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Preventive Diplomacy and Ethnic Conflict: Possible, Difficult, Necessary

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PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT: POSSIBLE, DIFFICULT, NECESSARY

Bruce W. Jentleson

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The basic logic of preventive diplomacy is unassailable. Act early to prevent disputes from escalating or problems from worsening. Reduce tensions that if intensified could lead to war. Deal with today's conflicts before they become tomorrow's crises. It is the same logic as preventive medicine: don't wait until the cancer has spread or the arteries are nearly fully clogged; or as the auto mechanic says in a familiar television commercial, as he holds an oil filter in one hand and points to a seized-up car engine with the other, "Pay me now or pay me later."

Indeed, invocations of the need to expand and enhance the practice of preventive diplomacy have been heard from virtually all quarters of the post-Cold War world:

- from the outset of the Clinton administration, as in the emphasis by Secretary of State Warren Christopher in his confirmation hearings on the need for "a new diplomacy that can anticipate and prevent crises. . . rather that simply manage them;" the advocacy by National Security Advisor Anthony Lake for "greater emphasis on tools such as mediation and preventive diplomacy" so that "in addition to helping solve disputes, we also help prevent disputes;" and the assertion by AID Administrator J. Brian Atwood that whereas "containment of communism defined our national security policy for nearly half a century. . . the Clinton administration has made crisis prevention a central theme of its foreign policy" (Binder 1993; Atwood 1994).

- from the United Nations, as in the January 1992 call by the UN Security Council, in its first-ever summit meeting at the level of heads of state and government, for "recommendations on ways of strengthening. . . the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peace-keeping," and the ensuing report by UN Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace,* which devoted a full chapter to preventive diplomacy (United Nations 1992: 13–19);

- from regional multilateral organizations such as the Conference (now Organization) on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE) which commits in its 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe to "seek new forms of cooperation. . . [for] ways for preventing, through political means, conflicts which may emerge"; and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which has established new mechanisms in the past few years which "have, as a primary objective, the anticipation and prevention of conflicts."
- from a broad range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), so many of which end up on the front lines of humanitarian relief efforts seeking to ameliorate the consequences of the failures of prevention;
- from elite associations, think tanks and scholars, which have been both issuing studies and setting up track-two action groups, such as the Carnegie Commission for Preventing Deadly Conflict and the Council on Foreign Relations Center for Preventive Action.

Yet despite the unassailability of the basic logic and all the invocations and initial initiatives, the track record of these first years of the post-Cold War era is not particularly encouraging. Croatia, Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Tajikistan, "Kurdistan"—the list goes on to include over 90 armed conflicts since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the vast majority of which have been ethnic conflicts. Indeed, in the view of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry, it is ethnic conflict that is driving "much of the need for military forces in the world today" (Defense Department 1994).

Some have questioned whether the whole concept of preventive diplomacy is yet another false and misleading "alchemy for a new world order" (Stedman 1995). That it has been "oversold," its difficulties underestimated and its risks undervalued is a fair criticism. But to simply write it off would be to commit the mirror-image mistake of those too eager and uncritical in their embrace. Instead, in my view we need to proceed from three basic postulates:

a) Preventive diplomacy is possible.

b) Preventive diplomacy is difficult.

c) Preventive diplomacy is necessary.

The purpose of this paper is to develop and support these postulates as a step towards refining the concept of preventive diplomacy, de-reifying any remaining promises of panacea and otherwise moving from appealing idea to usable foreign policy strategies. After first developing a working definition for the term *preventive diplomacy* in the next section, I then address each of these postulates—possible, difficult, necessary—drawing both on theoretical-conceptual arguments and empirical evidence from recent major cases.

Defining Preventive Diplomacy

Two aspects of the definition need to be established: a) general conceptual parameters for a working definition of the term; and b) methodological considerations in measuring success and failure.

Conceptual Parameters for a Working Definition

Michael Lund (1996) attributes the coining of the actual term *preventive diplomacy* to UN Secretary General Dag Hammarksjold in 1960 with reference, in the Cold War context, to UN efforts "to keep localized international disputes from provoking larger confrontations between the superpowers." More recently, it has been applied to an unmanageably broad range of activities, objectives and policies, including people-to-people conflict resolution dialogues, crisis prevention mediation, war de-escalation and termination, democracy building, economic development and the eradication of poverty; even environmental preservation. No wonder that one former State Department official referred to it as being "a buzz word among diplomats" (Stremlau 1995: 29).

Figure 1 presents a framework drawing out the conceptual parameters of preventive diplomacy as

differentiated from other major forms of diplomacy based on three criteria: a) the likelihood of mass violent conflict; b) the intended time-frame in which the diplomatic activity seeks impact; and c) the principal objectives of the diplomatic action. This is not intended as a comprehensive typology, but rather for definitional and heuristic utility.

Figure 1

Differentiating Preventive Diplomacy

	Normal Diplomacy	Developmentalist Diplomacy	Preventive Diplomacy	War Diplomacy
Likelihood of violent conflict	Low	Potential	Imminent	Existing
Timeframe	Ongoing	Long-term	Short, Medium term	Immediate
Principal Objectives	Mgmnt. of relations	Economic development, state building	Prevent crises and wars	War limitation and termination

At one end is *normal diplomacy*, the day-to-day interactions of what Sir Harold Nicolson called "the management of relations between independent States by processes of negotiation" (Nicolson 1980: 41). While on the one hand such normal diplomacy regularly involves situations in which disputes and debates do exist (and thus it can be said to be seeking to be preventive), to the extent that there is no significant likelihood of mass violence, there is a relatively non-pressing time frame, and the objectives are regularized management through accepted channels, it is useful to acknowledge its normality and keep it distinct.

At the other end is *war diplomacy*, involving situations in which violent conflict already has broken out, making the time frame a highly immediate one, with the objective of limiting or ending the conflict. One of the problems with the definition of preventive diplomacy laid out by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his *Agenda for Peace* —"action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur" (1992: 13)—is that the final clause blurs the distinction between preventing war or other mass violence from happening, and containing war and mass violence that have already begun. It is not that war and peace necessarily are dichotomous states of affairs, but in the same way that scholars who study war have needed to establish threshold criteria (Singer and Small 1972), it is useful to distinguish diplomacy intended to prevent the occurrence of a war from diplomacy seeking to limit the intensification of a war.

We use the term *developmentalist diplomacy* to refer to efforts to address long-term societal and international problems which, if allowed to worsen, have the potential to lead to violent conflict. In this regard, John Stremlau cites a 1994 OECD paper which stressed the importance of thinking about development in terms that extend beyond strictly economic calculations and recognize that

> successfully managing competing interests and loyalties in societies is the vital prerequisite for both achieving successful development and for containing disputes and conflicts . . . [to] bring peace and development closer together (Stremlau 1995: 35–36).

While this long-term perspective is valid, encompassing it in a working definition of preventive diplomacy would raise a similar problem of over-inclusiveness as with the other two categories. There is a difference, as the Carnegie Commission for Preventing Deadly Conflict (1995: 4) points out, between prevention as "a long-term, structural approach" and situations which demand "immediate operational steps to build a firebreak against the outbreak and spread of mass violence."

The optimal conceptualization of *preventive diplomacy* is one that focuses on these firebreak-type objectives. It involves situations in which the likelihood of violent mass conflict is imminent—not yet existing but also not low or just potential; the time frame is short to medium term—not immediate but also not just a matter of ongoing relations or the long-term; and the objectives are to take the necessary diplomatic action within the limited time frame to prevent those crises or wars which seem imminent.[1]

A further definitional point concerns the instruments and strategies included as part of the

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[1] As a formal definition Lund (1997) offers a useful albeit somewhat lengthy definition:

actions, policies and institutions used to keep particular states or organized groups within them from threatening or using organized violence, armed force, or related forms of coercion as the way to settle either inter-state or national political disputes, especially where and when the existing means cannot peacefully manage the destabilizing effects of economic, social, political, and international change.

preventive diplomacy tool box. While these are discussed more in a later section, the general point to be made here is that both coercive and noncoercive measures are included. The *Agenda for Peace* report explicitly identifies the preventive deployment of military forces as one of the strategies to which its definition of preventive diplomacy refers. Other efforts to define the term have sought to confine it to "nonviolent interactions that lead to constructive dialogue between adversaries," explicitly excluding "the use of armed forces." (Thompson and Gutlove 1994: 5). The problem with such a definition is that it ignores purposiveness and lapses into a posing of force and diplomacy as antithetical. They of course can be, but they don't have to be. Preventive diplomacy, no less than other forms of diplomacy, often needs to be backed by the threat if not the actual use of force.

Methodological Considerations in Measuring Success and Failure

There are three complicating methodological problems in attempting to assess the record of preventive diplomacy.

First is that in either assessment one must rely at least somewhat on *counterfactual* reasoning. To assess a case as a preventive diplomacy failure is to argue that violent conflict would have been avoided or at least limited if, irrespective of other factors, this particular factor had been different. Similarly, a case assessed as a success implies that were it not for the impact of preventive diplomacy it is at least likely that a major conflict would have occurred. These are similar caveats as with other areas of international relations theory, such as deterrence and the debates over optimal explanations of deterrence failure and reliable identification of deterrence successes (see, e.g., George and Smoke 1974, Lebow and Stein 1990). The key, as it has been for the deterrence literature and as it is for all efforts at counterfactual explanation, is both to establish the theoretical basis for the logic of the alternative hypothesized path and to support it empirically as strongly as possible (Tetlock and Belkin, forthcoming; Fearon 1991).

Second is the need for a degree of *relativity* in the measurement scale sufficient to allow for shades of gray but not so much as to become so relativistic as to lose all evaluative reliability. On the one end this means making some distinction between the success of avoiding the negative and the success of fully achieving the positive. With cases of failure, which often seem to have much less gray to them, it adds to the utility of analysis if any efficacious policies can be sifted out of the wreckage. There are very few cases of ethnic conflict which have ended up totally resolved; it's

doubtful there ever will be. But we don't serve our goal of gaining analytic insights into the sources of or the solutions for ethnic conflicts if our assessments are not sensitive to differences of degree.

Third is the frequent *transitoriness* of designations of success. A policy initially may appear to have achieved its objectives, but then at a later date may break down. What if the immediate goal of preventing a crisis is achieved, but a year later the ethnic groups are again warring? Or if a major conflict still has been averted, but only because the peacekeeping mission continues to be deployed with no end in sight? And when can societal conflict resolution initiatives be said to have taken hold? At what benchmark can we say that preventive diplomacy institution-building has reached robustness? Conceptually, if not as a matter of policy, we may need to develop a preventive diplomacy equivalent as is used in the economic domain of countries "graduating" from such economic assistance programs as foreign aid and the Generalized System of Preferences.

The Possibility of Preventive Diplomacy

Working from this definition, the first key question is: How strong is the basis for postulating that preventive diplomacy is possible? This is not to go so far as to claim that some policy *X* would have prevented ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, or some policy *Y* surely rebuilt the Somali state, or some policy *Z* prevented genocide in Rwanda. It is, however, also not to accept the assertion that nothing else could have been done, as if there was an inevitability to these conflicts degenerating to the levels of violence that they did.

There are three principal bases for asserting the possibility of preventive diplomacy: analysis of the purposive rather than primordialist sources of ethnic conflict; the case evidence of opportunities that did exist for effective preventive diplomacy, but which were missed; and the case evidence of conflicts which had the potential to escalate to war or other mass violence, but in which preventive action was taken with relative success (see also Jentleson, forthcoming.)

The Purposive Sources of Ethnic Conflict

A first point derives directly from the distinction made by a number of scholars in the sources of ethnic conflict being less "primordialist" than "purposive" in either or both of the instrumentalist and constructivist

conceptualizations. If the primordialist view held and ethnicity in fact was a fixed and inherently deeply conflictual historical identity, such that the 1990s conflicts primarily were continuations of ones going back hundreds of years (e.g. "Balkan ghosts" going back to the fourteenth century; the tracing back of Somali clan rivalries to the pre-colonial pastoral period; the medieval *buhake* agricultural caste system of Tutsi dominance over Hutu), then it would be hard to hold out much prospect for preventive diplomacy. The problem with the primordialist view, though, as David Lake and Donald Rothchild state:

> is its assumption of fixed identities and its failure to account for variations in the level of conflict over time and place. In short, the approach founders on its inability to explain the emergence of new and transformed identities or account for the long periods in which either ethnicity is not a salient political characteristic or relations between different ethnic groups are comparatively peaceful (forthcoming).

While Lake and Rothchild delineate differences in the instrumentalist and constructivist approaches, the complementarities between them as purposive explanations and their collective differentiation as such from primordialist theories bear more on my point herein. Purposive explanations do acknowledge deep-seated inter-group dispositional antagonisms, but also bring out the ways in which ethnicity is a "socially constructed" identity linked to the distribution of political power and economic privilege within a society. They stress the calculated role played by what Timar Kuran calls "ethnic activists" in activating and fomenting these tensions in order to serve their own political objectives. Kuran cites Donald Horowitz on how "group identity tends to expand on contract to fill the political space, available for expression" (Lake and Rothchild, forthcoming). It follows that to the extent that international efforts can limit the available political space, group identity will be able to do less expanding. Similarly, in another article in our volume, Stephen Saideman stresses the impact on the likelihood of secessions of expectations of international opposition (Lake and Rothchild, forthcoming). And as we consider recent cases, the purposive view can better explain why, for example, the ethnic groups of the Balkans have not always been at each other's throats, only to be led into ethnic warfare by the "purposeful actions of political actors who actively create[d] violent conflict" to serve their own domestic political agendas by "selectively drawing on history in order to portray it as historically inevitable." The Serbs and Croats in Croatia "before May 1991. . . lived together in relative contentment," and Bosnia had the highest percentage of ethnically mixed marriages of any former Yugoslav republic. The Somali conflict also was not just an extension of historical tensions, but the consequence of the "politicization" of clan relations by the dictator Siad Barre and, ultimately, against him. In Rwanda the genocide was not "the spontaneous slaughter of one group by another" but rather was "actively promoted by political and military leaders" (Glenny 1993: 19; Gagnon, 1994–95; Hirsch and Oakley 1994; Adelman and Suhrke 1996: 2). As with any purposeful action, calculations of costs and benefits are made, which means that as Gagnon states for the ex-Yugoslavia case "outside actors" could have prevented or moderated the conflict had they taken actions which would have made "the external costs of such conflict so high that the conflict itself would endanger the domestic power structure" (Gagnon 1994–95: 164–65).

Case Evidence of Opportunities Missed

A second point is the strong evidence from a number of recent cases that the international community *did* have specific and identifiable opportunities to have some impact to limit, if not prevent, these conflicts, but its statecraft was flawed, inadequate, or even absent. Again, one must acknowledge the counterfactual limits about what could or would or might have happened. And one must self-consciously base any such arguments on what genuinely was knowable and do-able at the time, not just in retrospect. Such caveats notwithstanding, the case literature from both analysts and policy-makers strongly and credibly points to warnings that were available at the time, to options that were proposed, and to patterns in the behavior and responses of leaders and parties to the various conflicts that indicate that a) different policies were possible, and b) such policies had plausible chances of positive impact.

There is, of course, the question in identifying missed opportunities of how far to go back in the etiology of a conflict. In the Somalia case, for example, while U.S. support for dictator Siad Barre was deemed successful in terms of serving immediate 1970s–1980s geopolitical objectives against the Soviets and their client state Ethiopia, by paying little attention to the mounting corruption, economic mismanagement, and repression, it contributed to the eventual collapse of the Somali state. In a more proximate sense, Mohamed Sahnoun, a noted African diplomat who served in 1992 as head of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), points specifically to the failure of the United States, the United Nations, and others in the international community to respond to the 1988 uprising in the north led by the Somali National Movement (SNM), despite ample and available

evidence ("early warning") of mass killings and wanton destruction by Siad Barre's forces. The violence was documented both by human rights groups and by the U.S. State Department.

> The world community was clearly witnessing a serious crisis in which a large population faced the dire consequences of what was to be a civil war. One would expect that in the absence of a democratic mechanism allowing for corrective measures, the international community would come to the rescue of the victimized population. It did not. . . (Sahnoun 1994: 6).

Sahnoun also cites three other missed opportunities: following the May 1990 Manifesto signed by 144 prominent political leaders, when the world watched while Siad Barre arrested many of the signatories; the fall of Siad Barre in January 1991 and the efforts by the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments to convene a reconciliation conference which "came to nothing, however, because of lack of international and regional support;" and the ensuing attempt in July 1991 by the Djibouti government to organize a conference, only to have its request for support from the UN "refused with no explanation except that the matter was too complicated" (Sahnoun 1994: 8–10).

The deployment first of UNOSOM and then of the U.S.-led United Task Force (UNITAF) and Operation Restore Hope, consistent with the definitional parameters set our earlier, generally did mark the shift from preventive diplomacy to peacemaking and peacekeeping. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that here too policy failure was not inevitable; that a number of mistakes were made; and that other policies with greater chances of success could have been pursued (Sahnoun 1994; Hirsch and Oakley 1995; Menkhaus and Ortmayer 1995).

In the Yugoslavia case, one finds a repeated emphasis on a number of particular points of inaction or flawed policies. Former U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmerman is among those who point to the failure by Western governments, most blatantly Germany, to abide by the principle established by UN Special Envoys Cyrus Vance and Lord Carrington in the summer of 1991 not to grant diplomatic recognition to any Yugoslav republic until all had agreed on their mutual relationship. "If this simple principle had been maintained, less blood would have been shed in Bosnia," Zimmerman claims (without overclaiming). He also points to the failure of NATO to respond to the shelling of Dubrovnik in October 1991:

> Not only would damage to the city have been averted, but the Serbs would have been taught a lesson about Western resolve that might have deterred at least some of the aggression in Bosnia. As it was, the Serbs learned another lesson. . . that there was no Western resolve, and that they could push about as far as their power would take them. (Zimmerman 1995: 13–14)

In his analysis, Lawrence Freedman emphasizes the opportunity missed in the initial use of economic sanctions against Serbia, proclaimed with much fanfare but without any serious efforts at enforcement. Indeed, once the West did get serious about enforcing the sanctions they were a key factor in pressuring Serbia to agree to peace terms. This mirrors the converse corollaries of both the coercive opportunity missed and the credibility-damaging signal sent when the reality of forceful sanctions fell far short of the rhetoric. Freedman, Woodward, and others also point to a number of other aspects of U.S. and European policies in the summer of 1992 that were much too little when it still may not have been too late (Freedman 1994–95: 60; Woodward 1995). The same logic fits NATO air power which, when finally used, brought substantial coercive leverage.

In the Rwanda case, there is ample evidence of early warning, but again flawed or otherwise inadequate preventive diplomacy responses by the United Nations, the United States, France, and Belgium. Even going back to the late 1980s and early 1990s, information about violent conflicts, military build-ups, human rights violations and escalating political tensions came to policy-makers from UN agencies such as the UNHCR, the OAU, Western ambassadors in the capital Kigali, human rights and other NGOs, and others. This made for at least three "windows of opportunity" as identified in a detailed and revealing study by a Canadian-Norwegian research team (Adelman and Suhrke 1996). First, in 1989 and early 1990, both the OAU and the UNHCR had gathered sufficient information on the increasing volatility of the long-standing refugee problem (mostly Tutsis in Uganda) to seek to take a series of initiatives, but they got little support from the United States or Western Europe. Less than a year later, on October 1, 1990, the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded from the refugee camps in Uganda and set off a civil war.

Second, a key reason for the collapse of the 1992–93 Arusha Accords which established Hutu-Tutsi power sharing was the failure of the international community to buttress them with tough and credible measures against violations and extremist violators. Proposals to make economic assistance conditional on respect for human rights were resisted by both the United States and the Europeans. The hatred-fomenting broadcasts of Radio Milles Collines were met with little more than "yet another demarche to [Hutu President]

Habyarimana." And while a UN peacekeeping force was authorized (UNAMIR, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda), it was slow to be deployed; it was staffed at less than one-third the level of recommended troops; and its mandate was limited despite repeated requests from its commander for greater authority. Consequently, when in April 1994 the genocide was launched, "UNAMIR lacked everything from sandbags to APCs to protect even its own personnel, and had little room to maneuver." Again, while not conclusive or certain, there was substantial early warning available, including a leak in January 1994 from a Rwandan informant on a plan by Hutu extremists to launch an assassination campaign against Tutsi and moderate Hutu politicians.

Third, the first week of the crisis was an opportunity to prevent the killing from reaching the extremes that it did. Adelman and Suhrke fault the UN for positing the options as being either building up UNAMIR sufficiently to be able to intervene between the two armies, or to withdraw. The UN did not recognize the possibility of a third option: that of increasing troop strength sufficiently to protect civilians. Adelman and Surkhe spread the fault between Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, who was off on a trip in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the critical days, and the unresponsiveness of the major powers, including the United States. However distributed, the point is that opportunities were missed (Adelman and Suhrke 1996: 12–16).

Case Evidence of Successful Preventive Diplomacy

The third basis comes from the comparative perspective of other cases that quite plausibly could have become deadly conflicts, but in which preventive action was taken with relative success. In cases like Macedonia, another ex-Yugoslav republic with a volatile ethnic mix and sharing a border with Serbia, or the Congo, where, unlike Somalia or Rwanda, internal ethnic violence was limited and managed, we are on solid analytical ground in contending that ethnic warfare was a distinct possibility. A brief discussion of each case shows the key role played by external actors and their preventive diplomacy in averting major conflict.

The earlier methodological point about transitoriness needs be borne in mind in attributing success to a case-in-progress like Macedonia.[2] Any number of factors still may cause any number of developments there. Irrespective, though, the point will hold that while both Croatia and Bosnia exploded in

mass violence, international diplomacy helped prevent spread to Macedonia. Credit is widely shared. The Bush administration issued a firm and unequivocal warning to Milosevic against Serb repression and violence against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, a previously autonomous province within Serbia and bordering Macedonia. Had violence broken out in Kosovo it could have drawn in Albania and also spread to Macedonia, which has a large ethnic Albanian population. In addition, an international presence was established on the ground early on in Macedonia. The CSCE sent an observer mission headed by a skilled American diplomat and with a broadly-defined mandate. A number of NGOs also established themselves, both providing an early-warning system and having some positive impact through conflict resolution and other multi-ethnic programs. Most significant was the actual deployment of a multinational military force before significant violence had been unleashed, originally as a division of the overall UNPROFOR and then later with its own mandate and moniker as UNPREDEP (UN Preventive Deployment Force). U.S. troops were included first as about 325 of the original 1000, and then up to over 500 of a force that grew to about 1500. Even though its mandate was limited, its presence was felt. This was especially true of the U.S. troops, which, despite their small number and their being confined to low risk duties, "carry weight," as Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov stressed. "It is a signal to all those who want to destabilize this region (Roskin 1993–94: 98)."

In the Congo case, a series of disputed elections in 1992–1993 set off conflict along ethnic and sectional lines. Violence broke out in April 1993 in Brazzaville and other cities, leaving over 1000 dead and about 10,000 displaced. The army restored some order, but there was little confidence that it would be more than temporary. The OAU interceded as mediators (with the same Mohamed Sahnoun who had been involved initially in Somalia as the special envoy), and succeeded in forging a viable compromise. Lund (1996) cites a number of reasons for its success. The diplomatic effort was launched quickly, without the usual delays; Sahnoun was a skilled mediator in his own right and also made shrewd tactical decisions such as drawing in the president of Gabon, who had family ties to both Congo presidential aspirants; the United States and European Community did not get directly involved, but did provide valuable back-up support.

Summary

In sum, there are both analytic and empirical bases for affirming the possibility of preventive diplomacy. There is nothing inevitable about ethnic conflict

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[2] Thanks to Donna Nincic for references on and discussions of Macedonia.

resulting in mass violence. In those cases that have, there are identifiable points at which, and policies by which, international actors could have had pre-ventive impact but did not. And in some key ethnic conflicts that did not result in mass violence, international preventive diplomacy played a key role.

Possible, but Difficult

Affirming the possibility of preventive diplomacy, though, must not be done without also recognizing the difficulties that inhere in moving from the possible to the actual. Indeed, the very need for international actors to involve themselves in an ethnic conflict is evidence of the failure of the "ethnic contract" and other breakdown of internal political order. And, as any number of studies have shown, internal wars in general often are more difficult to resolve through diplomacy than interstate wars (Licklider 1995, Stedman 1991, Pillar 1993, Walter 1995).

While each case naturally will differ in some respects, as a basic framework we can identify five generic difficulties that must be overcome for mounting effective preventive diplomacy against ethnic conflicts: achieving early warning; mustering political will; devising a "fair-but-firm" strategy; breaking through the constraints of the sovereignty norm with respect to the internal dimension of ethnic conflict; and strengthening the capacities of international institutions.

Early Warning

As Alexander George has observed, while there may be disagreement "on how to define the scope of preventive diplomacy and. . . also on the utility of various tools and strategies that may be employed in specific situations. . . there is no disagreement on the central importance of obtaining timely warning of incipient or slowly developing crises if preventive diplomacy efforts are to make themselves felt" (George 1994: 1). As with other types of conflicts, achieving early warning of ethnic conflict requires overcoming two fundamental problems: the *informational* problem of obtaining both the necessary quantity and quality of intelligence in a reliable and timely fashion, and the *analytic* problem of avoiding misperception or other faulty analysis of the likelihood of diffusion and/or escalation of the conflict, the impact on interests, and the potential risks and costs of both action and inaction (George and Holl 1995, Levite 1987).

In some respects, the nature of what constitutes early warning of an ethnic conflict is even more difficult to ascertain in a manner that is both timely and reliable than is early warning of such more classical problems as an impending surprise attack or advances in an adversary's military capabilities. While not underestimating the dangers and difficulties involved, the turning of a double agent or breaking an encrypted code or other aspects of traditional espionage are at least more concretely identifiable as to what needs to be known than is the case for discerning early warning of an ethnic conflict. It is, as Joseph Nye (1994) put it when he was head of the National Intelligence Council, the difference between breaking "secrets" and solving "mysteries." The CIA thus has begun to put more emphasis on and expertise into its own ethnic conflict early-warning projects, including drawing on academic research and researchers, as have such bureaus within the State Department as Policy Planning and Intelligence and Research.

In the academic literature, while some advances have been made in providing the empirical basis, as well as analytic methods and models with both explanatory and predictive power, the inherent analytic problem remains that, as David Carment (1994: 557) states based on a recent review of relevant literature, "determining the necessary and sufficient conditions for ethnic conflict is a complex task. No two scholars seem to agree on the exact causes of ethnic strife." Indeed, even among the authors in the Lake/Rothchild volume, and the shared view of a purposive etiology notwithstanding, there are analytic differences as to the key variables affecting the likelihood both of ethnic conflict leading to mass violence and of its spread (diffusion or escalation).

Nevertheless, as we look at recent cases, early warning actually has been less of a problem that often asserted and assumed. A great deal of information *was* available in the Yugoslav case, the Somali case, the Rwandan case. Milosevic's 1987 Greater Serbia speech was right there in *FBIS* and other open sources to be read. The Yugoslav Army's arms build-up and maneuvers were easily tracked by intelligence sources. Sahnoun's missed opportunities in Somalia go back to 1988, and, in addition to Amnesty International and Africa Watch reports, he cites a 1989 State Department report with the telling title *Why Somalis Flee: Synthesis of Accounts of Conflict Experience in Northern Somalia by Somali Refugees, Displaced Persons and Others,* as well as a follow-up study also in 1989 by the U.S. Congress' General Accounting Office. In the Rwanda case, while acknowledging that no one could know "the swiftness, scale, thoroughness and unique character of the genocide" that eventually transpired, "those with the capacity to prevent and mitigate the genocide [did] have the information upon which such a conclusion could be drawn."

Many knew that organized extremist forces existed. Increasingly, the latter even gave public proof of their existence by words and deeds. A pattern of violence was discernible, and the state apparatus itself was implicated in arms distributions to paramilitary groups and extremist propaganda advocating the need to rid Rwanda of all Tutsis and their supporters. By early 1994, specific information about plans and conspiracies towards this end was picked up. . . (Adelman and Suhrke 1996: 54)

The analytic problem, however, has been more difficult to overcome. One reason is that the "signals" in all of these cases had to compete with quite a bit of "noise" from concomitant and louder international events: Somalis were being killed and were starving in large numbers in late 1990–early 1991, but attention was riveted on Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait; at the same time that Yugoslavia was breaking up in mid-1991, so too was the Soviet Union; the reverberation of the October 1993 failed operation in Mogadishu drowned out most else, especially another African ethnic conflict in Rwanda.

Even more inherent are some basic cognitive and bureaucratic dispositions that impede early warning analysis. George and Holl (1995: 5–8) cite basic psychological research that shows that the detection of a signal is not just a function of its strength relative to "background noise" but also the baseline receptivity, which is a function of "the expectations of observers called upon to evaluate such signals" and "the rewards and costs associated with recognizing and correctly appraising the signal." Given the strong tendency of policy makers to put off hard choices as long as possible, the cognitive dynamics are to be less receptive to information that if taken seriously would require "new decisions of a difficult or unpalatable character. . . . *Taking available warning seriously always carries the 'penalty' of deciding what to do about it*" (emphasis in original; for a different case but a similar problem, see Jentleson 1994).

The same disposition and disincentives detrimentally affect bureaucratic behavior. The intelligence analyst who would push early warning risks the career-endangering "shoot the messenger" penalties of being blamed for the bad news he or she brings even if it is accurate. And, if inaccurate, the "cry wolf" label may follow, an appellation that damages professional reputation and also can bring its share of personal disdain among colleagues. For foreign service officers, the bureaucratic dis-incentives are arguably even greater. One veteran ambassador offered the following assessment of the "habitual behavior" and "mind-sets" of the career Foreign Service:

The habits of planning ahead, of taking strategic diplomacy beyond the issues of the week, are not deeply ingrained. Preventive diplomacy requires the ability to sniff trouble in its early stages and then take steps to avoid it. This does not happen routinely or predictably.

With this in mind, this same ambassador worked to add to the standard letter of instructions from the president to newly assigned chiefs of mission a statement that

achieving these goals. . . will require us to practice preventive diplomacy, to anticipate threats to our interests before they become crises and drain our human and material resources in wasteful ways.

The intent was at least to create the expectation that ambassadors and their staffs should be providing early warning and "thinking and acting in terms of preventive diplomacy" (Grove 1994). Of course, a mere sentence in an instruction letter is not nearly enough to change habitual behavior and mind-sets. But in a sense that is the point.

Humanitarian relief and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also can play important early-warning roles. "The hallmark of NGOs," Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss write (1995: 49), "is their activity at the grass-roots level. . . working on the front lines to provide humanitarian assistance and protection." Thus, by both location and activity, NGOs often are the first external actors to become aware of conflicts in their early stages. Moreover, the reputation for non-partisanship and even apoliticalness that most have earned gives any information they provide and warnings they sound substantial credibility.

Political Will

Even if early warning is achievable, there remains the problem of mustering the political will necessary to act. While the essence of the strategic logic of preventive diplomacy is to act early before the problem becomes a crisis, it often is the same lack of a sense of crisis that makes it more difficult to build the political support necessary for taking early action. In a traditional realist calculus, such situations have had difficulty passing muster both because the immediate tends to push the potential back in priority, and because many contemporary ethnic conflicts involve areas which, as the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia candidly put it, are "not a critical piece of real estate for anybody in the post-Cold War world" (Richburg 1994: A1, 43). Or, as then-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev remarked only semi-facetiously during his last official trip to Washington, "We are going to do a terrible thing to you. . . we're going to take away the enemy." Indeed, the names of the various activist groups today—*Civic*

Action Group, Refugees International, even *Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict*—just don't have the resonance of the old *Committe on the Present Danger*.

It is only partially parochial to say that this problem is particularly bad in post-Cold War American politics. But it is true in two senses. First, while the United States cannot and should not be expected to act unilaterally or even always shoulder the majority of responsibility, U.S. leadership continues to be crucial to concerted multilateral action. In cases like Macedonia, while the CSCE and UNPROFOR were the vehicles, the United States played a key role both in the diplomatic intermediation and in the preventive military deployment, as the statement cited earlier by President Gligorov emphasized. In Bosnia, while there was plenty of responsibility to go around, the corollary to the impact the United States had, once it finally got serious about playing a lead role, is how debilitating its earlier halting policies were. In Rwanda, despite the historically-based lead roles of Belgium and France, Adelman and Suhrke (1996: 61) argue that "by acts of omission the United States ensured that neither an effective national response nor a collective UN effort to mitigate the genocide materialized."

Second, while other countries also have their own problems of pressing domestic agendas and limited resources, in the United States these have to be coped with by a political system which has the structural weaknesses of divided power (Corwin's conception of the basic constitutional design of "an invitation to struggle" between the President and Congress), enhanced by the partisan political division of one party controlling one branch and the other party the other. Indeed, Presidents always have had to prioritize among foreign policy concerns. Those that didn't, like Jimmy Carter, paid a political price. Even a foreign policy president like Richard Nixon knew he also had to have a domestic agenda; this was a lesson that George Bush learned the hard way. And within that part of the agenda that is dedicated to foreign policy, there are only so many times and on so many issues that a president can kick into gear the full Neustadtian effort to mobilize political support for any sort of substantial funding or significant action. As to Congress, it has been hard enough to get funding or commitments for issues with immediacy, let alone for prospective problems.

There also is a political will problem for international institutions. While the United Nations has institutional weaknesses which are its own fault and responsibility, it is also unfairly blamed for inaction and indecisiveness for which the lack of will really resides with its members. The UN authorities in charge of UNPROFOR deserve much of the criticism they received for how they managed the peacekeeping mission, but the exceedingly limited mandate UNPROFOR was given from the start was the doing largely of all the UN Security Council's five permanent members. Similarly, in Rwanda one of UNAMIR's problems all along was the refusal of the major powers to provide sufficient financing or mandate. And, when the early warning was sounded about another brewing crisis in Burundi in late 1994–early 1995, including a charge by former President Jimmy Carter that the willingness to send troops to Bosnia while doing very little in Burundi was racist, the most the Security Council mustered was a resolution for more contingency plans. Nor is this only true of the Security Council.

Thus the limits on political will have been a major constraint on preventive diplomacy. The question, though, is whether this has to be accepted as strictly fixed, or could be malleable. Even taking this as an analytic question and not a normative judgment, there is reason to question whether the basic political calculus of how leaders can lower risks and avoid costs while still satisfying their interests necessarily or even most often is best served by inaction or deferred action. Conventional wisdom is: When interests are not compelling, why bother to run risks unless you absolutely have to? Better to wait as long as you can to see if the conflict will be otherwise resolved or contained. Such thinking, however, is grounded in the assumption that there are no costs or risks to waiting, whereas, as has happened repeatedly, the costs and risks may *increase* over time. Involvement thus may prove to be unavoidable, and if it does one risks ending up with fewer and less attractive options—to play on John Foster Dulles' famous dictum, having to get involved at a time and place not of one's own choosing. We return to this point later.

Fair-but-Firm Strategy

James Fearon poses the problem of ethnic conflict resolution and management as a "commitment problem that arises when two groups find themselves without a third party that can credibly guarantee agreements between them" (Lake and Rothchild, forthcoming). Both because of the questions as just discussed about the extent to which their interests are at stake and because of the constraints of the norm of sovereignty as is next discussed, it is unquestionably difficult for international actors to play that third-party role. But we again come back to the difficult-yet-possible formulation. "It may be that the Western powers and relevant international organizations can do little to prevent this from happening," Fearon concludes with

particular reference to ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet Union, "but it surely makes sense to try" (Ibid).

How, then, can international actors make their intentions and actions sufficiently credible in the eyes of the ethnic parties to solve the problem of the lack of credibility of those parties' own agreements? It surely is not enough, as Stedman pointedly argues, to succumb to "the urge. . . to do something, anything." (1995: 17) Not only may such policies fail to achieve their objectives, but they run the "quagmire risk" of incurring costs and setbacks far more burdensome and damaging than if nothing had been done, as well as the "syndrome risk" of a paralysis carrying over to future situations, including some in which early action may actually have worked.

There of course cannot be a standard preventive diplomacy strategy any more than there could be a single strategy for deterrence or crisis management or any other area of foreign policy. But the guiding requisites should be along the lines of what I term a *fair-but-firm strategy*.

There is no doubt that the parties to the conflict must have confidence in the fairness of international third parties, with fairness defined as a fundamental commitment to peaceful and just resolution of the conflict, rather than partisanship for or sponsorship of one or the other party to the conflict. This is key to overcoming the commitment problem Fearon writes on, of both sides having confidence that the international third parties will be even-handed in acting as guarantor of agreements they reach themselves and facilitator of agreements they are unable to reach on their own. Any promises made, rewards offered, or assurances given must be believable and stay as such. This requires a level of diplomatic skill in both the choosing and packaging of a particular diplomatic strategy and in the actual implementation of that strategy that too often is unappreciated. As to the particulars, some situations may be best served by straight-out third-party mediation; others might require pre-negotiations; others low-level conflict resolution techniques or "track-two diplomacy." Lake and Rothchild summarize some of the confidence-building measures that may be helpful in this regard, and William Zartman in his chapter in that volume compares the relative merits of different internal power sharing and political constitutive formulas.

But my conception of fairness is not necessarily to be equated with impartiality, if the latter is defined as strict neutrality even if one side engages in gross and wanton acts of violence or other violations of efforts to prevent the intensification or spread of the conflict. This was one of the problems in both Bosnia and Somalia. Impartiality is relatively straightforward in genuinely humanitarian situations, as in the April 1991 military assistance mission sent to Bangladesh following a devastating cyclone that killed 139,000 people and wreaked $2 billion worth of damage. So too in genuine peacekeeping situations, meaning those in which the parties have reached agreement such that there is a peace to be kept and all parties need to feel reassured that they will not be disadvantaged if they abide by the peace. But when the parties are still in conflict, what does it mean to be impartial? To apply the same strictures to both sides, even if these leave one side with major military advantages over the other? To not coerce either side, irrespective of which one is doing more killing, seizing more territory, committing more war crimes? It is a "delusion" to think, as Richard Betts (1994) has put it, that in such situations impartiality should be the standard.

Fairness and firmness thus go together quite symmetrically. The parties to the conflict must know both that cooperation has its benefits and that those benefits will be fully equitable, and that noncooperation has its consequences and that the international parties are prepared to enforce those consequences differentially as warranted by who does and does not do what. Accordingly, while the preference may be to avoid having to use military force, economic sanctions, or other coercive measures, the firmness of credible coercive threats needs to be projected more often and more quickly than has tended to be the case thus far. Going back to the analytic point made earlier of the purposive nature of ethnic conflicts, at least the credible threat of such coercive measures often needs to be posed so that the parties to the conflict have disincentives for pursuing their goals through their own military or other coercive means. At the most basic level, leaders such as Aideed in Somalia or Milosevic and Karadzic in the former Yugoslavia "decided on civil war because they thought they could prevail militarily and that the international community was powerless to stop them," yet "if they had faced an early international willingness to use military force, then their calculations might have been different (Stedman 1995: 18)." To the extent that the parties to a conflict cannot achieve their objectives at acceptable costs, preventive diplomacy is strengthened.

Just how to convey or impose such costs will vary, and different situations must be analyzed to ensure that threats or preventive military deployments will be deterrents and not exacerbants. But in some form and to some degree a credible coercive component is no less an essential requisite than the political–diplomatic components of a preventive diplomacy strategy.

The Sovereignty Norm: Its Sanctity versus Competing Interests and Principles

Because ethnic conflicts tend to be in whole or in part intra-state, preventive diplomacy in such cases has the added difficulty of the constraint of the intervention-limiting norm of sovereignty. Traditionally, for the 300-plus years of the Westphalian system, the central organizing principle of international relations has been the supremacy of the nation-state. "No agency exists above the individual states," write Robert Art and Robert Jervis (1992: 2), "with authority and power to make laws and settle disputes." John Ruggie (1988: 143) attributes the essence of sovereignty to "the institutionalization of public authority within mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains." If there is no authority above the individual state and each state has its own jurisdictional exclusivity, there can be no legitimate basis for some other actor, whether another state or an international institution, to seek to insert itself in the domestic affairs of that state. Indeed, as Jack Donnelly observes, "the term 'intervention' usually implies illegality" (1992: 307).

Yet such strict notions of the sanctity of state sovereignty have been in tension with norms and values of humanitarianism and the place of the individual as the "right- and duty-bearing unit" in international society. This is the basis for and the purpose of the Genocide Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other affirmations of the inalienability of basic human rights whether the offender is a foreign invader or one's own government. This tension of competing norms can be traced back to the earliest debates over just and unjust wars (Walzer 1977). It also is quite apparent in the United Nations Charter. On the one hand, for example, Article 2 (7) states that "nothing con-tained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state." On the other hand Article 3 affirms that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person;" Article 55 commits the UN to "promote. . . universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms;" and Article 56 pledges all members "to take joint and separate action" toward this end.

Stephen Krasner (1995, 1993) rightly points out that the Westphalia system really never has been that inviolate; that there have been numerous breaches of the sovereignty norm by great powers and other international actors in century after century. Surely, there were plenty of violations of sovereignty during the Cold War era. The difference, though, was that these were done more as manifestations of power politics than with much of a serious claim to principle.

Khrushchev's January 1961 "wars of national liberation" speech was dressed up in claims of the justice and legitimacy of international socialist action to free downtrodden peoples from neo-colonialist domination, but, in practice, from the Warsaw Pact to Afghanistan, the Soviets showed little genuine regard for the sovereignty principle. As to the United States, whether it was the cases when it didn't intervene (e.g., Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968) or when it did (Vietnam, Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, Lebanon 1958, Grenada 1983), the driving dynamic was *realpolitik* with claims of principle one way or the other more cover than cause. Indeed, the essence of the controversy surrounding the Reagan Doctrine in the 1980s was its claim that there could be no higher calling than to rid the world of Marxist–Leninist regimes, a claim that caused concern even among the Western allies because, as Robert Tucker (1985: 13) wrote, it risked "subordinate[ing] the traditional bases of international order to a particular vision of legitimacy." It is telling in this regard that on Afghanistan, where the Soviets were the sovereignty violator, the United States had strong support at the United Nations, winning General Assembly approval of condemnatory resolution by wide margins year after year, but on Nicaragua, where the United States was seen as the sovereignty violator, it was American policy that was the subject of repeated condemnatory resolutions.

Thus, for the most part during the Cold War, the international community could maintain some claim to abiding by the principle of the sanctity of sovereignty even if the major powers acted differently. But in recent years this somewhat convenient partial fiction has become much harder to sustain. The UN Security Council resolutions against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait fell within the traditional rubric—against the sovereignty violator—but UNSC 688, passed in April 1991, authorizing the extended and sustained military intervention of Operation Provide Comfort to protect the Iraqi Kurds within the boundaries of Iraqi sovereignty, marked a substantial departure. Indeed, the creation of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) and authorization of its unprecedented intrusive powers to ensure the disarming of Saddam's nonconventional weapons capability went even further in establishing that, at least in this case, there *was* an "agency above the individual state," that these were not always strictly "mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains."

It is telling that three members of the Security Council voted against UNSC 688 (Cuba, Yemen, Zimbabwe) and two abstained (China, India). The main reason was the concern about precedents that sovereignty wasn't so sacrosanct, which, for regimes as

repressive as many of these, could have repercussions. There have been other cases, such as Haiti, in which the UNSC also authorized interventions. On the other hand, when the Nigerian government murdered human-rights leaders in the fall of 1995, the sovereignty-impinging precedent-setting specter undermined effective UN action. And, even more to the point, one of the fundamental problems all along with UNPROFOR was that its mission was circumscribed by a strict sovereignty non-violating definition of humanitarian relief, and indeed its very capacity to operate was predicated on the permission of the successor republic governments.

John Steinbruner has been among those making the strongest case for the stake of the international community in "legal order" and the justification therefore to "impose these standards on all sovereign entities: states forfeit sovereignty if they do not or cannot execute these basic legal standards" (Wehling 1995: 8). Nicholas Onuf (1995) writes of "intervention for the common good," and Thomas Weiss and Jarat Chopra (1995) argue for "a qualitative shift from 'material interdependence' to 'moral interdependence'." Gene Lyons and Michael Mastanduno (1995: 250–265) conclude that the constraint of state sovereignty on humanitarian and other international involvements in internal affairs has been lessening, but still remains a significant force, leading them to answer the question of whether we are moving "beyond Westphalia" with a question mark.

International Institutions: Stronger But Still Not Strong Enough

Unfortunately, much of the discussion in both academic and political circles on international institutions doesn't make it past intellectual and political straw men. We need to get beyond paradigmatically debating whether or not international institutions matter, and get more focused on middle-level theorizing about when, how, and why they do and don't. Similarly, the UN is far more competent than is portrayed in the railings of conservative isolationists, but not nearly so capable as to play the pre-eminent role Boutros-Ghali sought to lay claim to in the *Agenda for Peace*. A more balanced and more accurate view is that international institutions such as the UN and also the major regional multilateral organizations (RMOs) have become stronger and more capable but still are not as strong or as capable as needed to prevent the spread and reduce the occurrence of mass violent ethnic conflicts.

The UN brings two great strengths to preventive diplomacy. One is its unique legitimacy as authorizer of actions in the name of the international community. That always has been its *raison d'etre*, and the problems noted above notwithstanding, is crucial to efforts to strike a better balance between the rights and responsibilities of nation-state sovereignty. Second is its network of agencies that provide it with significant institutional capacity to help cope with refugee flows, help relieve starvation and perform other humanitarian tasks. These UN agencies often work closely with NGOs, although there is extensive debate over how close this relationship should be in different situations. Minear and Weiss contend that when the goal is creating "humanitarian space," NGOs still benefit from UN funding but often can carry out the activities better on their own because their unofficial status allows them to be "more flexible and creative, and less constrained by the formalities of law" (1995: 38–45, 49).

Perhaps the area in which the limits on UN capacity have become most evident in recent years, and in which little is likely to change, is in peace operations in situations other than traditional peacekeeping. The kinds of operations at which the UN is most effective— indeed, for which it won the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize— are those in which UN forces are brought in after the parties agree to the terms of a peace, with the mission of keeping that peace. Most of its recent failures have been in situations which in reality were more about peace*making*—even a Nobel laureate method will not succeed when applied to purposes as fundamentally different as is peacemaking from peacekeeping.

Shashi Tharoor (1996), the second-ranking UN official for peacekeeping, is realistic enough to identify a set of eight challenges that must be met, but less so in his optimism that the UN can meet them. When one looks at some of these challenges, there is genuine question as to whether some are inherently insurmountable given the constitutive nature of the United Nations. The "challenge of command," for example, takes us back to the issue of the Military Staff Committee and whether standing UN peace operations forces ever will be created. This surely is incompatible with prevailing political views in the United States. And, politics aside, there are real questions about command and control, logistics, training, and other aspects of building a force that would be sufficiently effective not only to be able to successfully carry out preventive military deployments but, more importantly, which by its very existence could help deter ethnic parties from turning to violence. Similarly with "the challenge of choice." The issue Tharoor raises is how to choose among the various conflicts around the globe for which a case for preventive diplomacy can be made. To this I would add that whatever choices are made need to be made decisively and concerns about the UN's capacity to act in such a concerted and expeditious manner, even at the Security Council level.

Similar balance is needed in assessing the potential of the RMOs. The leading example is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The CSCE-to-OSCE name change reflects the efforts being made, as a former U.S. ambassador put it, to move from a "set of principles" as embodied in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act to "an operational organization." A key motivation has been the increased sense of a link between regional security and the peaceful resolution of ethnic and other internal conflicts. These interlinkages were a major theme of the November 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe. "We are convinced," one provision reads, "that in order to strengthen peace and security among our states, the advancement of democracy, and respect for and effective exercise of human rights, are indispensable." And other parts of the Paris Charter make similar points:

> We affirm that the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of national minorities will be protected and that persons belonging to national minorities have the right freely to express, preserve, and develop that identity without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.

> We undertake to seek new forms of cooperation. . . in particular a range of methods for the peaceful settle-ment of disputes, including mandatory third-party involvement.

> We will cooperate to strengthen democratic institutions and to promote the application of the rule of law.

Building on the Paris Charter, the CSCE/OSCE has established some preventive diplomacy capabilities, for example, creation of a High Commissioner on National Minorities; establishment and deployment of its "missions of short and long duration" in a number of East and Central Europe and former Soviet Union countries to provide early warning and possibly a degree of deterrence through their monitoring; some limited successes in Estonia, Moldova, and Hungary-Romania, as well as to an extent elsewhere. But other efforts have been disappointing. For example, while courts of conciliation and arbitration were established by agreement at the December 1992 Stockholm summit, the one is authorized only to issue advisory opinions, and, while the other can issue binding judgments, membership is optional, ". . . even those who join can place some limits on the court's jurisdiction," and then "only in exceptional cases will punitive actions be taken against recalcitrant states" (Walker 1993: 113–114).

Operationally, the CSCE preventive diplomacy missions have been handicapped by lack of staff continuity (e.g., two-month stints) and by overall limits on the sizes of missions host/target governments are willing to accept (Shorr 1993). And, most

fundamentally, there remains the problem of "enforceable norms" (Chipman 1993: 153). It is not quite like Stalin's apocryphal statement about the Pope, but it also is not totally different. There is value and importance to affirmation of norms of peaceful resolution of conflicts, democratic governance, and minority rights, but there are also inevitably situations in which affirmation is not enough and enforcement is necessary. Abram and Antonia Handler Chayes thus conclude that the OSCE can have the most success "in relatively low-level situations (1996: 10)."

Some developments with the OAU and the OAS do mark a departure from their traditional sovereignty sanctity upholdings, but go even less far than the OSCE. Partly directed against the military coup in Haiti, but also consciously with more general applicability, the OAS approved the June 1991 "Santiago Resolution." It is replete with qualifiers about "due respect for the principle of nonintervention," but it does delineate as grounds for OAS interventionary action "the sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process or of the legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected government in any of the Organization's member states."

With reference to Haiti this was more corrective than preventive, but there was an intent to establish the threat of collective action as a preventive deterrent against future Haitis. What is particularly interesting is that whereas in the past most OAS members were reluctant to establish such principles and precedents for fear that the United States could use them as an interventionary blank check, now that most members are democracies there is a sense of a common interest *vis-à-vis* their own militaries or other potential domestic enemies in giving some legitimacy to regional multilateral intervention to protect democracy. This marked a significant shift in the self-interest assessment of governments which, while still qualified and cautious, did hold possibilities for further shifts legitimizing regional preventive diplomacy.

In the OAU case an important reference point is the June 1993 creation of a "Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution." The undeniability of regional security consequences of conflicts traditionally considered domestic has, as Edmond Keller points out, "encouraged African leaders to seriously reconsider the norms of external intervention for the purpose of settling domestic disputes" (Lake and Rothchild, forthcoming). The OAU resolution still has significant qualifiers about "non-interference in the internal affairs of States," "the respect of sovereignty" and functioning "on the basis of consent and the cooperation of the parties to a conflict." Nevertheless, in relative terms there is some sense here

as well of strengthening the regional multilateral organization in recognition of common regional interests in seeking to prevent conflicts which threaten regional security irrespective of their original venue.

In sum, international institutions have yet to fully measure up to the requisites for effective preventive diplomacy. Yet they have accomplished enough to dispel the low esteem and highly pessimistic prognosis of their potential held by some. Moreover, given that ethnic conflicts are so much more regionally rooted than globally transmitted, a role for the OSCE and other regional multilaterals in overall preventive diplomacy efforts is crucial.

Conclusion: Possible, Difficult . . . Necessary

It is always easiest if either a foreign policy strategy that is difficult is not all that necessary, or if one that is necessary is not all that difficult. Preventive diplomacy, however, is both difficult and necessary.

In using the term necessary, I do not mean anywhere and everywhere. But I do mean more places and more often than tends to be acknowledged in the prevailing preference for acting late, if at all.

There are three bases for this claim. The first goes back to the questions raised earlier about the validity of the common assumption by major outside powers like the United States that their interests are better served by waiting to see if the conflict will subside, not spread, or otherwise self-contain. If it were the case that the fires of ethnic conflicts, however intense, would just burn upon themselves, and not have significant potential to spread regionally or destabilize more systematically, then in strict realist terms one could argue that major powers could afford to just let them be. The Bosnia experience, though, particularly belies the realism of this assumption. Moreover, as Lake and Rothchild and other authors in their volume delineate in their articles, there is substantial analytic and theoretical basis for concluding that Bosnia is not an exception, and that the risks of both diffusion and escalation of ethnic conflicts are quite substantial. There may be direct contagion through the actual physical movement of people and weapons, and/or demonstration effects (Kuran), and/or other modes of diffusion. There also may be the horizontal escalation of drawing in outside powers, even if not as direct combatants, which can have damaging effects on their overall relations and thus reverberate through the international system. This is why the UN and regional multilateral organizations have been increasing emphasis on regional security both in an absolute sense and also relative to the

humanitarian rationale as the basis for sovereignty-abridging intermediations and interventions.

Second, the realistic question thus often is not, "involvement yes or no?," but "when and how?" And here policy-makers need to take more seriously the Rubicon problem: as difficult as preventive diplomacy is, the onset of mass violence transforms the nature of the conflict in ways that make resolution and even limitation more difficult. Much has been written on the question of "ripeness": the problem that parties to a conflict simply may not have reached a point where they are willing to reach an agreement, even under substantial international pressures (Zartman 1989, Haass 1990). But, on the other hand, there is the potentially countering process of "rotting": that situations may deteriorate with the passing of more time, grow worse, become too far gone (Jentleson 1991). William Zartman, for example, observes from a wide range of cases of ethnic and other internal conflicts that autonomy and other compromise formulas for internal political order become less viable once "the conflict has built such a record or wrongs and hatreds that living together is no longer possible" (Lake and Rothchild, forthcoming). Stedman, too, along with his "alchemy" criticism, acknowledges that had there been an "early international willingness" to act with military force or in some other concerted manner, conflicts like the former Yugoslavia and Somalia might have followed less violent paths (1995: 17).

The Bosnia conflict never was going to be easy, but after all the killings, the rapes, the war crimes; with over a million people displaced internally and tens of thousands of other refugees outside the country; the economy shattered and in need of reconstruction in virtually every sector; and interethnic bonds balkanized not only at the broader societal level, but also within the microcosm of intermarried families—the task is vastly harder. Or, in Rwanda, as the question was posed rhetorically but tellingly in a UNHCR report,

> what might have happened in Rwanda if the estimated $2 billion spent on refugee relief during the first two weeks of the emergency (and more since) had been devoted to keeping the peace, protecting human rights and promoting development in the period which preceded the exodus? (*Washington Post* 1995)

Finally, there is fundamental humanitarian concern. The previous points are to establish that preventive diplomacy has a pragmatic basis as well as a humanitarian one. But let us not go so far as to state or even imply that humanitarianism in itself does not impel a certain necessity.

One of the persistent frustrations of realists has been that American foreign policy never has been

strictly a matter of "interests defined as power," in the classic Morgenthauian formulation. Indeed, just a few years after laying out this and other aspects of realism in *Politics among Nations,* Morgenthau felt compelled to write another book, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy,* lambasting American statesmen for not acting in this manner and instead being "guided by moral abstractions without consideration of the national interest." Yet in the most fundamental sense "the distinction between interests and values," as Stanley Hoffmann argues (1996: 172; see also 1995–96), "is largely fallacious. . . a great power has an 'interest' in world order that goes beyond strict national security concerns and its definition of world order is largely shaped by its values." To this should be added Joseph Nye's conception of "soft power" (1990), by which as a pragmatic and indeed quite realist calculus the values and ideals for which the United States stands are not just virtuous, but also a source of international influence.

Moreover, it is worth pondering whether in such a globalist age we want to become a people that does not feel a moral imperative to seek to prevent genocide and other mass violence and destruction just because it may be on a geopolitically unimportant piece of real estate. Again, this is both a moral question and a pragmatic one—as a "second image reversed" reverberation of how such hardening may affect domestic inter-societal relations. With ideas like these at stake, the search for effective preventive diplomacy strategies needs to continue.

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