Notes on Conflict Prevention and Resolution Forum
Can the UN Help prevent Violent Conflict?
September 14, 2004

JOHANNA MENDELSON FORMAN is the Senior Program Officer for Peace, Security, and Human Rights at the United Nations Foundation. Prior to joining the UN Foundation, Johanna was co-director of a high-level bi-partisan commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Association of the United States Army and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. For the last eight years she has held senior positions at the United States Agency for International Development, most recently as Senior Policy Advisor for the Bureau for Humanitarian Response, where she managed the Agency’s policy on post-conflict reconstruction, security, and governance. From 1998-1999 she served as Senior Social Scientist and Attorney at the World Bank’s newly created Post Conflict Unit and in 1994 she was appointed as a Senior Advisor to the newly created Office of Transition Initiatives. She also was one of the founders of the Conflict Prevention Network, a coalition of donor nations, working together to coordinate and support the reconstruction of war-torn societies. Dr. Mendelson holds faculty appointments at The American University and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Dr. Mendelson holds a J.D. from Washington College of Law at The American University, a Ph.D. in Latin American history from Washington University, St. Louis, and a Masters of International Affairs, with a Certificate of Latin America Studies from Columbia University in New York.

CHETAN KUMAR works for the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme, where he is Inter-agency Liaison Specialist dealing with political matters, and specializes in initiatives involving the early prevention of armed conflict. He also serves as the Programme Manager for the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacity for Conflict Prevention. He has previously worked for the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and the International Peace Academy in New York. He is the author of Building Peace in Haiti (Lynne Rienner, 1998), and co-editor of Peace-building as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies (Lynne Rienner, 2000) and South Asia Approaches the Millennium: Re-examining National Security (Westview, 1995). He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

VICTORIA K. HOLT is a Senior Associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center, where she co-directs the Future of Peace Operations project. She recently co-authored a study of peacekeeping reforms at the United Nations, analyzing implementation of the recommendations of the 2000 Brahimi Report and offering options for further improving peace operations. She also looks at regional capacities in Africa for peace operations, U.S. policies, and efforts to improve peacekeeping and rule of law tools. Prior to joining Stimson in 2001, she served as Senior Policy Advisor at the State Department, where she was responsible for interaction with Congress on issues involving the UN, peacekeeping and international organizations. Ms. Holt previously worked for seven years on Capitol Hill and was also the Executive Director of the Emergency Coalition for U.S. Financial Support of the United Nations, a bipartisan coalition of statestmen and civic organizations supporting U.S. payment of UN arrears, and director of the Project on Peacekeeping and the United Nations at the Council for a Livable World Education Fund. Ms. Holt is a graduate of the Naval War College and holds a B.A. with honors from Wesleyan University.

Johanna Mendelson Forman

Overview of the origins and history of the United Nations and key documents
The UN was established after WWII as an institution of governments and member states to help stabilize international relations and give peace a more secure foundation.

Now the UN is grappling with its place in the world: how they should operate in their most basic role – preventing conflict and creating a peaceful world.

Important documents relating to conflict in the history of the UN include:

**UN Charter**
Signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, it entered into force on 24 October 1945. The Charter establishes the United Nations, and outlines its mission and organization. Its first promise is the prevention of conflict.

1992 **An Agenda for Peace**, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali's paper which provided analysis and recommendations on ways to strengthen and improve the UN's capacity to maintain world peace, was commissioned by the UN Security Council. It gave the security council a new role, greater than that of the general assembly. Agenda for Peace was an incredible roadmap, it defined peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

1997 **Final Report of The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict**
A three-year examination, culminating with the Final Report in 1997, into the principal causes of deadly ethnic, nationalist, and religious conflicts within and between states, and the circumstances that foster or deter their outbreak. It focused on operational and structural concepts and brought in the importance of the development sector in conflict prevention. Subsequently, the role of the UN ancillary agencies became integrated into the larger work of the UN.

**Millenium Goals 2000**
The report sets out a practical vision for the United Nations in a globalized world that has changed dramatically in the 55 years since the Organization was founded. Among its key messages is the need to make globalization more inclusive, to create more opportunities for all, and not leave billions of people in a state of poverty and exclusion. The 10-year goals will be revisited next year at the half-way mark.

**Brahimi Report 2000** – This is the next comprehensive review of peacekeeping activities. It focused on the structure of the UN, presenting a clear set of specific, concrete and practical recommendations to assist the United Nations in conducting such activities better in the future.

2001 **Prevention of Armed Conflict**
This report builds on Agenda for Peace and for the first time recognized the role of NGP’s towards creating change. It offers two objectives: to review the progress of developing the UN’s conflict prevention capacity, and to present
specific recommendations on how UN efforts at preventing armed conflict can be improved.

Principles for conflict prevention:
- Early reaction to conflict requires research and analysis
- A balanced approach is needed to alleviate risk factors
- There should be an extended effort to deal with underlying/root causes of conflict

How can the UN be graded on each of these principles?
- On early reaction: C
- Balanced approach: Better, the UN has better tools and incentives to achieve this
- On extended effort: C

Chetan Kumar

Early Prevention of Conflict

Informally, there are three types of intervention.
- Gross intervention: genocide or similar level of conflict that mandates intervention
- Country basically self-destructs and the UN is invited to intervene
- Early Conflict Prevention: there are early warning symptoms that a violent conflict is coming, yet there is no threat to global security and no invitation from the country.

With no mandate to intervene – how can the UN proceed to attempt to prevent a violent conflict from happening?

One necessity is to respect the local situation and involve local partners.

Victoria Holt

Conflict won’t go away; the question is how to channel violence into political expression. Review of 1) UN’s reforms since the "Brahimi Report" in peace operations; 2) consideration of role of African organization’s capacity for peacekeeping; 3) US policy and 4) civilian protection issues.

The 2000 Brahimi Report had over 80 recommendations to improve the structure of the organization in order to make peace operations work better.

3 basic underlying concepts:
- War fighting in the job of the states
- Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding are complementary and need to be planned together for an operation
- Peace operations require support structures within the UN and from its member states

Doctrine and Strategy
The Security Council needs to hear an honest assessment of the situation on the ground, what is needed and then assess what can be provided through the UN. Better consultations with the countries providing troops are needed and these countries must be engaged in creating the operation strategy from the beginning. The rule of law must be recognized and integrated from the beginning. There should be an analytic unit with capacity to do analysis of the situation on the ground, an integrated mission task force and more staff for planning.

Capacity Issues
Rapid, effective deployment is critical. New definition of timelines for UN operations: After Security Council action, deployment should happen within 30 days for a traditional mission, 90 days for a complex mission.

Since the UN cannot begin a mission without approval of the Security Council, the UN Secretariat often has little time or funding with which to plan the mission in advance. Today there are clear improvements in other areas, including the UN’s strategic deployment stocks, which are lined up in advance at the UN Logistics Base to help with deployments, and mission leadership now meet and coordinate before deploying to the mission in the field. Still lacking are sufficient enabling units and strategic guidance for the mission leaders, among other challenges. The logistical support alone is a huge challenge.

Civilian Protection
The UN has increased its inclusion of civilian protection in its mandates for peace operations. This raises questions about what that means for a mission and how forces conduct such operations. Issues include: Where will the troops come from? What is the doctrine for civilian protection? What is the training for these situations?