educated African elites moving to the West rather than investing in their own countries.

There was discussion of some discrete successes in stemming the brain drain in South Africa.

Of course the failure to compensate military personnel can also pose a security threat, and participants were particularly interested in an innovative system used in the Democratic Republic of Congo to pay soldiers their salaries through their cell phones. State police forces that are underpaid are often susceptible to corruption. The problem of civilian police capacity falls between the bureaucratic cracks in the US system, with AFRICOM only able to do military-to-military training and training police falling under the responsibility of other agencies. This issue would typically fall in the remit of a development assistance agency like USAID; however, USAID is proscribed by law from providing this type of training. The experience in Iraq and Afghanistan may prompt new approaches, but in the meantime AFRICOM is not likely to meet this important need.

The question of substate actors, and the difficulty they pose for traditional security strategy, came up in the discussion of areas of potential convergence. As with piracy, countering this threat is not universally recognized as a vital strategic interest. Governments in the region are not yet convinced that these actors are threats to African states, although with recent violence in northern Nigeria and the prevalence of low-level entrenched conflicts, there is some room for cooperation on this issue. For instance, illicit trafficking itself may not seem to pose a direct threat to African politicians; however, the proceeds from it fuel instability throughout the continent. Similarly, energy security concerns in the global North intersect with the so-called "resource curse" which has given rise to intractable conflicts such as the Niger Delta, Cabinda, or the Ogaden militant movements. Given the interconnections among problems, however, corruption must be dealt with in both of these troubled areas.

Another example of a common interest is infectious disease prevention. Diseases easily pass back and forth between Africa and the United States, due to the high volume of business travel, for instance between major financial hubs such as Lagos and New York City. Several cooperative initiatives in response to epidemics have met with success.

Indeed, nearly all the challenges discussed at the conference were described as multilayered and complex, often needing to be addressed at both the sociopolitical and technical levels. Many of these complex threats center on governance and institution building. Food security, for instance, is an area where the solution is a mix of improved governance as well as more efficient agricultural practices. Such combinations of initiatives are essential to AFRICOM's approach to conflict prevention.

Yet the need to engage locally through diplomacy and development raises issues of the US government's available capacity and resources. The associated incentives and long-term strategies might not be matched by a commitment to follow-through in the US political culture. How can AFRICOM exert maximum leverage through the use of short-term, value-added tactics? How should AFRICOM prioritize?

Challenges to AFRICOM

As part of its strategic approach, AFRICOM has taken pains not to look at each African country in isolation. How, then, can AFRICOM set priorities for itself and still try to affect the continent as a whole? And for an organization with a core emphasis on supporting security sector reform, where do such efforts begin and end? Does a comprehensive and holistic approach require training police institutions, building modern jails and court systems, as well as anticorruption measures? How sustainable can one piece be without the others? Furthermore, if an emphasis is put on building up professional militaries, yet their civilian counterparts remain corrupt and abusive, could that lead to military coups that further destabilize the country? In some cases, the organs of the state are themselves benefiting from instability. How can AFRICOM promote security sector reform in countries where the military is acting against its people? These questions call for a sophisticated understanding of local power realities and the interconnections among the different parts of the system.

The group discussed Somalia at some length, noting the combination of different challenges and the traumatic legacy for US involvement in the region. Somalia is, for instance, a haven for terrorists whose activities have the potential for spillover into Yemen, which is already

quite fragile. The United States has been supporting the Somali government in its struggle for legitimacy and for the control of downtown Mogadishu.

The conference discussion centered on the failures of the past and the possibilities for the future, with many participants stressing the importance of a bottom-up approach. One participant suggested looking at three regions within Somalia in terms of their relative stability and the threats that they pose. According to this approach, for instance, the Puntland would be singled out as a source of piracy, and Somaliland seen as having internal problems that are not a direct threat to the United States. Understanding that the current conflict is largely limited to one section of the country, participants stressed the importance of identifying and working with the best possible partners among civil society and women's NGOs.

Just as the conflict in Liberia had disastrous repercussions for its entire subregion, that nation's post-conflict recovery is similarly crucial for the future stability of West Africa. Efforts at training and professionalizing the Liberian military, for instance, offer important lessons. Participants familiar with the case stressed that rehabilitating and disarming militia groups, or training a new military or police force, are important as first steps, but must be part of a more comprehensive approach. They also noted the legal and bureaucratic obstacles that have hindered the United States from offering as much support as it could.

One participant stressed that the frontiers between countries, as well as the areas where subregions meet, can be either sources of problems or of dynamism. This prompted a discussion of the Sahel as the crossroads of West Africa and the Maghreb. The region could lend itself to cooperation between the US and African governments on intelligence sharing, not only on terrorism but also on the trafficking of arms, people, and drugs. On the other hand, the reliance of local African economies on a single product controlled by the elite, in some cases might act as a strong disincentive. Mali was noted as an important ally in countering terrorism in the Sahel, and there seems to be genuine regional interest in responding to Al Qaeda in the Maghreb.

Part of this momentum on counterterrorism traces to a provocation by Al Qaeda in the Maghreb regarding the killing of a highly placed official in Bamako.

Even though support for regional organizations such as the African Union is a logical way to strengthen African partners and keep AFRICOM from being the center of attention itself, the African Union is already stretched to its limits, particularly as it deals with Somalia and Sudan. There is currently an active debate over multilateral and bilateral roles and capacity—including the potential creation of a new African Standby Forces structure, though there are questions about whether capacity in the region warrants such a vehicle.

The fact that many African nations are major troop contributors to peacekeeping operations provides both an opportunity and a challenge. Despite the obvious strain on the troops, the deployments help professionalize militaries in the region, and perhaps divert them from interfering in domestic politics in their countries. Continued training and experience would boost the effectiveness of peacekeeping and ameliorate the overall problem of conflict in the region. The debate over the African Union role is pertinent here, though, as African leaders worry about security challenges distracting from the organization's core economic agenda.

US Africa Command (AFRICOM)

To a significant extent, AFRICOM is spurred by the shortcomings of the regional commands' previous approach to the region. Not only was responsibility for Africa split among three regional commands, but it was also a second-order concern for all of them. Consequently, US military staff were often unable to make real commitments to African allies, and sometimes failed to follow through on the commitments that they did make.

In contrast, AFRICOM will not turn its focus from Africa. According to AFRICOM officials, the way to prove the new command structure's value-added is by showing its ability to engage consistently, develop trust, and make good on commitments.

The US military “brand” as a paragon of military professionalism is important in Africa, but needs to be used carefully. Many fears remain from the clumsy initial rollout of the idea of AFRICOM. The presence of US soldiers on African soil can cut symbolically in one of two ways: by evoking images of former colonial occupation, or by inspiring African militaries to professionalize and prey less on their own populations.

Tests of Effectiveness and Impact

One question for AFRICOM is whether it will succeed in integrating US government agencies where others have fallen short. While the history of cooperation between the different parts of the government has been sparked by extreme conditions and pressures, AFRICOM is quite deliberate in developing a holistic interagency approach and streamlined communication. Participants familiar with AFRICOM's operation reported near-constant examination of how best to combine agencies for maximum capacity and effectiveness. This may help AFRICOM develop a comprehensive understanding of African security issues, and focus on the second- and third-order effects that have received short shrift in the past.

That said, AFRICOM cannot escape the United States' overall shortfall in civilian international affairs capacity stemming from the steep historical decline in budgets. For example, the Department of State's staff contribution to AFRICOM is supposed to be a modest 14 people, but it is really only 4. There was disagreement amongst conference participants about how dire this situation is. Some considered it important to mark the improved relationship between DOS and DoD, with AFRICOM as a standout. This also raised the issue of the use of outside contractors and the associated questions of proper government functions and whether the lowest bidding contractors offer real value. African militaries are often acutely aware that much of the training they receive comes from contractors rather than uniformed US military.

The nature and balance of the United States engagement with Africa was another concern—a worry about the potential militarization of US approach to Africa. Notwithstanding arguments from the military

that much of its resources go to operational support, AFRICOM currently has many more personnel working on Africa than any other part of the US government. Isn't this bound to skew US engagement in the region?

Participants were also torn between the palpable need for police development and the fact that civilian police and other elements of state building simply are not within the military's jurisdiction. In order to deal with these challenges, AFRICOM either needs to obtain the necessary legal and funding authority, or its civilian counterparts must grow to catch up with demand. It was noted that AFRICOM does not, for instance, have discretionary resources with the flexibility of the CERP funds used by commanders in Iraq. There was strong agreement that AFRICOM needs to examine and determine its exact niche of security sector reform and stick to it—basing its programs on what individual countries want and need.

With a headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, AFRICOM comprises approximately 1,300 people, including seconded personnel from over two dozen other agencies. Due to AFRICOM's unusual mission, its staff includes cultural anthropologists and specialists on conflict and security trends. Within its engagement directorates, AFRICOM personnel cover peacekeeping, maritime awareness, crosscutting issues, and provide information about airspace to African partners. One is aligned to match the African Union organization as well as subregional bodies. Another monitors all of the command's military-to-military activities on the continent. The third coordinates and "synchronizes" all activities to enable AFRICOM to keep from overwhelming individual countries and really look at Africa from an overarching strategy (US perspective, continental then regional). There are also counternarcotics teams with links to counterpart teams in South America and Afghanistan. AFRICOM is also developing service elements such as Marine Forces Africa, US Army Africa, and US Naval Forces Africa, raising the question of how they could become effectively integrated.

Finding the Right Strategy

Participants saw significant challenges for AFRICOM in the clarification of its basic strategy. The command's stated goal is to boost

prevention rather than reaction. But how well do we understand the most effective means of prevention? Does AFRICOM have the right capabilities for this strategic objective relationship? How will it address counterterrorism? Some counterterrorism capacity is available through the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), but that is very much focused on the Horn of Africa. What about infectious disease? Weapons of mass destruction? Violent political polarization?

The emphasis on prevention also points clearly toward the effective integration of the tools of defense, development, and diplomacy. This has been a difficult struggle in Iraq and Afghanistan and confronts the military-civilian resource imbalances noted above. For example, many conflicts in Africa are driven or exacerbated by natural resource problems such as water and irrigation, yet the USAID office that is dedicated to these issues is staffed by just 10 people to cover the entire world.

Beyond conflict prevention, does AFRICOM have capacity for conflict management, resolution, or post-conflict reconstruction? Even within the core responses of conflict resolution and peace-making—what are the indigenous African solutions and how will AFRICOM support them? And to the extent that deployed forces are the proper response, while AFRICOM has the personnel, it does not have operational units of its own and would have to get them from another command.

One of AFRICOM's core strategic concepts is to distinguish between two distinct modes of operation. Indirect security sector support works to help African partners grow their capacity to perform security and peacekeeping operations in the region. Under the direct security approach, AFRICOM gets involved in African countries such as Sudan, DRC, and Liberia as they stabilize themselves after conflict.

Liberia is an example of the latter, with AFRICOM leading a significant security sector reform effort. Professionalizing the Liberian military has been difficult, though. The military drew 14,000 applicants for 2,000 billets, and only six former rebel forces were successfully

integrated into the Liberian Army. And as the Liberian military professionalizes, will the civilian organs of government follow suit?

The most prominent US military activity in the region by far is the CJTF-HOA. The Obama administration is starting to make what HOA does more regular. Many members of Congress have been sold on the American presence in Djibouti. It is impossible, for instance, to overemphasize the Djibouti operation's importance in feeding Ethiopia. How will AFRICOM keep the US Congress informed about African security needs and keep the political will necessary to launch such complex operations? There was a related concern that information about Africa in the news media will dwindle as a way to highlight the region as struggling news agencies close their Africa sections.

Potential for Progress in the Region

There are reasons to be hopeful about African security issues. Currently, when African heads of state hold their summit meetings, none of them appears in military uniform, a notable break with the earlier pattern and a welcome shift toward civilian leadership. Coups now are also much rarer than in the past.

Given that Africa will not likely emerge as a top strategic priority for the United States, it is all the more essential that AFRICOM clarify its strategy and purpose. What is the relationship between AFRICOM's activities and the region's major challenges? If the youth bulge and rapid urbanization are expected to pose huge problems for Africa, how can AFRICOM help? How does the US military advance economic development, create jobs, reduce corruption, and build institutions?

Our experts repeatedly expressed the need for a long-term and comprehensive approach to African security. Can AFRICOM provide this? Do we know what other donor countries are doing? Can we avoid redundancy? Are the US trainers or forces capable of dealing with large post-conflict demobilization and disarmament initiatives?

Sensitive to these questions, AFRICOM officials offer a carefully calibrated standard of success: the command's ability to add value in

response to a given problem. Because of the military-civilian resource imbalances among US agencies, they are also aware of the need for AFRICOM to contribute to other agencies' efforts without overshadowing them. If AFRICOM indeed passes these tests, it will not only contribute toward the future peace and prosperity of Africa, but also serve as an important international model of effectiveness.

This report summarizes the primary findings of the conference as interpreted by the rapporteur, Alena Junko Tansey and chair, Patrick Cronin. It contains their interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

Participant List for African Security and the Future of AFRICOM Discussion

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About the Authors

Ambassador Johnnie Carson was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of African Affairs on May 7, 2009. Prior to this he was the National Intelligence Officer for Africa at the NIC, after serving as the Senior Vice President of the National Defense University in Washington DC (2003-2006). Carson's 37-year Foreign Service career includes ambassadorships to Kenya (1999-2003), Zimbabwe (1995-1997), and Uganda (1991-1994); and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs (1997-1999). Earlier in his career he had assignments in Portugal (1982-1986), Botswana (1986-1990), Mozambique (1975-1978), and Nigeria (1969-1971). He has also served as desk officer in the Africa section at State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (1971-1974); Staff Officer for the Secretary of State (1978-1979), and Staff Director for the Africa Subcommittee of the US House of Representatives (1979-1982).

Before joining the Foreign Service, Ambassador Carson was a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania from 1965-1968. He has a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from Drake University and a Master of Arts in International Relations from the School of Oriental and Africa Studies at the University of London. Ambassador Carson is the recipient of several Superior Honor Awards from the Department of State and a Meritorious Service Award from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The Centers for Disease Control presented Ambassador Carson its highest award, "Champion of Prevention Award," for his leadership in directing the US Government's HIV/AIDS prevention efforts in Kenya.

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Paul B. Stares is the General John W. Vessey senior fellow for conflict prevention and director of the Center for Preventive Action at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). Besides overseeing a series of Council Special Reports on potential sources of instability and strife, he is currently working on a study assessing long-term conflict trends. Dr. Stares recently led an expert working group on preventive diplomacy for the Genocide Prevention Task Force co-chaired by Madeleine Albright and William Cohen. Prior to joining CFR, Stares was the vice president and director of the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention at the United States Institute of Peace.

Stares worked as an associate director and senior research scholar at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation from 2000 to 2002, was a senior research fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs and director of studies at the Japan Center for International Exchange from 1996 to 2000, and was a senior fellow and

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Capps has lectured at the Foreign Service Institute, the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, the NATO School, and The Henry L. Stimson Center. He has received numerous awards including two Department of State Superior Honor Awards, and two Bronze Star Medals. In 2007, the American Foreign Service Association presented

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David Nyheim is an established professional in the fields of conflict analysis, early warning, multistakeholder facilitation processes, and conflict prevention strategy formulation. He is the Chief Executive of INCAS Consulting. He served for six years as the Director of the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER) until 2003. During that period he worked extensively on early warning and preventive action in Africa (Great Lakes Region and West Africa) and the Caucasus.

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Griffin has been instrumental in developing and implementing several key reform initiatives in the area of peace and security, including the 2009 reports on peacebuilding, mediation and New Horizon/peacekeeping; the 2008 strengthening of DPA; the 2004-5 High-Level Panel report on Threats, Challenges and Change and the resulting World Summit; and the 2000 Brahimi report. Previous assignments included

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