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Center for Preventive Action



Council Special Report No. 48
October 2009

Paul B. Stares and Micah Zenko

Enhancing U.S. Preventive Action

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Contents

Foreword vii

Acknowledgments ix

Acronyms xi

Council Special Report 1

Introduction 3

Assessing U.S. Preventive Action 10

Recommendations 19

Endnotes 27

About the Authors 35

Advisory Committee 37

CPA Advisory Committee 38

CPA Mission Statement 39

Foreword

Few would dispute that preventing conflict, instability, and humanitarian disaster is preferable to confronting these problems after they arise. Preventive measures are generally less expensive than remedial ones. They also allow policymakers to address potential crises before they threaten international stability, U.S. interests, and human lives.

Building an effective U.S. government capacity to take preventive action, however, has proved an elusive goal. And the challenges to achieving it have perhaps never been greater. The urgent problems faced by the United States, including wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, nuclear development in Iran and North Korea, and the aftermath of a deep economic crisis, make it difficult for policymakers to focus resources and attention on potential future threats. But these same urgent challenges also make preventive action more useful. In this climate, measures that could obviate further military commitments, save money, and resolve tensions that might consume more time and resources later are a sound investment.

In this Council Special Report, sponsored by the Center for Preventive Action, Paul B. Stares and Micah Zenko evaluate the U.S. system for foreseeing and heading off crises. They assess in detail current U.S. practices with regard to different types of preventive action, examining such topics as intelligence community analyses; “watchlists” of states at risk; interagency planning processes; foreign assistance programming; and the work of the State Department office created in 2004 to lead U.S. government efforts in this area. The report cites an array of shortcomings in how the government plans and conducts its preventive activities, a situation that can leave policymakers scrambling to respond to crises after they break out. To improve this, the authors recommend a variety of steps, including revising and strengthening the strategic planning process under the leadership of the National Security Council, improving and consolidating intelligence products and connecting them more

closely to policymakers, and providing additional funding for preventive efforts.

Enhancing U.S. Preventive Action is a comprehensive contribution to the debate on a complex topic. It offers detailed recommendations that could bolster the ability of the United States to identify and address threats before they erupt into crises. It also makes a strong case that given the military and economic constraints facing the United States today, such preventive action is not a luxury but a necessity.

Richard N. Haass

President

Council on Foreign Relations

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Paul B. Stares
Micah Zenko

Acronyms

CMM	Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
COCOMs	Combatant Commands
CRC	Civilian Response Corps
CRC-A	CRC Active Component
CRC-R	CRC Reserve Component
CRC-S	CRC Standby Component
CRSG	Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group
DNI	director of National Intelligence
F Framework	Foreign Assistance Framework
ICAF	Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework
IIW	Internal Instability Watchlist
IMET	International Military and Education Training
IMS	Interagency Management System
IPC	Interagency Policy Committee
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIC	National Intelligence Council
NIPF	National Intelligence Priorities Framework
NSC	National Security Council
NSPD-44	National Security Presidential Directive-44 (“Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization”)
NSPPC	National Security Policy Planning Committee
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PSR	Prevention, Stabilization, and Reconstruction

QDDR	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
TSC	Theater Security Cooperation
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Council Special Report

Introduction

Since taking office, the Obama administration has repeatedly affirmed its intent to prevent potential future international crises from becoming the source of costly new U.S. military commitments. In one of the earliest foreign policy pronouncements of the new administration, Vice President Joseph R. Biden declared: “We’ll strive to act preventively, not preemptively, to avoid whenever possible or wherever possible the choice of last resort between the risks of war and the dangers of inaction. We’ll draw upon all the elements of our power—military and diplomatic; intelligence and law enforcement; economic and cultural—to stop crises from occurring before they are in front of us.”¹ Not long afterward, General James L. Jones, in his first speech as national security adviser, echoed much the same objective: “We need to be able to anticipate the kind of operations that we should be thinking about six months to a year ahead of time in different parts of the world to bring the necessary elements of national and international power to bear to prevent future Iraqs and future Afghanistans.”² And in a major speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August 2009, President Barack Obama also declared that “one of the best ways to lead our troops wisely is to prevent the conflicts that cost American blood and treasure tomorrow.”³

This would not be the first time senior U.S. officials have extolled the virtues of better crisis management and conflict prevention as a way to avoid costly military entanglements.⁴ Indeed, this goal has been a recurring feature of declaratory U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War, if not before.⁵ Yet for all the avowed interest in preventive action, the United States has repeatedly found itself responding to foreign crises belatedly and hastily with damaging consequences for U.S. regional interests and policy goals.⁶ In many other cases, moreover, regional instability and conflict have eventually necessitated major U.S.

military interventions to stabilize and reconstruct the stricken country. By one calculation, such missions have been carried out on average every eighteen to twenty-four months since the end of the Cold War, with each typically lasting five to eight years—collectively an immensely burdensome undertaking.⁷

The question remains: Will the Obama administration's declarations of intent to make preventive action a policy priority for the United States produce any different results? Some skeptics argue that the outlook is not promising—that preventive action is too amorphous and ambitious an undertaking to expect much to change. This Council Special Report, however, argues not only that the United States *can* take meaningful steps to improve its ability to manage regional instability and prevent violent conflict, but that it *must* take such steps.⁸ The burden of current and foreseeable military operations, as well as growing fiscal pressures, makes the avoidance of new demands no longer simply desirable, but necessary. The implications, moreover, of emerging geostrategic trends provide additional reasons to favor preventive or “upstream” approaches to conflict management over more costly remedial or “downstream” responses. Rhetorical commitments, however, will not suffice to bring about the needed improvements. The essential organizational arrangements that guide policy, planning, and budgeting must also be improved. In much the same way that entrenched service parochialism in the U.S. armed services was systemically addressed through organizational reforms to promote a culture of “jointness,” so the same has to happen to enhance U.S. preventive action.

This report recommends that the Obama administration take the following steps to enhance U.S. organizational arrangements for preventive action: reinvigorate interagency strategic planning under the direction of the National Security Council (NSC) that, among other things, would set clear priorities and broad policy guidance for U.S. preventive action toward identified threats of instability and conflict; streamline and integrate current early-warning products into a dedicated interagency process for preventive action planning and crisis preparedness that would also be led and coordinated by the NSC; and upgrade civilian resources for preventive action, including more flexible crisis contingency funds and a diplomatic “surge” capacity to support observer missions, mediation efforts, and other special initiatives abroad.

BACKGROUND

With the United States extracting itself from one immensely costly war while simultaneously increasing its involvement in another, the need to avoid additional military commitments is especially acute at this time. Although estimates of the eventual price tag of the Iraq war vary, direct costs to the American taxpayer are nearing three-quarters of a trillion dollars. Eight years of fighting in Afghanistan has cost a quarter of a trillion dollars and is now set to increase substantially, perhaps for many years.⁹ The strain on equipment, personnel, and the families of the servicemen and -women deployed overseas is enormous. And, of course, the tragic human toll measured in many thousands of Americans killed and maimed continues to grow, stretching public tolerance of current deployments, not to mention potential future ones, to the limit.¹⁰

The fiscal outlook for the United States reinforces the preventive imperative. The United States faces an anticipated current accounts deficit in excess of \$9 trillion over the next decade as a result of an ambitious domestic reform agenda coupled with a hugely expensive effort to resuscitate the economy following the recent financial crisis.¹¹ Although preventive action can involve significant investments, its relative cost-effectiveness compared to remedial measures is not in doubt.¹² Besides the direct expenses associated with military stabilization and reconstruction operations, a full audit of the cost imposed by mitigating the effects of conflict must also include foreign assistance expenditures. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has disbursed billions of dollars in disaster relief and humanitarian aid in response to various foreign crises (not counting Iraq and Afghanistan).¹³ Huge sums of prior investment and earlier foreign assistance have also been written off in the process.

Important geostrategic incentives for preventive action are also reasserting themselves and could conceivably grow more pressing in the twenty-first century. The end of the Cold War clearly lessened, if not entirely removed, the primary U.S. motivation for managing localized disputes and regional tensions, namely, to prevent them from being exploited by America's adversaries or, worse, escalating into a dangerous superpower confrontation. The U.S. interest in regional crisis management and conflict prevention subsequently became increasingly

driven by humanitarian concerns and then, after 9/11, by the fear that terrorist groups would take advantage of internal instability and state weakness to attack U.S. allies or the United States. Although these concerns still remain, additional preventive imperatives are emerging (or in some cases, reemerging) as a result of discernible global trends.

The rise of new regional and global powers such as Brazil, India, and China increases the potential for competition, insecurity, and friction that growing economic interdependence may not entirely ameliorate and could even exacerbate. Localized disputes among them or between them and lesser powers that are allowed to deteriorate or that escalate inadvertently would likely have far-reaching repercussions. Besides the heightened risk of a major regional clash, especially if nuclear-armed powers are involved, international cooperation to tackle the leading global challenges facing the planet such as climate change, weapons-of-mass-destruction proliferation, and pandemic disease—all of which require effective collective action—would almost certainly suffer, perhaps fatally so. Recent and enduring tensions between Russia and Georgia (and by extension NATO) and India and Pakistan, as well as the still unfolding nuclear-related crises with North Korea and Iran—all of which embroil the United States—are reminders of such risks.

Even when large powers are not directly involved in localized disputes, the consequences can still be serious when they do flare up. Complex political and economic couplings are an increasing feature of many regions. This increases the collective incentive of regional actors to promote peace and stability, but also makes them more exposed when disputes turn violent. West Africa and the Middle East are cases in point; the ongoing violence in the Great Lakes region of Africa, as well as the continuing spillover effects of the conflicts in Sudan and Somalia, are further examples. Given that many commodities critical to the global economy—such as oil, cobalt, tungsten, and tin—either come from or transit through unstable regions, relatively small disruptions caused by localized conflict can have significant systemic effects. Exposure to such effects could grow if strategic resources become scarcer in future years.

THE NATURE OF PREVENTIVE ACTION

Preventive action to minimize dangerous political instability and forestall violent conflict is not a singular endeavor or even a discrete set of activities. Indeed, it can mean quite different things to different people.

This report uses the term *preventive action* to refer to three overlapping types of activity: conflict risk reduction, crisis prevention, and crisis mitigation.¹⁴

- *Conflict Risk Reduction*: These are measures taken to minimize potential sources of instability and conflict before they arise. They encompass, on the one hand, efforts to reduce the impact of specific threats, such as controlling the development of destabilizing weapon systems or arms transfers that may cause regional power imbalances, restricting the potential influence of dangerous non-state actors, and diminishing the possible negative impact of anticipated demographic, economic, and environmental change. On the other hand, they cover measures that promote conditions conducive to peace and stability. Within states these include encouraging equitable economic development, good governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Stability can be enhanced through rules on the use of force, military and economic cooperation, security guarantees, confidence-building measures, functional integration, and effective arbitration mechanisms, among other things. Risk reduction measures, moreover, can be global in application so as to have broad systemic benefits, or may be more narrowly focused on a specific region or state.
- *Crisis Prevention*: In regions or states that are assessed to be particularly volatile or susceptible to violence, another, albeit similar, set of measures can be applied to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. Much like risk reduction efforts, crisis prevention measures can be aimed at redressing the specific source(s) or “drivers” of instability and potential conflict and/or assisting the state(s) or group(s) that are threatened. A host of diplomatic, military, economic, and legal measures are in principle available to alter either the contributing conditions or the decision calculus of the parties to the potential conflict. These include various cooperative measures (such as diplomatic persuasion and mediation, economic assistance and incentives, legal arbitration, and military support) as well as coercive instruments (diplomatic condemnation and isolation, various kinds of economic sanctions, legal action, preventive military deployments, and threats of punitive action). The two are not mutually exclusive and are frequently seen as most effective when applied together—“carrots and sticks” in the vernacular.

- *Crisis Mitigation*: If earlier preventive efforts fail to have the desired effect or violence erupts with little or no warning, then many of the same basic techniques can be employed to manage and mitigate the crisis. These measures include efforts targeted at the parties to facilitate cooperative dispute resolution and change their incentive structures to promote peaceful outcomes. Thus, steps can be taken to identify and empower “moderates,” isolate or deter potential “spoilers,” and sway the uncommitted. More interventionist measures to protect endangered groups or secure sensitive areas through the use of such tactics as observer missions, arms embargoes (or arms supplies), and preventive military or police deployments are also conceivable. Of potentially equal importance in some circumstances, moreover, are the preventive initiatives to help contain a relatively localized crisis or flash point to help ensure it does not either spread or draw in others. In some cases, containment may realistically be the only crisis mitigation option.

Obviously, there is no “one size fits all” formula for each of these types of preventive action. The various measures have to be mixed and matched according to the specific circumstances and guided by a similarly tailored political strategy.

CHALLENGES TO PREVENTIVE ACTION

Preventive action faces some well-known challenges that help explain why it has proven difficult to achieve success and why there is considerable skepticism about its prospects in the future. The challenges are usually boiled down to three: getting clear and convincing warning of a possible crisis or conflict in time to take effective action; having the “political will” to react positively to such information—again in a timely fashion; and possessing the necessary tools and resources to make a difference. Although a major deficiency in any of these three essential ingredients can doom efforts at preventive action, many experts have lamented that it is rarely the absence of early warning or insufficient resources that accounts for past failures to prevent a particular conflict from erupting but rather a lack of political will. Getting policymakers to commit resources proactively to address a hypothetical problem when there are demonstrably real ones in need of attention is difficult. Even when there are convincing signs of an emerging crisis, harried

policymakers are still inclined to focus on managing the problem on their desks rather than the one buried in their in-boxes. By the time the danger signs are unavoidable, the opportunities for early preventive action may have passed or the remaining options may seem either ineffective or too risky, further compounding the political inertia. This problem is especially evident when U.S. interests are seemingly not directly imperiled.

Though clearly critical, the political will to act is not a fixed ingredient that is either present or absent in any given situation. Rather, it is a variable that can be nurtured and squandered.¹⁵ Here the organizational arrangements for preventive action—or, put differently, the “central nervous system” that directs, regulates, and coordinates policy—can play a pivotal role. Thus, various kinds of conflict risk reduction initiatives can be promoted institutionally in much the same way preventive action in other areas has been encouraged, most notably with crime control, public safety, healthcare, and environmental preservation. When and how conflict risk assessments, and more specific early-warning information, reach the relevant decision-makers is also heavily dependent on organizational factors. In particular, timeliness can determine the range of available policy options that may be more or less politically palatable to decision-makers. How the early-warning information is conveyed can likewise affect whether busy policymakers pay attention, given other more immediate demands on their time and whether they appreciate the stakes involved—all of which influences their willingness to commit resources and take risks. Advanced planning and other measures to facilitate decision-making under crisis conditions can also help reduce inertia and policy paralysis. For example, pre-considered policy options to manage plausible contingencies can not only diminish the likelihood of last-minute improvisation but also help decision-makers avoid the common trap of believing their choices have narrowed to either “doing nothing” or the politically intimidating course of “doing everything”—usually framed as massive military intervention. Finally, the organizational element affects how well the latent capacity to act is harnessed and orchestrated. Given the many different U.S. agencies and actors involved in preventive action—not to mention the potential involvement of other governments, international organizations, and private groups—effective coordination is vital.

Assessing U.S. Preventive Action

With so many different kinds of preventive action, there is understandably no single, integrated management system to help guide, plan, and execute the full range of U.S. efforts. However, the relevant organizational arrangements affecting the three principal categories of preventive action can still be reasonably assessed.

CONFLICT RISK REDUCTION

Ideally, a systematic and comprehensive approach to conflict risk reduction would entail medium-to-long-term assessments of potential destabilizing developments or sources of conflict, an appraisal of their relative threat to U.S. interests, and a coordinated strategic planning process designed to match policy responses and resources to prioritized concerns. Currently, the United States does only some of these tasks and certainly not in an integrated fashion.

The National Intelligence Council (NIC) conducts long-range strategic assessments, including the unclassified Global Outlook series that regularly reviews international trends and plausible scenarios over a twenty-year time span. A Long-Range Analysis Unit has also been established within the NIC to augment this effort with in-depth studies. In addition, more focused National Intelligence Estimates and National Intelligence Assessments are also regularly commissioned on specific sources of concern, whether it be an individual country such as North Korea or Iran or broader transnational threats such as global climate change, HIV/AIDS, international migration, proliferation, terrorism, and potential humanitarian challenges.¹⁶ But there is no regular intelligence product specifically dedicated to surveying areas of instability and conflict aside from the shorter-term Internal Instability Watchlist (IIW). The director of National Intelligence (DNI) does give an annual

unclassified briefing to Congress, but that is more of a general *tour d'horizon* assessment of national security threats.

Although these assessments will inform the production of various national strategy documents such as the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy, they do not represent detailed policy guidance documents. No established interagency strategic planning process exists to produce such guidance for addressing longer-range concerns or priorities.¹⁷ To its credit, the Bush administration did try to lay the basis for more rigorous strategic planning with the creation of the National Security Policy Planning Committee (NSPPC) in late 2008.¹⁸ Made up of representatives from the NSC and the departments of State, Defense, Treasury, Justice, and Homeland Security, as well as the Joint Staff and the NIC, the NSPPC considered U.S. policy responses to more than a dozen potential contingencies or possible “strategic shocks” that were eventually briefed to the incoming Obama administration.¹⁹ Though a useful first step, the work of the NSPPC was still a work in progress by the time the Bush administration ended. Selection of the issue areas was apparently more the result of informal deliberation among its regular participants than a formalized process linked to specific intelligence assessments, while a systematic planning methodology had yet to be developed to undergird the process. The fate of the NSPPC is also uncertain; although General Jones indicated his intent to create a small “planning cell” at the NSC, the work of the NSPPC has yet to be revived.²⁰

The lack of coherent strategic planning relevant to conflict risk reduction is most acutely evident in U.S. foreign assistance programming. As indicated earlier, aid programs are one of the most important tools for lowering the risk of instability and conflict. There is widespread agreement, however, that management of the multibillion-dollar U.S. aid program is hugely incoherent and flawed. Currently, more than twenty U.S. agencies administer more than fifty types of aid programs to more than 150 countries around the world. The programs of most relevance for this report fall under the purview of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department. USAID’s Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (which includes the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the Office of Transition Initiatives) administers a variety of conflict prevention efforts around the world, though their scale is relatively modest.²¹ The State Department, meanwhile, manages several security cooperation

and security sector reform efforts, notably the International Military and Education Training (IMET) program to train foreign military and police officers, as well as the Global Peace Operations Initiative, which trains peacekeepers and stability police. Both programs are overseen by the Bureau of Political Military Affairs.²² The International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Bureau similarly helps build the capacity of law enforcement and judicial bodies in countries threatened by drug traffickers and organized crime.

Efforts by the Bush administration to rationalize the process—though laudable—have not had the desired effect. USAID and the State Department now submit a joint five-year strategic plan under the direction of the newly created director of U.S. Foreign Assistance (who concurrently serves as USAID administrator), but major new initiatives relevant to conflict risk reduction still fall outside their purview. These include the Millennium Challenge Account and the Global Health and Child Survival program—formerly the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief—but also, more directly, the growing involvement of the Pentagon and the U.S. military in what they term Phase Zero or “shaping” operations explicitly conceived to lower the risk of regional conflict.²³

Since September 11, 2001, Congress has granted the Defense Department authority to initiate a number of security assistance and development programs outside of Iraq and Afghanistan. The growth of these programs has skewed the long-standing arrangement whereby State provided oversight for most security assistance programs (such as IMET), while the Pentagon implemented them. For example, in FY2002, 94 percent of all security assistance programs between the agencies fell within the State Department budget. By FY2008, just over one-half were budgeted and managed by the Pentagon.²⁴ Most of these military assistance programs are implemented by the five non-North American regional Combatant Commands (COCOMs) through their Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) plans to promote stability and build partnership capacity with foreign military forces in their area of operations. COCOM planning staffs have great leeway in designing a TSC, but they generally include nonmilitary tasks, such as deploying mobile medical care teams to underdeveloped areas, refurbishing hospitals, and digging wells and irrigation canals, as well as military tasks, such as providing training in the basic tactics, techniques, and procedures

of military operations, equipping soldiers with nonlethal supplies, and providing logistics and communication support for deployed foreign military forces.

The TSC plans are primarily funded out of the COCOM's operations and maintenance budgets, with the average FY2010 request for each being \$200 million.²⁵ Interagency coordination for regional COCOMs is supposed to be handled through a Joint Interagency Coordination Group, but in practice this has proven to be difficult due to basic differences in the planning cultures and available resources of the Defense Department and non-Defense Department agencies.²⁶ Furthermore, COCOMs are also supposed to integrate their TSC programs into the three-year mission strategic plans developed by the ambassadors of the countries within their areas of operation. However, since the latter focus on just their own country while the COCOMs plan for their entire area of operations, this plan too has been difficult to accomplish in practice.

No overarching strategy or framework exists to guide the conflict risk reduction activities of the various agencies. USAID developed a general "Fragile States Strategy" for this purpose, but it was never adopted across the government. As part of its reform effort, the Bush administration introduced a Foreign Assistance (F) Framework that organized states into distinct categories and set specific "end goals" for each, but it represents less of a clear strategy and more of an organized checklist of objectives.²⁷ Many have also complained that the F Framework is arbitrary and cumbersome, making it less responsive to local needs.²⁸

CRISIS PREVENTION

Since the promulgation of National Security Presidential Directive-44 (NSPD-44) in 2005, U.S. efforts to respond to emerging threats of instability and conflict—particularly those associated with weak or failing states—have been organized under the aegis of "stabilization and reconstruction" operations.²⁹ A new Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) was established at the State Department and charged with implementing NSPD-44. However, the lack of vocal and sustained support from the White House, persistent underfunding from a skeptical Congress, and bureaucratic resistance from within and outside the State Department have all hobbled

S/CRS's efforts to fulfill its mandate. The perceived need to demonstrate its value also led S/CRS increasingly to devote most of its attention and resources to building up U.S. civil capabilities for stabilization and reconstruction missions rather than the crisis prevention part of its mission. Although some useful initiatives have been undertaken by S/CRS, U.S. crisis prevention and preparedness efforts remain deficient, particularly with respect to early warning and planning.

In 2005, S/CRS in collaboration with the National Warning Staff of the Office of the Director for National Intelligence established an Internal Instability Watchlist to monitor states at risk of instability and conflict. Initially revised every six months, this interagency coordinated and classified watchlist is now produced once a year. States are included in the IIW on the basis of a combination of quantitative risk assessment techniques as well as more qualitative inputs from the intelligence community. The likelihood of five possible outcomes—internal conflict, humanitarian crisis, violent political transition, state collapse, and the emergence of “ungoverned spaces”—are assessed for each country considered at risk.³⁰ Also included in the assessment are potential crisis-triggering events, the likelihood of such events occurring in the short to medium term, the potential consequences and severity of a crisis, and the resulting impact on U.S. interests. Since 2006, the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) within USAID has also produced two similar alert lists: the Fragility Alert List and the Instability Alert List. The former ranks more than 160 countries according to established criteria of state strength or weakness, while the latter assesses the likelihood that any given state will experience political instability or the outbreak of violent conflict in the near future. CMM also produces an amalgam of the two lists to determine those that not only face elevated risk of instability but also have the fewest political, economic, social, and security resources to deal with their vulnerability.

These watchlists augment other, more established warning products. Since 1999, the National Warning Staff has produced a quarterly Atrocities Watchlist of “countries where there is evidence of, or the potential for, significant political repression or systematic human rights abuses that could lead to a deliberate pattern of widespread atrocities or a major humanitarian emergency over the next twelve months.”³¹ More importantly, the National Warning Staff periodically issues “Special Warning Notices” when the threat is considered particularly acute

or imminent. Some have a relatively short (six months) time horizon, while others can be as long as two years.³²

Considerable effort goes into creating and distributing these various early-warning products. In addition to the well-established intelligence channels to senior officials, S/CRS has also created a dedicated network to distribute more specialized assessments to relevant agencies throughout the U.S. government. Its senior officer for warning chairs an interagency Intelligence and Analysis Working Group and also produces a regular compilation of other relevant material called the “Global Daily.”³³ CMM likewise distributes the USAID watchlists to its respective country and regional missions in the field and to regional bureaus in Washington, DC.

Yet, for all this effort, the various warning products play a limited role in either triggering or guiding preventive policy responses. This is partly a consequence of their design and format. With about fifty countries listed in the IIW and nearly thirty on the USAID combined alert list, policymakers do not consider them particularly helpful in drawing attention to the most pressing or important cases. Country and regional experts also complain that the watchlists add little to what they already know.³⁴

Even more problematic, no established interagency policy review or contingency planning process exists to make use of the various conflict assessment and early-warning products for preventive action and crisis preparedness. As one senior intelligence official lamented, there are too many “drop and go” warning products that are distributed and then left to the vagaries of the regular NSC-led interagency process for subsequent follow-up.³⁵ As a result, the intelligence community is often sidelined from playing a constructive role in helping to inform and shape policy options. More importantly, this increases the likelihood of ad hoc and improvised responses to emerging threats since each tends to be treated *de novo*, without the benefit of specialized knowledge of preventive action strategies.

In addition, although S/CRS is tasked “to lead interagency planning to prevent or mitigate conflict,” it has been unable to do this in a robust and sustained fashion due to its weak institutional standing within the State Department.³⁶ For example, the S/CRS-led Intelligence and Analysis Working Group is authorized to make twice-yearly recommendations to the Stabilization and Reconstruction Policy Interagency

Planning Committee for countries to be subjected to “scenario based planning” exercises, but resistance by the State Department’s regional bureaus to S/CRS involvement in their areas of responsibility has stymied efforts to do such planning on a regular basis. Any actual planning has largely been the result of informal arrangements with a few bureaus and missions abroad that have been amenable to receiving help from S/CRS.³⁷ Though useful in helping to build up a cadre of civilian planners within S/CRS, a recent RAND study concluded these efforts nonetheless “had consumed the attention of S/CRS’s planning staff, leaving the office with little time to develop contingency plans or think strategically about prioritizing countries for planning.”³⁸

S/CRS, however, created a useful interagency conflict assessment tool for planning and programming purposes that was approved in 2008 for all government agencies to use in developing a shared understanding of the conflict dynamics of a particular country.³⁹ Interagency groups have since applied the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) methodology to eight countries, including Tajikistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cambodia. The intent is for the ICAF to be used by U.S. missions abroad in determining specific assistance needs, by the Defense Department and COCOM planners for designing theater Phase Zero programs, and for full-scale government strategic and operational planning.⁴⁰ Similar generic planning aids have been drafted to help coordinate the implementation of stabilization and reconstruction missions.⁴¹ Unfortunately, no agencies are required to use the ICAF when developing and implementing programs.

After years of being unable to fund field initiatives, S/CRS has also carried out some modest preventive efforts using Section 1207 Defense Department security and stabilization assistance funds. These funds were transferred to the State Department and USAID to “address urgent or emergent threats” in regions and countries “where a failure to act could lead to the deployment of U.S. forces.”⁴² Through FY2009, \$350 million in 1207 funding has been used in eleven countries and two regions, including \$30 million to support internally displaced people in Georgia, \$9 million to support youth services in Yemen, and \$15 million to support teacher and job skills training in the Trans-Sahara.⁴³ Having a relatively flexible source of funds to support initiatives that fall outside the normal appropriations process has proven useful. Yet the future of this short-term transfer arrangement remains uncertain due to congressional criticism of the program.⁴⁴

CRISIS MITIGATION

Well-established arrangements exist to apprise senior officials of imminent or breaking crises as well as facilitate rapid decision-making in such circumstances.⁴⁵ Following the 9/11 attacks, U.S. early-warning and crisis management procedures were also significantly upgraded.

Only recently, however, have dedicated arrangements been established to manage the full range of stabilization and reconstruction operations as defined by NSPD-44. In 2007, an Interagency Management System (IMS) was formally approved to coordinate U.S. planning for such contingencies, including actual or imminent state failure, potential regional instability, humanitarian disasters, and grave human rights violations.⁴⁶ Use of the IMS can be triggered by the national security adviser or by direct request of the secretary of state or secretary of defense.⁴⁷ It calls initially for the creation of an interagency Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group (CRSG), co-chaired by the S/CRS coordinator, the relevant assistant secretary from the State Department, and the NSC senior director.⁴⁸ This group would generate a strategic plan to respond to the crisis, which would be presented for approval to the Deputies Committee and above if necessary. Coordination and implementation of the plan would be overseen by the CRSG and at lower operational levels by an Integrated Planning Cell that would be set up at the headquarters of the relevant regional combatant commander as well as by an interagency Advance Civilian Team dispatched to the country in crisis.

S/CRS has also been developing the Civilian Response Corps (CRC) as a major additional expeditionary capability for crisis situations. The CRC consists of three elements—an Active Component (CRC-A) to comprise 250 government employees on call to be deployed within forty-eight hours principally to augment embassy staff; a Standby Component (CRC-S) of additional governmental experts that can be deployed over a period of one to two months; and a larger Reserve Component (CRC-R) made up of state and local government experts as well as private sector specialists that would be called up and potentially deployed for up to one year.⁴⁹ Only the Active and Standby components, however, have received congressional funding.⁵⁰

Promising though these initiatives appear, several concerns have been raised about the overall level of U.S. preparedness for preventive action in crisis situations. First, reorienting U.S. intelligence collection

efforts on short notice in response to rapidly emerging needs can be difficult. Since 2003, broad tasking guidance has been managed through the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF) coordinated by the director of National Intelligence.⁵¹ Consisting essentially of a tasking matrix, it ranks on its horizontal axis some thirty issues of concern according to their relative priority. On the vertical axis approximately 180 state and nonstate groups are listed.⁵² The DNI then translates the matrix into specific guidance to senior intelligence community managers for allocating collection and analytical resources for their country, region, or issue area.⁵³ The NIPF is updated every six months and signed by the president.⁵⁴ While the NIPF is a comprehensive and systematic process, it is viewed by many intelligence officials and policymakers as too cumbersome and inflexible for responding to unforeseen contingencies.⁵⁵

Second, the Interagency Management System has never been fully activated, and it is unclear when it would be.⁵⁶ Criticisms have also been voiced that it duplicates standing NSC processes and, much like the NIPF, it is overly bureaucratic—all of which may ultimately deter activation.⁵⁷ Similarly, the Civilian Reserve Corps has yet to be fully mobilized, and while small numbers of the Active Component have been dispatched to assist U.S. embassy staff in several unstable areas—Lebanon, Kosovo, Haiti, Afghanistan, Liberia, Chad, Sudan, and Iraq—the results have been mixed. Whether they truly add value to existing U.S. government civilian “expeditionary” capabilities—in particular, USAID’s Disaster Assistance Response Teams and the rapid response assets of its Office of Transitional Initiatives—is also a matter of some dispute. In any case, the CRC is primarily oriented to helping states deal with the late stages of a crisis or aftermath of a conflict rather than to helping the State Department prevent such situations arising in the first place.⁵⁸

Third, U.S. agencies have repeatedly been hamstrung in crisis situations by the difficulty in accessing funds for operations not already pre-programmed or explicitly prescribed for certain contingencies. While several emergency funds are available for use, they come with various stipulations and constraints.⁵⁹ Two new programs—a Rapid Response Fund and a Stabilization Bridge Fund—have been proposed in the president’s budget for FY2010 to help address this problem, but it is still uncertain whether they will be supported.⁶⁰

Recommendations

Recent statements by senior U.S. officials, including President Obama, indicating that the administration intends to place more emphasis on preventing foreign crises and violent conflict from becoming the source of new military commitments, are necessary but not sufficient. This goal still needs to be underscored in a prominent presidential speech to send a strong and unambiguous message to the rest of the administration and to Congress that this is now a national priority. It should also be made the centerpiece of the first National Security Strategy of the Obama administration. At the same time, practical steps must also be taken to ensure that the rhetoric can be converted into effective action; otherwise it will be perceived as a hollow commitment.

The United States has considerable influence and resources at its disposal to carry out various forms of preventive action. What it lacks are effective organizational arrangements to make the most of this latent capacity and help overcome some of the more common hindrances to preventive action. Rectifying current deficiencies does not require a radical overhaul of the U.S. government or costly new programs. Rather, much can be accomplished with some relatively modest initiatives and adjustments in the following areas.

STRATEGY

The first order of business is to design a clear and coherent strategy for U.S. preventive action. Resources are finite and thus a national strategy must proceed from a prioritization of potential threats. The United States cannot treat every potential source of instability and conflict as equally important. A clear and sensible hierarchy of concerns must be developed to guide the level of attention and effort devoted to any given problem. Responsibility for setting preventive priorities and

providing broad strategic guidance for U.S. policy should involve inter-agency deliberation and be overseen by the national security adviser. Accordingly:

- The current strategic planning directorate at the NSC needs to be bolstered with additional staff and given appropriate authorities to perform its mission.
- The moribund interagency National Security Policy Planning Committee established under the Bush administration needs to be revived and elevated in importance.

Developing what might be termed an “upstream consensus” within the U.S. national security community about the principal preventive priorities of the United States is likely to be controversial. Useful precedents exist, however, in a variety of prior strategic exercises and guidance documents to help develop an acceptable approach. The goal should not be to rank specific countries or nonstate actors of concern to policymakers but to develop different levels or categories of risk (and likely needed response) associated with various types of instability and conflict. The following are suggested guidelines to frame those priorities:

- Tier-1 preventive priorities would be defined as events that pose immediate or direct spillover threats to the U.S. homeland; have serious systemic implications for international security, the global economy, and environment; or involve large-scale genocide and mass atrocities.
- Tier-2 priorities would be defined as threats to countries where the United States has made alliance commitments, or where instability and conflict may have serious regional implications or cause a major humanitarian disaster.
- Tier-3 priorities would encapsulate concerns where the likely human, political, or geographical effects are of a lesser magnitude.

Besides setting priorities for preventive action, such a ranking would help focus conflict risk assessments and intelligence collection. It would also sensitize policymakers to the significance of warning information in specific instances.

Given the diversity of concerns and potential contingencies, no single integrated strategy can hope to provide detailed policy guidance. More focused strategic planning frameworks can be developed, however, to direct preventive action toward generic sources of concern—such as fragile states or countries undergoing potential unstable political transitions—as well as toward specific regions or states. These frameworks would share common features with the attention given to determining the focus, timing, and synchronization of U.S. efforts as well as the use made of prospective partners. They would obviously also draw on the latest utility assessments of different preventive measures.

WARNING

The United States needs to better utilize its considerable early-warning capabilities, whether they be intelligence collection systems, analysts, or products. As others have noted, a much closer working relationship has to be nurtured between the intelligence and policy communities for this purpose.⁶¹ Intelligence officials need to understand the principal concerns of policymakers and provide them with warning information that is useful and timely. Likewise, policymakers need to be receptive to that information and make better use of the analytical capabilities of the intelligence community for preventive policy formulation.

Generating a clear set of preventive priorities would help guide the tasking of intelligence collection and analysis without compromising the integrity of the relationship. Thus, intelligence officials would not have to divine the leading concerns of the policymakers, nor make judgments about their relative import. Accordingly:

- The director of National Intelligence should prepare, as part of the Annual Threat Assessment briefing to Congress, a classified assessment of the most worrisome areas of potential instability and conflict for the coming year.⁶²
- The Special Warning Notices should be categorized using the same prioritization scheme, thus improving the likelihood that policymakers will take note of them when they are issued. The states listed on the various watchlists could conceivably be ranked in the same way, though the Annual Threat Assessment would arguably make this redundant.

- The various instability watchlists should be consolidated into a single U.S. government watchlist as part of a general effort to streamline early-warning products and integrate them more formally into planning and programming. The Atrocity Watchlist should be incorporated into the annual Internal Instability Watchlist or appended to it. Unless the USAID watchlists retain value as a more refined and accessible analytical tool for the wider development assistance community, they should be discontinued.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

The United States lacks effective planning and programming arrangements for these different kinds of preventive action. Those that do exist are poorly connected to the conflict assessment and early-warning process and are generally weak institutionally. This problem is most evident in the provision of overseas foreign assistance to reduce the risk of conflict as well as in crisis prevention and contingency planning. S/CRS certainly does not have the necessary “bureaucratic clout” to fulfill its NSPD-44 mandate to lead and coordinate government planning for preventive action.

The only logical place for planning and programming to reside is in the White House and specifically the National Security Council. Given the enormous scope of preventive action, it is too much to expect a single NSC directorate to coordinate all relevant programs and activities. A logical place to divide responsibilities is to split oversight and coordination of foreign assistance programming as well as related efforts to promote human rights and good governance from crisis prevention and management activities. The latter should be combined with preparation for and coordination of stabilization and reconstruction missions given the operational overlap. The following organizational arrangements are, therefore, proposed:

- Create an NSC Directorate for Development and Governance. This office would oversee and coordinate foreign assistance planning and programming across the U.S. government while also synchronizing cooperation with related international and regional organizations. An NSC Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) on Development and Governance co-chaired by the senior director and the deputy

administrator for USAID should also be created. All foreign assistance programming—including all temporary Defense Department funding—would fall under its purview.

- Create an NSC Directorate for Prevention, Stabilization, and Reconstruction (PSR). This should be established with a comparable PSR IPC co-chaired by the senior director and the coordinator for S/CRS. This office would likewise oversee and coordinate interagency crisis prevention, stabilization, and reconstruction planning. An annual interagency review of the Internal Instability Watchlist should be initiated and those states of particular concern to the United States should receive a mandatory follow-up ICAF conflict assessment—presently they are voluntary. The latter would serve as the basis for the creation of interagency crisis prevention and crisis response plans.⁶³ Special Warning Notices would likewise trigger automatic reviews by the PSR IPC to assess U.S. policy options and crisis preparedness. Planning for other plausible and important contingencies would also be directed by the PSR Directorate. Given the amount of effort expended to create the Interagency Management System, the system should be retained but its focus broadened to include pre-crisis planning and preparedness. Current arrangements for initiating its use should be reviewed with the intent of making it more integrated into established NSC procedures.

Representatives from each of these directorates would sit on their respective interagency coordinating mechanisms and report directly to the principal deputy national security adviser. The co-chairs of both IPCs would also coordinate agency briefings to Congress to ensure that relevant committee and staff are informed of planning efforts to facilitate quick congressional action if and when needed.

RESOURCES

Placing more emphasis on preventive action will require some reprogramming and rebalancing of resources to improve institutional capacities at the State Department and USAID. Initiatives are already underway to upgrade staffing support at their headquarters in Washington, DC, and in missions abroad, which should help redress a chronic

underfunding of both departments. The NSC also needs to be staffed at a level commensurate with its responsibilities, but this can be mostly satisfied through interagency transfers rather than with new dedicated staff. More specific recommendations are as follows:

- The temporary current authorities provided to the Defense Department to award development foreign aid should migrate back to the State Department. Several Defense Department–managed funds are set to expire in the coming fiscal year, and senior Pentagon officials have indicated that they support shifting authority for them to the secretary of state. If that happens, the U.S. military will still conduct a variety of conflict prevention programs under the auspices of Phase Zero operations. However, the resources devoted to these programs, their underlying guidance, and their coordination with similar civilian-led activities need to be reviewed.
- The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization should continue to be strengthened but with more resources devoted to preventive planning and crisis preparedness to fulfill its NSPD-44 mandate.⁶⁴ It should also become the prime locus for analyzing prior operations for “lessons learned” and best practices, something that the State Department rarely does.
- Congress should approve current proposals to establish a Rapid Response Fund and Stabilization Bridge Fund in the FY2010 budget. This will help address the recurring challenge of obtaining emergency funding support for crisis situations.
- The director of foreign assistance needs to streamline the paperwork required of field officers to request funding changes for needs not anticipated during the budget submission process and reduce the response time for such requests.⁶⁵
- Congress should fully support current efforts to build up a Civilian Response Corps for stabilization and reconstruction missions. However, it must also review the operational relationship of the CRC to similar USAID expeditionary capabilities. Their respective roles and missions overlap, and the circumstances for using one over the other need to be clarified, especially with regard to operational coordination in the field. The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), due to be completed in 2010, should address this issue.

- The QDDR should also consider the utility of standing up a dedicated mediation support unit and a roster of regional and functional experts that can be rapidly deployed to provide technical expertise to U.S. and UN officials or local negotiators. This unit could be employed to backstop the work of special envoys, who have noted in the past that being understaffed hampers the effectiveness of their activities. The UN's Department of Political Affairs has already created such a capability, and its experience to date needs to be studied.

The longer a new administration is in power, the harder it is to initiate and implement organizational changes. But the window of opportunity for these recommendations has not yet shut. Much is still in flux. While other foreign and domestic priorities also vie for attention, it is better to invest in prevention today than potentially pay a bigger price tomorrow.

Endnotes

1. Remarks by Vice President Biden at 45th Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 7, 2009.
2. Speech to the Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, May 25, 2009, <http://www.acus.org/event/nsa-james-jones-first-speech>. In an interview with the *Washington Post*, Jones also indicated his intent to build a “21st Century NSC,” one that can “look over the horizon to see what’s coming at us” and deal with emerging threats “proactively.” See David Ignatius, “National Security Facilitator,” *Washington Post*, April 30, 2009, p. A21.
3. Remarks by the president at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention, Phoenix, August 17, 2009. See http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-the-Veterans-of-Foreign-Wars-convention/.
4. See Michael Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy*, United States Institute of Peace (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), pp. 5–6.
5. See various National Security Strategy documents.
6. Recent examples include the Georgia-Russia conflict in August 2008, the Kenya electoral violence of December 2007–January 2008, the Israeli-Hezbollah war of August 2007, the genocide in Darfur beginning in 2003, as well as several dangerous crises involving India and Pakistan over the last decade.
7. Defense Science Board, *Institutionalizing Stability Operations Within DOD* (Washington, DC: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, September 2005).
8. It should be noted that not all forms of political instability and conflict are necessarily unwelcome. Indeed, it may be the only way that positive political and social development is advanced. See USAID, “Fragile States Strategy,” January 2005, p. 5.
9. Walter Pincus, “Analysts Expect Long-Term Costly Campaign in Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*, August 9, 2009.
10. Jennifer Agiesta and Jon Cohen, “Public Opinion in U.S. Turns Against Afghan War,” *Washington Post*, August 20, 2009.
11. Lori Montgomery, “Deficit Projected to Soar With New Program,” *Washington Post*, August 26, 2009.
12. See Micheal E. Brown and Richard N. Rosecrance, *The Costs of Conflict: Prevention and Cure in the Global Arena* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999). For a recent attempt to assess the costs of remedial approaches to managing conflict, see Andrew Sweet and Natalie Ondiak, “The Cost of Reaction: The Long-Term Costs of Short-Term Cures,” Center for American Progress, Washington, DC, July 2008.
13. USAID calculates that between 1994 and 2003, \$5.2 billion in disaster assistance and emergency food aid was spent in countries affected by conflict. See USAID, “Conflict Mitigation and Management Policy,” April 2005, p. 2.
14. Stabilization and reconstruction can be viewed as another form of preventive action in that, if done effectively, it can prevent the reignition of conflict.

15. See Lawrence Wocher, "Deconstructing 'Political Will': Explaining the Failure to Prevent Deadly Conflict and Mass Atrocities," *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, vol. 12 (spring 2001), pp.179–206. See also remarks of J. Brian Atwood, USAID administrator, "Conflict Prevention in Today's World," Georgetown University, Washington, DC (October 14, 1998), http://www.usaid.gov/press/spe_test/speeches/1998/sp981014.
16. See http://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_specialproducts.html.
17. See Janine Davidson, "Making Government Work: Pragmatic Priorities for Inter-agency Coordination," *Orbis* (summer 2009), p. 428.
18. Authorized by National Security Presidential Directive-60 (August 2009).
19. See Peter Feaver and William Imboden, "A Strategic Planning Cell on National Security at the White House," in Daniel W. Drezner, ed., *Avoiding Trivia: The Role of Strategic Planning in American Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), pp. 108–9; and interviews with U.S. policymakers.
20. See Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report, "Stabilization and Reconstruction: Actions Needed to Improve Governmentwide Planning and Capabilities of Future Operations," Washington, DC (2007), p.15.
21. The Office of Transition Initiatives provides two- to three-year funding for peace-building and reconciliation efforts in conflict-prone and democratizing states. CMM leads the conflict assessments conducted by USAID, produces tool kits on various themes related to conflict prevention, and also funds short-term peace-building efforts.
22. The Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency directs, administers, and provides policy guidance for the International Military Education and Training program. Annually, somewhere between 1,000 to 1,200 foreign officers at "national leadership levels" participate, including, currently, thirty-seven from Pakistan. U.S. Department of State and USAID, *Joint Highlights of Performance, Budget, and Financial Information: Fiscal Year 2007*, undated, p. 15; and testimony of Vice Admiral James Winnefeld, naval director of Strategic Plans and Policy, Joint Staff, before the House Armed Services Committee, April 29, 2009; and testimony of Admiral Timothy Keating, commander, U.S. Pacific Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 19, 2009.
23. The Millennium Challenge Account is managed by an independent U.S. government corporation that provides competitive five-year grants to countries to reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth. Over its first five years, the Millennium Challenge Corporation has signed compacts with eighteen countries and awarded over \$6.3 billion, with the top recipients being Tanzania, Morocco, Ghana, Mozambique, and Burkina Faso. The MCC request for FY2010 is \$1.43 billion. See Millennium Challenge Corporation, *Congressional Budget Justification, Fiscal Year 2010*, undated, pp. i, 25. The Global Health and Child Survival (GHCS) program funds child and maternal health programs, immunizations, programs to prevent a range of infectious diseases, and family planning activities. The FY2010 request for GHCS was for \$7.6 billion, up from \$400 million from the previous fiscal year. U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification*, June 2009, p. 28. Both initiatives account in large part for a significant shift in the geographical distribution of U.S. foreign aid to Africa and South Asia in recent years. Between FY1998 and FY2008, the percentage of total U.S. foreign assistance going to Africa more than doubled from 13 to 29 percent, while assistance for South Asia has more than quadrupled from 4 to 17 percent. DOD Directive 3000.5, "Military Support for Stability, Security Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations," (November 28, 2005). Such operations are to be conducted "across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States and regions." Shaping is distinct and prior to those activities that support operational—or

- “kinetic”—military planning: Phase I: Deter, Phase II: Defend and Seize Initiative, Phase III: Dominate, Phase IV: Stabilize, and Phase V: Enable Civil Authority. See Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning*, December 26, 2006.
24. Gordon Adams, “Rebalancing the National Security Toolkit,” slides prepared for “U.S. Military: New President, New Outlook?” Knight Center for Specialized Journalism, University of Maryland, February 17, 2009, pp. 7–8.
 25. DOD, *Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request, Summary Justification*, May 2009, pp. 2–32.
 26. U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander’s Handbook for the Joint Interagency Coordination Group*, March 1, 2007, p. vi; and GAO, “Military Operations: Actions Needed to Improve DOD’s Stability Operations Approach and Enhance Interagency Planning,” May 2007, pp. 27–33.
 27. The five categories of foreign policy objectives are peace and security, governing justly and democratically, investing in people, economic growth, and humanitarian assistance. Department of State, “Foreign Assistance Framework,” as of July 11, 2006. See GAO, “Foreign Aid Reform: Comprehensive Strategy, Interagency Coordination, and Operational Improvements Would Bolster Current Efforts,” April 2009, pp. 4–5.
 28. Testimony of Lael Brainard, vice president and director, Global Economy and Development Program, Brookings Institution, before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 23, 2008. GAO, “Foreign Aid Reform,” April 2009, p. 7.
 29. The relevant portion of NSPD-44 states: “The United States has a significant stake in enhancing the capacity to assist in stabilizing and reconstructing countries or regions, especially those *at risk of*, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife, and to help them establish a sustainable path toward peaceful societies, democracies, and market economies. The United States should work with other countries and organizations *to anticipate state failure, avoid it whenever possible*, and respond quickly and effectively when necessary and appropriate to promote peace, security, development, democratic practices, market economies, and the rule of law” (emphasis added).
 30. Interviews with U.S. policymakers; see also Monty Marshall, “Fragility, Instability, and the Failure of States,” Center for Preventive Action Working Paper, October 2008; and Liana Sun Wylar, “Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, updated August 28, 2008.
 31. See Director of Central Intelligence’s Warning Committee, “Atrocities Watchlist,” created May 1, 1999, http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0001381830.
 32. Threats considered to be serious and imminent are reported through the CRITIC system operated by the National Security Agency (NSA). The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) also manages the Defense Indications and Warning (I&W) System that includes separate regional I&W systems run by each of the U.S. COCOMs for their area of responsibility. It too issues periodic “Warning Reports” on military and other threats to U.S. forces around the world.
 33. Interview with U.S. intelligence official.
 34. Interviews with U.S. government officials. In fairness, however, to the intelligence professionals who produce the watchlists, the intent was never to prioritize states at risk according to specific criteria, itself a political judgment. Nor were they ever designed to substitute for specialized country expertise. Rather, the goal was to provide a regular and reasonably rigorous global compendium of countries at risk of instability and conflict.
 35. Interview with U.S. intelligence official.
 36. The conflict prevention mission is also weak institutionally within S/CRS. Its Office for Conflict Prevention was established within S/CRS and it has remained a small (eleven-person) operation.

37. See Dane F. Smith Jr., “An Expanded Mandate for Peace Building: The State Department Role in Peace Diplomacy, Reconstruction, and Stabilization,” Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), Washington, DC (April 2009), pp. 35–36. These include planning exercises for post-Castro Cuba, Haiti, Kosovo, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
38. See Nora Bensahel, Olger Oliker, and Heather Peterson, “Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations,” RAND (2009), pp. 37–38. See also GAO Report, “Stabilization and Reconstruction: Actions Needed to Improve Governmentwide Planning and Capabilities of Future Operations,” Washington, DC (2007), p. 15.
39. “Principles of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework,” approved July 15, 2008.
40. Dane F. Smith Jr., “Foreign Assistance for Peace: The U.S. Agency for International Development,” CSIS, Washington DC (April 2009), pp. 15–16.
41. See Dane F. Smith Jr., “An Expanded Mandate for Peace Building,” p. 27.
42. See S/CRS Guiding Principles. To its credit, the small Conflict Prevention Office within S/CRS has insisted that for countries to receive 1207 funds they must appear on the Internal Instability Watchlists. The Intelligence and Warning Working Group will also occasionally recommend use of 1207 funds in response to its own assessments.
43. Gordon Adams, “Stabilization and Reconstruction: DOD Funding,” slides prepared for “Preventing and Rebuilding Failed States Amid Global Economic Crisis: What Are Realistic Options for U.S. Policy?” Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, June 5, 2009; Nina Serafino, “Peacekeeping/Stabilization and Conflict Transitions: Background and Congressional Action on the Civilian Response/Reserve Corps and Other Civilian Stabilization and Reconstruction Capabilities,” Congressional Research Service, February 5, 2009, p. 15; and S/CRS, “1207 Funding: Facts and Information,” undated, <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=495E>.
44. DOD, *Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request, Summary Justification*, May 2009, pp. 1–13.
45. The most important being the President’s Daily Brief that is delivered personally each morning to the president and a small coterie of his most senior advisers. A much wider circle of government officials (as well as congressional oversight committees) also receive the World Intelligence Review—formerly known as the National Intelligence Daily—that is produced by the CIA in coordination with the rest of the intelligence committee. The DIA also produces each day a comparable but more DOD-oriented Defense Intelligence Digest that is circulated throughout the executive branch and to congressional intelligence committees. Complementing the more “top down” reporting, the principal cabinet officials also get daily intelligence briefings tailored to their departmental mission that draw on more “bottom up” sources of information. The secretary of state’s Morning Intelligence Summary is prepared by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and includes embassy reporting from U.S. missions around the world. The briefing for the secretary of defense provided by the DIA will likewise draw on defense attaché reporting as well as inputs from the Joint Staff and specifically its intelligence branch (J2). The latter also puts out a Daily Report. Besides having access to current intelligence from other sources, the director of the CIA’s daily briefing will draw on his chief of station reports. Threats considered to be serious and imminent are reported through the CRITIC system operated by the National Security Agency. The DIA also manages the Defense Indications and Warning (I&W) System that includes separate regional I&W systems run by each of the U.S. COCOMs for their area of responsibility. It too issues periodic “Warning Reports” on military and other threats to U.S. forces around the world.
46. GAO, “Stabilization and Reconstruction,” p. 7.

47. The NSC, chiefs of mission, and regional assistant secretaries of state may request initiation of the IMS for scenario planning. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
48. Details of the IMS are drawn from Smith, "An Expanded Mandate for Peace Building," pp. 25–26.
49. See S/CRS, "Active Component, Civilian Reserve Corps," <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=4F2H>; and Nina Serafino, "Peacekeeping/Stabilization and Conflict Transitions," p. 15.
50. The CRC is funded through State's Civilian Stabilization Initiative. For FY2010, \$323 million was requested, with \$137 million dedicated to the Active Component. See U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification*, June 2009, p. 503.
51. This was established in 2003 by National Security Presidential Directive-26. According to a directive issued by the Office of the DNI, "the NIPF is the DNI's sole mechanism for establishing national intelligence priorities." See Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), "Roles and Responsibilities for the National Intelligence Priorities Framework," Intelligence Community Directive 204, September 13, 2007. The FBI has also adopted the NIPF for its own intelligence prioritization, and FBI "intelligence requirements for collection are and must be based on and traceable to the NIPF." FBI, National Security Branch, "Frequently Asked Questions," http://www.fbi.gov/hq/nsb/nsb_fa_q.htm.
52. Interviews with intelligence officials; media roundtable with Dennis Blair, March 26, 2009; Gregory Treverton and C. Bryon Gabbard, *Assessing the Tradecraft of Intelligence Analysis* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), pp. 6–7; and Walter Pincus, "Intelligence Office Gives Progress Report," *Washington Post*, April 14, 2006, p. A11.
53. ODNI, *Analytic Transformation: Unleashing the Potential of a Community of Analysts*, September 1, 2008, p. 12.
54. Testimony of the Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, "DNI Authorities and Personnel Issues," February 14, 2008; and McConnell remarks at the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation GEOINT Symposium, October 30, 2008; and George Tenet, "Written Statement for the Record of the Director of Central Intelligence Before the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States," March 24, 2004.
55. One former chair of the National Intelligence Council even referred to the NIPF as having "little more than diplomatic or bureaucratic busy work." See testimony of Robert Hutchings, "The Director of National Intelligence's 500 Day Plan," Hearing of the Intelligence Community Management Subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee, December 6, 2007.
56. Some of its elements were activated during the 2008 Russia-Georgia crisis.
57. See GAO, "Stabilization and Reconstruction," p. 9; and Smith, "An Expanded Mandate for Peace Building," p. 26. Whether S/CRS has enough surge capacity to run the secretariat is another question that has been raised. See Bensahel et al., "Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations," p. 43.
58. See, for example, Gordon Adams, "Stabilizing U.S. Stabilization and Reconstruction Efforts Abroad," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (October 30, 2008).
59. These include:
U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund. Managed by the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, it is a contingency fund that the president can rapidly draw upon to respond to humanitarian crises. In the past year it has been utilized to provide assistance to conflict victims and displaced persons in Zimbabwe, Yemen, Gaza and the West Bank, Georgia, Somalia, Congo, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The FY2010 request is for \$75 million, up from \$40 million last fiscal

- year, in order to fund recurring programs in the base request that were previously covered in supplemental appropriations.
- Emergencies in the Diplomatic Counselor Services (EDCS)*. Managed by the secretary of state, the EDCS account “is used to meet unforeseen emergency requirements in the conduct of foreign affairs,” including: noncombatant evacuations of personnel and U.S. citizens; natural disaster and terrorist incidents; paying rewards for information on terrorism, narco-trafficking, and war crimes; and other authorized U.S. foreign policy activities. A bipartisan report by The American Academy of Diplomacy and the Stimson Center recently recommended that this account be increased fivefold to focus on “more ‘in advance’ policy pursuits, geared more toward development of anticipatory local partnerships and oriented more to crisis prevention, rather than crisis response.” The FY2010 request for the EDCS Fund is for \$10 million.
- Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA)*. Managed by DOD’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the OHDACA account funds three programs that are usually implemented at the request of regional combatant commanders: the Humanitarian Assistance, Humanitarian Mine Action, and Foreign Disaster Relief and Emergency Response. To assure that any unforeseen activities can be immediately implemented, each annual appropriation remains available for two years. The FY2010 request is for \$110 million, a 33 percent increase from the \$83 million enacted for FY2009.
- Combatant Commander’s Initiative Fund (CCIF)*. Managed by regional combatant commanders, the fund had historically been utilized for military education and training, joint exercises, and contingencies. In the FY2007 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress modified the program so it could be used to support “humanitarian and civic assistance to include urgent and unanticipated humanitarian relief and reconstruction assistance.” Reflecting its overlapping nature with existing DOD accounts, according to the DOD budget justification, “CCIF is an authority similar to the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP), which allows the Department to provide funds for urgent and unanticipated humanitarian relief and reconstruction assistance, particularly in a foreign country where the armed forces are engaged in a contingency operation.” The FY2010 request for the CCIF is \$100 million.
- For details see: DOD, *Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request, Summary Justification*, May 2009, pp. 5–12; DOD Directive 7280.4, “Commander in Chiefs (CINC’s) Initiative Fund,” October 26, 1993; P.L. 109–362, “John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007,” section 902; DOD, *Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request, Summary Justification*, May 2009, pp. 1–14. CERP is a program confined to counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. See GAO, “Military Operations: Actions Needed to Better Guide Project Selection for Commander’s Emergency Response Program and Improve Oversight in Iraq,” June 23, 2008; and GAO, “Military Operations: Actions Needed to Improve Oversight and Interagency Coordination for the Commander’s Emergency Response Program in Afghanistan,” May 18, 2009.
60. The Rapid Response Fund has been proposed by USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives to “respond quickly to unforeseen opportunities by focusing on development requirements related to shoring up new and fragile democracies.” State and USAID administrators envision the fund to be utilized only on an emergency basis when current structures and programs are insufficient to quickly address unforeseen democracy, health, and economic crises in the short term before they can be considered in the regular budget process. Several members of Congress, however, are skeptical of the Rapid Response Fund, with concerns about how it will differ from the Stabilization Bridge Fund. See testimony of Alonzo Fulghum, acting administrator, chief operating officer, USAID, before the Foreign Operations and Related Programs Subcommittee

- of the House Appropriations Committee, May 20, 2009; and testimony of Jack Lew, deputy secretary of state for management and resources, before the Foreign Operations and Related Programs Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, May 13, 2009. The FY2010 request for the fund is \$76 million. The Stabilization Bridge Fund is to be managed by S/CRS and “used to provide small grants or funding to communities and organizations to provide services or opportunities that help stabilize the situation, provide immediate security assistance to partner police forces, to support urgently-needed demining, to create post-conflict community reconciliation programs, and to support programs to reestablish or reform governance in post-crisis situations.” The FY2010 request for the fund is \$40 million and was placed within the Economic Support Fund account. See Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations: Fiscal Year 2010*, June 2009, p. 150.
61. See Richard Haass, “Supporting US Foreign Policy in the Post-9/11 World,” *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 46, no. 3 (2002), <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol46no3/article01.html>. For a similar argument but from the perspective of a former intelligence community official, see Jack Davis, “Strategic Warning: If Surprise Is Inevitable, What Role for Analysis?” Sherman Kent Center for Intelligence Analysis, Occasional Paper, vol. 2, no. 1 (January 2003).
 62. Something comparable was prepared for the incoming Obama administration.
 63. For an illustrative discussion of the general content of such plans, see “Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers,” report of the genocide prevention task force, chaired by Madeleine K. Albright and William S. Cohen, United States Institute of Peace, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and American Academy of Diplomacy, Washington, DC (2008), pp. 65–68.
 64. Consideration should also be given to changing the name of S/CRS to the State Coordinator for Prevention, Stabilization, and Reconstruction in line with the new NSC Directorate. A new Presidential Directive to replace NSPD-44 may be also be desirable.
 65. In addition, the DFA should consider fully implementing the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) tool that was attempted in pilot programs in ten countries for planning their budget requests for FY2009. The CAS is intended to produce longer-term (five-year) development strategies through a more transparent and interagency process.

About the Authors

Paul B. Stares is the General John W. Vessey senior fellow for conflict prevention and director of the Center for Preventive Action at the Council on Foreign Relations. Besides overseeing a series of Council Special Reports on potential sources of instability and strife, he is currently working on a study assessing long-term conflict trends. Dr. Stares recently led an expert working group on preventive diplomacy for the genocide prevention task force co-chaired by Madeleine K. Albright and William S. Cohen.

Prior to joining CFR, Stares was the vice president and director of the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention at the United States Institute of Peace. Stares worked as an associate director and senior research scholar at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation from 2000 to 2002, was a senior research fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs and director of studies at the Japan Center for International Exchange from 1996 to 2000, and was a senior fellow and research associate in the foreign policy studies program at the Brookings Institution from 1984 to 1996. He has also been a NATO fellow and a scholar-in-residence at the MacArthur Foundation's Moscow office. Stares is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Preparing for Sudden Change in North Korea*; *Rethinking the War on Terror: New Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Management in the Post-9/11 World*; *The New Security Agenda: A Global Survey*; and *Global Habit: The Drug Problem in a Borderless World*. He received his MA and PhD from the University of Lancaster, England.

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