

# Enhancing security through peacebuilding

by Matthew Levinger



*The sculpture of a handgun with a knotted barrel can be seen in front of the United Nations building in New York City. (AP PHOTO/HARRY KOUNDAKJIAN)*

As U.S. armed forces enter the ninth year of their deployment to Afghanistan and approach their eighth year in Iraq, the question of how best to prevent and manage deadly conflict has become a central concern for top U.S. foreign policy strategists, both military and civilian. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates declared in a speech in October 2008:

“The security of the American people will increasingly depend on our ability to head off the next insurgency or arrest the collapse of another failing state.... Enlightened countermeasures we take today will bolster the internal strength of vulnerable states so that they will not harbor violent networks seeking to launch the next attack. So they will not fall prey to ethnic fissures, sectarian conflict, crime, terrorism, national disasters, economic turmoil and disease—each of which can be every bit as destabilizing as militaries on the march.”

Gates’ remarks point to the emergence of a new international environment since the end of the cold war, in which military forces are a necessary but insufficient instrument for protecting American national security. No longer is it enough to defeat an enemy on the battlefield or to defend the territory of the U.S. and its allies against a military attack. U.S. security also depends on anticipating and addressing emerging nonstate-based threats—not only political radicalization in conflict-torn regions but also tensions caused or aggravated by resource shortages, poverty, environmental degradation, economic crises and pandemic diseases.

In this complex new security environment, traditional distinctions between “hawks” and “doves” have become increasingly obsolete. In recent years, even many so-called doves have advocated military intervention to defend civilians against massive human rights abuses in Bosnia, Kosovo, Darfur and elsewhere. And

**How to facilitate, support and sustain peace are increasingly important elements of foreign policy and national security.**

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even many so-called hawks have come to argue that America's own national security requires assertive efforts by the U.S. government and other organizations to build and sustain international peace.

With the development of ever-tighter webs linking people around the world—e.g., road networks facilitating travel within developing countries and airline networks enabling trans-continental flights—threats to global security have become increasingly networked as well. Viruses, whether biological or electronic, can traverse the world in a matter of days. With the globalization of finance and manufacturing supply chains, the world has become increasingly vulnerable to systemic economic disruptions. Electronic communications and advances in weapons technologies can extend the reach of terrorists and other international criminal organizations. The effects of climate change and other environmental challenges are also felt on a global scale. People in virtually any corner of the world are within a single day's travel of the continental U.S. Practically speaking, all peoples are potentially each other's neighbors now, no longer insulated from disruptions to peace in faraway lands.

Yet the very complexity of these emerging "networked threats" renders

them opaque and difficult to grasp in an immediate and emotionally gripping way. One enduring difficulty faced by political leaders in democratic countries is that it is hard to motivate a majority of the citizenry to take on the burden of a shared sacrifice without telling a simple and vivid story explaining the necessity of the enterprise. For example, at the beginning of World War I in 1914, many Americans felt disconnected from the continentwide bloodletting among the European Great Powers. But the sinking of the *Lusitania*, along with propaganda about German barbarism, helped turn the war into a morality play; and President Woodrow Wilson's oratory that this would be the "war to end all wars" gave a high purpose to America's involvement. During World War II, the slogan "Remember Pearl Harbor!" motivated soldiers fighting not only against Japan, but also against Japan's Axis allies, Germany and Italy.

Stories such as these, which almost always contain an element of truth, can help forge a common purpose among a country's citizenry and sustain the monumental effort required to win a war. But by presenting such oversimplifications, political leaders can also create future dangers for their country. For example, Wilson's utopian pro-

nouncements justifying U.S. involvement in World War I contributed to a cynical backlash during the 1920s and 1930s, when the U.S. Congress rejected engagement in Europe's internal affairs and stood back as Germany's Adolf Hitler consolidated his grip on power.

As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pointed out in a July 2009 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, the sources of instability in the contemporary world offer opportunities as well:

"The same forces that compound our problems—economic interdependence, open borders, and the speedy movement of information, capital, goods, services and people—are also part of the solution. And with more states facing common challenges, we have the chance, and a profound responsibility, to exercise American leadership to solve problems in concert with others."

Can the U.S. afford to invest in preventing conflict and helping rebuild war-torn countries around the world? According to Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, a better question is whether the U.S. can afford *not* to make these investments: "Given the military and economic constraints facing the U.S. today, such preventive action is not a luxury but a necessity." ●

## Peacebuilding efforts

The word "peace" is notoriously difficult to define. It can be used in a passive sense to mean simply the absence of armed conflict, or in its most active and comprehensive sense to include the achievement of justice and stability. It should not be thought of as an end state, however, but as a dynamic process. For current purposes, it is enough to say that a peaceful society is characterized by the ability to create and sustain *relationships* based on reciprocal respect and a sense of shared interests among diverse elements of the community. Peacebuilding efforts can

include *preventing* the eruption of violent strife, *resolving* an ongoing conflict or assisting a community *recovering* from deadly violence.

But what exactly is **PEACEBUILDING**? The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations defines it as "measures aimed at reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, by strengthening national capacities for conflict management, and laying the foundations for sustainable peace."

Originally conceived in the context of postconflict recovery efforts, the term peacebuilding has more recently

taken on a broader meaning. It may include providing humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, ensuring security, establishing nonviolent modes of resolving conflicts, fostering reconciliation, repatriating refugees and resettling internally displaced persons (IDPs), providing trauma-healing services and aiding in economic reconstruction. As such, it also includes conflict prevention in the sense of preventing the recurrence of violence, as well as conflict management and post-conflict recovery. It may be helpful to define some of these terms. (These

definitions sometimes overlap, as the lines between some of these terms are not always clear.)

**CONFLICT PREVENTION** includes measures taken to keep low-level or long-festering disputes from escalating into violence, to limit the spread of violence if it does occur, or to avoid the recurrence of violence. Such efforts may include early warning systems, confidence-building measures (e.g., information sharing, notification of troop movements, cooperative resource management), development assistance, economic sanctions and even the deployment of peacekeeping forces.

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT** is a general term that describes efforts to limit and contain conflicts, while building up the capacities of all parties involved. A closely related term is **PEACEMAKING**, although peacemaking tends to focus on halting ongoing conflicts and reaching agreements. Both terms emphasize such measures as negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.

Other related terms include **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**, which focuses more on addressing the underlying causes of the conflict by finding common interests and overarching goals, and **CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**, a recently developed concept that emphasizes addressing the structural roots of conflict in order to diminish destructive forms of strife while developing local institutions so they can take the lead in national governance, economic development and enforcing the rule of law. Success in this process permits an evolution from internationally imposed stability to a peace that is sustainable by local actors.

Another frequently used term is **PEACEKEEPING**, actions undertaken to preserve peace where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers. Typically authorized by the UN Security Council under Chapter VI or VII of the UN Charter, these operations usually include lightly armed military personnel and have the consent of the parties involved in the conflict. The scope of peacekeeping activities has

gradually broadened over the years, to include civilian and humanitarian activities such as food distribution, transportation, establishing safe havens and other basic services.

**POSTCONFLICT RECOVERY**, also known as postconflict reconstruction, refers to the long-term rebuilding of a society in the aftermath of violent conflict. It includes political, socioeconomic and physical aspects such as disarming and reintegrating combatants, resettling IDPs, reforming governmental institutions, restarting the economy and rebuilding damaged infrastructure. The term recovery is used here because it has a broader connotation than reconstruction, which implies a mechanistic effort to rebuild the physical infrastructure and social institutions destroyed by conflict. In practice, many societies recovering from conflict develop along much different lines than those that existed before the conflict erupted.

The term **RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (R2P)** focuses more narrowly on four specific categories of violent conflict: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. A recently developed concept, R2P asserts that states have an ethical and legal responsibility to protect their people from these crimes. But if a state is unable or unwilling to do so, that responsibility falls to the international community, which may intervene militarily in extreme cases. The R2P doctrine bridges all phases of the conflict management cycle: it includes the responsibility to *prevent*, the responsibility to *react* and the responsibility to help *rebuild* communities that have been devastated by these crimes.

Peacebuilding efforts can take many different shapes, depending on the nature and stage of the conflict and on the resources that the various actors have at their disposal. In their most modest form, such missions may involve little more than “good offices”: e.g., a timely visit by a trusted third party to enable the leaders of rival groups to establish direct contact for talks, or the offer of a venue for negotiations. At the opposite extreme—as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia or the Democratic Republic of

the Congo—peacebuilding missions may comprise military and civilian deployments lasting a decade or more, involving tens of thousands of troops and costing tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars.

In conflict situations, an ounce of prevention can indeed be worth a pound of cure. When riots broke out in Kenya after the December 2007 presidential election (see the topic, Kenya and R2P, p.17 in this issue), expert observers from organizations such as the International Crisis Group warned that the violence had the potential to destabilize the Kenyan government and perhaps even to escalate into genocide. In light of these predictions, Kenya’s major international donors, including the U.S. and Britain, warned the parties to the dispute that they must exercise restraint if they expected continuing financial and diplomatic support. The international donors’ united front enhanced the leverage of former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in his efforts to mediate a political settlement. At the same time, key Kenyan actors such as the country’s leading civil society groups helped contain the crisis by urging both parties to come to a peaceful resolution in the electoral dispute; and the African Union weighed its options for intervention in the event that the violence were to escalate.

Even when large-scale violent conflict has already erupted, a strategic diplomatic intervention involving only modest resources can sometimes help prevent a downward spiral. For example, in April 1994, a tiny UN diplomatic mission to the central African nation of Burundi helped maintain peace there during the paroxysm of genocidal violence in neighboring Rwanda that killed between 500,000 and one million Rwandan civilians in just 100 days.

Like Rwanda, Burundi had experienced several episodes of catastrophic violence between its majority Hutu and minority Tutsi ethnic groups since its independence in the early 1960s. In October 1993, when Burundi’s first democratically elected Hutu president was assassinated in an attempted coup, a wave of ethnic reprisals and coun-

terreprisals killed between 30,000 and 100,000 civilians (both Tutsi and Hutu) over the next two months. The UN responded by dispatching Mauritanian diplomat Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah as the special representative of the UN secretary-general (SRSG) to Burundi.

When Ould-Abdallah arrived in Burundi, he had a support staff of two and an operating budget of \$1,000 per day. Across the border in Rwanda, the UN had deployed 320 civilians and 2,600 peacekeeping troops to support a new power-sharing agreement, with an operating budget of \$1.2 million per day. Although Ould-Abdallah had little money and no military forces at his disposal, he recruited support for his mission from respected Burundians and the local media; and he cultivated his knowledge of the various factions in order to “wield sticks discreetly.”

Ould-Abdallah performed his greatest service to Burundi during the days after Apr. 6, 1994, when a plane carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi’s new Hutu president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was shot down on approach to Kigali airport in Rwanda. Within hours of Habyarimana’s assassination, the genocide began in Rwanda, when Hutu extrem-

ists started killing high-level moderate politicians who opposed the regime. Recognizing that the violence could quickly spill over the border into Burundi, Ould-Abdallah immediately gathered together Burundi’s top Hutu and Tutsi leaders. The group made a joint announcement on Burundi’s national television network, emphasizing that Burundi’s president had not been the target of the attack. Then the group went to army headquarters in order to display the unity of the nation’s civilian and military leadership. In a series of phone calls to Burundi’s provincial governors and the commanders of the country’s various military bases, this group instructed the civilian and military leaders to work together in order to quell any violent uprisings. Within 12 hours of the assassination, order had been reestablished throughout the country, and the fragile peace held throughout the three-month nightmare of the Rwandan genocide.

But once the tipping point into large-scale violence has been passed, it can be difficult to restore order without peacebuilding interventions of a much larger scale and longer duration. Not only do wars destroy lives and physical infrastructure, they also shat-

ter relationships among communities, creating or aggravating deep-seated grievances and patterns of distrust that are difficult to overcome. Intractable conflicts between rival groups—such as in Israel-Palestine, Afghanistan, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Sudan and the Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union—can continue for generations. Even when a fragile peace is established, it is easily derailed by “spoilers,” who seek to enhance their own power or wealth by stoking the flames of conflict.

One country that has made a successful transition from intractable conflict to stable peace is the southeast African nation of Mozambique, where a two-year mediation in the early 1990s ended a brutal 16-year civil war that had caused the deaths of more than 900,000 Mozambicans and the displacement of some 5 million civilians. Strikingly, this mediation process was led not by the UN or a major power, but by a little-known Catholic lay organization called the Community of Sant’Egidio, which had been founded by a group of high school students in Rome in 1968. Sant’Egidio’s approach to the mediation focused on listening patiently to all parties to the conflict, regardless of how heinous their past crimes were, and on “shifting the goal from victory to peace.” Andrea Bartoli, now the director of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, served as a member of Sant’Egidio’s mediation team. He observes that “Sant’Egidio was able to succeed as a conduit of negotiation because of the very weakness that made it such an unlikely leader.” Paradoxically, “the weaknesses of the negotiation team reduced the possibility of imposing outside solutions (through coercive diplomacy, military threat and so forth), which forced the parties to negotiate for themselves.”

In its efforts to lead the parties toward a mutually acceptable settlement, the Community of Sant’Egidio received crucial support from a wide range of other actors—including the U.S. government (which provided technical expertise), the UN and the



*An antipersonnel-mine-detecting worker stands at a mine field near Vilancoulos in southern Mozambique, 450 km (265 miles) northeast of the capital, Maputo, in November 2004. A two-year mediation in the early 1990s ended a brutal 16-year civil war and led Mozambique to a successful transition from intractable conflict to stable peace. (REUTERS/HOWARD BURDITT /LANDOV)*

Vatican (whose backing enhanced the legitimacy of the process), the Italian government (which offered financial and logistical support), and a wide range of other states including Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, France, Britain, Portugal and Russia, all of whom participated in the later stages of the negotiations.

In Mozambique, the Community of Sant’Egidio was able to function as a successful mediator in part because its own *lack* of military and economic power allowed it to become a trusted interlocutor. But without the logistical, financial and diplomatic support of the U.S. government, the UN and other international powers, Sant’Egidio would

have lacked the credibility to lead the warring parties to a binding agreement. Successful mediation efforts often involve informal coalitions of diverse organizations, each contributing based on its own institutional comparative advantage—ranging from global economic and military power to negotiating expertise, local knowledge or personal relationships with key parties to a conflict.

Mediation experts sometimes argue that a conflict must arrive at a state of “ripeness” for negotiation before a settlement becomes possible. This condition can involve a “hurting stalemate,” where both sides recognize that they are likely to suffer more by continu-

ing the conflict than by ending it. But even when such a stalemate exists, efforts to manage or resolve a conflict can require extraordinary patience and persistence on the part of international peacebuilders. During the 1990s, the U.S. led successful efforts to mediate peace settlements in Bosnia (the Dayton accords of 1995) and in Northern Ireland (the Good Friday agreement of 1998)—but these agreements were reached only after years of effort, and even today remain vulnerable to disruption. Other conflicts, such as in Cyprus and Israel-Palestine, have defied international diplomatic efforts to reach a resolution for over half a century.

## Tools for the job

“If your only tool is a hammer,” runs an old saying, “every problem looks like a nail.” The U.S. and other nations spend hundreds of billions of dollars each year on tools for waging war, but far fewer resources on waging peace. As the cases discussed above illustrate, no “silver bullet” exists for preventing or resolving deadly conflict. Success in this field requires resourcefulness, persistence, humility, good timing and a measure of luck. But, to devise effective peacebuilding strategies, leaders need a toolbox that includes more than just the hammer of military force. Fortunately, many of the necessary instruments are already at hand. With relatively modest additional investments, combined with a more systematic and collaborative approach to the problem, the U.S. has the capacity to support the formation of more resilient social and political institutions and to advance the cause of peaceful conflict management in countries around the world.

A mediation effort led by the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) in Iraq in 2007 provides an illustration of how a larger toolkit can be indispensable to peacebuilding efforts. At the begin-

ning of the “surge” in Iraq in 2007, U.S. military commanders were frustrated and disheartened by the rising levels of violence around the country. One place of particular concern was the ethnically mixed city of Mahmoudiya, 25 miles south of Baghdad. Mahmoudiya and the surrounding area was a hotspot of so much sectarian strife, criminality and terrorist activity that it had come to be known as the “Triangle of Death.”

Local tribal leaders were fed up with the intolerable conditions of life in the city, but they saw no viable way out of the crisis. The accumulated grievances between the Shi’i and Sunni communities of Mahmoudiya made both sides unwilling to reach out to the other, and anyone seen to be collaborating with the Iraqi government or the U.S. military risked assassination by extremists. (Indeed, over the course of the reconciliation process, two prominent sheikhs were assassinated and several attempts were made on the life of the district’s “mayor.”) Meanwhile, the most important Sunni sheikhs, whose support for any reconciliation effort would be vital, had fled to Jordan, and some of them were thought to be supporting

Sunni militia activity in Mahmoudiya.

The U.S. military surge itself helped create a window of opportunity by reducing the overall level of violence in Iraq, giving local Shi’i and Sunni leaders enough confidence to approach U.S. military officers in Mahmoudiya to ask for help in identifying common ground among rival factions and reestablishing security. But the local U.S. military and civilian representatives in Mahmoudiya lacked the expertise or diplomatic connections to lead a reconciliation process on their own. So they contacted the Baghdad staff of USIP, an independent, federally funded non-profit organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1984. As a public-private institution with close connections both to the U.S. government and to the nongovernmental sector, USIP had participated in mediation and peace education initiatives around the world, including in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

In consultation with local leaders, the government of Iraq and U.S. diplomats and military officers, USIP developed the agenda for a dialogue session in Jordan involving Mahmoudiya’s Sunni and Shi’i leaders.

This initial meeting was followed by a three-day conference in Baghdad—moderated by Iraqi facilitators who had been trained by USIP—entitled “Mahmoudiya: Cornerstone for Peace and National Accord.” The agreement reached at this conference, which was signed by 31 Sunni and Shi’i tribal leaders, put forth 37 specific goals to consolidate security, restore services, develop the economy, improve local governance and promote the rule of law.

Even after the agreement was signed, its implementation required ongoing support from the Iraqi and American governments to support public services, economic development, and improvements in governance and rule of law. In the words of Rusty Barber, director of USIP’s Iraq Programs, the success

of this event did not ensure the advent of “reconciliation and tranquility” in Mahmoudiya, but it could “perhaps lay claim to be the first suture in the effort to bind the massive wound this region bears from three years of unrelenting violence.”

The effort to bring peace to Mahmoudiya required a wide range of resources and the involvement of many diverse actors: the presence of U.S. military forces to create a security environment conducive to reconciliation efforts; the availability of expert American and Iraqi facilitators to lead the dialogues; funds for travel and logistical support; the cooperation of the Iraqi and Jordanian governments, the U.S. State Department and other U.S. civilian agencies; and the participation of Sunni and Shi’i

leaders from the Mahmoudiya district.

In each of the examples of successful peacebuilding missions, a diverse range of third-party actors cooperated closely with each other and with the principal parties to the conflict in order to prevent or resolve violent strife. To establish such habits of communication and collaboration in peacebuilding activities is no small challenge. This task requires individuals with diverse identities and interests to reach a shared understanding of the causes and stakes of a given conflict, along with mutually compatible strategies for addressing it.

Vice President Joseph R. Biden declared at a security conference in February 2009, in one of the Obama Administration’s first foreign policy pronouncements: “We’ll strive to act

## Global peacebuilding initiatives

**THE UNITED NATIONS.** The UN is currently deploying more than 100,000 military and civilian staff to 17 peacekeeping operations around the world. Over the past several years, the UN has created several new offices to prevent and manage conflict, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, the UN Development Program’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. In 2005, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the World Summit Outcome Document, declaring that all UN member states have a “responsibility to protect” their citizens from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

**THE U.S. AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS.** The U.S. State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have both created offices charged with coordinating efforts to prevent or mitigate violent conflict. The Department of Defense (DOD) has also increased its commitment to “building partnership capacity” to support peacekeeping and conflict prevention missions. DOD’s new Africa Command (AFRICOM), established in 2008, is the first U.S. military command to oversee civilian as well as military operations in its area of responsibility. AFRICOM defines its mission primarily as to build “African security capacity so our partners can prevent future conflict and address current or emerging security and stability challenges.” Many other governments around the world, including Canada, Britain, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland and all four Scandinavian countries, have also established offices charged with training peacekeepers or preventing deadly conflict overseas.

**MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS.** Various regional organizations around the world, including the European Union (EU\*), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union (AU\*), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF), have all committed themselves to the goal of preventing conflict and promoting peace.

**NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs).** Many of the world’s largest humanitarian NGOs, including World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, CARE, Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee and Mercy Corps, have identified conflict prevention and peacebuilding as central components of their overall strategies for delivering development assistance and humanitarian relief. Other NGOs, such as the International Crisis Group, focus on providing timely and authoritative analysis of emerging threats of violent conflict. The Alliance for Peacebuilding is a Washington, D.C.-based umbrella group for over 50 NGOs, academic centers and think tanks focusing on conflict resolution. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a global civil society-led network based in The Hague with more than 1,000 affiliate organizations.

**INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CORPORATIONS.** The World Bank\* and similar organizations have developed a range of initiatives for preventing violence and stabilizing conflict-affected states. In addition, hundreds of major international corporations have committed themselves to the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), whose tenets include preventing violent conflict and promoting human rights.

\*For definition, see glossary on p. 103

preventively, not preemptively, to avoid whenever possible or wherever possible the choice of last resort between the risks of war and the dangers of inaction. We'll draw upon all the elements of our power—military and diplomatic, intelligence and law enforcement, economic and cultural—to stop crises from occurring before they are in front of us." Biden's remarks about conflict prevention apply generally to the task of preventing and managing violent conflict. Effective conflict management requires the coordinated application of diverse instruments of power not only by governments, but also by multilateral institutions, NGOs and private-sector firms with an interest in preventing and resolving violent strife.

Over the past decade, a wide range

of national and international institutions have made the prevention and management of violent conflict a central dimension of their mandates. (See Sidebar: Global Peacebuilding Initiatives.) This multiplicity of conflict management and peacebuilding activities, both at the institutional and grassroots levels, creates a pressing need for coordination of the activities of the diverse organizations that are addressing common challenges. Such coordination cannot simply be mandated from above, because these organizations answer to different authorities and often focus on different objectives. For example, an international development NGO, a local civil society organization and the U.S. Marines may all be operating in the same village in Afghanistan, and may all be seeking to promote peace—

but they may perceive the nature of this task in contrasting ways.

Lawrence Wocher of USIP observes that, in recent years, "the world has made tangible progress in constructing the building blocks of effective conflict prevention" by "strengthening norms and mobilizing political support for preventing armed conflict." But the U.S. and its international partners need to develop greater clarity about the strategic importance of preventing and managing conflict, and they need to communicate and cooperate more effectively in order to advance toward these objectives.

To help create a common understanding of the nature of the challenges, and to better synchronize peacebuilding activities, it is essential for such diverse organizations to be able to communi-

**ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS.** Many institutions of higher learning in the U.S. and overseas have established programs on peace and conflict studies both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Among the most prominent U.S.-based programs are the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame University, the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego, the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University and American University's program in International Peace and Conflict Resolution. Nationwide, more than 200 universities and four-year colleges and 20 community colleges in 38 states have established programs in peace studies or conflict resolution.

**PEACEBUILDING CENTERS.** By Washington standards, USIP is a modest-sized organization with about 250 staff members and a base budget of \$31 million for FY 2009. As an independent, congressionally funded institution, USIP can act as a bridge between the U.S. government and other organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, around the world. As such, USIP can convene discussions among diverse institutions with overlapping missions that may be wary of or ill-informed about the work of others.

USIP's charter instructs it to serve the people and government of the U.S. "through the widest possible range of education and training, basic and applied research opportunities and peace information services on the means to promote international peace and the resolution of conflicts among the nations and peoples of the world, without recourse to violence." USIP combines the research func-

tions of a think tank with operational work on peacebuilding projects in zones of conflict overseas; it also runs education and training programs on international conflict management for audiences both in the U.S. and abroad. By sharing its practical expertise and by facilitating relationship building among the diverse stakeholders in particular conflicts, USIP can help catalyze more effective cooperation across national and institutional boundaries.

A number of governmentally funded institutions in other countries also carry out a wide range of peacebuilding functions through research, teaching and operations on the ground in conflict zones. Such organizations include the Swiss Peace Foundation and the Geneva Center for Security Policy in Switzerland, the Pearson Peacekeeping Center in Canada, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Ghana, the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in South Africa, the Cairo Regional Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (in Egypt), the Hiroshima Peacebuilders Center in Japan, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, International Alert in Britain, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, the Folke Bernadotte Academy in Sweden, and the Center for International Peace Operations and the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management in Germany.

Although the world faces increasingly complex challenges, the good news is that practitioners from a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental institutions have begun to recognize that our fates are intertwined as never before, and that building peace must be a central mission for the U.S. and its international partners around the globe.

cate with each other in a neutral forum. Organizations such as USIP, and other similar organizations overseas, can help facilitate such dialogue.

### Mission resources

The U.S. government invests far more heavily in military than in nonmilitary foreign policy tools. For fiscal year (FY) 2008, according to Stewart Patrick of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bush Administration budgeted nearly 16 times as much for defense spending (\$623 billion) as for civilian aspects of global engagement such as diplomacy and development assistance (\$39.5 billion), even without including supplemental funding requests for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and his colleague Laura Bilmes have estimated that the war in Iraq will ultimately cost the U.S. \$3 trillion, compared to the \$5 trillion (in inflation-adjusted 2007 dollars) that it spent on World War II. In terms of personnel, the differences are even starker: According to a 2009 report jointly published by the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Joint Forces Command, “The U.S. government is drastically unbalanced with respect to military/civilian ratios,” with soldiers outnumbering diplomats and development specialists by a ratio of 210 to 1.

The funding priorities illustrated by these figures reflect, in part, America’s relationship to the external world. The word “defense” suggests the need for vigilance and unyielding resistance against enemies who seek to harm our nation. The phrase “foreign assistance,” by contrast, might be construed to mean “giving money to unfamiliar people far away.” Although charity is a worthy virtue, few people would perceive it as an essential activity for our national survival.

But the boundaries between “foreign” and “domestic” security challenges have become ever more porous in this age of networked threats. General Anthony Zinni, former commander of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), argues that money spent to help stabilize and build up the resili-

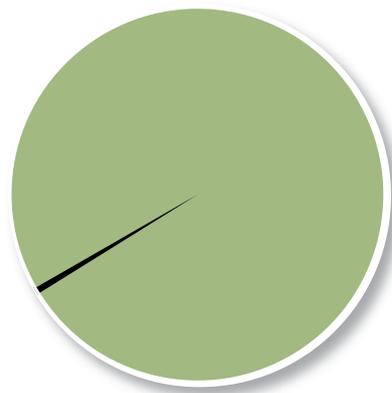
ence of fractured societies overseas is not just charity but also a prudent and pragmatic investment in U.S. national security:

“The action needed is not some 21<sup>st</sup>-century rebirth of the White Man’s Burden. Our job in the developed

Eastern Mennonite University, directs the 3D Security Initiative, which advocates an integrated approach to U.S. security comprising development, diplomacy and defense. The 3D Security Initiative is one of several groups promoting the idea of a “Unified Security

### Soldiers and Diplomats

“The U.S. government is drastically unbalanced with respect to military/civilian ratios,” with soldiers outnumbering diplomats and development specialists by a ratio of 210 to 1.



SOURCE: JUW 2009 Quicklook Report, May 20, 2009

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world is not to command and direct but to help, support, and empower.... We must think of these actions not as ‘foreign aid’ that tosses billions of dollars down some sinkhole of corruption but as investments in our own security and stability.”

The Institute for Economics and Peace, which publishes the annual Global Peace Index, describes peace as a “facilitator making it easier for workers to produce, businesses to sell, entrepreneurs and scientists to innovate and governments to regulate.” It observes:

“The world is connected in ways that were unimaginable even 50 years ago.... Global challenges call for global solutions and these solutions require cooperation on a scale unprecedented in human history. Peace is an essential prerequisite because without peace we will be unable to achieve the levels of cooperation, inclusiveness and social equity necessary to solve these challenges, let alone empower the international institutions necessary to address them.”

In order to provide sufficiently robust resources for peacebuilding efforts, some experts have called for restructuring the U.S. national security budget process. Lisa Schirch, a professor at

Budget,” which would establish a single account to fund all U.S. security spending overseas—including the Defense Department, the State Department and USAID. Lawrence J. Korb, who served as assistant secretary of defense during the Reagan Administration (1981-89), and Miriam Pemberton of the Institute of Policy Studies originated this idea and publish a Unified Security Budget for the U.S. on an annual basis.

Schirch argues that U.S. policymakers often think about security in exclusively military terms—what she calls “security landing in a helicopter.” She believes that the creation of a Unified Security Budget would help drive home the message to U.S. lawmakers and to the American public that expenditures on diplomacy and overseas development are not dispensable ornaments or frills for the federal budget, but rather critical components of a comprehensive national security strategy.

At present, the proposal for a Unified Security Budget has only limited—albeit bipartisan—support in the U.S. Congress. A somewhat similar project, which may have a stronger chance of adoption in the short run, is the congressionally funded Project on National Security Reform (PNSR).

James R. Locher III, PNSR’s executive director, was one of the chief architects of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, which restructured the DOD in order to improve cooperation among the five branches of the military. PNSR has high-level support from the legislative and executive branches of the federal government: current or former members of its Guiding Coalition include former U.S. Representative Newt Gingrich; the Obama Administration’s national security adviser, General James L. Jones; Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg; and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy.

As Locher observes, “The world has changed dramatically since passage of the National Security Act of 1947,” and the “multitude of diverse challenges” of the post-cold-war era “cannot be met by cold-war approaches that bind our rigid, bureaucratic, competitive departments and agencies.” PNSR’s proposals focus on enhancing interagency planning and coordinating mechanisms such as the National Security Council and on linking “resources to goals” by funding agencies according to “national security mission-based analysis,” including more robust funding for the U.S. diplomatic and development initiatives. PNSR has also made wide-ranging recommendations on how to improve professional education and training, information sharing and congressional oversight mechanisms in order to support more focused and effective national security policymaking.

### Security spending

Whether or not the U.S. Congress establishes a Unified Security Budget or implements all of PNSR’s recommendations, many leading American policymakers have expressed support for adjusting the mix of spending on security programs as well as better integrating nonmilitary security spending into overall U.S. strategy. Secretary of Defense Gates argues that “funding for



nonmilitary foreign affairs programs... remains disproportionately small relative to what we spend on the military.... There is a need for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security.”



General Zinni argues that, for the U.S. to prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it must reassert its “power and purpose” by engaging in a global “battle for peace.” He points out: “If you lack peace and stability in most parts of the world, it affects our way of life and our economic well-being and other things ... this isn’t a purely altruistic drill.” In public speaking engagements around the country, Zinni tells his listeners: “The *real* threats do not come from military forces or violent attacks. The *real* new threats come from instability. Instability and the chaos it generates can spark large and dangerous changes anywhere they land.”

When he presents this argument, Zinni says that he often receives a polite but skeptical response: “I hear you, General Zinni.... People are enduring terrible suffering. But so what?... Their catastrophe is never going to affect me. Where’s the violent threat to me from that?” And yet, he says, during the social hour after his

lecture, “Invariably, the same people who vehemently protest that instabilities over there will never touch us over here will start complaining” about insecurities touching their own lives: the rising price of gasoline, the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs to Asia, the influx of illegal immigrants, the uncertain future of Social Security, the threat of terrorist attacks. As Zinni points out, each of these problems “was either generated from the unstable part of the world or can be exacerbated by it.”

The world has arrived at a juncture, Zinni argues, where moral concerns and pragmatic self-interest coincide: “We have to realize that it is in America’s interest not to have growing areas of this world sink into a sea of destabilizing conditions. The problems that result will be our problems.... It is in our best interest to have a stable, secure, prosperous world, because that is the world in which we best thrive.” ●



**OPINION BALLOTS  
AFTER PAGE 16**

## QUESTIONS

1. Based on the discussion of successful and unsuccessful peacebuilding initiatives in this article, what dimensions of the conflict management “toolbox” (both of the U.S. government and of other institutions) are most in need of further development? (Such tools might include diplomatic resources, military or civilian peacekeeping forces, sanctions, economic development funds, support for rule of law and good governance, local dialogue efforts, etc.) How can this be achieved?

2. Successful conflict management efforts (as in Mozambique in the early 1990s and in Kenya after the December 2007 presidential election) are often facilitated by effective coordination among diverse third-party actors. But in other conflicts (such as in Bosnia before the Dayton peace process or in Zimbabwe and Myanmar/Burma today), the inability to achieve consensus among interested third parties (e.g., the U.S., European powers, China and the African Union) has hampered peacebuilding efforts. What strategies might the U.S. adopt, in concert with other governments and non-governmental organizations, to overcome such coordination challenges?

3. General Anthony Zinni argues that the term “foreign aid” is misleading, because it incorrectly implies that spending money to help stabilize and build up the resilience of fractured societies overseas is a purely altruistic activity. Is he right that such public spending should be seen as “investments in our own security and stability” rather than as “foreign aid”?

4. According to public polling data, the average American citizen believes that 25% of the U.S. federal budget is spent on foreign assistance programs, and that the right amount would be about 10%. The actual figure for U.S. foreign assistance programs in fiscal year 2009 was less than 1% of the federal budget. What do you think accounts for this distorted public perception of the scope of U.S. foreign assistance spending? Do you think this misperception has an effect on debates over U.S. national security priorities? Should Congress place a higher priority on funding peacebuilding initiatives as a way of enhancing national security?

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