



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

PREVENTION

PREVENTION NEWSLETTER

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MISSION

The USIP's Center for Conflict Management (CCM) designs and manages the Institute's efforts to *prevent* the initial outbreak of violent conflict, *resolve* ongoing conflicts, and *stabilize* areas emerging from conflict. The Center also conducts research, identifies best practices, and develops new tools for conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

CALENDAR

September 5: UN General Assembly interactive dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect

September 19: UN General Assembly session commences. Pakistan is expected to be represented by its President, Asif Ali Zardari

September 24-25: CCM co-convenes the 7th Trilateral Dialogue on Northeast Asia in Tokyo

October 1: Parliamentary Elections in Georgia

October: USIP-George Mason University Conference on Youth in Pakistan

October 31: Third Annual USIP Conference on Preventing Violent Conflict

PUBLICATIONS

- "In Libya, Success May Be the Best Revenge", *USIP Olive Branch Post* by Manal Omar, 15 August 2012.
- "Mutual Accountability", *USIP Peace Brief* by William Byrd, 27 July 2012.
- "Political Upheaval in Israel" *USIP On the Issues* by Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenberg, 20 July 2012.
- "Libyans Vote in First Free Parliamentary Elections in Decades" *USIP On the Issues* by Manal Omar, 12 July 2012.
- "Leadership and the Responsibility to Protect" Chapter in *Routledge Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect* by Abiodun Williams and Jonas Claes, June 2012.

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Dear Colleagues,

On October 31, 2012, the U.S. Institute of Peace will hold its third annual conference on preventing violent conflict. For this all-day conference, USIP will bring together experts and policymakers to discuss challenges and opportunities for conflict prevention around the world. This year's conference includes a morning panel on "Regional Challenges for the Prevention of Future Conflict," an afternoon panel on "Prevention Actors: Roles and Tools," and four concurrent break-out sessions allowing participants to discuss specific challenges facing prevention efforts, including "the Prevention of Mass Atrocities," "the Prevention of Violent Transitions from Authoritarianism," "the Prevention of Nuclear Proliferation," and "the Use of New Technologies for Prevention."

With this third annual conference on Preventing Violent Conflict, USIP continues to emphasize the importance of conflict prevention, address specific prevention challenges, and identify priority areas for USIP's future work on conflict prevention. We hope that many of you will participate in this year's conference which will contribute to USIP's programmatic work on prevention.

Abiodun Williams
Senior Vice President
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U.S. Institute of Peace



SPOTLIGHT

The Syrian Civil War: Threatening Lebanon's Fragile Stability

“The arrest of former Lebanese Minister of Information, Michel Samaha, reinforces concerns that Assad is attempting to deflect international attention by fomenting chaos in Lebanon.”

The surprising calm in Lebanon at the start of Syria's uprising has been shattered. Political kidnappings and gun battles have reignited tensions along Lebanon's own sectarian fault lines, resulting in an eruption of deadly clashes, largely in the north of the country. This region has become the epicenter of Syrian spillover, due not only to its geographic proximity but also to the prevalence of Sunni communities long hostile to Syria's interference in the country. Refugees have flooded the region and made it a base for launching attacks on the Syrian army. Lebanon's governing coalition, dominated by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's ally, Hezbollah, has implemented a policy of “dissociation” from the Syrian civil war, much to the dismay of Lebanon's Sunni population, which largely sympathizes with the Syrian opposition. The arrest of former Lebanese Minister of Information, Michel Samaha—a man with close ties to Assad—reinforces concerns that Assad is attempting to deflect international attention by fomenting chaos in Lebanon. Samaha is accused of transporting Syrian weapons across the border into Lebanon, with an intent to target large crowds and Sunni leaders aligned with the Free Syrian Army.

Hezbollah finds itself torn between dueling roles as a legitimate domestic political player and as a militant and terrorist proxy for its key patrons and fellow Shi'ite “Axis of Resistance” allies, Iran and Syria. The group is reluctant to face the domestic political fallout of dragging its war-weary Lebanese constituents into a war, while also loathe to antagonize their strongest base of external support. Hezbollah has thus far played a deft balancing act, but analysts say the organization is beginning to devise contingency plans, should Assad fall. The longer the current situation drags on the more pressure Hezbollah will face to make a choice. At such a point, the potential for protracted and spreading sectarian violence looms large. UNHCR reported that 51,000 displaced Syrians have registered for protection and assistance through the Lebanese government, NGOs, and the United Nations. Others estimate 39,000 additional refugees have entered Lebanon from Syria since the start of Assad's violent crackdown on the opposition and have not registered for assistance for fear of being tracked down by the Syrian regime or Hezbollah. Northern Lebanon does not have the capacity to accommodate a large number of refugees, but the government is not willing to build refugee camps in fear of creating hotbeds for Syrian opposition groups. This flow of refugees is expected to continue unabated for as long as Assad's campaign against opposition forces rages on in Syria.

USIP has been engaging these issues through a variety of means. Cognizant of the regional destabilizing potential of these unresolved sectarian tensions in Lebanon, the Institute has granted funding to Catholic Relief Services to research and identify strategies for early action to prevent the continued outbreak of violent conflict along these sectarian divides. The grant will also fund the production of a guide for local community leaders, students, and peacebuilding activists interested in preventing and resolving community-level conflicts in a post-Assad Syria. “The Day After: Supporting a Democratic Transition in Syria” is a project



Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.
Source: ICRC



aimed at developing concrete plans for the immediate aftermath of a regime collapse, to mitigate the risks of bureaucratic, security, and economic chaos. Finally, in partnership with the Stimson Center, USIP regularly convenes the Lebanon Working Group to brief policy-makers and analysts on the implications of the current dynamics in Lebanon. The two most recent meetings of the group focused on the spillover effect of Syria's crisis into Lebanon, and the potential for renewed cross-border tensions on Lebanon's southern border with Israel, respectively.

OVER THE HORIZON— HIGHLIGHTS

U.S.–Pakistan Relations

After months of deadlock, there is finally some positive news to report on the Pakistan-U.S. relationship. In late-July, the two countries finally reached an agreement on reopening the NATO supply routes. The breakthrough was in large part made possible by Secretary Clinton's apology to Pakistan for the deaths of 24 soldiers in a NATO airstrike on Salala in November 2011. Thereafter, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize the arrangement under which Pakistan will continue providing transit facilities to NATO. The resumption of NATO traffic through Pakistan has also acted as a catalyst for reengagement in terms of the high level coordination between the two militaries and intelligence agencies. The new chief of Pakistan's spy agency, the ISI met with CIA director General David Petraeus on his first visit to Washington in early-August. There have since been indications from the Pakistani military about a potential military offensive in North Waziristan agency which houses Haqqani network sanctuaries. There are also reports that Pakistan has facilitated meetings between Taliban leaders in Pakistan and Afghan government officials as reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan also seem to have gathered some momentum recently.

We cannot project too rosy a future for the Pakistan-U.S. relationship even after this recent thaw. Much will depend on whether the two parties can agree on how to deal with militant sanctuaries in Pakistan and if Pakistan is able to find, and play, the central role in Afghan reconciliation efforts that it longs. More likely than not, the oscillatory nature of the relationship will continue as cooperative and competitive elements proceed simultaneously. The direction bilateral ties take will also depend on the results of the upcoming elections in the U.S. and Pakistan. Pakistan is heading towards what analysts suggest is the country's most unpredictable election for decades. Left-of-center PPP and right-of-center PML-N and PTI all have a fair chance of taking power. Based on their public stances, at least the PTI may implement a fairly hard line policy towards the United States. Meanwhile, political instability within Pakistan is likely to continue till the elections as the Supreme Court threatens to keep disqualifying Prime Ministers—it has already ousted Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani in June—for their failure to follow court orders in a graft case involving sitting President Asif Ali Zardari.

Tensions on Korean Peninsula

Tensions have been high leading up to North Korea's long-range missile test, which resulted in an expanded sanctions effort at the UN Security Council and the loss of U.S. food aid,



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a meeting with Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul and Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar at the sidelines of the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan.
Source Flickr

outlined in the Leap Day Agreement. However, recent revelations have set off cautious speculation that the regime may be warming to reform. News of Kim Jong-eun's marriage to "comrade Ri Sol Ju" and the couple's subsequent series of public appearances together have been interpreted as a deliberate distancing from the aloof image that former leader Kim Jong-il cultivated. Kim Jong-eun further solidified his political hold on the state when he was appointed Marshal of DPRK. This came on the heels of the abrupt sacking of KPA general staff chief Ri Yong Ho, considered to have been a key player in the succession process, and largely interpreted as a move by the young leader and the party to rein in the military. In keeping with this trend the Taepung International Investment Group, a military-controlled firm tasked with attracting foreign investment, was recently shut down for poor performance. As new developments trickle out, it remains to be seen whether these are the regular shake-ups associated with succession power consolidation or if they reflect deeper political and economic changes as the new leadership maneuvers the regime towards the path of reform.

Iran and P5+1 Nuclear Talks

The P5+1 talks with Iran continued throughout the summer, but failed to make any significant breakthrough. The fact that the talks continued and may even stretch into the fall of 2012 is attributable to the recognition by all concerned that a total collapse of the talks could presage military intervention by Israel or the United States. Given the risks attached to military conflict, the impulse to keep on talking endures. Israel's leaders Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in particular—are pushing for an official U.S. declaration that the talks have failed, and that the time for diplomacy is drawing to a close. These assertions—made in a sea of media statements suggesting Israeli preparations for an attack—have heightened tensions in the region, while prompting U.S. statements designed to both reassure Israel and to deter it from attacking. This balancing act may not be sustainable very long, and thus in the coming months, the choices for the U.S. (and for Iran) will likely be sharpened. This fact may itself prompt an interim diplomatic compromise, but barring such a turn of events, the chance of armed conflict in the region could accelerate.

Responsibility to Protect: Moving Beyond the Period of Reflection

After several years of institutional and operational progress, the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect is, once again, experiencing a period of stagnation. The principle arguably advanced the international capacity to address the risk of atrocities since it was endorsed by Heads of State and Government at the 2005 UN World Summit. But every time the operational limitations of this nascent norm become tangible, as in Syria, the political momentum seems to stall. In July, the UN Secretary-General appointed Adama Dieng, the Senegalese Registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, as the next Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, following the departure of Francis Deng. It is unclear whether Mr. Dieng will also assume the responsibilities of the Special Adviser on R2P—a position which is now vacant—or whether a new Special Adviser will be appointed.

On September 5, the UN General Assembly will conduct its fourth annual interactive dialogue on R2P. The session will cover the wide range of international measures available in case atrocities are imminent or ongoing, including coercive and cooperative tools for the prevention and management of atrocities crimes. In his August report, "The Responsibility to Protect: Timely and Decisive Response," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasized that prevention and response activities do not present a dichotomy, and must be seen as intertwined activities.

“Given the risks attached to military conflict, the impulse to keep on talking endures.”



Adama Dieng, new UN Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.
Source UN

The Political Transition in Libya

Following successful federal elections in July, Libya's National Transitional Council handed over power to the General National Congress (GNC) on August 8, the 20th day of Ramadan and the anniversary of the liberation of Tripoli from the Qaddafi regime. The GNC elected Mohamed Yousef el-Magariief to serve as Speaker of the GNC. Over the next 10 months the GNC will be responsible for effectively governing the country, ratifying a Libyan constitution, and preparing for the next round of general elections. During this important time in Libya's transition USIP will host workshops in Libya to engage civil society representatives and leadership on the constitution-making process and continue developing an Alliance of Libyan Facilitators. USIP President-elect Jim Marshall will travel to various conflict zones, including Libya, to observe USIP field operations, and meet local staff, officials, and interlocutors in early September.

WORKING GROUPS

- On July 30th, the **Lebanon Working Group (LWG)** hosted a briefing and discussion with Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer and Dr. Randa Slim. The session focused on the potential for renewed hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel following the Burgas bus bombing that killed five Israelis on July 18, 2012, in which Hezbollah has been implicated.
- The **Working Group on the Responsibility to Protect** has concluded its formal sessions, and will focus on the drafting of the Working Group Report, scheduled for release in December 2012.
- The **Yemen Working Group** was convened on June 25th to discuss the international community's current role in Yemen following the Friends of Yemen event as well as the reach and role of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The group was briefed by former Ambassador to Yemen and current Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Arabian Peninsula, Steve Seche, and security analyst Christopher Swift.



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