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**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AS CATALYSTS TO
A MORE SECURE WORLD**

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ABSTRACT

The world community has recognized the need to become more proactive when dealing with violent conflict. In fact, the United Nation's Secretary General (UNSG) has called on the world community to become engaged more proactively in the work of conflict prevention and in 2001 issued his report on the prevention of armed conflict that at its core called for nations to work to prevent conflict. To date, however, the UN has been unable to act consistently to prevent conflict and, as the two UN Interim Reports of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict of 2004 and 2005 indicate, little has been done to advance the UNSG's 2001 direction to address conflict prevention. The key to addressing violent conflict, as will be expressed in this paper, is to tackle the root causes of violence. To achieve this, it is necessary to leverage the capacities of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) such that they can become effective contributors and indeed leaders in conflict prevention. By applying CSOs to states showing a potential for conflict, the international community could be able to address the root causes of that conflict which would in turn facilitate a more secure human environment through the prevention of that conflict. This can be accomplished through a CSO cooperative approach to conflict prevention, using CSOs for early warning of impending violence, facilitating greater CSO cooperation with the United Nations, and using CSOs as triggers for research and education.

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INTRODUCTION

Pick up a newspaper, search through the internet or turn on the television and you would certainly find a story dealing with some form of conflict occurring somewhere in our world. This is an unfortunate reality of today's world that one cannot escape. The world can no longer ignore this reality, a reality that is brought to us in full colour and sound by news organizations such as CNN, Aljazeera or CTV. Stories of children emaciated, starving and alone, the victims of violence can be seen in all forms of media. It seems that this is nowhere more so prevalent than in the African continent where today alone there are some nine major armed conflicts occurring. That is not to say that Africa is the only source of violence; violence can be found in almost all parts of the world from South America to Africa, from the Caucasus to the Koreas. Worldwide today there are somewhere in the range of 39 conflicts ranging from civil war to inter-state traditional wars, with each day bringing other countries closer to the brink of similar conflict.¹

Countries such as Canada have recognized the continued threat posed by violent conflicts in world and recognize a need to address this threat. Action through the United Nations such as the Right to Protect initiative or most recently, in its newly released International Policy Statement (IPS) are good initiatives with Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada referring to the initiatives of this IPS in 2004 in the following manner:

“Because we want to make a real difference in halting and preventing conflict and improving human welfare around the world. This may sound naively altruistic,

¹ Global Security.org, “Military, The World at War.”
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war>; Internet; accessed 02 March 2006.

but it's not. Rather, it's a doctrine of activism that over decades has forged our nation's international character—and will serve us even better in today's changing world. The people of our country have long understood that, as a proud citizen of the world, Canada has global responsibilities. We can't solve every problem, but we will do what we can to protect others, to raise them up, to make them safe.”²

Over that last year number of years starting as far back as 1999, Canada has been a leader in the “Responsibility To Protect” initiative raised at the United Nations while simultaneously leading international military actions in places such as Afghanistan. This effort is a significant sign that Canada is prepared to get involved with international conflicts however the broader international community is not necessarily in agreement with the principle of intervention. However, as the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty states, “... there continues to be disagreement as to whether, if there is a right of intervention, how and when it should be exercised, and under whose authority.”³ In reading this report, one is struck by the fact that although there is great focus on prevention, the international community seems to remain focused on action, primarily military; after a situation has degraded to such an extent that human suffering has already or will forthwith occur. Although nations have shown their intention to become engaged before conflict develops there unfortunately seems to be a lack of positive action to become engaged before a nation state has

² Foreign Affairs Canada, “Canada’s International Policy Statement, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World Forward from the Prime Minister.” <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/ips/ips-overview2-en.asp>; Internet; accessed December 2005.

³ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, “The Responsibility to Protect - Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty,” http://www.iciss.ca/report2-en.asp#chapter_3 ; Internet; accessed December 2005.

reached the limits of its capacity to govern or support its people. Why are other options aimed at prevention of conflict not being perused more prominently? If the international community could address the root causes of conflict before a nation has atrophied, it would be able to safeguard human life, mitigate suffering, and avoid having to intervene militarily in the first place. Figure 1 illustrates the potential savings that could result from a preventative approach to conflict prevention. A purely financial illustration, figure 1 demonstrates that a significant cost savings could be realized if the focus of conflict prevention was preventative not responsive. These savings if realized could in turn be reinvested into the cycle of peace helping to address root causes of violence and ultimately the conflict itself. As noted in the United Nations Report of the Secretary General on conflict prevention, funds currently spent on military action could be instead spent on root causes of conflict that would further reduce the risks of conflict.⁴

In order to forge an understanding of what can be done to prevent states from failing and falling into conflict we need to understand what causes states to fail in the first place. As Dr Walter Dorn stated in his address to the Canadian Forces Staff College in the fall of 2005, conflicts can be compared to fires. You need the log; that is the socio-economic conditions; the kindling, which is the aggravating circumstances; the match, such as a major or minor sparking incident, that together create the condition for conflict. Dr. Dorn also spoke of the importance of peacemakers/keepers as the firefighters using their military capabilities as the fire extinguisher ready to put out these fires. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) he offered could act as a means for fire prevention and

⁴ *Report of the Secretary-General on Prevention of Armed Conflict.* United Nations, A/55/985-S/2001/574 General Assembly: 07 Jun 2001.

detection. That is, the UNSC could take the lead role on international conflict prevention.⁵

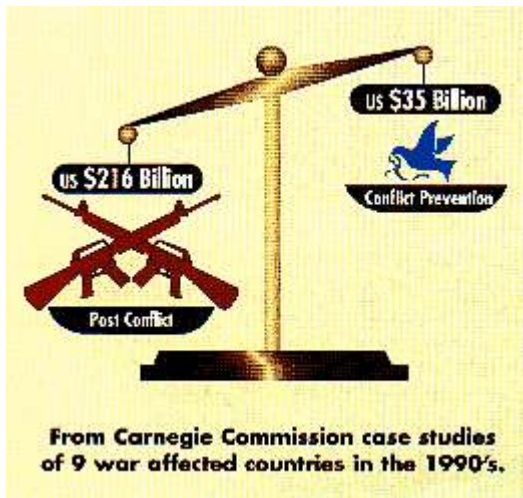


Figure 1: A theoretical cost comparison when using a conflict prevention approach to resolving conflict in comparison to action taken to address conflict after it has commenced.⁶

This concept of preventative action is also recognized by Canada where the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) acknowledges in its web site that armed conflicts do not occur without warning. They go on to state that conflicts rarely occur without warning and that the international community is recognizing the cost of ignoring these warning signs. CIDA also notes a tendency for increased consideration to dealing with potential conflict areas in a proactive fashion.⁷

This paper will argue that by committing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to a state showing the potential for conflict, the international community could be able to

⁵ Dr Walter Dorn, "United Nations" (lecture, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, December 2005).

⁶ Canadian International Development Agency, "Weighing the Costs: Cost Conflict Support versus Conflict Prevention." http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/vLUallDocByIDEn/D70F85A2203F573_D85256_A7_A00_1A711C?OpenDocument; Internet; accessed 02 Mar 05

⁷ Ibid.

address the root causes of this conflict thereby mitigating the state's risk of failure and facilitating a more secure human environment through the prevention of that conflict. These CSOs would in essence act in the role of fire prevention agent to use Dr Dorn's analogy above. To demonstrate, this I will introduce the UN Report of the Secretary General on the prevention of armed conflict, which identifies Civil Society Organizations and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) as key contributors to helping maintain international peace and security and urges further expansion of their role in conflict prevention. I will then discuss the root causes of conflict with the intent to identify areas of focus that CSOs could address to sever the link to failure and eventual conflict. Then, through a case study review of Haiti, I will demonstrate how traditional international interaction failed to prevent conflict. Once completed, I will then turn my attention to the current CSO and NGO construct and argue that the differentiation between the two is no longer necessary. For simplicity, CSO will be used in this paper to refer to both CSOs and NGOs. Finally I will offer suggestions for what CSOs can do in today's world situation to prevent conflict, focusing on proactive measures.

UNITED NATIONS AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

In reviewing the various reports available through the UN it quickly becomes clear that the concept of "conflict prevention" is not a new one. The UN Secretary General in his report entitled "Prevention of Armed Conflict" notes this when he states "since the late 1980's, the General Assembly and the Security Council have strengthened

the mandate of the United Nations for Conflict Prevention established in the Charter.”⁸

But a closer review of those measures, including re-affirming the role of the Secretary General in preventative diplomacy including early warning mechanisms for conflict prevention, highlighting the importance of improving UN system-wide coordination measures for preventative action, and open debates, have left the UN wanting for concrete action. Indeed even the most recent reports, such as that on the Informal Interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives from CSOs and the private sector in July 2005, call for action in establishing a proactive approach to conflict prevention and specifically called for a strengthening of early warning and early response capacities of the member states. Suffice to say, the UN is very good at, “talking the talk” but is left lacking when it comes time to, “walking the walk”.

The initiatives of the UN Secretary General (UNSG) as outlined in his 2001 report are valid and need to be addressed here. He identifies key issues of conflict and calls for a proactive approach that, if fostered, could be instrumental in addressing the root causes of conflict and lead to its prevention. In this report, the UNSG calls for action stating, “ the time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action.”⁹ The UNSG identifies two objectives of his report, the first being to review the progress made in developing the UN’s conflict prevention capacity and second, to make specific recommendation on how the UN efforts on conflict prevention could be enhanced. Given article 1, paragraph 1 of the UN Charter, which calls on Member States to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of

⁸ *Report of the Secretary-General on Prevention of Armed Conflict*. United Nations, A/55/985-S/2001/574 General Assembly: 07 Jun 2001. Prevention is addressed in the 1945 UN charter and 1948 Genocide Convention.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pg 3.

the threats of peace, the mainstay of his report calls on action needed from these member states and the UN as a whole. That said, the UNSG recognizes the importance of outside agencies as facilitators in achieving the broader goal of conflict prevention.

The UNSG identifies six premises on which his report is based; each will be discussed in turn. First, conflict prevention is a primary obligation of Member States and is established within the framework of the UN Charter. Each Member State is obliged by the Charter to act in such a manner that conflict will be prevented and as such any action to prevent conflict by Member States must therefore conform to the UN Charter. Second, it is his contention that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments, however it is here that he closely links the work of outside agencies when he states that civil society must play an important role. Thirdly, if preventative action is to be effective it must be taken at the earliest possible opportunity and in doing so the roots of conflict including socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional and other structural causes must be dealt with. This premise also infers the necessity of effective early warning mechanism on which to act and I quote “the need for reliable early-warning information and a deep and careful understanding of local circumstances and traditions is therefore of great importance.”¹⁰ The UNSG notes that the main lesson learned from past UN action is that early action is the best and the most likely time agents of a developing conflict will be willing to enter into effective dialogue leading to a peaceful solution. Fourthly, if the UN is to be successful at acting preventively to prevent conflict it must do so in comprehensive manner, both short and long term, when addressing the root causes of conflict. The last part of this premise states that in taking action, the UN must do so in cooperation with both national and

¹⁰ Ibid., pg 6.

regional actors implying that action directed solely towards the recognized government is not always an option. This is a clear indication that sovereignty concerns need to be carefully balanced with the need to get to the true causes of conflict. I believe this to be more so the case if preventive action occurred late in the conflict cycle, either through the failure of early warning or if member states failed to take action early enough. Fifthly, the UNSG makes it clear that it is his belief that preventative action and development activities are mutually supportive. One cannot effectively function without the other. That is, initiatives to build economic growth and prosperity are directly linked to actions dealing with human rights, women's issues and democratization to name just a few. Finally, he makes it clear that in order for preventative action to occur, it will take the cooperation of numerous UN agencies as well as outside organizations and acknowledges that the UN may not be the organization best suited to lead all preventative action noting that non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors may be best suited to take the lead.

Perhaps the premises used by the UNSG were flawed. Did CSOs have a true role to play in assisting the UN in preventing conflict? Of course his first premise is clearly directed to Member States and exclusive of CSOs. That said, certain CSOs do have recognized consultant status at the UN and have been lobbying for a greater voice within the UN including the General Assembly and Security Council. To date they have been unsuccessful in achieving their goals. I am not trying to argue here that CSOs be given the same rights as member states for clearly they are not recognized sovereign states but they can bring to the table a different perspective and experience level to UN General Assembly discussions, particularly when they are identified as key to the success for the

UNSG plan for greater UN preventative conflict prevention. What about the second premise? Given the track record of Member States in dealing with conflict in a preventative manner, just refer back to the Carnegie report, it appears clear that they have been reluctant to become involved with conflict until either it is imminent, as in East Timor or already occurring such as in the Former Yugoslavia. CSOs were on the ground in both of these conflicts well before official UN intervention was authorized. It appears as though the reality of this premise is that it is the CSOs with the help of Member States that are actually acting preventively and that a greater and more proactive role needs to be played by the UN Member States. The third premise “if preventative action is to be effective it must be taken at the earliest possible opportunity and in doing so the roots of conflict including socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional and other structural causes must be dealt with” remains valid with both the UN and CSOs in the 2005 report on the informal hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-government organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, agreeing that more needs to be done to address the root causes of conflict and agreeing that there remains a need to strengthen the early warning capacity of both organizations. The fourth and fifth premise can best be assessed using Haiti as an example. In the past century Haiti, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper, has had opportunities to “start over”. On two occasions, first in 1915 and later in 1994 military action was taken to restore order to the country. Good intentions abounded in both of these cases however they failed to deal with Haiti in a comprehensive manner, both short and long term, resulting in the country returning to violent conflict. Indeed the failure to build economic prosperity resulted in other initiatives such as policing and

democratization failing yet again. The premise of compressive action and mutually supportive preventative action and development activities remains valid. Finally is it valid to argue the premise that CSOs may at times be better suited to act as leads in conflict prevention initiatives? Clearly some CSOs have broad footprints spanning the world; one only has to look at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), although strictly speaking not a CSO but an intergovernmental organization or (IGO), to see this. The ICRC with its HQ in Geneva, Switzerland, can be found in roughly 80 countries and has a staff totalling over 12,000. Yet this huge organization with interests in protection, relief, training and education and humanitarian diplomacy and law has not been leveraged to act as a leader of conflict prevention missions. The UN could approach organizations with the capacity of CSOs like the ICRC, to lead conflict prevention missions, however the UN's failure to act on the conflict prevention initiative has prevented non-UN agencies from being given the lead in conflict prevention missions. This coupled with the failure of the UN to accept the new dichotomy of conflict prevention, that is prevention before conflict occurs rather than acting after it has already commenced, has resulted in little action in this field. I believe the premise that a non-UN Member could lead conflict prevention missions to remain valid.

The UN clearly identifies the potential benefit of preventative action but has been unable to put it into action. Yes one could say that peacekeeping missions are preventative in their mandate yet these are missions that have been undertaken after conflict had already occurred. The UN recognizes the need to break this mould and work to prevent conflict before it occurs, in his report, the UNSG uses example of recent failures by the UN, such as Rwanda, to intervene early resulting instead on the use of

military action to quell the violence. The Carnegie Commission Study on seven UN interventions during the 1990s showed that about 200 billion dollars was spent on military action and traditional peace keeping and enforcement actions in Bosnia Herzegovina, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, the Persian Gulf, Cambodia, and El Salvador.¹¹ Had the UN instead applied preventative measures to deal with these areas of interest they could have saved in the neighbourhood of 130 billion dollars.¹² This is a significant potential savings that could have been leveraged to deal with other international issues such as world hunger or health care. So given these potential savings, why has nothing significant seemed to be accomplished in the five years since this report by the UNSG on Conflict Prevention was published even after he pledged in this report to move the UN from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention? A review of a 2005 report on the informal hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-government organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector paints a bleak picture on accomplishments to date with statements such as “the need to move towards a culture of prevention of conflict was recognized by all” and “ participation of civil society in the United Nations needed to be strengthened” clearly indicating that little had been done since 2001 to take action to implement the UNSG call for a change in culture.¹³

In summary, the 2001 UNSG’s report on the prevention of armed conflict identifies with criticality the importance that must be placed on preventing conflict before it has turned violent, arguing that the human cost of war is no longer tolerable. This

¹¹ Ibid., pg 4.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ United Nations “Advanced Unedited Summary 21 July 2005 of Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly With Representatives of Non-Government Organization, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector.” http://www.undp.org/cso/documents/Advance_unedited_summary_GA_Hearings.doc; Internet; accessed December 2005.

report calls on both Member States and non-state actors (CSOs) to work in harmony to foster a paradigm shift towards an international culture focused on prevention rather than reaction. Unfortunately recent UN Interim Reports of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict from 2004 and 2005 do not paint a bright picture on the advances made in this field. Both reports use almost identical wording to that used by the UNSG in 2001 calling for more action and cooperation in the field of conflict prevention indicating that little has been done in the last four years to action the UNSGs vision of 2001. It is important to note that both the 2004 and 2005 reports contend that conflict prevention remains a critical component of a more secure world and needs continued international commitment. I have also shown that all the premises, except for one (CSO supporting States), raised by the UNSG in support of his position of conflict prevention remain valid and the commitment to conflict prevention must remain a priority.

ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Having introduced and discussed the 2001 UNSG's report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, it is now important to shift and analyse what causes a state to fail and atrophy towards conflict. In his report the UNSG made it clear that if conflict prevention was to be successful, that the root causes of violence had to be addressed and a mechanism put in place to provide early warning of this impending violence. This section will identify those root causes so that later sections of this paper can offer suggestions on how CSOs can address them in order to provide early warning thereby being able to assist in the prevention of conflict.

Theories on why states plunge into chaos and self-destruct leading to violent conflict abound. Each is convincing and offer very good justification to support their positions. Some authors even argue that there is no point in identifying the cause, as it is part of the natural progress of states to eventually collapse into violence. Even others, such as Edward Luttwak, even suggest that the world should let war have a chance. He would argue that true outcomes of war are stifled by outside interventions and instead should be allowed to run their course in order to bring peace. I believe however that by recognizing the causes of conflict, the world community can act in order to prevent conflict and address those root causes so that war need not be given a chance, as peace would have been achieved before war was allowed to occur. In his book “Blood on the Doorstep”, Bartlett Rubin suggests that conflict can arise from three sources, global systemic sources, state level sources and individual level sources.¹⁴ In reviewing these sources I noticed that there were lower level sources of conflict within each of the Rubin’s three sources. This suggested to me that Rubin had not identified the root cause of conflict. I would suggest that there is no one true root cause of a conflict, rather that most often the causes are complex and interconnected with one reason taking centre stages in one place and another taking centre stage in the next. This interconnection is critical if we are to be able to act to prevent conflict.

When trying to determine the cause and effect relationship of a particular subject it is important to try to avoid being drawn into the trap of trying to solve the problem without first understanding it.¹⁵ To understand this phenomenon lets turn to a hockey analogy. If a hockey team was consistently losing games by a significant margin those

¹⁴ Bartlett R Rubin. *Blood on the Doorstep: The Politics of Preventative Action*. (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 18-32.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pg 18.

that fail to analyse the problem before finding the solution might be prone to say, get rid of the goalie, or fire the coach. If however you truly analyse the problem you would see that there were a number of complex interrelated reasons for the team's failure. If you tried to address just one problem, such as replacing the goalie, without understanding the root cause you could be exasperating the problem. What if that particular goalie had been the reason the team wasn't losing by even more goals? Now let's apply this analogy to conflicts. Conflicts it seems often occur in the poorest of the poor countries, if we were to use the analogy of the hockey game to this situation we would be inclined to state that conflict occurs in countries because they are poor, when in fact this is much too simplistic a view point. Just because a country is poor does not mean that it will turn to violence however these countries do exhibit low levels of governance, elitism amongst its leaders, economic failures, and environmental stresses to name just a few. If we looked just at poverty as the cause of conflict we would be missing all the causal effects of the underlying problems.

In reviewing the writings of authors such as Stuart Kaufman, John Mueller, Jack Goldstone and Thomas Homer-Dixon I have been introduced to a number of theories on the causation of conflict. These readings collectively offer an insight to conflict, an insight one would not get if read in isolation. Attempts to list these underlying foundational causes of conflict such as by Michael E. Brown in his "The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict" show how complicated internal conflict truly is. Michael Brown chooses to select four factors of conflict, which he identifies as

Structural, Political, Economic/Social, and Cultural/Perceptual.¹⁶ I believe however that his first two factors, Structural and Political work as one and must be combined when assessing the causal factors of conflict. Clearly the ability of a government to effectively govern will directly impact the structural foundations of a state thereby providing a potential source for state failure and conflict. Also, Brown's list does not address a fundamental reality of human nature, greed. The concept of greed, as a causal factor of violent conflict, has been shown by authors such as Paul Collier to play an integral part in the development of situations in which conflict can erupt and must be considered when looking at the root causes of violence. It is my contention therefore that there are five main or what I will refer to as "root" causes of violence that are at the core of conflict development. They are, poor governance leading to social structure collapse, ethnicity, economic, environmental stresses and greed. Each will now be discussed in turn.

Poor Governance

When one speaks of good governance we in the west tend to automatically gravitate to examples of democracies, tending to place other forms of governance on a lower plane. This section will not however focus on trying to determine which form of government is the best to support a state but rather attempt to illustrate how a failure of a government to work for its people can lead to a degradation of social programs which can ultimately lead to social structure collapse and then violence. The Oxford English

¹⁶ Michael E. Brown, "The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict," in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, edited by Michael E. Brown, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) pg 577.

Dictionary defines governance as “the action or manner of governing”. How a state is governed will directly impact on the ability of it to establish the social networks so critical for its people. A government truly committed to the well being of its people will work to bring about the foundational elements of society such as education, healthcare, freedom from persecution and security. A failure of a government to maintain and establish these foundational elements will result in an environment where people lose hope and faith in their leadership. When this occurs one of two things can happen, either the leadership is removed or it becomes entrenched in power. When a government fails to yield to change, their leaders and associates subvert the current political norms and will turn to coercion, subvert bureaucracy, strangle judicial independence block civil society and gain control over the police and security forces.¹⁷ To better illustrate this connection I will use the theory of Horizontal legitimacy proposed by Kalevi Holsti in his book “The State War, and the State of War”. In his book Holsti presents a linkage within society and government on two planes. There is the vertical plane in which a government draws its right to rule and the horizontal plane in which a society establishes its limits within which that government is allowed to rule. To have an effective society their needs to be established practices and policies accepted by society which allows a government act on their behalf, if not they will be weak and prone to failure. As Holsti states “States of whatever format, if they lack vertical and horizontal legitimacy,... will be weak.”¹⁸ If horizontal legitimacy, a contract between society and government is broken then that society will be in danger of failing. This can occur when a government fails to provide

¹⁷ Robert I Rotberg , “Failed and Failing States.” *Foreign Affairs* Vol 81 Issue 4, (Jul/Aug 2002): pg. 128.

¹⁸ Kalevi Holsti., “The State, War, and the State of War” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 107.

essential service to its people. Things like security, health care, education if not provide can void the level of horizontal legitimacy provided to government by its people. People will become disillusioned and in many cases revert to their historical connections to provide these services, the immediate community or family unit. When this occurs, a government stops governing for its people and begins to govern for itself. What can then occur is a state that becomes increasingly divided amongst intra-societal lines. This in turn places the government in a position of risk and as mentioned earlier they can follow one of two paths, either they allow for a change or they become entrenched. If they choose the second option then the government begins to function solely for itself and marginalizes its people. People then in turn become even more disillusioned and the cycle continues. This is not to say that all governments start off with the intent to operate solely for itself and not its people. In fact most governments start out as well intentioned and honest.¹⁹ “Each one wants to do something good and begins to do it and then sees, after a month, after a year,... that it is just not happening, that it is slipping away.”²⁰ . A government that fails to live up to the horizontal legitimacy contract with its people will begin to live for itself. Its focus will be to securing its own position of power to the detriment of its social structures. More and more emphasis will be placed into remaining in power rather than providing for its people. This leads to corruption and mismanagement of the security and judicial systems over which the government has control. Unfortunately other factors often play on a government’s ability to maintain its horizontal legitimacy; these include ethnicity, economic failure, environmental stresses and greed.

¹⁹ Ibid., pg 117.

²⁰ Ibid.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity and its role in violent conflict are well documented in the world today. The Balkan conflict of the 1990's and the inter-racial slaughter in Rwanda are a pre-eminent example of how ethnic divides can foster the conditions for violence, but what caused this to occur? Authors such as Stuart Kaufman, David Lake and Donald Rothchild convincingly argue that ethnic violence is caused by a failure of the security dilemma where forces of ethnic hostility and failed leadership spawn the conditions where societies turn on one another.

It is important here to lay the foundation and dispel some of the myths of what I believe ethnic conflicts to be. Ethnic conflict is not, as supported by David Lake and Donald Rothchild just about two ethnically diverse peoples hating each other. Ethnic conflict is much more complicated than that. Although characteristics such as inter-group differences, ancient hatreds or centuries old feuds are found in ethnic conflict, they are not the primary cause, nor is it caused by the stresses of modern life within a global economy. Rather ethnic conflict is most likely caused by "collective fears of the future" which are acted on by ethnic activist or political entrepreneurs. Collective fears, as Lake and Rothchild state, arise when states lose their ability to arbitrate between groups and provide credible guarantees of protection for groups"²¹, which is referred to as "emerging anarchy". The failure to communicate between and bridge the gap of opposing sides is caused when one of three strategic dilemmas exists: information failures, problems of

²¹ David Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict." *International Security* 21, no 2 (Fall 1996): pg 43.

credible commitment, or a perceived lack of security. These collectively are known as the “security dilemma”. Lake and Rothchild state that it is the political entrepreneurs or political activist within a state/region that take advantage of this weakness, known as the security dilemma, to stimulate their own political agendas turning society towards violence.

The security dilemma needs to be further expanded to understand the factors that contribute to ethnic violence because the understanding of this will aid in understanding how this form of violence can be prevented. Information, it is said, is often a source of power. If you have the information you control the power. With information you will be in a position in which you can exploit it to the exclusion or detriment of those who are not in the “know”. When individuals use this information to misrepresent competing groups interests this is known as Information Failure.²² This failure means that competing ethnic groups are unable to share accurate information concerning each other and will be leery of the other. This environment of mistrust makes the potential for violent conflict possible. So why do groups choose to withhold or misrepresents information, would it not be in everyone’s collective best interest given the cost, in human life, that this positioning can bring? There in lies the problem. One group’s interest is not necessarily served by the collective interest. As Lake and Rothchild state “revealing true information undercuts the ability of the group to attain its interests.”²³ If for example there were competition within a state for scarce resources such as farmland or clean water it would be in the interest of the group holding these resources to understate the value or availability of these resources. If combined with poor

²² Ibid., pg46.

²³ Ibid.

government, such as corruption through allocation of these resources or contracts to exploit them, to the benefit of one group over the other, then information flow would be essential to controlling those resources. This incentive to misrepresent, according to Lake and Rothchild exists in three common circumstances. If the group were to be truthful it would undercut their ability to further their own interest. These three circumstances are: first, bluffing to gain a better bargaining position, secondly, misrepresentation of the true intentions of the group and thirdly, negotiating while preparing for war.²⁴ The effectiveness of government to help ensure information flow helps to create an atmosphere in which all parties can be heard and can express their views. This is key to the effectiveness of a state, if in contrast a state responds to bribery and provides information on one group over another or to suppress the rights of one group over another then this will foster ethnic mistrust and ultimately weaken a state because of the increased likelihood that violence will occur.

Credible Commitment occurs when one group can trust that the other will live up to the agreements reached by both parties. However when this is not the case, a situation develops in which, regardless of the negotiated settlement, one group feels that the other will as some time, be it now or in the future, renege on the agreement and threaten the existence of the other group. This “problem of credible commitment” as Lake and Rothchild refer to it may lead to groups choosing conflict today in order to avoid being exploited tomorrow.²⁵ Credible Commitment as a stabilizing force is often the responsibility of good government. It is this government that establishes the rules under which differing ethnic groups function and ensures the adherence to the agreed “ethnic

²⁴ Ibid., pg 47.

²⁵ Ibid., pg48.

contract”. This ethnic contract can take the form of a formal agreement such as a constitution as we see in Canada where two ethnically diverse cultures, English and French, have their rights equally entrenched in the constitution or it can be more informal. In either case it becomes the government that is the overseer of the agreement and can work to ensure its success or failure.²⁶

If a government fails to ensure that an agreed contract between ethnic groups is followed or that there is insufficient or inaccurate information sharing occurring, then the situation can develop in which one group fears for its own security. This is particularly the case should the government choose to support one group over the other. This situation leads to an environment of spiralling mistrust. “It is the inability to both know with certainty the intentions and abilities of others and to commit credibly not to arm for offensive purposes that drive the spiral.”²⁷ This is the “security dilemma”. Incentives to use force are generated because of the fear that one group will act on the other. It is therefore better to strike first and try and gain the initiative, as a negotiated settlement will be unachievable.

Ethnic violence is therefore a result of a failure of the state to ensure a neutral security environment in which differing ethnic groups can be allowed equal access to state resources. Each group must feel that they are able to trust the other which is impossible in an environment in which Information Failure, lack of Credible Commitment and a poor Security Dilemma are allowed to foster. Ethnic violence however doesn’t just happen if these criteria are met. There needs to be a catalyst that

²⁶ Ibid., pg 51.

²⁷ Ibid., pg 52.

drives the violence. Stuart Kaufman identifies essentially two ways in which ethnic war can start: *mass-led*, and *elite-led*.

The *mass-led* path to ethnic war begins with mass hostility where hostile masses choose a belligerent leader that provokes the security dilemma that leads to war. The *elite-led* path starts with a belligerent leader who comes to power when mass hostility is low then uses government power and influence to encourage hostility that provokes a security dilemma that leads to war. Kaufman states, that it is either the dominant or subordinate groups within a society that can instigate the path to ethnic war. To prove this he proposes four paths to violence: mass insurgencies, popular chauvinism, government jingoism, and elite conspiracy.

Mass-led events that are caused by a subordinate group are referred to as *mass insurgencies* and are driven by intense fear of extinction of the subordinate group by the majority. Here Kaufman states that the best option for preventing this form of ethnic conflict is through the efforts of reassurance by the majority towards the minority. *Mass-led* events caused by the dominant group leads to *popular chauvinism* and is normally driven by mass hostility against the minority group. Kaufman states that the best way to prevent this form of conflict is through third party deterrence.

Elite-led conflict that is caused by the dominant group leadership is referred to as *government jingoism* and are driven by elite outbidding. The offer of incentives to the leaders in return for a change in their policy towards minorities is presented by Kaufman as the best alternative to preventing this form of conflict. *Elite-led* conflict that is caused by the subordinate group is referred to as *elite conspiracy* and elite outbidding too drives it. Here however Kaufman argues that the leadership dependency of external aid caused

by this position of subordination of size allows for third party isolationism as a good strategy for preventing this form of conflict.

Lake and Rothchild like Kaufman note that the key to the management of ethnic conflict rests in the reassurance of minority group's physical and cultural safety. Lake and Rothchild, argue that the reassurance of minority groups must be accomplished through four confidence-building measures: demonstration of respect, power sharing, elections, and regional autonomy and federalism. They go not to mention that if states fail to manage their own internal conflicts then external intervention becomes necessary through a combination of non-coercive intervention, coercive intervention or third party mediation.

Economic

At first glance the issue of economics seems straightforward with those possessing resources the source of discontent for those that do not. On closer examination the reality of economic factors contributing to conflict becomes much more complex. Paul Collier in his article "Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective" makes it clear in his conclusion that "the evidence on the causes of conflict points to economic factors as the main drivers of conflict."²⁸ He also defines economic inequality as the unequal ownership of assets or the unequal distribution of incomes amongst a population and links conflict to economic factors rather than traditional grievance based agendas. In fact Collier suggests that elite or rebel leaders will play upon a sense of

²⁸ Paul Collier, "Doing Well Out Of War: An Economic Perspective", in *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, edited by Mats Berdal and David Malone, 91-111. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 111.

grievance to gain the support of new recruits while masking the reality of an economic based conflict.²⁹ Collier suggests that the Economic Conflict Agenda is driven by three factors: primary commodities, proportion of youth population and endowment of education, all interlinked to establish the criteria for violence. Primary commodities are those base resources such as gold, diamonds, oil or timber that do not rely on significant infrastructure and automation for extraction and exploitation and as such are the easiest to target. These commodities are easily exploited and often in demand worldwide. They are easily taxed and controlled and provide an easily source of revenue for the state. If this revenue is then reinvested in the State, then there's no problem, unfortunately this is may not always be the case. Worse yet, if a state becomes dependent on the revenue from a single source then world markets can have a dramatic effect on the revenue realized from that primary commodity. If the trend in prices for that primary commodity is downward then the leadership is forced to make decisions on how to maintain it's financial base. Here they are left with two options, first they can reduce state run programs or secondly they can increase the revenue base from somewhere else. If however the country has failed to diversify its economy and has remained reliant on the sale of primary commodities then there would be limited alternative sources of income. If this reduction in revenue and lack of a diversified economy coincide with a relatively high youth population as proposed by Collier then the seeds of conflict are sown. As collier states, "... a country that is heavily dependant upon primary commodity exports, with a quarter of its national income coming from them, has a risk of conflict four times greater than one without primary commodity exports."³⁰ This youth population can be

²⁹ Ibid., pg 92.

³⁰ Ibid., pg 97.

easily influenced by rebel groups offering income through criminal means and are an easy source of recruits to their cause. Collier continues by suggesting that education can mitigate the risk of economic based conflict as countries that have shown development success have focused their education on the youth population, which in turn enables youths to seek income-earning opportunities other than crime.³¹ As Don Hubert states, “Understanding the economic motivations underlying contemporary conflicts appears increasingly necessary for effective interventions to resolve conflicts and build peace.”³²

This linkage of economics to conflict is also recognized by the European Commission (EC), which places considerable emphasis on it when determining if a state will fall into conflict. The EC checklist for root causes of conflict use three questions as a basis for determining whether a state is likely to fall into violent conflict. Each of these questions has economic factors as key components and is linked to social welfare policies, social inequalities and regional disparities.³³ The EC questions are listed below and I have highlighted the economic components to signify the importance that economic factors play in conflict:³⁴

1. How are social welfare policies addressed?

Overall level of literacy, health, sanitation, development of safety nets & **income policies** (or, by default, existence of alternative social mechanisms ensuring local or family solidarity), correct anticipation of massive

³¹ Ibid., pg 94.

³² Don Hubert, “Resources, Greed, and the Persistence of Violent Conflict”, in *Human Security and the New Democracy: Protecting People, Promoting Peace* edited by Rob McRae and Don Hubert, 178. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press 2001) 178.

³³ European Commission, “Check-list for Root Causes of Conflict.” http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cpcm/cp/list.htm; Internet; accessed March 2006.

³⁴ Ibid.

demographic changes by public policies (especially urbanisation and youth unemployment)

2. How are social inequalities tackled?

Trend for poverty and marginalisation (especially in absolute terms), vulnerability of least-favoured segments of society, fairness of access to education, health care, jobs, **economic opportunities** (including women and minorities), existence of public policies addressing inequalities among communities through land reform, quota systems, social programmes or others

3. How are regional disparities tackled?

Urban/rural gaps, existence of regions lagging behind in terms of **economic development** or particularly affected by lack of vital resources, redistributive policies between regions

Environmental Stresses

In trying to determine whether environmental factors influenced violence I analyzed the readings of two key authors in this subject area, Jack A. Goldstone³⁵ and Thomas F. Homer-Dixon³⁶. Both Goldstone and Homer-Dixon agree on two issues. First, simple international scarcity conflicts, that is, conflicts fought between nations over resources, are not likely to happen. Secondly, that environmental change can have a

³⁵ Jack A Goldstone, "Demography, Environment and Security." In *Environmental Conflict*, Edited by Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch, pg 84-108. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001) 84-108.

³⁶ Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environment Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence form Cases", *International Security* 19, no 1 (summer 1994): pg 5-40.

significant impact on populations and their demography and that this could create a circle of degradation with the two feeding on each other leading to some form of internal conflict.

Goldstone and Homer-Dixon both investigate the hypothesis that environmental degradation and scarcity of required resources such as water or arable land would lead to inter-state conflict. Both authors, however, after analyzing the available historic evidence, found no significant connection to inter-state conflict. This lack of evidence leads both men to dig deeper into the complexities of environmental changes and their effect on conflict in general. Both authors agree that there is a correlation between environmental changes and conflict but that this conflict is more often linked to internal conflict. This said, the result of internal conflict could lead to a destabilizing of relations between nations if the internal conflict has external implications such as mass population movement out of one country into another. Therefore, although both de-link inter-state conflicts directly to environmental changes both agree that inter-state conflict could be a secondary result of environmental changes. The case study of Rwanda by Homer-Dixon and Valerie Percival³⁷ shows this relationship where by 1992 internal civil war had displace one tenth of the Rwandan Population, created a Rwandan Patriotic Front located in neighbouring Uganda, and set the stage for the coming civil war. A war it is argued by Homer-Dixon and Percival that was caused primarily by economic change or as they would term it, “Environmental Scarcity” which lead to population movement resulting in a group identity crisis.

³⁷ Valerie Percival and Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, “Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: The Case of Rwanda” Occasional Paper Project of Environmental, Population and Security Washington, DC, (American Association for the Advancement of Science and the University of Toronto Jun 1995) 1-19.

As mentioned earlier, both Goldstone and Homer-Dixon offer analysis of the environmental factors that lead to conflict with both concluding that environmental factors alone are not the cause of violent international conflicts, but have led to a number of internal conflicts. It is important to note that although Goldstone chooses to isolate the environmental changes leading to potential conflict from population changes or demographic changes Homer-Dixon sees the two as supportive, relating to the inner connection of these as, Environmental Scarcity. Homer-Dixon even goes one step further and includes unequal distribution of resources as the third side of his scarcity triangle with environmental changes and demographic changes the other two. Goldstone also considers the impact of unequal distribution of resources but chooses to include it as a factor that comes secondary. He is careful to point out that just because you have an environmental and demographic change does not mean that you will always have a violent conflict. In his view, you would need a catalyst such as unequal distribution of resources or elite leadership, which could destabilize a state and cause conflict internally.

In summary, Environmental Scarcity, to use Homer-Dixon's term, has led to a number of intrastate conflicts over the years. This hypothesis is supported by Goldstone as well. Both authors investigate the impact of environmental changes on a state and show that if states are unable to manage this change the prospect for conflict is high. Goldstone appears to be more optimistic than Homer-Dixon. He argues that this conflict is not inevitable as long as the population growth created through environmental degradation is managed through a growing economy and job base. Homer-Dixon is careful to point out that contrary to popular belief, there is no clear correlation between poverty and social conflict. He argues conflict occurs when there is a perception of

“economic injustice” in the population base. This perception can be created when there is a fall in the quantity or quality of resources that combine with population growth and encourages power groups within society to shift resource allocation to their own favour, known as ‘resource capture’ or through ecological marginalization. That is, unequal resource access leading to population growth, which causes migration of high population densities, that causes environmental damage that leads to chronic poverty. An additional factor as noted by Goldstone is the impact of environmental disasters. These disasters can lead to conflict if the government’s capacity to deal with the event is seen as inadequate or if there is a tie made between the government and the disaster, such as poor building materials leading to structural collapse during an earthquake.

Greed

In order to understand the causes of violence that lead to conflict I have so far addressed four root causes as noted above. Each alone or in combination can create the conditions for societies to turn to violence and eventually to conflict in which to resolve their problems. All the causes listed until now have their foundation in grievance, that is, they are results of a cause of complaint that can become so significant that they turn to violence. Greed on the other hand is a different story. Here I am suggesting that an additional root cause for violence is not just grievance but profit. As Don Hubert stated in his article “Resources, Greed, and the Persistence of Violent Conflict” it appears as though the accumulation of wealth seems to be at the heart of many contemporary

conflicts.³⁸ He goes on to say that if a conflict does start as a result of some form of grievance that over the course of the conflict greed can become the key motivating factor to the conflict making traditional technique of negotiation to resolve the conflict comes into question as the willingness for a political solution will not be present.³⁹

Avaritia (greed) is a natural and normal human characteristic. From as far back as the 14th-century Christians have recognized greed as a shortcoming of human character and have tried to educate their followers in its vices listing it as one of the seven deadly sins. To expect that greed would somehow be non existence in conflict would be to naive an approach, rather there needs to be a recognition that greed, as a fundamental characteristic, is likely to be present in conflict. Don Hubert proposes that what may start as a conflict rooted in traditional grievances can quickly turn to a conflict based on the goal of becoming wealthy. He proposes that leaders of fighting factions that start out trying to right a wrong, following a traditional path of conflict in which they search for resources to support their cause. However as the conflict progresses these same leaders become wealthier and wealthier as a result of the conflict and begin to sustain their war effort as an attempt to safeguard their access to wealth. What could have started as a conflict of liberation can quickly turn to a conflict aimed at resource capture. To support this theory Hubert identifies the middle level leadership such as paramilitary group and warlords as examples. He points to the Arkan's Tigers, a paramilitary group in the Former Yugoslavia, as an example of this greed based violence. This group was given the right to pillage and loot by the Serbian leadership in return for their military support

³⁸ Don Hubert, "Resources, Greed, and the Persistence of Violent Conflict", in *Human Security and the New Democracy: Protecting People, Promoting Peace* edited by Rob McRae and Don Hubert, 178. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 2001) 178.

³⁹ Ibid., pg 180-181.

in the advance by Serb forces into Bosnia. These individuals turned the conflict into a source of wealth immune from any form of justice.

Greed in conflict can take two routes. First there is the historic route, made famous by the stories of Viking conquest. Soldiers took advantage of their military success to intimidate, extort, pillage, or rape a population. This was a residual effect of a greater political objective, that is, to conquer their adversaries. This form of exploitation however is time limited because once the objective is taken your army moves on to the next objective. A second and more dangerous route occurs when parties to a conflict view the conflict as a profit-seeking enterprise.⁴⁰ Examples of this form of greed-based conflict abound. Charles Taylor and diamonds in Liberia, the Khmer Rouge and timber and gems in Cambodia, and UNITA, an Angolan rebel group and diamonds from Sierra Leone are but three.⁴¹ It is therefore critical that greed be considered as one of the root causes of conflict. If we fail to recognize it and attempt to apply traditional conflict resolution techniques such as negotiation we will fail to address the true nature of the conflict. More importantly in trying to prevent conflict one needs to understand that traditional grievance based root causes of violence leading to conflict have a close ally in greed.

HAITI – A CASE STUDY IN THE FAILURE TO PREVENT CONFLICT

Having now addressed the root causes of conflict and the fundamental aspects of the UNSG's desire for a more proactive approach to conflict prevention it is important to

⁴⁰ Ibid., pg 181.

⁴¹ Ibid.

identify, as an example a place where the UN has attempted to intervene. To do this I have chosen to look at the historical nature of the conflict in the country of Haiti. I have chosen to look at Haiti for two reasons. Firstly it is a country that has had two opportunities to essentially start over in the last century and secondly it is a poor nation located in the rich Western Worlds own back yard.

“During Haiti’s two hundred years of independence, it has experiences 33 coup d’etats and countless civil unrest.”⁴² There is probably no country in the world that has suffered so significantly. Not only has there been political unrest but Haiti has seen very limited economic growth, resource exploitation, ethnic clashes, and brutal military regimes and it took the international community until 1994 to decide that international efforts were needed to address these issues.

Haiti’s problems are well entrenched in history, from French and Spanish completion for control in the 1600’s, to the struggle for independence in the late 1700’s and early 1800s, to the United States (US) intervention of the early part of the 1900s and now its most recent violent clashes in 2004, this is a country seemingly forged in violent conflict. In analyzing this country’s causational factors for violence I will concentrate on two periods in its history, the intervention of the US in 1915 and the intervention of the United Nations in 1994. The emphasis here will be to identify the root causes of Haiti’s conflicts and identify what was done to attempt to resolve them.

The US first officially recognized Haiti in 1862 following the abolishment of slavery in the US. By this time in history Haiti was well entrenched in the elite-led

⁴² Fondasyon Mapou “Rebuilding Haiti, One Branch at a Time”
<http://www.fondasyonmapou.org/becomemember.html> accessed 14 Mar 06

politics and economic exploitation. The peasant population of Haiti lived in general peace and prosperity however pressures on land allocation and urban elite taxation lead to greater and greater resistance by the peasants.⁴³ This increased violence and the fact that US interests were now threatened, particularly the assets of US banking firms led to the invasion of Haiti by the US in 1915. Although an armed invasion I view this event as Haiti's first opportunity in the 20th century to address the issues of elitism, economic disparity, and oppression. Unfortunately mistakes made by the invaliding force resulted in conditions remaining unchanged.

The US while attempting to bring order to the country helped create a Haitian National Guard which by the time the US left Haiti in the 1930's was completely under the control of the elite leadership. A leadership put in power by the US on invasion and forced upon the Haitian people. The US misunderstood the nature of the Haitian people, viewing the peasants as idle and attempted to force them into work programs. This resulted in significant violent clashes between the peasant population and the US forces. The result being that by 1930 when the US forces left the island a condition of mistrust in US imposed government was rampant. This coupled with the fact that the peasant/elite gap had not been narrowed, and that economic reforms aimed at bringing a North American ideology of what was desirable and good, resulted in increased not decreased violent clashed after the US exodus.⁴⁴ What had been created in Haiti was a certain clash in societal groups. Small elite groups clashed with the peasants with oppression rampant with a small middle class the new catalyst for change. This middle class spawned the nationalist movement called Les Grios and in 1957 Francois Duvalier came to power on a

⁴³ Chetan Kumar., "Building Peace in Haiti: Occasional Paper Series" (International Peace Academy Inc, 1998) pg 57.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pg 58.

platform aimed at removing the elites. However, like those who came before him, Duvalier resorted to brutal persecution of both those he deposed and the peasant classes of Haiti. As Chetan Kumar puts it “Duvalier was no messiah for Haiti’s masses.”⁴⁵ World geopolitical posturing of the Cold War era enabled Duvalier and later his son to play timely political cards to gain concessions from the United States in return for support against Cuba and the fighting of communism at home. Although it could be argued that Jean-Claude Duvalier, who had replaced his father Francois in 1971, worked to encourage economic development of his country, he still ruled with an iron fist and his economic policies had failed. By 1985 Haiti was a nation almost entirely dependent on imports of food and prices rose as a result.⁴⁶ The mid-1980’s saw the rise in popularity of a catholic priest named Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who began to denounce the Duvalier leadership and inspired popular dissent amongst Haiti’s peasant population. What followed were a series of mass protests aimed initially at the poor economic situation in Haiti but this quickly turned to a protest against the Duvalier government and what followed were even more brutal attempts by Duvalier to suppress his people.⁴⁷ By 1986 Duvalier had fled and had been replaced by a militarily lead government but if the people of Haiti had hoped for improvement they were to quickly find out they were wrong. What followed was no different then what was replaced. Peasant exploitation continued, brutal repression was rampant and the democracy promised in 1986 took until 1990 to come to fruition with Jean-Bertrand Aristide a surprise winner. Within a year the military in Haiti had overthrown Aristide and went on to slaughter thousands of Aristide supporters. Here enters the United Nations.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pg 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pg 18.

In 1991 the UN in cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) imposed a series of sanctions while attempting to negotiate with the Haitian Military regime, the goal of which was to restore the democratically elected Aristide to power.⁴⁸ Initial attempts to negotiate with the Haitian Military Regime failed and international sanctions on oil and arms soon followed. Further UN action was not forthcoming until the situation in Haiti had deteriorated to such an extent that significant numbers of its people started fleeing to the US. The UNSC passed resolution 940 authorizing a Chapter VII mission in the summer of 1994. This resolution, and the impending invasion of Haiti, finally convinced the Military Regime to allow the ousted Aristide to return. So, once again, Haiti is given a fresh start. With world attention and aid focused on the nation the prospect for improvement was higher than it had been in the previous 80 years since the US invasion of 1915. But just like in 1915, Haiti has not prospered through intervention rather it has once again regressed to violence. The work of the UN, its various agencies and world wide CSOs have not been able to solve the deep seeded roots to violence. “Massive unemployment and pervasive lack of capacity to respond to popular needs at all levels of government were arguably the main catalyst of violence amongst the destitute population.”⁴⁹ So what has been the result of all this UN intervention in Haiti since 1991? To get a snap shot of Haiti after nearly 15 years of UN intervention lets look at the following description of the

⁴⁸ Ibid., pg 41.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pg 44.

Country found in the CIDA web site:⁵⁰

Haiti is the poorest and least developed country in the western hemisphere. Over 70 percent of Haitians live below the poverty line.

Most of Haiti's 8.3 million people live on less than US\$1 a day. Half the population is illiterate. Haiti has the most degraded environment in the Americas. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization says that Haiti's forest cover now totals about one percent of its original forest. Deforestation continues to erode Haiti's scarce resources. Haiti also is home to over 60 percent of all cases of AIDS recorded by the World Health Organization.

Haiti has experienced a persistent period of political instability since the contested legislative and local elections of May 2000. This crisis intensified when an armed uprising led President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to resign and go into exile on February 29, 2004.

The recent political crisis and insecurity are having a disastrous economic impact on Haiti. The consequences of the crisis in Haiti entail dangerous risks. These risks include:

- a massive exodus of people;

⁵⁰ Canadian International Development Agency "Haiti Overview, Canada's Commitment" <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca>; Internet; accessed 14 March 2006.

- risks relating to public health and regional health, including the risk of HIV/AIDS;
- an increase in crime and regional insecurity; and
- vulnerability and ecological/environmental risks.

One is therefore left wondering if the current method of international assistance as facilitated through the United Nations is in fact being successful. Attempts by states to intervene in Haiti have proven fruitless with the nation plunging back into disarray once these states leave Haiti behind. Perhaps had there been an attempt earlier in Haiti's past that addressed the root causes of violence I listed earlier there may have been greater success. If intervention by the UN remains limited to a few key state actors what occurs when they decide their interests are no longer focused on the nation they are currently engaged in? The answer is clear; the world would face another Haiti. So what can be done differently? The coming paragraphs will address the current CSO construct with the intent to show these organizations can be leveraged in accordance with the initiatives of the UNSG to better address root causes of conflict before a state atrophies to that inevitable violent conflict.

CONSTRUCT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The term non-government organization (NGO) is widely accepted to represent organizations in the world that are focused on assisting others independent of direct linkages to a state government; they are therefore classified as private, non-for-profit, act

on their own volition on behalf of others.⁵¹ Over the years these organizations have expanded their roles from simply providing aid, as was the intent of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) when founded in 1844 to providing to governments assistance in human rights support, democracy building and conflict resolution to name just a few. From the first NGO, the YMCA, today we now have an estimated 29,000 NGOs that operate outside their own national borders, with more and more being created each year.⁵² Today NGOs are found in every trouble region of the world, working to improve conditions under some of the most trying conditions, yet the majority are largely unknown except for the few largest which have international recognitions such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Save the Children.⁵³

Other organizations such as International Government Organizations (IGOs) help to complicate the understanding of NGOs. It is important to recognize that IGOs unlike NGOs are financed and supported by state governments, often more than one, under member state agreements, and aim to promote the shared interests of the member states.⁵⁴ This paper however, focuses on organizations which are independent of governments and who do not necessarily project the interests of any specific nation state. These forms of organizations are classified as NGOs but are also often referred to as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) or Private Development Organization (PDO). The term CSO reflects the growing tendency of NGOs to be

⁵¹ Pamela Aall, Lt. Col. Daniel Miltenberger, and Thomas G. Weiss, *Guide to IGOs, NGOs and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations* (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC. 2000) pg 95.

⁵² Wikipedia, "Non-Government Organization." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO>; Internet; accessed 16 March 2006. Note that the figures are 1995 estimates based on a United Nations report on global governance.

⁵³ Pamela Aall, Lt. Col. Daniel Miltenberger, and Thomas G. Weiss, *Guide to IGOs, NGOs and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations*, (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC. 2000) pg 87.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pg 5.

recognized for their efforts to improve societal conditions worldwide and reflects the true scope of these organizations activities. This is therefore why the term CSO will be used to represent the collective nomenclature of NGOs.

History

CSOs have been around in one capacity or another for hundreds of years but it has not been until this past century that CSO came into themselves. World events such as World Wars One and Two saw the numbers of CSO expand to help deal with the scope of human misery these conflicts created. This expansion of CSOs was then limited over the next 40 years and it was not until the end of the Cold War that there was once again resurgence in CSO growth. These organizations grew out of the increase in need for humanitarian assistance during the 1990s as instability grew within states once propped up by the political posturing of the cold war era. The political shift away from East West ideology to a more globalized view following the cold war also provided organizations access to regions of the world previously inaccessible. With the 1980's and 1990's also came significant environmental disasters such as drought creating conditions of hardship never before seen in such detail. The pictures of African people starving quickly and easily made their way into our homes, thanks in large part to a more and more interconnected world. Satellite TV and cell phones had enabled immediate access to the world's tragedies, tragedies that had previously gone unnoticed, and with this came more and more people willing and able to help. It is estimated that the US alone has over 2

million CSOs, both international and national, with the majority of these being created in the last 30 years.⁵⁵

Structure

CSOs are independently run organizations which extend in scope from small “mom and pop”⁵⁶ organizations to huge multinational and international ones, but regardless of their size, are focused on acting on behalf of others in order to improve quality of life. CSOs aim at addressing the root causes of world suffering but addressing issues such as political rights, poverty, disease, race and gender issues, environmental degradation and state infrastructure.⁵⁷ Each CSO is independent and will therefore operate in different manners, however some similarities do exist. All CSOs are clear about their values and goals and establish a charter under which the organization will operate. They are independently sponsored with the majority of funding coming from private sources, however it is not uncommon for organizations to receive some sponsorship for state agencies. In Canada alone some 50 CSOs received over 1 million dollars each in funding annually in 2003-2004 out of a total development assistance budget of 236.4 million dollars.⁵⁸ Some of the larger CSOs have even expanded to provide for autonomous chapters in other states that although sharing the same founding

⁵⁵ Wikipedia, “Non-Government Organization.” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO>; Internet: accessed 16 March 2006.

⁵⁶ Sub-Lieutenant Sarah Tarry, “Demystifying Non-Government Organizations in Peace Support Operations.” *Canadian Military Journal* (Winter 2002-2003): pg 35.

⁵⁷ Pamela Aall, Lt. Col. Daniel Miltenberger, and Thomas G. Weiss, *Guide to IGOs, NGOs and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations*, (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC. 2000) pg 93.

⁵⁸ Canadian International Development Agency “Statistical Report on Official Development Assistance Fiscal Year 2003-2004” [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/stats/\\$file/Stat_rep_03-04.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/stats/$file/Stat_rep_03-04.pdf); Internet; accessed April 2006

principles are independent of one another. Oxfam is an example of this, having 9 autonomous organizations worldwide.⁵⁹

CSOs will operate according to an agreed charter that is normally overseen by a board of governors. These individuals ensure that the action of the organization remains consistent with the charters intent and become legally accountable for the organizations operations and finances just as a board of governors of a corporation would. And just like a corporation, these individuals leave the day-to-day operations to the managing directors and staff of the organization. Board action will generally be necessary if activity is being considered that is not in keeping with the current charter such as entering into new geographic regions.⁶⁰

Although broad decisions are made at the highest level, most CSOs are characterized by decentralized decision making at the tactical level. This personal engagement is characteristic of CSOs who are highly dependant on the commitment and risk taking of their individual staffs in the field.⁶¹ It is just this decentralized decision making process that both helps and hinders the CSO. On the one had they are quick and easy to change their focus if needed, but on the other, this can lead to action being taken in haste, ill conceived and not in cooperation with other agencies be they other CSOs or State agencies such as a military force.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pg 134.

⁶⁰ Pamela Aall, Lt. Col. Daniel Miltenberger, and Thomas G. Weiss., *Guide to IGOs, NGOs and the Military in Peace and Relief Operation*", (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC. 2000) pg 96.

⁶¹ Ibid., 97.

CSOs and the United Nations

CSOs have had a long and lasting relationship with the UN. They have worked together on thousands of occasions and if the remarks of the UNSG are any indication the relationship will continue to grow as will their importance to the world community.

Unlike member states CSOs have no official status at the UN but their participation is considered vital. “They contribute valuable information and ideas, advocate effectively for positive change, provide essential operational capacity ... and generally increase accountability and legitimacy of the global governance process.”⁶²

Recognizing the importance of CSO participation in the UN process, Article 71 of the UN Charter, which is governed by the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC) resolution 1996/31, opened the door of the UN to CSOs by providing arrangements for consultation. This consultant status can be established with international or regional CSOs, provided that governments or international agreements did not create these CSOs. In accordance with the UN, application for consultant status by CSOs is governed by the following:

“must have been in existence (officially registered with the appropriate government authorities as an NGO/non-profit) for at least two years, must have an established headquarters, a democratically adopted constitution, authority to speak for its members, a representative structure, appropriate mechanisms of accountability and democratic and transparent decision-making processes. The

⁶² United Nations “Economic and Social Council Non Government Organizations, Consultative Status with ECOSOC.” <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>; Internet; accessed March 2006.

basic resources of the organization must be derived in the main part from contributions of the national affiliates or other components or from individual members.”⁶³

Within the ECOSOC consultative structure there are three levels of status that a COS may hold. They are General consultative status, Special consultative status and Roster status.

“General consultative status is reserved for large international NGOs whose area of work covers most of the issues on the agenda of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies. These tend to be fairly large, established international NGOs with a broad geographical reach.

Special consultative status is granted to NGOs which have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the ECOSOC. These NGOs tend to be smaller and more recently established.

Organizations that apply for consultative status but do not fit in any of the other categories are usually included in the Roster. These NGOs tend to have a rather narrow and/or technical focus.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Since the inclusion of CSOs into the UN under consultant status starting back in 1948 there has been steady increase in numbers of CSOs added each year. Table 1 below is taken from the ECOSOC web site and shows that from 1948 to 1968 there were 6 CSOs (with consultant status) added each year but that since 1968 this number has increased to 66 per year an increase of over 600% a clear indication that both the UN and CSOs view the UN form as an critical one for raising and addressing world issues. This cooperative approach to addressing issues will be critical if CSOs are to take a more effective and frontal role in conflict prevention.

Table 1 - Number of NGOs in consultative status with the Council by Category

Year	General	Special	Roster	Total
1948	13	26	1	40
1968	17	78	85	180
1992	38	297	409	744
1993	40	334	410	784
1994	40	334	410	784
1995	65	406	415	886
1996	76	468	497	1041
1997	85	582	517	1184
1998	100	742	663	1505
1999	111	918	909	1938
2000	122	1048	880	2050
2001	124	1132	895	2151
2002	131	1197	906	2234
2003	131	1316	903	2350
2004	134	1474	923	2531
2005	136	1639	944	2719

Source: Economic and Social Council Non Government Organizations, Consultative Status with ECOSOC, <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>

CSO Strategies

The Carnegie Commission report on the causes and prevention of deadly conflict identifies two strategies for the prevention of conflict, they are Operational Prevention and Structural Prevention.⁶⁵ In reviewing these two strategies it became clear that both are currently supported by worldwide CSO activity.

The concept of Operational Prevention relates to the action taken when a conflict appears imminent or has already started. From a CSO perspective this is akin to providing immediate crises relief to a suffering population such as food and water, medical care. Assistance in the form of working to mobilize the international response, or assisting in crisis negotiation are also key areas where CSOs can become engaged. This “Operational” level activity is one which the majority of people associate with CSOs. We regularly see the immediate results of their efforts through disaster relief activity and international aid agencies. CSOs have a long and successful history working at the “operational” level and this has been acknowledged by the UNSG where he states that “...NGOs participate vitally in the international system.... NGOs as indispensable partners of the UN, whose role is more important than ever...”⁶⁶ Cooperative For Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) Canada, for example, has been continually active in Haiti since 1954 providing relief effort to hundreds of thousands of Haitian

⁶⁵ Carnegie Commission “Executive Summary of the Final Report on the causes of conflict and methods of preventing deadly conflict December 1997.”

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/subsites/ccpdc/frpub.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 Mar 06

⁶⁶ Global Policy “Comments for the Report of the Secretary General NGOs and the United Nations June 1999.” <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/docs99/gpfirep.htm>; Internet; accessed 02 Mar 06.

people in the form of food and clean water⁶⁷ and is a practical example of Operational Prevention in action.

The second strategy for the prevention of deadly conflict is Structural Prevention and relates to that activity that is conducted before a conflict is imminent or is occurring. This Structural Strategy is focused on the root causes of violence and work to prevent the onset of conflict from developing in the first place. This supports my fundamental argument and is the foundation of the UNSGs report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict discussed earlier. If the international community and specifically CSOs can act preemptively to address the root causes of violent conflict then the necessity for an Operational Prevention strategy is minimized or eliminated. As the common saying states, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”. In taking a Structural Strategy forward we can act to maximize the abilities of CSOs in states that have yet to degrade to such an extent that an Operational Strategy becomes necessary. In doing so, non-state actors can be the eyes and ears of the international community and act to address the root causes of conflict and at the same time be in position to signal an early warning sign should their efforts be unsuccessful. The Carnegie Report States that:

Whatever model of self government societies ultimately choose, and whatever path they follow to that end, they must meet the three core needs of security, well-being, and justice and thereby give people a stake in non-violent efforts to

⁶⁷ CARE Canada “CARE Projects, Emergencies, Events.”
http://care.ca/work/emergency/Haiti/Haiti_e.shtm; Internet; accessed February 20 06

improve their lives. Meeting these needs not only enables people to live better lives, it also reduces the potential for deadly conflict.⁶⁸

This analysis support my contention that by acting to assist states in achieving these core needs you are addressing the five root causes of violence I proposed earlier. Security is for example rooted in good government, ethnic camaraderie, and the absence of greed; each can lead to a sense of insecurity if removed. If you look to Haiti as an example you can quickly see the connection. Haiti was a nation that had struggled to ensure the security of its people and as recent as 2004 the UN needed to take action to address this security issue. The Haitian government failed to ensure good government through the rule of law and effective and unpartisan policing. Violent clashes between regional groups and political parties were rampant forcing President Aristide from power and reprisals against his supporters. Finally, the government and rebel leaders did not act in good faith and towards the benefit of all Haitian people. Had the core need for security been ensured by addressing the three root causes of violence noted here, then Haiti may have had a chance to break out of its 200 year history of violence.

This type of analysis can be done on the other two core needs presented in the Carnegie Report. Justice, like security can be maintained if good government, ethnic camaraderie, and greed are addressed as the roots to it. Finally “well being” can be assured through good government, fair economic policies, care for the environment and the lack of greed. This interconnection between core needs and root causes support a balance society less likely to go down the violent path to conflict. This relationship is

⁶⁸ Carnegie Commission “Executive Summary of the Final Report on the causes of conflict and methods of preventing deadly conflict December 1997.”
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/subsites/ccpdc/frpub.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 March 2006.

illustrated in figure 2 where I propose the teeter-totter model. This model has as the teeter-totter foundations, the three core needs identified in the Carnegie report, with the 5 root causes of violence I identified as the counter balance to society. If the root causes of violence are not addressed then the core needs cannot keep society in balance leading to the potential for violence.

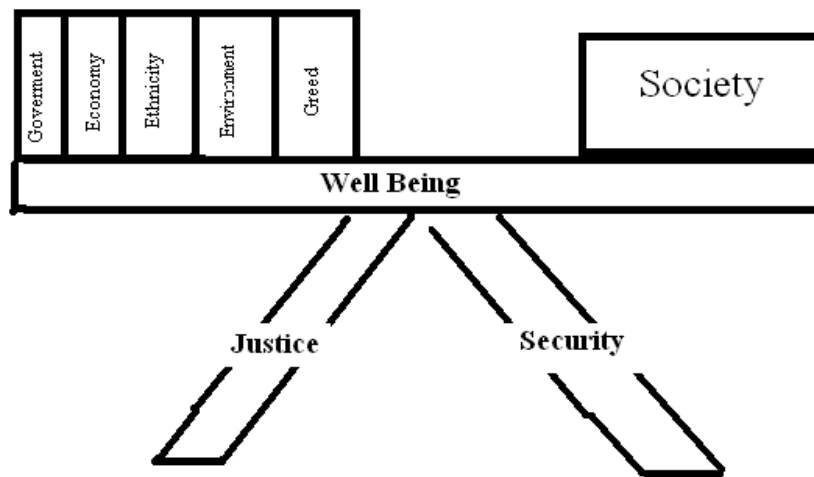


Figure 2: The Society Teeter-totter

PREVENTING CONFLICT

Having identified that the UNSG recognizes the necessity and criticality of CSOs in the preventing of conflict and identified the root causes that cases this conflict, and having outlined how a failure in preventing conflict in Haiti can occur, it is now time to examine what CSOs can do to prevent conflicts form occurring in the first place.

To do this I am purposing four mechanisms by which CSOs can act to prevent conflict in states that have not yet atrophied to the point where violent conflict is imminent. I do this because it is my contention that to be truly preventative one must act early and target the 5 root causes of conflict I identified earlier. These four mechanisms are: a cooperative approach amongst CSOs, CSOs as early warning indicators, CSOs as catalysts for research, and finally an expanded role within the UN.

Cooperative Approach

CSOs, given the nature of their structure, have had a tendency to operate independently and in isolation to one another. There has however been recognition over the recent past that if CSOs are to be truly effective in acting to prevent conflict; their efforts need to be applied in a collective approach so as to maximize their effect. Because CSOs focus on independent action, they are free from state control and influence, and can be leveraged to operate under neutral terms. To be effective a cooperative CSO approach would require CSOs to operate under a unified charter so that recipient states have no doubt about the CSOs intentions or motivating factors for action

in their country. This cooperative charter would ensure neutrality and remove the perceived threat to a states jurisdiction. The idea of a code of conduct was presented by Henry Carey and Oliver Richmond in their edited book *Mitigating Conflict: The Role of NGOs*, but their focus was on establishing a voluntary code of conduct between CSOs and militaries. The concept of a cooperative approach was further supported by them when they not the importance that is being placed on consensus and the fact that CSOs are working in a more multidimensional framework including local actors, the CSOs themselves, state governments and international organizations.⁶⁹ The concept of a voluntary code of conduct which will govern the actions of different agencies is therefore not a new one but one that has not be exploited to its fullest.

There have been efforts to bring like-minded CSOs together under a common working charter. The efforts of the American Council For Voluntary International Action (InterAction) is an example where some 160 US based private relief, international development and refugee assistance organizations have come together under to promote a common agenda. To quote InterAction:

“InterAction is greater than the sum of its parts, a force multiplier that gives each member the collective power of all members to speak and act on issues of common concern. InterAction convenes and coordinates its members so in unison, they can influence policy and debate on issues affecting tens of millions of people worldwide and improve their own practices.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Henry E Carey and Oliver P. Richmond *Mitigating Conflict: The Role of NGOs*, (Frank Cass and Company Ltd 2003), pg 6-8.

⁷⁰ InterAction American Council for Voluntary International Action “About Us.” <http://www.interaction.org/about/index.html>; Internet; accessed March 2006.

Unfortunately this is but a very small fraction of the number of CSOs in the world today. If this type of cooperation could be leveraged on an international scale perhaps through UN facilitation the potential effects could be enormous. You would have at the world's disposal an organization committed to international peace with the structures, leadership and capabilities to address the root causes of conflict in a preventative manner. CSOs would no longer be working at cross purposes and against each other, rather they could work together to address key issues such as poverty, education human rights, gender equality, good agricultural practices, all those aspects of Structural Prevention. This concept is in keeping with the UNSG's keynote document in which he stated, "NGOs can contribute to the maintenance of peace and security by offering non-violent avenues for addressing the root causes of conflict at an early stage."⁷¹ These activities if combined would help ensure that the 5 root causes of conflict are kept in check that the three core needs as presented by the Carnegie report are maintained ensuring that the Society Teeter-totter remains in balance through a cooperative approach to conflict prevention.

CSOs as Early Warning Indicators

Key to the success of a proactive approach to preventing conflict is the ability to inform the greater world of impending violence and conflict if the action if the action to prevent it is unsuccessful. As stated by the UNSG "the need for reliable early-warning

⁷¹ *Report of the Secretary-General on Prevention of Armed Conflict.* United Nations, A/55/985-S/2001/574 General Assembly: 07 Jun 2001.

... is therefore of great importance, and the fundamental inequities need to be identified and addressed in development planning and programming.”⁷² By establishing a reporting mechanism linked to a UN resolution CSOs can then be in a position to have the UN take action. By establishing a criterion for action CSOs can then work to assist and at the same time ensure that the recipient state acts to the interests of its people. CSOs have significant experience in addressing the causes of violence and as noted by the UN itself, “[are] often far out in front of us in identifying new threats and concerns.”⁷³ Their ability to access all levels of society for the grass roots to national government puts CSOs in the best position in which to assess and monitor the state they are supporting. Unlike government organizations they do not carry with them a national objective and can work to retain a neutral approach to providing assistance and assessing its success. The key factor here is that if CSOs are to be truly effective in preventing conflict any action taken by CSOs needs to be executed before a state has commenced down the path of failure. This is not to say that CSOs would not have a role to play at mitigating suffering and providing support to the people of a state on its way to conflict or already engaged in it, but the opportunity for CSO prevention is lost once that bridge is crossed. It would then become extremely difficult to address the root causes of violence, because the actors at play in the conflict would prevent conflict prevention intervention. The cooperative CSO organization I purposed above would be able to provide experts in area such as aid, humanitarian support, education and human rights. These individuals or organizations could then report to the centralized cooperative agency, which would, as part of its

⁷² Ibid., pg 6.

⁷³ United Nations “United Nations, Regional Organizations Must do more to tap into Civil Society’s Advantages in Conflict Prevention, Secretary-General tell Security Council, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sgsm10114.doc.htm>; Internet; accesses January 2006.

mandate be required to report to the UN. If tied to a UN resolution then this cooperative CSO agency could then be empowered to seek more robust support from the UN member states should it be unable to prevent the slide into violence. This would address the concerns raised by such authors, as Barnett Rubin would identify the lack of political will as the key problem to implementing a policy of early warning. He notes in his book “Blood on the Doorstep” that “the problem is not lack of early warning. It is the lack of political will.”⁷⁴ He goes on to identify failures in the early warning process such as the Ukraine in 1993, and the most prominent of all, the Rwandan genocide. These examples of failure support my contention for an early engagement by CSO organizations. These two examples are perfect at showing how a failure to address the root causes of violence started a slide down the path of failure and ultimately lead to violence. This provides fuel to the argument that early action and continual monitoring and reporting by CSOs offers a better avenue for addressing violence. This early action and if necessary early warning, would then enable the international community to act in anticipation of failure preventing a reoccurrence of tragedies such a Rwanda.

Greater Cooperation with the United Nations

In July of 2005 an informal and interactive set of hearings was conducted by the UN General Assembly and various representatives of CSO organizations including the private sector, and addressed five issues including, the freedom from want, the freedom from fear, the freedom to live in dignity, and strengthening the UN. These hearing were

⁷⁴ Bartlett R Rubin. *Blood on the Doorstep: The Politics of Preventative Action*. (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 139.

significant because it was the first time that UN member states and CSOs actually interacted together within the framework of the UN. Coming from these meetings was a finding that included the need to move towards a culture of prevention of which lies in an approach that emphasises security, human right and root causes of conflicts.⁷⁵ Also noted was the need for a strengthened participation by CSO within the UN including the General Assembly. Proposals were suggested for including CSO representation on the Peace Building Commission and Human Rights Councils. This report also noted that CSOs needed to be given a greater voice in the UN decision-making process.

This closer and strengthened relationship between CSOs and the UN will be critical if the international community is to truly embrace a philosophy of preventative action as proposed by the UNSG. It has become clear to the UN that in order to action this philosophy and indeed for this philosophy to be effective it will be the action of CSOs that will make the difference. If CSOs develop a more cooperative approach as noted above, and work to not only address the root causes of violence but also report when they are being subverted, they will directly achieve the intent of the UNSG's vision of preventative action.

The UN in turn could legitimize CSO action through UN resolutions aimed at providing a legal framework for their actions. These resolutions in turn would provide a measure of protection for participating CSOs similar to what occurred in 1992 when the UNSC passed resolution 688 during the period following the Iraq/Kuwait war.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ United Nations "Advanced Unedited Summary 21 July 2005 of Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly With Representatives of Non-Government Organization, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector." http://www.undp.org/cso/documents/Advance_unedited_summary_GA_Hearings.doc; Internet; accessed December 2005.

⁷⁶ Henry E Carey and Oliver P. Richmond *Mitigating Conflict: The Role of NGOs* (Frank Cass and Company Ltd 2003), pg 4.

This support by the UN towards CSOs can and should be taken even one step further. Any cooperative activity by CSO organizations to act preventively in a state should be sanctioned by a UN resolution. This resolution should also include an avenue for further action if the preventative action is not successful. This form of resolution would enable the UN to act on CSO early warning so that time is not wasted in addressing a situation where conflict becomes likely.

CSOs as Catalysts for Research and Education

Finally, I propose one final mechanism where by CSOs can act to prevent conflict. CSOs need to leverage their experience and become leaders in the field of research and education, specifically in the field dealing with the causes of conflict. Their ability to remain neutral provides a view not skewed by national or international organizations objectives. Through education these CSOs can encourage further research into the root causes of conflict and gain greater support at home. This support could then be used to attract greater participation either through funding or human resources, which would in turn expand the capacity of CSOs worldwide. If the battle of education at home can be won it could translate into greater support at home leading to greater support at the UN. As the UNSG noted "... NGOs also provide studies, ... and can act as advocates in raising the international consciousness of particular situations and helping to shape public opinion."⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *Report of the Secretary-General on Prevention of Armed Conflict.* United Nations, A/55/985-S/2001/574 General Assembly: 07 Jun 2001, pg 47.

CONCLUSION

The time has come to start making a more concerted effort towards taking effective action at preventing conflict. The international communities traditional route of waiting to take action thereby not addressing the root causes of violence early, as demonstrated by their failure in Haiti, has shown that by waiting to take action the world community is only facilitating violence. A change in direction pertaining to conflict prevention is necessary. This has been recognized by the UNSG in his report in 2001 however in the last four years little, according to UN Interim Reports of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict from 2004 and 2005, has been done to be proactive at conflict prevention. If this reluctance to act continues then the world will be faced with future situations where armed intervention by UN or other forces will become necessary.

To counter this trend of nation states waiting until it is too late to prevent conflict I propose a greater role be played by CSOs, who could act in states before the conditions for violence occurs. They could act to address the five root causes of violence, governance, economy, ethnicity, environment and greed, before they have had an opportunity to set a nation down the path towards violence. This approach would ensure that core needs of a society; well-being, security, and justice are maintained and that

society remains in a balanced equilibrium preventing the conditions of violence from occurring in the first place.

CSO can apply four specific mechanisms to preventing conflict. Firstly they need to adopt a cooperative approach leveraging their size, international scope, human resources and influence. Secondly they need to act as early warning indicators for the world community in the event that action to address the root causes of violence is unsuccessful. Thirdly, CSOs and the UN need to developed a more formalized relationship leading to UN legitimization of CSO actions to prevent conflict and finally CSO's need to become better at educating at home so that they can increase their support base and legitimization and access to human resources.

CSOs are the world's fire prevention specialist and need to be given the opportunity to act in this capacity. The tendency for the international community to wait for the fire to start, to use Dr. Walter Dorn's analogy, as we saw in Haiti, and then call the fire department (military force) must end. As in good fire prevention practices, CSOs can work to prevent the conflict through awareness, creating campaigns to combat violence and addressing the root causes of violence. It is time for the world community to leverage the capacity of CSOs worldwide so that they can act as the catalysts towards a more secure world and work to prevent the fire before it starts.

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