Lesson Report

Conflict Prevention

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, right, Oregon, speaks with Larry André, U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti, and his wife Ouroukou Younoussi André during a visit to the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, March 26, 2018. Merkley visited with service members at Camp Lemonnier before continuing his trip to other locations in East Africa. As a member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Merkley's visit focused on the critical role that U.S. assistance plays as he examined famine-like conditions, severe food shortages, internally displaced persons and refugees in each location and how these factors affect counter-terrorism efforts within the CTJF-HOA area of responsibility. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Moore)

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Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Conflict Prevention Lessons Learned Report uses a unique organizational approach. Rather than a conventional chronological or topical style, we've opted to present a lead lesson based on a study by the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) entitled "Preventing Extremism in Fragile States: A New Approach." Supported by the analysis and recommendations presented in the study, a bipartisan group of Congress members recently introduced the Global Fragility Act of 2019 bill that requires the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Defense to coordinate on a global initiative aimed at stabilizing conflict affected areas and preventing the violence and fragility that allow terrorists, criminal networks, and war lords to take hold in the first place. It provides for Congressionally-mandated funding and executive branch organization to prevent conflict in much the same way 1986's Goldwater-Nichols Act helped the Department of Defense focus its Joint warfighting capability. Thirty-three years after Goldwater-Nichols, the U.S. arguably possesses the most integrated, powerful military force in the world. The Global Fragility Act similarly promises to provide Congressional and Executive Branch support for a holistic approach based on the principle of unity of effort to stopping terrorist conflict before it even starts.

This bill is in the first stage of the legislative process. It was introduced into Congress on March 7, 2019. It will typically be considered by committee next before it is possibly sent on to the House or Senate as a whole. [1]

In the near term, the U.S. government's Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR) serves as the framework for diplomatic, development and defense operations in conflict, post-conflict and fragile states – the 3D Approach. The SAR centers on the roles, functions and various lines of effort the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and U.S. Department of Defense will take up in stabilization efforts. According to the SAR, "Stabilization is a critical part of how the United States seeks to address conflict-affected states, as part of a spectrum that also includes both conflict prevention and longer term peacebuilding and reconciliation." (p. 1)

"The most critical issue the SAR addresses is cultural, and not between the Americans and the foreigners encountered in conflict zones. The three main stabilization actors – State, Defense, and USAID – bring unique expertise as well as different world views and expectations to the stabilization mission. The SAR directs the agencies to modify their processes: State and USAID have always taken the long view of stabilization; Defense, on the other hand, moves quickly, but its short-term operational goals may not directly contribute to the broader political mission. Each needs to change its operational outlook and synchronize its efforts. [2]

Inspired by the SAR, "the Department of Defense (DoD) has asked Congress for $25 million to establish a post-conflict stabilization assistance fund, and a Defense Support to Stabilization (DSS) program and program office at the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). The DSS program office will provide guidance for designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating DoD's post-conflict stabilization activities." [3]

These efforts are supported by policy set forth in Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, Stabilization "To the extent authorized by law, DoD will plan and conduct stabilization in support of mission

partners across the range of military operations in order to counter subversion; prevent and mitigate conflict; and consolidate military gains to achieve strategic success. (p. 4)

This lead lesson, along with the nine others presented in the Report, reflect current doctrine. United States Joint Publication JP 3-07.3, Peace Operations (1 March 2018) defines conflict prevention as "diplomatic and other actions to prevent interstate or intra-state tensions from becoming violent." (ix) Further, it "is the employment of complementary diplomatic, civil, and, when necessary, military means to monitor and identify the causes of conflict and take timely action to prevent the occurrence, escalation, or resumption of hostilities." (xiii) "Designated conflict prevention efforts can include fact-finding missions, consultations, warnings, inspections, and monitoring. It is also an implied task for many peacekeeping missions and other post-conflict operations." (II-13) "Supporting military activities may be intended to build situational understanding, deter potential belligerents, or strengthen capacities that enhance stability. These activities will generally fall within the following categories: early warning, surveillance, training associated with Security Sector Reform (SSR), preventative deployment, and enforcement of sanctions and embargoes." (p. I-9)

"Many stability activities support conflict prevention, as they help address the root causes of conflict. The establishment of a safe and secure environment, with the presence of capable and legitimate security forces, can prevent conflict. Other security activities that support the delivery of essential services, ensure good governance and the rule of law, and foster social well-being and economic growth can reduce grievances that might lead to conflict. Military forces support conflict prevention through shaping activities, serving as a deterrence force, and through combat operations. Security Cooperation (SC) activities can improve the credibility of Host Nation (HN) security forces. Stability activities (as discussed above) can help reduce drivers of conflict. Monitoring activities can provide early warning of potential conflict which, in turn, can permit diplomatic remedies. Military presence, including preventive deployments and shows of force, can deter would-be belligerents. (II-13 – II-14)

Importantly, "Peace operations support the promotion of women's roles in conflict prevention; improve conflict early-warning and response systems through the integration of gender perspectives; and assist efforts to invest in women's and girls' health, education, and economic opportunity to create conditions for stable societies and lasting peace." (II-23)

In addition to the lead lesson, this Report provides lessons from a broad spectrum of conflict prevention concepts and activities. The second section highlights strategic policy approaches to the topic. Third, the document looks at practical approaches to conflict prevention. Finally, the document provides an annex of additional references covering Conflict Prevention beyond those provided in the lessons.

2. LEAD LESSON – CONFLICT PREVENTION

[Preventing Extremism in Fragile States: A New Approach](#)
([Lesson #2719](#))

Observation:

Since September 11, 2001, the United States has prevented another terrorist attack on the homeland. American diplomats and development professionals have also dedicated great effort to improving conditions in the dangerous places that give rise to terrorism. Yet challenges remain. Tactical and operational success in defeating terrorists has not been translated into strategic success by ending the spread of terrorism. This lesson is recommendation-heavy because it is based on a foundational [research document](#) produced by the U.S. Institute of Peace for [U.S. Congressional legislation](#) addressing extremism prevention in fragile states.

Discussion:

The current U.S. counterterrorism strategy is necessary, but neither sufficient nor cost-effective. A new strategy of prevention must also be pursued because terrorism continues to spread. Worldwide, annual terrorist attacks have increased fivefold since 2001. The number of self-professed Salafi-jihadist fighters has more than tripled and they are now present in nineteen countries in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Near East. A new strategy is necessary because the costs of the current anti-terrorism approach are unsustainable. Since 2001, ten thousand Americans have lost their lives and fifty thousand have been wounded fighting this threat, at an estimated cost of $5.9 trillion. [1] A new strategy is necessary because terrorism is not the only threat. Terrorism is a symptom, but extremism—an ideology calling for the imposition of a totalitarian order intent on destroying free societies—is the cause. Extremism both preys on fragile states and contributes to the chaos, conflict, and coercion that kills innocents, drains U.S. resources, forecloses future market opportunities, weakens our allies, and provides openings for our competitors.

The U.S. must not only respond to terrorism but also act to prevent extremism from taking root in the first place. This does not mean seeking to stop all violence or to rebuild all nations in vulnerable regions of the world. Instead, it means recognizing that even modest preventive investments—if they are strategic, coordinated, and well-timed—can reduce the risk that extremists will exploit fragile states. The objective of a preventive approach should be to strengthen societies that are vulnerable to extremism so they can become self-reliant, better able to resist this scourge, and protect their hard-earned economic and security gains. The United States cannot carry this burden alone. The U.S. must lead an effort to catalyze international donors to support extremism prevention.

Many challenges continue to persist. There is still insufficient prioritization, coordination, or agreement on what to do, both within the U.S. government and across the international community. A preventive strategy will not stop every terrorist attack. It will take time to produce results. It will require us to recognize the limits of our influence and work hard to leverage our resources more effectively. The U.S. cannot implement this effort alone. International partners must do their fair share. But it offers our best hope. Neither open-ended military operations, nor indefinite foreign assistance, nor retrenchment, offers a better alternative.

A new, comprehensive strategy for reducing extremism in fragile states can bring coherence to and amplify existing U.S. and international initiatives. Three dynamics point in the right direction. First, the U.S. government has already begun to work toward more unified, interagency approaches to this long-term challenge. Second, bipartisan agreement is emerging in Congress on the need to change how the United States engages in fragile states. Third, new opportunities have arisen for burden sharing and international collaboration.

It is time to build on this progress and adopt a new paradigm for dealing with a threat that has plagued the world and impeded stability and prosperity for far too long. For a preventive strategy to succeed, it will need to outpace attempts by extremist groups to undermine fragile states. The time to put a preventive strategy in place is now.

[1] Neta Crawford, "United States Budgetary Costs of the Past-9/11 Wars Through FY 2019: $5.9 Trillion Spent and Obligated," (Brown University, November 18, 2018).

Recommendations:

1. The report's main recommendation is the U.S. should pursue a new whole-of-government effort focused on developing a joint strategy to prevent the underlying causes of extremism. The three supporting recommendations are: develop a Shared Framework for Strategic Prevention that presents a common understanding of how to prevent violence and extremism; develop a Strategic Prevention Initiative that operationalizes the prevention framework within the U.S. government; and develop a Partner Development Fund that inspires the international community to support locally-led efforts to prevent extremism.

2. The first step is the adoption of a Shared Framework for Strategic Prevention that recognizes that extremism is a political and ideological problem. It should:

a. Identify partnership-building opportunities with interested actors in fragile states who are committed to accountable government as the best approach to preventing extremism.

b. Reflect the emerging consensus that the conditions that enable extremism to spread across fragile states in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Near East are both political and context-specific in nature.

c. Recognize that addressing the political and contextual conditions for extremism will require adaptive programs that empower leaders to strengthen state-society relations and better respond to their citizens' needs. Preventive effort success should be measured by whether national and local leaders are becoming more widely trusted within a given community or society.

d. Establish and follow clear strategic criteria for U.S. engagement in key vulnerable countries. Through even moderate investments in prevention that are strategic and well-timed, the United States can help keep key fragile countries on a path toward sustained stability and development.

e. Recognize that in those countries where the United States choses to prioritize prevention, sustained partnerships will be needed to affect change. More often, however, it will be necessary to seize opportunities for progress as they present themselves while recognizing the risk that U.S. involvement might make the situation in fragile states worse.

3. To operationalize this shared framework, the U.S. Congress should fund and the Executive Branch should implement a comprehensive Strategic Prevention Initiative that:

a. Establishes clear roles and responsibilities for departments and agencies to promote long-term coordination in fragile states

b. Provides agencies with authorities and resources needed to carry out a preventive strategy effectively

c. Develops a plan to mitigate the political risks of providing security and foreign assistance to fragile states

d. Develops five- to ten-year security cooperation and assistance compacts with fragile states, modeled on the Security Governance Initiative

e. Implements a policy of graduated security cooperation and assistance to fragile states that restricts the type of cooperation and assistance programs available to fragile states with poor security sector governance, subject to exemption from senior officials

f. Expands existing efforts to improve the oversight, transparency, accountability, and performance of security sector cooperation and assistance

g. The Strategic Prevention Initiative should specifically include:

(1) Congressional authorization for the State Department to be the overall lead for establishing U.S. foreign policy and advancing diplomatic and political efforts; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to lead the implementation of civilian assistance programs; the Treasury Department to lead U.S. contributions to multilateral entities; and the Department of Defense to support these efforts as needed under a new U.S. prevention strategy. Additional departments, including the Commerce Department, the Department of Justice, and the Development Finance Corporation, should also be assigned clear roles and responsibilities appropriate to their areas of expertise. The Strategic Prevention Initiative should build on existing efforts to improve U.S. engagement with fragile states, including the Stabilization Assistance Review and the State Department/USAID Strategic Prevention Project.

(2) Executive Branch designation of a new Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Prevention to coordinate the policies and activities of agencies. The National Security Council should work with the intelligence community to establish an early warning and risk management system to identify priority prevention countries based on clear criteria and an assessment of both risks and opportunities for engagement.

(3) New Congressional authorities for adaptive funding of prevention efforts in fragile states in exchange for greater accountability to Congress. Congress should authorize the creation of a new account to support sustained, multiyear investments in prevention programs, based on an agreement between Congress and the Executive Branch on specific countries to be prioritized. These authorities should be flexible enough to allow adaptive implementation of programs that are responsive to evolving conditions on the ground. The Executive Branch should closely consult with Congress throughout the program planning, implementation, and evaluation phases concerning challenges and results.

(4) Congressional and Executive Branch empowerment of U.S. diplomats and development practitioners to focus on longer-term prevention goals. Chiefs of mission and USAID Mission Directors need the ability to plan, implement, and modify innovative prevention strategies to local conditions over sufficiently long time horizons.

(5) Congress should work with the Executive Branch to support a strategy for recruiting, training, and retaining personnel with the skills to implement prevention strategies, including expertise in early warning and political economy analysis, provision of technical advice to partner governments, and community-led prevention activities.

(6) The State Department and Congress should coordinate for appropriate funding for programs and capabilities that are critical to addressing the underlying conditions of extremism and violence in fragile states. The United States has often under-resourced capabilities that have proven effective at reinforcing state-society relations.

(7) Congress should require the State and Defense Departments to develop and implement a plan to better align U.S. security cooperation with prevention priorities, and improve security sector governance, in vulnerable countries. Building on the 2018 Quadrennial Security Sector Assistance Review's call to better tailor security assistance in fragile states, the plan should consider:

(a) providing all security sector assistance to fragile states through five- to ten-year compacts based on a joint strategy to improve the country's security sector and subject to oversight from civilian authorities and civil society

(b) restricting the types of security assistance available for fragile states with poor security sector governance, unless exempted by senior officials

(c) establishing a security sector reform endowment to support partner-proposed initiatives to build institutional capacity or undertake reforms

(d) supporting and expanding existing accountability efforts by appropriately funding Defense Department assessment, monitoring, and evaluation programs (AM&E), mandating an AM&E program for State Department–managed security assistance, designating an Assistant Secretary–level official at the Defense Department to oversee the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, and designating a lead office for coordinating all State Department–managed security assistance.

(8) Congress should consider establishing a bipartisan, bicameral prevention Working Group composed of Members serving on relevant authorizing and appropriating committees. Congress has a vital role to play in enabling the adaptive, multiyear, and accountable investments that are necessary to promote prevention. The Working Group could hold joint hearings, draft and cosponsor legislation, and meet to discuss issues relevant to U.S. prevention programming.

4. Preventing extremism is in the best interest of the entire global community. Therefore, the U.S. should establish a Partnership Development Fund, a new international platform for donors and the private sector to pool their resources and coordinate their activities in support of prevention. Congress should authorize, and the State Department and the USAID should lead, a diplomatic effort to establish the Partnership Development Fund.

a. The Fund should support five- to ten-year partnerships to strengthen relations between citizens and the government in fragile states. Programming priorities should be based on local assessments of vulnerabilities in areas such as justice sector reform, community policing, civilian security, and accountable and fair service delivery.

b. The Fund should be structured as a partnership between international donors, fragile states, affected communities in those states, civil society, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. The Fund should optimize public-private partnerships that could facilitate contributions and innovations from foundations and other private actors.

c. The United States should contribute no more than 25 percent of the Fund's overall operating budget. U.S. contributions to the Fund should be contingent on contributions from other major donors, the private sector, and fragile states themselves.

d. An inclusive board or steering committee should be created to oversee the Fund's policy and strategic decisions, including approving funding decisions. The board should consist of representatives from the United States, other donor nations, potential fragile state recipients, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations. USAID's Associate Administrator should represent the U.S. government on the board of the Fund.

e. The Fund should promote international coordination and provide grants for multi-year programs in a small number of key countries where investments in prevention could have a catalytic effect on a region or country early on.

f. The Fund should augment—but not duplicate—the separate prevention-related activities of bilateral donors, UN agencies, and multilateral development banks in fragile states.

g. The Fund should ensure the establishment of recipient country-led boards to allocate grants, and align international assistance with country-specific prevention priorities. These in-country boards should include government ministries, local government leaders, multilateral and bilateral donors, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, vulnerable communities, and private sector actors.

h. The Fund should support programs that focus on strengthening the compact between citizens and the state, ranging from short-term stabilization focused on "quick wins" to programs intended to have more enduring impact.

i. Transparency, learning, and innovation should be high priorities across the Partnership Development Fund process.

5. Principles and priorities for preventing violent extremism in fragile states:

    a. Intervene early

    b. Support country-led solutions

    c. Empower women and youth

    d. Integrate development, diplomacy, and defense within a coherent approach

    e. Promote an efficient international division of labor

    f. Work for quick wins . . . but commit to sustained, realistic timelines

    g. Be flexible and adaptive

    h. Incentivize accountability in countries that are committed to prevention

    i. Prioritize justice and security sector reform

    j. Promote inclusion, transparency, and accountability

    k. Do no harm

    l. Respond to Extremist Ideology

    m. Mitigate Negative Effects of Regional and Great Power Competition

    n. Improve Political and Conflict Analysis

    o. Undertake Adaptive Programs

    p. Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation

    q. Increase U.S. Government Learning and Knowledge Management.

Sources:

1. Primary reference: This lesson is based on the U.S. Institute for Peace's February 2019 document: Preventing Extremism in Fragile States: A New Approach

2. Other reference: Global Fragility Act of 2019.

Lesson Author: Mr. Jack Dougherty, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analyst. Published in SOLLIMS 18 March 2019.

Members of the Coalition and Syrian partner force conduct a patrol through a local village along an established de-confliction zone in support of Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve in the Dayr Az Zawr Province, Syria, Dec. 23, 2018. Coalition Forces remain committed to supporting its partner forces to prevent an ISIS resurgence. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Arjenis Nunez/Released)

3. STRATEGIC POLICY LESSONS

[States of Conflict: Lessons in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding](#)
(Lesson #2717)

Observation:

Despite the death toll and associated costs of lengthy conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other states and regions, there is still a compelling case for policy makers to invest more political and financial capital in both conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Discussion:

While there are reasons for optimism, there are still serious challenges to effectively overcome conflict situations throughout the world. On the positive side, conflict levels have fallen over the past few decades. Three notable developments characterized this drop in the number of conflicts. First, since the end of the Cold War, the number of conflicts coming to an end has begun to outweigh the number of new conflicts starting: a reversal of trends between 1960 and 1990.

Second, the method of conflict termination has changed. While absolute victory by one party or the other was responsible for the majority of conflict terminations in the period 1950–1999, since 2000 there has been a rise in the number of negotiated settlements. Between 2000 and 2005, for example, 17 conflicts were settled through negotiation, and evidence suggests that the negotiated settlements are more durable. Third, the number of reported battle deaths from state-based violent conflict has decreased significantly since the late 1980s, thanks in part to the changing nature of warfare. Conflicts where two or more conventional armies meet on the battlefield have become increasingly rare, replaced by a greater number of low-level insurgencies and rebellions that tend to take place within rather than between states.

Although the conflict patterns described above are encouraging, they mask considerable regional variations. For example, while the number of conflicts in Africa has fallen, the levels of violence in the Middle East and parts of Asia remain high. Another cause for concern is the recent increase in the number of campaigns of one-sided violence, which are defined as the use of armed force against civilians by the government of a state, or by a formally organized group. Governments and international organizations find it extremely difficult to generate both the political will and the legitimate mandates required to intervene in the internal affairs of other states, so an increase in the number of civil conflicts that involve governments perpetrating violence against their own people will likely complicate conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts by international actors. Responding effectively to the serious challenges described above will require international actors to be increasingly strategic and coordinated in the way they approach conflict prevention and peacebuilding. An important step in this process is to gather and build on what has been learned from international involvement in past and present conflicts.

Policymakers now widely accept that efforts to prevent the outbreak of violence are likely to be far more sustainable than attempts to manage and resolve conflict after it has emerged. International

actors have found this principle difficult to put into practice, however. A number of reasons for this can be identified. First, evidence on the value of conflict prevention tends to be anecdotal rather than empirical, that is, making the argument that prevention is more cost-effective than reaction, is more subjective than objective. Second, there is a lack of coverage given to the good examples of conflict prevention that do exist. With some notable exceptions, news reports are more likely to focus on the tragic failure of preventive actions in places like Sudan than on the fine details of how conflict can and has been avoided in places like Macedonia. These problems are compounded by the fact that there are few short-term political incentives to invest in prevention causing one to ask, why spend money on something that may never happen, when there are so many other ongoing conflicts that require attention and resources?

These challenges, however, are not insurmountable. While case studies of Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia do not uncover precise financial savings that could be made over the long term through investing in conflict prevention, but they do suggest a number of lessons and best practices for actors involved in preventive activities.

Recommendations:

Conflict Prevention

1. International actors engaged in conflict prevention should engage early and be prepared to commit to a comprehensive and long-term process. A sustained commitment to conflict prevention does not necessarily imply that huge amounts of money must be spent. Rather, it indicates the need for international actors to work together more strategically to identify the specific skills and resources that each can contribute to the process, and then to divide responsibility accordingly.

2. Inclusive prevention efforts that focus on foundational causes of conflict are most likely to succeed. The best conflict prevention initiatives are those that involve all parties in the dispute resolution process. Actions to prevent conflict should also address the root causes of tension between different ethnic and societal groups, or they are unlikely to have a long-term and positive impact.

3. High-level diplomatic engagement can make a difference. While successful conflict prevention requires hard work on the part of many actors at all levels of society, active engagement by non-partisan senior figures can often have a significant impact on the dynamics of a conflict. Respected senior statesmen can also confer legitimacy on efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation between parties to a conflict. Interventions of this kind will not always be sufficient to stop the emergence of violent conflict on their own, but should certainly be used more frequently as part of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy.

4. Smart power is required for effective conflict prevention. Successful conflict prevention efforts use a shrewd combination of military and non-military tools, to include preventive military deployments. Carefully planned military deployments can help to defuse crisis situations and prevent the emergence of violence when combined with other diplomatic and development tools designed to address the structural causes of conflict.

5. Good coordination between conflict prevention actors is essential. The success or failure of conflict prevention activities rests on whether those involved are focused on attaining the same goals together or working at cross purposes.

Peacebuilding

1. Actors involved in helping states make the transition from conflict to stability must temper their ambitions with a sense of realism. International actors must focus on attainable improvements. While the goal is the creation of sustainable political settlements capable of delivering good governance, peacebuilding is most effective when it focuses on incremental change.

2. Peacebuilding should be based on a good understanding of the situation on the ground and develop capacity that is already present in the country. Peacebuilding should start with what is already present (in terms of people, institutions and infrastructure) and build from there, since the most sustainable peacebuilding efforts are those which are implemented by local actors possessing both a sense of ownership of the process and a stake in its success.

3. Inclusive political settlements are more likely to deliver sustainable peace agreements. International actors involved in peacebuilding should direct their efforts towards supporting inclusive peace settlements and creating new governing structures that address the full range of issues that caused and perpetuated the conflict. If minority concerns are not adequately addressed, this can sow the seeds for further violence in the future.

4. Peacebuilding actors should prioritize the development of strong governance institutions. International actors will often have a more positive and sustainable impact on peacebuilding processes if they focus their efforts on building durable legislative and judicial structures that promote good governance and the rule of law, and which are able to exert clear checks and balances on the power of the executive.

5. International aid should take better account of the specific needs of post-conflict societies. The issue here is one of prioritization and sequencing, since a strong and enforceable legal framework is clearly necessary to create the conditions for economic development in post-conflict societies.

6. There must be a clear plan for international disengagement. The more important lesson here is about how the peacebuilding process is planned. From the outset, external actors should focus on developing a shared vision of what they want to achieve based on support for legitimate local actors. They should closely coordinate action to avoid effort duplication and waste. The parameters of end state success and an exit strategy should be developed before engaging in the peacebuilding process.

Implications:

1. Policymakers would find it easier to make the strategic case for a "responsibility to prevent" if more evidence existed of the efficacy of conflict prevention. Governments should make it a priority to fund independent research that evaluates conflict prevention activities and collects evidence about their cost effectiveness and value for money, as a resource for policymakers and the media.

2. International commitments to prevent deadly conflict need to be better monitored. There should be a drive to create an international reporting framework for monitoring and evaluating the success of conflict prevention activities.

3. High level activism should address potential as well as actual conflicts. A 'conflict prevention network' of high-profile activists should be established with a specific mandate to identify and seek to address tensions that have the potential to erupt into conflict in the short and medium term, and to act as an early warning system for policymakers and the media.

4. Peacebuilding efforts should seek to avoid making the presence of international actors a condition of stability. Governments and other organizations engaged in peacebuilding should constantly monitor the effects their presence may have on the internal dynamics of post-conflict societies, and do what they can to minimize any that might cause harm. They should also ensure that local actors have the capacity and the resources to drive the process of peacebuilding forwards themselves.

Sources:

"States of Conflict: Lessons in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding," by Alex Glennie, Institute for Public Policy Institute, September, 2010.

Lesson Author: Mr. Jack Dougherty, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analyst. Published in SOLLIMS 30 January 2019.

Cost-Effectiveness of Conflict Prevention for High-Risk Countries
(Lesson #2672)

Observation:

A cost-benefit analysis of conflict prevention indicates that financial investment in prevention in high-risk countries would likely save substantial global resources. This analysis is based on an examination of the probabilities of conflict escalation and persistence across different conflict stages, the various losses that occur due to violent conflict, and the donor costs of conflict management.

Discussion:

The United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB) recently published a Joint Flagship Study on conflict prevention, "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict," in an effort to reorient international capabilities towards sustaining peace instead of responding reactively to crises. To understand the financial aspects of this shift, the UN-WB commissioned a study, "How Much is Prevention Worth?," on the cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention.

Since conflict prevention essentially quantifies what will *not* happen and thus cannot directly be measured, determining the cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention relies on the prediction of conflict. For

the purposes of making this calculation, this study identified seven distinct stages of conflict based on an analysis of the history of conflict from 1975 to 2014. These stages include: 1) stable peace, 2) high-risk peace, 3) armed conflict, 4) civil war (first year), 5) other civil war years, 6) recovery year (first year), and 7) other recovery years. Based on the data from 1975-2014, the study compiled a chart of the probabilities that each stage would transition into one of the other stages, as evident below in figure 1 (found on p. 8 of the study).

Figure 1. Summary of States and Transition Likelihoods

|	peace	high-risk peace	armed conflict	transition from first year of civil war	other year of civil war	first year of recovery	2nd to 5th year of recovery
peace	96.04%	15.50%	17.26%	0%	0%	0%	4.33%
high-risk peace	1.55%	73.25%	3.10%	0%	0%	0%	10.58%
armed conflict	2.32%	5.75%	75.44%	0%	0%	0%	4.81%
first year of civil war	0.09%	5.50%	4.20%	0%	0%	17.81%	9.13%
other year of civil war	0%	0%	0%	57.33%	77.20%	0%	0%
first year of recovery	0%	0%	0%	42.67%	22.80%	0%	0%
2nd to 5th year of recovery	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	82.19%	71.15%

(Row label axis: transition to)

After calculating the probabilities of various stages of conflict transitioning to ongoing violence, the study examined the amount of donor money spent during various stages of conflict, using averages of peace-keeping and bilateral aid. As evident by the chart below (also found on p. 13 of the study), aid spending is highest during armed conflict, and most peacekeeping spending takes place during recovery. (On average, at least $1.1 billion would be spent for recovery from civil war, which could increase depending on relapse.) The amount of spending during stable peace and high risk peace, however, is actually quite similar. As such, donor spending increases greatly after violence has erupted, but not during times of warning signs of potential violence. This presents a strategic opportunity for increased investment during high-risk peace, which may block a country's initial descent into the cycle of war. It is very important to prevent entry into the conflict cycle, since "conflict often persists once it has started and, even after it ends, the likelihood of relapse remains relatively high" (Mueller, 2017, p. 5). Since it is very difficult for a country to follow a pathway of peace once violence has entered the equation, in the interests of long-term peace and avoiding cycles of civil war, it is imperative to prevent conflict at this critical juncture, before violence and armed conflict initially emerges. "The key for the savings here is that early interventions prevent countries from entering the conflict cycle, which thereby prevents the much higher costs incurred during the conflict and recovery phases" (Mueller, 2017, p. 20).

In addition to calculating the probabilities of conflict persisting and the donor costs of conflict management, this study also describes the immense amount of damage caused by violence and armed conflict. In additional to battle deaths, damaged infrastructure, and expected numbers of refugees each situation would create, cycles of civil war can also severely damage a country's economic growth for decades to come.

To calculate the cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention based on this data, this study simulated two possible future scenarios – one in which the same probabilities of the past continue on into the future and the other in which conflict prevention measures are taken during high-risk years which reduce escalation. (See Figure 2) Given unknown future variables which may affect conflict prevention effectiveness, the study presented optimistic, neutral, and pessimistic scenarios for conflict prevention, based on variations in intervention effectiveness, cost, and economic growth. For these three scenarios, prevention effectiveness is calculated at 25%, 50%, and 75%. Potential prevention costs present a range of amounts from $100 million, $500 million, to $1 billion. Since the amount of damage that a civil war inflicts on economic growth is one of the major financial tolls of armed conflict, the final variable is mapped based on the degree of economic loss prevented – from -2.5% during civil war, -3.9%, to -5.2%

Figure 2. Donor Spending in the Conflict Cycle
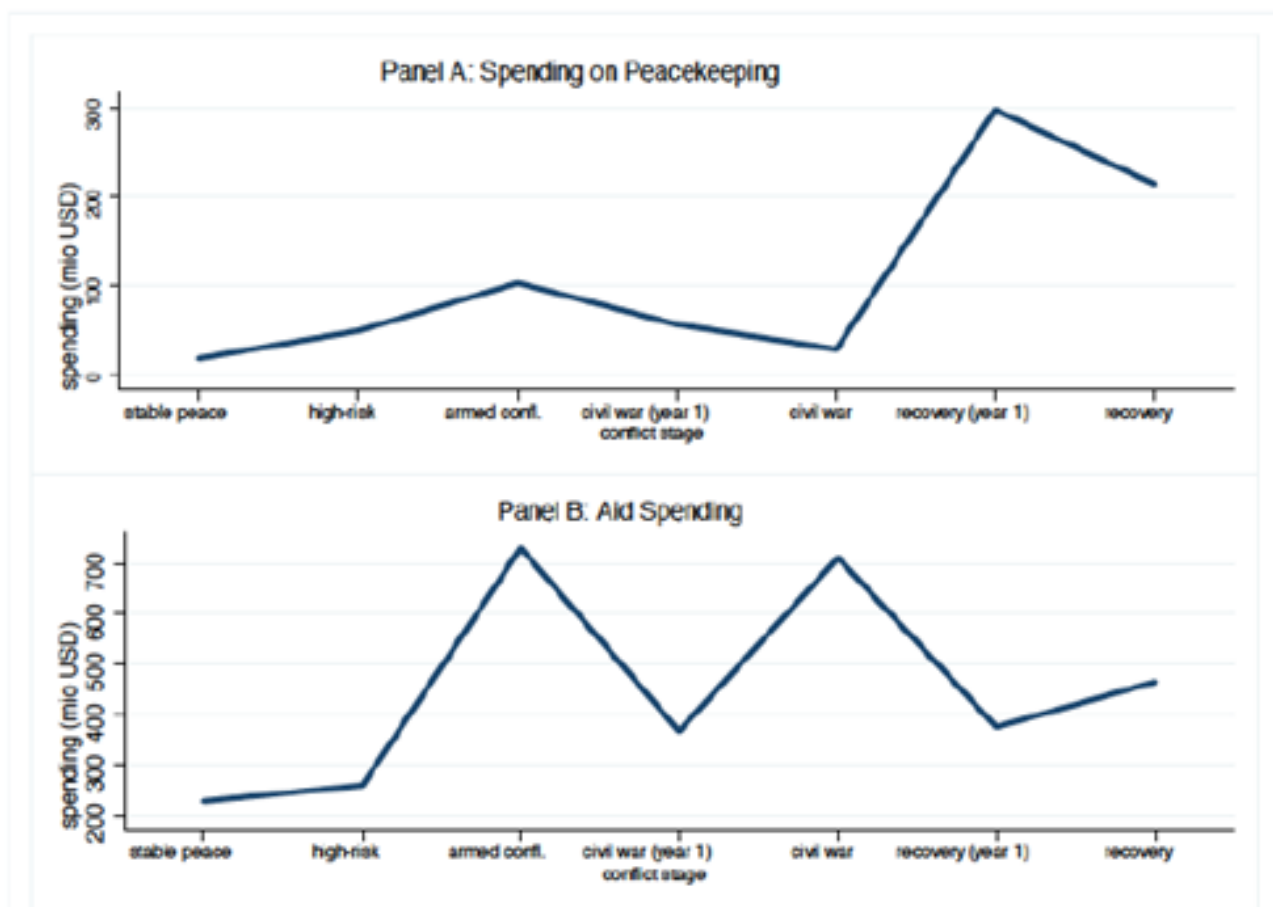
Combining these variables leads to the outcomes of the three scenarios for conflict prevention. In the pessimistic scenario, high intervention costs ($1 billion) are assumed along with low effectiveness (25%) and growth damage (-2.5 percent during civil war). In the neutral scenario, intermediate costs ($500 million) and intermediate effectiveness (50%) are assumed along with medium damage to the growth rate (-3.9%). For the optimistic scenario, low costs ($100 million) are assumed along with high effectiveness (75%) and conflict damage of -5.2%. The study asserts that the neutral scenario is the most likely, with the pessimistic and optimistic scenario presenting the limits of what may be realistic.

In total, according to this simulation, prevented damage and saved costs for each scenario lead to net benefits from $4.8 billion (pessimistic) to $33.3 billion (neutral) to $70 billion (optimistic) per year. ("Prevented damage" includes monetized measurements of death and other damages from war, which cannot truly be captured in financial mechanisms but must be represented in some form to show the costs of conflict. Such devastation includes the expected number of refugees each situation would create.) In this scenario, simulation would suggest that after 15 years, targeted conflict prevention intervention in just a few high-risk countries each year would increase the number of stable/high-risk peace countries by 4.

The risk of investing in countries at high-risk peace is that, using this model, high risk only refers to those situations with an 11% probability of escalating into violence and armed conflict. As such, some of these situations might not escalate even without an intervention in conflict prevention. However, the potential dividends are still high in investing in an environment which has not yet descended into violence, given that preventing the initial eruption of a civil war may well prevent years and repeated cycles of civil war (which prevents not only battle-related deaths but also long-term damage to economic growth, forced displacement, extreme levels of human suffering, disease outbreaks, etc.) This study asserts that the most cost-effective way to finance conflict prevention is to target a few key interventions in high-risk situations and to study these efforts in the interests of more effectively targeting future prevention efforts.

"An important corollary is that inclusive approaches to prevention should recognize and address group grievances early. Violence is highly path-dependent: once it takes hold, incentives and systems begin to reorient themselves in ways that sustain violence. Effective prevention requires acting before grievances harden and the threat of violence narrows the choices available for leaders and elites, understood as groups who hold power or influence in a society" (UN-World Bank, p. xxi).

Recommendations:

1. The global community must shift focus to invest substantially in conflict prevention and not primarily in conflict/crisis response.

2. Donors should strongly consider investing in conflict prevention in high-risk countries where violence has not yet broken out but where warning signs of increased tension are in place. For increased cost-effectiveness, target a few specific inclusive and sustained interventions in these high-risk areas.

3. More research is recommended to analyze prevention already being implemented in high-risk scenarios and to improve precision of conflict forecasts/early warning.

Implications:

With increased investment in conflict prevention, donors will likely need to expend less money on peacekeeping and aid. According to the report on which this lesson is based, "In the first fifteen years, a discounted value of close to $1.2 billion per year can be saved through prevention. After years the yearly savings reach close to $2.5 billion. This implies that under the assumptions of our neutral scenario, prevention would start to pay for itself" (Mueller, 2017, p. 24).

There is some degree of financial risk in investing in high risk countries, because some may not develop into violence/armed conflict even without intervention. However, the possible pay-offs of what might be prevented are statistically significant, as explained above. Prevention involves preventing not only deaths from armed conflicts, but also decades of stunted economic growth, forced displacement, etc.

If donors wait to invest in conflict prevention until violence and armed conflict have erupted, it will be very difficult to scale back the violence. The UN-World Bank joint study on conflict prevention, "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict," would suggest that it is much more difficult to forge a path for peace in societies that are already entrenched in violent patterns than to steer high-risk countries away from beginning a cycle of violence. Once armed conflict has begun, risk of relapse remains high. So, the window of opportunity for conflict prevention is to invest in high risk countries to stop armed conflict from beginning in the first place.

"Put differently, prevention is not about preventing a year of civil war; rather, it is about preventing a future path of repeated episodes of conflict that can last decades" (Mueller, 2017, p. 6).

Sources:

Primary reference: "How Much is Prevention Worth?" H. Mueller, Background Paper [Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict, United Nations – World Bank Joint Flagship Study], (September 2017, copyright 2018).

Secondary reference: United Nations and World Bank. 2018. *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict.* Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1162-3. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

Katrina Gehman, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analysist. Published in SOLLIMS 30 July 2018.

Mambassa, DRC – 24 Aug 2013. Local women attend the inauguration ceremony for a newly built police station. (Photo credit: UN / Sylvain Liechti)

Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect
of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
(Lesson #2718)

Observation:

The benefits of conflict prevention peacekeeping operations (PKO) are severely underestimated because they have only been investigated in their component parts and not holistically. When total effect is considered, the benefits of PKO operations are even greater.

Discussion:

Previous studies of the effectiveness of UN PKOs focused on investigation of component benefits rather than a holistic analysis. These components included the relative intensity of a conflict, the conflict duration, how many times conflict recurred, and the diffusion of conflict across borders. When synergistically analyzed as a whole, UN PKOs are even more effective.

The authors used complex computer modeling to create a holistic, interdependent comparison of PKOs from 1960 to 2013. They evaluated the effect of PKOs and their potential for reducing conflict by estimating the counterfactual global incidence of internal armed conflict under different peacekeeping policies. By simulating different scenarios, we have estimated the effect on the future incidence of conflict of different types of missions and of varying the money spent on PKOs. A set of simulations found that if the UN had invested $200 billion in PKOs with strong mandates, major armed conflict would have been reduced by up to two-thirds relative to a scenario without PKOs. Additionally, 150,000 lives would have been saved over the 13-year period compared to a no-PKO scenario.

Their findings indicate that peacekeeping is much more effective than found in previous studies. For example, the study estimates that at least three additional countries would have been in major conflict in 2013 if the UN had not maintained its PKOs from 2001 onwards. In the short run, PKOs limit violence. In the long run, these less violent conflicts are easier to end conclusively a few years down the road. In a given year, this means that for each conflict that the UN manages to transform from a major conflict to a minor one, another conflict ends.

They conclude that UN peacekeeping policies over the last 15 years have been effective; however, the authors also found that the United Nations could have done considerably better if they were willing to spend more on peacekeeping and provide stronger PKO mandates. The results show that PKOs have a clear conflict-reducing effect. The effect of PKOs is largely limited to preventing major armed conflicts. However, there is a discernible indirect effect since the reduction of conflict intensity also tends to increase the chances of peace in following years.

Recommendation:

Given the statistical evidence presented by the authors, the UN should support robust budgets and strong mandates for PKOs. Their analysis suggests that such policies increase the effectiveness of PKOs.

The UN Security Council's Role in Conflict Prevention
(Lesson #2716)

Observation:

The UN Security Council's most important task is conflict prevention. It is one of the things it does least well.

Discussion:

The number of people displaced by conflict worldwide is over 65 million, the highest number since the establishment of the UN in the wake of World War II. The UN Security Council's mission to prevent these conflicts receives strong rhetorical support, yet is rarely realized in practice. The Council stagnates under the weight of managing multiple crises and defaults to pursuing broad thematic discussions on conflict instead of focusing on solving specific situations. While the UN has prevented a third world war, it has not been particularly effective at preventing smaller-scale conflicts, including many recent civil wars.

The UN Security Council's ineffectiveness is primarily due to eight reasons: the nation-state sovereignty shield; the unproductive relationship between the UN Secretariat and the Council; individual member states' political interests; the Penholder system; the conflict management burden; the lack of true strategic interaction; and the permanent member veto right.

Unwillingness to violate a nation-state's sovereignty handicaps UN involvement in intra-state conflicts. Further, Security Council members usually prioritize their own nation's interests over humanitarian concerns in other sovereign nations, making them less likely to take action through the Security Council to mitigate conflict in what they perceive as another sovereign state's internal affairs. Efforts to resolve conflict are particularly difficult when one or more Security Council members—including permanent or influential elected members – is party to a conflict or provides support to one of the parties.

The relationship between the Secretariat and the Council is not as effective as it could be. Generally speaking, the Secretary-General's office does not provide the Security Council with a coherent synthesis of information gathered by the entire UN organization concerning a particular conflict. This lack of integrated analysis and information-sharing remains a significant systemic problem. Further,

starting around 2010, a process developed that prevails today whereby the P3 (France, the UK and the US) draft the majority of Council decisions. In many cases, this "Penholder" has a strong national interest in the decision that other Council members oppose. The resulting stalemate hinders effectiveness.

Additionally, Council members are often overwhelmed with the burden of managing many existing crises simultaneously. Council energy and resources that could go towards planning conflict prevention actions are instead drained just keeping up with on-going clashes. Exacerbating this situation, Security Council meeting formats are problematic because they do not facilitate strategic solution brainstorming. Council meetings, even the informal ones, are scripted affairs with little spontaneity or strategic discussion. Consultations by and large remain stilted and formal, with members reading prepared statements, often repeating what colleagues around the table have said before them, while only infrequently exchanging ideas and engaging in constructive dialogue.

The last identified reason for the UN Security Council's reduced conflict prevention effectiveness is the P5's (United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and China) power to veto any "substantive" resolution. Invariably, these powerful nation-states use their veto in pursuit of narrow self-interest, undermining larger goals of conflict prevention. Simply put, there is a perception among many member states that the prerogative of the veto is at times abused to the detriment of international peace and security.

An important attempt to improve UN conflict prevention efforts was the appointment of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). Their 16 June 2015 final report called for four essential shifts that would allow the UN to position its peace operations to better respond to current and future challenges. First, ensure the primacy of politics. Second; use the full spectrum of peace operations flexibly. Third, form stronger partnerships. Fourth, emphasize a field-focused UN Secretariat and people-centered peace operations. The HIPPO Report highlighted how the Security Council has infrequently engaged in emerging conflicts, focusing instead on dealing with armed conflicts and emergencies after they occur. Hence, it called for earlier Council engagement, including deliberations in informal formats, regionally-focused discussions and visits to turbulent areas.

A second key effort designed to improve UN conflict prevention operations was the June 29, 2015 Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) report. The AGE report's overarching thesis was that peacebuilding is an activity that happens not only in post-conflict situations but also as a process before, during and after conflict. Peacebuilding should therefore be seen as a responsibility of the entire UN system, and greater emphasis should be placed on conflict prevention. The AGE report suggested that a more appropriate term to reflect this broader understanding of peacebuilding could be "sustaining peace." Subsequently, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted substantively identical resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture. According to the resolutions, sustaining peace includes activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nation's engagement [peace and security, human rights and sustainable development] at all stages of conflict.

The Global Study on Women, Peace, and Security was the third substantial effort by the UN to improve its conflict prevention efforts in recent years. The Global Study made several recommenda-

tions with regard to conflict prevention. Among other things, the study called for women's participation in early warning mechanisms, enhanced data collection and awareness regarding violence against women, and the creation of new strategies to incorporate women into preventive diplomacy efforts.

The Security Council has also adopted varied meeting formats to improve conflict prevention analysis. Meeting formats now include Horizon Scanning Sessions, Situational Awareness Briefings, Arria-Formula Meetings, and informal international dialogs. Horizon Scanning Sessions and the follow-on briefings they inspired are most often used to keep members informed of pertinent developments in countries on the Council's agenda, but might not be garnering significant attention at the time. Situational Awareness Briefings aid conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy, and early engagement by providing members with timely and comprehensive briefings that integrate analysis and information from across the UN's peace and security, human rights, and development pillars. The "Arria-Formula" Meetings and Informal Interactive Dialogs allow members to receive insights and information from people with knowledge and expertise from outside the UN system, although UN officials frequently participate in these meetings as well. A benefit of these meetings is their informality, which facilitates discussion on sensitive topics that might be more difficult to address in formal meetings.

Additional tools for analysis and action include the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which recommends ways to strengthen cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations in Africa; Security Council Visiting Missions, a tool for information gathering, support for peace operations and peace processes, conflict mediation, and preventive diplomacy; Regional Offices, which are particularly effective and play a credible role addressing emerging conflict in their areas; Article 34 of the UN Charter, that allows for legitimate investigation of potential causes of conflict; Sanctions, that can support political processes designed to prevent conflict; the Peacebuilding Commission, that focuses on peacebuilding as a process that occurs before, during, and after conflict; and the International Court of Justice, a potent prevention and mediation instrument.

<u>Recommendations</u>:

1. The UN Security Council meetings should become more interactive, spontaneous, and geared toward substantive problem-solving if the Council is to improve its decision-making.

2. Strengthen the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to focus on developing strategies to address cross-border threats such as terrorism, climate change, and health issues.

3. Develop smaller, more agile visiting missions to more effectively engage parties involved in potential conflicts.

4. Engage in more interactive discussions with senior diplomats on emerging and evolving crises.

5. Spend more resources addressing country situations in a prevention mode rather than debating conflict prevention mainly at the thematic level. The culture of formality that pervades much of the Council's work is a hindrance to efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts.

6. Encourage increased involvement of UN Security Council elected members in proposing initiatives.

Source:

This Lesson is based on the Security Council Report "Can the Security Council Prevent Conflict?", posted to their website on February 7, 2017

Lesson Author: Mr. Jack Dougherty, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analyst. Published in SOLLIMS 23 January 2019.

(30 April 2019) Security Council Extends Mandate of MINURSO. A view of Council members signaling their abstention. -The Security Council adopts resolution 2468 (2019) extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 Oct 2019. The vote was 13 in favor, with 2 abstentions (Russian Federation and South Africa). (UN Photo/Loey Felipe)

4. CONFLICT PREVENTION IN ACTION LESSONS

[Honoring Dignity as a Method of Conflict Prevention and Resolution](#)
(Lesson #2691)

Observation:

During negotiations between stakeholders in conflict, sometimes there is an unspoken undercurrent which can prevent peace agreements from being reached. This undercurrent is composed of the relational violations and emotional damage which both sides have suffered due to the conflict. The utilization of the Dignity Model as designed by Dr. Donna Hicks, a Harvard associate with two decades of experience negotiating in international conflict situations, can bypass this challenge, effectively creating an opportunity for conflict resolution. Honoring people's dignity through the elements of dignity can also prevent conflict by averting indignities which can fuel violence.

Discussion:

When stakeholders in conflict are treated badly or experience indignities, these indignities can become an unspoken obstacle to the establishment of fair peace agreements. "People need recognition for what they have suffered. And dignity violations, as ubiquitous as they are, have not been adequately recognized as a source of human suffering" (Hicks, 2011, p. xiii - xiv). "[E]motional distress is often ignored, diminished, and even trivialized at the political level. And ironically, it is the unprocessed losses and psychological traumas that maintain the divide between warring communities, even after a peace agreement is signed" (Hicks, 2011, p. 194).

Despite the suffering produced by indignities, it can be uncomfortable for stakeholders to speak about the damage of war in terms of "emotional devastation" or "trauma." During talks with guerillas in Central America, for example, Dr. Hicks made little progress eliciting response with the language of "emotions." However, asking people to share how they had experienced their dignity honored or violated led to a breakthrough in the conversation.

What is dignity? It is the indelible worth of every human being. According to Dr. Hicks, "Dignity is an internal state of peace that comes with the recognition and acceptance of the value and vulnerability of all living things" (2011, p. 1). Dignity is a person's worth that cannot be taken away, whereas respect may be rendered based on a person's actions. Each person deserves to have his/her dignity honored due to his/her humanity.

What does it look like to honor people's dignity? Dr. Hicks' extensive research and experience, as explained in her book *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*, supports a Dignity Model composed of ten essential elements: acceptance of identity, inclusion, safety, acknowledgment, recognition, fairness, benefit of the doubt, understanding, independence, and accountability. These elements are the "building blocks of functional, healthy relationships" (Hicks, 2011, p. xiv-xv).

The Dignity Model also encompasses the ten ways in which people are tempted to violate each other's dignity, such as by engaging in false intimacy through demeaning gossip, or blaming others to deflect one's own guilt. It can be difficult for people groups who have been victimized in a war to see the ways

in which they may also have perpetrated harm. Emotional trauma can affect people's ability to empathize, and yet empathy is important for conflict resolution. (See below for a list describing the ten essential elements of dignity and the ten temptations to violate dignity.)

One of the most powerful essential elements of dignity is acknowledgment. The literature on restorative and transitional justice would suggest that acknowledgement is also a key justice need. In other words, even if someone was sentenced to prison for a crime that s/he perpetrated, the victim of that crime may still feel that justice has not been met – the victim may want the perpetrator to acknowledge what s/he did, why s/he did it, and recognize the suffering s/he caused. This is one of the reasons why Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are so important – these forums include an element of public acknowledgment for what people have suffered. Acknowledgement is further important because it is necessary for people to break out of the cycle of trauma and violence, potentially preventing victims from becoming perpetrators in the future (See the Snail Model from Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU)).

An example of a successful implementation of the Dignity Model in a truth telling conference occurred between stakeholders in Northern Ireland. The BBC hosted a series called *Facing the Truth*, filming reunions between perpetrators and victims of the conflict. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, renowned for his role in facilitating the Truth and Reconciliation Commission following apartheid in South Africa, presided along with Dr. Hicks. People who had been victimized by the conflict had emotional needs which were not adequately addressed by prison sentences, and perpetrators wanted their victims to understand the conditions in which they had lived which led to their use of violence. The filmed series by the BBC provided a space for both victims and perpetrators to share their stories, acknowledge suffering, build empathy for each other, and in doing so, honor each other's dignity. Honoring dignity led to an ability to heal from the past and to move forward.

Structural discrimination can erode dignity, as well as people's individual actions. In talks between Palestinian and Israeli students, both sides were trapped in a victim mentality. It was not until they were asked by a third party to share what they could do to prove themselves trustworthy to the other side that they were able to grapple with the ways in which their own group may have perpetrated harm, thereby acknowledging the suffering of the other side. This honored dignity and provided a breakthrough in the conversation.

The Dignity Model is not useful just on an international stage but also within any relationships at home or in communities. In order for conflict prevention and resolution at any of these levels to be effective, HOW matters as much as WHAT. The sustainability of peace agreements, for example, is dependent not only on the content of the agreements but on how they were developed. The way in which people treat each other matters, and relationships cannot be ignored when attempting to solve violent conflict.

"Honoring dignity is not just about being nice. It even transcends the issue of survival. Instead, it is about living our lives in a way that promotes each other's physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being and expands our humanness." (Hicks, 2011, p. 125).

Recommendations:

Stakeholders, negotiators, and leaders in conflict situations should consider using the Dignity Model for conflict prevention and resolution to address the unspoken, underlying relational dynamics which

can prevent peace agreements from being reached (honoring other people's dignity using the ten essential elements). Conflict parties should reflect on the ways in which they have each honored or violated other people's dignity. Leaders must be educated on the importance of dignity and its effects – "both the human vulnerability to being violated and the remarkable effect on people when they feel that they are seen, heard, understood, and acknowledged as worthy" (Hicks, 2011, p. 67).

Implications:

If stakeholders ignore the dignity violations and relational/emotional suffering and damage caused by conflict, it may be difficult for them to empathize with each other and to successfully negotiate for peace agreements. When people honor each other's dignity, however, there is a greater chance for conflicts to be resolved and prevented successfully. Acknowledging the experiences and dignity violations of other stakeholders can also meet certain stakeholders' needs for justice and promote trauma healing. Honoring people's dignity can avert indignities which fuel violence, thereby serving as a powerful tool for conflict prevention.

"Honoring people's dignity is the easiest and fastest way to bring out the best in them. The opposite is equally true. Treating people as if they don't matter creates destructive emotional upheavals." (Hicks, 2011, p. 67).

Comments:

The Ten Essential Elements of Dignity:

(Hicks, 2011, p. 25-26)

Acceptance of Identity: Approach people as being neither inferior nor superior to you. Give others the freedom to express their authentic selves without fear of being negatively judged. Interact without prejudice or bias, accepting the ways in which race, religion, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability may be at the core of other people's identities. Assume that others have integrity.

Inclusion: Make others feel that they belong, whatever the relationship – whether they are in your family, community, organization, or nation.

Safety: Put people at ease at two levels: physically, so they feel safe from bodily harm, and psychologically, so they feel safe from being humiliated. Help them to feel free to speak without fear of retribution.

Acknowledgment: Give people your full attention by listening, hearing, validating, and responding to their concerns, feelings, and experiences.

Recognition: Validate others for their talents, hard work, thoughtfulness, and help. Be generous with praise, and show appreciation and gratitude to others for their contributions and ideas.

Fairness: Treat people justly, with equality, and in an even-handed way according to agreed-on laws and rules. People feel that you have honored their dignity when you treat them without discrimination or injustice.

Benefit of the Doubt: Treat people as trustworthy. Start with the premise that others have good motives and are acting with integrity.

Understanding: Believe that what others think matters. Give them the chance to explain and express their points of view. Actively listen in order to understand them.

Independence: Encourage people to act on their own behalf so that they feel in control of their lives and experience a sense of hope and possibility.

Accountability: Take responsibility for your actions. If you have violated the dignity of another person, apologize. Make a commitment to change your hurtful behaviors."

The Ten Temptations to Violate Dignity:

(Hicks, 2011, p. 93-94)

*Taking the Bait***:** Don't take the bait. Don't let the bad behavior of others determine your own. Restraint is the better part of dignity. Don't justify getting even. Do *not* do unto others as they do unto you if it will cause harm.

Saving Face: Don't succumb to the temptation to save face. Don't lie, cover up, or deceive yourself. Tell the truth about what you have done.

Shirking Responsibility: Don't shirk responsibility when you have violated the dignity of others. Admit it when you make a mistake, and apologize if you hurt someone.

Seeking False Dignity: Beware of the desire for external recognition in the form of approval and praise. If we depend on others alone for validation of our worth, we are seeking false dignity. Authentic dignity resides within us. Don't be lured by false dignity.

Seeking False Security: Don't let your need for connection compromise your dignity. If we remain in a relationship in which our dignity is routinely violated, our desire for connection has outweighed our need to maintain our own dignity. Resist the temptation to settle for false security.

Avoiding Conflict: Stand up for yourself. Don't avoid confrontation when your dignity is violated. Take action. A violation is a signal that something in a relationship needs to change.

Being the Victim: Don't assume that you are the innocent victim in a troubled relationship. Open yourself to the idea that you might be contributing to the problem. We need to look at ourselves as others see us.

Resisting Feedback: Don't resist feedback from others. We often don't know what we don't know. We all have blind spots; we all unconsciously behave in undignified ways. We need to overcome our self-protective instincts and accept constructive criticism. Feedback gives us an opportunity to grow.

Blaming and Shaming Others to Deflect Your Own Guilt: Don't blame and shame others to deflect your own guilt. Control the urge to defend yourself by making others look bad.

Engaging in False Intimacy and Demeaning Gossip: Beware of the tendency to connect by gossiping about others in a demeaning way. Being critical and judgmental about others when they are not present is harmful and undignified. If you want to create intimacy with another, speak the truth about yourself, about what is happening in your inner world, and invite the other person to do the same."

Source:

The author of this lesson participated in research at the Center for Justice & Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University to validate these elements of dignity. This lesson was based primarily on this book:

Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict. D. Hicks. Yale University Press: London. 2011.

Note: The creator of the Dignity Model, Dr. Donna Hicks, has over two decades of experience facilitating talks between conflict parties around the world from Israel-Palestine to Northern Ireland. She was also the deputy director of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. See also: drdonnahicks.com.

Lesson Author: Ms. Katrina Gehman, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analyst. Published in SOLLIMS 13 September 2018.

(25 September 2018) President of Gambia Addresses General Assembly - Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-third session. (UN Photo/Cia Pak)

[Political Leadership & Regional Preventive Diplomacy](#)
[Avert Constitutional Crisis in The Gambia](#)
(Lesson #2582)

Observation:

Preventive regional diplomacy and political leadership contributed to averting a constitutional crisis and potential armed violence in The Gambia. After West African leaders, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) presented a united front, long-term dictator Yahya Jammeh conceded power to Adama Barrow who won the December 2016 election in this small West African nation.

Discussion:

The Gambia is a small country located in West Africa, lining the Gambia River and entirely surrounded by Senegal. It gained its independence from Britain in 1965, soon after Senegal gained its independence from France in 1960; the two countries joined briefly to form a confederation of Senegambia between 1982 and 1989. In 1994, Yahya Jammeh took power in a bloodless coup, and his authoritarian rule extended for 22 years. Although Jammeh was subsequently re-elected in 'democratic' elections, he was seen as a dictator, since other political parties were barred at times from participation in elections, and there were reported incidents of repression of free speech and a long track record of governmental human rights abuses.

The recent constitutional crisis in The Gambia began following the results of the 1 December 2016 presidential elections. Earlier in 2016, the opposition leader for The Gambia's United Democratic Party had been detained and arrested. This led to the candidacy of Mr. Adama Barrow, a real estate developer who had not previously held public office, to represent seven Gambian opposition parties in the election. In a shock election outcome, Barrow won with over 45% of the vote.

Immediately following Barrow's election, Jammeh conceded defeat, broadcast across the country. International organizations such as the AU, UN, and ECOWAS, expressed support for the legitimacy of the election outcome. On 9 December, however, Jammeh reversed his initial acceptance of defeat and rejected the results of the election, calling for a re-election due to 'inconsistencies.' He deployed Gambian troops in the capital to take over the Independent Electoral Commission and later declared a 90-day state of emergency to extend his term for an additional three months.

After Jammeh reversed his acceptance of defeat, there followed a multi-leveled, unified international response. There were a series of diplomatic leadership visits by West African presidents to attempt to resolve the constitutional crisis and persuade Jammeh to leave office peacefully. Sustained efforts included those of Senegal's President Macky Sall. Mediation efforts, including visits to the capital of Banjul, were taken under the authority of ECOWAS, by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria, former President John Mahama of Ghana, and President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone.

International organizations maintained support for the legitimacy of the election results, which Jammeh himself had initially accepted, saying they would no longer support Jammeh after 19 Jan, the date that Barrow was supposed to take office. However, as the January deadline approached, Jammeh did not back down. At this point, ECOWAS deployed the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG), with Senegalese troops stationed at the border of The Gambia as well as Ghana troops and Nigeria naval/air elements, giving Jammeh a deadline to leave on the day of the inauguration of Barrow.

Mr. Adama Barrow was inaugurated as president at the Gambian embassy in Dakar, Senegal on 19 January. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 2337 on 19 January, endorsing decisions of the AU and ECOWAS recognizing Barrow as The Gambia's new president. The deadline for ECOMIG's threatened use of force was extended as President Ould Abdelaziz (Mauritania) and Alpha Condé (Guinea) made last minute pleas with Jammeh.

On 21 January, Jammeh conceded defeat, with a negotiated agreement that would ensure his dignified exit. There are reports that he had initially back-tracked on accepting defeat in December due to threats of prosecution or reprisals for allegations of human rights violations committed during his presidency. As such, he was willing to accept defeat and exile when those concerns were addressed by the mediation presidents through the agreement. Questions remain about whether the threat of the use of force was legally justified by ECOWAS (see Paul Williams' article: https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/03/ecowas-gambia-barrow-jammeh-african-union/); regardless, the determination of peaceful resolution was aided by combined efforts of political leaders.

Barrow returned to The Gambia on 26 January 2017, a few days after Yahya Jammeh left for Guinea. Barrow requested that the ECOWAS regional military force remain in the country for six months, amidst some concerns that elements of The Gambia's security forces may remain loyal to Jammeh. In addition to Jammeh's dignified exit, Barrow has pledged to establish a truth and reconciliation commission for the investigation of human rights abuses alleged in The Gambia during Jammeh's leadership, focusing first on finding out the truth before deciding what next steps to take to address any violations.

Recommendations:

1. The international community (including the UN and regional organizations such as the AU and ECOWAS) should continue to provide a united front in the pursuit of peaceful political solutions to states experiencing constitutional crises. The UN/AU/ECOWAS were united in recognizing the legitimacy of Barrow's election as the will of the Gambian people. Although the use of force was threatened to enforce these results, it was not used, and there was a determination on the international community to prioritize the pursuit of peaceful political solutions.

2. Such a united front ought to include the direct efforts of multiple presidents and political leaders to mediate and engage with former leaders, as did heads of state of several West African countries with former dictator Jammeh. Such leaders could speak as peers, hear his concerns to mediate an agreement, and implore him for the sake of his country to stand down.

3. In future such crises, consider trade-offs in the offers of amnesty/asylum and a dignified exit for former leaders/dictators. This may prevent bloodshed or the sparks/continuance of armed conflict. However, this offer of asylum must be balanced with the need for justice and accountability with

human rights violations that may have been committed under the leadership of such a former dictator.

Implications:

Lack of unified political resolve among regional/international leaders may perpetuate or spark further violence in a nation experiencing a constitutional crisis. This can be seen in the current and ongoing situation in Burundi. When Burundi's President Nkurunziza decided to run for a 3rd term in 2015, despite stipulations in the Arusha Peace Agreement limiting presidents to two terms in office (he claimed that his first term did not count towards this limit), unrest broke out in Burundi. However, there was a lack of clear resolve by the UN, AU, and regional organizations and leaders to address this constitutional crisis. Political violence escalated against civilians, and yet regional organizations remained hesitant to intervene. The African Union decided against sending peacekeepers to Burundi in January 2016, and the UN Security Council authorized a police force in July 2016 to monitor the security situation. 400,000 Burundians fled the country in the face of extrajudicial killings, serious human rights violations, and warning signs of genocide. Nkurunziza remains in power, although he stated in June, 2018 that he would step down after the 2020 elections.

"*A related reason why West Africa's leaders were united against Jammeh was the increased democratization the region had experienced over the past decade. Unlike in East Africa, for instance, when regional leaders did not strongly criticize Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to stand for a third term in office, few of West Africa's heads of state would be condemning themselves if they criticized Jammeh's push to overturn the constitutional process.*" - "A New African Model of Coercion? Assessing the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia," IPI Global Observatory; by Paul Williams (16 March 2017); found at: https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/03/ecowas-gambia-barrow-jammeh-african-union/

Clearer political unified resolve by international entities may have prevented this escalation of violence imposed by the continuance of Nkurunziza's reign. While all facets of the case of The Gambia and the case of Burundi are not the same, there was a drastic difference in the unity of international response and in the outcome of the crises. Of course, it remains to be seen what will happen in the coming months and years for The Gambia, but an immediate escalation of the crisis into violence was averted in large part by unified international political resolve.

Sources:

This lesson is based primarily on various news articles about the recent constitutional crisis in the Gambia. (See, for example, a BBC country profile of The Gambia. The agreement under which Jammeh left office – Joint Declaration by ECOWAS, the AU, and the UN on the Political Situation of the Islamic Republic of The Gambia – can be found at: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/note-correspondents/2017-01-21/note-correspondents-joint-declaration-political-situation).

Lesson Author: Ms. Katrina Gehman, updated by Mr. Jack Dougherty, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analysts. Published in SOLLIMS 31 March 2017. A version of this lesson also appears in the SOLLIMS Lessons Learned Sampler "Inclusive Peacebuilding: Working with Communities," volume 9, Issue 2, April 2018.

[Gender Inequality as an Early Warning Indicator of Violent Conflict](#)
([Lesson #2692](#))

Observation:

Gender inequality within a society is often a predictor of armed conflict. Thus, early warning systems for violent conflict and violent extremism must include indicators about gender inequality and sexual/domestic violence. Furthermore, conflict prevention mechanisms must support gender equality and women's empowerment in order to be effective, as shown by Morocco's support of women's rights in the wake of the Arab Spring, which has prevented severe growth of violent extremism.

Discussion:

Conflict early warning systems are mechanisms used to anticipate conflicts and to respond to their escalation. Such systems involve collecting, analyzing, and communicating data to inform prevention and mitigation response strategies. Awareness of longstanding structural violence, such as social exclusion (economic inequality and/or lack of access to resources for certain groups) can improve early warning for the potential escalation of physical violence.

As such, it is important for early warning systems to incorporate data about the entire population (including marginalized groups) and to include stakeholders from the entire population in conflict response efforts. However, according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), "Gender is still often ignored in efforts aimed at conflict prevention, with the result that these efforts may perpetuate stereotypes or even increase women's vulnerabilities to having their human rights violated" (2009, p. 2). "Because threats that are regarded not as public but as private matters (including sexual violence and domestic violence) are often perceived and treated as non-political matters, there is a risk that EWS [early warning systems] reporting disproportionally highlights security threats that affect men" (OSCE, 2009, p. 10).

Yet, it is important not just for women – but for entire societies – that sexual and domestic violence are taken into account in early warning systems. These factors can in fact be an indicator of the potential for more widespread armed conflict. According to OSCE, "The lower status that most women generally hold relative to most men may cause them to be among the first to experience the weakening of security levels. Thus, their experiences can potentially serve as foreshadowing of more widespread armed conflict." (2009, p. 10).

According to a study of civil wars between 1960-2001, there is a confirmed link between gender inequality and intra-state armed conflict. Cultures with a great degree of structural inequality, including a system of male domination which persists through gender stereotypes, may support violence as a way to address grievances. In other words, when there is inequality at home, this norm of inequality can also extend to the national and international stage and make the resolution of conflicts more difficult and more violent. Furthermore, gender stereotypes are often used to mobilize people to war. Following a cross-national analysis coded for gender inequality and controlled for other variables (such as GDP), the study concludes that: "Gender inequality, as measured by both fertility rate and female percent of labor force, increases the likelihood that a state will experience internal conflict. The higher the level of gender inequality within a state, the greater the likelihood such a state

will experience internal conflict. In short, states characterized by gender discrimination and structural hierarchy are permeated with norms of violence that make internal conflict more likely" (Caprioli, 2005, p. 171-172).

When societies implement norms of equality, however, groups are more likely to interact based on cooperation, not violence. This is evident from support for women's empowerment as a successful method of conflict prevention in Morocco. Following the Arab Spring, Morocco began a series of reforms aimed at responding to public concerns. Instead of cracking down on women's rights, amidst a series of interventions, Morocco actually strengthened and expanded women's rights through revisions of the Family Code which enabled women to be considered equal to their husbands. Furthermore, women were given the right to become certified as mourchidates, Islamic preachers, to teach messages of peace and to promote equality. This program has been proclaimed a success within Morocco and abroad, and it was praised by the U.S. Department of State in 2009.

Another example of a state which has had some success decreasing extreme violence in the decade following 2005 is Bangladesh. In 2005, Bangladesh introduced a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and adopted a CVE strategy which focused on poverty as a main driver of extreme violence. To address this driver, the government focused on women's economic empowerment through supporting micro-credit lending programs and employment opportunities in garment factories. Improving the quality of life for women in Bangladesh "will contribute to increased security and stability in Bangladesh," according to a Brookings Policy Paper (Couture, 2014, p. 22). The country has also taken steps to improve the access to education for both girls and boys.

Figure 3. Key Female Empowerment Indicators

Social Indicators	Political Indicators	Economic Indicators	Quality of Life Indicators
Female literacy rate	Females as head of state	Female unemployment	Female mortality rate
Female teachers	Women in parliament	Female percentage in workforce	Female HIV prevalence
Legal marriage age	Quota of reserved seats for females in political positions	Women's right to inherit land	Female access to healthcare
Female enrollment in primary/secondary/tertiary education	Women in religious figure positions	Women's access to credit	Female access to birth control

Key female empowerment indicators include social indicators (such as the female literacy rate, legal marriage age, and enrollment in education), political indicators (female heads of state, parliamentarians, and religious leaders), economic indicators (female unemployment, right to inherit land, percentage of the workforce, and access to credit), and quality of life indicators (female mortality rate, access to healthcare, and access to birth control) (Couture, 2014, chart on p.7). Such indicators must be incorporated into early warning systems for effective conflict prevention.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective into early warning systems. This can be accomplished along the following lines of effort (OSCE, 2009, p. 12):

- Ask how men and women are affected by the conflict: What are the consequences and the threats they experience with respect to international human rights and international humanitarian law?

- Evaluate structural and conflict-related inequalities and human rights violations as to how they affect men and women.

- Explain roles, experiences, needs and capacities of women and men in conflict. Gender analysis can be used to better explain factors that generate vulnerabilities.

2. Utilize gender inequality (and other key female empowerment social, political, economic, and quality of life statistics) as indicators to predict potential armed conflict.

3. Prevent conflict by supporting the empowerment of women and by furthering women's rights.

Implications:

A key component of effective conflict prevention is the inclusion, equality, and empowerment of all stakeholders, including women. When states achieve greater gender equality, gender stereotypes are less likely to be used to incite people to violence for both intra- and inter-state armed conflict. The levels of a society are composed of fractals, wherein the structure of power in relationships is often repeated from family and community levels to national and international levels. When there is a greater balance of power at the family level between men and women, then there may also be a greater balance of power between stakeholders at the political level which can promote inter- and intra-state cooperation and decrease the potential for extreme violence.

Comments:

The Sustainable Development Goals, an agenda to guide the global community towards positive change in 17 major sectors by 2030, highlights "Gender Equality" as goal #5. For more information, see: http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2017/7/infographic-spotlight-on-sdg-5.

Sources:

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- "A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco," K. L. Couture, National Counterterrorism Center Federal Executive Fellow; Foreign Policy at Brookings; Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence Policy Paper, (July 2014); Found at: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Women-CVE-Formatted-72914-Couture-FINAL2.pdf

Lesson Author: Ms. Katrina Gehman, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analyst. Published in SOLLIMS 13 September 2018.

Testing Assumptions about Violent Extremism in Order to Prevent it More Effectively
(Lesson #2689)

Observation:

It is essential to correctly identify drivers of violent extremism in order to effectively counter it. One of the best ways to test assumptions about extremism is to ask the people directly implicated. The USAID ENGAGE project did just this in Mindanao, Philippines, surveying in-school youth about different factors in their lives including their various attitudes towards violent extremism. The research showed that extremist radicalization is a social process with stronger ties to community marginalization and discrimination than to previously-assumed drivers of poverty and unemployment.

Discussion:

Marginalization and Discrimination as Drivers of Violent Extremism in Mindanao

In order to counter the growth of violent extremism in the conflict-affected region of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded a five-year Enhancing Governance, Accountability and Engagement (ENGAGE) Project to improve local governance. ENGAGE assisted local governments with the improvement of service delivery and increased the capacity of civil society organizations. ENGAGE also promoted civic engagement through a variety of activities, including by strengthening methods for public participation in local governance (including the involvement of women and youth).

In order to more effectively address the drivers of extremism, USAID ENGAGE Project designed a mixed methods research to test the assumptions of what contributed to the growth of violent extremism in Mindanao, particularly among in-school youth. USAID Engage performed the research by identifying assumed drivers of violent extremism in Mindanao and then surveying in-school youth to test for correlations between support for violent extremism and these assumed drivers.

First, researchers identified assumed drivers of violent extremism in Mindanao through interviews with local stakeholders (civil society, academia, and local government), consultations with experts, and a literature review. Researchers then surveyed a stratified random sample of over 2,300 youth from high schools in ten local government units and university students from five universities. To

confirm the survey results, researchers tested them against case studies of 25 members of armed /extremist groups based on interviews with these combatants and/or members of their social networks.

Some commonly assumed drivers included that poverty and unemployment drove youth support for violent extremism and that men were more supportive of such ideologies than women. The USAID ENGAGE study, however, found that these assumed drivers of violent extremism were inaccurate in this region. Instead, social factors such as marginalization and exclusion were priorities.

Key findings from the study included that (p. 2):

- "[G]rievances among youth about corruption, human rights, lack of trust in government, poverty and unemployment appear not to make them more likely to support violence or extreme ideologies."

- "Gender also showed no strength as a predictor of support for violence or extreme ideologies, disproving the assumption that support for violence and extremism is more prevalent among men than women."

- "Support for violence and extreme ideologies correlates with higher levels of community engagement, more acute perceptions of community marginalization and discrimination, lower levels of perceived self-efficacy, more acceptance of revenge seeking and acceptance of a 'gun culture,' wherein power and respect in communities is held by those with guns."

- "High school respondents were also more prone than university students to support violence and extreme ideologies."

These finding from USAID ENGAGE correspond to the findings from the United Nations – World Bank joint flagship study, "Pathways to Peace," in which marginalization is identified as major factor which can drive violent conflict… and in which inclusion can be a powerful force to prevent conflict. For effective conflict and violence prevention, the UN-World Bank report recommends sustained, inclusive, and targeted programming with people-centered processes. Consulting local people directly about their lives to test assumptions was the first step in this process for USAID ENGAGE in Mindanao.

Recommendations:

1. All programs with a CVE focus should test their assumptions about what contributes to the growth of violent extremism specific to that region and prioritize their conflict prevention efforts accordingly. Consult with local people who are directly involved and include a broad range of stakeholders in research, assessment, project design, and implementation.

2. Prevent and counter violent extremism by working towards improving inclusion and decreasing marginalization, exclusion, and horizontal inequalities. Such conflict prevention efforts must involve

a broad range of stakeholders, including women and youth. Programs seeking to counter violent extremism must have a social engagement and relationship focus.

Implications:

Assumptions about what drives conflict and violence might not be accurate. If accurate drivers of violent extremism are not identified, then programs intended to prevent and counter violent extremism may not deter violence or extremism. If local people are not directly consulted in the process of assessment, program design, and implementation, then it is likely that inaccurate risks will be assessed and programs will not be designed in ways that connect with local people. However, when local people are included as agents in the decisions that affect their lives, they may experience less marginalization/exclusion and as such may be less likely to form social networks around extremism. If efforts to reduce violence are inclusive of all people (including women and youth), then there is a greater chance of effective prevention.

Conflict prevention is directly linked to inclusion.

Comments:

"Prevention must be *inclusive* and build broader partnerships across groups to identify and address the grievances that fuel violence. Prevention must actively and directly *target* patterns of exclusion and institutional weaknesses that increase the risk of violent conflict" (Pathways for Peace, 276).

"*Prevention must be inclusive.* Too often, preventive action is focused on elites. In complex, fragmented, and protracted conflicts, an inclusive approach to prevention puts an understanding of grievances and agency at the center of national and international engagement. It recognizes the importance of understanding people and their communities: their trust in institutions, confidence in the future, perceptions of risk, and experience of exclusion and injustice. It uses this understanding to disaggregate risks and build inclusive responses to risk that enhance state legitimacy, reduce polarization, and avert violence." (Pathways for Peace, p. 276-277).

"It is important to empower underrepresented voice such as women, youth, and marginalized groups and to increase the quality of people's engagement. An inclusive process for selecting representatives from diverse groups is critical for building trust and creating meaningful participation. Furthermore, service delivery should be reoriented to make people partners in the design and delivery of public services and to strengthen trust in local and central government. Making people partners is done most effectively through mainstreaming participatory and consultative elements for all planning and programming in areas at risk of violent conflict. Mainstreaming these elements can help to ensure that all efforts are focused on locally defined problems and that proposed solutions are accepted as legitimate by all relevant stakeholders, thereby ensuring ownership…" (Pathways for Peace, p. 281-282.)

Sources:

This lesson is primarily based on this information sheet: [“Youth and Violent Extremism in Mindanao, Philippines: Testing Assumptions about Drivers of Extremism – What Matters Most?”](#) USAID.

For more information about USAID's ENGAGE Project in Mindanao, see: "Enhancing Governance, Accountability and Engagement (ENGAGE) Project," USAID, (17 August 2016); Found at: https://www.usaid.gov/philippines/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/engage; "Advancing Peace and Stability in Mindanao," USAID.

See also the UN-World Bank study: United Nations and World Bank. 2018. *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict.* Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1162-3. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

Lesson Author: Ms. Katrina Gehman, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analyst. Published in SOLLIMS 30 August 2018.

Peace Huts in Liberia Prevent Escalation of Local Conflict
(Lesson #2671)

Observation:

Peace huts run by local women in Liberia following Liberia's brutal civil war have reduced and prevented violence in local communities by providing mediation services and liaising with local police to avert conflict outbreaks.

Discussion:

When Liberia's civil war persisted for years with ongoing brutality, women decided to take matters into their own hands. Women from different walks of life, Christian and Muslim alike, influenced Liberian people to seek peace, convinced the president to attend peace talks, and pressured negotiators to establish a cease fire. Due largely to the political activism of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2003, bringing an end to over a decade of civil war.

After the civil war ended, women began implementing peace huts across Liberia in the hopes of consolidating the gains made by the peace agreement. Before the war, *palava* huts under the leadership of men were utilized for traditional methods of conflict resolution in Liberian communities. The peace huts created in Liberia during the civil war, however, were led by women, many of whom had participated in the nonviolent movement which brought an end to the war. Initially, these women-led huts provided services to counsel women and child soldiers who had been traumatized by the war. By 2006, however, peace huts began hearing cases and assisting with mediation for local disputes, supporting the facilitation of fair agreements. By 2012, there were 16 peace huts in Liberia with the support of UN Women.

These peace huts have performed a variety of different roles in local communities. The huts were primarily established to mediate local disputes and to refer victims to counseling. In addition to this function, women of the huts have raised awareness about important events such as the need for peacebuilding during election seasons. Women-led peace huts have also promoted tangible connections with the security sector through liaison with the police. The Liberian National Police provided

mobile phones and a free hotline to women at the huts, so that the women could call the police directly with any security concerns or for collaboration on a case. In Weala, Liberia, for example, after peace huts were established in 2011, there were initially frequent calls between the women and the police, but the frequency has reduced since then due to the women's success at de-escalation of local conflicts. According to local police, the women have defused tensions and stopped disputes from becoming violent, serving an important role in conflict prevention.

In addition to their mediation capacity, some peace huts have also had an economic component. In 2012, for example, UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) provided support for economic initiatives for the women peace leaders of the huts. Groups of these women developed and operated small businesses (bakeries or fish processing centers, etc.) in order to support themselves while continuing their peace work. Furthermore, several huts developed village savings loan associations. In this way, members of the associations would pool their money and lend it to members. Some huts also offered vocational skills programming, teaching adult literacy and skills in soap making and tailoring.

The peace huts have had a tangible impact in local communities across Liberia. The indigenous local ownership and grassroots basis for the peace huts has increased their sustainability, even during ongoing challenges in Liberia, such as the Ebola outbreak. The huts have made connections with the justice system, including by reporting cases to authorities when needed. They have increased community members' access to justice, which has increased local security. The huts have also reduced the work of the police since interpersonal disputes are resolved before they escalate to a point where they would require additional intervention by security personnel. Since women have played such a central role in these peace huts, women's participation in decision-making and political leadership has increased.

The United Nations and World Bank commissioned a study on the cost-effectiveness of peace huts as a background paper for the 2018 flagship study on conflict prevention. The study found that the financial costs of establishing and maintaining the peace huts (including building capacity and facilitating trainings) is approximately $1.5 million total annually, which comes to about $62,000 per hut per year. These costs can be compared to the vast amount spent in annual response to crisis - $10 billion towards peacekeeping/aid or $95 million in the domestic justice sector. Peace huts thus represent a very small financial investment which has paid high dividends in terms of conflict resolution and prevention.

Recommendations:

1. Provide access to traditional forms of justice and mediation as a form of conflict prevention in high-risk environments. Traditional forms of justice, such as the peace huts, may contribute to resolving disputes and preventing local violence as well as reducing the toll of state justice systems. Liaise with additional community services, such as the police, as needed.

2. The international community should continue to support grassroots women's peacebuilding efforts such as the peace huts in Liberia (through entities such as UN Women, etc.). Such resources enable women to start small businesses to support themselves while they continue their peace work.

3. In the aftermath of civil war, provide justice services for women and girls who are affected by sexual violence and domestic harm. Such efforts fall under the umbrella of Women, Peace, and Security.

Implications:

Without local grassroots conflict prevention mechanisms (such as peace huts), disputes may spiral into violence. In the absence of the promotion of traditional forms of justice, many rural local people may not have access to state forms of justice.

If only the traditional pavala hut system had been used instead of the peace huts, many women would still not have access to justice. However, the peace huts continue the momentum established by women of all identities and religions in Liberia who demanded and forged an end to the civil war. With the ongoing witness of these powerful women who stand up for women and girls who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault, both women and men receive a fair hearing during disputes and victims can be referred to counseling and support services. The continuing presence of peace huts in communities across Liberia tangibly contributes to sustaining peace in Liberia and preventing relapse into armed conflict.

Comments:

Additional articles:
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For additional reading, see: "This Hut Is Working for Me: Liberian Women and Girls Make Peace in Their Communities," S. Douglas, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 16 (1): 148-55, (2014). Found at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14616742.2013.876880

Or, watch this short film clip: "Liberia: Peace Huts," United Nations, (22 July 2011); Found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Beged43P8uo

Lesson Author: Ms. Katrina Gehman, PKSOI Lessons Learned Analyst. Published in SOLLIMS 30 July 2018.

5. Additional References on Conflict Prevention

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- How much is prevention worth? Pathways for peace: inclusive approaches to prevent violent conflict, Felix Hannes Mueller, World Bank Group, 2017.

- How Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention and Resolution Advances U.S. Interests, Jamile Bigio and Rachel Vogelstein, Council on Foreign Relations, 2016.

- Playback Theater as a Tool for Conflict Prevention & Transformation, SOLLIMS Lesson # 2636

- Preparing to Prevent: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Mitigation - Scenario-Based Training, PKSOI, 2014

- [Sovereignty Strategies: Enhancing Core Governance Functions as a Postconflict & Conflict-Prevention Measure,](#) Clare Lockhart, *Daedalus*, 2018.

6. PKSOI Lesson Reports and SOLLIMS Samplers (2014-2019)

2019
- **SSR & DDR**

2018
- **Transitional Public Security**
- **Foreign Humanitarian Assistance: The Complexity of Considerations**
- **Stage-setting and Right-sizing for Stability**
- **Complexities and Efficiencies in Peacekeeping Operations**
- **Inclusive Peacebuilding: Working with Communities**
- **Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace and Stability**

2017
- **Lessons on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)**
- **Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security**
- **Leadership in Crisis and Complex Operations**
- **Civil Affairs in Stability Operations**

2016
- **Refugees & Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**
- **Strategic Communication/Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations**
- **Job Creation Programs – Insights from Africa and Conflict-affected States**
- **Stabilization and Transition**
- **Lessons from the MSF Hospital (Trauma Center) Strike in Kunduz**
- **Investing in Training for, and during, Peace and Stability Operations**
- **Building Stable Governance**
- **Lessons Learned – Peacekeeping Operations in Africa**
- **Shifts in United Nations Peacekeeping**

2015
- **Foreign Humanitarian Assistance: Concepts, Principles and Applications**
- **Foreign Humanitarian Assistance [Foreign Disaster Relief]**
- **Cross-Cutting Guidelines for Stability Operations**
- **Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students**
- **Security Sector Reform**

Lead Author Information: Mr. Jack Dougherty is currently the Lessons Learned Analyst for PKSOI. His previous positions include Transition and Assessment Manager with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces Joint Staff, Academic Advisor at the UAE Joint Staff College, Advisor to the Commandant at the Republic of Georgia's National Defense Academy, Operations Officer at JIEDDO's Training Center of Excellence, Operations Officer at the Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernization Program, Associate Professor of History at UNLV, Assistant Professor of Military Science at Boston University, Assistant Professor of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and Assistant Professor of History at the U.S. Military Academy.