

Investing in Peace: Taking Conflict Resolution and Development to Scale**13 October 2009****NANCY BEARG (MODERATOR)**

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SUMMARY AND MAJOR POLICY POINTS

Washington, DC – October’s **Conflict Prevention and Resolution Forum (CPRF)** was held at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) on October 13th, 2009. Over 85 individuals from government agencies, think-tanks, non-profits and local universities attended the event. The CPRF is organized by the non-profit organization **Search for Common Ground** and is co-sponsored by the **3D Security Initiative, Alliance for Peacebuilding, American University, Council on Foreign Relations, George Mason University, Johns Hopkins University, Partners for Democratic Change, United States Institute of Peace and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.**

The October CPRF began with Harriet Fulbright, President of the J. William and Harriet Fulbright Center, describing her work at the Alliance for Peacebuilding on the [Global Symposium of Peaceful Nations](#). The Symposium, set to convene in November of 2009, will bring together 18 of the world’s most peaceful nations, as ranked by the [Global Peace Index \(GPI\)](#), to recognize the “achievements of the group and develop insights into the history, policies and characteristics” that define peace. Ms. Fulbright discussed the importance of the work that has been done to create the GPI, noting that for the first time, “we have a body of research” devoted to what it takes to realistically bring about peace. The researchers from the Economist Intelligence Unit “defined clearly and measurably, the indicators and drivers of peace”.

The Symposium will provide a three-day intensive discussion on “what it really means to be peaceful, how each nation became peaceful and how each maintains peace”. More importantly, and perhaps with greater implications for sustainable world peace, the symposium will ask “how [each nation] will convince their neighbors to become more peaceful”. The GPI and the symposium have the potential to influence policy makers to critically examine factors that contribute to peace and weave ‘best practices’ into their decision making.

Mark Schneider, Senior Vice President and Special Advisor on Latin America for the [International Crisis Group \(ICG\)](#) began his presentation by highlighting the role of organizations such as the ICG in undertaking critical “conflict analysis and forming policy recommendations to prevent and end crises across the globe”. According to Mr. Schneider, the founders of ICG were “convinced that conflicts outside of major strategic areas would not draw the attention” of nations equipped with the necessary tools to end violence and create peace. The founders thus set about developing an organization that could advocate and provide a voice for the people affected by violent conflict.

Noting a recent success of the ICG in influencing foreign policy, Mr. Schneider described his organization’s briefing to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding conflicts in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Nonetheless, Mr. Schneider conceded that while the ICG has done much to inform the public and government officials on conflict issues, his organization and their work represent a relatively small portion of the foreign policy agenda. “Within institutional powers, there is not sufficient focus on how to bring conflicts to an end. There is no organizational structure that allows for [conflict prevention].”

Still, Mr. Schneider believes there is an opportunity within the current administration to make institutional changes, allowing conflict prevention to become a realistic tool in suppressing violence. “Within the administration, you have people who are thinking about the issues of conflict, peace and development. In the Department of State, you have the QDDR, [Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review](#). [Previously,] we haven’t had this kind of focus...on how USAID and the US Department of State are structured to deal with the interplay of development and diplomacy.”

With these new developments, Mr. Schneider noted that the NGO community has an opportunity to have a greater impact on future policy. Regardless of what bureaucratic shape the new policy will take, Mr. Schneider noted that there “needs to be a clear structure that reports to [the Secretary of State] on how to prevent conflict, mitigate conflict and provide reconstruction that looks at the causes of conflict and brings together all the tools that are designed to prevent the reemergence of conflict... This is a moment when the NGO community can offer ideas to government decision-makers trying to cope with these issues.”

Avi Meyerstein, co-founder of the [Alliance for Middle East Peace](#) (ALLMEP) and founder of the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, spoke about two models of how conflict resolution and development NGO’s can realize the goal of broadening the scope of their work and ensuring robust funding. Mr. Meyerstein spoke about the evolution of ALLMEP, which “started with three different NGOs in the Middle East working on people-to-people relationships”. Mr. Meyerstein explained that the organizations included in his alliance recognized a common, “collective need... to be known and to have more funding.”

In an effort to “bridge the gap between track 1 and track 2”, ALLMEP held an event on Capitol Hill during which NGOs displayed their respective array of activities and projects. According to Mr. Meyerstein, ALLMEP now has [over 65 NGO’s](#) under its banner all “rallying around the point that policy makers need to know this work is going on in numbers greater than is often

realized, and the potential that exists if this work is scaled up in both moral support and funding support.” As a result, a dedicated fund of 9 million dollars has been established in USAID, which funds people-to-people projects across the Middle East.

Next, Mr. Meyerstein noted that it is “often hard to convince people that you just need some pocket change. Sometimes it’s easier to ask for a lot of money than a little bit of money.” Mr Meyerstein and his group looked to previous examples of targeted money streams devoted to ending international conflicts and decided to work off the example of the [International Fund for Ireland](#). Mr. Meyerstein noted that in over 25 years, the Fund, with the support of the Governments of the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the European Union, has invested \$1.5 billion in projects ranging from community relations exercises to economic activities in the relatively marginalized border communities, with the ultimate goal of reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Mr. Meyerstein put forward a proposal for an [International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace](#) two and a half years ago, “shopping around, talking to people here [in Washington DC], in Congress and with the international community”. Most recently, Mr. Meyerstein’s project was presented to ambassadors from the Arab League nations in Washington, DC. While recognizing that broadened “support for this fund has a long way to go,” Mr. Meyerstein noted that “there is a lot to be said about the mode [of the International fund]”, especially considering the magnitude of ALLMEP and the potential reach of its various projects. Mr. Meyerstein summed up his presentation by offering a few word of advice: “The NGO sector has to talk as a group.” There needs to be “conflict resolution within the conflict resolution community, ideally in the form of coalition building.” This will garner the attention, support and funding necessary to being these projects to scale.