



## CHAPTER 3

# EARLY PREVENTION: Engaging before the Crisis

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

—MARGARET MEAD

The Genocide Prevention Task Force believes that early prevention is not only the preferred course of action in strategic, resource, and moral terms; we also believe that engaging early can successfully obviate the need for a much more difficult crisis response at a later stage. Early prevention, however, is not easy. Building sustainable peace in fragile societies requires serious long-term investment. The U.S. government will need to increase resources, boost capacities, and exercise leadership to make prevention a priority. Because we cannot be certain where the next genocide will take place, the United States must be prepared to engage effectively in many complex situations simultaneously.

The recommendations in this chapter are not intended to be a panacea for all failing states or societies in conflict. However, the task force recognizes that mass atrocities and genocide almost always occur in the context of violent conflict or in the wake of major political instability, and that these factors are most prevalent in impoverished countries where ordinary citi-

zens lack economic opportunities. We believe, therefore, that promoting economic development and strengthening capacities to prevent instability and violent conflict of all kinds should be integral parts of a genocide prevention strategy. Many other efforts have addressed these broad challenges, notably including the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (1997), the Center for Global Development's Commission on Weak States and U.S. National Security (2004), and most recently, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor (2008). We recognize the value of the results of these efforts for our work and seek to build on them by developing proposals specifically designed to prevent genocide and mass atrocities at the earliest possible stage.

### Major Challenges

Effective early prevention requires: (1) an understanding of the conditions and triggers that lead to and enable the commission of mass atrocities, (2) the means required to mitigate those conditions, and (3) a concerted strategy to apply those means.

The task force finds that mass atrocities are generally perpetrated when underlying risk factors—such as ethnic or sectarian discrimination, nationalist myths, armed insurgency, or political and economic exclusion—are exploited by opportunistic elites seeking to amass power and eliminate competitors. Therefore, early prevention will have a better chance of succeeding when integrated efforts address *both underlying causes of conflict and the means and motives of leaders*.

Grievances over inequitable distribution of power and resources appear to be a fundamental motivating factor in the commission of mass violence against ethnic, sectarian, or political groups. That same inequality may also provide the means for atrocities to be committed. For example, control of a highly centralized state apparatus and the access to economic and military power that comes with it makes competition for power an all-or-nothing proposition and creates incentives to eliminate competitors. This dynamic was evident in Rwanda and Burundi and is serious cause for concern in Burma today.

It is equally important to focus on the *motivations* of specific leaders and the tools at their disposal. There is no genocidal destiny. Many countries with ethnic or religious discrimination, armed conflicts, autocratic governments, or crushing poverty have not experienced genocide while others have. The difference comes down to leadership. Mass atrocities are organized by powerful elites who believe they stand to gain from these crimes and who have the necessary resources at their disposal. The heinous crimes committed in Nazi-occupied Europe, Cambodia, and Rwanda, for example, were all perpetrated with significant planning, organization, and access to state resources, including weapons, budgets, detention facilities, and broadcast media.

There are also key *triggers* that can tip a high-risk environment into crisis. These include unstable, unfair, or unduly postponed elections; high-profile assassinations; battlefield victories; and environmental conditions (for example, drought) that may cause an eruption of violence or heighten the perception of an existential threat to a government or armed group. Sometimes potential triggers are known well in advance and preparations can be made to address the risk of mass atrocities that may follow. Poorly planned elections in deeply divided societies are a commonly cited example, but deadlines for significant policy action, legal judgments, and anniversaries of highly traumatic and disputed historical events are also potential triggers that can be foreseen.

In order to ameliorate these conditions and triggers, effective early prevention efforts need to match tools to the most salient factors in a given context. Even with a targeted strategy, such efforts to change underlying social, economic, or political conditions are difficult and require sustained investment of resources and attention. Given the challenge of stimulating constructive, long-term change in troubled environments, targeting leaders and their resources through positive and negative inducements may be one of the most effective strategies to steer a country off the path to genocide at an early stage.

The task force is keenly aware that increasing early prevention efforts faces significant hurdles and that early engagement is fundamentally a speculative venture. It is difficult to prove that a crisis would have occurred or been more severe but for the investment made in preventive efforts. There

are few cases, like the UN Preventive Deployment in Macedonia, that are widely agreed examples of successful preventive action.

The inability to demonstrate clear successes is vexing to policymakers who must focus limited resources. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that watch lists of countries “at risk” can be long, due to the difficulty of anticipating specific crises in a world generally plagued by instability. Paradoxically, the resource limits facing decision makers are precisely why effective early prevention is so important: to keep potential crises off the front burners. Preventing crises from emerging allows us to respond more effectively to those that are not prevented. At the same time, genocide almost always occurs in the context of violent conflict, so progress in preventing or ending violent conflict will have a direct and positive impact on preventing genocide or mass atrocities.

### **Readiness to Meet the Challenge**

The capacity and resources of the United States dedicated to the pre-crisis prevention of mass atrocities are limited and dispersed. There are no specific entities or programs devoted to the early prevention of genocide or atrocities per se. All such resources will be found more generally under “conflict prevention,” and even there dedicated resources are limited. Instead, conflict prevention is generally a subordinate goal seen as a part of overall policy considerations such as national security, good governance, and poverty reduction. The significant exception is for efforts in post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction, where preventing a relapse into conflict is a high priority.

### **Assessment**

As elaborated in Chapter 2, the intelligence community and diplomats generate a range of analyses on conflict and atrocities risk and early warning. For crafting effective pre-crisis strategies, detailed assessments of conflict dynamics are particularly important. In this vein, the State Department’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) and USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) have led the development of an interagency conflict assessment

framework, which can be expected to reveal conflict dynamics relevant to the risk of mass atrocities, but as yet it is not widely used. CMM, more generally, seeks to integrate conflict mitigation and management into USAID's analysis, strategies, and programs, including by using USAID's own conflict assessment framework.

### ***Policy***

S/CRS is mandated to coordinate and institutionalize civilian capacity and action to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations. It undertakes country-specific planning and develops generic tools for assessment and implementation, and it has begun to focus limited resources on instability in countries beginning to show signs of violent conflict. There is not a specific focus on prevention of atrocities in its mandate or planning, but given its focus on conflict and efforts to develop new civilian capacity to respond to crises, S/CRS would be a logical place to develop doctrine on genocide prevention.

The State Department Office of War Crimes Issues (S/WCI), described in Chapter 1, primarily addresses post-atrocities accountability and U.S.-held detainee issues, and works very little on direct prevention efforts. The Policy Planning Staff at the State Department provides analysis and guidance to the secretary on a range of issues including prevention of conflict, but it is not known to have pursued any specific planning on the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. Ultimately, the National Security Council (NSC) has responsibility for policy coordination on issues related to national security, including conflict, genocide, and mass atrocities. But the NSC has been primarily consumed by crisis management, not crisis prevention.

### ***Implementation***

The U.S. government has robust capacity to undertake conflict prevention initiatives through the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury, and Commerce as well as USAID, and also through the considerable extended foreign aid apparatus that includes the National Endowment for Democracy and the party institutes, the United States Institute of Peace, and other NGOs and contractors working throughout the world.

The USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) focuses on short-term rapid response to a variety of crises, but OTI also does some work on peacebuilding and conflict management, supporting mediation efforts in places such as Aceh, Indonesia and programs promoting dialogue between minority groups and government officials to reduce tensions in places such as Venezuela.

In addition, significant budgetary allocations go for efforts that contribute to conflict prevention indirectly. For example, the Human Rights and Democracy Fund administered by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) provided more than \$300 million in grants to projects around the globe in fiscal year 2007. In addition, as detailed below, governance programs, development efforts, and security sector reform (SSR) are all essential to reducing risks of large-scale violence. Thus, the U.S. government invests each year in many projects that arguably have a connection to genocide prevention, although they are not specifically designed or deployed for this purpose.

The U.S. military establishment also has demonstrated an increasing interest in conflict prevention. Defense Department Directive 3000.05, issued in 2005, made stability operations a core mission of the U.S. armed forces. The resulting initiatives to build such capabilities are affecting training and doctrine, redirecting substantial resources, and enhancing the military's need for stronger collaboration with civilian agencies responsible for other elements of stabilization operations. The International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) is also meant to contribute to conflict prevention by training foreign military officers in principles and practices of democratic governance. Similarly, the Expanded IMET program trains civilian leaders in oversight and management of the military, a critical capacity to ensure civilian control of the armed forces. The military's role is discussed further in Chapter 5.

### ***Multilateral and International Capacity***

Our multilateral and international partners likewise have a general conflict prevention perspective rather than a direct focus on genocide and mass atrocities, and also suffer somewhat from lack of coordinated policies and implementation. Several individual governments, plus UNDP's Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the

World Bank, the African Union, and the European Union are all actively engaged in conflict prevention, with special focus on preventing relapse in post-conflict societies. Other than very small initiatives by the UN secretary general, none of these efforts are specific to preventing genocide. We discuss international partnerships further in Chapter 6.

## Responding to the Challenge

### *Strategy and Tools*

Successful early prevention requires a multifaceted strategy that *simultaneously reduces capacities and motivations* for mass violence while *increasing the social and institutional safeguards* against mass violence. Like all crimes, genocide requires a combination of means and motive. Disrupting the link between the tools of mass violence—for example, proliferation of small arms, unaccountable security forces, hate media, and misappropriated funds—and the proponents of violence is essential. It is also crucial to change the perceived costs and benefits to ruthless leaders by creating a sense of security and shared well-being among disparate groups. At the same time, accountable institutions and a strong civil society will provide a bulwark against the designs of conflict entrepreneurs. The refusal of security forces or judicial officials to implement abhorrent policies can diminish the capacity and legitimacy of such efforts. Furthermore, popular resistance to mass violence by a broad cross-section of society, rather than solely vulnerable groups, can be a far more powerful response than international condemnation.

A targeted pre-crisis atrocities prevention strategy thus requires focusing on three primary elements: *leadership*, *institutions*, and *civil society*. It is in these pillars of modern society that the capacity both to undertake and to prevent genocide is found. To target these critical elements, we need to expand and hone the tools available for genocide prevention and wield them effectively. Ultimately, there is no single model or checklist appropriate for every environment, nor is any country irreversibly prone to genocide. Standing alone, none of these pillars can support an effective pre-crisis genocide prevention strategy. When translated into tailored, context-specific approaches, however, they form our best hope of never again having to say “never again.”

***Recommendation 3-1: Early prevention strategies should aim to influence leaders by using positive and negative inducements, aggressive enforcement of international regimes, and fresh approaches to conflict transformation.***

Leaders—whether presidents, generals, traditional chiefs, or religious figures—are at the core of the political and social dynamics that lead toward or away from atrocities. Genocide requires significant leadership to rally perpetrators and to gather and deploy resources. Whether committed with chemical weapons, Kalashnikovs, or machetes, mass atrocities require the resources, organization, discipline, and ideology that are supplied by leaders who believe they have something to gain from genocide. Such decisions are not sudden; planning and creating a conducive environment can take place over years. Thus, the ability to influence leaders, to change their calculus, alter their goals, or diminish their capacity to do harm well before atrocities begin, is a fundamental element of a successful early prevention strategy.

Preventing genocide also requires leadership. Whether by bridging the divide between estranged groups, contesting elections against demagogues, or raising concern abroad, successful pre-crisis engagement will rest principally on the ability and willingness of indigenous leaders to act. Providing resources and support to such leaders while increasing their accountability are equally important elements of a successful early prevention strategy.

*Employ positive inducements.* Foreign assistance in the form of grants, loans, debt relief, budgetary support, technical assistance, and equipment and training can be effective means of persuading leaders to pursue broader goals of peacebuilding. Favorable trade and investment policies have similar dual-use potential in rewarding positive leadership while also expanding economic empowerment and promoting economic and political interdependence. Political and other official recognition and diplomatic attention are often important carrots that can tempt isolated regimes to pursue responsible policies toward their people.

*Use negative inducements.* These inducements may help deter or dissuade leaders with poor human rights records from committing atrocities by signaling the resolve of the international community, eliminating access to resources necessary to undertake mass violence, or directly attacking the assets, privileges, and stature of leaders. Even before a genocidal crisis has



taken hold, sanctions against specific industries, imports, or exports, or against travel and finances of specific individuals, can be a powerful tool, if properly targeted to ensure they do not damage the economic opportunities of ordinary citizens and if broadly supported by international and especially regional partners. Aid conditionality may be used to improve the behavior of regimes that benefit from significant external financial assistance. Threatening legal and moral accountability for violations of international law, especially in the era of the International Criminal Court and ad hoc tribunals, signals potentially serious repercussions for inexcusable behavior. The indictments of Liberia's Charles Taylor, Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, and Iraq's Saddam Hussein are emblematic of this trend. Public shaming through regional and international human rights mechanisms can also influence the behavior of regimes that seek to escape isolation and opprobrium.

*Interdict funds and arms.* Genocides are organized by people with access to weapons and funds, and with the network and assets to distribute them. Resources provided by external actors frequently aid in the commission of atrocities. In those countries identified to be at risk, a high priority should be placed on identifying any effort to marshal and distribute resources intended for the commission of atrocities. Specific responses may include tracking arms purchases and financial transactions, arms embargoes, sanctions or legal actions against individuals or public and private enterprises involved, and restrictions in resource flows either through limits on the marketing of products (such as conflict diamonds and timber) or escrows on public resources such as oil and gas revenues.

*Build collaborative capacity.* War and long-standing systemic discrimination and exclusion produce deep mistrust, inhibit communication, and dehumanize opponents. In order to create a physical and psychological environment suitable for reducing tensions and building trust, leaders must (re) learn how to collaborate across divisions within their society and must eschew a zero-sum mentality of politics. Programs that bring government and community leaders together to build relationships and develop their communication skills and mutual understanding can help transform leaders from adversaries into partners. The Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP) and the Iterative Peacebuilding Initiative in Kirkuk, Iraq are two examples of programs in atrocity-prone environments that bring together leaders to engage in a process of dialogue and reconciliation that

builds confidence and skills to resolve problems together. More than simply workshops, these processes use complex simulation exercises to force adversaries to collaborate and resolve specific issues relevant to their own ongoing process of conflict transformation. In Burundi, for instance, military leaders were able to overcome a long-standing impasse over the ethnic composition of the army following an intensive BLTP retreat.

***Recommendation 3-2: Early prevention strategies should support development of institutions in high-risk states by supporting power sharing and democratic transition, enhancing the rule of law and addressing impunity, and reforming security forces.***

Moving societies away from conflict and impunity and toward accountability and the rule of law requires the development and reform of key institutions. The distribution of power and resources in a society and the protection of the basic rights of its citizens must be determined according to fundamental agreed principles of fairness and equality and must be administered according to the rule of law. The powerful must be constrained by rules and transgressions must be punished. Forging broad consensus on the rules of the game and creating institutions to uphold those rules and guard against their abuse is of paramount importance to preventing atrocities.

*Support power sharing and democratic transition.* Grievances over power sharing and resource distribution are one of the most common elements in atrocity-prone environments; reaching a sustainable agreement among communities in discord and their leaders is a necessary step in the transformation of the conflict. There is no one formula for power distribution. Such choices must be based on demographic, geographical, historical, and other contextual factors. Perhaps most important, however, is that the fundamental rules of the game are inclusive and agreed upon by concerned parties.

To this end, the more representative and accountable the form and method of governance, the more likely that, over time, rules will be respected and enforced. Meaningful checks and balances among the branches of government—horizontal accountability—increase the likelihood that legislative and judicial oversight will help constrain abuses by the executive. Similarly,

distributing power among the national, regional, and local levels—vertical accountability—can help ensure that resources are distributed to minority populations and that political exclusion is minimized.

While democratic governance is among the best long-term hedges against genocide, the introduction of electoral competition into divided societies can heighten the prospect of conflict. It is, therefore, critical that governance arrangements remove the mentality of zero-sum, winner-take-all politics that drive impulses to demonize, exclude, and exterminate. Far more effort can be devoted to increasing electoral cooperation rather than competition and to ensuring that electoral systems produce democratic actors.

The organization of political parties and conduct of elections are crucial in democratic transitions. First, the outcome of a good election must reflect—and must be seen to reflect—the will of the people. Actual or feared disenfranchisement or rigging can be an immediate trigger of intergroup conflict, as was evident in the violence following Kenya's 2007 national elections. Second, the electoral system must allow for a high degree of representation. Representativeness does not require explicit provision for ethnic quotas, but it does require ensuring that all legitimate groups feel included in the political process. Constructing an electoral commission that reflects the diversity of the population is a critical foundation. Third, the electoral process should help to build trust between communities. Identity-based political parties, for example, tend to form in conflict environments, exacerbating tensions and pushing communities toward extremes. To ameliorate this trend, electoral laws can be designed to provide incentives for coalition building and disincentives for the formation of exclusionary ethnic or sectarian parties. Political parties that cohere around ideology—so long as it is democratic—rather than identity deepen cross-community coalitions interested in broader economic or political ends.

*Enhance the rule of law and address impunity.* Creating confidence among both elites and citizens that the rules will be clear, fair, and equally applied is fundamental to ensuring their participation in a rule-based system. The rules themselves must be unambiguously free of harmful discrimination, and the institutions that create, apply, and enforce the rules must be representative and fulfill their functions without regard to the status of the concerned parties. This requires that both law making and law enforcement are transparent and carried out by competent and accountable insti-

tutions. An independent judiciary, a professional prosecutorial service, and an independent bar association create the foundation for a legal system that will challenge the illegal actions of the powerful while defending the rights of the weak. Independent mechanisms to counter corruption are also essential. Supporting these institutions, as well as creating access to justice for the poor or excluded, is a critical component of efforts to address the causes of deeply rooted conflict and constrain abuses of power that may lead to atrocities.

As noted in Chapter 2, the existence of past atrocities is associated with elevated risk of future atrocities. It is, therefore, fundamental to address the legacy of past abuses. Addressing the past is required not only to serve the interests of justice and to remove cause for retribution, but also to end a culture of impunity that discounts the costs of violence. Whether through prosecution of perpetrators at the local or international level, truth-seeking, or the teaching of accurate history to all citizens, these processes of reconciliation are essential. The Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation is one noteworthy international initiative that is pursuing accountability, acknowledgment, and the resolution of historical disputes.

The United States should extend its support for indigenous transitional justice mechanisms that foster reconciliation around the world. Previous examples include U.S. technical assistance, through OTI at USAID, for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru and U.S. funding for outreach efforts to promote citizen engagement in the *gacaca* courts in Rwanda after 1994. The United States should also continue to provide assistance through programs such as the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program at the U.S. Department of Justice, which works with foreign governments to develop professional and transparent law-enforcement institutions, to protect human rights, and to identify and prosecute war crimes.

*Reform security forces.* Organized security forces have both the capacity to carry out genocide and the power to prevent it. Armed and trained security forces comprised of one ethnic, sectarian, or ideological group and in the hands of unaccountable leadership may be available to commit unspeakable crimes. The German Schutzstaffel (SS), the Cambodian Santebal, and the Caravan of Death in Chile all stand as terrible testament. Indeed, the

creation of unaccountable paramilitary forces may indicate preparations for atrocities.

However, security forces that represent all elements of a diverse society, that are trained to protect rather than destroy life, and that are legally accountable to civilian leadership are unlikely to be available for such crimes and may, in fact, prevent them. For example, during a potentially unstable transition in South Africa in the early 1990s, the powerful professional military remained responsible to executive authority, which was in turn constrained by a powerful legislature. This system of accountability helped to limit the potential for violence by the military and other groups.

Security sector reform—the effort to transform police, military, and other security forces into professional, rights-respecting services—may be one of the most direct and effective means of removing the capacity to commit atrocities. Creating military-to-military relationships can also be essential to promoting reform, through training of officers, joint exercises, and conditionality for military aid. The Pentagon’s IMET program brings foreign military officers into the U.S. military education system, which incorporates democratic governance, civilian control of armed forces, and human rights into its curriculum. Similar Department of State-administered programs using International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement funding can promote a reform agenda within the police and other civilian security forces. These programs also can build enduring relationships between U.S. civilian and military leaders and their foreign counterparts, creating an avenue for ongoing engagement to deter or address crises.

Working with security forces must be done as part of the larger context of political reform and conflict transformation. Building capacity for civilian oversight and management of the security sector is essential. Mechanisms of governance and accountability that allow for effective control and administration of security forces constitute an important check on the ability of those forces to perpetrate genocide or mass atrocities. Such oversight capacity should be built within all branches of government.

***Recommendation 3-3: Early prevention strategies should aim to strengthen civil society in high-risk states by supporting economic and legal empowerment, citizen groups, and a free and responsible media.***

Among the most elemental building blocks of a strong and just society are smaller groups of people, such as trade associations, local media, churches, and schools, that directly engage individuals and the communities they represent. These organizations and networks, often referred to as civil society, play a fundamental role in mobilizing grassroots support and promoting political, economic, and legal empowerment and can be a bulwark against the spread of violence. However, such organizations have also served as a catalyst of genocidal violence, with their leaders exhorting radio listeners to kill their neighbors or preaching hatred from the pulpit.

*Support economic and legal empowerment.* Poverty reduction and economic empowerment are essential strategies in reducing the likelihood of conflict and the conditions that can lead to the commission of atrocities. Economic growth and improved employment opportunities can be an important catalyst of citizen participation and demands for rights. Economic development, including trade and investment opportunities, can reduce feelings of hopelessness, empower individuals and groups, and strengthen the resilience of societies. Economic growth alone, however, is not sufficient. The benefits of growth must be widespread through the population. There must also be accountability in the use of public and natural resources. Mechanisms such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative allow citizens to hold their governments accountable for income sources, thereby improving the likelihood that such resources will be used fairly and for public benefit.

While overall policy changes that would improve U.S. assistance for economic development are beyond the scope of this report, there are a few specific measures that could serve to diminish the potential risk of genocide. For example, assistance programs should create employment and other economic opportunities for ex-combatants or decommissioned members of security forces, often a key source of instability unless reintegrated into the economic and social life of the country. Similarly, land rights, economic opportunity, and displacement form a critical nexus of peril and opportunity. As the Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor noted, the majority of the world's poor live outside the rule of law, without

protections that recognize their property rights. A focus on aiding governments to undertake land reform to provide property rights to landless farmers and squatters, and to compensate for loss of land rights due to displacement, may help reduce long-standing grievances.

*Develop civil society.* Creating a healthy society that provides numerous avenues for participation and disperses power provides the best defense against opportunistic leaders. Independent groups that can play a role in monitoring and addressing community-based conflict provide a valuable resource for early warning and dispute resolution. Groups promoting and protecting women's rights should be a particular focus of assistance efforts. Women are frequently a target of atrocities, including sexual violence orchestrated on a massive scale. At the same time, women play an integral role in civil society efforts at all stages of conflict mitigation. Likewise, expanding educational opportunities at all levels, including those specifically designed to promote peace, is a vital step toward building a vibrant civil society. Organizations engaged in public education and advocacy for rights can help not only protect individual rights, but also promote a culture of lawfulness. Religious organizations can also provide a foundation for promoting interfaith cooperation and tolerance.

*Support a free and responsible media.* Free and responsible media are critical to ensuring that both citizens and governing elites are well informed and that citizens are able to hold their government accountable. Independence from state control and a multiplicity of independent outlets are essential not only for the integrity of information, but also promoting healthy political dialogue and supporting language and cultural preferences. It is also important that the media develop a sense of ethical responsibility, supporting the rule of law and diminishing intergroup tensions.

### ***Implementing the Strategy***

In order to implement the strategy outlined above, the task force recommends: (1) expanding the tools and resources available to influence leaders, develop institutions, and strengthen the fabric of society in high-risk environments; (2) partnering with international, regional, national, and local organizations; and (3) setting priorities for effective early prevention by refining analysis and understanding of key risk factors, context-specific dynamics, and best practices.

### Burundi: Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Since its independence in 1962, the small East African nation of Burundi has experienced repeated episodes of extreme violence between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi ethnic groups. When Henry Kissinger, the national security advisor, belatedly told President Richard Nixon about U.S. inaction in the face of the 1972 slaughter of more than 100,000 Hutu civilians, Nixon replied that it represented “one of the most cynical, callous reactions of a great government to a terrible human tragedy I have ever seen.”

The United States was apparently surprised by another round of massacres in 1993, which claimed perhaps 100,000 lives. One report submitted by the USAID mission director in November 1993 stated that Burundi “had been one of the most successful transitions to democracy in Africa.” Following the 1994 genocide in neighboring Rwanda, however, the United States and the international community increased their engagement in Burundi with greater attention to genocide risks.

- A focus on **leadership** has included engaging elites and community leaders in innovative programs aimed at reconciliation and rebuilding trust.
- The important work of **developing institutions** has included a new constitution, approved in 2005, and multiparty elections that produced a Hutu-led government with significant Tutsi representation. The military and police forces implemented wide-ranging reforms and ethnic rebalancing. A disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process has involved thousands of ex-combatants. The parties have also committed to a transitional justice process to address the legacy of past atrocities.
- At the same time, **civil society** in Burundi has begun to blossom, with new, independent media enterprises, women’s associations creating employment and promoting public health and peace initiatives, and human rights organizations lobbying for a national truth and reconciliation process. These mechanisms engaged a much broader swath of society in the political and reconciliation process.
- **Improved international coordination** has created a more cohesive strategic approach to addressing long-term challenges. In 2007, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission selected Burundi for a UN integrated peacebuilding mission to support the transition from the immediate post-conflict phase to longer term development.

In many ways, Burundi’s recent history represents the extremes of international engagement. Tragic indifference to a country of limited strategic importance has given way to a level of sustained engagement that can help prevent future atrocities.

As discussed at greater length in Chapter 1, a standing interagency committee co-chaired by a senior NSC official and the assistant secretary for democracy, human rights, and labor should be created to raise the profile of genocide prevention to the highest levels of the national security bureaucracy; link early warning, pre-crisis engagement, and crisis response;



and coordinate a whole-of-government policy and response to potential and emerging crises. The Atrocities Prevention Committee (APC) would task and coordinate the completion of crisis prevention plans for situations identified to be at elevated but not imminent risk of genocide or mass atrocities. The plans themselves would, in most cases, be prepared by country experts at State and USAID, but the APC would serve as the crucial coordination hub.

***Recommendation 3-4: Funding for crisis prevention in countries at risk of genocide or mass atrocities should be expanded through a new genocide prevention initiative, funded through existing foreign assistance mechanisms.***

Without the priority that would be signaled by a dedicated genocide prevention initiative, targeted atrocities prevention projects are often neglected by U.S. development assistance. And without dedicated funds at its disposal, the APC would be unable to fully implement its crisis prevention plans. We therefore propose a new annual \$200 million genocide prevention initiative to finance efforts to prevent genocide and mass atrocities in countries at risk. Funded through existing mechanisms within the foreign assistance budget, such as Development Assistance and the Economic Support Fund, this initiative will ensure appropriate visibility, cohesion, and priority for crucial pre-crisis genocide prevention efforts. To create and sustain this initiative, the State Department's Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance and the Office of Management and Budget must make preventing mass atrocities a priority, integrate relevant projects into country strategies, and request additional funds from Congress for this purpose. Congress should then approve these funds based on annual budget submissions from the administration.

Genocide prevention initiative funds should be allocated based on a competitive interagency application process, which would be coordinated by the APC and linked to its preparation of crisis prevention plans for at-risk countries. DRL, as the lead actor within State, should administer these funds. During the budget planning process, country teams and agencies would propose projects to address specific risk factors based on in-depth assessment of risks and the necessary steps to reduce them. Examples might include support for demobilization and job creation for ex-combatants in

Burundi, community reconciliation programs in Iraq, or land reforms in Kenya—critical tools for reducing conflict and increasing political and economic participation, thus mitigating the high risk of future atrocities. This model draws on the successful British Conflict Prevention Pool, launched in 2004, that has dedicated several hundred million pounds to conflict prevention efforts worldwide.

This competitive funding process should, in turn, drive more refined assessment of both the risk factors and the impact of programming on those factors. Thus, the dedication of funds for early prevention would serve as a critical research and development tool to improve the capacity of the U.S. government and its international and nongovernmental partners to prevent genocide and mass atrocities. To that end, the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance would require recipients to employ an effects-based planning and reporting model, and would produce an annual report assessing the impact of funded programs.

The amount of additional dedicated funds we propose would provide an average of \$15 million to \$20 million in new program funds annually to each of ten to fifteen countries deemed at high risk of future atrocities. This is a serious investment, if sustained, but it is only a fraction of the cost of a single outbreak of serious conflict that leads to atrocities and/or military intervention. We strongly believe that the costs of preventing genocide are small—in a fiscal, political, and moral sense—compared to the incalculable costs of failure. The additional funds recommended in this report amount to less than one dollar per American per year. In addition, the proposed size of the genocide prevention initiative is roughly comparable to what the U.S. government allocates to other conflict-related assistance programs, such as the Global Peace Operations Initiative and the Commanders Emergency Response Program, as well as the British government’s Conflict Prevention Pool.

***Recommendation 3-5: The State Department and USAID should enhance coordination with international partners both in terms of policy and in-country implementation.***

As elaborated on in Chapter 6, the assistant secretary for democracy, human rights, and labor should be responsible for liaising with the primary

genocide and conflict prevention initiatives in international organizations including the European Union, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and United Nations (for example, UNDP's Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and the Peacebuilding Commission). For pre-crisis engagement, it is critical that coordination take place at the levels of policy and in-country implementation. At both levels, the United States should organize or participate in existing multidonor coordination mechanisms. Where possible, conflict assessments should be done jointly to promote common understanding of conflict dynamics and risks, which should facilitate more coherent strategies among key actors. In-country coordination, in particular, should include regional organizations and NGOs. Where possible, strong coordination with responsible host nation institutions should be a primary organizing principle. These mechanisms can play an early warning function, improve impact, and reduce the likelihood that efforts are duplicative or counterproductive.

As Chapter 2 outlines, risk assessments should help policymakers prioritize where they invest limited resources. But analysis of static risk factors alone will often produce lists of high-risk states that are still too long to target U.S. early preventive action. Thus, U.S. officials must look beyond static risk factors to assess four critical elements: (1) potential triggers (for example, elections or environmental pressures); (2) whether leadership in at-risk countries has *means* and *motive* to commit atrocities; (3) whether the United States has effective levers to influence behavior in a given context; and (4) what would be the likely costs, human and otherwise, of failure to prevent a crisis. The results of improved prioritization can help focus the implementation of early prevention strategies.

