UNITAR Peace and Security Series: Preventing Genocide
"Structural Prevention"
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There is a growing body of research literature on prevention of mass violence by building what I call <u>pillars of prevention</u>. These <u>pillars of prevention</u> are mostly <u>long-term measures</u> that are <u>useful for prevention</u> of all sorts of mass violence: war, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Structural prevention refers to long-term conditions conducive to peaceful living. Pillars of prevention can become strong in crucial ways.

1. <u>Continuous flow of accurate information on emerging conflicts,</u> especially violent outbursts; extensive hate speech; early warning of serious trouble between groups or between nations.

2. <u>Ready availability of preventive diplomacy, proactive</u>, with respectful engagement in an <u>assistance</u> approach to countries in trouble.

3. Building <u>good governance leading toward democracy and equitable socioeconomic development</u>.

4. <u>Education for conflict resolution, mutual accommodation</u>, learning to live together.

5. <u>Serious restraints on weaponry</u>; arms control regimes

6. International justice in preventing human rights abuses.

These pillars are <u>multi-purpose in preventing human suffering related to hatred and violence</u>. War and genocide have important shared properties — often virulent prejudice predisposes to civil war, revolution, or inter-state war. Under those conditions, the door is opened to genocide as the norms and institutions that restrain genocidal behavior are badly eroded. Killing becomes the order of the day and established targets become exceedingly vulnerable. So it is highly desirable and increasingly feasible for the international community — especially the established democracies worldwide — to take measures that help to <u>put out fires when they are small, yet the danger of conflagration is visible</u>. If not extinguished, these fires may well lead to mass violence of one form or another. <u>Early prevention of deadly violence, whether it is genocide or not, must become the highest priority of a world striving to be decent and civilized</u>. The path toward genocide is visible and must be illuminated.

I will sketch here three fundamental pillars of prevention, and leave the others for another day. 1) Fostering of democracy; 2) Building of <u>equitable</u> socioeconomic development; and 3) Education for learning to live together, i.e. for human survival.

DEMOCRACY AND PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE

<u>Democracies thrive by finding ways to deal fairly with conflicts and resolve them *below the threshold of mass violence*.</u> They develop ongoing

mechanisms for settling disagreements. That is why they are so important in preventing mass violence, especially genocide. But these very ambitious goals require the worldwide spread of democracies and the application of democratic principles to inter-group and inter-nation conflicts. This is a difficult process, but its general tendency is clear and strong over many years in many places. People who live in pluralistic democracies become accustomed to diverse needs and learn the art of working out compromises that offer something to satisfy everyone involved. This does not mean democracy imposed by force, nor does it mean that a single, premature election will lead to peace and prosperity. But it does mean that patiently constructed democracies, based on fair processes of mutual accommodation, offer the best chance for non-violent conflict resolution.

Democracies, even with periodic regressions, protect human rights better than non-democratic societies, and their elected officials are less likely to engage in large-scale, egregious human rights violations that create intense fear and severe resentment. Massive human rights abuses as a path to genocide are very unlikely in an established democracy.

The basic principles of democracy are attractive all over the world, even though entrenched autocratic powers resist them. Survey research shows that the majority in most developing countries would prefer democracy.

All democracies need systematic, fair procedures of governance that are based on the <u>consent of the governed</u>. A system of representation is essential, but no single kind will work for every group. These variations share the common themes of <u>fairness and widespread participation</u> in decisions important to the lives of the population.

<u>Pluralism is at the heart of a lasting democracy</u>; it permits and fosters the dynamic interplay of ideas and enterprises by parties and by a great variety of nongovernmental organizations on the basis of reasonably clear, agreed upon rules — rules that reflect a fundamental attitude of tolerance, <u>mutual respect</u>, and <u>sensitivity to human rights</u>. These habits of <u>understanding others and working out compromises</u> are learned. The established democracies can <u>make the world's experience available to emerging, fragile democracies</u> and offer tangible help.

Other than <u>democratic institutions</u>, there is no clear way to provide an enduring basis for treating human beings fairly and protecting human rights under a popularly accepted rule of law. The European experience in the second half of the twentieth century provides specific models for <u>judicial means of protecting human rights</u>. These mechanisms are now being adapted to take account of the wider scope of emerging democracies in Europe, as the EU has expanded. Its experience can usefully be considered in other parts of the world. This progress reflects

learning from the bitter experience of Nazi and communist repression. It is indeed a dramatic transformation.

The international cooperation necessary to achieve such change is measured in years of complicated joint efforts. That is why cooperative efforts through strong organizations are so often necessary — especially the European Union, United Nations, and the worldwide community of established democracies. One way or another, the established democracies (an expanding group of countries) will need to <u>act in concert to build the pillars of prevention essential for blocking mass violence</u>.

All states who wanted to be a part of the EU and share in its peaceful prosperity were required to adopt comprehensive democratic practices and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. Over the past fifteen years the EU has provided political, technical, and economic assistance to help these candidate states achieve and maintain free political and economic conditions, and to build democratic institutions and make them work well. The EU demonstrated a powerful magnet effect for democratic change. Other regional organizations may in due course move toward similar achievements.

There is clearly a <u>need for coordinated action among established democracies</u> both to help build strong democracies out of weak ones; and also <u>to act jointly to prevent deadly conflicts, above all genocide</u>.

The best international organizations can promote explicitly sustained antidotes to hatred and violence in several generic ways:

(1) setting standards for fair, free elections, and monitoring their conduct;

(2) providing guidance for education at all levels — from children and youth to political and business leaders as well as scholars in institutions of higher learning — on specific paths to decent interpersonal and intergroup relations, conflict resolution, violence prevention, and paths to enduring peace; and

(3) mobilizing intellectual and moral leadership in the universities, religious institutions, the scientific community and other powerful sectors to focus on these crucial issues — above all on prevention of war and genocide.

Dictatorships are inherently destructive. They are prone to genocide. Using any means at their disposal, dictators will serve themselves at the expense of their people. Therefore, the community of democracies must move from a general wish for democracy to a concrete, practical plan for achieving it.

To be sure, the transition from a closed authoritarian society to a fully viable, open and equitable democratic society can be stormy — and requires the kind of international help the Weimar Republic did not get. The social contexts of democracy are highly variable. No one size fits all. Still, there are effective means for promoting democracy internationally.

International cooperation can provide valuable help in strengthening the political and civic infrastructure of new, emerging, and fragile democracies.

International support of the complicated processes of democracy building must be sustained over many years. As a practical matter, this requires strong multilateral organizations to pool strengths, share burdens and fill gaps when one member goes astray.

Fostering Equitable Socio-Economic Development

Economic development is a vital partner of democratic political development.

We have learned important lessons from successes and failures of socioeconomic development in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and Europe during the past half-century. It is surely in the interest of prosperous countries everywhere to facilitate the development of knowledge, skill, health, and freedom in poor countries so they can become contributing, responsible members of the international community rather than breeding grounds for social pathology, serious infectious disease, terrorist violence, or genocide. An avoidable excess of human suffering tends to recruit alienated youth into genocidal or terrorist movements.

To foster economic development, it is essential to promote inclusive political participation, basic education and health care, and respect for

human rights. All of these contribute powerfully <u>not only to individual well-being</u>, but also to the <u>economic progress of the society</u>.

Democratic socioeconomic development on a world-wide basis offers humanity its best hope for producing conditions favorable to preventing war and genocide.

This is a much more practical goal today than it was a few decades ago, even though a long rugged path still lies ahead. <u>Investment in human and social capital</u> is now generally accepted as a central part of development, especially in the form of promoting the <u>health and education</u> of girls and boys (and women and men) alike — to build a vigorous, dynamic population that is well-informed, capable, fair-minded, open-minded, and mutually supportive in times of personal and social stress; also social support networks in communities tackling their local problems constructively. The essential features of development — <u>knowledge, skills, freedom, and health</u> — can be achieved by sustained international cooperation that draws upon the unprecedented advances of modern science and technology.

Firmly grounding new democracies with equitable development requires decades or even generations, so their older and more established counterparts must be persistent and constructive without seeking domination. Development assistance, especially in the form of <u>capacity building</u>, is crucial for very poor countries in their efforts to create decent

living standards.   Such help comes from affluent states, international organizations, NGOs, and multinational firms. In terms of crucially constructive developments that must take place within poor countries, and have often been neglected, two stand paramount — <u>health and education</u>.

Health

Health has been curiously neglected in economic development efforts, as if it were a benefit to be achieved only in an advanced later stage of development. But a healthy, vigorous population is essential to build a dynamic, equitable, growing economy.

Improving the health and longevity of the poor is a valuable end in itself, a fundamental goal of economic development. But it is also a *means* to achieving the other development goals relating to poverty reduction. The links of health to poverty reduction and to long-term economic growth are powerful. The burden of disease in some low-income regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa, stands as a stark barrier to economic growth, and any comprehensive development strategy must therefore strive for its prompt removal

The established democracies can make a great contribution to overcoming these deficiencies if, with the involvement of civil society, they help build local capacity for <u>honest, effective governance</u>, <u>science-based health care</u>, and <u>technical capability</u>.

At a time of unprecedented advances in biomedical sciences and public health, it is urgent that <u>research and development **redirect** efforts</u> to pursue the treatment and prevention of the <u>world's most devastating diseases — concentrated in **developing countries**</u>. We are beginning to see that now in long oppressed and neglected Sub-Saharan Africa

<u>Education</u>

One of the fundamental underpinnings of successful socioeconomic development is <u>comprehensive education</u>, from pre-school through graduate school. This must include women on an equal basis, not only as a matter of equity but also as a matter of <u>economic stimulus</u>.

Given the crucial role of science and technology in the economy of the twenty-first century, an important component of this effort must be education in mathematics, science, and technology. This should run the entire gamut of the sciences from physical to social, and inclusion of science based professions, especially engineering, medicine, and public health. It must include education for learning to live together — preventing hatred and violence in the development of children and youth. To develop research capability, it is essential for each developing country to connect its emerging scientific community with the international scientific community. The role of an effective technical community in moving toward prosperity is clear. Moreover, the international ties that develop in this way can be helpful in other ways, especially in fostering democratic

norms and helping to sort out inter-state conflicts without violence, since cooperation among diverse scientists sets a good example and often generates creative ideas for dealing with intergroup or even international problems.

Changing International Norms of Hatred and Violence Through Education

Throughout history, much of human aggressive behavior has been exerted in the service of personal bonds of attachment. For millennia, a human individual's survival and reproductive success depended on loyal membership in a group, which provided the strength to defend oneself against other groups, or to wrest valued resources from them. Aggression toward other people has always and everywhere been facilitated by a pervasive human tendency to draw invidious distinctions between a positively valued "us" and a negatively valued "them." Warlords, demagogues, and tyrants have traditionally encouraged this tendency for their own purposes, a practice that shows little sign of abating.

Ridding mankind of the ancient habits of blaming, dehumanizing, and attacking will be very difficult, but not impossible. The human need to be part of a group has also fostered in our species positive tendencies of cooperation that make us highly interdependent and capable of positive **inter-group** as well as **intra-group** relations.

We must find ways to raise our children to welcome constructive, tolerant, and prosocial human relations rather than hatred and violence. It is a central challenge of our time to provide the foundation for a humane, democratic, and safe course of child and adolescent development, ultimately aiming to protect humanity.

At the adult level, <u>education of political leaders in the prevention of war and genocide</u> would make a valuable contribution to global security. Educational innovations in the past two decades — based on independent scholarship — directly involved <u>political</u> and <u>military</u> leaders of North America, Europe, Russia, and Africa. Experts from various fields brought to bear knowledge and skill in preventing war and genocide. The dynamic interplay of these experts with distinguished governmental leaders has set a valuable precedent. We can see in scholarship and practice how research-based knowledge of human conflict and the paths to mutual accommodation can become a <u>universal part of education</u>, conveying both the facts of <u>human diversity</u> and our <u>common humanity</u>. Nothing is more fundamental for the human future.