



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

November 2: All-day USIP Conference marking 20 years since the Madrid Peace Conference: Lessons Learned. Speakers include former Secretary of State James A. Baker, III and current Deputy Secretary of State Ambassador William Burns.

Mid-November: Next round of Commerce Secretary-level bilateral talks on normalizing Indo-Pakistan trade relations.

November 28: Presidential and Legislative Elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (tentative).

November 30: USIP Public event with Dr. Bates Gill (SIPRI) on his USIP Special Report titled "China's North Korea Policy: Assessing Interests and Influences."

December 14-15: 6th U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Dialogue in Northeast Asia (TDNA) Track 1.5 Conference at USIP.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Saving Syria from Civil War" *Foreign Policy.com* Article by Mona Yacoubian, October 5, 2011.
- "Mr. Lee Goes to Washington" *USIP on the Issues* by John Park, October 11, 2011.
- "Landmark Hamas and Israel Prisoner Swap" *USIP on the Issues* by Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen, October 12, 2011.
- "Preventing Electoral Violence: An International Priority" Abiodun Williams, *ACUNS Informational Memorandum*, No. 3, 2011.

Dear Colleagues,

The concept of preventive diplomacy is gaining renewed prominence at the United Nations over 50 years since it was introduced by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold during the height of the Cold War. It is one of the most important ideas ever put forward at the UN, and all subsequent Secretaries-General have practiced preventive diplomacy with varying degrees of success. Preventive diplomacy was at the heart of Boutros Boutros-Ghali's landmark report, *An Agenda for Peace*, published in 1992. Kofi Annan saw preventive diplomacy as part of operational preventive strategies, and sought to move the UN from a "culture of reaction" to a "culture of prevention."

In August, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a comprehensive report—*Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results*—on the use of preventive diplomacy as a means to resolve tensions and crises before they escalate. Ban noted that there are several reasons for the growing attention to preventive diplomacy: "Foremost is the recurring and devastating impact of armed conflict on individuals, societies and economies, coupled with the recognition—all the more acute in these strained financial times—that failure to prevent conflict is extremely costly." Ban cited Sudan, Guinea, and Sierra Leone as recent cases in which preventive diplomacy by the UN helped to avert or contain conflict.

The Secretary-General's report also identifies a number of priorities to enhance the successful use of preventive diplomacy: First, early warning and early action; second, strengthening the UN's strategic partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations, civil society, and independent mediators; third, ensuring the sustainability of political agreements; fourth, providing more financial and human resources for the Organization's mediation efforts.

On September 22, the Security Council held a High-Level Meeting on Preventive Diplomacy and issued a Presidential Statement. The Council underlined the political, humanitarian, moral and economic advantages of preventing the outbreak and escalation of violent conflicts. As Ban told the Council, "better preventive diplomacy is not an option; it is a necessity."

Abiodun Williams
Acting Senior Vice President
Center for Conflict Management
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SPOTLIGHT

The Palestinian Quest for Statehood

“The relevant leaderships should capitalize on their recent boosts in domestic popularity to pursue serious progress towards peace.”

On September 23rd, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas submitted an application to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to admit Palestine as a full-state member of the U.N. The United States publicly committed itself to vetoing any eventual vote in the Security Council, asserting that a return to direct negotiations is the only viable path to a two-state solution.

President Abbas could have avoided a protracted and likely-unsuccessful Security Council bid in favor of a more certain, yet watered down, General Assembly vote. However, he likely calculated that a retreat from a long-promised (or threatened, in the eyes of Israel and the United States) Security Council bid would be domestically disastrous. Palestinian expectations were high and PLO officials had climbed too far up the proverbial tree to jump down unscathed by the fallout of public disappointment. Popular uprisings that have been sweeping the Arab world for the past 10 months are paramount enough in the consciousness of the Palestinian leadership that the avoidance of public disaffection seems a matter of political survival. Additionally, whether a primary motivation or an incidental yet useful consequence, the Security Council route carried with it the benefit of buying time. Abbas earned a symbolic victory among his people for facing down U.S. pressure and bringing global attention back to the stalled cause of Palestinian statehood, while opting for a process which could drag on long enough for the parties to find a way back to the negotiating table.

This is precisely the hope of the Middle East Quartet (comprised of the United States, Russia, the United Nations, and the European Union) which issued a statement calling for a resumption of negotiations within a month. In the same statement, they directed praise and encouragement at the Palestinian state building project and called for a donor's conference. Their message is clear: calls in the U.S. congress to cut off aid to the Palestinians, and by members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet to withhold Palestinian tax revenues, are counterproductive. Israel itself seems aware that while perhaps tempting for them to exact a price on Abbas for forcing the U.N. showdown, their own interests are strongly dependent upon the continued success of Palestinian state building. Predictions of violence erupting in the wake of a statehood bid proved unrealized: a fact many attribute to the success of Israeli and Palestinian security cooperation. But how long can the parties reap the fruits of security cooperation and state building absent linkage to a political process with the prospect of a negotiated solution?

To this end, the relevant leaderships should capitalize on their recent boosts in domestic popularity to pursue serious progress towards peace. Not only did Abbas return from the U.N. to a hero's welcome, but Netanyahu also received strong support in Israel for his impassioned defense of his country's position at the General Assembly. Netanyahu has also increased his political capital by concluding a deal with Hamas—just two weeks later—to bring kidnapped soldier and national symbol Gilad Shalit back home to Israel. Further, while President Obama was roundly criticized by the Palestinians for his General Assembly speech which was seen as a one-sided outpouring of support for Israel, this did serve the purpose of building Israeli



official and public trust in Obama. Such faith had been strikingly absent—a fact considered by many to have impeded a renewal of the peace process. The U.S. should now seize this window of opportunity. It may be no longer able to go it alone as broker, but its role remains crucial. Engagement of the Quartet, surrounding the U.N. vote, suggests that the Administration recognizes this dynamic. There are strong obstacles to overcome, but while the Security Council weighs a vote on Palestinian statehood, no time should be wasted in bringing the parties back to the table in order that they may bring about this reality themselves.

OVER THE HORIZON— HIGHLIGHTS

Pakistan

The past year has seen a progressive deterioration in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Last month, ties reached a new low with the outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen calling the Afghan militant group the Haqqani Network a “veritable arm” of Pakistan’s intelligence agency. While tensions have been contained for now, the future of the relationship looks grim as military-to-military ties have been downgraded, and the strategic dialogue process between the two sides has all but stalled. Meanwhile, troubling signs continue to emanate from within Pakistani society. The assassin of Punjab’s Governor Salman Taseer, who killed the governor in January this year for opposing the country’s blasphemy law, was recently sentenced with the death penalty. The reaction from the street has been disturbing; support for the assassin has grown as thousands came out to oppose the verdict and defend his action in the name of religion.

USIP’s Pakistan program continues its multipronged and long-term approach, both in terms of enhancing mutual understanding between these two troubled partners as well as in helping to check growing concerns about radicalization and violent extremism in the country. USIP is expanding its activities in Pakistan on the issue of countering violent extremism (CVE). Over the next three years, USIP will broaden its grant making program to civil society organizations working on CVE-related issues across Pakistan, and map radicalization within the Pakistani media while developing new narratives and content for the electronic media.

Korean Peninsula

On October 13, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak capped his state visit to Washington with an address to a joint session of Congress. In many respects, the state visit represented further progress towards realizing the Joint Vision Statement that Presidents Obama and Lee unveiled in June 2009. Amid setbacks and chronic challenges in almost every major region, Washington views South Korea as a linchpin on a global scale. From hosting the G20 summit in 2010 to preparing to host the next Nuclear Security Summit in 2012, South Korea has been establishing itself as a global partner in addressing common challenges ranging from rebalancing the international economy to preventing the use of nuclear material for terrorist attacks.

From a prevention perspective, the state visit highlighted the effectiveness of the U.S.-South Korean alliance in preserving peace and stability by deterring North Korean provocations following the 2010 attacks by the North against the South. While security analysts believe that



*US President Barack Obama and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak following a bilateral meeting at the Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, November 11, 2010.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.*



this enhanced defense posture has kept North Korean provocations in check, it has elicited a strong reaction from China, which views the deployment of an aircraft carrier group as a U.S. military capability that also threatens Chinese territory. USIP will be engaging current and former policymakers and advisers in Track 1.5 activities to better assess these developments and examine their implications for regional stability.

National Elections in Tunisia

On October 23, Tunisia held national elections for the creation of a constituent assembly. The latter's 220 members will be charged with one mission: to produce, in under one year, a new constitution for a democratic Tunisia. The country whose popular protests in February 2011 set the stage for a cascade of political rebellions in Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Syria, will now have another opportunity to demonstrate that the state which created the first Arab constitution (in 1861), has resumed its role as a beacon of political change for the entire Middle East. Little Tunisia, a country of no more than 12 million people, will inevitably bare a responsibility that extends far beyond its own national boundaries.

But there remains a troubling gap between the dynamics of elite politics and popular struggles of every kind (particularly economic). Part of this divide echoes the gap between the urban, Western oriented world of Tunisia at the coast, and the more impoverished and traditional rural hinterlands. The young people in rural towns and villages—the very ones that helped bring about the “Tunisian Revolution,” see the politics of Tunisia as theater irrelevant to their immediate concerns—employment, education, regional isolation and underdevelopment. But if such perceptions are understandable, the distinctly political struggles being waged in Tunis and other locals are not in fact mere theater. The debates between Islamists and secularists, for example, nearly derailed the recent elections, an outcome that was finally avoided when some 10 parties hammered out an agreement on the modalities of the constituent assembly and its temporary powers. The challenge for Tunisia is twofold: first, advance a process of constitution making that will inevitably be contentious if not fractious. The declared good will of all the parties, including Al-Nahda, the largest Islamist party and clear frontrunner, will not in and of itself overcome some basic divides. Hard discussions on compromises will have to be found on issues relating to the relationship of Mosque to state, or even the more fundamental question of what kind of political system Tunisians want. The debate around these questions brings up the second challenge, which is to make sure that the quest for a new constituent advances in a timely way, and even more so, that efforts be established—through NGOs, the public schools, and the media—to communicate to all Tunisians the importance of what is going on in the heart of Tunis. Managing expectations and the inevitable disillusionment that flows from such expectations will be tricky business, particularly in the context of a continued economic slump that may get worse before it gets better.

“There remains a troubling gap between the dynamics of elite politics and popular struggles of every kind. . .”



USIP's Daniel Brumberg during a talk organized by the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, Tunis, Tunisia, September 15, 2011.

Lebanon Highlight: Fears of Fallout over Syria's Uprising Grow

While the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) remains a key issue of contention among Lebanon's key political players, the country remains riveted by Syria's uprising. Across Lebanon's diverse political spectrum, key actors share deep concerns about the potential negative spillover of Syria's escalating crisis. In particular, many are worried that should Syria descend into a sectarian civil war, Lebanon's delicate sectarian balance will also be disrupted. The potential for larger refugee flows into northern Lebanon is another key



concern. Spillover violence could also ignite tensions inside the volatile country. Syrian soldiers have pursued oppositionists across the porous border into Lebanon a few times, even firing on the Lebanese army in one instance. The Lebanese government will continue to monitor developments inside Syria closely, seeking to insulate Lebanon from further spillover.

The STL is also moving forward. However, a critical battle over the Lebanese government's funding for the STL is beginning to take shape. Lebanon is required to provide 51% of the court's funding. Yet, Hezbollah and its March 8th allies, who currently hold a majority in the Cabinet, remain adamantly opposed to providing funding to the Tribunal. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Najib Miqati has assured the international community that Lebanon will meet its international obligations, including providing STL funding. In the coming weeks, these differences could come to a head in the Cabinet, potentially threatening the government's stability and putting Lebanon on a collision course with the international community.

The Responsibility to Protect: Back at Square One?

On October 4, the UN Security Council failed to take decisive action against the crackdown on civilians by the Syrian regime. Permanent Members Russia and China refused to accept another invocation of the Responsibility to Protect at the Council and vetoed a mild resolution that condemned "the grave and systematic human rights violations and the use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities". These vetoes, together with the abstentions from the other BRICS and Lebanon, represent an R2P-wary backlash following the NATO operation in Libya. The Libyan experience certainly strengthened the misperception that any reference to R2P automatically allows for 'all means necessary'. The Russian and Lebanese ties with the Syrian regime also stand in stark contrast with the politically isolated position of the Qaddafi regime, and allowed the other BRICS to bandwagon on the Russian opposition.

Following the 'humanitarian moment' in Libya, this Security Council deadlock signifies a reminder of the continuing importance of realpolitik. But this reality check and apparent blow for the R2P principle does not mean R2P advocates are back at square one. Despite the mixed results, the centrality of R2P lingo in Security Council discussions on Côte D'Ivoire, Libya and Syria indicates another step away from its traditional ad hoc approach to prevent mass atrocities. As we experienced on October 4, international atrocity prevention will remain conditioned by geopolitics, and our score sheet will display conscience-shocking levels of inconsistency for some time to come. But R2P's normative potential has the ability to counter realpolitik to some extent, and slowly transform into the standard framework for international responses to imminent or ongoing atrocities.

WORKING GROUPS

- The **Korea Working Group (KWG)** hosted a closed roundtable discussion on October 5 at USIP entitled "Unification, Denuclearization, Succession, Provocations: Where are we in Dealing with North Korea?" In early October, the Working Group conducted briefings on the Hill focusing on the status of U.S.-North Korean and inter-Korean talks, as well as implications of deepening Sino-North Korean economic ties on denuclearization efforts. On October 6, key findings from KWG research on China's North Korea policy were presented at the Harvard Kennedy School. On October 21, the Working Group conducted a briefing on its recent Track 1.5 activities for



*UN Security Council Vote on Syria, New York, October 4, 2011.
Source: UN News Centre*

“This reality check and apparent blow for the R2P principle does not mean R2P advocates are back at square one.”

- "Understanding the Regional Dynamics of Syria's Uprising: The Case of Lebanon and Hezbollah" *USIP Peace Brief* by Mona Yacoubian, forthcoming November, 2011.
- "The Responsibility to Protect and Peacemaking," Abiodun Williams and Jonas Claes. In *Peacemaking*, edited by Andrea Bartoli, Susan Allen, and Zachariah Mampilly (Praeger: forthcoming November 2011).

newly promoted general officers and their civilian-equivalent colleagues who were participating in the DoD's National Security Studies Program.

- The **Lebanon Working Group (LWG)** hosted the Registrar of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) at the U.S. Institute of Peace on October 13.
- The third meeting of the **Responsibility to Protect Working Group (R2PWG)** was held on October 19. This meeting, co-chaired by Secretary Madeleine Albright and Ambassador Richard Williamson, focused on the role of Congress in atrocity prevention and featured briefings from current and former Members and key Congressional staff, including Senator John McCain.



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