

Global Campaign

On the Prevention of Violent Conflict

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IN CONSULTATION WITH

the Harvard International Negotiation Program,

the World Economic Forum, and

the Forum's Global Agenda Council on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

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THE PROBLEM

Violent conflict over the past generation has caused the loss of millions of lives and trillions of dollars. While much has been done to address ongoing violence through peacekeeping and other efforts, much less has been done to prevent violence before it breaks out. This is a major missed opportunity for human survival and economic growth. The Global Campaign on the Prevention of Mass Violence seeks to work with world leaders and senior policymakers to change the current paradigm.

Prevention is on the lips of leading thinkers in every field. Especially in public health, practitioners realize that a small investment today can lead to tremendous returns in the future. Take, for instance, The Gates Foundation's current work on malaria. Although they continue to develop medications for individuals suffering from the disease, they have also begun to push for the distribution of mosquito nets. For ten dollars, a person in the United States can purchase a mosquito net for a child living in Sub-Saharan Africa that will allow that child to avoid contracting the disease.

These prophylactic measures can be applied to mass violence. Most people intuitively understand what factors make an area prone to violence. Poverty, military occupation, and scarce resources are only a few of the more prominent among them. Recognizing that certain situations carry a "genetic predisposition" for violence means that steps can be taken to prevent violence before it breaks out. The Global Campaign on the Prevention of Mass Violence seeks to develop tools and policies to accomplish this goal.

For prevention to work, the Campaign must shift the way policymakers think about violent conflict. Many treat violent conflict like an anomaly. Peace is viewed as the default state of affairs. When violence erupts, that peace is disturbed and policymakers act to suppress the violence in hopes of returning the world to its peaceful default state. Under the preventative mindset, one

thinks of violent conflict as always lurking below the surface of events. The possibility of violence is like one's portfolio of investments. There are many factors (stocks) that combine to yield positive and negative results.

When your investments are losing money, you may sell

one of your holdings and buy a different one. By pulling on different strings, you hope to increase your earnings or, at least, stave off further losses. The same could be said about violent conflict. The potential for violence ebbs and flows in any given society at any given time. If a drought hits, the possibility of violence spikes (this would be the equivalent of hearing that a particular stock has taken a bad hit). Under the preventative mindset, one

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recognizes this fact and then looks to other factors to see how they might be adjusted to reduce the possibility of violence.

There remains, however, a central problem with prevention: although the cost of intervention is at its lowest before mass violence erupts, political will is also at its lowest at that moment. Until a problem manifests, it is difficult to convince one's constituencies to contribute their limited resources toward a problem that does not yet exist. One of the Campaign's goals, then, lies in educating leaders about the benefits of early intervention and to develop the research and practical tools to make prevention more tangible.

WHERE DID THIS IDEA COME FROM?

The impetus for the Global Campaign on the Prevention of Violence Conflict grew out of the work of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution. The Global Agenda Council found that today's large-scale conflicts differ from those of the past in major ways. For instance, today's conflicts have the following characteristics:

- **Intrastate:** Increasingly intrastate rather than interstate
- **Identity-based:** At times of rapid change, people tend to cling to the aspect of their identity that they feel is under attack, e.g., religion, ethnicity
- **Fragmentation:** Increasing divisions within rebel movements and governments (e.g., DRC)
- **Asymmetric:** For example – NATO vs Taliban
- **Reappearance of ideology:** Examples: (1) the abuse of religion by extremist groups; (2) the reemergence of Cold War rhetoric by politicians

Global Agenda Council on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

Daniel Shapiro, Chair; Director of the Harvard International Negotiation Program

Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland (1997-2008)

Betty Bigombe, Distinguished African Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars

Kjell Magne Bondevik, President, Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights; Prime Minister of Norway (1997-2000; 2001-2005)

Chester Crocker, Professor of Strategic Studies, Georgetown University

James Gilligan, Collegiate Professor, New York University

Shamil Idriss, Deputy Director, Office of the Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations

Jessica Mathews, President, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Jonathan Powell, Senior Managing Director, Investment Banking Division, Morgan Stanley, United Kingdom; Chief of Staff to Tony Blair

Mary Robinson, President, Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative; former President of Ireland; former United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights

Herbert Salber, Director, Conflict Prevention Centre, OCSE, Austria

Jiro Tamura, Professor of Law, Keio University, Japan

- **“Conflict as Business”**: Groups remain committed to continuing conflict for vested interests (e.g. the small arms trade; drug trade)
- **Conflict over resources**: As a result of global warming, water shortage, mass population movement
- **History as a tactic of conflict**: Draw on antagonistic history to create a present-day enemy; useful to governments and rebel groups lacking legitimacy
- **Conflict over norms and values**: Western norms are advocated in some contexts and less in others (e.g., over women’s rights, freedom of speech in the press), which is sometimes seen by some as Western double standards
- **Weakness of international institutions including the UN**
- **Technology**: Greater ability (1) to communicate and (2) to destroy

The Council agreed that the most effective way to confront these new conflicts would be to adopt the “Prevention Principle.” The Prevention Principle advocates action at the earliest possible moment at the lowest possible level. Such action is a cheap and efficient means of stunting violence before it grows.

DRAFT STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Global Agenda Council on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution would constitute the Core Team, along with additional Forum affiliates as mutually decided. The Campaign would be directed by Dr. Daniel Shapiro, Director of the Harvard International Negotiation Program (INP). There also would be an Honorary Chair designated by the World Economic Forum.

Structurally, we envision the Campaign as a joint venture between the World Economic Forum (the “Forum”) and the Harvard International Negotiation Program. Crafting this new paradigm of thought on the global prevention of violent conflict will require the creation of new ideas and models. Collaboration between the Forum and the Harvard INP serves this purpose. The Forum will provide research expertise, its extensive network of contacts and convening power, development assistance, and aid in publicizing findings. The Harvard INP will research and develop new models of prevention, drawing heavily upon the expertise of the Core Team, and will use its convening power to push forward investigation on theory and practical principles of prevention. INP will enlist other universities, think-tanks, and NGOs in the research.

STEPS THE CAMPAIGN PLANS TO TAKE

The Campaign's goals are to enhance research *and* practical progress toward a new paradigm of violence prevention.

Research

Through Harvard's International Negotiation Program and the Forum, the Campaign plans to research how to deal preventively with the roots of conflict. The research will identify key factors that contribute to the outbreak of violent conflict (including less tangible topics such as the role of identity in conflict), what steps can be taken to address these root concerns, and how programs and policies will have to be modified or created to accommodate this new preventive rather reactive mindset. In the next six months, the Campaign hopes to assemble the work it has done so far into a theoretical paper entitled, "The Case for Prevention." Additional papers include: "Managing Greed and Grievance: Steps to Building Resilient Peace."

Institutionalize "Prevention Sessions"

The Campaign hopes to use the World Economic Forum's annual and regional meetings to both publicize its research and to work with leaders on using that research to have a real world impact. One idea is to develop and facilitate high-level "Prevention Sessions." Drawing on the Forum's unique convening power, here's how it could work: (1) Prior to a regional meeting, the Campaign would identify a low-level, brewing conflict with the potential to turn violent. (2) Key stakeholders from business, government, and civil society would meet for a closed-door session at a Forum event, where there would be a facilitated problem-solving discussion to figure out joint strategies to prevent violence and promote security. Note that this model is not reactive, but proactive, with intervention occurring at the earliest stage possible in a conflict that has not yet unraveled.

The Campaign also could include a Senior-Level Prevention Program, in which leaders facing an emerging or on-going conflict situation travel to another region of the world to learn from fellow leaders who have navigated constructively through violent conflict.

Distinguished Lecture Series

The Distinguished Lecture Series will serve as an additional platform for publicizing the Campaign's research efforts. Moreover, it will allow these new ideas to begin to percolate throughout the policymaking community. As the lecture series grows, so too will the reach of the ideas it promotes. The Lecture Series will also help to build international partnerships with the universities and NGOs that host them. Members of the Global Agenda Council on

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution have expressed preliminary, informal support for helping to coordinate the lecture series at the Nobel Institute, Keio University, the United Nations, and Harvard University.

Global Report for Key Leaders

In order to convince policymakers of the wisdom of the Prevention Principle, the Campaign plans to create a global report that explains how to put its ideas into action and why such implementation is worthwhile. Conceivably this could eventually lead to an Ambassador Training Program in which active diplomats go through the program in order to gain new insights into their work.

Multimedia Efforts

While the other programs mentioned may take many months and years to establish, the Campaign hopes to begin developing multimedia content within the next few months. The initial program will consist of video podcasts of interviews with Global Agenda Council members who will use the forum to discuss those aspects of mass violence prevention that most relate to their field of expertise. In time, a more regular podcast may be developed that advocates for certain actions in response to real-time political occurrences.

Furthermore, the Campaign would work with media leaders to develop new approaches to reporting human interaction that emphasize and encourage prevention rather than sensationalized violence.

Encouraging the Participation of Business Leaders

A recent report by the Strategic Foresight Group estimates that violence in the Middle East has cost the region \$12 trillion in missed economic growth. This means that mass violence is as much a problem for private enterprise as it is for government. Due to mass violence, billions of individuals are not being reached by today's businesses. The Campaign seeks to educate business leaders on the wisdom of helping to prevent violence. The Campaign, of course, does not expect businesses to develop private armies to engage in peacekeeping operations. Rather, it asks businesses to take steps to reduce corruption and to aid in the development of infrastructure projects. Businesses do not need to do all of this out of the goodness of their hearts. Rather, the Campaign hopes that its research will demonstrate that such behaviors will have positive effects on companies' bottom lines. The Campaign hopes to emulate projects like the UN Global Compact and the World Economic Forum's "Partnering Against Corruption Initiative" in moving forward with this aim.