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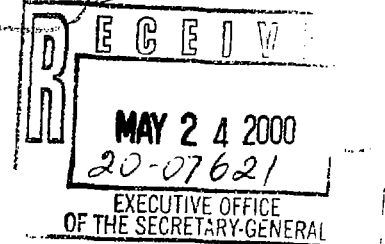
*For your attention, pls*

**Note to the Secretary-General**

MAY 26 2000

EOSG/CENTRAL

**CONFLICT PREVENTION**



1. When we spoke last week about conflict prevention, you expressed an interest in hearing more about DPA's activities in this area, in particular the Conflict Prevention Training Programme, and suggested that I might brief the SMG. I would of course be happy to brief the SMG. We also discussed the idea of a Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for Conflict Prevention, and your suggestion of a complementary informal resource group on the same subject, consisting of academics and other helpful outsiders.
2. The background is that in January 1999 DPA launched, with the UN Staff College and other UN departments, programmes and agencies, a system-wide training programme in conflict prevention. The programme is intended to impart common skills and tools for conflict prevention so as to enable more strategic interaction within the UN system and between Headquarters and the field. To date some 300 staff members from 22 departments, programmes and funds have participated in week-long training courses held throughout the world. The courses are also attended by host governments and a limited number of NGOs.
3. The training programme complements internal activities, whether those of a more operational nature funded by the Trust Fund for Preventive Action or our collective efforts to improve our capacity for early warning through mechanisms such as DPA's Prevention Team and the Inter-Departmental Framework for Co-ordination. (The latter operates under a rotating chairman and includes participants from: DPA, DPKO, OCHA, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, FAO, UNHCR and, recently, the World Bank.) Within DPA a number of other initiatives are underway to strengthen our capabilities for prevention.
4. In the last year, as you are aware, conflict prevention has received important support from both the General Assembly (in the General Debate) and the Security Council (Presidential Statement of November 1999). It is likely to feature significantly at your meeting with the Heads of Regional Organizations, which will be dedicated to both preventive and post-conflict peace-building. And it is on the agenda of the G-8 summit meeting in Okinawa in July. There has also been talk of a Foreign Minister level meeting of the Security Council during the Millennium Assembly to follow up on the November 1999 Presidential Statement on prevention.
5. This public discussion of conflict prevention is to be welcomed. However, our effectiveness in the practice of conflict prevention is still hampered by the reluctance of

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*Many thanks for this brief.  
Left place on the SAC's agenda.*

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even some of those Member States most vociferous in support of the concept to commit themselves in deeds, rather than just words. A more pervasive problem, in terms of galvanizing either the Security Council or General Assembly, remains the suspicion of the whole notion of prevention that is still harbored by some states. These states seem to confuse prevention with intervention.

6. In this context, I believe the time may be right for you to launch a **Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for Conflict Prevention**. While I would generally favour any group of "friends of the Secretary-General" being small and flexible, in this instance, I would counsel otherwise and recommend a broad and open-ended membership. In its initial composition the Group might include, for example: members of the Security-Council, the chairs of the Regional Groups and donors to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action. I would envisage the Group's objectives as being threefold:

- to examine how the Security Council, the General Assembly and other organs and bodies of the United Nations can become more proactive in conflict prevention and to support the activities of the Secretary-General in this area;
- to help mobilize the resources necessary for the support of conflict prevention strategies and specific mechanisms that may be jointly developed by the Secretary-General and Member States;
- to serve as a forum for regular consultations between the Secretary-General and Member States on specific prevention issues.

7. A useful complement to this necessarily unwieldy body may be an initiative of which I am not sure you are aware: the convening by Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden of an informal gathering of countries with a similar interest in the promotion of conflict prevention by the United Nations. The countries so far engaged in this exercise, in addition to Sweden, are: Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Hungary, Japan, Nigeria, Norway, South Africa and the United Kingdom. This is an eclectic group, of a good regional mix, that is characterized by active Ambassadors. Its members could perhaps also be members of the Group of Friends, allowing it to play a useful role as a "ginger group" within the larger Group, without compromising its utility as a self-appointed and informal body. Coordination would clearly be important, to ensure that we do not sow confusion. Ambassador Dahlgren has stressed that his initiative would be wholly supportive of your efforts and wishes to work closely with us in this regard.

8. As a parallel undertaking, I agree with you that it would be most useful to consider the formation of an informal resource group on conflict prevention, principally composed of academics, to reinforce our efforts in this area and particularly our ability to take action sufficiently far "upstream" of potential crises. While some time will clearly be

needed for both the Group of Friends and the resource group to mature, the possibility of the two being brought together for cross-fertilization in the future is a most intriguing one.

9. I would welcome a chance to discuss the proposals contained in this note with you at your convenience.



Kieran Prendergast  
24 May 2000

cc: The Deputy Secretary-General  
Mr. Riza  
Mr. Gambari  
Mr. Miyet  
Mr. Fall  
Mr. Ruggie  
Mr. Türk  
Ms. Lindenmayer  
Mr. Tharoor  
Mr. Mack