

International Conference

Partners in Humanitarian Crises

Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution – Towards a Comprehensive Approach



Report



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Partners in Humanitarian Crises

A Report

on the conference held at the United Nations University, Tokyo
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Hans van Ginkel

Rector, United Nations University (UNU)



It gives me great pleasure to introduce this report on *Partners in Humanitarian Crises: Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution – Towards a Comprehensive Approach*, compiled by the United Nations University and the European Commission.

Although inter-state warfare has subsided, since the mid-1980s local wars and humanitarian crises have become more prominent in world affairs. Major civil wars are now one of the most important sources of human suffering in the world today, leaving millions of people dead, maimed, undernourished and displaced. These emergencies, inherently complex in nature, provide massive challenges for all people and policymakers.

The goal of the United Nations University is to provide innovative solutions to these challenges, focusing on issues of peace, governance and development. Given our priority attached to the issue, it was a great honour and a privilege for the United Nations University to collaborate with the European Commission in organizing the conference on *Partners in Humanitarian Crises* and in preparing this report.

As you will see in the report, the conference did generate some important recommendations for improving international mechanisms for responding to crises as well as for investing in longer term ‘structural’ conflict prevention. It also outlined ways that different actors – states, NGOs, the United Nations and regional organisations – can work better together in these areas. The key is partnership: partnership between types of actors, between different regions of the world, and ultimately a partnership of respect amongst peoples.

I believe there is a ‘double imperative’ for the international community to do more in the prevention, management and resolution of humanitarian crises. Firstly, there is an issue of self-interest, perhaps even self-preservation. Issues of serious humanitarian concern – from poverty and exclusion to gross abuses of human rights to widespread epidemics – are rarely confined to territorial borders and pose a wider threat to international peace and stability. It is therefore in our general interest to address human security needs and to help others build their own capacity. Secondly, there is a moral imperative. Our own dignity rests, in part, upon our willingness to extend a hand to our fellow human beings so lacking in basic human security.

We hope that through this report, our work can help in some small way towards achieving the important and noble goals of preventing and responding better to humanitarian crises.

Ove Juul Jørgensen

**Ambassador, Head of the Delegation
of the European Commission in Japan**



The conference, Partners in Humanitarian Crises, came at an opportune time for the Delegation of the European Commission and I think also for the United Nations University. It was some twenty-five years before that our respective organisations were set up in Tokyo, yet the conference provided us with the first occasion to work together on such a scale.

The timing is also appropriate when we consider how the EU is working ever more closely with the UN on conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, and post-conflict rehabilitation, and that the EU and its Member States are heavily involved in UN peacekeeping and peace-building operations. More generally, as the world's largest donor of development aid and humanitarian assistance, the EU is a main supporter of developing countries' efforts to achieve the agreed international targets for development and poverty reduction.

To hold such a conference in Japan was also fitting. Japan is the largest single-country donor of development assistance. Japan, like the EU, is a major economic power, and takes seriously its responsibility to help less fortunate countries improve their situation and to face global challenges.

At the G8 Summit held in July 2000, Japan took a leading role in launching the Okinawa Initiative against Infectious Diseases as well as a Package to address the International Digital Divide. At Okinawa, the European Commission President Romano Prodi warmly welcomed the Japanese proposals. As he said at that time, 'Leaders must act responsibly to close the intolerable gap between the world's haves and have-nots'.

This shared attitude towards our broader responsibilities is relevant to EU-Japan bilateral relations as well. The 2001 EU-Japan Summit sees the adoption of an Action Plan which will set the scene for the things we want to do together over the next ten years. Promoting peace and security and strengthened cooperation in the areas of development and humanitarian assistance will be key elements.

The EU and Japan already do a lot together. In Asia, Japan and the EU are, for example, cooperating in support of stability and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. In Europe, Japan is making a significant contribution, both in money and in human terms, to rebuilding the Balkans. And let me stress that we are very grateful for Japan's involvement; it is tangible evidence of Japan acting as a generous and responsible "citizen" of the world.

Unfortunately, that world seems to be ridden with conflict. Through exchanging views on shared concerns, the conference was aimed at improving the mechanisms necessary to ensure peace, and to promote justice and stability. It also endeavoured to increase awareness of these issues, and underpin the growing cooperation between the European Union, the United Nations and Japan. I hope that this report of the proceedings and the recommendations of the conference will go some way to improving the methodology of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Introduction

Humanitarian Crises

The human and financial cost of war is beyond comprehension. When societies collapse into violence, the result is all too familiar: the destruction of life and infrastructure, gross abuses of human rights, and human displacement. The misery of war for those caught up in it is an affront to humanity that must be addressed. The grim reality is reflected in UNHCR's estimate that at the end of 1999, well over 18 million people were refugees, internally displaced, or seeking asylum. The number of war-related deaths during the 1990s surpassed 5 million according to the UN Millennium Report. These figures are indicative of a much wider tragedy.

Moreover, civil conflict is rarely confined to territorial borders; evidence has shown time and again that it is linked to international or regional peace and stability. The material means and resources necessary to identify vulnerabilities of conflict and respond in a variety of ways do exist. The focus of this conference was how rhetoric can be turned into constructive action on the part of international actors; states, regional and global international organisations, and NGOs.

The conference asked whether an integrated and regional approach to conflict prevention is needed, simultaneously addressing the socio-economic, political and security aspects, if countries are to escape the downward spiral of insecurity and under-development. A starting point is provided by the 2000 G8 Miyazaki Initiative for Conflict Prevention, which embraced a 'comprehensive approach': chronologically comprehensive from pre-conflict to post-conflict; and functionally comprehensive: recognising the multi-sectoral challenges of conflict and forging partnerships between different types of actors on the basis of complementarity and comparative advantage.

Conference themes

Prevention or cure? The challenges of effective conflict prevention

While the means for conflict prevention exist, the political will and consensus around which collective action can occur, do not. Few international actors will disperse scarce resources to invest in the prevention of

conflicts. The culture of reaction seems inherent in the international system. How can we convince international actors to invest in peace, justice and stability before catastrophe occurs?

Conflict Management: Dilemmas of humanitarian intervention

When conflict occurs, the damage needs to be minimised and contained. The international community has the responsibility – and the right – to limit the escalation of war and destruction. This inevitably calls for intervention in the affairs of sovereign states. Is humanitarian intervention permissible? Who decides when and how the community of states has the right to put human security ahead of state sovereignty? Can states lose this privilege if they fail to provide for the most basic needs of their populations? When is 'conflict management' – containing the repercussions of conflict, such as refugees, to the conflict area – a poor substitute for addressing the root causes of conflict

Addressing the illusions and realities of Conflict Resolution

The real task of peacemakers starts after a settlement has been reached. How can the major stakeholders interact to facilitate true resolution of conflict? This requires the rebuilding of war-torn societies, of legal, political, economic and social structures. How can the international community assist societies to 'reinvent' themselves, to build peace where war has left deep scars that may take generations to heal? Unless conflicts are addressed at their roots and mechanisms are put in place to prevent their recurrence, true resolution remains a dangerous illusion. But this is not without controversy when international actors take responsibility for security – and even governance – in post conflict societies. Moreover, the demands of justice in coming to terms with past human rights abuse raise real dilemmas when balanced against the need for peace, stability and reconciliation. Is there a tension between justice and peace?

Actors/Institutions

The role of donors

Which regions receive most attention and how is this reflected in the distribution of resources for the prevention and management of conflict?

Humanitarian aid, as a *response* to conflict, reflects

genuine concern to alleviate suffering, but is often inadequately accompanied by measures to address *root causes*. As poverty – especially when combined with inequality – lies at the root of many of today’s conflicts, the best way to prevent crises may still be international involvement in order to promote sustainable and inclusive development. At the same time, development aid policies must be adapted to encourage good governance, equity, democracy, protection of minorities and human rights. How can these conditions be accommodated and addressed by donors?

Has humanitarian aid lost its innocence? Is it just a fig leaf for the lack of political will/action? Can the donors achieve a constructive division of labour pertaining to conflict management?

The role of Non-Governmental Organisations

The role of NGOs in all areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution is well understood and acknowledged, on the basis of their local support and expertise, their flexibility and quick response time. Working alongside international and regional organisations on the basis of partnership, complementarity and comparative advantage clearly seems to be logical and efficient. Yet the co-ordination, motivation and resource allocation of NGOs can be extremely diverse. How can effective regulation be introduced while maintaining the essentially ‘unregulated’ nature of civil society in this area?

The role of the media

How does the media play different roles in humanitarian emergencies, having the potential both to exacerbate conflict and promote reconciliation at the local level; having an impact upon - or even driving - foreign policy decision-making and the allocation of resources from donor countries (the CNN effect)?

The international media community does not respond in a consistent way to humanitarian emergencies. The comprehensive coverage of the Kosovo crisis contrasts with forgotten tragedies such as conflicts in Angola, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa. How can the imbalance be redressed?

With the tension between speed and accuracy how does live reporting reflect the reality and substance of crises? Should efforts be made to analyse the causes and consequences of conflict rather than resorting to ‘template reporting?’ And how can the dignity of the victim be

respected and preserved in 90-second reports from the disaster zones?

The symbiotic relationship between the media and humanitarian workers has become increasingly contentious. And yet the role of witness is vital. How do the two actions balance trust and tension in their working relationship?

Conference Aims

Developing recommendations for improving international mechanisms for responding to crises, but also investing in longer term ‘structural’ conflict prevention;

Considering how the relationship between national and international mechanisms and policy is evolving in response to changing demands;

Considering how the tension between sovereignty/national security and ‘human security’ is played out in conflict prevention and management;

Considering how different actors (states, NGOs, the UN, the EU and other regional organisations) can better work together in these issue areas on the basis of complementarity and comparative advantage;

Raising awareness among Japanese policymakers and other Japanese communities about the entire ‘humanitarian cycle’ and the need for donors to contribute throughout and stay committed.

Kiyohiro Araki

**Vice-Minister for Foreign
Affairs of Japan**



Last October, on the occasion of the United Nations University's 25th Anniversary Conference I had the honour of making a congratulatory address on behalf of the Japanese Government. As its host country, Japan pledged, at that time, to continue to assist the United Nations University and expressed its hope that the UNU would continue to contribute to international society. Today's conference is a fine example of the UNU making such contributions.

It has been widely recognised that a comprehensive approach is necessary in responding to humanitarian emergencies, especially identifying potential causes of conflict in peacetime, the timely resolution of conflicts or the provision of humanitarian assistance. To rebuild conflict-stricken communities requires economic, political and social means and this entails effective coordination between a wide range of bodies such as international organisations, governments and NGOs.

The Japanese government in particular is working to respond effectively to humanitarian crises. Last year, Japan led a discussion on conflict prevention at the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit with a view to promoting such a comprehensive approach. The G8 Miyazaki Initiative for conflict prevention was prepared at the meeting of Foreign Ministers and this was the first time that the G8 laid out a framework of specific actions to help prevent conflict. In the area of small arms and light weapons, the Japanese Government established the fund for small arms and light weapons in the United Nations. Japan is also using ODA to identify and respond to potential causes of conflict and to strengthen assistance to NGOs involved in conflict prevention. Most recently, in order to carry out emergency assistance promptly and effectively in cases of natural disasters and in the face of refugee crises, we have established the Japan Platform – a system in which NGOs, industry and government can cooperate and coordinate.

The question of refugees is a major element of humanitarian crises and may have a serious effect on peace and stability. From the standpoint of human security, the Japanese Government views humanitarian assistance as an important pillar of international cooperation and we provide active assistance through the United Nations Human Security Fund. Yesterday the former High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, announced the establishment of a Commission on Human Security and the Japanese Government intends to assist in the activities of this commission as well.

After humanitarian crises have been resolved there is a need for development assistance to prevent political and economic instability and the potential for a further outflow of refugees. In order to move smoothly from emergency humanitarian aid to development assistance, the relevant international organisations and donor governments need to cooperate and Japan is actively promoting such cooperation. The Japanese Government, as part of its commitment to contribute to the peace and stability of international society, has also made the issue of anti-personnel landmines a priority. Since 1997 we have provided ¥3.5 billion to the victims of landmines.

Japan hopes to cooperate with NGOs, humanitarian aid organisations and the UN to provide humanitarian assistance and welcomes the recent appointment of Mr. Kenzo Oshima as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

Finally, I hope that this conference will be a success, that it will be able to promote international cooperation in the field of humanitarian crises and that it will allow the UNU to continue to evolve.

Poul Nielson

EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid



Keynote Address

Humanitarian Crises: Challenges for the 21st Century

In spite of the dominance of globalisation, I fear that the global village of which we hear so much cannot possibly exist. No village would accept the big divide between the rich and the poor that exists in this world. The low level of ODA flowing from the north to the south in this world is a case in point illustrating that rather than a global village, we have a world full of deep and dangerous problems.

There is a lot of talk about donor fatigue. Against a background of unrealistic expectations it is important to clarify that development cooperation and assistance have in fact worked. In the past 25 years we have seen diseases eradicated and developing countries develop. A lot of progress has been made.

Residual poverty, however, is still in evidence and in absolute numbers we have seen the number of people below the poverty line increase. To combat poverty requires a more long-term view on development cooperation. From implementing structural reform to taking the time to educate a generation tell us that a long-term perspective is the only realistic one and it is against this background that we have to counter donor fatigue. Development is not an event, it is a process.

Turning then to the ideology of north-south relations in the world, I see a confrontation between greed and ethics developing, with the UN conference values at odds with globalisation's big money. Although the output of the big conferences of Rio, Beijing, Cairo and Copenhagen have been dismissed on occasions as just words, these conferences have succeeded in identifying shared values and a collective framework that creates the necessary balance to the insensitive economic philosophy that followed the Washington Consensus. With the World Bank and the IMF now pursuing a more ethical policy, we see a philosophy emerging that can be expressed as,

'Market Economy – Yes. Market Society – No.' It takes more than the market economy to create a decent society; politics is here to stay.

The European Union is very much in the centre of this drive to civilise globalisation. It reflects our own values, our aspirations and ambitions as to what direction development in this world should go. It also reflects many of Japan's values, and I hope that together, both bilaterally and as part of a closer relationship with the UN family, we can make efforts to push this agenda of 'globalisation with a human face' forward.

The title of this presentation defines humanitarian crises and conflicts as the challenge of this century. Let me perhaps first differentiate between conflict and chaos. Conflict is a natural part of human relations, there will always be those who want to defend their position to avoid change. Conflict can even create improvement if handled well. If handled badly, however, violence, warfare and the breakdown of civilisation soon follow.

The causes of violent chaos are still difficult to determine. Access to land is often at the core of many conflicts. Many conflicts in Pacific island-states may appear ethnic in origin, when in fact conflict emerges from migration in search of land – the basic need for resources. Access to land is even more of a problem against the background of global population pressure and one of the keys, therefore, to conflict prevention is population policy. Birth control and family planning are part of the solution, not part of the problem. This is why the European Union sees the work of UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) and IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation) as necessary elements in conflict prevention and will continue to support them irrespective of recent decisions made by the United States.

The HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) debt-relief initiative is another meaningful contribution to conflict prevention. Among many failures the HIPC Initiative does stand out as something that actually works. Without it many highly indebted countries would in all probability fall into new chaos.

Poverty has many consequences. Another link between poverty and crisis can be seen from the way in which natural disasters hit poor countries harder than rich ones.

We normally think of our very sophisticated infrastructure as being very vulnerable. The reality is, however, that in El Salvador recently 50% of all water supply in the nation was destroyed because of the damage caused by an earthquake. The same was the case in Mozambique where the poor quality of dykes and bridges made them vulnerable to disaster.

So how is the EU responding? We have learned a lot on the road from Rwanda to East Timor, especially in the way that we handle the short-term, immediate humanitarian response. The whole community of humanitarian aid learned from Rwanda how better to organise its activities. The return of Rwandan refugees and the supply of goods in Bosnia under military protection show how purely humanitarian activities can embrace a military component. In recent years the two elements have come somewhat closer, but they are still very far from having a clearly-defined relationship. Perhaps this shows that we still need to create an international society. Let us hope this conference can be a contribution and an effort in that direction.

Today we are frustrated in another crisis again. We have enormous problems in Chechnya. Yet it is important to persevere in the face of adversity and for members of the humanitarian community to lend each other the stamina and support to continue. Macedonia's refusal to give the UNHCR a more active role in assisting Kosovar refugees was another frustrating low point. While NATO was able both to move and save the refugees it did so at the expense of some of their rights and dignity.

It is important to note that something does work and East Timor is a case in point. Management-wise it has been a success story. The UN has performed quite well. The donors have been reasonably reliable and predictable and the humanitarian phase is now more or less over. We still have the remaining refugee problem with the people from West Timor in the camps, but we are now moving into the next phase of rehabilitation and the effort to launch the new nation. Over these years, with all the problems and frustrations, the cooperation and clarity of assigning tasks have, in fact, improved. This is also important to tell our public. It is not just chaotic; these organisations know better than ever who is doing what and how they relate to each other.

What we cannot do is create order and stability. We do not have a magic touch to create emerging governance if there isn't an agreed framework. South Africa's President, Nelson Mandela was often asked to demonstrate his magic healing talent in many cases, some beyond even his means. He would base his decision whether or not to engage himself on whether the parties shared a framework of some understanding. If they did not he would stay away. The problem for the donors is that staying away is not an option.

Here, the level of ODA is important. It is clear that more ODA is part of the solution and less ODA is part of the problem. The European Union is a big donor that is working in all developing countries. Our system enables us to be present and to have money available in post-conflict situations, and when the risk is greatest this allows the EU to take the lead in providing support. We need, however, to continue to strengthen our strategic partnerships. For the EU, moving closer to the UN is part of this. I have also recently discussed with the Government of Japan how to strengthen the development cooperation partnership between the EU and Japan and the response is very positive.

It is important for donors to relate to one another. All donors are fortunate that they work today in a world radically different from that of ten years ago. We have a global consensus discussed in the development assistance committee in OECD. We are in agreement with the basic policy orientation of the World Bank and the IMF. We have a new balance where social sensitivity is given more emphasis than 10 years ago. This provides us with the necessary background and opportunity for a strengthening of our partnerships. There is a real need for hard-core, big money development cooperation. It will take time, but learning from what we have done in the last 10 years should also mean that we have the courage and the self-confidence to keep doing things in an ever more effective and ambitious way.

Glenys Kinnock

Member of the European Parliament



With the advantages of looking to the future simply too hypothetical to seem real at the time, promoting to policy makers the importance of conflict prevention could be compared to trying to sell a pension scheme to a busy teenager.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall there was a general sense of optimism that the main players would finally be able to cooperate toward building a consensus about how to respond to emergencies. The end of the Cold War, however, released new tensions and pressures all over the world, especially in the old Soviet bloc, where there was to be now no policing of ethnic and nationalist claims.

We had entered a period filled with what have been called, 'complex political emergencies' and the challenge was how we would deal with the multitude of emergencies that were erupting around the globe. Since 1945, there have been genocides in Indonesia, Cambodia, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia. There were actually UN troops on the ground when (according to UN war crimes prosecutors) an estimated 8,000 Muslim men and boys were massacred in Srebrenica. The one million dead, the tens of millions displaced in the 1990s alone demand urgent answers. When conflict occurs when do we actually stop debating the issues about national sovereignty, and just decide to take action to intervene?

All too often, commercial and economic interests drive those vital decisions about intervention. Russia, for example, because of its economic importance, is afforded protection from international opprobrium about the tragedy of Chechnya. Only by addressing the root causes of tension in a proactive sense, can we prevent conflicts becoming violent, or effectively resolve them, and then build peace, or prevent a renewal of hostilities.

War and poverty are inseparable: the destruction of infrastructure, the diversion of social welfare spending to military expenditure, and the cost of rehabilitation. The

Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts recently said that the cost to the international community of the 7 major wars in the 1990s, not including Kosovo, was \$200 billion – four times the development aid given in any single year. Conflict prevention, therefore, is not just the right thing to do, it also makes sound financial sense. This makes it especially short-sighted that the volume of development aid – one of the key tools for conflict prevention - dropped significantly in the 1990s.

While I welcome the UN's recent Brahimi report, and its call for a more robust approach to peacekeeping, firefighting when things get out of control simply cannot be the right approach. I firmly believe that more resources should be invested in improving access to basic healthcare and education, clean water, shelter and employment.

I chair an independent international consortium of intergovernmental, NGOs and academic institutions, called FEWER – the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response – whose aim is to provide decision-makers with up to date and relevant information and analysis and to promote an understanding of cultural sensitivities. We are currently working in the Caucasus, Central and South East Asia, West Africa and the Great Lakes and base our philosophy on the fact that early warning must be coupled with the political will to act.

FEWER understands that the key to early warning is democratic structures and the accompanying freedoms and accountabilities. The promise of food aid or UN troops does not solve emergencies. Our basic thesis is that impending crisis can only be properly managed by local action. People on the ground know what needs to be done long-term and if there is famine looming, for example, their first thought is not for packages of aid, but for seeds to plant next year.

Of course, Africans 'squaring up' to each other is one thing. People doing that on our own doorstep in Europe is quite another. Our failure to act with the resolve, purpose and a well-defined strategy was a feature of the response in the Balkans where the EU and the UN, adopted a technocratic, 'quick-fix' approach, which took insufficient account of the need for long term planning about peacebuilding and reconciliation.

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What drives people to conflict? Not all poor countries are at war, but extreme poverty or the unequal distribution of wealth, can create this desperate disaffection while the inadequate political and judicial systems are often unable to manage the social tensions which are created. With the destabilising effects of a formal economy in which large sections of the community are simply excluded, the risk of violence increases. This is particularly the case when one ethnic, cultural or religious group is clearly reaping the benefits. Throw a ready supply of cheap, available arms into the melting pot, and these are some of the root causes of violent conflict which we need to address.

Demobilisation and democratisation efforts need to take into account the need to get soldiers out of uniforms, and into contributing to efforts to rebuild their country, and their communities. In this context, I have worked closely with Saferworld, the British think tank, on how the European Union can start to deal with these factors in its new Cotonou Agreement with 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific states.

The changes which we need to see depend on actions taken in developing countries, including a reallocation of resources and a crack down on corruption. When states are plagued by corruption and impunity, or when democratic government, a free press and transparent police and judicial systems are absent or ineffective, there is a clear increased risk of political instability and violence. Transparent and accountable political systems represent an important means by which citizens can manage tensions, and resolve difficulties peacefully.

Women have a central role to play. Neither bystanders nor passive victims, they suffer as refugees, as victims of rape and other terrible abuses of their rights. In Northern Ireland, for example, we can fairly claim that women have laid the foundations for accommodation and compromise. Women around the world need to help do the same and as the UK NGO International Alert describes it, 'take their rightful place as decision makers in all aspects of the peace process - from the village hall to the negotiating table.'

Finally the availability of arms is a crucial factor to consider in this debate. With the Second Preparatory Committee in New York, recently ending with many issues still unresolved, action to increase transparency and

accountability at this year's UN Conference on the illicit trade in small arms is crucial. There is a striking lack of proper regulation on the export of military equipment that is exported to countries where it is likely to be used for internal repression or external aggression. As evidence shows us that much of illicit trade originates as 'legal' transfers, it is also vital that the UN Conference agrees international controls on government transfers of small arms and closes the loopholes exploited by unscrupulous dealers.

The West's three permanent members of the Security Council account for 80% of the world's weapons sales. Let us dispense with that old chestnut, 'If we don't sell them arms, then someone else will'. If we can reach agreement on a range of policies from trade to defence, then why not on international arms control? Only wide-ranging, internationally agreed controls will prevent the transfer of arms into conflict zones such as Angola, Sierra Leone or the Congo.

This conference is a call for collective action, and the need to work together for a better, and safer, world. With modern conflict presenting us with a challenge about the very concept of war and peace, we need to examine the nature of our values in this new century? Shouldn't it be fundamental to ask for the protection from violence, to respect everyone's right to food, water, health and education, to give work to everyone, and to give everyone a say in his, or her, own future?

Yasushi Akashi

**Chairman, The Japan Centre
for Preventive Diplomacy**



While we are all hopeful that the 21st century will bring a more peaceful world in which to live, there is no guarantee that civil wars and ethnic conflicts which ravaged many parts of the world in the last decade will disappear soon. In fact, there are signs of continuing conflict in the Middle East, South Asia, Northeast Asia as well as in Africa. In addition to the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons, chemical and particularly biological weapons may constitute a renewed threat to humanity, especially when they are wielded by non-state actors, including terrorists and fanatical groups. The small arms trade presents a similar threat, with one such weapon in the hands of every twelve persons.

Uneven distribution of wealth between countries as well as within countries provides a fertile environment for more strife. We have to work harder to try to prevent such conflict before it occurs, and manage and resolve it before it escalates.

Conflict prevention is easier said than done. Everybody agrees on its merits, but few are willing to pay the price or accept its full implications. La Rochefoucauld, a French philosopher, said that 'hypocrisy is a homage paid by vice to virtue'. We might say, 'preventive diplomacy is a homage paid by policymakers today who readily make a plea for a durable peace but are actually unwilling to confront serious problems of the future which are not on their daily agenda'.

There are conceptual difficulties of defining 'conflict prevention'. I consider this synonymous with 'preventive diplomacy'. During the Cold War, Dag Hammarskjöld's policy emphasised preventive diplomacy, meaning impartial UN efforts to lessen the spheres of influence of cold-war protagonists by neutralising areas of potential rivalry such as the Middle East, Laos and Congo. Successive UN Secretaries-General have practised preventive diplomacy, and a low public profile seems conducive to success.

Today, there is a large degree of agreement that only a comprehensive approach is workable – comprehensive not just in chronology but also functionally as well in forging partnership among different organisations and actors.

It may be suggested that there are at least four chronological stages in conflict prevention. The first stage is general prevention, confidence-building through greater interchange and transparency, reducing disparities in standards of living and achieving a greater sense of equity and justice. The second stage is when conflict is looming, when the UN Secretary-General and other impartial institutions can be helpful. The third stage is immediately after conflict has broken out. Efforts to prevent escalation through a cease-fire and decrease conflict intensity can be fruitful. The fourth and last stage is after a cease-fire or peace agreement has been concluded and elections held. Consolidation of peace can be attempted through reconciliation among groups, economic reconstruction linked to more immediate humanitarian assistance, as well as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers.

It can be agreed that quick and effective action by means of well-established mechanisms is most effective in the second and third stages. That is when 'quiet diplomacy' by the UN Secretary-General combined at times with a peace-keeping operation as the instrument for temporary separation of parties in conflict from each other might best be attempted.

In contrast, general prevention efforts in the first stage and the prevention of recurrence of conflict in the fourth stage can be parts of more global efforts by governments, international institutions, the private sector, and NGOs to join forces for a multifunctional action to reduce economic and social disparities, to build democracies and equitable sharing of power, and to ensure human rights and good governance.

The distinction between a broad and a narrow definition of conflict prevention is important to prevent illusions that a long-term solution may produce immediate or short-term consequences and, conversely, that a temporary patchwork of humanitarian relief can have a long-lasting effect on peace and stability.

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Further, within a comprehensive framework, each partner in preventive diplomacy has its distinctive but inter-related part to play. NGOs should probably not aspire to play the role of experienced negotiators. Nor should governments have the hope of reaching grass roots without the help of non-governmental actors for economic reconstruction or true national reconciliation. I personally experienced in the former Yugoslavia when too many actors tried to play the peacemaker's role and this tempted the conflicting parties to play one peacemaker against another, prolonging the conflict.

Under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, a variety of means for a peaceful resolution of conflicts are provided, supplemented by articles 97-99 on the powers of the Secretary-General. They represent a potent instrument for preventive diplomacy. However, even a more elaborate machinery for early warning or fact-finding cannot be a substitute for a coherent and determined political will of the international community expressed in a body like the UN Security Council. The Yugoslav conflict was an unfortunate example of a divided Council adopting numerous lofty decisions and resolutions, devoid of effectiveness, military or financial, and therefore of no real significance.

Of course coercive means provided for in Chapter VII can be employed, but they should be used sparingly. Non-military sanctions are generally preferable to a military sanction. In enforcement, a coalition of countries like NATO is more effective than the United Nations or a regional organisation. In extreme humanitarian emergencies, we should not discard coercive means of prevention. I was personally involved in the UN efforts in Bosnia. In Sarajevo and in Gorade, the UN employed its best diplomatic and persuasive means, indicating to the conflicting parties that it was willing to allow use of NATO's force if the parties refused to accept UN mediation.

When a major conflict or a massive humanitarian disaster is foreseen, all entities involved, governments, international institutions and non-governmental organisations have to work closely together, while being aware and respectful of different roles and capacities they can bring to bear individually for conflict prevention.

We must absolutely renew our resolve to tackle root

causes of conflicts, while endeavouring to refine our national and international efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts when they are concrete and imminent. In a larger historical perspective, we have to work for a better dialogue between civilisations and cultures as well as between religions and national groups. We should cultivate better mutual confidence among peoples and ethnic groups. Universal acceptance of human rights, based on the dignity of each individual, is a sine qua non, as reducing socio-economic gaps between and within nations is essential. Beyond these long-term measures, we should focus on short-term causes for conflicts, which are found mostly in deficiencies in political and constitutional arrangements. Focused efforts on governance, the rule of law, and administration of justice is vital in this context.

However, while elements conducive to conflict may be present, conflict may not actually take place in the absence of inflammatory and irresponsible political leadership. We have to study mass psychology of mutual fear exacerbating conflicts. Even in a gasoline-filled room, someone has to light a match for an explosion to take place. We must take all measures necessary to make our societies immune to racial or group hatred.

My conclusion is that while there is no panacea for a conflict not breaking out in any society we must make our environment less pervious to violence, and must provide more institutional safeguards and civic education to work against its outbreak.

In Asia and the Pacific, we are behind Europe in building safeguards and institutions for conflict prevention, management and resolution. Therefore, we have much to learn from European experiences. However, Asia is vast and more complex than Europe in its cultural and historical heritages, and we must avoid building artificial institutions and mechanisms to be imposed on reluctant governments and peoples.

At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), we have to continue our endeavours step by step, from confidence-building to preventive diplomacy, and eventually to conflict resolution. The region recognises that human rights are universal, while the means of attaining them may vary, from region to region and from society to society. We must affirm our commonality as human beings, and yet preserve and rejoice at the great diversity

of culture and traditions.

The UN possesses abundant experience and insight into ways and means of preventive diplomacy, including peacemaking and peacekeeping. But peacekeeping is essentially a temporary stopgap aimed at a cooling off period of political temperature. In order to be effective, peacekeeping has to be accompanied by a determined effort for peacemaking or conflict resolution. When these diplomatic efforts are out of joint, UN peacekeeping is reduced to prolonging an unsteady and fragile status quo like in Cyprus.

Fergal Keane

**BBC Foreign Affairs
Correspondent**



Over the past 20 years I have been covering Africa's conflicts and disasters. With side trips to the Balkans, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and nearly six years as a correspondent in Northern Ireland I know the mistakes I have made myself and I have watched with interest the behaviour of my television colleagues and my friends in the NGOs. I have also watched how politicians and soldiers have manipulated all of us. I am going to focus much of my presentation on Africa because that is the place that I am most passionately attached to, and the place most abused in our modern era. However, much of what I will say about Africa could be applied with a little modification to humanitarian crises throughout the world.

At a recent debate I chaired on the media's coverage of Africa I was joined by four distinguished Africans: one a former diplomat, the other a development worker with UNICEF, and two journalists. All complained that the reporting of their continent was driven by the hunger for dramatic images and failed to appreciate the complexity of African political and social life. The diplomat – Ahmedou Auld Abdallah – the former UN Special Representative in Burundi – went so far as to accuse journalists of inflaming crisis by constantly predicting a genocide in Burundi, making people believe it was inevitable. And though my job was to act as the impartial chairman, I found that difficult, because I knew that almost all of what the panel was saying was true.

Not all coverage of Africa fell into the categories they described, but if the charge is that the international television media has failed to portray the breadth and depth of Africa, then I for one find it difficult to argue a case against. Africa is seen by the majority of television viewers as one long humanitarian emergency.

In the 1950s American writer John Gunther warned of the dangers of the west ignoring Africa. He wrote: '...we should at least give Africa our most seasoned, scrupulous, and long-minded attention.' I do not think that even the

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most optimistic propagandists would suggest we have been scrupulous or long-minded in the attention we have given Africa; this is true of our political establishments and of the media.

In the Cold War era we were governed by a ruthless self-interest which placed the interests of the Africans at the bottom of our list of priorities. In the post-Cold War era our governments have merely acted as reluctant fire brigades rushing in to smother the flames of local crises, or have profited from the export of weapons to opposing armies. We in the media have spent much of that time chasing the fire engines, reporting war and misery and famine, to the extent that they are now synonymous with that word: Africa.

Television news has always been governed by tough competition. Competition can produce great reporting, but if what we get is a relentless pursuit of the dramatic image backed up with alarming statistics then I believe we are in trouble. We settled long ago on the iconic image of the African humanitarian disaster: the baby with the swollen belly, the mother with the eternally outstretched arm.

I have been part of this myself. I know that the folks back home like to see a white angel in the midst of the African darkness, but as journalists do we ever stop to contemplate the effect of all of this on the people we report on? Do the NGO's stop and think about what it means to have white faces speaking for Africa? A former director of Medecins Sans Frontières – Remy Broman – used the phrase: 'compassion without understanding' to describe the collective emotional response which television coverage of humanitarian disasters usually prompted.

With just 3 minutes to tell a story it is in the nature of television news to hone in on the essentials. This means leaving out valuable context, the danger of which is precisely what Remy Broman described. You end up with an audience that weeps and reaches into its wallet, but does not understand.

This is not helped by the long-standing practise of dispatching the 'big hitters' to cover the big humanitarian emergencies. They can be excellent journalists but often as not they will have no in-depth knowledge of the

country upon which they are about to descend.

The BBC still maintains a wide network of foreign bureaus as does our main international competitor – CNN. Yet only one of the American networks, ABC, actually maintains a bureau in Africa, and that is staffed by a reporter who shoots his own pictures. The other networks are dependent on the 'big hitters' who will hit town for the disaster and roll out again as soon as the body count falls. The end result is that the developing world is too often presented as a place where you do not waste your time on peace initiatives because they will not work, they cannot work.

Why was Kosovo such a big deal and why is Congo – the biggest war anywhere in the world at the moment – not? Kosovo was big primarily because it represented a major domestic political issue for European countries. It was a big issue because it was closer to us than Congo, and because it came after the debacle of Bosnia. It was big too, because the people in the pictures looked like us. A bit rough around the edges maybe, but there were enough fair heads and green eyes to strike the necessary notes of empathy.

During the period of the Bosnian war, I had to battle with news editors to get them to invest resources in covering the war in Angola. At that time some of the biggest land battles in modern history were being fought with catastrophic consequences for the Angolan people. Had there been more resolute and long term coverage there might just have been a chance that major political players on the international stage would stay engaged with Angola.

At least part of our difficulty lies in resources. Television news executives live in an era of expanding services but contracting budgets. Covering a crisis like Angola or Afghanistan is costly and when they do not present a pressing claim on the national political interest they figure low on editorial priorities. There is also a concerted decline in programming about the developing world. Consider the case of Sorious Samura, the Sierra Leonian cameraman, who produced an award-winning documentary on the civil war in his country. It ran at 11.30 at night with a tiny audience as a result.

It is dangerous of course. Because the wars do not go

away. The hunger and the dislocation festers and can explode. And when they explode the cameras pile back in and the story goes to the top of the bulletin. Politicians may feel forced to act, to activate emergency plans, perhaps even to deploy troops. But they and the public they serve will too frequently act without the knowledge that informed and analytical journalism can bring into the public domain.

I am a believer in humanitarian intervention. I do not accept the notion that our failures constitute an argument for not intervening. Yet the isolationists, the 'nothing must be done' brigade, are helped by a media which at first encourages intervention through the power of its imagery, and then quickly turns on the politicians as soon as that intervention goes wrong.

In the case of Rwanda the media as a whole failed dismally to report the truth in time; with some honourable exceptions, it misrepresented the emergency as a tribal civil war based on ancient hatreds. This reporting helped to persuade the major powers on the Security Council that no good could come of intervening in another messy African civil war. It took weeks of slaughter before the mass media woke up to the genocide. And even then the response was limited. What was happening in Rwanda demanded more inquiry and journalistic determination than the kind of 'simple truths' Africa story the big networks love.

Then at the end of the genocide the refugees poured out of Rwanda. For a long time the majority of people in the west had no idea that this body of refugees contained in its ranks those who had carried out the slaughter. They were just hungry and sick Africans, – the imagery we are used to, that we are comfortable with.

I am not sure either that those of us who report on or work in humanitarian crises fully appreciate the media sophistication of the political and military forces we must deal with. As international television beams back into the countries we broadcast from, the official watchers and listeners are becoming ever more active. I am not simply talking about obvious censorship, but the use of information as a weapon. False information which in the relentlessly hungry climate of the internet and rolling news can find its way into the public domain.

So what are my suggestions for change?

(i) From the point of view of a television journalist, we need to make a commitment not to abandon countries when they cease to produce dramatic footage.

(ii) If we do make mistakes then let us discuss them openly. Defensiveness is a road to ruin.

(iii) Critically, we need to recruit more people from the developing world. I would urge NGOs in particular to train more local people to act as spokespersons.

(iv) Bodies like the European Union and the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs could inject funds into the training of local NGO workers who can 'represent' their people to the world.

(v) A strong civil society is a central plank of any attempt to make societies less prone to humanitarian emergencies. Investment in the free press, the struggling local radio stations may prove to be powerful bulwarks when a crisis erupts.

(vi) A bursary to enable mainstream European and Japanese programme-makers to work in the television or film industry of a developing country would give journalists or producers the opportunity to have first-hand knowledge of that country, to make contacts and collect programme ideas.

I will leave you with a memory of my own from South Africa's first non-racial elections. The first day of polling was reserved for the elderly and the sick. Standing outside a polling station in Soweto in the dusk, I was approached by an elderly man. 'My name is Robert Kaptein,' he said. The old man explained that his son had been killed by the security police during the struggle; he himself had been tortured. And what did he feel now, I asked...now that he was able to vote? 'Today,' he answered, 'I became a human being once more.'

And that for me was something to remember all my days. We deal with people not with product. Human beings, not good soundbites or sensational images. That may be a truth we have tended to lose sight of along the way.

Albrecht Schnabel

Academic Programme
Officer, UNU



Conflict prevention has emerged as an important alternative to the management and resolution of violence. The rationale for conflict prevention is simple: It is easier and less costly to prevent a conflict from emerging than to deal with the tremendous human and other costs once violence has broken out. Conflicts, which are, of course, part and parcel of human and group interactions need to be channelled peacefully. Institutions and processes need to be in place to allow communities to manage their differences without resort to violence.

Of course, the most effective approach to conflict prevention would be to create an environment with no competition for territory, resources, and power. However, this is an unrealistic goal anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, steps in that direction must be taken. Strengthening institutions and organisations that can support democracy, development, human rights and peaceful relations between communities and states is crucially important for a long-term, early approach to conflict prevention.

Of course, rhetoric and policy in conflict prevention are often two different issues. There is ample talk by many governments, international organisations, nongovernmental organisations and scholars about the necessity for conflict prevention. However, to do something about conflict prevention is a difficult and intimidating challenge. Moreover, many governments and international organisations resist it. Why is that so? Preventive actions can easily be perceived as a threat to a state's sovereignty - and so political resistance is unavoidable. In part because of many states' unwillingness to allow outsiders to 'meddle in their affairs,' there has been much rhetoric and advocacy and sadly little specific action in the early prevention of violent conflict. Moreover, when the international community is involved in the management of existing conflicts, there is little enthusiasm for investing in conflicts that have not even emerged. This is a vicious circle that needs to be broken.

Conflict prevention can only be effective if it is pursued in partnership between local and external actors. Ideally, collaboration on conflict prevention would take the following form: Every attempt by the international community to prevent or manage a conflict requires international legitimacy (ideally by the UN), regional resources (ideally by regional organisations), and local expertise (ideally by NGOs). However, this requires that each organisation is willing to co-operate with others, work in a team and contribute what it does best, while leaving other tasks to those actors that are better equipped for them. None of this is currently done very successfully. Non-state, state and interstate actors pursue their own policies and activities with little or no co-ordination with each other. The will of the so-called international community is expressed by a multitude of voices, each pursuing its goals and interests, each driven by its own mandates and motivations. Competition and turf fights are unfortunately very common.

Why is it so difficult for intergovernmental organisations to prevent conflicts successfully? There are a number of reasons: First, we have to consider the nature of international organisations. Their primary 'clients' are their member states. The United Nations and regional organisations can only do what their member states want them to do. Second, except for the European Union, no international organisation has developed supranational characteristics and can force its members to adhere to its policies. Third, most international organisations have been created to protect and defend, not to challenge and undermine, state sovereignty. Many states fear that some of their fellow states will attempt to further their own strategic interests and intervene in weaker states under the mantle of 'conflict prevention.' Finally, preventive action requires long-term commitment to be successful ... a rare virtue in an international environment that is still driven by re-action, and not pro-action.

While the UN and regional organisations can only do so much when internal problems indicate imminent breakdown of peace and order, national governments are the most proper actors to provide skilful conflict resolution and prevent the escalation of violence. However, are the governments and leaders of risky states willing to co-operate with the international community to prevent violent conflicts?

Some of them will care about the impact of constant warfare and conflict on their country and on their neighbours. Those are the leaders who are committed to their citizens' basic needs and the society's prosperous and secure future. Those leaders who profit from conflict and who do not care for their society's and region's welfare, will see no need for democratisation and increased influence of civil society and intergovernmental organisations in conflict prevention efforts. Such leaders would have to leave their posts – voluntary or involuntary, through popular uprisings or popular vote - before true and positive change can take place.

Commitment by political decision-makers and leaders to good governance is the key to the prevention of violent conflict. If external actors get involved, the focus must be on the needs of the people, not the politics and needs of individual heads of state and their political friends. In addition to external pressure on incumbent political elites, civil society must take on the responsibility (with all the risks attached) to encourage populations to demand more democracy and accountability. Education on peace, human rights, civic responsibilities and rights, offered inside and outside of schools and universities, plays a crucial role in this process. Most of the responsibility and initiative has to come from local actors, including civil society actors and sub-regional and regional organisations. External support has to trigger, facilitate and maintain local and regional initiatives until they are self-sustaining.

Conflict prevention is a nice catch phrase that has received much attention lately. In response there has been much effort in many quarters to give more attention to conflict prevention. This is of course laudable. However, simply adding the adjective 'preventive' to one's activity is not enough. Rhetoric, wishful thinking and nice intentions are of little help if they do not correspond to action. They are even counterproductive as it raises expectations that cannot be met.

What are some concrete steps that those working for governments, intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations can take? First, they need to make their daily work relevant to the prevention of violent conflict. Conflict prevention must be 'mainstreamed.' This process evolves along several crucial steps: The political, economic and social situation of a country or region has

to be thoroughly assessed. Then, potential conflict causes, including their primary root causes, need to be identified. Finally, root causes must be matched with suitable and feasible preventive measures that utilise, in the first instance, existing mechanisms by one's organisation, program, unit or department. In order to maximise the application of existing capacities for conflict prevention one must unnecessary overlap and duplication must be avoided and each contributor must focus on their comparative advantage and expertise.

While we will likely not experience revolutionary change, piece-meal change, in small steps and in co-ordination with partners within and outside our organisations, will over time infuse a conflict prevention mode into our work. Although conflict prevention may often prove to be a thankless task - after all, evidence for our success is when nothing bad happens - it is nevertheless a rewarding task. This is not always apparent – neither to outsiders nor to those involved in conflict prevention work. Therefore there must be positive feedback and encouragement for those who think and act in preventive terms. These people act upon the vision and conviction that with a bit of extra effort, much human suffering can be avoided. This conviction must be nurtured to keep the momentum going.

In the long run conflict prevention can only be successful when two crucial conditions are met: First, societies at risk, their people and non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations must take the lead and produce visible progress. Second, external actors such as the UN, regional organisations and courageous and enlightened states must be committed to investing more efforts in maintaining peace, rather than to wait, see, and become involved only when it is too late and violence has already broken out. This will likely be a bumpy road with many setbacks. Many enthusiastic and devoted individuals and organisations will become frustrated, worn out, and may, at some point, simply give up. Nevertheless, what they have accomplished during what is often an uphill battle against established patterns, rules and behaviour, will bring us closer to a more prevention-sensitive international environment.

Sadako Ogata

**Former UN High
Commissioner for Refugees**



Wars and refugees have never been so inextricably linked as in recent years. Conflicts produce massive human displacement of refugees, internally displaced persons and war-affected civilians. Bridging the gap between the interests of the most vulnerable and deprived people in the world and the legitimate concern of states has been the crucial theme of my decade at UNHCR. The last ten years have proven that agencies such as the UNHCR will remain relevant not only as an essential player in the international community's response to humanitarian crises, but also as an advocate for early and effective conflict prevention and resolution.

Although the nature of war has changed, the concept of peace operations may still be based on the assumption that wars are fought across clear-cut lines. Peace operations continue to be country-based, and reflect neither the internal nor the regional nature of many of today's wars. UNHCR deploys its unarmed humanitarian workers to dangerous and isolated duty stations; increasingly targeted. The time gap between the beginning of humanitarian activities and that of peace operations continues to widen; in many places forced population movements have become the cause and conduit of grave insecurity and instability, and little is done to address the problem. In most parts of the world where UNHCR and its humanitarian partners are called upon to operate, mechanisms to address security problems not adapted to the new type of conflicts. In many places, these mechanisms do not even exist.

I am aware of the difficulties, but there is a need to initiate and implement peace operations much more rapidly. The issue of timing has not yet been satisfactorily addressed by governments. Peace operations will inevitably be slower than the humanitarian response. In refugee emergencies, UNHCR, other UN agencies, the Red Cross movement and NGOs will continue to be the first ones on the ground. If there is to be complementarity in this endeavour, the gap between the deployment of

humanitarian personnel and the implementation of some security support measures needs to be reduced.

UNHCR has become used to being called to confront refugee emergencies on a very short notice. Any delays in our work equal lost lives. Since 1992, UNHCR has built systems that can be mobilised and sent to the field within 72 hours. Political pressure for quick solutions to refugee problems has increased since 1992. The Kosovo refugee crisis showed that we had to upgrade the surge capacity to address refugee emergencies at a very short notice. Yet, no matter how rapidly and effectively humanitarian agencies mobilise, the response will be inadequate unless the environment in which they operate is secure – for the UNHCR staff, for the refugees and for the communities hosting them.

There is an increased awareness that humanitarian agencies should not be left alone to confront difficult and dangerous situations. In order to ensure that, we need to look at different options, such as measures intended to support local law enforcement capacity. Support is a key concept which implies working together, as opposed to straightforward intervention. In very specific situations, especially insecure border areas in and around refugee sites there is the need for relatively simple measures: assisting the judiciary, training the police and military, supporting the police with logistics and communication, deploying – when necessary – liaison officers to work as co-ordinators and advisors. Such programs have already been implemented and are working reasonably well in Western Tanzania.

Governments have responded positively to the concept of a “ladder of options” to improve local security, but such responses have remained so far in the realm of theory. Governments must take concrete steps, informing UNHCR on the availability of forthcoming contributions – human, material and financial – as well as on the time required for such response.

Besides “intermediate” security measures, peacekeeping will continue to remain necessary as conflicts will continue to flare up in different regions and the international community will have to maintain peace after fragile cease-fire agreements are signed. Yet, for peacekeeping to remain relevant it must become speedier in deployment and more effective in output.

Kofi Annan's initiative of an in-depth review of peace operations has received a lot of support from the humanitarian community. The Brahimi Panel report is important and courageous and sets out objectives crucial to humanitarian action: it stresses the need for quick decisions in responding to crises, it gives priority to quick fact-finding missions to the field, it underlines the importance of identifying and pursuing early solutions and it places great emphasis on presence in the field. These are basic elements of any humanitarian deployment, pointing out the affinity between humanitarian action and peace operations, as well as the need to refine their relationship and mutual support.

UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies are currently working together with peacekeepers in areas such as Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor. These agencies could not have worked and continue to work effectively without the peacekeepers, and that the humanitarian field-based agencies are complementary to peace operations and not just actors who happen to work in the same area.

Going beyond the conclusions of the Brahimi Panel report, the presence of refugees in border areas, such as Guinea and Liberia, puts at risk humanitarian workers and threatens with the possibility of the conflict spreading to other areas. In other words, the conflict may become regional, spreading beyond Sierra Leone's borders, yet the response continues to be country-based. Despite the many political hurdles and problems of resources, the issue of insecurity spilling over across borders from countries in conflict, and affecting in particular areas hosting refugees, should be examined and factored into operational strategies. In situations of refugee flows, for example, peace-keepers – with the accord of the refugee-hosting countries – could be given a special cross-border mandatory mandate.

The importance of post-conflict peace-building has been acknowledged by UNHCR, through the agency's efforts to ensure that refugees return home and settle down in safety and dignity. The Brahimi Panel report is complete with its focus on peace-building; yet we must shift into operational mode and become as comprehensive in action as on paper. From the UNHCR perspective, the main problems evolve around lack of resources and expertise to run development programmes, and response time once the emergency ends. Societies can unravel and conflicts

restart during the gap between emergency short-term humanitarian activities and the implementation of medium and long-term development and reconstruction programmes.

To fill in this gap in funding and in responsibilities and operations a joint initiative between UNHCR, the World Bank and UNDP was launched in January 1999, under the auspices of the Brookings Institution. Disappointingly, the response from governments and organisations has been very modest, and raising funds for post-conflict activities remains a difficult and uncertain exercise.

At UNHCR, peace-building is not an abstract concept. "Quick impact projects" for emergency rehabilitation in areas of return were initiated in the 80s. At times, we were criticised for having gone beyond our mission, but we could not have withdrawn in countries like Rwanda, when returnees still lived under plastic sheeting and schools had no roofs, no books and no teachers.

Currently UNHCR is focusing on the promotion of community coexistence as a first step towards reconciliation. A pilot project – "Imagine Coexistence" – was launched in returnee areas of Rwanda and Bosnia in order to support inter-ethnic income-generating activities. But the impact of such initiatives will be limited unless there are more rapid and comprehensive efforts towards peace-building at various levels.

Before concluding, I would like to mention the issue of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes (DDR), which reflect all the contradictions of peace-building. Two problems need to be addressed: first, the roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in DDR activities must be clarified; second, there must be a stronger focus on reintegration of soldiers to the society.

If humanitarian operations are not part of a comprehensive political and security approach, they are less effective. To avoid such situations, "security partnerships for refugees" must be established at different levels. These presuppose ventures among states ready to provide resources and host the refugees and international humanitarian organisations and NGOs. Through active dialogue among a wide range of partners we must find practical ways to contain insecurity, improve peace operations and focus more decisively on peace-building.

David Malone

**President, International
Peace Academy**



The issue of humanitarian intervention is increasingly important against the background of recent experiences like Srebrenica and Rwanda where so many voices were silenced. After Idi Amin was ousted, the representative of the new government of Uganda came to the UN and asked 'where were you when we needed you?' The UN had been concerned by sovereignty and the rights of the former government of Uganda, knowing that this government was oppressing its population. The international community fails again and again in these situations.

A major problem of conflict prevention is lack of political will. International action in non-security fields is mostly preventive and non-controversial: countries seek the help of the WHO in developing preventive strategies and action; the environmental treaties we subscribe to are largely preventive in their goals. And yet in the fields of security, humanitarian action and sometimes human rights, we are instantly in very sensitive waters.

The action of the international community when faced with humanitarian disasters may take a variety of forms. Military action without the consent of the affected government is seen as an extreme and exceptional response. Yet intervention in other spheres, such as the economic interference of the IMF or World Bank, does not raise the worries of intrusiveness that intervention in the security sphere does. Does the international community feel that it will get something beneficial in return for economic intervention whereas intervention in the security sphere yields less? In the security sphere governments are obsessed with sovereignty, and it would be wishful thinking to believe that changes in the past ten years have lessened the sensitivity of governments.

One example is Canada, not known for its security problems, when a native tribe near Montreal had run-ins with the Montreal Police. The Canadian military was called in, and were able to diffuse the situation. While the

situation was at its most intense, the European Parliament decided to send some observers in. The sensitivity of the Canadian government to the idea of external observation in their country, was shocking to them, particularly to the prime minister, Brian Mulroony, an advocate for human rights elsewhere in the world. So we need to be open to the contradictions in the nature of our own governments when it comes to security issues.

Unsustainable, inadequately funded, or under-resourced intervention is worse than none at all. The UN has time and again been victim of vague good intentions in the Security Council, unsupported by a willingness to provide the UN with the means to carry out effective action in the field. There is clear evidence that the Security Council has trouble learning lessons. The case of Sierra Leone is proof in point. A large peace-keeping mission is limping along in desperate straits mandated by Security Council countries unwilling to provide the troops or the equipment to make a success of this operation.

Many scholars of the UN believe that what restrains the UN from intervening are the provisions of the UN Charter. But in fact, we have seen throughout the 1990s that the UN Charter is an infinitely flexible document, subject to many different interpretations, and I do not see the UN Charter as the principal bar to effective intervention military and otherwise by the UN in the field. Other problems are more serious.

First, the absence of a common analysis of a problem, particularly between the UN Secretariat, the UN Agencies and the principal powers in the UN Security Council, has tripped up the UN time and again. Seeing a problem with the same eyes is something the international community is rarely able to do.

Second, there is often a lack of a clear concept regarding how to act, particularly if it entails departing from time-honoured traditions of peace-keeping, which often no longer fit with the reality on the ground.

Third, there is often a lack of political will among the member states, especially the political will to make resources available and to assume risks. Risks on behalf of the nationals of our own countries. Why are virtually no Western countries participating in the UN operation in Sierra Leone? It is because of the risk factor. The growing

American obsession with the value of American military life, and the concomitant lack of willingness to take any risks with this military life is leading to a distortion not only in American values, but has proven contagious. Lack of national interest has been given as one reason, but we have never had national interests in most of the countries in which we were prepared to intervene. So this idea of national interest is a very corrosive and contagious one, as is this lack of willingness to assume risks on behalf of a greater international good.

Our governments continue to be extremely sensitive to the issue of sovereignty, particularly our own sovereignty. The cumulative decisions of the Security Council during the 1990s, which called on the UN repeatedly to intervene in the internal affairs of a number of countries, often without the consent of the government authorities involved, have profoundly changed our understanding of what sovereignty represents today. Borders need more attention because the nature of borders is evolving in the practice of international relations, and we need to understand it better. Borders within the European Union are no longer what they once were, and borders in Africa are extremely porous.

Changes in the understanding of sovereignty have been largely positive in the last 10 years. Governments increasingly understand that they do not have a blanket right to violate the rights of their own population, or more often, minorities within their own population. In this sense, the radical legal innovations that we have seen in the 1990s, from truth commissions to the creation of international criminal tribunals, are all important. If the international legal framework we are setting in place becomes effective, government leaders who brutalise their own populations may be forced to change their behaviour, thus reducing the need for interventions.

There is a political context for the debate on humanitarian intervention. There is often an effort to create the impression that the debate over humanitarian intervention pits North against South, and NGOs against governments. But this is completely untrue. African governments call for more interventions from the outside world. Elsewhere in the developing world, such as in India and Pakistan, there is a lot of opposition against the notion of humanitarian and other forms of military intervention. So there is as much disagreement within the developing

world on this issue, as there is between the industrialised and the developing world.

It is widely supposed that NGOs favour humanitarian intervention in most circumstances. But in fact, the reality is very different as was seen at the 1999 Hague appeal for peace meeting with disagreement centring on intervention in Kosovo. The divide was between NGOs that felt that the intervention essentially was right to avoid a repeat of Bosnia, and those NGOs that felt very strongly that no use of force should be justified by the NGO world. So this idea that the issues are simple, that agreement exists between sectors of the world society or even regions of the world is dead wrong.

Increasingly, governments do accept that a degree of international concern over humanitarian conditions can be legitimate. The government in Moscow has been criticised for its methods in Chechnya. I think Russian government understands that the criticism is not against its aim of maintaining territorial integrity. Rather, the methods being used are unacceptable to the international community. With the type of media coverage we have today, the type of effective advocacy we have today, insupportable methods will rapidly be drawn to the attention of the international community, with significant costs to the government involved.

Kofi Annan has been exceptionally courageous in the debate on humanitarian intervention. The safe thing to do for a Secretary-General, is to duck when sensitive issues come by, and refer to the member states of the Security Council. Annan has chosen a rather different path. The hallmark of his tenure has been advocacy of respect for basic human rights and for the imperative of humanitarian action. By that, I do not understand him to be advocating military intervention, I think he sees that as the most extreme form. But he has been systematic in being an advocate for the victims of conflict. We should not take this for granted, and we should be grateful to Kofi Annan for focusing on the ethical dimensions of the problems facing us. Our governments will not do so unless it suits their interests.

Fiona Terry

**President, Medecins sans
Frontieres, Australia**



In the spirit of a frank exchange of ideas, I am probably going to take an opposite viewpoint to many of those expressed here today, although I hope to give you food for thought particularly in relation to the notion of this entire conference “Partners in Humanitarian Crises.”

The most important players in this whole process are people who have not been invited to the conference to speak – the people with whom we are concerned in the field.

While we all aware of the positive work of humanitarian action, the potential negative consequences are often overlooked. Since Rwanda, there has been more attention given to the more “perverse” effects of such action in spite of the fact that it is often pushed into the background by aid organisations themselves.

The negative aspects of humanitarian crises are also misleadingly portrayed as a recent phenomenon: a product of the famous Post-Cold War disorder. While this dichotomy between pre and post-Cold War Society may apply to some international conflicts, as far as humanitarian crises are concerned while aid organisations may find themselves more in the heart of conflict in a post-Cold War setting, the issues remain unchanged.

The term humanitarian crisis itself is in fact misleading. It also goes against the work we are trying to do to generate a political response to war, genocide and famine. These themes are very specific and they require specific responses, but to use this generic term “humanitarian crisis” is dangerous because it leads us to believe that the crisis is of a humanitarian nature. Crises are not of a humanitarian nature they are of a political nature and some of the consequences may be humanitarian. This allows politicians to respond with humanitarian intervention or humanitarian aid.

Humanitarian aid can be deployed as an alibi for a lack of

political will. Humanitarian aid can only really address the symptoms of the problem and not the causes. There is a notion of a continuum between conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution but it is not obvious where humanitarian aid fits in. We can see how it is part of the management of conflict but too often aid is used as a tool of diplomacy for peace building.

The term humanitarian intervention is also misleading; armies can only really provide military intervention. More often than not armed humanitarian responses go awry. To illustrate this point we need only look at the military response to the 1994 cholera outbreak in Goma, Zaire. While genocide was taking place in neighbouring Rwanda, the military intervened to fight a disease. Is this because cholera does not shoot back? At that stage Medecins Sans Frontières (MSF) had called for a military intervention, not a humanitarian intervention, in Rwanda and the intervention in Zaire was simply not enough.

The negative side effects of humanitarian action are unavoidable. If we go back to 1863, to the Geneva Convention and the birth of the Red Cross, the idea was to create a humanitarian space in war where those who had been wounded in the course of war could be declared non-combatants and healed. In deciding the warfare principles at the Geneva Convention, there was no rule made to stop the non-combatants from returning to war. In this sense, humanitarian action can actually prolong war.

The first paradox I would like to refer to in terms of modern-day humanitarian assistance is protection. When we set up refugee camps or safe havens, they may well provide protection to combatants thereby jeopardising the safety of refugees. The most obvious example was in the Rwandan refugee camps, but this has also been a big problem in West Timor and Burundi. As I have said before this is not a new phenomenon: the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, the Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand have inadvertently provided protection to combatants. The same is true of safety zones - Radovan Karadzic threatened to attack safe havens in Bosnia accusing the Bosnian Muslims of using them as bases of attack.

The second aspect of this paradox is the inability to provide physical protection. The presence of

humanitarian organisations often creates a false sense of security. NGOs are only able to call on peacekeeping forces, and still, as Srebrenica has shown, these peacekeeping forces do not even have a mandate for protection. One particularly tragic example for MSF was when Rwandan refugees fled from eastern Zaire. At this time, MSF was used as a lure to identify refugees who were later killed by Kabila and Kagami's troops and we realised that unless we could provide them with physical protection we were actually jeopardising their lives by being there.

Another paradox is the contribution that humanitarian aid can make to the economy of war. The most obvious and direct examples are the payment for armed escorts, which still happens today in Somalia or the theft or misappropriation of food aid. Indirectly, however, simple expenses such as warehouse and car rental as well as inflated beneficiary numbers can help fund the economy of war. For example, in Liberia in 1994, \$5 million worth of goods, including 74 vehicles and communications equipment, were stolen from NGOs. Just 2 years later the agencies lost \$20 million worth of equipment. Taxation is also a problem. In just one of MSF camps, local staff in Goma were paying to the leaders responsible for genocide \$11,000 a month. MSF tried to reduce this by not paying in US dollars but in Zairian currency, but other NGOs were unable to find such large quantities of local currency.

The third paradox is the legitimacy that humanitarian action can bestow on different leaders. Mohamed Sahnoun, who was to have spoken at this conference, worked hard as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in Somalia to marginalise the power of the two main warlords, Ali Mahdi and General Aidid by working with the local community. Yet as soon as the US intervened, their special envoy oversaw Aidid and Ali Mahdi shaking hands under the American flag. Instantly, these two people were accepted by the world's media as legitimate representatives of the Somali people and in one move undid all the work that Sahnoun had done.

There are increasingly humanitarian branches of factions established in the field. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has a humanitarian branch called the FRRA (Fashoda Relief and Rehabilitation Association) and even totalitarian régimes such as North Korea has its

Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee and when humanitarian aid is channelled through these associations it gives them a lot of legitimacy. Again this is nothing new. The Biafran secessionist movement and its leader General Ojukwu used aid to prioritise the cause of independence over saving people from famine.

The fourth paradox of aid is the control of populations, the provision or withholding of food is a very useful tool in the control of populations. In the closed environment of refugee camps this happens effortlessly. This is not limited to refugee camps. In North Korea today all food is channelled through the North Korean public distribution system allowing the government to easily control the movement of its people.

It is rare that such paradoxes actually lead to the prolongation of war although I do believe that the situation in Eastern Zaire prolonged the war in Central Africa. I do think, however, it is important to bear in mind the negative consequences of humanitarian action which are exacerbated when humanitarian aid is used as the primary solution to crises.

Mari Fitzduff

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Of the 110 conflicts active in the last decade, 75 had been terminated by 1999. Of these, 21 were ended by peace agreements, 22 ended in victory for one side, and 32 had other outcomes such as cease-fires. Many conflicts are of a long-standing nature – of the 27 major armed conflicts of the decade, at least 17 were ten years old.

While 22 conflicts ended with apparent victory to one side, history shows that what may appear to be a 'victory' may reoccur or re-emerge at a later date as a renewed conflict. In addition, 'victories' are becoming rarer – possibly due to the nature of the newer kinds of conflicts, and the state of arms availability in the world.

21 conflicts were ended by peace agreements i.e. where the conflict was not necessarily 'ended' but changed so that it was mainly played out through politics rather than through violence. Such agreements often take a considerable time to construct. Often such processes are punctuated by violence, and indeed violence can increase as agreements become more likely – such was the case in the death of Chris Hani at the height of the South African discussions. In addition, ceasefires often break down, or become partial many times before a conflict finally moves into politics. Many conflicts are still locked in stalemate or reach an 'acceptable' level of violence, and may take external leverage (e.g. Cyprus) to start a process of agreement discussions again.

How well, or how badly, a peace process has been conducted will often determine the issues that need to be dealt with in a post-conflict scenario. A recent INCORE study has suggested that the following were helpful in developing a 'successful' peace process.

a) A recognition that successful peace processes are often organic and cumulative. Peace processes frequently collapse, but each phase often delivers some level of success. The fragmented and accumulative nature of the process means that issues are often left hanging, and

prevent a clean break between conflicts and their ending.

b) A sufficiency of inclusion is necessary to actively involve those who would otherwise threaten or obstruct the process. Not only is it important to try and include as many political parties as possible in the process, it is also important to continue to try and include those who may have excluded themselves from the process of agreement making. In South Africa, the inclusion of Inkatha, despite their opposition to the process, was extremely important in achieving a sustainable agreement. In Northern Ireland, despite the fact that the Democratic Unionist Party was totally opposed to the agreement, they have been included in the Assembly set up to implement the agreement. Where groups are left out, with no gain from the political process, they will resort to 'spoiler' tactics. In some cases they will resort to alternative means of power seeking, including violence and criminality.

c) Military spoiler groups are best neutralised with the active involvement of ex-militants. Ex-militants, who are converted to the compromises of peace, are more easily able to persuade those of their own groups about the merits of peace. Subsequently, the more ex-militants are involved, in post conflict community and political processes, whether these be of the state or of non-legal groups, the more likely they are to help to maintain the peace. If they are not involved, problems ensue. Members of the security forces and paramilitary groups must be integrated into normal society if the agreement is to stick.

d) During peace negotiations, the primary function of leaders is to promote the interests of their own people. Following an agreement, there may be many years of political realignments for and against the agreement, as feelings remain high and hostility continues, albeit often in a different form. Leaders often face a very difficult time, as the realities of compromises reached are implemented.

f) Peace accords need to address the needs of victims of violence. It is often after the main violence is over that victims begin to express their anger. Their needs must be addressed, or such anger can coalesce into a rejection of compromises made.

Following a conflict, the need for leadership at many different levels is critical. As in Conflict Resolution work,

'top down' or 'bottom up' approaches are never sufficient. An interesting example of a Post Conflict programme is the aid programme put in place by the EU in Northern Ireland following the cease-fires in Northern Ireland in 1994. The EU agreed to fund a post conflict programme for 1996-2000 to focus on post-conflict needs in the region. It was agreed that the programme should be implemented through a strategy that embraced partnerships of governments, NGOs, and business. The programme embraced the following activities:

Military/Security: retraining and resettlement programmes for ex-combatants. Many of these programmes were organised by the ex-combatants themselves.

Policy/Constitutional: supporting political dialogue, particularly on post-agreement issues that were problematic, such as policing, decommissioning, identity, language, parading.

Economic/Social: Government agencies in particular concentrated on funding developments of an infrastructural and economic development nature to ensure an economy that could deliver a peace dividend.

Psycho/Social: Although conflicts end, hostilities often continue, along with stereotyping, prejudices and discrimination. EU funding also provided for continuing dialogue work to deal with many of these issues. It also provided funds for work with victims, either through groups or with individuals, which was about acknowledgement of their suffering, and practical ways to address this.

International: Inevitably, in the midst of a conflict, people turn inwards, and their horizons are often limited by their identity groups and by the exigencies of their conflict. Funding helped people to look beyond these horizons to seek international assistance sharing lessons learned about coming out of conflict, managing existing diversity, and implementation of the requirements of the peace agreement at all levels.

Lessons learned

1) Balance: Justice and reconciliation

There is always a need for information and justice, but also forgiveness and reconciliation, if albeit, very painful. Politicians, particularly those who have gained through

the settlements, are often anxious to move on, and it is usually left to civic society to help pick up the necessary pieces to ensure a modicum of justice, and ensure enough processes of reconciliation.

2) Ensure: Aid as connector not divider

The evidence is that the more people can be encouraged to make collective decisions about developing their futures, the more stable the peace is likely to be. Decisions about aid distribution, and economic and social regeneration should, where possible, be undertaken in a shared fashion.

3) Affirm: Equality, diversity, and interdependence

These are the suggested three necessities that may help to underpin the development of a post conflict society, and which may help to prevent or mitigate the development of future conflicts. A commitment to equality, a recognition of diversity, and the mainstreaming, where possible of interdependence or co-operative process between the communities to ensure sustained dialogue.

4) Address: Post-conflict identity and meaning

Finally, it is important to recognise that people, and in particular men, often miss the excitement, and power generated by a conflict. Despite their terrible consequences, conflicts simplify life, and enemies; it gives exciting new roles to people, and the bondings are often tighter between communities. If the solutions generated do not provide for alternative foci and roles, particularly for those who gained either psychologically or materially through the conflict, then the peace may be fragile. The post-conflict process must seriously address the inclusion of as many as possible in a new meaning for their future which can provide both material and psychological gain - and thereby generate a collective commitment to a future of peace that is shared by as many as possible in a post-conflict society.

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Civil war has been a constant feature of international relations. Every now and then in the course of history, states have been able to monopolise violence in society, but, as a rule, the central control of violence has not been enduring. Only in the 20th century, most developed societies seem to have moved to a stable internal peace in which the risk of civil war has all but disappeared. This seems to be associated with the declining risk of interstate wars among the leading powers. Here the causality seems to be going in both directions; internal stability and democracy contribute to peaceful external relations, but international peace also help to maintain domestic tranquillity.

Major intra- and interstate wars have been declining for several decades giving rise to a security community among industrialised countries. A similar development can be discerned in selected regions of the South, including Latin America and Southeast Asia. The situation in the Western Hemisphere is intriguing; for decades, countries there have been able to avoid wars among themselves.

This has been the case in spite of the domestic economic turmoil, political instability, and military intervention in the region. In Latin America, a firewall has been successfully set up between intra- and inter-state conflicts. One of the reasons for this appears to be the long history of national sovereignty in the region.

In the 1980s and the early 1990s, civil wars and humanitarian emergencies plagued Central America. The ideological character of the conflicts converted them into a regional confrontation where intra-state fighting became associated with political coalitions and military confrontations.

With peace taking hold in Latin America, with the exception of Columbia, it seems that civil wars between organised parties are fading out. Internal and external

peace have become mutually reinforcing which makes it justified to speak, as Arie Kacowicz does, of a zone of peace in South and even Central America.

A similar trend can be discerned in Southeast Asia. ASEAN has been relatively powerless to intervene in the political, financial and environmental crises. Political problems are manifested by autocratic governments, irregular power transfers, and the resort to violence in the struggle for resources and ethno-religious dominance. Yet, the inter-state relations, even within the expanded ASEAN, seem to be relatively peaceful.

In Africa, the distinction between civil and international wars is not, in most cases, very meaningful. The Great Lakes region is not divided so much by international borders as the ethnic divisions and economic spheres of influence cutting across borders. Similarly, in the West African conflict formation internal and external aspects of the crisis are inextricably linked with each other. The informal political and economic map of Africa is very different from the formal boundaries of the region.

The problem of civil war is not as pervasive in the Middle East and Asia as it is in Africa. Yet, there are several regions in which such wars are either raging or looming. The risk of instability and violence continues to be pervasive in Central Asia. In South Asia there are several military hotspots, including Kashmir and Sri Lanka. While a regional war is unlikely in Southeast Asia, violence continues to fester, especially in Indonesia.

The global tour given above lends support to one, admittedly, hypothetical conclusion; *the institutionalisation of national sovereignty contributes to the internal and external stability of a region*. As Robert Jackson and Mark Zacher have argued, there is a territorial covenant in international relations that is respected by most governments. This suggests that the institution of national sovereignty is an important element in the efforts to prevent and resolve violent conflicts.

Admittedly, this generalisation is based on the Latin American and, to some extent, Southeast Asian experience. The situation in the Balkans, South Caucasus, and Central Asia could be ameliorated by the establishing the principle of sovereignty more firmly there – regional stability without recognised national borders and

jurisdictions is difficult to accomplish.

There is also counter-evidence to the emphasis on sovereignty as a conflict-resolution method. In the Middle East, one could argue, the territorial division and national sovereignty are quite well established. Yet, neither internal turmoil nor external aggression can be ruled out in the region. The same conclusion may apply also to South Asia as well as north and South Korea. These examples suggest that ideological and political tensions can overwhelm the peace-producing effects of sovereignty.

One can also take a different look at the problem and note that the cause of conflict in these regions is the contested nature of sovereignty. In the Middle East, the biggest bone of contention is the Palestinian sovereignty and in South Asia much of the problem boils down to the status of Kashmir. The risk of a military confrontation between China and Taiwan is almost completely due to the dispute over the status of the latter.

A corollary of the emphasis on the virtues of sovereignty is that external intervention in the internal affairs of other states, even violent conflicts, should be avoided. This prescription is, however, controversial and runs counter to most of the recent international efforts to develop more effective and just methods of conflict management.

The question is, in other words, the extent to which the international community can help to stave off or resolve violence in regions where wars have crystallised into a semi-permanent condition? The answer is probably that the chances of a successful intervention are small, but it should be tried anyway, carried out in as a flexible and effective manner as possible.

The first argument for this course of action is the humanitarian one. The economic and human costs of inaction are almost always higher than those of preventive action. Therefore, it makes sense to launch preventive diplomatic and even military operations even if they are considered to be effective only in the margins.

Another argument for international intervention is that it cannot be avoided in any case; learning about atrocities, the mass media and international public opinion would pressure governments to act. In a way, there seems to be a

new humanitarian imperative in operation in international relations. Yet powers seem to have a declining motivation to become militarily involved in local crises. This trend is most visible in the U.S. case; the Bush administration is developing non-intervention, provided that there is no major national interest in play, into a doctrine. Even if major powers are prepared to act, it is very difficult to bring from outside a solution to protracted civil wars.

Successful negotiation and mediation of violent crises presuppose that parties are organised and leaders can control their troops and deliver the promises given at the negotiating table. Counting on good faith between faction leaders may be, however, a doubtful proposition, as peace talks may be only an expedient that the faction leaders use to play the game of war.

The incoherence of the parties to a war has become a genuine problem in peace talks. In many cases, the members of military factions are not tied together by ideological or even ethnic bonds and are comprised of people who have no other place to go, or who are motivated by economical gains.

According to William Zartman's well-known dictum, success in mediation requires that the conflict is ripe for resolution. This statement is, of course, tautological, but yet it rings true. Ripeness is supposed to bring with it moderation and reason that would pave way for a negotiated solution. However, even ripeness may be difficult to convert into a successful peace agreement. The problem is that the contemporary local crises are so complex that even the best methods of negotiation and mediation are inadequate to the task. Therefore, it is almost impossible to "get to yes".

My intention has not been to discourage negotiated efforts or international intervention to put an end to violence and suffering in local wars and humanitarian emergencies. Clearly, in most situations there is no other alternative but to support local efforts at peace building and try, by external means, to alter the balance of incentives in the direction of a cease-fire or peace agreement. I have only wanted to point out that there are no easy solutions to civil wars and humanitarian disasters. Therefore, only structural solutions, such as the support to the principle of national sovereignty, may, in the end, provide a way out of the current dilemma.

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Historically, the relations between media and conflicts have not been what one could describe as happy. In the past there have been countless examples of the media taking sides reducing themselves to tools of propaganda. Even now governments use the media as auxiliaries to their war machines.

With strict censorship a thing of the past, governments are obliged to employ more subtle means. At the beginning of its bombing campaign in Yugoslavia, NATO told journalists that the bombing was aimed only at restricted numbers of military targets and that its accuracy would be akin to that of a surgeon's scalpel. The journalists reported NATO's version of the facts in spite of the fact that 500 civilians were killed by the bombing. While I do not believe these journalists collaborated with NATO willingly, it is clear that they were manipulated to sell NATO's war. When journalists are often suspected of collaboration in war how can they contribute to the resolution of conflict?

The answer, I think, is the so-called CNN effect. The twenty-four news network has no doubt a big influence on international politics since it reported the start of the Operation Desert Storm live from Baghdad. It was unprecedented for an American network to report on a U.S.-led war from an enemy capital. Images of dead or dying Iraqi civilians beamed into American homes made the White House sit up and take notice and one US officer remark, 'war policy in the CNN age must have a human face'.

Next came Somalia. Some say it was the images of famine stricken children that influenced President Bush's decision to intervene in Somalia in December 1992. The US troops landed on the Somali coast at midnight to coincide with U.S. primetime and were greeted by rows of television cameras. When one year later, images of the corpses of American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu preceded President Clinton's

announcement of the withdrawal of troops from Somalia, people said 'CNN sent US troops in. CNN pulled them out.' UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali even dubbed CNN the sixteenth member of the Security Council.

In actuality the influence of CNN in the decision making process has been exaggerated. According to Warren P. Strobel of *The Washington Times*, there had only been fifteen reports on US television about Somalia before Bush's decision to intervene. Similarly, Secretary of State Warren Christopher had told Boutros Boutros-Ghali of the US desire to pull out several days before the macabre images appeared on CNN. It was not CNN that forced President Clinton to act, but a media-savvy President taking advantage of the report to announce his decision.

In spite of these inaccuracies it is wrong to underestimate the influence of the media. Real time images televisions send from all corners of the world have an impact on public opinion. The 1984 famine in Ethiopia, for example, showed the power of media to attract attention to a human tragedy.

10 years later the crisis in Rwanda was more complex. The gruesome pictures of the violence there did not generate a surge of pro-intervention public opinion. The massacre spread and 800,000 people were killed. It was only the images of Hutu refugees that finally provoked public opinion and forced governments to offer emergency assistance.

In terms of public opinion, it is easier to respond to refugees than to massacres. Regardless of the root cause, you can help refugees by giving them food, shelter, and medical care. It is never enough but lives will be saved. Genocide is too complicated a problem for such a simplistic solution. Governments and the public alike do not want to commit themselves to a problem which is hard to understand and hard to tackle.

The media may be to blame for this attitude. Stereotypical images of human misery make people indifferent. The media's simplistic views of complicated problems appeal to the viewers' anger or sympathy. They do not explain the problems, they do not offer solutions. The media is selective and inconsistent. The crises in Sudan and Afghanistan were barely reported at all. Yet our

constituency is our readers and viewers. We cannot force them to read or watch what they are not interested in. A chicken-and-egg argument, I agree, but I would like to say that one should not expect too much from the media.

I think what the BBC World Service is doing towards Afghanistan is a good example of how the media can help the healing process begin. A radio programme broadcast in Pashto and Dari entitled 'New Home, New Life' is proving popular. The programme is an entertaining radio drama that also provides useful information. One of the topics featured was landmines and according to a survey, those who listen to the programme regularly are twice as likely to avoid landmines than those who have not heard the broadcasts.

Also in Afghanistan, the Geneva-based NGO Media Action International in cooperation with BBC runs a project called REACH (Radio Education for Afghan Children). It is a radio education programme to teach Afghan children who cannot go to school, basic subjects such as mathematics, science and Afghan culture. The project is supported by the European Union, UNICEF and British and Canadian governments. Star Radio in Liberia, run by Swiss based Hironnelle Foundation, is another example. While these activities are not aimed at solving problems, by disseminating accurate, factual news and information to those who are used to being manipulated by propagandists they may contribute to relief and conciliation.

About one year ago Media Action International held a workshop entitled 'Strengthening Lifeline Media in Regions of Conflict'. Taking part in the discussions were crises management and conflict resolution experts as well as journalists. The workshop concluded that by learning the techniques of conflict resolution, journalists could improve the ability to understand conflicts more deeply. I personally am wary about journalists co-operating with negotiators. I believe that a journalist's prime role in conflict resolution should be objective reporting to provide negotiators with accurate information and help them to resolve the conflict. I do, however, support the idea that journalists and conflict resolution experts should share their experiences. For example, by focusing on common ground rather than on differences, journalists' reports may have a more constructive influence.

Rather than promoting conciliation, the media has been known even in recent memory to incite conflict. Slobodan Milo_ovic used Yugoslav state media to inspire Serb nationalism and to incite hatred against other ethnic groups. After the collapse of Milo_ovic the journalists who once peddled hatred now need a chance to learn about independent and objective reporting. Educating the media may also have a role to play in conflict prevention. If effective efforts had been made to counter the dissemination of Serb nationalism that began in the mid-eighties, some of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia might have been avoided. Yet, unless handled prudently, outside intervention by journalists usually encounters strong resistance, seen recently in the wake of media condemnation of Austria's Jörg Haider.

How can the routine media contribute to conflict resolution? How can media attract international attention to such enduring and debilitating conflicts as Sudan or Afghanistan? It is important not only to report on ongoing conflicts but also important to report on areas where conflicts are emerging and how they may be prevented. The media and the international community ignored non-violent Albanian resistance in Kosovo throughout most of the nineties. We were too busy covering Bosnia, we did not care about Kosovo until 1998 when it was too late. The same can be said about Rwanda. If the media, along with the United Nations, had warned the world that preparations for a massacre of Tutsi was underway, many people might have escaped death.

It is also important for media to help spread global solidarity. Because of that we need to carry more international reports. Unfortunately, the world's only superpower, the United States, is becoming increasingly introspective. The news reports from the foreign bureaux of ABC, CBC, and NBC declined from 3261 minutes in 1988 to 1596 minutes in 1996. Foreign news reports in US print media fell similarly. While in Europe and Japan there is not such a conspicuous trend for introspection, we need to ensure that as responsible journalists we continue to publish foreign news reports. International institutions and NGOs should also reappraise their relations with the media to ensure their activities get the coverage they deserve.

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War lies at the heart of traditional security paradigms, and military force is the sharp edge of the realist school of International Relations. The incidence of war is as pervasive as the wish for peace is universal. At any given time, most countries are at peace and long to keep it so, yet most are also ready to go to war if necessary. The 20th century captured the paradox only too well. We tried to place increasing normative, legislative and operational restrictions on the right of states to go to war, but the century turned out to be the most murderous in human history, with more dead in over 250 wars than in all previous wars of the past two thousand years. Six million people have died *since* the Cold War ended.

At the same time, the meaning and scope of security have become much broader, incorporating military, political, economic, societal and environmental aspects. The number and types of security providers have grown enormously and the relationship between security providers has become more dense and complex. Phenomena of global scope - from drug trafficking to eco-terrorism - require active collaboration among law-enforcement authorities as well as non-government groups and organisations.

In all of this, the burden of history, though, presses heavily on present atmospherics and any future resolutions. History is a fiercely contested terrain because it's crucial to the construction of identity. Certain approaches tend to ignore the emotional factors, but the mix of symbolism, emotion, identity should not be denied. Consider Kashmir as a dispute. It is an example of three competing nationalisms: India's secular nationalism, Pakistan's Islamic nationalism, Kashmir's ethnonationalism.

A variety of factors and actors in the current international arena are at odds with each other, impeding and at times hindering attempts at resolution. The facts in the dispute are themselves open to interpretation; so is the relevant

international law. There are also third party complications, with third parties acting as both facilitators and spoilers. Mediators, stepping into a conflict to play the role of peacemakers, might or might not have good credentials, and at times put at risk their neutrality, as it was the case in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Korea, Taiwan, Angola, Kosovo, and East Timor, to mention only a few.

We tend to think of war as a pathology. But historically, war has been *the* traditional method of conflict resolution, it has undergone declining legitimacy but, as of now, we have no equivalent functional substitute. Once a conflict erupts, violence breaks out and people are killed it's much more difficult to get a compromise. It's difficult to impress upon nationalistically inflamed consciousness, the enormous disparity between the ends sought, the means used, the price paid, and, in the end, the results achieved.

There are a number of contradictory logics of negotiating from strength versus weakness. Many sides in a conflict do not accept to negotiate; most peace agreements today came after a prolonged period of stalemate. Peace and justice have contradictory logics, too. Peace is forward-looking and may require reconciliation between rival communities. Justice looks back and requires trial and punishment of the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. But the pursuit of human-rights violators can delay and impede the effort to establish conditions of security so that displaced people can return home and live in relative peace once again. The tension must be reconciled on a case-by-case basis rather than on a rigid formula; and it is best resolved by the countries concerned, not by outsiders.

Peace contradicts power politics, but peace cannot be *grasped* without acknowledging and accommodating military realities. No peace agreement will *last* without incorporating equity and justice – fragile foundations, resting on temporary inability of revisionists to challenge the status quo rather than permanent change in their disposition. The two must be combined.

Humanitarian crises pose incredible challenges – multiple parties, multiple issues, multiple dimensions, multiple timeframes, multiple partnerships. Human security becomes the template of international public policy. (e.g., The demons of displacement include too much

government, leading to tyranny; too little government, leading to anarchy; civil, revolutionary and international warfare; economic collapse; epidemics; and mass expulsions.)

The degree of government – tyranny and anarchy as causes of refugees – can be addressed in a preventive way if outsiders give greater attention to incipient problems and confront the myth of state sovereignty that precludes outside intervention until after the onset of a full-blown crisis. Economic collapse can be averted through timely and adequate foreign investment and stabilisation of commodity prices. One possible solution to the problem of multiethnic societies is partition into two or more states: except that partition too can leave its own enduring legacies of conflict, as in Northern Ireland and the Indian subcontinent.

The most effective and least disruptive solution would be to institute preventive measures before the situation deteriorates to the point of a massive outflow of refugees. This can include the construction or strengthening of civil society and democratic institutions. Peace-building measures can be followed by a range of peacekeeping efforts during the immediate crisis of refugees. After the crisis is over, the palliative measures undertaken during it must be followed once again by curative measures designed to tackle the deeper underlying causes.

If the problem of humanitarian crises is exacerbated by weakened state structures, then one solution is to strengthen the institutional foundations of fragile states. But a word of caution is in order as strengthening the apparatus of the state in some contexts may give more powerful means of oppression to a dominant group, clique or sect.

There is the need to create early warning systems for alerting us to the danger of imminent humanitarian tragedies. NGOs could be especially useful components in the early warning network. But again, two notes of caution. First, in many recent cases we have not lacked for early warning of impending disasters. The greater need may be to examine how the world community can be made to heed such warnings.

Second, there is the opposite danger of adopting policies that are driven by the CNN factor. The international

media, dominated by Western conglomerates, interprets the world through their eyes. Our responses to humanitarian tragedies should be driven by the needs of the victims and by our capacity to render effective assistance. The resemblance between this and the CNN factor can sometimes be coincidental.

Humanitarian agencies are also having to face up to ambiguities in the field. The Cambodian refugee camps on the Thai side of the border, for example, were the main catchment area for the Khmer Rouge cadres. Were international agencies, in helping the Cambodian refugees, in effect sustaining the Khmer Rouge? Likewise, to what extent were outside agencies, in helping to alleviate the sufferings of Rwandans in refugee camps, sustaining rival groups of killers?

How do we reconcile community obligations toward large numbers of internally and externally displaced people with the revered principle of state sovereignty? On the other side of the equation, limits exist to the physical, environmental, bureaucratic and social capacity of any country to absorb refugees.

The dilemmas and tensions in turn highlight the need for strategies and solutions that integrate national, regional and global efforts, and for mechanisms that co-ordinate the efforts of national governments, NGOs and international organisations. Partnership, not conflict and competition, is called for between scholars and practitioners, and between different provider organisations.

Confronted with a world that cannot be changed, reasonable people adapt and accommodate. Cynics insist that war is an inherent part of human society. But crime and poverty, too, have always been part of human nature. Any political leader who admitted to giving up on the fight to end crime or poverty would quickly be returned to private life by voters. Paradoxically, in the case of war, those who seek to abolish war are the ones to be considered soft in the head.

Success comes from having the courage to fail. Those who have never failed have not tested the limits of their potential. Sustained, co-ordinated efforts *can* turn killing fields into playing fields and rice fields.

Conclusions

The principle of partnership involves different actors – especially civil society, states, the international organisations and the UN – working better together on the basis of complementarity and comparative advantage. This brings with it the need to understand the role that different organizations and actors can play at different stages of conflict prevention, management and settlement, and the optimum division of labour. Yet while this sounds logical in theory, the practice may not be so simple. Moreover, the operating philosophies of different actors may not be entirely compatible. Therefore, while the emphasis must be upon optimum coordination, coordination for its own sake is not the objective. Indeed, certain actors – and especially NGOs – have a strong interest in maintaining their identity and autonomy.

Co-operation was one of the key elements of the conference from the very beginning; co-operation between the EU, the UN and Japan, but also co-operation between donors, policymakers, NGOs, the media and most importantly with the victims of crisis themselves. The need to more actively engage people in the field – from identifying communities at risk to supporting post-conflict societies – is key. In the imperfect science of conflict prevention, management and resolution, while the interests of the conflict-affected remain paramount it is these same victims that are often most easily overlooked.

Every situation and every conflict is different, and we may well be cautious of theories of conflict. Nevertheless, there are some patterns in the root causes and background conditions that lead to conflict, and it is important to learn from them.

The multilateral aid community should consider strategies for building capacity for local, indigenous, civil society. This can involve financial assistance, and it can involve sharing expertise. We can capitalize upon and learn from the civil society.

In providing assistance in developing countries, strategies should ensure that constructive and responsible civil society is involved in processes of governance and development in a transparent and accountable way.

It is important to continue to provide leadership in highlighting the utility of conflict prevention, and to *institutionalise* this in a number of ways. In particular, this should cover the formation of permanent resources to be used for promoting equitable, broad-based development and assistance for good governance. The UN's role in conflict prevention should be identified and organized as an inter-organizational activity, reflecting its broad economic, social and political basis. This means doing away with the distinction between '*high politics*' and '*low politics*' that often privileged traditional security over human security.

Education is an integral part of the solution at every level. Be it training NGOs or journalists to deal more sensitively with the conditions on the ground or training local aid workers or spokesmen to support and speak for themselves, education is a key vehicle through which humanitarian action can make itself more inclusive, responsive and effective.

Debt continues to play a prominent role in perpetuating underdevelopment. Worse still, it contributes to the social inequalities and vulnerabilities that contribute to the root causes of conflict. Therefore, if a 'comprehensive approach' is to be taken seriously, debt relief is essential.

The availability of light weapons has resulted in millions of deaths since the end of the Cold War in localized violence and civil war. Yet the production and export of arms are central to the economies of many states. Therefore, governments should reassess their arms transfer guidelines and promote transparency in sales. Profit must not come before people's lives.

Poverty and inequality are root causes of conflict, especially in societies divided by ethnicity, religion, language and other identities. Weak state capacity to deal with such vulnerabilities and provide basic human needs – such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, infrastructure – also translate into vulnerability to conflict. In addressing conflict prevention, management and resolution at the root level, the strategy should centre on a common methodology. All these activities involve *building capacity* for (1) local, broad-based and inclusive development, (2) inclusive and participatory governance, (3) the promotion of pluralism in heterogeneous societies.

The changing political climate – conditioned largely but not solely by the end of the Cold War and the impact of globalisation – has transformed not only the way in which wars are fought but also the way in which humanitarian actors respond to crises. In some cases mechanisms have not sufficiently adapted to the new type of conflicts, in others political evolutions have been used as excuses for inaction. Piecemeal or short-sighted approaches to humanitarian crises in particular were criticised with ineffective preventative diplomacy and aid for aid's sake shown up as lacking the necessary political will to be truly of value.

The media have a significant impact upon every aspect of humanitarian crises – often determining which tragedy is broadcast into the living rooms of television viewers; which issue promoted; which issue receives the resources of donors. A proactive rather than reactive media stance is necessary to ensure that journalists neither drive nor exacerbate conflict and that their reporting does not hinder reconciliation and reconstruction in post-conflict societies. Similarly, sensitivity and respect for people is essential to maintain the dignity of fellow human beings.

“Finishing the job,” from the point of view of international organizations, the media and humanitarian workers, is a vital element to ensuring lasting peace. Re-integrating both aggressors and victims into society and guaranteeing that former enemies have the support needed to co-exist is essential in making certain that resolved conflicts remain resolved. Lukewarm support from governments makes this an area that could most benefit from a comprehensive approach. Therefore, after the issue – be it a conflict or a natural disaster – is out of the news, the long job of reconstruction must be supported.



Dr. Sadako Ogata addresses a full house in the UNU's U Thant International Conference Hall.

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The UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the European Commissioner Poul Nielson open the EU / UN exhibition 'Partners in Humanitarian Crises'.



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