Preventing Deadly Conflict

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Introduction

THE TERRIBLE FACT is that, in major cases of deadly conflict in the last decade and before, specific actions identified and discussed at the time could have been taken that would have gone a long way towards preventing the enormously costly catastrophes that eventually occurred. These actions were not exceptional measures in foreign relations: they were all moves that had been made elsewhere at other times or even were to be made in the same conflict, but belatedly and incompletely. The agent that might have been able to implement these preventive policies varies: sometimes it would have been the United States, the remaining world superpower; sometimes it would have been the Great Powers acting in concert in the UN Security Council (UNSC); sometimes it would have been neighboring states in the conflict region; and sometimes even a nongovernmental organization (NGO).

The reason why no action was taken also varies, ranging from loss of nerve to preoccupation with other crises elsewhere. As a result, hundreds of thousands of lives and millions of productivity dollars were lost, new and worse situations were created, reconciliation and reconstruction became ever more difficult, distracting conflict was introduced into Great Power relations, and efforts of enormous and prolonged magnitude were required to reinstitute legitimate authorities. In many cases, following the conflict, the situation became a major problem for international actors who had not deemed it worthy of their interest beforehand.

The Past Conditional

Counterfactual analysis is a minefield.[1] Yet every decision actually taken is a selection among alternatives, so that the course of history is made up of an

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unending chain of choices. Any choice can be examined in the context of its alternatives, for it was in that context that it was made. To do this means placing oneself in that momentary context, with as full an understanding of it as possible. Such an understanding involves a careful weighing of the options presented and the reasons why the given choice was made, before an argument can be made for an alternative choice. Many associated elements also need to be examined: the availability of a suitable agent to carry out the alternative policy, the availability of required means, the appropriateness of the policy to desired and expected outcomes, and the implications and consequences of the action. Finally, counterfactual policy analysis needs to examine why the policy proposed was not adopted at the time.

This article examines the choice of decisions taken in a number of salient cases of escalating deadly conflict,[2] with particular emphasis on the putative opportunity that presented itself as a way of changing the course of that escalation. Working inductively from the salient opportunity identified at the time, it analyzes the characteristics of alternative policies to begin the process of creating a new polity out of conflict, the incentives and disincentives required for such policies, and the reasons for their rejection at the time. There is no claim that the opportunity if seized would correct all ills, only that it would enable the beginning of a new course of events that could reduce the conflict and head it towards settlement. The purpose of this analysis is to encourage a fuller appreciation of opportunities to reduce deadly conflict and the ways to exploit them.

Six cases of deadly conflict are examined for possible moments of preventive action by a variety of agents. Although no two cases are the same, the fundamental fact of the disappearance of legitimate authority, institutions, and law and order is the political characteristic of the situation in all cases, demanding measures for political reconstitution. The cases – Lebanon, Liberia, Somalia, Zaire (Congo), Haiti, and Yugoslavia – were chosen because of their salience, although a number of alternatives – such as Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, El Salvador, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Albania – could also have been selected.

Under the assumption that parties in a conflict need help to get out of it, the emphasis is on third-party diplomacy based primarily on negotiation, not on military or other physical involvement (although, in a few specified instances, a military presence may be involved ancillarily). Within the six cases, 28 moments were found to meet specific criteria for selection. The selection criteria are: (1) a conceivable alternative at an identifiable decision-point, following the minimal-rewrite rule; (2) an alternative that was mentioned and discussed at the time; and (3) an action that was feasible and relevant to the intended outcome.

Preventive diplomacy has a broad reference in common usage, referring to anything from structural measures to remove grievances to crisis diplomacy

to bring conflict to an end.[3] The focus here is on preventive diplomacy situated in the latter moments of a conflict, where the main purpose is the reduction of continued conflict and casualties. In these cases, the frequently debated subject of early warning is not particularly germane, since the conflicts were either clearly indicated or actually in course. Nevertheless, the related matter of early awareness is crucial, since the common characteristic of the identified opportunities is that they were missed.

The 28 putative moments of preventive diplomacy provide the 'data' for the following analysis.[4] Two general types of diplomatic intervention (with a number of supporting measures) are the indicated measures, depending largely on the source of the conflict and the conditions on the ground. One is to convene a meeting of warring factions to reconstruct a new state order. The other is to provide for succession to the egregious ruler and to maintain law and order in the ensuing transition. The two relate to different situations, although in some cases may overlap. The 28 moments in the six cases are:

1. Lebanon under civil war from 1975 until 1989:
   1.a. February 1976. Arabization of the Syrian initiative to provide incentives and modifications for the proposed Constitutional Document while the conflict was still in civilian hands;
   1.b. July 1982. Reagan initiative that focused on the Lebanese problem, brought in Syria, and worked more deliberately on a peace agreement;
   1.c. March 1984. Saudi and US cooperation with Syria to provide incentives and guarantees and to include militia and parliamentary leaders to reinforce the Lausanne Agreement; and
   1.d. December 1985–March 1986. Saudi, Egyptian and Western involvement alongside Syria to broaden and strengthen the Damascus Accord.

2. Liberian state collapse into civil war after 1990:
   2.a. October 1985. US decertification of fraudulent electoral results and support for the true count to end Doe's regime while political forces were still intact and the army had not been cleansed of anti-Doe forces;
   2.b. June 1990. US evacuation of Samuel Doe to safe retirement offered by Nigeria and Togo, thus offering an opportunity for influence with Taylor;
   2.c. April–July 1992. Inclusion of all factions and a stronger mediation role for the Carter Center's International Negotiation Network (INN) to provide fuller implementing details and a monitored disarmament for the Yamoussoukro IV agreement;
   2.d. July 1993. Stronger mediation role by the Carter Center's INN and the Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General to provide for realistic disarmament and interim governance at Cotonou; and
   2.e. July 1998. Follow-up to the Taylor–Kabbah agreement through redeployment of an augmented ECOMOG force along the Liberian–Sierra Leonean border and in the diamond region of Sierra Leone.

3. Somalia under civil war after 1988:
   3.a. October 1988. UNSC, Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Inter-Government Agency on Drought and Development (IGADD) condemnation of Hargeisa massacre, mediation of monitored ceasefire, and convocation of national reconciliation conference under US–USSR leadership;
   3.b. May 1990–January 1991. US–IGADD mediation of Siad Barre's resignation (such as arranged for Mengistu in March 1991) and leadership transition through a sovereign national conference (as used elsewhere in Africa);
   3.c. March–June 1991. Earlier UNSC authorization of United Nations Operation in Somalia UNOSOM I, with an arms embargo and a more inclusive Djibouti reconciliation congress;
   3.d. March 1992. UNSC authorization of humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping monitors, confidence-building measures and a reconciliation conference, with a broadened mandate for UN mediator Sahnoun, as a follow-up to the Mogadishu ceasefire;
   3.e. March 1993. Seamless transition from the Unified Task Force in Somalia (UNITAF) to UNOSOM II, with continuation of UNITAF policies of grassroots institutionalization, enforcement, and policing; and
   3.f. October 1993. Firm reaction by US forces to deaths at the Aideed corral.

4. Zaire under mismanagement after 1990:
   4.a. September 1991. Troika initiative to bring Mobutu to hand over power to the Sovereign National Conference during Kinshasa riots;
   4.b. January–February 1993. French detainment of Mobutu in France for murder of French ambassador, multilateral freeze on assets as demanded by European Parliament, and US–French–Belgian support for Sovereign National Conference government of Tschisekedi;
   4.c. September 1993–January 1994. US mediation of government reform;
   4.d. July 1995. International involvement in halting Masisi pogrom, and moving and disarming Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire; and
   4.e. March 1996. UN, OAU and Carter Center mediation to protect Banyamulenge, combined with UN and OAU mission to repatriate Rwandan Hutu refugees and intern perpetrators of genocide.

5. Yugoslavia under breakup after 1990:
   5.a. June 1990. International conference on a confederal Yugoslavia under the auspices of the USA, the European Community (EC), and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), capitalizing on Croatian, Slovenian, and Serbian insistence on maintaining Yugoslavia;
   5.b. March 1991. EC reaffirmation of minority rights conditions for recognition of Croatia and insistence on confederal Yugoslavia, with US support within CSCE;

5.c. March 1992 and January 1993. EU and US measures to support Cutileiro and Vance–Owens plans guaranteeing integrity of Bosnia with autonomous ethnic components; and
5.d. March 1996. US engagement in active effort to arrest indicted Yugoslav officials, support the 'Together' movement in the Yugoslav elections, and signal unacceptability of ethnic discrimination in Bosnia and Yugoslavia.

6. Haiti under military gangs from 1991 to 1996:
6.a. October–December 1991. UNSC support of Organization of American States (OAS) sanctions during Cartegena meeting to reverse Aristide's overthrow, installation of Theodore as prime minister, and provision of amnesty and exile for junta;
6.b. March 1992. OAS pressure on Dominican Republic to close borders and enforce sanctions to force junta to withdraw;
6.c. August–October 1993. Maintenance of sanctions and US insistence on *Harlan County* landing and respect for Governor's Island Agreement, with amnesty and exile for the junta;
6.d. May 1994. US follow-up to UN sanctions through closing and monitoring Dominican border and mounting a Carter-type mission to provide exile for the junta; and
6.e. May 1996. US-led dialog program among government, parties, business, and civic groups to create momentum toward reconstruction programs.

Opportunity

While states cannot be either reconstructed or saved from self-destruction by external action alone, external intervention of some sort becomes worthy of consideration when the domestic parties need to be saved from their own self-destructive devices and when such a result would be in the interest of the intervening party. In the end, domestic actors need to be brought back into control, but in state rebirth, as in other delivery processes, midwiving is often necessary. Interest can come in specific or general terms. The country in question can feel a peculiar attraction to or responsibility for the intervening state, or it can simply be a special case of the general usefulness of open access to trade, investment and diplomacy, and the general value of saving human lives and productivity. The second type is so broadly applicable that it requires an additional filter: the intervenor must have the capacity to effect the desired results. All of these defining elements – attraction, responsibility, usefulness, value, capacity – are soft terms, opening huge judgemental debates. They at least indicate the terrain on which that debate is to take place.

Alternative decisions to undertake preventive diplomacy do not come out of the blue but require an 'entry point' or occasion that invites foreign action. Need alone does not justify the specific action: there must be some definable opportunity (as in 'missed opportunity') for external parties to seize. Opportunities or entry points are defined by an event or by the context.

Events that require or justify a reaction can be scheduled or unscheduled. Scheduled events, such as an election, require a response that could make a major difference in the subsequent course of actions. Examples are the fraudulent count announced after the 1985 elections in Liberia (2.a), where US rejection would have triggered both internal and external reactions, or the 1996 election in Yugoslavia (5.d), where Western action could have strengthened the competition and sent a signal about permissible behavior toward minorities. But unscheduled events or crises call for an external response and provide the opportunity for action; examples are the 1988 massacre in Northern Somalia (3.a), the 1991 and 1993 riots in Kinshasa (4.a,b), the 1995 and 1996 pogroms in eastern Zaire (4.d,e), the Cedras coup itself in 1991 (6.a), or the unconstitutional installation of a new president in May 1994 in Haiti (6.c).

When there is no event, scheduled or unexpected, to require a response, external action must be contextually justified, as is more frequently the case. Contextual justification for international action is provided by a ripe moment composed of a mutually hurting stalemate that forces parties to seek or accept help in finding a way out of the conflict.[5] A perception of a painful stalemate may motivate conflicting parties themselves to reconciliation, but it often needs to be nourished by a third party. Mutually hurting stalemates have provided the occasion for interventions: this was the case as early as 1976 in Lebanon, when the parties responded to Syrian démarches (1.a), and again in 1984, when they met in Lausanne (1.b); in mid-1990 and mid-1991 in Liberia, when the parties had fought to a temporary standstill (and so met at Yamoussoukro in the second case) (2.b,c); and at the beginning of 1991 in Somalia, just before Siad Barre's fall (3.b).

But most conflicts are characterized only by a soft stalemate unequally affecting the parties, leaving external parties without a clear event or an opportunity to trigger an intervention.[6] Conflicting parties need to be convinced of the need for external involvement in such a situation; it is a lifebuoy thrown to a swimmer rather enjoying the excitement of the surf and oblivious to the approaching tidal wave that only the thrower sees. But the same image also shows that a soft stalemate requires third-party action, even more than does a hard or hurting stalemate.

In sum, events scheduled or unscheduled provide opportunities for third-party action. But, in their absence, clear ripeness is elusive in internal conflicts, and preventive intervention has to rely on its own initiative to create opportunities and entry points, which are necessarily more artificial and less compelling.

Intervention to Construct

In cases where legitimate and effective political authority has disappeared in the midst of collapse and conflict, the need is for leadership to fill the vacuum by convening a meeting of the diverse political forces in the country. While a third party might be thought to lack legitimacy in calling a national conference of domestic political forces, this device is frequently used. Examples come from Damascus in 1976 (1.a), Geneva in 1983, Lausanne in 1984 (1.b), Damascus in 1985 (1.c), and Taif in 1989 on Lebanon; from Yamoussoukro in 1991 (2.c), Cotonou in 1993 (2.e), Geneva in 1994, and Abuja in 1995 on Liberia; from Djibouti in 1991 (3.c) and Addis Ababa in 1992 on Somalia; from Dayton in 1995 on Yugoslavia; and from New York in 1993 (6.b) on Haiti, among many others. Other proposed conferences could have made their impact on the Yugoslav conflict in 1990 (5.a) and 1991 (5.b), and on Somalia in 1988 (3.a) and 1992 (3.d), among others. Conferences tend to respond to the fatigue of a soft stalemate rather than the pain of a mutually hurting stalemate.

It is not the calling of the conference that is unusual, but rather its successful conclusion. Each of the cases of deadly conflict was marked by a number of international conferences to which the various parties were convoked, but most of them adjourned before achieving full results. Ultimately, these conferences failed because their convenors did not invest commensurate energy in follow-through. The intervenors already did the hard part, creating an entry point out of a soft stalemate, but then wearied of the effort and let the initiative peter out. Frequently, the convenor was not sufficiently assisted by other third parties, who were needed to keep the initiative going when the first intervenor grew tired. In the joy of their own successes in opening the conferences and achieving some minimal results, the convenors neglected four elements necessary to assure – or at least increase the chances of – a successfully negotiated outcome: inclusion, seclusion, mediation, and confidence-building. Convenors need to involve the parties to the conflict as parties to its resolution and not limit their negotiations merely to their friends or the moderates. They need to keep the parties in the room until they have worked out the details for implementing the agreements, for allocating power, and for restoring institutions. They should not be satisfied with a ceasefire or a superficial settlement or be discouraged by deadlock or conference fatigue. They need to provide mediation to communicate, formulate, and even manipulate potential outcomes, and not leave these in the hands of the conflicting parties. They need to provide confidence-building measures during and after the negotiations to create trust and to verify progress from conflict to reconstruction, and not rely on the good will of the parties to implement their agreements. These four elements were missing in the failed conferences and played an important role in successful ones.

Though they are necessary, these elements are hardly sufficient to ensure the success of an all-party conference to restore state authority and structure. Conferences depend on the ability of the mediator to turn the conflicting parties gradually away from a fixation on each other as enemies and rivals for power towards a common attention to the needs of rebuilding the country together. Non-state diplomacy specialists argue the need for reconciliation sessions over an extended period of time to accomplish this goal, and it might be argued that a series of failed conferences serves this purpose, preparing for a finally successful one, such as Abuja on Liberia, Dayton on Bosnia, or the Carter talks on Haiti. But failed conferences leave relations more hostile, exhaust potentially useful remedies, and do not move towards a common goal. The final stages of deadly conflicts cannot wait for extended rounds of reconciliation sessions or a long series of failed conferences. Mediators have the difficult task of holding the parties together once they have convened them and turning their attention to the challenge of rebuilding the state.

It takes an authoritative mediator to call this type of negotiation, one who can issue an invitation that cannot be refused and who has mediating skills and can keep the conference in session until its purpose is achieved. The potential range of such actors is wide, from external powers or patrons to Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General to regional states or organizations; the assistance of private facilitators can also be useful. The most desirable intervenor would be a regional organization of peers and neighbors with a direct stake in resolution, but frequently such states leave the matter by default to external patrons. Again, pluralism requires coordination with a designated prime mediator or 'layered mediators' with a mediator of last resort.

In sum, where deadly conflict has reached the stage where conflicting parties are fighting over a vacuum of power, preventive diplomacy can focus on holding and mediating a conference of the parties. The conference needs to provide for the end of conflict, the allocation of power, and the beginning of a process of state-rebuilding. Regional organizations are the most effective agents of this action, but they tend to need help from experienced, authoritative mediators. Entry needs support from other intervenors to keep the efforts moving on track and to provide follow-through to ensure implementation.

Intervention to Remove

In some cases, such as Somalia, Liberia, Zaire, and Haiti, state collapse and conflict can be clearly and directly laid to the long rule of a debilitating dictator operating on a shrinking power-base, destroying the opposition, alienating the citizenry, and creating a vacuum around himself. Reforming the tyrant is a vain hope; power-sharing keeps the fox in charge of the chicken coop. The

purpose of preventive diplomacy is to effectuate an early succession in such a way as to fill the power vacuum that is being created. In Liberia, this would have been the aim of decertifying the 1985 elections (2.a) or of providing Samuel Doe with a retirement home in 1990 (2.b). In Somalia, it was the aim of proposed diplomatic interventions in 1988 (3.a) and 1991 (3.b), under which safe conduct for Siad Barre would be exchanged for his retirement. In Zaire, it was the goal of policies in 1991 (4.a), 1993 (4.b), and 1994 (4.c) providing Mobutu Sese Seko with attractive conditions of retirement either under the pressure of disorder, in the first two cases, or in fulfillment of past agreements, in the third. In Haiti, where the ruler did not have the long record of tenure seen in the other three cases, a Carter-type of diplomatic persuasion, associated with some form of military operation, was the policy proposed in all three instances: in 1991 (6.a), 1993 (6.b), and earlier in 1994 than it was finally used (6.c).

Although it constitutes an extreme measure of interference in internal affairs, intervention of this type is neither new nor inconceivable. Jacobo Arbenz, Jean Bedel Bokassa, Idi Amin Dada, Bernard Coard, Ferdinand Marcos, Manuel Noriega, Jean-Claude Duvalier, and finally Raoul Cedras himself were removed from Guatemala in 1954, Central African Republic and Uganda in 1979, Grenada in 1983, the Philippines in 1986, Panama in 1989, and Haiti in 1986 and 1994, respectively. As in the Philippine and Haitian precedents, the action proposed here is above all diplomatic intervention, and its means is negotiation, through persuasion and negative and positive inducements, discussed below. There is little that distinguishes these successful cases (no failed cases come to mind) from the proposed instances. Indeed, in the case of Haiti, the proposals were merely for an earlier intervention, and, in Zaire and Liberia, an offer of early retirement to the incumbents was actually decided as US policy and then vetoed at the highest level.

None of the proposed instances of removal of an egregious head of state required any greater use of force than was already or soon to be used in the country. Where force was to be involved, it was to be used to keep order, not to remove the leader. Careful diplomacy and delicate persuasion, as eventually practiced by President Carter in Haiti in 1994, as actually envisaged in Liberia in 1990 (2.b) and Zaire in 1991 (4.a) but vetoed at the last moment, and as shown in dealing with Marcos and Duvalier in 1986, were the primary means, backed by the threat or presence, rather than the actual use, of force. Haiti, among others, showed that a light military presence, as brief as possible, is needed to set up local forces of order, so that there is someone to whom an order to be maintained can be handed over. Somalia did show, however, that a much larger force could be required if the egregious ruler is not removed before he or she totally destroys the political system.

Like hostage negotiations, early-retirement negotiations become possible when the subject shifts from holding out for the original demands to seeking

conditions for asylum. The key to proposals for removing Doe between 1985 and 1990, Mobutu between 1990 and 1993, Siad between 1988 and January 1991, and Cedras and company between 1991 and 1994 was diplomatic action that would provide a secure, if reduced, future instead of an insecure, but 'important', future, where the attractiveness of the trade-off depended on the diplomats' skill in conveying the insecurity inherent in the status quo. Doe, Siad Barre, Cedras, and Mobutu rejected offers of early and secure retirement in 1990, 1991, 1993, and 1991–1993, respectively, convinced that the benefits of staying on outweighed the dangers. Reportedly, the basis of that feeling was mystical in Doe's case, desperate in Siad Barre's, and credible in the context of US dithering in the cases of the Haitian junta and Mobutu. More and better efforts by the intervenor and a clear message not contradicted by other external parties involved in the problem were needed to convince the rulers that the game was up.

In such cases as these, the strategy is not simply removal, but succession. Removal must be accompanied by measures to fill the vacuum, without which it only confirms the vacuum. Successful cases of removed rulers show that an immediately available replacement candidate is needed, preferably one legitimized by a recent, fraudulently lost election; such candidates were available in Liberia, Haiti, and Zaire, as they were in the Philippines, but a process was needed to produce one in Somalia if the removal were to work. In the latter case, the conference call was needed along with the early retirement.

Negotiations for the early retirement of a rapacious head of state require a powerful agent, above all one that can exert the moral pressure that is necessary to re-evaluate the present and provide the future security that is the basis of the bargain. In addition, it takes an agent who is able to apply credible and painful sanctions in the event of refusal, sanctions that are less a matter of specific embargoes than general ostracism and a break in an important relationship. Finally, the agent itself must not be susceptible to counter-pressure from the target ruler, and especially must not suffer more from the rupture of the relationship than does the target. Cooperation between an external power or patron and a regional organization or group of states, with the partners sharing the different responsibilities, is optimal. For this reason, the USA was the indicated intervenor in the case of Haiti, where it was supported by the OAS (of which it is a member), and worked with France and Belgium in the case of Zaire, though here was unable to count on the support of the OAU (of which it is not a member). Support from IGADD and ECOWAS in Somalia and Liberia were necessary and available.

In sum, where impending state collapse is the work of an egregious ruler, preventive diplomacy can focus on his or her removal. Elements in that action involve persuasion that the game is up, availability of a legitimate alternate candidate, and the presence of force both as a threat and as an interim assur-

ance of law and order. Strong states external to the region working with regional alliances are the agencies most indicated for this action.

Carrots and Sticks

Actions of preventive diplomacy are based on diplomatic persuasion, sometimes combined with forceful entry. Although there must be an incentive for acceptance by the parties involved, an initiative is no stronger than the alternative that lies behind it if it is rejected. An initiative must be attractive in itself, carrying the prospect of a better future if implemented; but it must also carry the assurance of a worse future if it is not implemented. Carrots and sticks to assist the negotiations can be better analyzed by using the familiar categorization into threats and promises for contingent voluntary deprivations and gratifications, and warnings and predictions for contingent involuntary gratifications and deprivations.[7] As with most preventive diplomacy, the proposed initiatives in the cases examined were predicated on predictions of benefits in the case of acceptance, plus a few additional promises by the mediator. The predictions emphasized the improvement that the intervention itself would bring to the lot of the parties by ending the conflict and restoring the state. In addition to warnings about the pain that rejection would lead to for the parties, there were also a number of threats by the mediator to add to that pain. However, because preventive diplomacy is interference in a sovereign state's internal affairs, threats are less often used than warnings, promises, or predictions.

Positive predictions of benefits from implementation come with any policy démarche and are supposed to carry their own powerful incentive for compliance. The politics of state collapse and deadly conflict are variously marked by egregious authoritarianism, narrow power-bases, surrounding power vacuums, illegitimate power formulas, and violent conflict, and policies are predicted to overcome these ills. These predictions for a better outcome generally concern the political system as a whole, whereas, to make the intervention effective, incentives have to be directed at the targeted party, who is removed from office and is thereby *prima facie* worse, not better, off. To ask Siad (3.a,b), Mobutu (4.a,b,c), Cedras (6.a,b,c), or Doe (2.a,b) to leave office so as to prevent their states from collapsing may appeal to their thin sense of civic duty, but not to much else. To work for a new national pact in Lebanon (1.a,b,c), Yugoslavia (5.a,b,c), Haiti (6.a,b,c), Zaire (4.a,b,c,d), or Somalia (3.a,b,c) may be attractive to the general population and some of the political leaders, but it is scarcely an incentive to those who benefit either from the old order or from imposition of the new solely on their own terms. In the former type of case, an attempt to salvage the state can be attractive to incumbents by maintaining a

place for them in the new political system if they also make room for others. But that is probably too much to promise to egregious rulers, who will continue to feed on the system if given a chance. It is an inherent weakness of preventive diplomacy that its benefits accrue to the currently powerless and its costs to the debilitating incumbents. This means that, for the most part, incentives for change must come from the other sources of power: promises, warnings, and threats.

Promises come from a rather standard list relating to developing countries: aid (2.a; 5.a), reconstruction assistance (2.b,c,e; 3.c,d; 6.b,c,d), and recognition of the new government (2.c,d,e; 6.a,b,c). In some cases, the carrots are merely buried sticks: resumption of aid and revival of recognition (1.b; 2.a), or lifting of sanctions (6.a,b,c). But, again, these promises are incentives to the 'outs', rather than to the 'ins'. Early retirees from power need special incentive plans, ranging from retirement homes to amnesties. Doe, Siad, Mobutu, and (for a while) Cedras resisted such blandishments, which the alternative policies under discussion would make more compelling (2.b; 3.a,b; 4.a,b,c; 6.a,b,c). But both resources and justice impose real limits on executive buy-outs.

Warnings, like predictions, are inherent in every preventive diplomacy démarche: The unbearable situation will continue, and even worsen, if the initiative is rejected. Indeed, the soul of diplomacy is a mixture of predictions and warnings. Such warnings are most powerful when the moment is ripe and the stalemate hurts all sides; but this is an ideal situation (although its absence may explain why the proposed démarches were not adopted at the time). Internal stalemates tend to be soft, and pain is unequally distributed, often absent on some sides or outweighed by benefits. To the judgement, 'It can't go one like this,' those in power retort: 'Going on like this is better than the alternatives.' Beleaguered rulers and warring factions tend to believe that they can still escalate their way out of any temporary difficulties, in part because of the weakness of the opposition (which often believes the same thing on its side). None of the proposed measures has any tricks to produce results.

Thus, much rests on the power of threats. A threat for non-acceptance should be a part of every démarche. The threat may be clearly stated, so as to pose a choice, or it may be implied or ambiguous, for tactical reasons. Threats most frequently involve economic pressures, from aid cut-off to sanctions, or coercive diplomacy, from embargo to direct intervention. Sanctions run a gamut of measures and were involved in reality in all six cases covered in this article, whether through unilateral trade and travel restrictions or through consolidated international measures. Haiti provides a good example since sanctions were used from 1991 to 1994. In the proposed policies, they would have been tightened and loopholes monitored as early as November 1991, when the first Colombian tanker ran the OAS embargo (at the very moment OAS–Haitian talks were going on in Cartegena!) or as late as the Governor's Island Agreement of July 1993, when sanctions were lifted before implementa-

tion took place. The Haitian situation is a sound indication that sanctions can work when backed by internal resistance and a higher threat to escalate to direct intervention; in this case, they worked in a relatively short time and could well have worked faster if the holes had been plugged and if they had been better targeted and graduated. (The Haitian situation is also a clear indication that blunt, late and prolonged sanctions can cause greatest damage to the innocent bystanders one is trying help.) The argument here is not for sanctions per se, however; it is for the necessity of backing preventive diplomacy with credible threats, in the absence of credible warnings, promises, and predictions.

In addition, threats are needed to make promises look good. Executive buyout is much more attractive if the alternative is made even worse than the status quo by additional deprivations – isolation, frozen assets, travel and visa restrictions, and others. Furthermore, as noted, promises are merely the obverse of threats, indicating the removal of threatened or activated deprivations. Of course, as is known, threats are usually better when presented as warnings ('congressional legislation obliges me to...', 'the international community will not countenance...', 'rebel forces are poised to...'), making the presenter look less nasty and enabling him or her to help the target find a way to avoid the warnings by activating the promises ('...but I have a way to suggest which can help you out of this mess'). These devices were applicable in Haiti (6.a,b,c), Somalia (3.a,b,c), and in Liberia (2.b,c,d), respectively.

It has been argued that threateners should not make threats that they are not willing to carry out and that policymakers should not make démarches if they are not ready to back them up. Such judgements are idealizations and often serve as excuses for inaction – indeed for total inaction anywhere, anytime – since they indicate that no policy should be undertaken that would not be carried through to the extreme. Threats must be credible, but the best threats are never implemented. The challenge, therefore, is to find threats that are sufficiently credible as backups to policy that they need not be implemented, or to find targeted, graduated threats that can establish their credibility by small increments. But, above all, the instances studied indicate a need to be absolutely clear that policies will be enacted, rather than simply brandished, and that an enacted policy is a powerful deterrent to future misunderstandings of intent.

Even a good policy démarche needs to contain incentives for its acceptance and disincentives for its rejection. Reliance on the incentive inherent in forestalling state collapse (predictions) or the disincentive inherent in persistence of the current conflict (warnings) is usually not enough and is especially unappealing to the incumbents. Extra inducements (promises) are necessary, and above all extra disincentives (threats) to discourage rejection. In all four modes, credibility is to power what confidence is to money, and it must be maintained by living up to one's policy pronouncements.

Excuses

In all 28 instances of preventive diplomacy in the six collapsing states, early warnings were more than adequate, the proposed measures had a good chance of succeeding, and the cost in lives and money was foreseeably much smaller than the final cost of the unarrested conflict and collapse in reality. In half the instances (13 out of 28), the policy proposal involved merely strengthening, enacting, and implementing initiatives already taken. So why were the proposed measures not adopted?

The range of reasons is broad. The most specific reason is that, despite momentary endorsement, the measures were contrary to past policy, which supported the status quo. In dealing with Zaire, the USA was often in the lead and had trouble bringing along Belgium, under the influence of its businessmen, and especially France, under the influence of its good relationship with Mobutu; however, the USA would not venture out alone to implement any new policy. Often, the status quo involved 'friends', whose continued incumbency implied a commitment. The USA has long held to a policy of 'Mobutu or Chaos' and worked hard to make that mantra come true. Like Mobutu, Doe was long viewed as a bulwark against communism, and his regime's assistance in giving the USA a toehold in West Africa was viewed with gratitude. In Haiti, too, US policy and opinion were sharply divided between supporters of Haitian business and partisans of Haitian populist democracy, dulling the thrust of any effort to secure a rapid return for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Thus, in many cases, the safe status quo was preferred to risky change, and the troubled state continued to slide down the slippery slope to conflict and collapse. The best response to this reason for inaction is to point out that continued support for the egregious ruler is a shortsighted cop-out that guarantees chaos: blind commitment to Doe, Mobutu, Duvalier, and Cedras so entrenched one system of governance that, when a successor finally took over, he was in effect simply the predecessor in a different suit, since the pattern of egregious rulership had been so well set (and Barre, ten years later, has still not got a successor in Mogadishu). Thus, efforts to provide a succession to an egregious ruler are not a 'leap into the unknown'; rather, they are attempts to offer an alternative to the incumbent who is known all too well.

Three other broad reasons were nonspecific. One was a fear of casualties. Although the Somali debacle did not begin until June 1993 and the slaying of the UN Pakistani soldiers, the official fear of military deaths was encouraged by the Bush administration as early as 1991 in the way the Gulf War was touted and played to the hilt by the Clinton administration. Instead of developing such themes as leadership, post-Cold War order, the UN role, regional security regimes, protection of human rights, and values as interest, the USA – joined by other Western countries – hid behind its own rhetoric about casual-

ties even when the danger of deaths was minimal. As a result, it allowed forces of disorder and spirals of violence to prove its point. A little exemplary firmness in Liberia, Somalia, and Yugoslavia in 1990 (2.b; 3.b; 5.a) or in Liberia, Somalia, Zaire, Yugoslavia, and Haiti in 1991 (2.c; 3.c; 4.a; 5.b; 6.a) would have involved no troops in most instances and few troops (mostly non-US) in the rest, and would arguably have forestalled much larger troop use and danger later. The lack of response showed the forces of disorder that they could get away with what they were doing. A firm response not only inhibits specific disorder in the short run, it also inhibits its escalation in the long run.

Another nonspecific reason was a lack of skills. Frequently, in Lebanon, Liberia, and Somalia (1.a,b,c; 2.c,d,e; 3.c,d), mediation was attempted but failed because it was not well conducted. A skilled authoritative mediator was lacking, often because of a shortage of experience and training in the tough business of preventive diplomacy (especially in West Africa and the Middle East, but also among top UN officials). Keeping the parties engaged, devising trade-offs, thinking through consequences and follow-through, working out details, developing ties and relationships – all these skills were lacking in the preparation and management of crucial conferences with the parties. Provision of a skilled mediator was required to complement the démarche.

Third was a lack of perceived interest. Incredibly, on crucial occasions, the fates of Lebanon, Somalia, Zaire, Yugoslavia, Liberia, and Haiti have not been considered of interest to the USA; nor has the importance of their announced collapse to the fate of their regions in general been deemed worthy of motivating US involvement. If the cost of 50,000 Lebanese lives, 150,000 Liberians, 500,000 Somalis, 100,000 Zaireans, 500,000 Yugoslavs, and 5,000 Haitians at the hands of their own countrymen does not provide a compelling humanitarian interest, it is not because these losses were not foreseeable and foretold. The proposed interventions span the period from the early outbreak of violence to the time of the worst killings, that is, a period when the holocausts were already visible on the horizon and were the subject of frequent warnings. If humanitarian interest was not enough of a motivation, the importance of each case in regard to US and other Western foreign-policy values, such as good governance and democracy, regional stability, economic accountability and access, should have been.

The most general objection involved the requirements of the Cold War in some cases in the late 1980s, such as Lebanon, Liberia, Haiti, and Somalia (1.a,b,c; 2.a; 3.a). Bipolar considerations outweighed the need for positive actions by the United States, argued for inaction, and sometimes blocked the USA's access to the conflicting parties. Such blockage was not insurmountable, but required additional commitment and effort. However, this inhibition on the US side was usually the result of a bogus calculation. Support for and participation in the Damascus and Lausanne negotiations would have left the USA in a stronger position in the Middle East, particularly in relation to Syria

– the ally claimed, but only belatedly supported, by the Soviet Union – but also with Saudi Arabia, and of course with Muslims and Christians in Lebanon. The idea that Doe and Barre were bulwarks against communism in Africa, thus inhibiting preventive diplomacy in 1985 and 1988, respectively, is as farfetched as they come, and even more so since their oppositions were communist in neither case. The Cold War was the reason given for inaction, but this was based on faulty perceptions and calculations of benefit.

The other general distraction was the Gulf War, which dominated US and UN attention from late 1990 through 1991, blocking any attention to a number of promising démarches in Liberia, Somalia, Zaire, Yugoslavia, and Haiti (2.b,c; 3.c; 4.a; 5.a,b,c). The inhibition worked in two major directions: It monopolized official attention, leaving no room for dealing with other issues; the judgement of an experienced practitioner that 'the US can only do one crisis at a time' may be true, but the opportunities noted here were not of crisis proportions and were quite manageable even in the busy Washington milieu. It also dominated the possibilities of building alliances and coalitions, since the USA was already too deeply in political debt to its allies on the Gulf front to be able to contract additional debts on other issues. Yet the same considerations could have worked in the other direction: For the very reason that the proposed preventive diplomacy démarches were not of crisis magnitude, many of them at least should have been possible even during the Gulf War.

A broader conclusion to this last objection returns the focus to preventive diplomacy and the forestalling of deadly conflict. The experience of the second Gulf War shows how dangerous it is for US and world interests to allow one crisis to so thoroughly monopolize the attentions and energies of the USA. Khrushchev knew this in 1956, springing the Hungarian crisis during the Suez crisis. The conclusion, however, is not that the invasion of Kuwait should have been allowed to pass without a response. Rather, it is that preventive diplomacy lost its opportunity throughout 1990, when careful attention to signals from Baghdad and appropriate responses to those signals as they evolved might well have prevented the crisis and left the hands of organizations in the USA and other states free to deal with other problems of state collapse.[8]

Conclusions

On the basis of 28 arguable points of entry into the politics of six states in the process of deadly conflict and on the way to collapse, this article has drawn some conclusions about the practice of preventive diplomacy. No claims have been made that the proposed actions could have been guaranteed to arrest the process of conflict and collapse, but only that they could have seriously increased the chances of that arrest. The first conclusion is that there were

indeed a number of missed opportunities and that these interventions were no different in nature from other similar actions taken by the same actors. Indeed, more than half of the proposed interventions were merely the earlier execution of actions ultimately carried out later on, the pursuit of decisions already made but not carried to fruition, or the effectuation of decisions taken at a lower level but vetoed by a higher authority.

The second conclusion is that the two principal strategies – early retirement and replacement of the egregious ruler, and an international conference to refill the political vacuum – constitute standard, conceivable measures practiced by external intervenors. Furthermore, these measures, rather than requiring specific justification by event of context, usually constituted their own entry point within a situation of soft stalemate. In other words, these strategies do not need a particular signal to be practiced, but can simply be a response to a gradually worsening situation.

The third conclusion is that the success of preventive diplomacy interventions depends in large measure on diplomatic – even negotiatory – elements, including the provision of positive and negative trade-offs and authoritative persuasion to hold the parties' attention to the completion of the reconstruction agreement. Constructive interventions cannot be viewed as a value in and of themselves: in fact it is the opposition or the country at large that benefits, not the incumbent leader(s), and, in situations of (impending) state collapse, it is precisely the powerlessness of the opposition or the country at large that is the problem. The negative forces need to be bought off or threatened out.

The fourth conclusion is that the United States has a unique position in regard to preventive diplomacy but other external powers and regional groups of states also have a role to play, operating under the legitimizing authority of a regional organization or the United Nations (Security Council). However, private agencies and NGOs can also have a role where a non-state facilitator is needed in the negotiations themselves and where training is needed to raise politicians and diplomats to the level of their challenges.

Finally, the clustering of many of the propitious moments for an active policy in many of these cases highlights the fact that there is such a thing as 'too late'. Missed opportunities are not merely missed moments: they tend to be failures to gain entry into a whole phase of a conflict, after which entry is no longer, or much more rarely, possible and the phase changes into something less penetrable. Opportunities are not revolving doors, where entry appears at regular intervals. They tend to constitute a period of time in the life of the conflict when preventive diplomacy is possible, after which entry becomes much more difficult. Not only opportunities but whole periods of opportunity were missed in Yugoslavia, Liberia, Haiti, Somalia, and Zaire–Congo, and now the countries and their citizens, the regions, and the external powers have to live with the consequences.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1 Frederick Shields, *Preventable Disasters: Why Governments Fail* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1991); Philip Tetlock & Aaron Belkin, eds, *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). For a similar attempt from a different angle, see Barbara Tuchman, *The March of Folly* (New York: Knopf, 1984).

2 The term 'deadly conflict' is used as established by the work of the Carnegie Commission for the Prevention of Deadly Conflict; see Jane Holl, ed., *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Final Report* (New York: Carnegie Commission for the Prevention of Deadly Conflict, 1997). The present work also follows on from a previous project on state collapse; see I. William Zartman, ed., *The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995); and James Rosenau, 'The State in an Era of Cascading Politics', in James Caporaso, ed., *The Elusive State* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989), pp. 17–48.

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4 The cases and instances are fully analyzed in I. William Zartman, *Cowardly Lions: Missed Opportunities to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (forthcoming).

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