



5-2003

The Prevention of Armed Conflicts as an Emerging Norm in International Conflict Management: The OSCE and the UN as Norm Leaders

Alice Ackermann
University of Maryland

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs>



Part of the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ackermann, Alice (2003) "The Prevention of Armed Conflicts as an Emerging Norm in International Conflict Management: The OSCE and the UN as Norm Leaders," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 10 : No. 1 , Article 1.

DOI: 10.46743/1082-7307/2003.1029

Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol10/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Peace & Conflict Studies at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Peace and Conflict Studies by an authorized editor of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

The Prevention of Armed Conflicts as an Emerging Norm in International Conflict Management: The OSCE and the UN as Norm Leaders

Abstract

This article explores the emergence of conflict prevention as an emerging norm in international conflict management. In particular, it examines the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations as primary actors in the construction and promotion of conflict prevention as an international norm. The article describes some of the major instruments that both organizations have already developed to implement the prevention of armed conflict on a more consistent rather than ad hoc basis. The article traces the emergent norm of conflict prevention through three stages—the awareness-raising and advocacy stage; the acceptance and institutionalization stage; and the internationalization stage. Although it is argued that conflict prevention as an emerging norm may eventually become firmly institutionalized and internationalized, at this point in time it remains for the most part in the advocacy stage. Regional organizations, such as the OSCE, have been more successful in moving conflict prevention toward acceptance and institutionalization, albeit on a regional level.

Keywords: *armed conflict, humanitarian intervention, international conflict management, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), sovereignty, United Nations*

Author Bio(s)

Alice Ackermann was born and educated in Germany, and now is a U.S. citizen. She received her Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Maryland, College Park in 1992, and then taught undergraduate and graduate courses in international relations, European studies, conflict analysis/resolution, peace studies, and international security studies at Washington State University, the University of Miami (Florida), and at Lancaster University, The Richardson Institute (UK). Dr. Ackermann's current research interests focus on conflict prevention, reconciliation, ethnic conflict, and the emergence of new norms in international relations. Dr. Ackermann's research has been published in the *Journal of Conflict Studies*, *Security Dialogue*, *Peace and Change*, *European Security*, and *The International Spectator*. She is the author of *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), and the producer of an award-winning documentary on the prevention of violent conflict, *From the Shadow of History* (Cinema Guild, 1997) which has aired on the History Channel and Public Television in the United States, and has been screened internationally. In 1996, Dr. Ackermann was a Fulbright scholar at the German governmental institute, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*. Recently she was awarded another Fulbright scholarship, also to Germany. Dr. Ackermann is the recipient of several grants, including two from the Washington-based United States Institute of Peace, and has worked as a consultant for the United States Agency for International Development. Dr. Ackermann has also been interviewed extensively on the Balkans, including by The BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Currently, Dr. Ackermann serves as the chair of the International Studies Association (ISA) Peace Studies Section, and also as the ISA annual conference program chair for that Section.

THE PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICTS AS AN EMERGING NORM IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: THE OSCE AND THE UN AS NORM LEADERS

Alice Ackerman

Abstract

This article explores the emergence of conflict prevention as an emerging norm in international conflict management. In particular, it examines the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations as primary actors in the construction and promotion of conflict prevention as an international norm. The article describes some of the major instruments that both organizations have already developed to implement the prevention of armed conflict on a more consistent rather than ad hoc basis. The article traces the emergent norm of conflict prevention through three stages—the awareness-raising and advocacy stage; the acceptance and institutionalization stage; and the internationalization stage. Although it is argued that conflict prevention as an emerging norm may eventually become firmly institutionalized and internationalized, at this point in time it remains for the most part in the advocacy stage. Regional organizations, such as the OSCE, have been more successful in moving conflict prevention toward acceptance and institutionalization, albeit on a regional level.

Introduction

Since the early 1990s the international climate has increasingly permitted new thinking and the implementation of concrete actions when it comes to the management of violent conflicts. The reasons for this are not only the need to control the new security environment, but also changing political developments such as the end of the cold war, which allowed for the acceptance of new practices and behaviour. Thus we are witnessing dramatic changes when it comes to new normative thinking regarding intervention for humanitarian purposes, limits to state sovereignty in the face of gross human rights violations, the protection of minorities, post-conflict peace building and reconciliation, and conflict prevention. This is a markedly significant phenomenon--one that goes well beyond those practices that defined the cold war period.

Responding to violent conflicts in their early, non-escalatory stage has become part of what is often referred to as “global governance.” Moreover, within the field of conflict resolution it is increasingly recognized that conflict prevention is a vital component in a broader approach to conflict management—one, that entails not only measures to manage the escalatory or post-violent phases of conflict, but also the pre-violent or low-violent stage where it might be still possible to prevent the outbreak of large-scale hostilities and bloodshed.

Much of this new normative environment has come as the result of concerted advocacy

on the part of norm leaders or norm advocates. These are actors that take a critical role in the emergence of new international norms and practices because they are able to articulate and promote new normative conditions and can mobilize support from other actors, often through the creation of organizational platforms. Such norm leaders or advocates can be single individuals, but also international and regional organizations, non-governmental actors and transnational advocacy movements, and national governments. When it comes to conflict prevention, there have been significant strides in advancing the idea and practice of preventing armed conflicts.

The importance of preventive action as an international policy is now actively supported by a number of international and regional organizations, such as the UN, the World Bank, the European Union and the European Commission, the OSCE, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but also sub-regional organizations such as the Southern Africa Development Community or the Economic Community of West African States. Moreover, the developmental agencies of several major countries, including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the British Department for International Development (DFID) as well as non-governmental actors have followed suit in implementing programs to facilitate long-term conflict prevention (Ackermann, 2003; Lund, 2002).

This article will explore in particular the contributions that the UN and the OSCE have made in the articulation and implementation of an idea—namely, that violent conflicts can be prevented in their early stages before they have entered into an escalatory phase. There are numerous norm advocates now on the international stage consistently and actively seeking to establish new international norms in the managing of armed conflicts, particularly when it comes to conflict prevention. However, it is the UN and the OSCE that assumed an early role in the construction and promotion of a global norm of conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention in the context of this study is defined as “any structural or intercessory means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and use of armed forces, to strengthen the capabilities of potential parties to violent conflict for resolving such disputes peacefully and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce these issues and disputes” (Lund, 2002, p. 117, fn. 6). This article also adopts a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, including in the discussion on preventive measures and instruments both the operational (also direct or proximate) and structural dimensions of prevention. Structural prevention, also referred to as “deep prevention,” is long-term in nature and refers to any preventive measures that eliminate the underlying causes of conflict. This would include measures such as the facilitation of good governance, adherence to human rights, and economic, political, and societal stability, and civil society building. Operational prevention is directed toward imminent crises and therefore includes fact-finding and monitoring missions, negotiation, mediation, dialogue among contending groups, preventive deployments, or confidence-building measures (Ackermann, 2000; Annan 1999; Carnegie Commission, 1997; Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 1999)

The Emergence of International Norms and Conflict Resolution

The evolution of domestic and international norms has been mostly studied in the literature on international relations. This literature focuses on questions on how norms emerge, how they shape the interests and identities of states, and how they become internalized and implemented internationally and domestically (Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Goertz & Diehl, 1992; Katzenstein, 1996; Klotz, 1995; Checkel, 1999; Florini, 1996). Yet there still have been few attempts in that literature to explore the emergence of new norms and practices in international conflict management. There are numerous examples that call for more empirical research on emergent norms in the field of conflict resolution. For one, when we look at the emergence of a conflict prevention norm, we can discern a web of other emergent norms in international conflict management. These include not only conflict prevention but also norms on humanitarian intervention, post-conflict peace building and reconciliation, peace enforcement, and peace maintenance.

In the context of this study, norms are defined as standards of acceptable and appropriate behavior, or shared understandings on standards for behavior. Norms, once internalized by actors in the international community, can also be viewed as established practices and codes of conduct. Norms also entail the belief that there are shared values and principles. While they do not exclusively determine action, norms create the permissive conditions that enable a particular action. It is important to note that newly emergent norms tend to compete with already firmly entrenched norms. This is the case with the norm of sovereignty and non-intervention that directly conflicts with emergent norms of limited sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. Therefore, norms are not equal when it comes to their influence, their salience, and their acceptance by a critical number of international actors (Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Flynn & Farrell, 1999; McCoy & Heckel, 2001; Ingebritsen, 2002)

Norm theory provides a powerful analytical tool for explaining the emergence of new norms and practices in international politics and the normative environment in which such changes occur. New practices and norms have their origins in ideas, defined here as principled beliefs. Such principled beliefs spell out what is right or wrong, just or unjust, and what ought to be (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993). According to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), studies on norms demonstrate how political reality gets created on the basis of people's ideas about what ought to be and what is good. Moreover, they contend that significant changes have come about in world politics because of individuals with principled commitments. There are plenty of examples of such changes based on the construction of new norms, such as the abolition of slavery, women's rights, decolonization, the anti-apartheid movement, humanitarian intervention, humanitarian law, and the protection of minority and group rights.

One of the most potent examples of how principled beliefs underlie the construction of norms is that of human rights. The emergence and subsequent internationalization of

international human rights norms, now widely accepted in the international community, can be traced to the aftermath of World War II. The European experience of genocide, systematic mass killings, torture and arbitrary detentions gave rise to the idea--and eventually a new norm--that there was a responsibility to protect human rights through internationally-agreed upon regulations and policies (Sikkink, 1993; Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999). The aftermath of World War II also facilitated the emergence of norms that promoted peaceful change in Europe. These were a set of clusters of norms that entailed integration as a means to peace in Europe and reconciliation among former enemies. These norms of peaceful change, if one may call them so, supplanted those norms and behaviors that permitted the use of violence for settling disputes and conflicts of interests. What these examples illustrate is that changes in the behavior of states were driven by normative agendas and concerns.

Empirical research on norms demonstrates that norm advocates or norm leaders consciously construct or build norms. This is done primarily through calling attention to particular problems, often through the construction of cognitive frames—that is, through the use of particular language that enables the naming, interpreting, and dramatizing of such problems or issues. Norm advocates share principled beliefs and commitments as to appropriate or acceptable behavior, and seek to make lasting and radical changes in international behavior. Seen in this context, norms can be understood not merely as constraining behavior, but rather as enabling particular action that may otherwise not occur (Finnemore, 1996, Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Flynn & Farrell, 1999).

There are contending perspectives as to why new norms emerge. Some scholars believe that they are the result of social learning and societal pressures, as was the case with the anti-slavery norm. Others argue that new norms emerge through some cataclysmic event as happened with the human rights norm that emerged gradually after 1945 out of the genocidal experience in Europe (Crawford, 1993). Norms also emerge from already existing webs of international norms; in this case, such emergent norms stand a better chance of being successful in being adopted internationally (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; McCoy & Heckel, 2001). Three casual factors have been associated with the emergence of new norms: changes in the global environment such as major systemic transitions or dramatic events; social processes that have taken place on a global level, such as the increase of social interaction among actors and the diffusion of information; and internal developments within states, particularly when it comes to motivational and cognitive processes of leadership or other changes in the domestic environment (Kowert & Legro, 1996).

The evolution of new norms can be traced through stages. In the first stage of a norm life cycle, norm advocates are actively engaged in building norms. Often this is accomplished through the creation of an organizational platform from which the content of a new norm can be articulated and promoted. This is also referred to as the awareness-raising and advocacy stage. Important in this phase are three processes: the use of cognitive frames by norm advocates to identify and widely publicize a particular international problem that needs to be addressed and changed; increasing levels of activism on the part of norm advocates; and the support of critical states and platform organizations, either in disseminating information, in

providing financial assistance, or in assuming crucial leadership. The objective in this stage is to persuade other states and actors to adopt new norms. Stage 2 entails the acceptance and institutionalization of a norm through the development of policy and legal instruments; in Stage 3, one can witness the internalization of a norm, meaning its widespread adoption and adherence through the creation of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms which are intended to guarantee norm implementation over time (McCoy & Heckel, 2001; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

It is argued in this article that the norm of conflict prevention with regard to its growth process is solidly situated in the first stage. However, it is making its way into the second stage, given that we can already observe the development of policy instruments that allow for some implementation. Even though stage three is not going to be reached any time soon, what is demonstrated in this article is that the OSCE and the UN have been playing a major role as norm leaders when it comes to the construction of a conflict prevention norm. The following analysis highlights the role of these two institutions in the evolution of a conflict prevention norm.

The OSCE: Taking the Lead in Norm-Setting

No other regional organization has carried conflict prevention as an emergent international norm as much forward as the OSCE. There are several reasons why the OSCE has been at the forefront of constructing, advocating, and implementing new international norms, not only in conflict prevention, but also in crisis management, post-conflict peace building, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. For one, the OSCE is a unique institution with a highly innovative character. It takes a comprehensive approach to security and its mandate is extensive enough for it to function as a cooperative security organization with a broad security agenda. Moreover, the OSCE is a strictly political organization with a small institutional structure, allowing for greater flexibility than some other international organizations. While OSCE decisions are not legally binding, its member states have over time agreed collectively and as a matter of choice on a number of norms through which security can be maintained and conflict can be managed (OSCE, 2000; Zellner, 2002). These rules and standards are politically binding and laid down in a series of documents, even though OSCE participating States may at times disregard their commitments.

According to Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell (1999), there are “no historical precedents” for the type of “constructive intervention” as practiced by the OSCE, and the normative foundation that was created as early as the 1970s. This normative framework has since then been expanded, and it underlies the “constructive” or “cooperative” intervention that the OSCE is engaged in (Zellner, 2002, p.16). Moreover, the OSCE is perceived as having the necessary legitimacy to manage conflicts—its existing institutional mechanisms for conflict management have been legitimized by its participating States through collective decision-making and consensus (Flynn & Farrell, 1999). It is this high level of legitimacy that enables the OSCE to intervene in the internal affairs of member states (Zellner, 2002, p.16). The OSCE’s experiences with conflict prevention and conflict management can be traced to the

organization's humble beginnings as an international regime in the early 1970s. Since the OSCE's history is already well documented (see Bloed, 1993; Heraclides, 1993), it suffices here to only briefly outline the earliest attempts of actively building, advocating, and implementing new international norms.

Founded in the summer of 1975 through what became known as the Helsinki Final Act, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), as the OSCE was named then, was to function as a forum to facilitate East-West dialogue. Its preventive capacity rested on the idea and the necessity to build constructive and cooperative relationships on an interstate level in the Cold War era. It has been documented that this relationship building as a preventive mechanism was successful in the transformation of the East-West conflict (see Thomas, 1999). The Helsinki Final Act, adopted during the Helsinki Summit (30 July to 1 August 1975), constitutes the initial normative framework on which the OSCE still rests. It laid down a number of agreed upon norms such as refraining from the threat or use of force, the inviolability of frontiers, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and respect for human rights. It also introduced confidence-building measures that were to assist in the promotion of peaceful change (OSCE, 2000).

When the Cold War ended, the CSCE was transformed from an international regime to a regional security organization, and became increasingly engaged in the prevention and management of conflicts, albeit now primarily on the intrastate level. The Paris Charter for a New Europe signed on 21 November 1990 during the Paris summit created a number of permanent bodies and institutions, such as the Secretariat, now in Vienna, the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. During the Berlin Council Meeting in June 1991, the CSCE also created a special mechanism for emergency consultations in times of crises. This so-called "Berlin Mechanism" was used for the first time during the Yugoslav crisis. Then in December 1992 the post of the Secretary-General was created and, in 1993, the Permanent Committee (in 1994, renamed "Permanent Council"), all of which were intended to expand the OSCE's ability to engage in political consultation, dialogue, and decision-making, particularly when it came to conflict and crisis prevention.

One of the most crucial documents for the development and institutionalization of a conflict prevention, early warning, and crisis management capacity was the 1992 Helsinki Document, adopted during the July 1992 Helsinki Summit. In it, two principal instruments of conflict prevention and crisis management are specifically outlined: 1) fact-finding and rapporteur missions; and 2) peacekeeping missions—to be dispatched not in a peace enforcement capacity but more so in a preventive one, and to cover interethnic as well as interstate conflicts. The Helsinki Document also created the position of High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), an office that "provides early warning and ... early action at the earliest possible stage in regard to tensions involving national minority issues which have not yet developed beyond an early warning stage...." (CSCE, 1992, p. 12). Originally a Dutch initiative, the creation of the Office of the HCNM meant yet another preventive mechanism that could be employed in the emerging stages of conflict. Accordingly, "early warning was to

be carried out by collecting information on national minorities, by exploring the role of all contending parties, and, most important by visiting those states where conflict seemed imminent or where ethnic tensions continued to disrupt the political and social order” (Ackermann, 2000, p. 133). To this day, these visits are a particularly important element in the ability of the HCNM to issue early warnings of potential conflicts to the Chairman-in-Office. Also, one of the most important tools available to the HCNM are his written recommendations, which, although not binding, are crucial for preventive action. Thus the HCNM has been considered “a highly effective and cost-effective institution for conflict prevention” (Zellner, 2002, p.21).

Since the early 1970s, the CSCE/OSCE has not only been able to actively construct and promote a series of new norms. Moreover, it has been successful in the creation of policy instruments to move particular norms into the direction of institutionalization, or Stage 2 of the norm life cycle. This has been the case with the norm of conflict prevention. Since the end of the Cold War, the OSCE has implemented an impressive list of instruments and institutional mechanisms for the prevention of violent conflicts. These include the following: fact-finding and rapporteur missions, field missions, the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Conflict Prevention Centre and its Operation Centre, created at the 1999 Istanbul Summit, the use of a personal representative of the Chairman-in-Office, and ad hoc steering groups. Among the most commonly used instruments for conflict prevention are the field missions and the HCNM. The earliest field missions date back to 1992, including those to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, and Macedonia. There have also been missions to the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Baltic States, and Eastern Europe. A high concentration of field missions continues to be in South-Eastern Europe, with the largest at present being the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK).

Not all field missions have come as a result of preventive action. In the case of the more recent missions to Croatia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, their function is primarily within the domain of post-conflict rehabilitation, although one may argue that conflict prevention must also be incorporated into the post-conflict phase. In fact, the major focus of OSCE missions in the Balkans has now shifted to post-conflict rehabilitation. However, a few of the field missions, such as the one to Estonia and to Macedonia, were truly preventive in nature. Moreover, there are OSCE Centres in the five Central Asian republics that for the most part have a preventive core to deal with a variety of potential sources of conflict, including disputes regarding water resources, interethnic rivalries, particularly in the Ferghana Valley, deepening poverty and economic disparities, insurgencies and radical Islamic movements, and trafficking of arms, drugs, and people (European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 2002).

The OSCE Spillover Mission to Skopje is a particular good case in point in demonstrating how a preventive mission has been transformed into a peace implementation mission after violent conflict. But the case of Macedonia also provides an excellent case study for new practices in conflict prevention. It was in Macedonia that the CSCE/OSCE, from 1992 onward employed two preventive mechanisms that reflect the institution’s commitment to conflict prevention—the creation of a field mission and the regular fact-finding and mediation

² The CSCE became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on 1 January 1995

visits by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Although there was a short-lived outbreak of violent conflict in 2001, for nearly nine years, OSCE efforts were crucial for the peaceful conduct of majority-minority relations, largely through assisting in addressing ethnic grievances and demands, maintaining a moderating influence on the political elites, and early warning when interethnic tensions threatened to undermine conflict management efforts (Ackermann, 2000).

The United Nations' Advocacy of Conflict Prevention

Although the idea that armed conflicts should be prevented underlies the Charter of the United Nations, it was not until several decades after the ratification of the Charter that the United Nations actually began to use consistently the terms “preventive diplomacy” and “conflict prevention” in any of its official statements. Moreover, throughout the Cold War, UN interventions were rather reactive than preventive in nature. The first time the term “preventive diplomacy” came into official use was in 1960 when UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld reflected on the limited powers of the United Nations during the Cold War. At the time, Hammarskjöld defined preventive diplomacy as a UN effort to keep “newly arising conflicts outside the sphere of bloc difference,” and to localize any conflicts so as to prevent a wider confrontation between the superpowers (UN, General Assembly, 1960). In this sense, conflict prevention was solely directed at preventing a war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but not at preventing armed conflicts altogether. It was nearly thirty years later that the United Nations initiated a shift toward advocating the prevention of violent conflicts, particularly those on an intra-state level.

One can trace UN advocacy for a global conflict prevention norm to the late 1980s when the General Assembly in its Annex to the 1988 “Declaration on the Prevention and Removal of Disputes and Situations Which May Threaten International Peace and Security,” formally recognized the role of the United Nations in the prevention of international conflicts. Moreover, it impressed upon member states to take direct responsibility for preventing conflicts. Therefore, the Annex spelled out a number of recommendations on how states could prevent disputes, most of which were centered on traditional diplomatic means, such as bilateral and multilateral consultations. It did however also envision a more active role for the Security Council in conflict prevention. It was to “consider, sending at an early stage, fact-finding or good offices missions or establishing appropriate forms of United Nations presence” (UN, General Assembly, 1988). Thus already in 1988 the United Nations captured the important essence of conflict prevention in that preventive measures had to be initiated in the early stages of a conflict. Much of this was reiterated in a follow-on document in 1991, the Annex to the “Declaration on Fact-Finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security.” Again, as in the 1988 document, the 1991 Annex identified fact-finding in the early stages as a major instrument for conflict prevention and vested the Secretary-General with more powers to initiate preventive fact-finding missions

on his own (UN, General Assembly, 1991; see also Sokalski, 2003).

Awareness-raising and advocacy for preventive action received a critical boost when former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made preventive diplomacy one of the center pieces of his 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*. Disseminated widely in the international public domain, *An Agenda for Peace* came as a result of a Security Council request on 31 January 1992 for the Secretary-General to prepare for UN member states by July 1 recommendations for strengthening the UN capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. It was left to the Secretary-General to define what preventive diplomacy was, and what its parameters ought to be. Boutros-Ghali opted for a rather broad definition of preventive diplomacy, defining it as “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.” Thus preventive diplomacy was to fulfill three critical objectives: prevention in the early stage of conflict, prevention of escalation, and containment once conflict had broken out (UN, Secretary-General, 1992).

Moreover, the report did not view preventive diplomacy in a vacuum or as an isolated UN activity. In *An Agenda for Peace*, the entire spectrum of a violent conflict cycle was addressed. Not only was the prevention of violent conflict to entail preventive diplomacy, but also post-conflict peace building measures such as peacemaking and peacekeeping. In fact, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping were regarded as “integrally related.” What appeared novel in this document was that it was considered no longer sufficient anymore for the United Nations to put all its energies into peacekeeping but that a wider range of instruments and activities had to be adopted that covered all stages of the conflict cycle. In that sense, the prevention of violent conflicts included both a pre-violent/early conflict phase, an escalation phase, and a post-conflict phase, making preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping part of a wider conflict resolution approach. Moreover, *An Agenda for Peace* suggested wide-ranging preventive practices, including: (1) confidence-building measures; (2) fact-finding missions by senior UN officials or members of regional or non-governmental organizations; (3) the strengthening of early networks, to include political instability indicators; (4) preventive deployment; and (5) the creation of demilitarized zones. While confidence-building measures, fact-finding, and demilitarized zones had already been established UN practices, early warning networks and preventive deployment were novel concepts, of which the latter was initiated for the first time only a few months after *An Agenda for Peace* appeared.

Although preventive diplomacy still remained a vague and mostly rhetorical concept, what was significant was that Boutros-Ghali had revived the notion of preventive diplomacy to make it fit the changed international climate. Moreover, norms advocacy took on a new dimension when in December 1992, the Security Council authorized for the first time in UN history the deployment of a preventive peacekeeping mission. The deployment came much by way of how Boutros-Ghali had envisioned it: a country that “feels threatened and requests the deployment of an appropriate United Nations presence along its side of the border” (UN, Secretary-General, 1992, p. 6). This country was the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,

whose President, Kiro Gligorov, appealed for a UN preventive force at the United Nations Headquarters in November 1992 in light of the potential spillover of violence from the other Yugoslav republics.

On 11 December 1992, Security Council Resolution 795, approved unanimously, authorized the immediate deployment of a preventive mission to Macedonia's borders with Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The UN mandate was explicitly preventive and justified on two grounds: 1) concerns over "possible developments which could undermine confidence and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or threaten its territory;" and (2) a request by the Macedonian government. In early January 1993, the first UN contingent arrived, later renamed, the UN Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) mission. UNPREDEP remained in Macedonia for six years, and the mission was terminated on 1 March 1999, but only following China's veto at the Security Council on 26 February 1999, after Beijing objected to Macedonia's establishment of diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

However, what the UN preventive mission demonstrates, even though there has never been another incident of preventive deployment, is that the Security Council demonstrated some incentive and willingness to put preventive diplomacy into action when it was in fact urgently needed. That there have been no other such preventive deployment missions does not necessarily prove that the UN failed in its advocacy role. Rather the lack of more preventive action is due mostly to the fact that the newly emerging norm of conflict prevention is directly competing with the norm of sovereignty and non-intervention. We can observe a similar phenomenon when it comes to interventions for humanitarian purposes whereby the emergent norm of humanitarian intervention conflicts with the sovereignty norm

Although there have not been any other preventive deployment missions, there are other indicators that conflict prevention as a newly emerging norm on the international level is moving slowly toward stage 2. For one, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has been fine-tuning the norms discourse. In fact, Annan has done much to advance the idea and practice of conflict prevention. Since assuming office, his objective has been to move the United Nations from a "culture of reaction" to a "culture of prevention." Among the most comprehensive assessments on the UN capacity toward conflict prevention has been his 2001 report on the "Prevention of Armed Conflict" (UN, General Assembly, 2001). In the report, Annan calls on other actors—regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, member states, the private sector, and the civil society sector to cooperate with the United Nations when it comes to the implementation of a successful conflict prevention strategy. But he makes it also clear that member states must take responsibility for building a national capacity in conflict prevention, rather than relying solely on the United Nations to be the leading preventive actor. To that end, the United Nations is willing to provide member states with training in conflict prevention. This is merely one way in which Annan thinks that conflict prevention can move from the rhetorical to the practical level, and perhaps eventually become institutionalized.

³ For example, the widely-read and prestigious U.S. journal, *Foreign Affairs*, published an article written by Boutros-Ghali, entitled "An Agenda for Peace."

⁴ I am indebted to Henryk Sokalski, the former UN Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia for this information. For a detailed analysis on the development of conflict prevention within the United Nations, see his forthcoming book, *An Ounce of Prevention: Macedonia and the UN Experience in Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 2003).

Conclusions

It is clear from the preceding discussion that one can speak of a conflict prevention norm only in the context of one that is newly emerging in the international environment. While the OSCE and the United Nations have indeed acted as norm leaders or norm advocates, participating actively in the constructing of a new conflict prevention norm, this norm, as far as its origins are concerned, remains in stage 1 of the norm life-cycle—the awareness-raising and advocacy stage. However, the OSCE has been more active and effective in pushing conflict prevention as a norm to its next stage. Thus, one can witness some progress toward norm acceptance and institutionalization, primarily because the OSCE has been successful in developing and implementing policy instruments for the operationalization of conflict prevention. Much of the OSCE's success in that direction can be credited to the fact that it is a smaller institution and that it has already a long history of preventing violent conflicts through cooperative measures and agreements on a set of norms that determined the behavior of states during the Cold War era. Moreover, there are a number of states, including Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands that have taken the lead in norm advocacy when it comes to conflict prevention.

On the other hand, the United Nations, under the leadership of Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan, while influential in actively advocating conflict prevention as a new norm and practice in international conflict management, has met with less success in the actual implementation of conflict prevention policy instruments, largely because of objections of some of its member states who fear that preventive action can turn easily into unauthorized international intervention. It is here that the newly emergent norm of conflict prevention continues to compete with the norm of sovereignty and non-intervention. Moreover, effective prevention requires that preventive action plans and strategies be designed and that these must be institutionalized over time. The United Nations is still far away from this objective, even though Annan's culture of prevention is envisioning such a course in the future.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the actual implementation of preventive action, it is crucial to also emphasize the complementary roles that the OSCE and UN have played both in norm setting and in practice on the ground. This was particular the case in Macedonia where the OSCE and the UN had similar mandates in terms of its monitoring component, and where both organizations also worked closely together on special projects that were preventive in nature.

As for future prospects, conflict prevention will most likely be successful in becoming fully institutionalized and internalized as a regional norm, since it is on the regional level, that this emergent norm is already becoming firmly entrenched in its second stage, that of a wider acceptance by national governments and other non-state actors. As to conflict prevention as an international norm, this remains a process in the making for some time to come, although it will be highly fascinating to observe and to document the pace in which conflict prevention as

an emerging international norm will move from being an idea to becoming a political reality.

References

- Ackermann, Alice. 2003, "The Idea and Practice of Conflict Prevention." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 347-355.
- Alice Ackermann. Forthcoming. "From Preventive Engagement to Peace Implementation." In Peter Siani-Davies with Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, eds., *International Intervention in the Balkans Since 1995*. London: Routledge.
- Ackermann, Alice. 2000. *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Annan, Kofi. 1999. *Toward a Culture of Prevention: Statements by the Secretary-General of the United Nations*. New York: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict.
- Bloed, Arie. 1993. *The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. 1997. *Preventing Deadly Conflict*. Final Report. New York: Carnegie Corporation.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1999. "Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 43, pp. 83-114.
- Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). 1992. "CSCE Helsinki Document 1992, The Challenges of Change," 9-10 July. <http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/hels92e.htm>; accessed on 16 October 2002.
- Crawford, Neta C. 1993. "Decolonization as an International Norm: The Evolution of Practices, Arguments, and Beliefs." In Laura W. Reed and Carl Kaysen, eds., *Emerging Norms of Justified Intervention*. Cambridge, MA: Committee on International Security Studies, American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- European Centre for Conflict Prevention. 2002. *Conflict Prevention in Central Asia: The Role of the OSCE*. Utrecht, Netherlands: European Centre for Conflict Prevention.
- Finnemore, Martha. 1996. "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention." In Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. "International Norm Dynamic and Political Change." *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Autumn, pp. 887-418.
- Florini, Ann. 1996. "The Evolution of International Norms." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 40, pp. 363-389.
- Flynn, Gregory, and Henry Farrell. 1999. "Piercing Together the Democratic Peace." *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Summer, pp. 505-535.
- Goertz, Gary, and Paul F. Diehl. 1992. "Toward a Theory of International Norms." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 36, No. 4, December, pp. 634-664.
- Goldstein, Judith, and Robert O. Keohane, eds., 1993. *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Heraclides, Alexis. 1993. *Helsinki—II and its Aftermath: The Making of the CSCE into an*

- International Organization*. London: Pinter.
- Ingebritsen, Christine, 2002. "Norm Entrepreneurs: Scandinavia's Role in World Politics." *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 11-23.
- Katzenstein, Peter J., ed. 1996. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Klotz, Audie. 1995. *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kowert, Paul, and Jeffrey Legro. 1996. "Norms, Identity, and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise." In Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lund, Michael. 2002. "Preventing Violent Conflicts: Learning Lessons from Experience." In Paul van Tongeren, Hans van de Veen, and Juliette Verhoeven, eds. *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- McCoy, Jennifer L., and Heather Heckel. 2001. "The Emergence of a Global Anti-Corruption Norm." *International Politics*, Vol. 38, March, pp. 65-90.
- Miall, Hugh, Oliver Ramsbotham, and Tom Woodhouse, 1999. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). 2000. *OSCE Handbook*. Third edition. Vienna: OSCE.
- Risse, Thomas, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 1999. *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sikkink, Kathryn. 1993. "The Power of Principled Ideas: Human Rights Policies in the United States and Western Europe." In Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Sokalski, Henryk J. 2003. *An Ounce of Prevention: Macedonia and the UN Experience in Preventive Diplomacy*. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press.
- Thomas, Daniel C. 1999. "The Helsinki Accords and Political Change in Eastern Europe." In Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- United Nations, General Assembly. 1960. *Introduction to the Annual Report of the Secretary-General of the Work of the Organization, 16 June 1959-15 June 1960*, Supplement No. 1A (A/4390/Add.1). New York: United Nations.
- United Nations, General Assembly. 1988. "Declaration on the Prevention and Removal of Disputes and Situations Which May Threaten International Peace and Security and on the Role of the United Nations in this Field, 5 December 1988, A/RES/43/511. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/43/a43r051.htm>, accessed on 16 May 2002.

- United Nations, General Assembly. 1991. "Declaration on Fact-Finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, 9 December 1991, A/RES/46/59. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r059.htm>, accessed 16 May 2002.
- United Nations, Secretary-General. 1992. "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peace-Keeping," Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to the Statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, 17 June 1992, A/47/277-S/24111. <http://www.un.org/Docs?SG/agpeace.html>, accessed 24 April 2002.
- United Nations, General Assembly/Security Council. 2001. "Prevention of Armed Conflict," Report of the Secretary-General, 7 June 2001, A/55/985-S/2001/574.
- Zellner, Wolfgang. 2002. "The OSCE: Uniquely Qualified for a Conflict-Prevention Role." In Paul van Tongeren, Hans van de Veen, and Juliette Verhoeven, eds. *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.