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**A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
OF CONFLICT PREVENTION**

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Document prepared for the second WG Meeting of the research project on
"Preventing violent conflict in Europe"
Rome, 23-24 February 1996

IAI9634

ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

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Introduction

This paper attempts to give a rather general introductory overview of the conceptual issues related to conflict prevention (CP). Most of the recent books and articles dealing with conflicts, their causes and prevention refer to the CP measures by defining the terms in one or another way. The field of study, however, is characterised by a great deal of conceptual confusion. In order to avoid this, the first chapter is devoted to a closer examination of different interpretations of CP concept. It results thus in an attempt to suggest a broad definition of CP encompassing a certain typology of conflict prevention measures.

The achievements in avoiding, preventing or constraining, conflicts are not very impressive. Having said this, it is worthwhile to present some considerations on the conditions or prerequisites which are vital for the success of conflict prevention actions. The second chapter will focus on the latter.

The third chapter will consider some aspects of CP which, in large part due to the changing nature and dynamics of post-Cold War conflicts, present great dilemmas for both international and national actors.

I. Definitions

Literally the term *prevention* refers to an advance action against something possible or probable. The term *prevention of conflict*, involves a new element, namely - competitive or opposing action of incompatibles resulting in destructive modes of behaviour (the most extreme of which is armed conflict), which is perceived by other national actors or international community at large as an undesired event, which therefore has to be prevented. The term CP is frequently used and discussed in the literature dealing with Europe's new security and peace architecture. It is obvious that international relations and diplomacy are always concerned with the resolution of conflict, by and large reflecting a basic assumption that "conflict is not unavoidable but can indeed be prevented"¹. But equating CP with general objectives of international relations and diplomacy is to dismiss the concept, for a definition that embraces everything means nothing. Clearly, a less ambiguous, more precise definition is needed.

Despite the prevailing view that there is a clear need for better conflict prevention, the concept remains rather blurred and has not been well enough defined. Not many authors give a precise CP definition, mainly due to the fact that it represents a highly complex issue, and therefore is not an easy task to do. One can observe the debate addressed to the ways and means of implementation of CP measures, rather than to the aims of it. Still, some suggested definitions

¹ Max van der Stoep, "The Role of the CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in CSCE Preventive Diplomacy", in Sweden. Utrikesdepartementet, *The Challenge of Preventive Diplomacy. The experience of the CSCE*, Stockholm, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1994, p.33

differ as to what should be the ends of CP.

Stephen J. Stedman argues that while preventive diplomacy attempts to stop conflicts from becoming violent, CP aims at the supposed roots of such conflicts: poverty, environmental degradation, overpopulation, resource competition, and lack of legitimate political institutions². This approach could be seen as a minimalist one, defining CP from a strictly narrow perspective. A similar approach is reflected in the meaning of John Burton's CP: "prevention of an undesired event by removing its causes, and by creating conditions in which it can not occur"³.

Another, somewhat more broadly defined CP concept, has been suggested by Luc Reyhler anticipating that the term CP refers to a particular kind of conflict management, which can be distinguished from conflict avoidance and conflict resolution⁴. He further proceeds with the following definitions: "Efforts to avoid the development of contentious issues and the incompatibility of goals are called *conflict avoidance*; <...> and any activated measures at the stage when a conflict involves incompatible goals, hostile attitudes and disruptive behaviour - conflict settlement or in special cases *conflict resolution*"⁵. Reyhler's CP concept lies between conflict avoidance and conflict resolution, and encompasses "measures which contribute to the prevention of undesirable conflict behaviour once some situation involving goal incompatibility has arisen".⁶ Contrary to Stedman, Reyhler does not distinguish preventive diplomacy from CP, pointing out that both refer to similar efforts. However, one could question whether the distinction between conflict avoidance and CP, as suggested by Reyhler, is not too artificial.

A more comprehensive approach towards CP concept is maintained by Max van der Stoel, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Conflict prevention, he argues, "is an affair of multiple dimensions involving various time frames"⁷. Furthermore, a distinction between short-term and long-term conflict prevention is presented. Short-term CP aims at the prevention or containment of an immediate development towards escalation. According to van der Stoel, "it is in particular in the framework of short-term CP that early warning and preventive diplomacy have to play their crucial roles"⁸. The long-term or durable prevention of conflict, however, requires a long-term perspective: "it involves building a viable democracy and its institutions, creating confidence between a government and population, structuring the protection and promotion of human rights, the elimination of all forms of gender, and respect for minorities"⁹. These short-term and long-term aspects of CP are seen by van der Stoel as a

² Stephen John Stedman, "Alchemy for a New World Order: Overselling Preventive Diplomacy", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 74, no. 3, 1995, p.18

³ John W. Burton, "Conflict: Resolution and Prevention", London: Macmillan and New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1990, p.233

⁴ Luc Reyhler, "The Art of Conflict Prevention: Theory and Practice", in Werner Bauwens, Luc Reyhler (eds.), *The Art of Conflict Prevention*, London, New York, Brassey's, 1994 (Brassey's Atlantic Commentaries, 7), p.4

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Luc Reyhler makes observation that the concept of CP "refers to two types of effort; those which prevent behaviour defined within the relevant international system as undesirable, and those which attempt to confine conflict behaviour within clearly limits of permissible activity", see Luc Reyhler, *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷ Max van der Stoel, *ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*

part of an integrated strategy and in practice they can hardly be separated. Another element of CP, which could constitute a part of the mentioned long-term CP activities, has to do with post-conflict situations. Even if violence has come to an end, very often the underlying causes which led to the conflict have not been removed. Such "post-conflict conflict prevention", as van der Stoel names it, has to be fully integrated in and coordinated with the strategy of peacebuilding¹⁰. To sum up, the OSCE High Commissioner's definition, which is certainly based upon the comprehensive approach to security, incorporates such activities as early warning, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Following this comprehensive approach towards the CP concept, one could give an example of terminology even more clearly spelt out by Margaretha af Ugglas. Defining preventive diplomacy in a wide sense, she refers to its use in: 1) preventing disputes from arising between parties; 2) preventing disputes from developing into conflicts¹¹; 3) eliminating conflicts when they occur; and 4) containing and limiting the spread of those conflicts not amenable to swift elimination¹². In comparison to van der Stoel, who does not foresee the role of preventive diplomacy alone in "deep-going resolution" of disputes (not to mention resolution of conflicts)¹³, af Ugglas assigns preventive diplomacy to eventual "elimination of conflicts when they occur". This clearly represents a new, though controversial, aspect of CP concept, provided a distinction is made between conflict prevention and conflict settlement or resolution.

One of the most elaborate (though it has not been spared strong criticism¹⁴) work as far as a conceptual framework for conflict prevention and resolution is concerned is Boutros - Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace*. Although not giving a precise definition of CP, the Secretary General defines the terms of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building, which might be considered the principal and indispensable CP and resolution measures. According to Boutros Ghali, "preventive diplomacy is an action (1) to prevent disputes from arising between parties, (2) to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and (3) to limit the spread of the latter when they occur".¹⁵ In order to effectively exercise its mission, preventive diplomacy must accommodate such measures as confidence-building, early warning, fact finding, preventive deployment and, in some cases, demilitarized zones. In contrast to preventive diplomacy, the Secretary General defines *peacemaking* as an "action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations".¹⁶ All of the measures he then mentions, including negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, "good offices", are the same measures that can be used by preventive diplomacy or preventing the outbreak of armed conflict in general. A further conceptual confusion appears when the Secretary General

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 35

¹¹ We could presume that the term "conflict" here and further on is meant to be an "armed" or "violent" conflict. Otherwise the distinction between dispute and conflict is not very clear.

¹² Margaretha af Ugglas, "Conditions for Successful Preventive Diplomacy", in Sweden. Utrikesdepartementet, *The Challenge of Preventive Diplomacy. The experience of the CSCE*, Stockholm, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1994, p. 12

¹³ Max van der Stoel, *ibid.*, p. 38

¹⁴ Boutros-Ghali's CP terminology has caused some confusion among researchers and policy executors. See Trevor Findlay, "Multilateral conflict prevention, management and resolution", in: SIPRI Yearbook 1994, pp. 13-80.

¹⁵ Butros Butros Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace", United Nations, New York, 1995, p.45 (enumeration added).

¹⁶ Boutros-Ghali, *ibid.*, p. 45.

includes the use of military force, inter alia, by "peace-enforcement units", among the peacemaking activities. One could hardly agree that the use of force is peacemaking, rather than peace-enforcement or peace-keeping. The latter is defined by Boutros-Ghali as "the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well".¹⁷ Finally, *post-conflict peace-building* is an "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict".¹⁸ These measures may include disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, monitoring elections. As Boutros Ghali concludes, "preventive diplomacy seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out; peacemaking and peace-keeping are required to halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained; <...> post-conflict peace-building can prevent the recurrence of violence among nations and peoples"¹⁹. Drawing from this conclusion and the way in which he divides different techniques into categories, one can notice that some of the mentioned activities fall directly under the CP concept (i.e. confidence-building, fact-finding, early warning, monitoring elections), some are clearly the tools of conflict settlement or resolution (i.e. peace-enforcement), furthermore, some may be applicable in expanding the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict, containment of its spread and its resolution (i.e. peace-keeping, preventive deployment). However, one could perhaps agree with Trevor Findlay that "most tools of conflict prevention and resolution can in fact be used at any point of the 'conflict spectrum'"²⁰ and in this respect, *An Agenda for Peace* is misleading.

The interpretations of CP's aims discussed above provide a sound basis to suggest that **CP is a set of efforts, measures and actions which aim at:**

- **preventing disputes from arising between parties;**
- **preventing disputes from escalating into conflicts;**
- **containing and limiting the spread of those conflicts when they occur, and**
- **preventing post-conflict relapse into conflict by removing its causes and creating conditions in which it can not occur.**

The latter definition implies that CP is distinguished from conflict resolution which consequently can be defined as a set of activated measures at a stage when conflict occurs aiming at:

- stopping violent and coercive behaviour;
- enacting and enforcing cease-fires;
- bringing parties to an agreement through peaceful or, as applicable, forceful means.

For the further elaboration of the latter definitions as well as a certain typology of CP and resolution measures, see the matrix attached. The main idea behind this matrix is not to distinguish suggested conflict prevention and resolution measures from one another, conjoining them with different tasks of CP and resolution, but rather to show how they

¹⁷ Boutros-Ghali, *ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁸ Boutros-Ghali, *ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Trevor Findlay, *ibid.*, p. 17: "Observer missions, for instance, can be seen as a conflict prevention technique, a type of peace-keeping activity or a confidence-building measure in a post-conflict situation. Preventive diplomacy can occur at any stage of a conflict, either before the outbreak of armed clashes, or after they have begun, in order to prevent escalation in to full-scale war. Humanitarian intervention can be carried out during a conflict, such as in former Yugoslavia, or after it, as in the case of the Kurds of Iraq. Peace negotiations can take place at any point in the conflict spectrum."

intertwine and may be performed simultaneously or at varying points when dealing with conflict. One should keep in mind that, though matrixes usually pretend to be "innocently correct", this should not be taken for granted in this case.

II. Conflict Prevention: easier said than done

Since the achievements of CP measures in avoiding, preventing or constraining conflicts are not very impressive it is worthwhile to raise the question: What makes CP successful? There is a limitation for giving a simple answer to the latter question. There are many factors related to conflict as such, -- namely, local political, military and social conditions differ from one conflict situation to another, and many political disputes do not always lead to use of armed force. Whether or not a dispute becomes violent or is prevented may be determined as much by the nature of its causes as by whether or not anyone has done anything to prevent it.²¹ Thus, it is difficult to draw a clear judgement to what extent deliberate preventive action makes the difference between a peaceful or a violent outcome of conflict. Even so, having in mind the assumption that some conflicts are not inevitable and that some can be prevented, one can try to indicate more generally what the factors are that determine success or failure of preventive actions.

What makes CP successful?

One of the conditions for successful conflict prevention is its *timeliness*. The widely accepted belief that the earlier third parties take preventive action, the more effective it is, finds support in general theories of conflict escalation. Clearly, the earlier a preventive effort addresses the dangers of potential military conflict, the less likely it is that conflict will materialise. Yet timeliness will not always mean involvement early on. It rather has to do with whether inducements to resolve disputes peacefully can be effective before the parties have actually engaged in conflict. In other words, as Christoph Bertram has put it: "the situation must be ripe for outside mediation and sensitive to outside pressures".²² Some analysts suggest that third-party intervention must "wait" until the disputants have already reached some sort of stalemate following an initial engagement or have attempted themselves to come to terms, a situation otherwise known as "ripeness for resolution".²³ Lund, however, suggests that the latter theory is suspect, arguing that once violence has begun, it escalates because of "an interactive process of attack and retaliation that leads to a self-perpetuating cycle. To end such a cycle, a mutual hurting stalemate may be indeed necessary, but the cycle itself is not inevitable."²⁴ In very much the same way as Bertram, Lund proposes the notion of "ripeness for prevention", which is a timely action that is neither "too little, too late" nor "too much, too soon".²⁵ To sum up, one could say that preventive action is best launched at points when sufficient interest and motivation on the part of the disputants to seek a peaceful resolution already exist, yet it is not so early that the disputants are incited to intensify their confrontation²⁶. Early action is vital if

²¹ Michael s. Lund, "Preventing Violent Conflicts. A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy", Draft Manuscript, United States Institute of Peace, October 1995, p. 90.

²² Christoph Bertram, "Multilateral Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution", *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 4, p. 73.

²³ Quoted in Michael S.Lund, *ibid*, p.95 and 151.

²⁴ Michael S. Lund, *ibid*, p. 152.

²⁵ as an example of timing representing the "ripeness of prevention" is often given the preventive action of the HCNM to help resolve the dispute between the Estonian government and the Russian-speaking community in Estonia over proposed language laws; the problems of action "too little, too late" were illustrated in the case of Balkan war.

²⁶ Intervention taken too early, may itself fuel tensions by creating an awareness of a dispute, stimulating demands

violence is to be preempted and the disputants are not to entrench themselves in rigid positions from which it is difficult to withdraw.

Another condition for success, which is closely related to timeliness, is *leverage*. Without it, preventive action is reduced to appeals which the parties in the conflict can heed or reject without having to pay for a negative response or gaining an advantage from a positive one. One of the important guidelines for conflict prevention is that it is not likely to be successful if it only consists of diplomats proposing solutions and urging reasoned compromise. Jennone Walker puts it this way: "Mediation efforts must be supported by a combination of political, economic and military muscle that promises (or threatens) an effective mix of pain and gain.<...> (Moreover:) It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the credible threat of economic or military action should be an aid to mediation, not an alternative to it".²⁷ Lund names it "muscular mediation" - that is, a provision of rewards sufficient to gain disputants' compliance and/or imposition of penalties adequate to deter their noncompliance with processes of peaceful negotiation.²⁸ For example, leverage existed when a compromise over the status of the Russian minority in Estonia and Latvia was worked out. The incentive for reaching a compromise there was a powerful one: not to do so could have risked further integration of the two states into Western Europe, and, most obvious, would have led to the delay in the departure of Russian armed forces. Equally, Russia was provided an incentive to keep to schedule with its troop withdrawal by the threat that U.S. and other Western economic aid would otherwise have been withdrawn. In the Balkan war, instead, as Bertram argues, the incentives or disincentives that existed were usually generated by internal events, not external pressures.²⁹ In conclusion, however, it may be said that the level of inducement that third parties must bring to bear in terms of carrots and/or sticks is relative to the scale and stage of development of the conflict being addressed.

A prudent selection of a variety of political, diplomatic and military instruments or "multifaceted action", as Lund calls it, is usually presented as a vital condition for successful conflict prevention. Moreover, those actions must be in *close coordination* among the third parties participating in the preventive effort. Parties to a conflict generally need more than a combination of carrots and sticks but also a variety of other conflict prevention measures, which might include assistance in alleviating distrust, promoting reconciliation, establishing channels through which to pursue negotiations, and formulating settlements. Two good examples of an attempt to employ a number of preventive actions, while at the same time managing coordination among the different actors involved might be the cases of Macedonia and Estonia. The effectiveness of preventive effort in the former depended on the cumulative impact of U.S. threats of military action and the presence of the UN peacekeeping force, the CSCE observation mission, several NGO dialogue and reconciliation projects, and the

and expectations, and provoking countermeasures from one or other party.

²⁷ Jennone Walker quoted in: Dennis J.D. Sandole, "Ethnic Conflict as Low Intensity Conflict in Post-Cold War Europe: Causes, Conditions, Prevention", in: Report: "ILIC '95. The First International Workshop on Low Intensity Conflict", Stockholm, Sweden, 29-31 March 1995, p. 33.

²⁸ Michael S. Lund, *ibid*, p.95.

²⁹ Christoph Bertram, *ibid*, p. 76, where the author argues that "prior to the outbreak of hostilities, other incentives might have worked (in the Balkans). Indeed, the EU promised credits to underpin its request that the Yugoslav Federation be maintained, and threatened to withhold them if force were to be used. But this was too late and too little; <...> Instead, an arms embargo was imposed which in practice affected only the Bosnian Army, not Serb or Croat forces, thus doing nothing to discourage the latter from <...> continuing the war"

widespread diplomatic recognition of the new Macedonian government. Together, these official and nonofficial actions signalled to the various factions and neighbours a significant international presence and interest in Macedonia.³⁰ In Estonia, a fruitful interplay between a number of different CSCE instruments was established, which highly contributed to the effective settlement of dispute.³¹ By contrast, in the cases of failure of preventive diplomacy, like in the Balkans, only one or two preventive instruments were employed and these were targeted on only one aspect of the local dispute.³² In complex situations with a variety of needs, importance must be placed on cooperation and coordination among third-party actors. Where cooperation and unity of purpose among third parties in a given conflict are weak or absent, preventive effectiveness is compromised.³³

The prospects for preventing conflict are strongly determined by *the degree of political support or tolerance* extended by *a third-party actors*, be it major powers, regional powers or neighbouring states, towards the efforts to settle the dispute. Rather often the lack of progress in conflict resolution is not due to technical factors like the low level of mediation or insufficient competence or vision on the part of preventers, but to the extent to which political support from the actors outside the conflict is exercised and consensus among them is achieved. It has been argued that the interests of a majority of OSCE countries seemed to be limited to containing the Yugoslav conflict within its boundaries and to preventing a possible spill-over into neighbouring regions.³⁴ Reyhler describes this lack of interest as due to "the weakly developed strategic culture in Europe", pointing out that "the 'we-ness' feeling of many Western Europeans does not seem to reach far beyond their Little Europe".³⁵ This example, though might be argued, clearly explains the lack of political support. The influence, on the other hand, for good or ill, of major players can be exercised in a variety of ways. Lund suggests that one way is through approving or vetoing the involvement of a regional organisation of which they are members. Another way local actors as well as major powers can exert themselves is through the economic and/or diplomatic influence they enjoy in a given region.³⁶ In some regions, several outside or regional actors may have strategic interests to get involved. Individually and collectively they may have a tremendous impact on whether preventive action is taken. This

³⁰ Michael S. Lund, *ibid*, p. 104-105.

³¹ As a Chairman-in-Office, Sweden conducted an intensive dialogue with the Government of Estonia and other CSCE Governments on both troop withdrawal and the situation of Russian-speaking population; the discussion of the troop withdrawal issue in the Committee of Senior Officials helped put the Government of Russia under pressure; on citizenship and language issues, the High Commissioner on National Minorities pleaded the cause of the larger European community of nations with the Government of Estonia; the CSCE Mission to Estonia assisted the HCNM in the preparatory stage, and also in the implementation phase, of his operations. see Margaretha af Ugglas, *ibid*, p. 25.

³² Bertram has argued that the main vehicle chosen to influence events in the Balkans, that is the UN presence, has been "designed and equipped not to shape the outcome of the war, but to accompany it, primarily through humanitarian efforts", which eventually "only served to constrain whatever more 'muscular' intervention was being contemplated", see Christoph Bertram, *ibid*, p. 75.

³³ "The EC decision to recognise Croatia, for example, was taken against the wishes of the UN negotiator Cyrus Vance, who felt recognition placed further strains on the relationships among the republican leaders and increased the difficulties of reaching a political settlement": see Michael S. Lund, *ibid*, p. 104.

³⁴ Luc Reyhler, *ibid*, p. 10

³⁵ Luc Reyhler, *ibid*, p. 11, where he further elaborates that this "weak strategic culture" embraces several illusions: for example, the illusion of distance, or the feeling that one should not be too concerned with faraway conflicts; and the illusion of time, or the believe that important decisions can be postponed to the distant future.

³⁶ Example being Russian economic, political and military dominance in its "near abroad", which allows it play active roles in the conflicts in Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine, and the Transcaucasus.

has been illustrated in the Baltic states, which have historically enjoyed close relations with the West and the Nordic countries, where third-party preventive activity has increased as a counterbalance to Russia. On the contrary, the lack of interest in a particular region among the major powers may cause disputes there to be neglected.³⁷

The success of preventive efforts is also conditional upon *political support from the parties to the dispute*. It has been emphasised by Lund, that "peaceful outcomes are more likely when the leaders of the parties to the dispute are moderate in their words, actions, and policies, make conciliatory gestures, and seek bilateral or multilateral negotiations and bargaining to resolve the issues in dispute."³⁸ The chances of reaching a peaceful outcome were significantly enhanced in the cases of the Hungary - Slovakia dispute over Gabčikovo-Nagymaros hydroelectric project, the Estonia - Russia controversy over the interests of national minorities, and the breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1993, where the respective governments displayed greater restraint and showed themselves willing to accommodate the interests of other parties through negotiation and consultation. An example to the contrary, was the CSCE effort in preventive diplomacy in Kosovo, Sanjak and Vojvodina with the initial approval of the government of Belgrade. When the Belgrade authorities chose to withdraw that support, the local CSCE missions in the region had to cease their activities.³⁹ One has to agree with af Ugglas that no conflict or dispute can be solved for the conflicting parties by a third-party alone; only the parties themselves can do so, with the assistance of a third-party.

Another set of conditions for successful preventive action has to do with *conflict prevention facilities* which refer, among others, to *involvement of encompassing institution, effective decision making*, and *adequate infrastructure*.

It is of great advantage if all the parties to the dispute are already members of the same organisation, even more so if that organisation authorises interference in its members' internal affairs.⁴⁰ The advantage in having an encompassing institution is that mediators can concentrate on the substance of the issue, instead of having first to work out the procedures. A good example here is the way in which NATO has consistently been able to prevent military conflict between two of its members, Greece and Turkey. The procedural matters have a great impact on the level of urgency of preventive action, thus, on its effectiveness.

It is believed that the issues pertinent to decision making within international organisations have an impact on the effectiveness of prevention. In all the regional organisations, decisions are made on the basis of consensus. The OSCE decision-making process is being perceived as the most cumbersome. Certainly, if the regional organisations are to carry out preventive actions effectively, the process of decision making must be streamlined, while respecting an organisations' preference for consensual rules and practices. Although an obstacle, the impact of the decision making system should not be exaggerated. More important is the lack of will and consensus among the countries concerned.

Effective conflict prevention is also dependent on efficient contingency planning, availability of an adequate infrastructure for peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building, and stronger financial support for these from the nations. It is clear however, that though conflict prevention is generally considered a cost-effective investment in security, it will require more resources

³⁷ As there has been the case in Moldova, or now in Chechnya.

³⁸ Michael S.Lund, *ibid*, p. 111.

³⁹ Margaretha af Ugglas, *ibid*, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Christoph Bertram, *ibid*, p. 75

to be truly effective.

The above list of conditions is open-ended. All of them will rarely be met. However, as Bertram puts it, "if the record of conflict resolution is unimpressive, <...> it is because the failures are evident, the successes often not. <...> The problem is that, when diplomacy fails, it fails visibly; where it succeeds, the causes for success are often imperceptible."⁴¹

III. Some dilemmas faced when applying Conflict Prevention measures

There are certainly some aspects of conflict prevention which present great dilemmas for both international and national actors. Some of them, those that most often appear to be the subject of examination by contemporary scholars, are touched upon here. The first issue, namely - *external intervention versus sovereignty*, has to do with emergence of intra-state conflict as a new post-Cold War challenge to security. The other two conflict prevention dilemmas are pertinent to its practical application: *confidentiality versus transparency*; *the relationship between diplomacy and military force*.

External intervention versus sovereignty. At present, conflict prevention in an international community formed by states that are fiercely suspicious of external interference in their internal matters is hampered by the constraints imposed by sovereignty. Because few inter-state conflicts have occurred recently, while the number of ethnic and other national conflicts has remained high⁴², conflict prevention no longer means only watching for cross-border aggression. Its mission is rather to look for signs of national crises such as gross violations of human rights, genocide, ethnic cleansing, the collapse of states, and military or executive usurpation of established democratic institutions. To exercise this mission, some kind of intervention is required. However, the widely accepted limitations on external intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states,⁴³ has restricted the possibilities of action by international and national actors. Hence the dilemma: the predominance of these fundamental principles is being challenged by human and minority rights, the principle of intervention for humanitarian purposes, and, in general, by the demand to cope with intra-state conflict. In the case of Yugoslavia, the constraint imposed by the sovereignty of states was among the factors that impeded earlier action. In terms of international law, the conflicts in Croatia or in Bosnia-Herzegovina were, until the international recognition of those states, an internal matter within a sovereign state. Does this preclude all international action to prevent potential internal conflicts? There are some arguments that the principle of non-interference is not absolute, for the UN Charter allows for application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII, and limits non-intervention to matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of state.⁴⁴ Most countries in Central and Eastern Europe more or less willingly accept international interference in their internal affairs concerning minorities. Still the notion that national crises are a legitimate international concern is far from being universally accepted; this is illustrated

⁴¹ Cristoph Bertram, *ibid*, p. 67.

⁴² As referred in the study of Margareta Sollenberg and Peter Wallensteen, "Major armed conflicts", in SIPRI Yearbook, 1995, p. 21: "As was the case in 1993, no 'classic' interstate war was waged in 1994 - that is, the basic incompatibility in each case was not a dispute over territory or government between two states but between parties within states..."

⁴³ As stated in Art. 2.7 of the Charter of the United Nations, also as one of the Helsinki principles.

⁴⁴ Gabriel Munuera, "Preventing Armed Conflict in Europe: Lessons from Recent Experience", Paris, Western European Union, Institute for Security Studies, 1994 (Chaillot Paper, 15-16), p. 94.

by the conflict in Chechnya. Serious efforts should be undertaken to resolve the fundamental tensions between these international principles.⁴⁵

Confidentiality versus transparency. Conflict prevention is very often challenged by the problem of how to strike a balance between "keeping quiet" and "going public", especially when exercising such preventive measures as negotiation and mediation. Confidentiality is important since parties directly involved often feel they can be more cooperative and forthcoming if they know that the discussions will not be revealed to the outside world. The risk of escalation of a conflict can be considerably reduced if a low profile is adopted. There is, however, an inherent contradiction between the demand for confidentiality and the need for political support that has been emphasised as one of the conditions for success of conflict prevention. But how can this support be accomplished if the substance of the negotiations is known only to the disputants and a limited number of actors concerned? There is no given answer to this dilemma. In search for a delicate balance between confidentiality and transparency, af Ugglas, then the Chairman-in Office of the CSCE, commenting the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process pointed out that transparency was important but ... "it is equally clear that the parties can not always be expected to compromise in open meetings attended by representatives of eleven governments".⁴⁶ The problem of the balance between public and quiet diplomacy is also built into the institution of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. It is recognised widely that its key to success is early action, however as confidential as possible.⁴⁷

Relationship between diplomacy and military force. As has been argued in the second chapter, one of the conditions for success of conflict prevention activities is application of a variety of political, diplomatic and military instruments. The greatest difficulty here appears to be how to make military force support diplomatic efforts in undertaking preventive activities. The relationship between diplomacy and military force is a particularly subtle one. As Bertram has pointed out: "too little force will be irrelevant, even counterproductive; too much could not only destroy diplomacy but also draw the powers using military force into a conflict ...".⁴⁸ It has been argued that the most effective way of assisting diplomacy by military force is to threaten its use, not to use it. In other words, it is deterrence which does not aim at military solutions or victory, but at dissuading conflict parties from using force, and persuading them to come to peaceful agreement.⁴⁹ Certainly, this has to do with the leverage discussed earlier in the paper. Still, one wonders what the relationship between the civilian and military components should be when the latter is actually involved in preventive action, i.e. peace-keeping or peace-building activities. The objectives of the military in peace-keeping operations are not "winning", "imposing solutions", or - what would in any case be impossible - "solving"

⁴⁵ Luc Reyhler and Werner Bauwens suggest that the mentioned principles could be more elaborated, or guidelines should be provided on how to reconcile them with each other. See Luc Reyhler and Werner Bauwens, "The organisation of Conflict Prevention" in: Werner Bauwens, Luc Reyhler (eds.), "The Art of Conflict Prevention", London, New York, Brassey's, 1994 (Brassey's Atlantic Commentaries, 7) p. 217.

⁴⁶ Margaretha af Ugglas, *ibid*, p. 27.

⁴⁷ Margaretha af Ugglas, *ibid*, p. 28; also Ettore Greco, "The OSCE after Budapest Summit: The Need for Specialization", *The International Spectator*, Vol. XXX, No. 2, April-June 1995, p. 15.

⁴⁸ Christoph Bertram, *ibid*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ Bertram suggests that deterrence, as a political concept, applies as much today as it did in the pre-nuclear past: "it is difficult to think of a better 'force-multiplier' to diplomacy than military deterrence". see Christoph Bertram, *ibid*, p. 78.

(by military means) the conflict. Instead, its tasks might be to allow for international relief operations, to separate the warring factions or patrol borders or other sensitive areas, to ensure a cease-fire, etc. These activities are often a necessary, but not sufficient condition for collaborative resolution of the conflict. Such activity does not undermine the military's role, but on the contrary, expands and enhances it.

This list of dilemmas is an exhaustive one. The following issues are deserving of further attention: selection of critical conflicts, in other words - what kind of conflicts should be tackled first?; state versus international organisation, as two actors in preventing and managing conflicts; positive and negative roles of non-governmental organisations in conflict prevention.⁵⁰ All in all, some of these and other problems and dilemmas are unavoidable, some of them can be prevented, but all of them must be studied.

⁵⁰ These and other problems have been identified in a study concluded by the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). see Bernard von Plate, Reinhardt Rummel, Peter Schmidt, "Conflict Escalation Control Policy", September 1995, Ebenhausen SWP, p. 10,24.

ANNEX 1

DEFINITION ==>	CONFLICT PREVENTION aims at:				CONFLICT RESOLUTION aims at:		
ACTIVITIES	1) preventing disputes from arising between parties	2) preventing disputes from developing into conflicts	3) containing and limiting the spread of conflicts	4) preventing post-conflict relapse into conflict	1) stopping violent or coercive behaviour	2) enacting and enforcing cease-fires	3) bringing hostile parties to agreement through peaceful / forceful means
Early warning	*			*			
"Good offices"		*	*				*
Mediation		*			*	*	*
Negotiations		*	*		*	*	*
"Track-two" dialogues		*		*	*		*
International legal instruments (ICJ)		*			*		*
Arbitration and conciliation		*		*			*

Sanctions			*		*		*
Economic and humanitarian aid		*	*	*		*	
Demilitarized zones, "safe havens"			*	*	*	*	
Arms embargoes		*	*	*			
Disarmament				*		*	
Fact-finding and observation		*		*			
CBMs	*			*			
Pre-emptive peace-keeping		*					
Peace-keeping in active conflict situations			*		*	*	
Deterrence policies		*	*	*	*	*	*
Use, or threat of, limited shows of force			*		*	*	*

Major military interventions					*	*	*
Security guarantees	*			*			
Democracy building	*	*		*			*