

The Global Regime for Armed Conflict

Issue Brief

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Scope of the Challenge

Preventing armed conflict, keeping peace, and rebuilding war-torn states remain among the most challenging problems for the international community. Every year, at least 250,000 people [die](#) (PDF) in armed conflicts, most of which occur within, rather than between, states. Armed conflict and its aftermath corrode virtually every aspect of society: law and order, economic development, education, healthcare, human rights, natural resource extraction, and the environment. The World Bank estimates the global economic costs for all conflicts each year to reach at least [\\$100 billion](#). Furthermore, conflict prevention, mitigation, and response are global concerns, because instability can (and often does) spill across borders and trigger piracy, drug trafficking, small-arms sales, environmental exploitation, and terrorism.

After the shocking mass atrocities in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s, the United Nations (UN) and several regional organizations mandated new initiatives to address politically motivated violence. The UN reforms improved its ability to monitor political developments, plan and support peacekeeping operations, and coordinate mechanisms charged with peace-building. Meanwhile, new arrangements

within the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), Organization of American States, and other regional organizations have been more responsive to instability and violence within their regions —albeit with varying levels of engagement and capabilities.

But these international instruments have had a mixed record of success. International organizations still pay disproportionate attention to conflict response, too often neglecting conflict prevention as a tool for managing armed conflicts. Most peacekeeping efforts still don't have enough manpower, money, or equipment to fulfill their overstretched mandates. And the international community has too often failed to foster peace and recovery in war-torn states.

Multilateral action can be an effective response to armed conflict, but both international and regional approaches need to be enhanced and coordinated if they are to effectively address the range of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and rebuilding problems facing the world.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Overall assessment: Unprecedented attention and reform, yet patchy focus and uncertain goals

In recent years, the multilateral institutions and governments of many donor states have devoted increased attention to the challenges of international conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and postconflict peacebuilding. Over the past decade in particular, the international community has begun to develop new tools and institutions to prevent and manage conflict. Partly as a result, interstate and intrastate conflicts have declined globally by approximately **40 percent** since 1992. Although governments and international organizations continue to focus on crises like Iraq and Afghanistan, notable successes involving multilateral conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding efforts have been made in less prominent conflicts, such as Timor-Leste and Liberia.

Yet the international instruments that attempt to prevent the outbreak of conflict or end fighting remain unwieldy and, at times, ineffective.

Among the actors that exist to end conflict, the United Nations (UN) plays an indispensable role. Created in 1945 "to save future generations from the scourge of war," the UN enjoys universal legitimacy and legal status, thanks to its **charter**. During the Cold War, the UN found its practical role in international peace and security circumscribed. The end of the bipolar confrontation and the increase in the number of intrastate conflicts in the early 1990s, however, rejuvenated the UN's role in global conflict management. In 1992, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali released **An Agenda for Peace**, outlining how the UN should think about and reform conflict prevention,

mediation, and peacekeeping in a post-Cold War context. It also introduced the new concept of postconflict peacebuilding to support conflict resolution and prevent a relapse into violence. Over the ensuing two decades, the UN has created or strengthened several of its programs, departments, and agencies charged with anticipating, preventing, and responding to conflict.

Within the UN, the Security Council has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, including the authority to establish peacekeeping operations, impose international sanctions, and authorize military action. The UN also manages conflict through its secretariat, which includes the [Department of Peacekeeping Operations](#) (created in 1992) and the [Department of Field Support](#) (created in 2007). The [Department of Political Affairs](#) (DPA), established in 1992, is the secretariat's focal point for conflict prevention, mitigation, and response.

Other UN departments, agencies, and programs have also adapted their mandates to operate more effectively in conflict environments. These include the [UN Development Program](#) (UNDP) and its [Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Response](#); the [Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs](#); the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#); the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#); the [Office for Disarmament Affairs](#); and the [World Food Program](#).

In the wake of the shocking mass violence in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s, the UN created a series of new initiatives and reforms to improve conflict management. These included targeted sanctions to deter or end violence, expert panels to monitor the effectiveness of targeted sanctions on peace spoilers, and an increase in the use of special envoys and special representatives to the secretary-general. These advancements have been assisted by a relatively more [active](#) (PDF) UN Security Council willing to authorize peacekeeping missions and sanctions to mitigate inter- and intrastate conflict. Most recently, in 2005, the UN created the [Peacebuilding Commission](#) (PBC) to foster integrated strategies for sustainable peace and recovery in the aftermath of armed conflict by securing resources and coordinating political, security, and development actors.

Other multilateral bodies, regional organizations, and innovative partnerships have also developed deeper capacities for conflict prevention and response. The [World Bank](#) in July 2008 established a [State and Peace-building Fund](#) to support peace-building projects in fragile, conflict-prone, and conflict-affected states. The [International Monetary Fund](#) has expanded its emergency assistance funding streams to cover postconflict assistance. It has also been more actively involved in building the capacity to establish financial and fiscal systems in postconflict countries, including Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Bosnia.

Regional organizations—including [African Union](#), [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#),

[European Union](#), and [Organization of American States](#)—have also created mechanisms to better respond to violence within their regions, albeit with varying levels of engagement and capabilities.

Moreover, innovative partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society have established new norms and practices for conflict prevention and stabilization. The [Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative](#) and the [Kimberley Process](#) restrict governments and companies that exploit resources that fund and exacerbate armed conflicts.

Finally, a number of leading bilateral donors, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and the Netherlands, are investing in their own conflict prevention and response capabilities, such as enhanced early-warning systems, rapidly deployable civilian and military personnel, dedicated funding streams to conflict-prone and conflict-affected states, and interagency planning processes aimed at securing "[whole of government](#)" effort in conflict-plagued countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Despite the proliferation of new multilateral and bilateral instruments, significant challenges remain. First, conflict prevention efforts—including early-warning systems—receive scant attention compared with peacekeeping and postconflict interventions. Second, the UN's peace operations—which have [increased dramatically](#) (PDF) in number and scope—have placed severe financial and personnel strains on the world body. The UN Security Council has contributed to this overstretch, authorizing and frequently extending the life of peace operations without adequate planning and with unrealistic mandates. Aside from major [troop-contributing countries](#) (TCCs) (PDF) like Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Nigeria, the majority of UN member states have not often kept up their end of the bargain by committing the requisite number of troops and uniformed personnel necessary to enforce mission mandates. Third, the international community's efforts to foster peace and recovery in war-torn states leave much to be desired. Despite the creation of the UN Peace-building Commission and numerous interventions that have helped decrease intrastate conflicts, the international community is still struggling to build coherent and coordinated policies. The PBC itself has only coordinated activities in four postconflict countries. These challenges are exacerbated by poor management, corruption scandals, charges of sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers, and loose coordination among the UN, regional organizations, and other players involved in a peace operations.

Conflict prevention: *Strides in curbing interstate conflicts; major shortcomings in addressing intrastate conflicts*

Success in preventing conflicts from emerging or escalating has been mixed. On the one hand, conflicts between countries have declined markedly over the past sixty years, largely as a result of collective security agreements, a balance in nuclear weapons, and increased economic interdependence. In 2010,

the [Uppsala Conflict](#) database reported zero interstate conflicts.

Conflicts within states (including those involving nonstate actors), however, have increased since the end of the Cold War. They now constitute the majority of high-intensity conflicts, Somalia and Pakistan being current examples. In 2010, [Conflict Barometer](#) (PDF) reported that nearly 75 percent—approximately 269 of the total conflicts monitored—were intrastate. Moreover, the recurrence of violence within ten years in approximately [40 percent](#) of all postconflict societies further underscores the need for more robust conflict prevention.

And yet, the multilateral tools currently available to reduce political instability and the likelihood of armed conflict within states are generally underdeveloped, uncoordinated, and deprived of the political authority necessary for effective application. In addition, when facing internal political crises, some member states invoke principles of state sovereignty to deter international institutions from carrying out any effective role in conflict prevention.

The principal international body dealing with conflict prevention for interstate conflicts is the [UN Security Council](#). However, by virtue of its political dynamics and the dependence on a convergence of political wills among member states, it remains deficient as an instrument for conflict prevention. Moving beyond the UN Security Council, the UN in general—as well as most regional organizations—has a poor record of preventing intrastate conflicts, such as civil wars, coups d'état, and state-sponsored mass killings. Over the past ten years, though, growing awareness of the costs of delayed intervention has increased the UN's efforts to prevent violence.

The international community uses a variety of conflict prevention tools. Together they target structural causes of conflict, conduct early warnings and assessments of emerging conflicts, promote cooperative measures such as mediation and dispute resolution, and act coercively through sanctions. Each mechanism offers a unique opportunity for avoiding or reducing the impact of conflict. For instance, early-warning systems provide a comprehensive picture of the drivers of potential conflicts as well as possible entry points for prevention. Once a budding conflict has been identified, preventive diplomacy and mediation help contain disputes before they escalate in scope or spread geographically.

The primary UN body providing early warning and assessment and mediation support is the [Department of Political Affairs](#) (DPA). The DPA produces analytical reports and briefing notes warning of incipient crises, and its specialized [Mediation Support Unit](#) (MSU) facilitates training of peacemaking mediators, supports specific mediation processes, and provides a databank of peacemaking experience. The MSU also deploys staff to work in individual crises at short notice through its Mediation Support Standby Team. In addition, the DPA manages eleven political missions that cross a range of activities, including preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding support. These

missions vary in terms of mandate and capacity, but their [shared objective](#) (PDF) is to "launch and support political processes" to prevent violence.

The UN and regional organizations rely heavily on [special and personal representatives](#) (SRSGs), envoys, and high-profile leaders to inform and oversee negotiations specific to a nation or an issue. The UN has also experimented with establishing regional officers as platforms for SRSGs tasked with regional conflict prevention. The UN has had success using mediation resources in over a dozen conflict zones, ranging from [border disputes](#) between Nigeria and Cameroon to civil conflicts in [Tajikistan](#) to high-intensity conflict in Timor-Leste. The African Union is working to develop a stand-alone mediation capacity, and has had some success in collaborating with other actors, as in helping to broker the [Sudanese Comprehensive Peace Agreement](#) in 2005.

Several regional organizations have also developed early-warning systems that vary in scope and efficacy. The [European Union](#) and the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](#) both have relatively advanced systems. The [Organization of American States](#) (OAS) has made some important strides toward playing a more active, preventive role by prompting democratic principles and leveraging various international dispute settlement mechanisms, such as the secretary-general's "good offices" and use of "special missions." In a 2011 General Assembly meeting, OAS member states proposed a formal early-warning system to prevent coups, although plans have yet to move forward. In Africa, the [most developed](#) (PDF) include the [Economic Community of West African States Early Warning and Early Response Network](#) and the [Intergovernmental Authority on Development Conflict Early Warning Response Mechanism in Africa](#). Despite updates, both systems remain limited in coverage and response. Increased bilateral support from major donors for early-warning and mediation efforts, including through U.S. Agency for International Development [initiatives](#) and the EU [African Peace Facility](#) (PDF), have strengthened preventive efforts. However, conflict analysis is still in its infancy and limited early warning is not adequately integrated with policy responses.

The UN has also managed a preventive deployment mission through the [UN Preventive Deployment Force to Macedonia](#) from 1995 to 1999. The mission monitored and reported on the security situation along the borders with Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and is widely regarded as a success that led to sustained peace and stability in the region. The lack of a permanent, standing military force at the disposal of the UN, however, limits the establishment of more preventive deployment missions.

Over the last ten years, early-warning systems, preventive diplomacy, and mediation have benefited from increased focus and new instruments. Anecdotal evidence from the UN and experts points to the success of conflict prevention tools in reducing armed conflicts. Prevention still remains

underappreciated, however, especially compared with efforts dedicated to peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

Strengthening peacekeeping operations: *Expanded scope and pace, yet overstretched*

Multilateral peacekeeping efforts have become more complex and common in recent years. Over the past decade, the United Nations (UN) has been the largest actor in such efforts, having supervised a number of successful peacekeeping operations, including most recently in the West African countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Nevertheless, peace operations are increasingly inadequately resourced with overstretched mandates. Against a backdrop of growing transnational threats and competing agendas, the global demand for peacekeeping has exceeded the global willingness to support peace operations.

Multilateral peacekeeping has evolved significantly since its origins in the early post-World War II era. Although not mentioned in the [UN Charter](#), peacekeeping was predominantly conceived as a way to keep peace between states by inserting observers or lightly armed military forces to maintain ceasefires between opposing sides. Over time, both the scope of peace operations and the relevant actors involved have expanded dramatically. Most peace operations today occur in the context of intrastate conflicts, including those that may be still ongoing, and have more extensive ambitions—namely, to help countries ravaged by conflict create the necessary conditions for a durable peace. Such multidimensional efforts include humanitarian, military, political, and development actors who work toward intertwined goals of promoting security, advancing good governance and the rule of law, and paving the way for economic development.

Over the past fifteen years, the UN has been called on to engage in peacekeeping efforts in more countries and in more complex environments as the world has witnessed civil wars, genocide, mass atrocities, terrorism, and radical Islamist insurgencies. Ten years ago, 27,000 UN peacekeepers (or blue helmets, as they are commonly called) were deployed in fifteen operations. Today the UN oversees sixteen operations and over 98,000 peacekeepers around the world. The main department dealing with peacekeeping at the UN is the [Department of Peacekeeping Operations](#) (DPKO), which has an annual budget of [\\$7.8 billion](#) (PDF) dedicated to peacekeeping missions. In addition, in 2007 the UN established a [Department of Field Support](#) (DFS) to help bridge gaps between headquarters and field staff.

The bulk of multilateral peacekeeping efforts have been established under UN operational control, and deployed armed forces work under the auspices of a particular UN operation but remain members of their national armed forces.

The [UN Security Council](#) has the ultimate responsibility for authorizing and (at the highest level) supervising peace operations. The role of the UN Security Council implies that UN peacekeeping missions are—for better or worse—subject to political bias in terms of their mandates. UN peacekeeping operations can be tied to specific chapters of the UN Charter. Generally, operations are associated with Chapter VI, "Pacific Resolution of Disputes," although Chapter VI has never been invoked per se. More recently, the UN Security Council has authorized missions under Chapter VII, "Actions with Respect to the Threats, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression," which allows peacekeeping operations to use force for defense. The UN Security Council has also invoked Chapter VIII, "Regional Arrangements," to help cement political consensus for a mission.

In keeping with Chapter VIII of the charter, the UN Security Council can authorize peacekeeping efforts by regional organizations or by an ad hoc coalition of countries. It has, for instance, authorized or supported the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#) (NATO) and [Economic Community of West African States](#) to engage in peacekeeping efforts in Libya, Afghanistan, Liberia, the former Yugoslavia, and Sierra Leone. Several regional organizations, such as the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), have also authorized peacekeeping missions (usually as a result of an UN-decreed mandate), and developed their own institutional capacity to plan, manage, and deploy peacekeepers. Increasingly, regional organizations are also acting in concert with the UN to form hybrid peacekeeping operations. In Sudan, the UN Security Council has mandated a peacekeeping mission commanded by joint UN-AU political and military officials, and in Somalia it has authorized a peacekeeping mission financed by the UN, but led by the AU. Similarly, in the past seven years the first wholly military European Security and Defense Policy missions in Macedonia and the Chad were all "bridging" missions where European soldiers made security and logistics preparations for the larger UN peacekeeping forces.

Despite notable successes, the UN and other multilateral and regional peacekeeping operations have suffered several major setbacks. The decade following the Cold War revealed serious shortcomings, as UN peacekeeping failed in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda. In response to these failures, the UN initiated a series of restructures and reforms, under the auspices of the [Report of the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations](#)—otherwise known as the Brahimi Report—released in 2000. The report highlighted UN deficiencies in its conflict management capabilities and called for a robust doctrine with realistic mandates, and the strengthening of information-collection and peacekeeping capabilities across UN agencies. In part because of these reforms, the UN has improved on its peacekeeping efforts leading to successes in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. However, despite the reform process, a number of problems remain that hamper the military and political success of peacekeeping operations.

First, UN Security Council mandates continue to be exceedingly difficult to implement with the forces

and capabilities marshaled by troop-contributing countries, leading many to fear that the mandates themselves are unrealistic. Given that the field commanders have too few forces, they are required to constantly prioritize which mandated tasks to attempt to implement within their area of operations. Correcting this problem will require the UN Security Council to rein in its ambitions and define clearly achievable peacekeeping goals.

Second, because the UN does not maintain its own standing army, it must rely on prospective troop-contributing countries to supply forces and equipment. Generating a fully fledged peacekeeping force takes nine to twelve months on average, though deployment times can vary substantially based on political will (on receiving an expanded mandate, the [UN Interim Force in Lebanon](#) grew fourfold in two months, whereas the [UN/AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur](#) (UNAMID) took more than three years to reach full deployment). In recent years, DPKO has led a campaign to enhance the UN's rapid-deployment capability, but it has received little support even among member states with the most relevant capabilities.

Third, in addition to delays in deployment, member states—including the United States—have often proven reluctant or unwilling to provide the military hardware and equipment (referred to as high-demand enablers and force multipliers) needed for mission success. One notable example of this gap is the three-year unfulfilled request for eighteen medium utility helicopters to provide tactical mobility for UNAMID troops, some of whom died needlessly because they could not be quickly transported to field hospitals.

Fourth, the quality of peacekeepers has been mixed, with uneven standards for training of peacekeepers between countries. Lack of common, professional training standards has held back progress and in several cases damaged the reputation of UN peacekeeping. In 2010, [reports emerged](#) that UN peacekeepers from Nepal were the source of a deadly outbreak of cholera in Haiti, which to date has killed more than seven thousand civilians throughout the country. Equally disturbing have been instances of gross misconduct by UN peacekeepers in the field. The most alarming incidents pertain to sexual abuse cases in the DRC, Burundi, Haiti, and Liberia, where scores of women and children were allegedly raped by UN troops. Although the UN has adopted a policy of zero tolerance for such conduct, it relies on troop-contributing countries to hold aggressors accountable for crimes committed by their nationals. The record of troop-contributing countries has been mixed in both punishing and training military personnel.

Preventing mass atrocities: *Getting attention, but not enough action*

International efforts to stop mass atrocities—genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes—continue to be inadequate. Although international treaties, legal innovations, and advances in

transitional justice have provided some tools to tackle mass atrocities, weak political will at the national and global levels (and an aversion toward interference and intervention) continues to plague multilateral efforts in this area. Despite former president George W. Bush's pledge to not allow genocide to occur on his watch, and President Barack Obama's pledge to "**never again**" stand by as atrocities are committed, they in fact continue. The [International Criminal Court's](#) (ICC) lengthy indictment of Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide provides a stark reminder both of the stakes involved in the pursuit of international justice and the diplomatic and political obstacles to holding alleged perpetrators accountable.

In the wake of the Holocaust, United Nations (UN) member states negotiated the 1948 [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) (Genocide Convention), which officially defined genocide and listed five specific crimes associated with it: killing; causing serious bodily or mental harm; deliberately inflicting conditions on a group to bring about—in whole or in part—its physical destruction; imposing measures intended to prevent births; and forcibly transferring children from one group to another. The convention, however, contained no triggers for international response to genocide, and instead invited signatories to "call upon the competent organs of the United Nations" to take action.

Although 142 countries have [ratified](#) the Genocide Convention, the world has witnessed repeated instances of genocide and other mass atrocities. These include the genocide in Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979; the Rwandan genocide of 1994; the July 1995 massacre of unarmed Muslim boys and men in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina; ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999; and the slow motion mass killings and starvation in Darfur between 2003 and late 2009. In each case of genocide the international community failed to unite behind a collective response.

Recent reports of atrocities and war crimes in Syria point to continued prevalence of these crimes. Since the outbreak of antiregime protests in March 2011, more than nine thousand Syrians have been killed and many thousands more have fled the country. Inaction to stop such heinous crimes, and in the broader context, to prevent conflicts from escalating has become too prevalent. Diverging political interests and entrenched views on sovereignty continue to be a major cause for inertia.

There have been a number of efforts to set up tribunals—including the [International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia](#), the [International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda](#)—and hybrid criminal bodies—such as the [Special Court for Sierra Leone](#), the Crimes Panels of the District Court of Dili (East Timor Tribunal), and the [Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia](#)—that address particular conflicts. These initiatives have expanded the legal and judicial instruments available to hold perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable.

In addition, the creation of the [International Criminal Court](#) in 1998 provided an additional legal tool to hold perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable for their actions. The ICC has been aggressive in investigating and indicting high-profile criminals, such as Sudanese President al-Bashir for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. However, the ICC has been criticized on several grounds for its focus on Africa (the four cases under its agenda are the DRC, Sudan, Central African Republic, and Uganda), and the African Union (AU) has reacted adversely by issuing a [resolution](#) (PDF) against supporting the ICC indictment of al-Bashir. Other countries have demonstrated concerns with the court, including the United States over the ICC's investigation of Israeli actions in Gaza. The ICC is also faulted for the purported trade-off between peace and justice caused by its legal decisions. For instance, when the ICC first indicted President al-Bashir, he proceeded to expel international aid agencies from the country, causing an even greater humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

The UN has also strengthened its capabilities to fight mass atrocities through more diplomatic channels. In 2004, it created the [Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide](#) (OSAPG) to collect information, provide recommendations to the UN Security Council, and act as a liaison within the UN to prevent genocide. The efficiency of the OSAPG to date has been mixed. On the one hand, it has received strong support from many UN member states for having acted proactively to release statements of concern in situations characterized by massive human rights violations. On the other, its early-warning capacity and effectiveness remain limited, partly due to a lack of resources.

The evolving norm of the "responsibility to protect" (R2P) could provide a normative framework for redoubling international efforts to prevent genocide and other mass atrocities monitored by the OSAPG. The term was first introduced in 2001 in a report by the [International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty](#), which was established in the wake of the tragedies in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The concept is based on three pillars: states bear the primary responsibility of protecting its citizens; the international community is encouraged to support states in this endeavor; and in instances when states fail to meet their obligations, the international community should use diplomatic, humanitarian, and coercive pressures to intervene. Despite some [opposition](#) on the use of Chapter VII for intervention, UN member states reaffirmed their commitment to R2P in a UN General Assembly debate in 2009. [Multilateral response](#) in the Libyan crisis proved to be an important step in implementing R2P, although some [critics](#) questioned the necessity of the action. It is too early to tell whether R2P will remain a mainstream operational tool.

Several regional organizations have made the prevention of mass atrocities a rhetorical priority. At its founding, the AU adopted a principle of nonindifference. The [AU Constitutive Act of 2000](#) includes "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity." Still, the AU is hampered by the participation of members who have been the very perpetrators of mass

atrocities.

Civil activism in developed countries has also helped raise awareness and galvanize support among key policymakers. For instance, efforts by faith-based organizations (FBOs), humanitarian agencies, and groups such as the [Save Darfur Coalition](#) (which consists of nearly 200 organizations) have been highly effective in mobilizing support and urging governments to stop the "ongoing genocide" in Sudan. The [Enough Project](#)—a coalition of nongovernmental organizations, FBOs, and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—has similarly focused attention on genocide and crimes against humanity in Africa. However, support of the civil-society groups has also been selective and numerous high-intensity conflicts—such as in the DRC and Sri Lanka—have suffered from disengagement.

State-building and peacebuilding: *Unrealistic mandates and lack of sustained attention*

When the killing ends or is reduced, efforts to rebuild war-torn states and societies begin. Despite the creation of new institutions and processes, the international community's record on this front has been inadequate. According to the Center for International Development and Conflict Management's [Peace and Conflict 2010 report](#) (PDF), of the thirty-nine conflicts that started during the previous decade, thirty-one were in countries where conflict had relapsed. Afghanistan and Iraq present two of the most somber pictures of how complex the task of postconflict reconstruction can be, particularly in situations of ongoing insurgency and political division.

Effective and comprehensive strategies are required to ensure that peace is sustainable (peacebuilding) and that capacity and legitimacy of institutions is enhanced (state-building). Stronger institutions help [prevent](#) the recurrence of violence by providing public goods and enhancing the perceived legitimacy of institutional arrangements. However, both state-building and peacebuilding efforts have similar shortcomings. These frequently include complex mandates for international missions, financial and resource constraints, a lack of national ownership in the design and implementation of reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts, and short-term commitments from donors that limit opportunities to stabilize and promote long-term economic development.

The international community has been making efforts to improve the toolkit for peacebuilding and state-building. In 2005 the United Nations (UN) created the [Peacebuilding Commission](#) (PBC), the Peacebuilding Support Office, and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to coordinate activities and mobilize resources for postconflict countries. To date, the PBC has coordinated country-assistance strategies and allocated over [\\$100 million](#) in direct aid for the postconflict states of Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and the Central African Republic. It remains modest in scope and mandate, however, and operates only as an advisory body. It has no control over the PBF (which is

controlled by the UN secretary-general), and even if the PBC had full control of the PBF, it is uncertain whether the funds would be more effectively utilized. In addition, at the moment the PBC is—in practice—limited from adding complex postconflict cases to its agenda—such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. Moreover, since its establishment in 2005, few postconflict countries have indicated any interest in being on the commission's agenda.

Increased attention to postconflict countries over the past decade, however, has fostered greater investment in state-building. The international community has launched several mechanisms for multidimensional efforts that engage national and host governments, UN agencies, international financial institutions, regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. However, concerted efforts to achieve state-building objectives are sluggish in many postconflict countries. Among the actors in Afghanistan is the [International Security Assistance Force](#) (ISAF) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which is mandated with empowering the national government and assisting with reconstruction and rebuilding. Despite unprecedented support from NATO member states, ISAF has too few resources—troop contributions and transport—to achieve its mandate. Other major state-building initiatives, such as in Haiti, lack financial support despite donor pledges and newly created trust funds to assist reconstruction efforts.

Several international financial institutions have undertaken steps to mainstream peacebuilding and state-building support. The contribution of the [International Monetary Fund](#) (IMF) on this front has been mixed. Some IMF critics contend that IMF loans that come with strict austerity programs can cause economic hardship that could trigger armed violence to break out along socioeconomic fractures. Additionally, although peacebuilding and state-building activities are not formally included within the IMF mandate, the institution has the capacity to [influence](#) activities indirectly. Others view the IMF more charitably, as an organization that can help nations address structural precipitators of conflict by making loans conditional upon much-needed political and economic reform.

More recently, the [World Bank](#) has supported reconstruction efforts by creating a group working on states prone to or affected by conflict and establishing the [State and Peacebuilding Fund](#). Created in 2007, the [Fragile and Conflict-Affected States Group](#) coordinates the World Bank's work in such states or zones. The State and Peacebuilding Fund has the twin objectives of improving governance and institutional performance, and supporting the reconstruction and development of countries prone to, in, or emerging from conflict. The [UN Development Program](#)'s (UNDP) [Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery](#) has also established a trust fund to mobilize resources for recovery needs.

The UN system is assisting peacebuilding and state-building programs, but despite the organization's efforts to [improve](#) institutional effectiveness by strengthening coordination and management of its

operations, its on-the-ground activities lack coherence and coordination. One major hurdle is the presence of different UN leadership figures—each tasked with handling peacebuilding and state-building mandates by their own agencies. For instance, the special representative of the secretary-general in some cases conflicts with the chief UNDP or PBC representative on how to effectively carry through peacebuilding and state-building efforts. Ongoing debates on how to better integrate the various UN actors in the field remains a struggle.

Since 2001, the [Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) has also organized the [International Network on Fragility and Conflict](#) (PDF), which brings together international development institutions and partner countries to promote policy and programs on state-building.

There has also been a marked growth in informal ad-hoc coalitions to support specific postconflict countries—commonly known as "groups of friends." As of June 2005, some [thirty-two](#) such groups were dedicated to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, such as the secretary-general's Group of Friends for Myanmar. The activities of these informal groups have had mixed outcomes. For example, an international donor conference for Yemen in 2006 announced pledges of \$5.2 billion to promote development, build governance capacity, and strengthen civil society. As of January 2010, less than 20 percent of those pledges had been delivered.

Moreover, regional organizations have established their own financial development institutions. The [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB) places importance on assisting states as they transition out of fragility through the [Fragile States Facility](#) enhanced engagement plan, which aims to "strengthen capacity and accountability in economic and financial governance." Two examples of the AfDB's intervention were in Rwanda and Mozambique, two states transitioning out of a fragile, postconflict environment toward greater stability and economic prosperity. In Rwanda, AfDB is promoting economic infrastructure and enterprise development; in Mozambique, it is focusing on good governance and economic and human capital development.

The Group of Eight has committed to launching a system to strengthen civilian capacity for peacebuilding and state-building efforts. This includes developing rosters of civilian experts, and helping developing and emerging countries increase their standby capacity for recruiting and deploying civilians in postconflict zones. These initiatives, however, have not been well coordinated or well implemented.

U.S. and International Armed Conflict Issues

Should the United States provide greater financial and other support for peacekeeping

operations?

Yes: Proponents note that peacekeeping operations led by the United Nations or a regional organization are less expensive than a U.S. military operation would be if deployed for a similar mission. A [2006 report](#) (PDF) by the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that it would cost the United States about twice as much as the UN to conduct a stabilization mission for Haiti, although a U.S.-led mission would perform to higher standards. Appropriating the \$2.2 billion in international peacekeeping requested in the FY2011 budget and having the Pentagon provide the UN and regional organizations with military support would be a cost-effective way to address U.S. international security interests for only a small fraction of the overall defense budget.

No: Critics point out that the United States already provides 27 percent of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' annual budget—[\\$2.182 billion](#) (PDF)—as well as \$50 million annually for the [African Union](#)-led peacekeeping mission in Somalia, and the [Multinational Force and Observers](#) mission in the Sinai Desert between Egypt and Israel. These financial contributions—in addition to the significant costs of deploying 260,000 troops and sailors in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere—demonstrate that the United States has accepted more than its fair share of the international peacekeeping burden. In addition, peacekeeping operations mandated by the UN Security Council may be inefficient or prove unsuccessful, wasting American taxpayer dollars.

Should U.S. soldiers serve in UN peacekeeping operations?

Yes: Proponents point out that, as of September 2011, only [thirteen U.S. soldiers](#) served in UN peacekeeping operations, with an additional ninety-nine in police training and eleven as military observers. By remaining largely unwilling to place U.S. soldiers on the ground, the United States appears disengaged and uncommitted to ongoing UN peacekeeping missions. Given that the United States will likely seek UN Security Council backing for peacekeepers to help stabilize and rebuild countries in the future, it should actively participate in current UN peacekeeping operations.

No: Opponents of expanded American participation in UN peacekeeping operations are either skeptical about the utility of the UN system or are keen to leave UN peacekeeping roles to others. The United States already contributes its fair share to international peace and security efforts, with [260,000 U.S. soldiers](#) and sailors (PDF) operating around the world. While U.S. troops largely do not take part in UN-commanded deployments, large numbers are involved in UN-mandated operations, particularly in Afghanistan. Additionally, the type of training that U.S. ground troops undergo, emphasizing perceived threats and the use of overwhelming force, is not appropriate for peacekeeping missions. The last time large numbers of U.S. active-duty soldiers participated in UN peacekeeping operations was in Bosnia in the late 1990s. A Government Accountability Office

[investigation](#) (PDF) revealed commanding officers opinions that "high-intensity combat skills such as battlefield synchronization, maneuver, and gunnery are being degraded in Bosnia."

Should the United States be engaged in state-building missions?

Yes: Poor governance structures in weak and conflict-ridden states allow terrorism and other transnational issues, like crime and disease, to prosper and spread regionally and internationally. Legitimate and effective institutions are necessary for sustained peace, and proponents argue that, as such, they are an appropriate target for U.S. foreign policy efforts. State-building provides both a cost-effective measure to ensure the future security and stability of failed and weak states, and an unparalleled opportunity for advancing U.S. national interests with regard to security, diplomacy, and cultural and humanitarian concerns.

In the long term, promoting national ownership and responsibility for internal affairs diminishes future expenditures on behalf of the United States. Rather than directly confronting extremism through force, state-building offers an alternative to military action and the nurturing of democratic institutions helps develop permanent bastions of cooperative states with like-minded agendas, essentially acting as a conflict-prevention tool.

No: Critics contend that state-building, rather than fostering stability, has the potential to exacerbate conflict and endanger U.S. national interests. Effective methods of state-building are not well established, and the practice depends heavily on potentially uncontrollable aspects of the local political and security environment. Exercises in state-building often prove detrimental to U.S. long-term interests, and may cause regional destabilization, provoke insurgency, and disquiet the international community. State-building is not a quick fix: patience and long-term resources are required that may not be politically palatable with regard to domestic opinion.

Moreover, state-building cannot be achieved without security, and in most cases requires a prolonged and expensive military action—exactly what advocates seek to avoid. Legitimacy in state-building operations requires multilateral support and consensus, vital factors that have been unachievable with regard to the most recent U.S. endeavors in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, critics argue that not all weak or failed states present security risks to the United States, and forays into such countries would exhaust national resources.

Should the United States become party to the International Criminal Court?

Yes: Proponents contend that the [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) is the only permanent international body that provides global jurisdiction over mass atrocities when other means of

prosecution fail or do not exist. To ensure the continued respect for the rule of law, and solidify its moral position as a global leader in international justice efforts, the United States **should** sign and ratify the **Rome Statute** of the ICC. The United States already actively cooperates with the ICC—it attended the Kampala review conference and continues to support the referral of the Darfur case to the court. Moreover, participation in an institution that shares the values of international law and order fits with the broader U.S. foreign policy of engagement with international institutions. Finally, resistance to crimes of aggression is unwarranted because the United States signed an amendment that does not allow prosecution of U.S. citizens without UN Security Council referral.

No: Critics believe that granting an international court the legal authority to try U.S. citizens for crimes committed in the United States would infringe on the established purview of U.S. national courts and **significantly** undermine the U.S. Constitution. As such, ratification of the Rome Statute would require a constitutional amendment to ensure concordance with U.S. law. Moreover, the ICC would grossly interfere with U.S. sovereignty, inherently limit power to choose judges, influence the direction of trial proceedings, and thus further undermine U.S. national interests.

Can management of peace operations be shared among traditional and emerging powers?

Yes: UN peacekeeping operations already consider the input of emerging powers, including China—a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Other countries, such as India and Brazil, also provide invaluable support as major troop-contributing partners. As emerging countries grow wealthier, they should continue to increase their engagement—even financially—to meet their (informal) obligations as responsible stakeholders in the global security space. A larger group of members with capability would enlarge and diversify the resources available for conflict-management efforts.

In addition, sharing responsibilities will enhance the UN Security Council's credibility and legitimacy for conflict prevention and response. Armed conflict more often directly affects developing nations than it does the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and a more proportional participation scheme would better address the problems of countries in need of intervention. Likewise, a wider representation will allow the UN Security Council to make decisions on budgets and mandates that consider regional dynamics and shed a more analytical lens on the effectiveness of peace operations.

No: Managing UN peace operations is complex and incorporating more actors might lead to more gridlock and red tape, diminishing the effectiveness and response time for conflict management. The current format gives priority to the world's most capable and responsible actors, and adding less-capable states may confuse the UN Security Council's agenda and process. Additionally, more

participants do not necessarily mean a proportionate expansion of the resource pool or heightened capabilities. Finally, emerging powers have security interests (for example, Brazil on Iran, and South Africa on Zimbabwe) distinct from those of the United States and its Western allies, and incorporating their position would undermine U.S. national interests.

Does the R2P doctrine offer a promising normative foundation for curtailing mass atrocities?

Yes: Proponents believe that the **responsibility** to protect (R2P) doctrine is a valuable tool for humanitarian intervention, enhancing both the international community's motivation and prospects for successful operations geared toward ending mass atrocities. Foremost, the doctrine affirms that sovereignty involves the obligation to protect a country's civilians—further asserting that a failure to protect transfers the responsibility to intervene from a national government to the international community. Without the cloak of sovereignty to hide behind, state leaders will be less likely to commit or allow atrocities within their borders. Likewise, with such a normative mandate, the international community, led by the United Nations, will have a broadly recognized basis to take action. Furthermore, the R2P concept has already been successfully engaged, with the international community responding to protect civilians during the outbreak of violence in Kenya after elections in 2008 and during civil war in Libya in 2011.

No: Staunch opponents of R2P argue that it is not the job of the United States to intervene in the problems of another sovereign nation, or to coordinate a group of states to do so. The R2P doctrine does not establish new concrete obligations under international law and therefore will not create an environment that motivates outside actors or compels national leaders to protect populations. The primary mechanism for leveraging collective action in protection under R2P continues to be the UN Security Council, limiting a supposed global responsibility to the purview of a few nations. Without an explicit mandate from the UN Security Council, individual countries may still be unwilling to intervene unilaterally. The doctrine also advocates swift action to prevent mass atrocities but does not expand existing mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating, or facilitating action.

Recent Developments

Sudan and South Sudan on the brink of war

After decades of fighting for independence, 98 percent of South Sudanese voted in favor of succession in January 2011, and South Sudan officially celebrated its independence day on July 9, 2011. Less than one year later, however, Sudan and South Sudan are again on the brink of war. The two countries remain deadlocked over the ultimate sovereignty status of the contested region of Abeyi and how to

divide critical oil revenues.

Simmering tensions erupted in April 2012, when South Sudan captured the oil-rich region of Heglig from Sudan, which quickly reasserted control. The Sudanese government subsequently **launched** a series of aerial and ground attacks on South Sudan, as well as declared a state of emergency in the border regions. Chinese president Hu Jintao made efforts to mediate the crisis, and **declared his intent** to send an envoy to assist toward peace talks. In a further sign of the severity of the crisis, the UN Security Council **called** on Sudan and South Sudan to "immediately end hostilities and resume negotiations," and threatened sanctions if the two countries did not comply.

Civil war in Syria

After over a year of deadly clashes, the conflict in Sudan has escalated to a state of civil war, with no resolution in sight. Over the course of the conflict, approximately **forty thousand** Syrians have been detained, over nine thousand have been killed, and thousands more have fled the country—most of them unarmed civilians.

The international community has taken several steps to attempt to stem the violence, to little avail. In late 2011 and early 2012, the **Arab League** sent observers to monitor the violence, although the mission had no measurable impact on the increasing levels of violence. After months of protracted negotiations, in February 2012 the **UN Security Council issued a condemnation** of Bashar al-Assad's brutal crackdown and called for his resignation. Most recently, newly appointed UN special envoy Kofi Annan is working to broker a peace agreement with the Syrian regime, which **he claims** is "on track" despite continued reports of violence.

Twin coups in West Africa

Mali, a country that for years was cited as an island of stability in a volatile region, was shocked by a coup d'etat in March 2012 when soldiers overthrew the democratically elected government. The coup—the first in the country since 1991—was widely decried by neighboring states, regional organizations such as **Economic Community of West African States** (ECOWAS), and the international community. In **exchange for amnesty**, the coup leaders ultimately abdicated power and an interim government was installed in their place. However, tensions remain high as the transitional government attempts to both maintain power and negotiate with the northern rebels.

Guinea-Bissau, long mired by internal conflict and power struggles, became the second country to succumb to a coup d'etat in April 2012. In the midst of presidential elections, the military seized control of the government. In response, regional organizations condemned the coup, the **African**

[Union](#) subsequently suspended Guinea-Bissau from membership, and the [European Union](#) imposed sanctions on the country. ECOWAS announced that it would send [several thousand troops](#) to both Mali and Guinea-Bissau to support the transitions back to civilian rule.

Obama administration elevates genocide prevention

On April 23, 2012, in a high-profile ceremony at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, President Obama unveiled the [Atrocities Prevention Board](#) (APB), a new interagency body specifically charged to monitor, respond to, and prevent mass atrocities. The president declared the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities to be a "core national security interest and core moral responsibility of the United States." [According](#) to the White House, the APB will be composed of senior officials from numerous agencies and will meet monthly and in emergency session when necessary. The APB is also tasked with assisting the National Intelligence Council in the preparations for the first-ever National Intelligence Estimate on the "global risk" of mass atrocities and genocide. If fully implemented and preserved through future U.S. administrations, these new institutional tools would provide the United States with a clear and effective framework to anticipate, deter, and respond to atrocities in the future.

Obama administration unveils recalibrated defense strategy

In January 2012, the U.S. Department of Defense released its much anticipated strategic guidance, [Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for Twenty-First Century Defense](#) (PDF), which provides a broad framework for U.S. military operations over the next decade. The strategy is reflective of an era of fiscal austerity, shifting global priorities, and emerging threats. [Characterized](#) as "leaner" by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, the plan includes a 14 percent reduction in the number of troops and a smaller nuclear arsenal. However, it also calls for an expanded presence in Asia, sustained strength in the Middle East, and enhanced "counterterrorism and irregular warfare" capabilities, such as drones and cyber technologies. The plan did not specify the budget cuts facing the Pentagon, which could range from \$480 billion to \$1 trillion over the next decade.

U.S. military officially withdraws from Iraq

The last U.S. troops left Iraq on December 15, 2011, marking the official end to nearly nine years of nation building that left 4,487 U.S. soldiers killed, 32,226 U.S. soldiers wounded in action, tens of thousands of Iraqi casualties, and cost nearly \$1 trillion. At the peak of the war in 2007, there were 505 bases and more than 170,000 troops in the country. In a speech at Fort Bragg, President Obama [acknowledged](#) that the war had been a "source of great controversy," although he emphasized that the war created a "sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq, with a representative government that was

elected by its people."

Although the Obama administration hailed the Iraqi government as a success story, Iraq remains mired in violence and political discord. On December 19, 2011, the majority-Shiite government, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, [issued](#) an arrest warrant for Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashami on charges of running a death squad. In the following weeks, Baghdad witnessed a series of improvised suicide bombings that killed approximately 120 people. The international community fears that the power vacuum left by the United States could reignite ethnic conflict and destabilize the fragile security apparatus.

U.S. National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security

In December 2011, President Obama [issued](#) an executive order on the first-ever U.S. [National Action Plan \(NAP\) for Women, Peace, and Security](#) (PDF). The plan forms the U.S. response to [UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#) (PDF), which called on UN member states to integrate a gender perspective in all aspects of peace and security. The U.S. NAP outlines [strategies](#) to more fully integrate women into conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding through heightened awareness, increased protection, expanded political participation, and recovery assistance. Including the United States, thirty-three countries have released national action plans thus far.

Options for Strengthening the Global Regime to Prevent Armed Conflict

U.S. and international action are needed to ensure that conflict-prevention, conflict-response, peacebuilding, and state-building efforts are supported and provided with ample resources. These recommendations reflect the views of [International Institutions and Global Governance](#) program, and [Micah Zenko](#), fellow for conflict prevention.

- **Enhance global architecture for conflict prevention:** Together, norms, institutions, regimes, operating procedures, and capacities of international organizations constitute the architecture of conflict prevention. The United States can undertake global risk-reduction initiatives by endorsing norms that promote state responsibility in the interests of peace and security, such as those in the [United Nations](#) (UN) Charter and the emerging norm of the responsibility to protect. In support of these norms, core global governance institutions, such as the UN, must be bolstered so that they can continue to defend essential norms through collective action, including the use of force. The United States should also work with international organizations to strengthen global crisis-prevention initiatives—such as early-warning systems, governance reform, mediation support, and electoral assistance—through sharing best practices

and funding. Finally, the United States can contribute to the international management and mitigation of crises through pre-crisis capacity-building in the UN and regional organizations, as well as its preparedness to provide timely operational support during a crisis

- **Improve UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding planning:** United Nations (UN) peace operations suffer from poor planning in the design phase and limited implementation and enforcement on the ground. A greater focus on integrated mission planning that considers the roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors is essential to strengthening the effectiveness of peace operations. Released in July 2009, the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations [New Horizons](#) report offered recommendations to rectify these issues. In 2010, some of the suggestions have been [incorporated](#) (PDF)—namely, greater dialogue and consultation among the host of actors involved in establishing and implementing a UN field mission. However, less headway has been made in creating an accountability framework that delineates a clear division of labor between headquarters and the senior mission leaders. These parameters have to be clarified and used to ensure the long-term success of peace operations.
- **Increase budgets for UN and regional organizations:** Lack of funding and personnel remain critical concerns for international institutions. Pressure to do more with less has increased during the global financial crisis, shrinking the funds available to the United Nations. As a consequence, officials prioritize the few countries and regions that demand immediate support, fostering a narrow and near-term focus that may neglect quieter emerging crises on the horizon. Although some institutions are expanding their capacity—the European Union dedicated funds for mediation for the first time this year—these organizations should attempt to increase their funding from within their normal budget processes. If this is difficult, the alternative solution is to turn to funding sources outside of the institution, namely voluntary contributions from sympathetic states (primarily from Western Europe, Canada, and Japan).
- **Coordinate capacity-building efforts with regional organizations:** Presently, coordination between the various governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in capacity-building of many regional organizations is, at best, scant. For example, the United States provides assistance via private contractors to [secretariat](#) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on a range of apolitical issues including mining, customs, market integration, standards, and information systems. Several other governments also work with the secretariat in Indonesia to build capacity on these and other areas. Unfortunately, all of these outside actors do not coordinate or prioritize their efforts, other than attending a monthly meeting in which several governments refuse to participate. Within the African Union Secretariat in Ethiopia, a similar situation has unfolded, where parallel and overlapping projects are being implemented by outside groups. The willingness and capacity to share intelligence and resources will undoubtedly provide significant hurdles to any comprehensive effort; however, to

ensure the maximum impact for their projects, governments and NGOs should adopt a joint capacity-building approach that promotes greater coherence and coordination.

- **Enhance early-warning and -action efforts:** Although several regional organizations have mandates and some capacity for early-warning systems and assessment, there is no formal information-sharing even for joint political or peacekeeping missions, and only a vague idea among them of what each is doing through informal meetings. Work plans are needed to promote broader cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations that goes beyond simply building capacity and includes formally sharing timely and relevant early-warning information, analytical reporting, and best practices. Early warning must also be better integrated into the decision-making processes of states and international organizations that are committed to preventive action.
- **Clarify mandates and exit strategies:** UN missions suffer from overstretched mandates that often cannot be achieved with the allocated resources. To ensure that resources are maximized, the UN Security Council should establish criteria for the deployment of a UN Peacekeeping mission, matching mandates to conflict circumstances. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations should work with the UN Security Council to review the mandates for existing operations and provide greater clarity so that mandates are feasible on the ground. A review of mandates should also consider a more coherent strategy toward sequencing and exiting missions, particularly from the peacekeeping stage to the peacebuilding stage.
- **Develop rapidly deployable military forces to prevent mass atrocities:** The U.S. military maintains the world's preeminent rapidly deployable power-projection capabilities. As one notable example, the Army's 82nd Airborne-Ready Brigade can deploy as many as 3,600 troops anywhere in the world within eighteen hours notice. However, U.S. military officials demonstrate little enthusiasm for mobilizing this impressive capability to prevent or curtail ongoing mass atrocities. The U.S. military has the capabilities to intervene quickly to prevent genocide when directed by the appropriate civilian authorities, but does not have the clear national policy, doctrine, plans, and training to make that mission a Pentagon-wide priority. The Obama administration must provide specific guidance to the military in its National Security Strategy to plan and train its rapidly deployable forces for genocide- and mass-atrocity-prevention missions.
- **Create a dedicated mediation support unit:** American diplomatic officials called on to mediate between parties in conflict have long complained that their efforts are hampered by having little support in the way of political analyses, regional and issue-area expertise, logistics, and communications. Within the State Department's [Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization](#), the Obama administration should develop a strategic

vision and fund and staff a **[Mediation Support Unit](#)** that could be rapidly deployed to bolster U.S.-sponsored mediation. Useful lessons can be drawn from the **[United Nations Department of Political Affairs Mediation Standby Team](#)** created in 2008. Consisting of a team leader, as well as experts in constitutional arrangements, human rights and transitional justice, power sharing, and security arrangements, the team was ready to be deployed within three days for a period of up to one month to support the mediation efforts by the United Nations, regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. In its first year, the team was deployed twenty-six times to ten countries to support ongoing mediation efforts, and conducted capacity-building seminars in thirteen countries.