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THE POTENTIAL FOR COOPERATION
BY THE OSCE AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS
ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

As violent conflicts have emerged across Europe and the former USSR, the search for non-violent means to resolve or manage these conflicts has become ever more important. Such non-violent conflict management activities, which may also be described as preventive diplomacy, include efforts to obtain early warning of conflict and interventions that are intended to prevent, mitigate, transform or resolve conflicts.

Many observers believe that conflict management is an important growth area for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, formerly CSCE). As stated by a member of the European Commission's staff: "The main role of the OSCE after Budapest will be conflict prevention, crisis management and peacekeeping, most probably in conjunction with other organizations."¹ Furthermore, it is widely held that conflict management presents a large, unexplored potential for OSCE cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The value of such cooperation was recognized by the OSCE in the decisions reached at the 1994 Review Conference in Budapest: "The participating States and CSCE institutions will provide opportunities for increased involvement of NGOs in CSCE activities as foreseen in Chapter IV of the Helsinki Document 1992. They will search for ways in which the CSCE can best make use of the work and information provided by NGOs."²

¹ Fraser Cameron, "The European Union and the OSCE: Future Roles and Challenges", *Helsinki Monitor*, Volume 6, 1995, Number 2, page 29.

² CSCE Budapest Document 1994, Decisions, Chapter VIII, paragraph 17.

A growing corps of non-governmental actors, both individuals and organizations, is active in a wide range of non-violent conflict management activities across the OSCE region. The personnel involved are often highly trained in the theory and practice of conflict management, and come to it from a range of disciplines, including law, the social sciences, and diplomacy. A variety of non-governmental organizations are ready to provide expert consultation to groups in conflict and to international organizations such as the OSCE. Some of these NGOs engage in 'Track Two' efforts that seek to address the root causes of conflict, to train people in conflict resolution skills, and to promote dialogue and negotiations between both official and unofficial members of communities in conflict.

This article focusses on the potential for cooperation between this corps of professional, non-governmental actors and the OSCE. The article is not intended to address issues of OSCE-NGO cooperation outside the conflict management arena, nor are arguments about OSCE-NGO cooperation on conflict management necessarily applicable to OSCE-NGO cooperation in other endeavors. The authors' focus derives, in part, from the experience of running a conflict management project in the Balkans³ Other related experience of the authors, in Europe and elsewhere, has included efforts to promote the more systematic application of conflict management by NGOs and governments. One author (Paula Gutlove) has been a public member of the United States' delegation to two CSCE conferences. The first of these events was a seminar addressing "Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy", held by the CSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Warsaw in January 1994. The second was the CSCE Review Conference in Budapest, in November 1994. At both events the author addressed, from the national microphone, issues of conflict management and the potential for cooperation between the OSCE and NGOs in this field.

OSCE interest in the work of NGOs on conflict management, and in the potential for cooperation with NGOs active in this field, was apparent at the ODIHR seminar in Warsaw and at Budapest. Interest was further demonstrated at two seminars organized by the Institute for Resource and Security Studies (IRSS) in cooperation with the OSCE Secretariat. The first of these was a seminar held in StadtSchlaining, Austria, in September 1994, to explore the potential for OSCE-NGO cooperation on conflict management. The second was a seminar at the Hofburg in Vienna in June 1995, to explore the opportunities for exchanging information on conflict management in the OSCE region.

The OSCE and Conflict Management

The OSCE is devoting progressively greater attention to conflict management activities. This trend has continued for several years and was reflected, for example,

³ The Balkans Peace Project, a project of the Institute for Resource and Security Studies (IRSS), was founded in 1991. The project has facilitated dialogue and conflict management training workshops in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Paula Gutlove has directed this project from its inception. Gordon Thompson is the executive director of IRSS.

in the creation of the CSCE Conflict Prevention Centre at the Paris Summit of 1990. The trend was reinforced at the Budapest Summit of 1994, whose Declaration noted that: " The CSCE will be a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management in the region."⁴ Practical evidence of this trend includes the opening of the OSCE Court on Conciliation and Arbitration in Geneva in May 1995.

Development of the OSCE's conflict management plans and capabilities occurs within the broader context of a search for a new security architecture for Europe. That search is plagued by the residue of East-West confrontation, which is particularly visible in the controversy surrounding the eastward expansion of NATO. Thus, because the OSCE has a proven record of success as a Europe-wide forum, governments will inevitably turn to it as a key instrument of European security. In illustration, when German Foreign minister Klaus Kinkel discussed the concept of a pan-European security structure in a speech in Washington in May 1995, his remarks included the statement: "The new order will be based on several pillars, and collective defense within NATO and cooperative security through preventive crisis management in the OSCE will complement each other."⁵

A comprehensive security approach for Europe would, in fact, require the conduct of a wide variety of complementary activities by many actors. These actors would include the OSCE, NATO, the European Union, the United Nations, OSCE participating States, and non-governmental organizations. They would pursue interlocking programs of activity that promote security through a variety of means including the promotion of democracy and civil society, economic development, protection of individual and minority group rights, arms control and disarmament, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and collective defense commitments.

Effective operation of such a multi-faceted security apparatus will demand careful coordination of activities and flexibility in the conduct of those activities. Each situation will require a particular combination of measures, and the optimal combination of measures for a given situation will change over time. The various actors will need to continuously adapt their programs, and their relationships with each other, to meet the changing requirements. This need for ongoing coordination and adaptation poses a major challenge to all the actors, including the OSCE and non-governmental organizations. Greatly improved coordination, cooperation, and adaptation of programs will be needed at every level, including the political, planning and operational levels.

In the arena of conflict management, the OSCE is likely to be a central actor, especially in activities that involve diplomacy, dialogue, and the upholding of agreed standards for the behavior of states. Where conflict management involves the application of military or economic power, other actors will dominate, but if that power is to be perceived as legitimate it must be applied alongside, and in harmony with, the 'softer' measures employed by the OSCE.

⁴ CSCE Budapest Document 1994, Budapest Summit Declaration, paragraph 8.

⁵ Speech by Klaus Kinkel, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, to the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Washington, DC, 25 May 1995.

During recent years, the OSCE has gained considerable experience, and achieved some successes, with conflict management measures. Over the same period, a variety of non-governmental organizations have also developed conflict management programs, often building upon East-West conflict transformation work during the Cold War. It is widely agreed that these non-governmental programs could potentially make a major contribution in the future. To fulfil this promise, the non-governmental actors must adapt their programs to evolving needs, act cooperatively with each other, and coordinate their activities with those of the OSCE and other governmental or inter-governmental actors. A reciprocal effort by these actors to cooperate with NGOs is also needed, especially on the part of the OSCE, whose conflict management work can be synergistic with that of NGOs.

NGOs and Conflict Management

Since governments began to engage in wars, non-governmental actors, often from religious communities, have pursued non-violent conflict management. During the past ten years, however, a proliferation of conflict management programs has occurred. These new programs are typically professional, interdisciplinary undertakings. Much of the new activity has occurred since the end of the Cold War, with a focus on central Europe and the former Soviet Union. A growing number of university programs have been established since 1989 in the United States and in western Europe, addressing international conflict analysis and resolution. Similarly, organizations have sprung up whose purpose is to engage in conflict management, on either a 'grass roots' or an unofficial diplomatic level, as a neutral, third party intervenor.

The growth of the conflict management field has been so rapid that there is not yet any generally accepted way of describing the field from a strategic or managerial perspective. Most practitioners focus their attention on their particular interventions. Thus, in order to provide an overview of the field, the present authors have developed a conceptual framework whereby a particular conflict management activity can be regarded as occurring within one of four phases. The phases begin consecutively, but one phase is not necessarily concluded before the next begins. The four phases are:

- Phase I: Initial Intervention
- Phase II: Building Indigenous Capacity
- Phase III: Improving Effectiveness
- Phase IV: Establishing Sustainable Institutions

To date, most NGO conflict management activity in the OSCE region has been in Phase I. This phase of activity includes: (1) assessment or diagnosis of the conflict situation, during which the intervenor will map the conflict, identify appropriate parties for future activities, and engage them in the planning of the intervention; (2) convening meetings or workshops for the pursuit of facilitated dialogue, mediation, consensus building, and/or collaborative problem solving; (3) conducting training in conflict management theory and practice; and (4) encouraging indigenous conflict management operations.

NGOs from Europe and north America have actively engaged in all aspects of Phase I activities throughout the OSCE region. Problem-solving workshops, round table discussions, facilitated dialogue and mediation sessions have been convened in conflict areas from Northern Ireland to Cypress, from the Basque region to the former Soviet Union, from the Baltics to the Balkans. Many of the third party interventions have been training programs, introducing people who live in conflict areas to the theory and practice of conflict management, and providing training in negotiation, facilitation, mediation, and consensus building. In many instances, training can actually be viewed as a significant conflict management intervention because parties who might not otherwise agree to meet will agree to participate in a conflict management training program. Within training programs, conflict can be discussed generically, or lessons can be learned from simulations based on the local conflict or on other conflicts that have similarities to the local conflict.

Some of the western-based NGOs have put their energy into encouraging, or seeding, the development of indigenous conflict management activities. Such indigenous activities include the development of local affiliates, independent NGOs, or organizations affiliated to a university or other existing local entity. In Phase II, where efforts of this kind are fully developed, conflict management interventions are primarily dedicated to the support of indigenous conflict management capacity. This will include the raising of funds from external sources to support local operations, and the provision of advice or assistance in organizational development. Phase II activities could also include the joint development of training materials or educational curricula. It should be noted that some NGO intervenors do not focus on indigenous NGO development, and therefore do not enter Phase II. These NGOs see their role as a third party facilitator, or a trainer, and do not involve themselves in the development of local conflict management organizations. Other NGOs, by contrast, see Phase II activities as their primary focus, setting up local offices throughout a given region and then supplying resources, training and guidance in organizational development. Still others work to develop a consortium that brings together disparate local parties into a coordinated local conflict management organization.

Phase III -- Improving Effectiveness -- is at an early stage of development. When it is more fully developed, this phase will involve a variety of efforts to improve the effectiveness of conflict management operations, including: (1) systematic documentation of conflict management interventions and early warning of conflicts; (2) improved information exchange among conflict management practitioners and with parties outside the conflict management field; (3) assessment and evaluation of conflict management interventions; and (4) improved coordination of conflict management activities.

While Phase III is in its infancy, it is long overdue. As more organizations engage in conflict management activities, it is crucial that their efforts help rather than burden the local 'client' populations, that programs be coordinated and wherever possible synergistic, and that efforts not be redundant or counterproductive. It is incumbent on the field that it develop mechanisms for documenting and sharing information, for evaluation and assessment, and for improving coordination between

intervening third party actors. Such mechanisms were a focus of discussion at an NGO seminar that the IRSS organized in Vienna in June 1995, and are discussed in more detail below.

Phase IV -- Establishing Sustainable Institutions -- relates to the longer-term future of the conflict management field. Most NGO efforts rely upon private philanthropy and project-specific governmental support, usually with little or no guarantee of long-term funding. Thus, the sustainability of the conflict management field depends upon its securing long-term support through the development of financially sustainable, non-governmental conflict management institutions. While it is essential that these institutions not be forced to compromise their independence, it is nonetheless inevitable that government support will form an important part of their funding base. The provision of such support will be an appropriate expense for governments, because of the security benefits provided by conflict management activities.

Pursuing NGO-OSCE Cooperation

By 1993, rising concern about the escalation and spread of conflict in Europe had created an urgency in both governmental and non-governmental circles about finding creative conflict resolution alternatives. The ODIHR responded by holding a January 1994 seminar in Warsaw to address the role of the CSCE in early warning and preventive diplomacy. Both government and non-governmental actors perceived that scheduling an official seminar at that time was a validation of alternative conflict management options.

An important aspect of the Warsaw seminar was its focus on the roles of non-governmental actors in the overall context of preventive diplomacy, including the role of NGOs in the development of democratic institutions. Official delegates at the seminar and non-governmental participants both expressed the belief that programs in early warning and preventive diplomacy had the potential to enhance and preserve security in Europe. Moreover, it was stated that CSCE-NGO cooperation in these efforts could be mutually beneficial. In a plenary address to the seminar, Ambassador John Kornblum, head of the US delegation to the CSCE, stated: "Individual States and the CSCE community as a whole can gain from greater involvement of non-governmental organizations in early warning and preventive diplomacy."⁶

During the seminar, proposals were made by both official delegates and NGO observers that cooperation between the CSCE and NGOs be explored further. One such proposal was put forward by Paula Gutlove, who argued that cooperation in the conflict management area could be mutually beneficial to NGOs and the CSCE in the following three respects:

⁶ Speech by Ambassador John Kornblum to the CSCE Seminar on "Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy", Warsaw, January 1994.

* **FREEDOM OF ACTION:** Government officials may be constrained from taking certain kinds of actions in conflict situations (e.g., meeting with representatives of paramilitary groups or guerilla movements) or in deviating from standard operating procedures. In some circumstances NGOs may have greater freedom of action; they can use innovative techniques and can work on many levels.

* **ACCESS:** NGOs and the CSCE have access to different groups. Government officials have the ear of policy makers, and CSCE access and credibility can open doors and lend stature to a collaborating NGO. On the other hand, NGOs have access to a range of leaders from civil society. Furthermore, when NGOs do have access to political leaders, this can be a more informal form of contact that can sometimes produce creative options. NGOs also have access to the public, and can work in a variety of ways to influence public opinion.

* **RESOURCES:** Non-governmental organizations and the CSCE both suffer from a lack of human and financial resources. Collaborative actions might enhance the availability of both kinds of resources. NGOs can raise private funds for specific initiatives, something the CSCE is not in a position to do. Where appropriate, NGOs can promote public awareness of the CSCE, its goals, and its programs.

The engaged presence of appropriate parties at the Warsaw seminar opened the way to a variety of cooperative governmental and non-governmental initiatives. One such initiative was a cooperative effort of the OSCE Secretariat and the Institute for Resource and Security Studies, through the Balkans Peace Project, to convene a seminar in StadtSchlaining, Austria, in September 1994. This seminar brought together about twenty heads of CSCE delegations and CSCE officials with an equal number of representatives of non-governmental organizations that are engaged in conflict management activities in the OSCE region.

The StadtSchlaining seminar provided the first opportunity for representatives of the CSCE and NGOs in the conflict resolution field to have frank, informal and direct contact, to develop dialogue, and to build links. The seminar was a new departure for the CSCE because, up until that point, contact with specialized groups of NGOs had been rather chaotic. However, it was felt that with the establishment of CSCE institutions (e.g., the ODIHR, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Secretary General, the Secretariat, the Chairman in Office, the Committee of Senior Officials) it may now be possible to have a continuity of contact that could be built upon constructively.

One of the unique features of the meeting was the degree to which it was broadly and significantly representative. Key CSCE officials and ambassadors attended, including fifteen heads of delegation. This attendance demonstrated how serious the CSCE delegations are about the issue of conflict management and the role of NGOs. Participation from the NGO community was similarly representative, featuring NGOs from the USA, Canada, the CIS and across Europe.

At the meeting, three important areas of convergence between the CSCE and the NGO conflict management community were delineated. First, the CSCE and this NGO community share the key objectives of preventing conflict, building civil

society, and protecting human rights. Second, there is significant overlap between the CSCE and this NGO community in the approaches they use, namely persuasion, dialogue and conciliation. Third, between the CSCE and this NGO group there is a useful complementarity of roles, in all phases of conflict management from the grass roots level to the political and governmental level.

The meeting also clarified areas in which this NGO community could provide expertise to the CSCE, including: (1) education, training, research, and conceptual analysis of conflict, conflict prevention and conflict management; (2) communal dialogue on the local level; (3) provision of information; and (4) unofficial, peaceful, sub-diplomatic interventions in conflict situations.

The CSCE Secretariat indicated that they were actively seeking new ways to be more open to NGOs and would, in particular, welcome information and alternative analyses on conflict situations, and seek to utilize NGO training capabilities in the areas of conflict prevention and conflict management. However, the CSCE participants noted, while acknowledging the utility of information that NGOs could supply in regard to early warning and conflict prevention, that the CSCE does not yet have mechanisms in place to adequately accept or deal with this flow of information.

The meeting yielded a number of recommendations, many of which focussed on the need for better information exchange, in both directions, between the CSCE and this NGO community. First, NGOs were encouraged to help the CSCE gain a broader understanding of the wide range of NGOs and their functions in conflict management. Furthermore, it was requested that NGOs be better organized on both a national and regional basis, to assist the CSCE in identifying and communicating with appropriate members of this NGO community. It was also felt that better channels of communication should be established by the CSCE to improve CSCE-NGO information exchange in the conflict management arena. Such measures included enhanced NGO liaison functions at CSCE institutions, with greater attention to conflict prevention and conflict management, and regular seminars on CSCE-NGO cooperation in conflict management and prevention, to be organized in Vienna.

An important final recommendation from the seminar was that a written report of the meeting be submitted to the Budapest Review Conference, describing the broad range of ideas and possibilities that were explored at the seminar. Further, it was recommended that the seminar convener address the delegates at Budapest, preferably through the national microphone, to share the ideas, feelings and recommendations of the seminar. Both of these recommendations were carried out.⁷ Presentation of the seminar findings in Budapest was met with strong support. It was acknowledged that expert consultation from NGOs in this area

⁷ The summary statement from the September 1994 StadtSchlaining seminar, which was distributed at the Budapest Review Conference, is available from the Institute for Resource and Security Studies, or from the OSCE Secretariat. It is titled: "Exploring the Potential for Collaboration by the CSCE and NGOs on Preventive Diplomacy".

could well be one of the most useful and cost-effective resources available to the CSCE, and that the CSCE needs to improve its ability to utilize this resource.

To follow up some of the key recommendations that were made in Schlaining, and reinforced at the Budapest Review Conference, the Institute for Resource and Security Studies has convened an effort to improve the sharing of knowledge about conflict management, including knowledge about early warning of conflict and interventions that are intended to prevent, mitigate or resolve conflict. The effort has two tracks, one involving the OSCE and NGOs, the other operating entirely within the NGO community. As part of this initiative, a pair of seminars were convened in Vienna in June 1995. One seminar, co-convened by IRSS and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, brought together officials of the OSCE, delegates to the OSCE, representatives of NGOs that are engaged in conflict management, information specialists, and representatives of NGOs or international organizations involved in humanitarian assistance and relief. Participating NGOs came from Europe, the CIS and North America. The second seminar, convened by IRSS, brought together the NGO representatives and those from international organizations involved in humanitarian assistance and relief.

The purpose of the first seminar was for OSCE and NGO representatives to share perspectives on the needs and opportunities for improved exchange of knowledge on conflict management. This event was part of an ongoing expert consultation coordinated by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and IRSS. Both parties have agreed that this OSCE-NGO consultation does not commit the OSCE or any participating NGO to take any specific future action. Instead, the seminar was an opportunity for OSCE delegations and officials to learn about trends in both conflict management and information management. At the second seminar, however, NGO representatives engaged in discussion and planning of specific actions to improve the exchange of knowledge on NGO conflict management in the OSCE region.

Events such as the seminars convened in StadtSchlaining and in Vienna are examples of many OSCE-NGO cooperative efforts in the conflict management field. Other OSCE-NGO efforts, for example with the OSCE Secretariat, with the High Commissioner on National Minorities and with individual OSCE missions, are seeking to improve the practice of conflict management through collaborative actions. These seminars and related efforts reflect a growing appreciation of the importance of preventing and resolving conflict, and a recognition of the need for greater cooperation by government and non-government actors in the conflict management arena.

Opportunities for Improved Coordination

Many observers have pointed out the need for improved coordination between the OSCE and other international organizations, including the United Nations, the European Union, and NATO. Yet, this coordination has been difficult to achieve. For example, an entire chapter titled "Cooperation Between the CSCE and the United Nations" was dropped from the Decisions of the 1994 Budapest Summit. This occurred because of disagreement over the proposed "CSCE First" concept whereby

states would attempt to exhaust CSCE dispute resolution possibilities before going to the UN Security Council. However, it is important to note that the deleted chapter also contained a call for "additional and regular flow of information" between the UN and the OSCE.⁸

A sustained flow of appropriate information is a necessary, although certainly not sufficient, condition for effective coordination of programs by different entities. Other necessary ingredients include a willingness to compromise, a clearly articulated set of shared goals, and the availability of decision-making mechanisms that allow practical coordination at both strategic and operational levels. These ingredients will be available to differing degrees in particular situations and can often be assembled on an 'as needed' basis. By contrast, the effective exchange of information requires a sustained operation. Databases must be kept up to date, and the mechanisms for information collection and dissemination must be kept functioning, ready for use at short notice.

Thus, systematic information exchange emerges as a key ingredient of improved coordination. This is particularly true in a field such as conflict management, where a diverse array of actors engages in a variety of ever-changing activities. In this shifting environment, a reliable system of information exchange will provide a framework and a focus for planning and coordination. The need for such a system has been strongly felt in a field that is close to conflict management, namely humanitarian assistance and relief. In response to that need, an information system titled ReliefNet is being developed under the aegis of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, with active involvement by NGOs.

In the case of conflict management in the OSCE region, there seems to be a special opportunity for NGOs to contribute to the development of systematic information exchange and, thereby, to improved coordination of conflict management activities. The non-governmental community perceives a need for improved information exchange, and is not handicapped by the political or diplomatic constraints that may face the OSCE or other inter-governmental bodies. Thus, the NGOs may be able to take a leading role in promoting the OSCE-wide exchange of information on conflict management. In doing so, they may help to improve cooperation not only within the NGO community, but also between NGOs and the OSCE and between the OSCE and other inter-governmental bodies. An example of this was the Vienna meeting convened by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and the IRSS, which brought together UN personnel, including those working on ReliefNet, with OSCE delegates.

The Benefits of Information Exchange

Conflict management activities occur within a decentralized, multi-level regime in which there are roles for a diverse set of official and non-governmental actors. Within this regime, conflict management involves the flexible, adaptive application

⁸ John Borawski, "The Budapest Summit Meeting", *Helsinki Monitor*, Volume 6, 1995, Number 1, page 13.

of a wide variety of mechanisms. In this context, improved information exchange will yield diverse benefits, including:

- * **IMPROVED PRACTICE:** Systematic compilation and sharing of experiences will help conflict management practitioners to learn from each others' successes and failures, and will thereby improve their performance and productivity.
- * **IMPROVED COORDINATION:** A decentralized, multi-level conflict intervention regime employing flexible, adaptive measures is needed, but the coordination of activities under this regime will be difficult. Systematic compilation and exchange of information about the plans, capabilities, resources, experiences and observations of the various actors will be crucial to successful coordination.
- * **IMPROVED EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY WARNING:** A comprehensive system of information exchange will strengthen linkages among early warning efforts and between those efforts and conflict prevention activities. Linking efforts in this way will improve the quality of early warning information and will help to ensure that this information leads to appropriate action.
- * **ESTABLISHING OF ACCOUNTABILITY:** Sharing of knowledge will help to ensure that conflict interventions are appropriately conducted and evaluated. Also, wide circulation of early warning information will document the fact that warning has been given, thus creating a wider expectation that appropriate action will be taken.
- * **BUILDING OF SUPPORT FOR CONFLICT INTERVENTION:** Ongoing political and financial support is needed if conflict intervention is to realize its potential. Information indicating that interventions can be successful will help to build such support.
- * **FACILITATION OF REGIME ADAPTATION:** The development and adaptation of the conflict intervention regime will require systematic exchange of knowledge. There will be a need to compile and compare information on a wide variety of subjects, drawing from many sources.

The Need for Information Conventions

The information that is exchanged will encompass a wide variety of early warning signals, together with information about a wide range of conflict interventions. Because the field involves multiple actors operating in a decentralized regime, information will be provided, consumed and managed by many organizations, and there will be no powerful, central body to oversee the information exchange process. In this situation, effective information exchange demands general acceptance of conventions for the collection and management of information. Conventions will be especially important in the following three areas:

- * **ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK:** Agreement will be needed on an analytic framework for the description of early warning signals or conflict interventions.

* **TERMINOLOGY:** A lexicon of agreed terminology will be needed, as an adjunct to the analytic framework. Parallel versions of this lexicon will be needed for each of the languages used in conflict management.

* **REPORTING PRACTICES:** A set of generally accepted reporting practices will be needed, to ensure that useful information is generated.

The development of these conventions is an important task that will be demanding and time-consuming. Many conflict management practitioners will need to be involved, together with representatives of organizations that use, rather than produce, information about conflict management. Information users will include journalists, government policy-makers, and many others.

Other Information Issues

The major information exchange conventions that are needed are not technology-dependent. In principle, they could form the basis for an information system that relies entirely on the circulation of paper. However, contemporary information technology (featuring small computers, versatile software, and electronic networks) allows the creation of a much more powerful and useful system. Also, contemporary technology allows a highly decentralized approach to information management. This approach is compatible with the decentralized conflict management regime that has emerged.

There is an existing, and growing, infrastructure for information exchange on matters such as conflict management. Electronic networks, skilled personnel and information exchange services are major parts of that infrastructure. However, an issue requiring ongoing attention will be the extent to which it can be assumed that information users and contributors employ contemporary information technology. Substantial differences in access to this technology, and in the inclination to use it, may persist over the coming years.

Another important issue is the extent to which the exchange of conflict management information should be open. NGOs will generally prefer open exchange, although they recognize that in some cases, such as interventions that involve confidential discussions, certain items of information will not be appropriate for open exchange. Governments and intergovernmental entities such as the OSCE may regard a substantial part of their internal communications and data as inappropriate for open exchange.

Openness implies that any interested organization or individual can contribute or gain access to information, thus creating a broad-based exchange of knowledge. Broad participation has some important advantages. Notably, it helps to ensure that the information which is exchanged is both complete and accurate. There are also some disadvantages to broad participation, but it can be expected that these will be outweighed by the advantages. Moreover, the disadvantages can often be overcome. For example, low-quality information will inevitably appear in an open information exchange system, but there will be ways to help users choose high-quality information that meets their needs.

Conclusions

Attempts are under way to develop a comprehensive security structure for Europe, and there is general agreement that this structure must provide a major role for non-violent means of conflict management. The field of conflict management, while promising, requires further development and refinement if it is to achieve its full potential. The OSCE is likely to be the leading inter-governmental actor on conflict management matters, but it will need to systematically coordinate its work with other actors, especially the professional NGOs that are engaged in conflict management. These NGOs can work with the OSCE in a manner that is synergistic and mutually beneficial.

Within the OSCE and the NGO community there is growing recognition of the need to cooperate on conflict management. Practical steps toward that end have been taken. Improved coordination and cooperation on conflict management will require, among other things, better information exchange. Members of the NGO conflict management community have identified opportunities for promoting the systematic exchange of information. Capturing of these and other opportunities will allow both NGOs and the OSCE to contribute to a sustainable peace for Europe.

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