



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

PREVENTION

PREVENTION NEWSLETTER

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MISSION

The USIP's Center for Conflict Management (CCM) designs and manages the Institute's efforts to *prevent* the initial outbreak of violent conflict, *resolve* ongoing conflicts, and *stabilize* areas emerging from conflict. The Center also conducts research, identifies best practices, and develops new tools for conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

CALENDAR

January 9: Referendum on the independence of South Sudan

January 17-18: USIP convenes the 5th U.S.-South Korea-Japan "Trilateral Dialogue in Northeast Asia" Track 1.5 conference in Seoul

January 17-20: President Hu Jintao's state visit to the U.S.

February 18: Presidential and parliamentary elections in Uganda

Spring: Round four of the ministerial level Strategic Dialogue between Pakistan and the United States

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Dear Colleagues,

It is often stated that part of the problem in gaining support for conflict prevention is that successful prevention is a "non-event." If no one takes notice, there will be no obvious political benefits. In fact, it is not only the outcome of preventive efforts that can be invisible. Frequently, preventive actions themselves escape notice too: for example, a development project designed to promote cooperation across ethnic communities, training legal professionals in international human rights standards, engaging in quiet diplomacy with government and opposition leaders.

The upsurge in action to head off a potential conflict around the Sudan referendum this month is a rare and powerful counterpoint. It is evident that the U.S. government, the UN, the African Union, civil society groups, and others have exerted tremendous energy with the explicit goal of averting a return to major violent conflict in Sudan. Of course, it is much too early to assess the ultimate value of these efforts, which can only be measured in their impact on the ground. Yet, the current case of Sudan is notable for generating much high-level attention and activity in advance of a potential conflict, rather than responding belatedly after a crisis has erupted.

Several factors have contributed to the preventive push in Sudan. First, there is a clear, discrete event that is feared could trigger major violence. In this case, the potential trigger—the referendum scheduled for January 9—is not only foreseeable, but pinned to a specific date on the calendar. Seldom are triggers to major violence so easy to identify so far in advance. Second, the history of conflict in Sudan raises fears that if war is not averted, it could be extremely long and bloody. The North-South civil war that ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 lasted more than two decades and cost some two million lives. It is easy to imagine the dire consequences of a renewed North-South conflict. Third, atrocities in Sudan's Darfur region over the last several years have generated significant public outcry and forced Sudan onto the political agenda.

The preventive surge in Sudan also raises a difficult question: How can vigorous preventive efforts be mobilized in situations where these factors are absent?

At least a partial answer can be found in the recently released report of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). The report declares preventing and responding to crisis and conflict in fragile states to be a core mission of U.S. civilian agencies—the State Department and USAID, first and foremost. It proposes a series of organizational changes to ensure that the U.S. government is better equipped to fulfill this mission.

However events play out in Sudan in the coming months, the experience will undoubtedly hold important lessons for conflict prevention. We can only hope that these will be lessons drawn from an unusually visible case of conflict prevention success, not failure.

Abiodun Williams
Vice President, Center of Conflict Management



SPOTLIGHT

Lebanon



Map of Lebanon. Source: U.S. Department of State.

“The current STL crisis is rife with sectarian overtones and is in many ways a manifestation of the sectarian divide that has plagued Lebanon for decades.”

Tensions remain high in Lebanon as the country braces for impending indictments from the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) which is investigating the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 22 others in a February 2005 car bomb attack. The STL was formally established in May 2007 by UN Security Council Resolution 1757 which created the tribunal under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. While indictments might be issued sometime this month, it is unclear whether they will be made public or will remain sealed.

It is widely anticipated that the court will indict members of the Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah. For its part, Hezbollah has increasingly ratcheted up pressure on the Lebanese government to disavow the tribunal. Hezbollah views the UN court as an existential threat and has undertaken a multi-pronged campaign to discredit the tribunal. In a November speech, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah vowed to “cut the hands” of anyone who attempts to arrest their operatives and has termed the STL an American and Israeli plot to destroy the organization. Meanwhile Prime Minister Hariri, his March 14th coalition and their Western allies continue to stress the importance of respecting the UN court and not allowing the Tribunal process to be impeded.

With growing concerns that the indictments could provoke sectarian violence in Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia – the two primary power brokers in Lebanon – have been cooperating on trying to seek a deal in advance of the indictments that would bridge the differences between Hariri and Hezbollah and prevent the crisis from reaching a more acute phase. November and December were marked by numerous rounds of shuttle diplomacy by the Saudis and the Syrians as they sought to reach a compromise between the two Lebanese camps in advance of indictments being issued.

The current STL crisis is rife with sectarian overtones and is in many ways a manifestation of the sectarian divide that has plagued Lebanon for decades. Both the Sunni and Shiite communities view the STL in existential terms. Hezbollah views the Tribunal as the latest in a series of attempts by the West and its Lebanese allies to destroy the organization. They cite numerous events including passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 calling for their disarmament, the 2006 war with Israel, and the STL process as all having the same goal – Hezbollah’s destruction. Meanwhile, Lebanon’s Sunni community also considers the UN tribunal as part of a broader struggle between the Sunni and Shiite communities in Lebanon. For them, the prospect that a key Sunni leader– Rafiq Hariri – was killed by a Shiite militant organization is beyond the pale. More broadly, the Sunni community has felt increasingly threatened by Hezbollah, particularly following several days of sectarian violence in May 2008 when Hezbollah turned its weapons on its fellow Lebanese. The publication of numerous WikiLeaks—reporting efforts by some Lebanese actors to cooperate with the United States in undermining Hezbollah— injected an additional element of mistrust among Lebanon’s sectarian actors, adding yet another layer of complexity to an extremely complicated situation.



OVER THE HORIZON— HIGHLIGHTS

Iran

On December 6 and 7, Iran and the “P5+1” countries met in Geneva to explore prospects for transcending the escalating conflict over Iran’s nuclear program. In some respects, the low expectations that all sides had going into the talks made the only decision to come out of them—namely an agreement to hold a new round of talks in January 2011—seem like faint but relevant progress. The key sticking point remains the question of enrichment. As to be expected, Iran’s chief negotiator insisted there is no room now or in the future for any discussion of Iran’s enrichment rights under the NPT. As if to anticipate this point, in advance of the talks, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a statement that suggested that the US and its partners may now be ready to endorse this right more explicitly than in the past, providing that Iran demonstrates its preparedness to address the demands of the International Atomic Energy Commission and the UN Security Council in a serious and sustained fashion. The fact that a next round of talks will take place in Istanbul adds another layer of intrigue to the story. Having previously joined with Brazil to propose a variant of the October 2009 “fuel swap agreement,” and having seen this proposal totally eclipsed by the imposition of a new set of UN Security Council sanctions, it remains to be seen whether Turkey is ready to support a version of this swap agreement – one that will meet the requirements of both Washington and Tehran. The chances are not great, but if progress on this front is registered, it could open space for a more comprehensive solution to the question of enrichment.

Pakistan

The Pakistan-U.S. relationship continued its oscillatory nature with claims of a reenergized partnership by both governments being marred by the parallel blame game and deep rooted mistrust, most recently exposed by the leaked U.S. diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks. One recurrent instigating factor has been the aerial strikes by Drones in FATA which have been stepped up tremendously to complement the troop increases in Afghanistan. The opposition to the drone strikes in Pakistan is on the rise simultaneously; the media is once again in the forefront of this opposition. The security debate in Pakistan has remained focused on the U.S. National Security Council’s December Strategy Review for Afghanistan. Opinion makers and officials are analyzing what the review’s findings mean for Pakistan’s role in the conflict and what it conveys about the future of the Pakistan-U.S. relationship. Pakistan is certain to continue positioning itself as a major player in the political settlement in Afghanistan and will derive clues from the findings of the review to determine its own stance in the coming months.

Given the importance of Pakistan’s role in Afghanistan and the differing opinions in Washington of where Islamabad stands on the issue, USIP will conduct a project to better understand the Pakistani position. The project seeks to engage with a wide spectrum of Pakistani opinion makers and officials in a number of analytical meetings to decipher Pakistan’s view on the end game in Afghanistan. USIP also continues its outreach activities: in the last quarter of 2010, nine public events were held featuring top experts who covered various aspects critical to the bilateral relationship. A Special Report on Hydropolitics



Secretary Clinton and Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi at the First U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue in Washington DC on March 24, 2010. Source: U.S. Department of State.



in Pakistan's Indus Basin was published in November and another on Police and Law Enforcement Reforms in Pakistan is forthcoming.

Korean Peninsula

On November 23, the North Korean People's Army (KPA) launched an artillery attack on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island in the disputed western maritime boundary area. Two marines and two civilians on the South Korean side were killed in the artillery exchange – the first attack on South Korea by the North since 1953. The U.S. and South Korea quickly responded by condemning the attack and conducting a joint naval exercise with the USS George Washington aircraft carrier battle group in the Yellow Sea. Despite U.S. and South Korean efforts to get China to rein in its North Korean ally in order to prevent a future provocation, Beijing instead urged both Koreas to exercise restraint and launched a diplomatic effort to convene an "emergency session" with the Six-Party Talks envoys. Washington's deep disappointment with the lack of a strong response from China resulted in a special U.S.-South Korea-Japan trilateral meeting at the State Department on December 6. North Korean provocations are likely to continue because Pyongyang now views itself as a nuclear weapons state that can carry out limited military strikes without fear of retaliation from South Korea or the United States. In March, North Korea sank the South Korean warship, the *Cheonan*.

Not only will North Korean provocations raise the level of tensions among countries in the region, they will exacerbate difficulties in U.S.-China relations. Largely ignoring these recent provocations – including the revelation in November that North Korea developed a new uranium enrichment facility – the Communist Party of China has continued its institution- and capacity-building activities in North Korea. Wu Bangguo, head of China's National People's Congress, welcomed Choe Thae-bok, head of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly, to Beijing on December 1 to discuss how the two countries can deepen bilateral economic and political ties. Rather than following Washington's renewed calls for it to apply more pressure on Pyongyang, Beijing is going in another direction – it's continuing to develop the Sino-DPRK relationship while seeking to rein in U.S.-South Korean military activities. In spite of all the careful Chinese preparations to ensure a smooth state visit in mid-January, President Hu Jintao's high-profile events in Washington may be overshadowed by a North Korean cloud.

Turkey's Role in Mideast Peace

U.S.-Turkish relations continue to experience ups and downs—for reasons that go well beyond the embarrassing revelations in Wikileaks. Although Turkey played a key role in the recent NATO summit and in discussions about future missile defense systems, there remains a gnawing divide over how to approach questions of Arab-Israeli diplomacy. Can further disagreements and a souring of relations be prevented? Can Turkey's unique role in promoting stability in a volatile Middle East—as evidenced in Iraq—endure in light of its worsening relations with Israel?

The on-going crisis of confidence between Turkey and Israel has damaged Israeli trust in Turkey's ability to play a constructive mediation role, as it did with Israel and Syria in recent years. Turkey's outreach to Hamas has not been welcome with many in the Palestinian Authority or Israel, and the larger question of Ankara's relations with Iran suggests a growing gap in threat perceptions with Washington. While it appears there is little need for direct U.S. intervention in repairing the breach between Israel and Turkey caused by the flotilla incident—given the good will generated by Turkey's assistance during the forest fires and



USS George Washington in Republic of Korea, Source: U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Charles Oki.

“Not only will North Korean provocations raise the level of tensions among countries in the region, they will exacerbate difficulties in U.S.-China relations.”



also the bilateral talks in Geneva over compensation—Washington does need to step up its dialogue with Ankara about a broader strategy for Arab-Israeli peace.

If Turkey wants to continue to be a force for resolving conflicts in its neighborhood, Ankara must take further steps to restore confidence with Israel. At the same time, Turkey would be enticed by further American action to ensure access to Gaza continues to improve, as well as more active efforts to engage Damascus—where Turkey has made important inroads recently. With Washington's own Mideast peace initiative faltering, perhaps the time is ripe to intensify U.S. engagement with Turkey—not in an effort simply to encourage improved ties to Israel, but rather as part of a dialogue aimed at generating greater regional support for peacemaking and coordinating our diplomacy so we don't appear to be working towards different ends.

For this reason, the Center is leading the Institute's efforts to improve US-Turkish relations, in the Middle East and beyond. In December 2010, USIP convened a high-level, unofficial dialogue in Turkey with leading national security figures, business leaders and former members of Congress—co-chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Foreign Minister Ilter Turkmen. Results of the program will be released in early 2011.

Kenya

In December, USIP held the first meeting of the Kenya Working Group. The meeting featured Professor Muna Ndulo, Professor of Law and director of the Institute for African Development at Cornell University, to lead a discussion about the development of the new Kenyan constitution and challenges it faces for implementation. Professor Ndulo served as an advisor to the constitutional reform efforts in Kenya. The Kenya Working Group brings together practitioners, representatives of the US government, and academics to discuss the key aspects of Kenya's National Accord, designed to end ethnic and electoral violence; share ideas; and create opportunities for collaboration on projects in Kenya. The meetings operate under Chatham House rules, to encourage frank dialogue among participants and invited guests.

Côte d'Ivoire

While the international community has recognized Alassane Ouattara as the winner in the November 28 run-off, Laurent Gbagbo, Cote d'Ivoire's sitting president, is also claiming victory. Thus far, all efforts to end the standoff have failed and there is a very real threat of widespread violence. Three possible avenues for resolution exist: a powersharing arrangement between Gbagbo and Ouattara, similar to those in Kenya and Zimbabwe; the deployment of a mutually agreed upon mediator, similar to resolution of the Guinean electoral standoff; or the re-run of the elections in the disputed constituencies. A powersharing arrangement would not be wise, as all credible accounts indicate that Ouattara is the clear winner. Similarly, all reports by international observers note that despite some irregularities in the disputed constituencies, results would not have been substantially different, so re-running the elections would not accomplish much. However, a new mediator, who focuses on finding a solution for Gbagbo's departure and reducing his support by the army, will be more likely to resolve the political crisis and avert a return to war.

PUBLICATIONS

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- "Engagement, Coercion, and Iran's Nuclear Challenge," Report of a Joint Study Group on US-Iran Policy, November 2011.
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- "An American Jolt for the Middle East Peace," Op-ed Co-Authored by Chester Crocker, Scott Lasensky, and Sam Lewis, *International Herald Tribune*, November 23, 2010.
- "Breaking the Cycle of Violence in Nigeria," USIP Special Report by Ebere Onwudiwe and Chloe Berwind-Dart, December 2010.
- "Prevention Should Be at Heart of Clinton's Reforms," Op-ed by Lawrence Woocher, *Huffington Post*, December 17, 2010.



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USIP provides the analysis, training and tools that prevent and end conflicts, promotes stability and professionalizes the field of peacebuilding.

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WORKING GROUPS

- The **Korea Working Group (KWG)** convened a private meeting in December for senior officials and analysts regarding the North Korean artillery attack on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island on November 23. USIP also conducted briefings for Congressional staffers and State Department officials in mid-December, which focused on the motivations for and limits of China's diplomatic efforts to defuse tensions on the Korean Peninsula.
- The **Lebanon Working Group (LWG)** remains active with particular focus on the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) and its implications for Lebanese stability. On December 8, the Working Group sponsored a public panel discussion entitled, "Lebanon in Crisis: Sectarian Politics, Regional Dynamics and the UN Tribunal. The panel featured Randa Slim, former Jennings Randolph Guest Scholar at USIP, Aram Nerguizian, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Andrew Tabler, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and Mona Yacoubian, U.S. Institute of Peace