

Chapter IV: Regional Cooperation and Conflict Prevention

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Regional Cooperation and Conflict Prevention

David Mitrany wrote in 1943 that “the problem of our time is not how to keep nations peacefully apart but how to bring them actively together”.¹ Today it is evident that Mitrany underestimated the success of bringing states together in regional and international organizations. The problem we face today is not how to bring them together, but how to handle disputes and maintain good relations once cooperation has been initiated. As regional organizations have become more dominant in international affairs, it is especially interesting to see how they work in relation to conflict prevention. Regional organizations in general have been noted to enforce preventing mechanisms or even to act as such in political disputes. One well-known example of such a regional organization is the forerunner of today's European Union, the European Coal and Steel Union, which was created in the immediate post World War II era. The Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Andean Community are among other regional organizations cited as successful in this regard.² Similarly, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) are arguably examples of organizations that have prevented disputes in the economic sphere.³ It should be noted,

¹ David Mitrany, *A Working Peace* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), 28.

² Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002); International Crisis Group, *Increasing Europe's Stake in the Andes*, Latin American Briefing, June 15, 1994.

³ Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002); Mattli

however, that what is referred to as prevention today has not been the norm earlier. Indeed, earlier attempts are better described as conflict management in the best of cases and as crisis management in most cases. Although the need of preventive action always has been apparent,⁴ conflict prevention has not until relatively recently been noted as an important concept when dealing with conflicts, both on a domestic and state-to-state level. But they saying that 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' is, however, widely accepted today.

After the end of the Cold War, states, regional and international organizations have also adopted a more diversified view on security that also encompasses humanitarian, environmental and economic issues. This move away from the traditional concepts of security is positive, especially since the nature of conflict also has changed. According to estimates made by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), deaths related to interstate conflicts dropped by two thirds – from 660,000 in the 1980s to 220,000 in the 1990s. This can be contrasted to the 3.6 million people who were killed as a result of internal conflicts in the 1990s.⁵ Moreover, this is not taking into consideration the societal and humanitarian disasters, like poverty, diseases and environmental degradation, that follow, especially, intrastate conflicts. The combination of old and new security threats has increased the need and potential for conflict prevention, and it has become necessary to expand the focus to include, among other things, the prevention of social, environmental and economic degradation. Today, it is therefore vital to deal with more complex conflict patters and move away from the single-minded focus on military threats. Military threats are no longer the sole security threats and the focus has moved beyond the interstate level to

Walter, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴ Preventive action has not always been seen as a peaceful means, in the classic Chinese texts – the Three Kingdoms – and Greek classics such as the Peloponnesian war – or the late Christian texts from Augustino – conflict prevention was preemptive strikes against the enemy. This even if Sun Tzu did argue in the Art of War (孙子兵法) that the emergence of a conflict and the usage of military violence is a failure in itself. This preemptive strike mentality continued until the end of the Cold War when the argumentation was directed towards a more peaceful conflict avoidance pattern.

⁵ United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 2002* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11.

encompass individuals, sub-national and regional entities.⁶ This has led to a realization that the costs of inaction, or late action, can be tremendous since military conflicts, in combination with the new security threats, tend to be more devastating both in terms of human suffering and economic losses.⁷ In addition, in contemporary military conflicts, there is always at least a potential risk that nuclear weapons will be used, something which could end in total destruction as several states in the region are armed with nuclear weapons. Academics, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and policy institutions have both noted the increased risk that this combination of security threats implies, as well as its increased destructiveness. Thus, the central issue is no longer whether conflict prevention is needed or if it can work, but rather under what conditions it can be effective and how it should be implemented.⁸

There has also been a positive change in the political arena towards using

⁶ It has been argued that the international community has been slow to pick up the new security threats, and that the focus still, to a large extent, is on state actors and military threats. Steve Smith, "Singing Our World into Existence: International Relations Theory and September 11", *International Studies Quarterly* 48, 3 (2004): 504-507.

⁷ Michael Brown and Richard Rosenkrane have showed that, on top of the reduction of human suffering and moral decay, there are also great financial gains involved in preventative or early action. According to some estimates, the costs of early prevention could be as low as 5% (varies between 5-50 %) of the cost of late intervention, crisis management and peace creation (Michael Brown & Richard Rosenkrane, *The Costs of Conflict* (New York: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1999)). These estimates were made before the initiation of the expensive operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, which are likely to become the most expensive operations so far for the US. John Stremlau has pointed out that the cost of the UNHCRs relief intervention in Somalia has surpassed US \$ 3 billion. However, it should be noted that the costs of the UNHCR are marginal in comparison to the military costs (John Stremlau, "People in Peril: Human Rights, Humanitarian Action, and Preventing Deadly Conflict", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* 6 (1998)). The mission in Bosnia has surpassed US \$15 billion according to official statistics but the figure is undoubtedly higher. These are only two examples of conflicts that could have been prevented on an early stage. Thereby, billions of dollars could have been saved and the suffering of millions of people could have been avoided.

⁸ Michael Lund, "Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy", in *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, eds. Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson & Pamela Aall, (Washington D.C.: USIP Press, 1996); David Carment & Albrecht Schnabel, *Building Conflict Prevention: Methods, Experiences, Needs* (Tokyo: UNU Workshop Seminar Report Series, 2001); Michael Brown & Richard Rosenkrane, *The Costs of Conflict* (New York: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1999). Brown and Rosenkrane convincingly argue that preventive efforts are cost-effective in regards to political, economic and military measures. The evidence that they present to support their argument points to a clear correlation between early preventive actions and lower human and capital costs.

conflict prevention measures instead of emergency actions – at least on paper.⁹ Indeed, the operational effects do not always mirror the content of the well-intended agreements or the beautiful language of the documents. The failure to implement conflict preventive measures is endemic, but far worse among certain states and organizations than others. Far too little is also being done by states and regional organizations to increase the implementation of conflict prevention measures.¹⁰ The failure, or unwillingness, of states to implement conflict prevention measures is somehow illogical since everyday society is filled with conflict prevention measures, such as the social security system, insurances, traffic rules, legal norms or simple rules such as washing your hands before dinner to prevent you from becoming sick. All these rules are simple prevention measures that nobody would think twice about, but preventive measures that could save millions of lives and billions of dollars are often contested or neglected by politicians and policy-makers.

There are at least two reasons for this. On the one hand, many decision-makers do not believe in the possibility of conflict prevention. On the other hand, following the prevailing Cold War mentality, prevention is not considered realistic and military options seem many times as the logical solution. The reluctance towards conflict prevention can also be the result of a fear among states that conflict prevention implies an intervention in internal affairs. However, regional organizations seem to have had greater success than international organizations in implementing conflict prevention measures. This is because trust and integration normally is deeper in a regional setting, which in turn eliminates some of the fear of intervention in internal affairs. In addition, conflicts, even domestic ones,

⁹ Nicole Ball, *Spreading good practices in security sector reform: Policy options for the British government*, Saferworld, November 1998

<<http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications/pubspread.htm>> (September 6, 2005); Cynthia Gaigals & Manuela Leonhardt, *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development*, Saferworld, International Alert & IDRC, 2001; David Nyheim, Manuela Leonhardt & Cynthia Gaigals, *Development in Conflict: A Seven Steps Tool for Planners, Fewer*, International Alert & Saferworld, 2000; Regeringskansliet (Government Offices of Sweden), *Preventing Violent Conflict – Swedish Policy for the 21st Century* (Stockholm: Government Communication 2000/01:2, 2000); International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002), 2.

¹⁰ International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002).

often have regional effects and reasons.

Moreover, regional organizations are becoming increasingly important as the UN has delegated the responsibility of conflict prevention and resolution to regional organizations. As a result, states need to interact in a regional setting in order to be effective in developing prevention strategies. Very few conflicts can be prevented with solely national methods as globalization has made the world smaller. Today, national borders are neither a good defining line, nor are they capable of containing conflicts. Scholars and practitioners have devoted great efforts, both in theory and practice, in regards to regional cooperation and its effects on conflict related issues in politics and trade.¹¹ States are also becoming increasingly involved

¹¹ For an overview of current and past generic studies on regional cooperation see: Alao Abiodun, "The Role of African Regional And Sub-regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention and Resolution", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, Working Paper No. 23, 2001 <<http://jha.ac/articles/u023.htm>>; Gerhard Bebr, "Regional Organizations: A United Nations Problem", *American Journal of International Law* 49, 2 (1955); Edward Chen & Kwan C H eds., *Asia's Borderless Economy: the emergence of sub-regional zones* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1997); Inis Claude, "The OAS, the UN, the United States", *International Conciliation* 54, March (1964); William Dixon, "Research on research revisited: another half decade of quantitative and field research on international organizations", *International Organization* 31 (1977):65-82; Ellen Frey-Wouters, "The Prospects for Regionalism in World Affairs", in *Trends and Patterns*, eds. Richard Falk & Cyril Black (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); John Halderman, "Regional Enforcement Measures and the United Nations", *Georgetown Law Journal* 52, 1 (1963); Mattli Walter, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); John Moore Norton, "The Role of Regional Arrangements in the Maintenance of World Order", in *The Future of the International Legal Order: Volume III Conflict Management*, eds. Cyril Black & Richard Falk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); Joseph Nye, *International Regionalism* (Boston: Little and Brown Company, 1968); Richard Stubbs, "Signing on to liberalization: AFTA and the politics of regional economic cooperation", *The Pacific Review* 2 (2000); Thant Myo, Min Tang & H Kakazu eds., *Growth Triangles in Asia* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1998). For literature on the effects of regional cooperation on politics and trade see: Akrasanee Narongchai & David Stifel, 1994, "The political economy of the ASEAN Free Trade Area", in *Asia Pacific Regionalism: Readings in International Economic Relations*, eds. Ross Garnaut & Peter Drysdale, (Pymble: Harper Educational Publishers, 1994); Amer Ramses & Niklas Swanström, "Konflikter och samarbete i Stillahavsasien", *Internationella Studier* (Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska Institutet, 1996), 52-71; Michael Anatolik, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: The Spirit of Constructive Engagement", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 16, 2, (1994); Kamarulzaman Askandar, *ASEAN as a Process of Conflict Management*, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Bradford: Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford (1996); Helga Haftendorn, Robert Keohane & Celeste Wallander, *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Sree Kumar "Policy issues and the formation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area" in *AFTA: The Way Ahead*, eds. Pearl Imada & Seiji Naya (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1992); Robert Lawrence,

in regional organizations to prevent such conflicts. Conflicts, both internal and international, in many cases have regional implications, dimensions and connections that necessitate a multilateral approach to conflict prevention. Michael Lund has pointed out that preventive diplomacy in its nature is multilateral, and that organizations such as the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the EU, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), later African Union (AU) and the Organization of American States (OAS) - all working in a multilateral context - have been very active in conflict prevention.¹² There also seems to be a consolidation and expansion of regional structures such as the EU, APEC, ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and NAFTA. As a result, new roles are being carved out for international and regional organizations.¹³ This is in line with the United Nations' policy to increase the importance of regional organizations.¹⁴ The effectiveness and impact of regional organizations on regional structures is, however, still relatively unclear. This said, it is important to realize that regional organizations do not operate in a vacuum. In fact, their success in preventing conflicts is directly dependent on cooperation between nations (their member states) and international entities such as the WTO, the UN and NATO.¹⁵

"Emerging regional arrangements: building blocks or stumbling blocks?", in *Finance and the International Economy*, ed. R O'Brien, (The AMEX Bank Review Prize Essays, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24-36; Ronald Scheman, "The Alliance for Progress: Concepts and Creativity", in *The Alliance for Progress*, ed. Ronald Scheman (New York: Praeger, 1988); Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002); Niklas Swanström, "The Prospects of Multilateral Conflict Prevention in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey* 23, 1 (2004).

¹² Michael Lund, *Preventive Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1995), 78-79.

¹³ Aggarwal Vinod, Beverly Crawford and Cédéric Dupont, *European Integration as a Model for Asia-Pacific Regionalism* (Paper presented at the Conference on Global and Regional Economic Security and Integration, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, December 14-15, 2001).

¹⁴ United Nations Charter, <<http://www.un.org/>>.

¹⁵ There are a multitude of successful NGO attempts to prevent violent conflicts from erupting, and to consolidate the peace in a post-conflict situation. The work of the Italian Community of Saint Egidio in Mozambique, the Kettering Foundation's Inter Tajik Dialogue (John Stremlau, "People in Peril: Human Rights, Humanitarian Action, and Preventing Deadly Conflict", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (1998)) are significant, but also the NGO work to prevent conflict between Czechs and Roma, the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between people that aims at increasing dialogue between Jews and Palestinian (Marina Ottaway, "An Ounce of Prevention Is Worth a Pound of Relief" in

There is no doubt that conflict prevention, both as a theoretical concept and an instrumental tool, is increasingly important as it enhances the possibilities for peaceful development at a low cost for the international community and individual states. Early intervention in conflicts, even before they have erupted, makes prevention easier and militarized disputes or open conflicts can be avoided. At the early stages of conflict, the disputed issues are less politicized and therefore fewer resources, both political and economic, need to be invested. Moreover, militarized conflicts imply a greater cost than structural or direct prevention. It has been suggested that regional organizations could function more effectively as conductors of conflict prevention than other units within the international system (international or state level), but more research is needed on this issue before any conclusions can be drawn.

Conflict Prevention and Regional Organizations as Integrated Concepts

The linkage between regional cooperation and conflict prevention has received less attention than crisis management and security at large, especially regarding the relation to international actors or states.¹⁶ There is a great amount of literature on conflict management and negotiation in

Countries in Crisis: Sixth Annual Report on the State of World Hunger (Silver Spring: Bread for World Institute, 1996)).

¹⁶ When dealing with conflicts and regional cooperation, a definition of the terms 'conflict' and 'region' is needed. Conflict is here defined as perceived differences in issue positions between two or more parties at the same moment in time (Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002), 31. When considering regional cooperation, we need to look a bit closer at regions as a phenomenon. Regional definitions are, as Chris Dixon and David Drakakis-Smith noted, "notoriously difficult to establish" (C. Dixon & D. Drakakis Smith *Economic and Social Development in Pacific Asia* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), 1). This is partly because the regions' essential character often does not coincide with their physical character (Iyanatul Islam & Anis Chowdhury, *Asia-Pacific Economies* (London: Routledge, 1997), 3) and partly because different researchers use widely different definitions. Björn Hettne has pointed out that regions are dynamic concepts that change over time (Björn Hettne, *The Globalization of Development Theory and the Future of Development Strategies* (Gothenburg: Gothenburg University, Padrigu Development Studies, Padrigu Papers, 1989), 55), which makes the study of a region more difficult. It is however clear that regions are entities, made up by states that share a cultural characteristic and which define themselves as being a region.

transnational settings and cultures,¹⁷ but far less on conflict prevention.¹⁸ The theoretical discussion on the correlation between regional cooperation and conflict prevention has been limited in earlier studies and offers little guidance. Ernst Haas, Robert Butterworth and Joseph Nye, who conducted one of the first studies directly focusing on regional cooperation and conflict management (but not prevention), came to the conclusion that international organizations can influence the conflict management processes.¹⁹ The drawbacks, which they acknowledge, were that they were unable to base their study on an existing theory, but also to produce a new theory at the time of writing.²⁰ However, studies on cooperation and conflict management have since been conducted and their results have lead researchers and policy makers to assume that a positive correlation exists between conflict prevention and regional cooperation. Yet the theoretical basis, on which such assumptions are founded, does not acknowledge the differences between conflict prevention and conflict management.²¹ Thus,

¹⁷ For examples see: Kevin Avruch, *Culture & Conflict Resolution* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1998); Hans Binnendijk ed., *National Negotiating Styles* (Washington D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, US Department of State, 1987); Herman Kahn, *World Economic Development: 1979 and beyond* (London: Croom Helm, 1979); Kwok Leung & Dean Tjosvold, *Conflict Management in the Asia Pacific: Assumptions and Approaches in Diverse Cultures* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia), 1998); Jeswald Salacuse, *Making Global Deals: What every executive should know about negotiating abroad* (New York: Random House, 1991); Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

¹⁸ International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002); International Peace Academy, *Cooperative Prevention and Management of Conflicts in Europe* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2001); Connie Peack, *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflicts* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); Abram Chayes & Antonia Handler Chayes eds., *Preventing Conflict in the Post-Communist World: Mobilizing International and Regional Organizations* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1996); Niklas Swanström, "The Prospects of Multilateral Conflict Prevention in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey* 23, 1 (2004).

¹⁹ Ernst Haas, Robert Butterworth & Joseph Nye, *Conflict Management by International Organizations* (Morristown: General Learning Press, 1972).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹ Conflict and crisis management has traditionally been focusing on "hard" issues such as military or strategic issues and the focus have often been on the combatants. This holds true also for conflict prevention. This is not only a dangerous focus, but also a focus that does not mirror the reality. In the beginning of the twentieth century, 90 per cent of the casualties in war were combatants. Today, 90 per cent of the victims are civilians. Of the surviving civilians, 14.5 million are refugees around the world, and another 30 million are internally displaced persons (IDP) (John Stremlau, "People in Peril: Human Rights, Humanitarian

the assumed positive correlation lacks theoretical differentiation and reflects the researchers' conceptual simplification. There are also considerable risks in basing assumptions on too inclusive definitions. To assume a positive correlation is insufficient, since the initiation of regional cooperation is costly and can have potentially destabilizing effects if it fails.

Further research is needed, first in regards to the definition of these concepts and second on the relationship between prevention and regional organizations. Cooperation between regional entities differs from national and international, as do regional, preventive strategies. The difference between intra-national, regional and international cooperation (and integration) is not only the number of states involved but also, and more important, the dynamics behind the cooperation.²² Intra-national cooperation is defined as cooperation between political and economic entities within a single state as it is defined by its membership in the United Nations. International cooperation constitutes cooperative relations between states that are all-inclusive, i.e. open membership for states, such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) without regional focus. Regional cooperation focuses on cooperation between regional actors with a regional aim. Regional cooperation is, furthermore, exclusive in its membership (non-regional actors are not members).²³ The distinctions and difference in power between regional, international and national units are important to understand in order to make a correct analysis of the prospects of prevention in regional organizations.

Action, and Preventing Deadly Conflict", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (1998). This is in itself problematic, but the situation is even more complicated since IDP camps are virtually recruiting camps for rebels, extremists and freedom fighters. The problem is partly that the IDPs do not enjoy the same rights as "normal" citizens. To promote human rights and human security in these camps, and at large, would be a more effective security strategy. There is, in similar fashion, a multitude of "soft" issues such as environment, gender, education, economic equality, health care, etc. that directly and indirectly impact conflict development and the consolidation of peace.

²² William Wallace, *Regional Integration: The West European Experience* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994), 104-107; Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

²³ For a discussion that includes further variables on state-regional cooperation (institutions) see: Helga Haftendorn, Robert Keohane & Celeste Wallander, *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12-13.

Sovereignty and the unique enforcement power of national entities are one of the more important aspects that differentiate them from international and regional entities. The aspect of sovereignty has traditionally made each individual state legally “immune” from external intervention and external involvement in the domestic decision-making process.²⁴ Conflict prevention in regional and international organizations makes the state, per definition, open for external intervention in accordance with the treaty that establishes the mechanism. Despite attempts to protect their sovereignty, a sovereign state will have to give up certain aspects of its sovereignty when it enters into regional or international cooperation.²⁵ This includes the exclusive power of enforcement and the right to rule in disputes.²⁶ This transfer of authority strengthens the regional or international entity's ability to act. At the same time, it weakens the national entity's ability to act independently. The actual degree of sovereignty that states surrender is, however, mostly relatively low and at best there is enough to empower the international or regional organization.²⁷ The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the African Union (AU) are examples of organizations with little independent power over the individual member states and they are thus dependent on the more powerful members. On the other hand, the EU has limited the sovereignty of all its members to empower the organization, which coordinate and act for its members as a unit.²⁸ How the transfer of sovereignty has impacted conflict prevention

²⁴ For more information on the principle of sovereignty see: *Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act* (United States, Public Law 94-583, 94th Congress, 1976,); International Court of Justice, *Portugal v. India* (Judgment of April 12 1960,); *Mayo Gerald v. Satan and His Staff* (Misc. No. 5357, United States District Court, W.D. Pennsylvania, December 3 1971).

²⁵ Alastair Iain Johnston, "The Myth of the ASEAN Way? Explaining the Evolution of the ASEAN Regional Forum" in *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*, eds. Helga Haftendorn, Robert Keohane & Celeste Wallander, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁶ The principle of sovereignty is still the ruling principle in international law, despite recent international interventions in the "internal" affairs of Iraq, Chile and Serbia. I do not argue that states will surrender the power over internal problems such as separatism, but that they are more inclined to do so in regards to trade and other mutually agreed areas of cooperation.

²⁷ The disputes are not necessarily about the factual sovereignty, but rather over the political implications of the perceived loss of sovereignty. The distance between actual and perceived loss of sovereignty could be abyss-like, but since perceptions, rather than factual conditions, determine the conflict development, the interest will be on the perceptions.

²⁸ Mattli Walter, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Nkosi Nthabiseng, "The African Union: Forging links for greater

varies between the different regional organizations, but generally a higher degree of transferred sovereignty means more effective preventive mechanisms.

However, the definition of what prevention is varies between regions and states and it is at times unclear what structures are strengthened or weakened. It is clear that in the post-Cold War era, preventive measures have been given a new meaning and now emphasize peaceful prevention of disputes at an early state. During the Cold War, preventive action was altogether synonymous with pre-emptive strikes and crisis management.²⁹ Anders Bjurner has pointed out that conflict prevention is a fairly new sub-culture of security and foreign policy studies.³⁰ This explains why there is a shortage of studies in the field and why there traditionally has been a focus on military and political security. Regional cooperation is a further addition to this equation and integrated studies on the subject are even fewer.

Conflict prevention can be a very wide or a very narrow term for mechanisms created to deal with the prevention of violent conflicts. Track-two diplomacy, high-level official meetings, disarmament, economic development and cooperation, democratization, etc. are all different aspects of conflict prevention and its definition depends on the authors' individual purpose.³¹ However, the focus of all these aspects of conflict prevention is

unity and security", *Conflict Trends* 1 (2002); Pran Chopra, "SAARC and the Asymmetry Issue" in *The Challenge in South Asia: Development, Democracy and Regional Cooperation*, eds. Poona Wignaraja and Akmal Hussain, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1989); Saleem Farrukh, "A South Asia Free Trade Zone?", *Far Eastern Economic Review* (April 9, 1998).

²⁹ Peter Wallensteen, "Preventive Security: Direct and Structural Prevention of Violent Conflicts" in *Preventing Violent Conflicts: Past Records and Future Challenges*, ed. Peter Wallensteen (Uppsala: The Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998).

³⁰ Anders Bjurner, "Security for the Next Century: Towards a Wider Concept of Prevention", in *Preventing Violent Conflicts: Past Records and Future Challenges*, ed. Peter Wallensteen (Uppsala: The Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998), 279-290.

³¹ Bruce Russett, "Preventing Violent Conflict Through Kantian Peace" in *Preventing Violent Conflicts: Past Records and Future Challenges*, ed. Peter Wallensteen (Uppsala: The Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998), 260; Michael Lund, *Preventing violent conflicts: a strategy for preventive diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996); Regeringskansliet (Government Offices of Sweden), *Preventing Violent Conflict – Swedish Policy for the 21st Century* (Government Communication 2000/01:2, 2000). According to the democratic peace argument, democratic states rarely engage in war against each other. However, nothing is said about the peacefulness of democratic states per se since

the prevention of violent conflicts. The focus on violence is important since conflicts per se are not negative. The easiest way to separate prevention from other forms of intervention is to focus on the time factor. Crisis management and dispute resolution are both tactics that are initiated after the conflict has erupted. Conflict prevention is by definition applied before the outbreak of conflict or in a post-conflict phase to prevent a conflict from reoccurring. In this chapter, conflict prevention will be analyzed as concerted actions designed by organizations to deter, resolve or halt disputes before they erupt.³²

In order to clarify strategies and implementation, prevention should be divided into two sub-definitions; direct and structural prevention. Direct conflict prevention includes measures that are aimed at the short-term prevention of conflicts, while structural conflict prevention includes measures aimed at long-term conflict prevention.³³ Economic development is, for example, a structural prevention mechanism that has been relatively successful in the EU and the Americas. The distinction between structural and direct prevention is important, especially in the policy field as it translates into different strategies. It is too often argued that long-term and short-term measures are the same. Lund, for example, argues that all preventive diplomacy is short-term measures because he does not take into account the possibility of long-term preventive diplomacy tactics.³⁴

At the operational level of conflict prevention, Lund argues that preventive measures are especially effective at, what he labels, the "level of unstable peace", which is a "situation where tension and suspicion among parties run high but violence is either absent or only sporadic".³⁵ I argue that this is not

they tend to be as militant as non-democratic states. Indeed, research has shown that the development of democratic norms and values will prevent democratic states from engaging in war against other democratic states, but not necessarily against non-democratic states.

³² Sophia Clément, *Conflict Prevention in the Balkans: Case Studies of Kosovo and the FYR Macedonia* (Alençon: Institute for Security Studies of WEU, 1997).

³³ Peter Wallensteen, "Preventive Security: Direct and Structural Prevention of Violent Conflicts" in *Preventing Violent Conflicts: Past Records and Future Challenges*, ed. Peter Wallensteen, (Uppsala: The Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998); Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolutions: War, Peace and the Global System* (London: SAGE, 2002), chapter 10.

³⁴ Michael Lund, *Preventing violent conflicts: a strategy for preventive diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

necessarily the case since some preventive measures are best operationalized at an earlier stage, preferable during the level of stable peace where there is a minimum of suspicion between the potential adversaries. The reason for this is simply that the acceptance of preventive measures is higher when suspicion does not disturb the situation. By building institutions, trust and cooperation at an early stage there is little, if no, reason for a stage of unstable peace. It is at this stage that the creation of regional organizations and economic cooperation per se could have positive structural effects on the prevention of conflicts.

However, it is clear that many states and regional organizations see little or no point in working with conflict prevention if there are no open military conflicts and are thus often reluctant to coordinate conflict prevention within and across regions.³⁶ In theory, the OSCE is an exception to this rule. In reality, however, the OSCE's implementations are often introduced relatively late. With regard to conflict prevention, the old saying why fix it when it is not broken, becomes a sad reality in many instances. This line of reasoning would translate into an argument of why buy an insurance policy if you are not suffering from an illness. The counterargument and actual reality, however, is that when you need an insurance it is too late to get it. I do not argue that it is possible to prevent all potential conflicts – only that early prevention will decrease the number of conflicts that move to the level of unstable peace or war. Thereby, human suffering and the loss of economic capital can be prevented.

Global or Regional Prevention?

Regional cooperation has been viewed as an important factor in handling conflicts for some time now. Despite initial recognition by a few scholars, regional cooperation had been largely neglected as a field of study up to the 1970s.³⁷ Ernst Haas and John Moore concluded, for example, in the early 1970s that it was of great importance to study regional integration, as it

³⁶ International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002), 3.

³⁷ John Moore Norton, "The Role of Regional Arrangements in the Maintenance of World Order", in *The Future of the International Legal Order: Volume III Conflict Management*, eds. Cyril Black & Richard Falk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 122.

would provide a laboratory for observing the peaceful creation of human communities.³⁸ Along the same line, Haas argued for studies that should compare the peacekeeping machinery of regional organizations with the United Nations' structure and capacities.³⁹ The neglect of regional cooperation as a research area was to cease, and the numbers of studies on regional cooperation increased in the 1970s and 1980s. However, this coincided with a general decrease in political reliance on regional organizations,⁴⁰ although a few organizations, like the European Economic Community (EEC) increased its importance.⁴¹ It was not until the 1990s that regional arrangements gained a central position in international affairs.

Conflict prevention is arguably most suitable for the regional level. The reason for this is that states have a greater interest and are more committed to resolving conflicts in their immediate neighborhood, since such conflicts tend to have implications for the whole region and are thus a cause for regional concern. The International Peace Academy has moreover argued that, in many cases, states prefer to refer their disputes to regional bodies rather than to the UN.⁴² This is partly due to the states' fear of losing control over the situation if it is dealt with within an international organization, and partly due to the common culture of prevention, i.e. a common set of core principles,⁴³ that often exist in a regional setting. The notion of core principles was the basis for attempts by the UN to generate an international culture of prevention⁴⁴, a task that is far from being

³⁸ Ibid.; Ernst Haas, "The study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing", *International Organizations* 24, (1970): 607-646.

³⁹ Ernst Haas, "The study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing", *International Organizations* 24 (1970): 608.

⁴⁰ William Dixon, "Research on research revisited: another half decade of quantitative and field research on international organizations", *International Organization* 31 (1977): 65-82.

⁴¹ Ernst Haas, "Regime Decay: Conflict Management and International Organizations, 1945-1981", *International Organization* 37 (1983): 189-256.

⁴² International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What Role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002), 3.

⁴³ Albright Schnabel, "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Second Generation Preventive Action", in *Recovering from Civil Conflict*, eds. E. Newman, A. Schnabel and Julian Roberts (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 7-30.

⁴⁴ Kofi Annan, *Millennium Report – We, the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (New York: United Nations, 2000); International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What Role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002).

completed due to the differing perceptions globally. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has proposed an idea of a “loose and temporary global policy network” that would deal with prevention.⁴⁵ This wide and unclear approach has failed to establish a common understanding of the need and benefits of prevention and until this day, no global culture of prevention has developed.⁴⁶ On the international level, the actors are too diverse and lack trust in each other. As a result, it has been difficult to reach a common understanding and acceptance of prevention.

Although attempts to establish a common perception of conflict prevention failed on the international level, studies on intra-regional relations indicate that regional actors are important. In addition, the UN has pointed out regional actors as crucial in the creation and implementation of a culture of prevention. The creation of common cultures of conflict prevention on a regional level is hoped to create a regional base for prevention, which later could be transformed into a more or less defined global culture of prevention.⁴⁷ The importance of regional actors, in this regard, is highlighted by, for example, the International Peace Academy, which has pointed out that the UN can not act on its own in conflict prevention, but needs to link up to regional organizations.⁴⁸ Due to the greater political commitment regionally, and the lack of a global structure and a common understanding of prevention, the creation of regional cultures of conflict prevention, which are shared by all regional members, are essential for

⁴⁵ Kofi Annan, *Millennium Report – We, the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (New York: United Nations, 2000).

⁴⁶ Michael Lund, "Creeping Institutionalization of the Culture of Prevention?" in *Preventing Violent Conflict*, Report of the Krusenberg Seminar, organized by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Institute for Foreign Affairs, June 19-20, 2000 (Stockholm: SIPRI, 2000), <<http://editors.sipri.org/pdf/PVC.pdf>> (September 7 2005).

⁴⁷ David Carment, Abdul-Rasheed Draman & Albrecht Schnabel, *From Rhetoric to Policy: Towards workable conflict prevention at the regional and global levels*, Occasional paper 23, 2003, <http://www.carleton.ca/csds/publications/occasional_papers.htm> (September 7 2005); Kofi Annan, *Millennium Report – We, the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (New York: United Nations, 2000); International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What Role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002).

⁴⁸ *Sharing Best Practices on Conflict Prevention*, International Peace Academy Workshop Report, 2002, <http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/SHARING_II.pdf> (September 7 2005); International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What Role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002).

conflict prevention to be fully effective. Regional actors are often best equipped for handling disputes in their own region and have also an incentive for long term commitment that other actors lack. Moreover, local disputes that states feel uncomfortable referring to the UN can be better dealt with at a local level through regional organizations.⁴⁹ It is also more likely that a regional, as opposed to a global, culture of prevention could be created as the regional identification is somewhat based on a cultural similarity and shared norms and values, even if there is always more variation in a region than expected.⁵⁰ The creation of a regional culture of prevention would stabilize and simplify peace-related work, especially in a region like Northeast Asia where there are no regional organizations and very little regional cooperation.⁵¹ But as institutions are important for the creation of regional cultures of prevention, many regions that lack effective regional organizations seem to be somewhat deadlocked.⁵²

Regional organizations function as an aggregated form of national conflict prevention. By engaging in multilateral cooperation, some prevention is already achieved through acting as a unit with a specific purpose. The fact is that regional cooperation is often considered to be conflict preventative by nature. John Stuart Mill and Jean Monnet assumed that regional cooperation would create a more peaceful Europe. Robert Schuman and

⁴⁹ Chandra Lekha Sriram, Albrecht Schnabel, John Packer & Augustine Toure, *Sharing Best Practices on Conflict Prevention: The UN, Regional and Subregional Organizations, National and Local Actors*, International Peace Academy Policy Report, April 2002
http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/PROMISE_TO_PRACTICE_FINAL.pdf
 (September 7 2005).

⁵⁰ Examples of the creation of regional cultures could be the Organization of American States (OAS), North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), The Andean Community, Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU). Examples of regional organizations that have been stalemated include the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Characteristic for these organizations is their lack of regional consensus and cultural similarity and, as a result, regional cultures have clashed and prevented further cooperation and integration. Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

⁵¹ The current "regional" organizations in Northeast Asia are trans-regional or even international. Examples include the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), ASEAN+3 and the Six-party talks that all involve one or more non-Northeast Asian actor.

⁵² Niklas Swanström, "Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management in Northeast Asia", *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 30, 1 (2003): 35.

Konrad Adenauer also built on this assumption in their attempts to create peace by uniting Europe in a regional structure. The positive spirit continued and in 1966 Mitrany claimed, as noted earlier, that "the problem of our time is not how to keep nations peacefully apart but how to bring them actively together". However, the nature of the problem has proved to be harder than so. Regional organizations and cooperation, per se, is not necessarily a good conflict prevention mechanism. Rather, it is the mechanisms inside the organization and its mandate that largely determines the success of the preventive functions of the organization.⁵³ It could be argued that regional organizations that fail to fulfill their purpose generate conflicts. Examples of such organizations include SAARC, APEC and ARF that arguably have added more tension than they deducted from regional relations. The logic behind such arguments is that the expected outcome is not received, which creates tension and puts blame on the members. Even though the initiation and failure of cooperation may create increased tension that could be destabilizing rather than preventive, several authors have pointed out the importance of regional organizations as hubs for conflict prevention in their regions, such as OSCE, OAU, ASEAN, OAS and EU.⁵⁴

There are several important factors, which work in favor of using a regional approach to conflict prevention. Some of the positive traits are that the geographical proximity makes it easier for states to identify potential conflicts and that the limited size of the organization – in comparison to the UN and other global organizations– makes it easier to reach consensus and

⁵³ Kamarulzaman Askandar, *ASEAN as a Process of Conflict Management*, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Bradford: Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford (1996); Kiichi Fujiwara, "State Formation and Regional Order: Southeast Asia in the International Environment", in *Peace Building in the Asia Pacific Region*, eds. Peter King & Yoichi Kibata, (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd., 1996); Haftendorn Helga, Robert Keohane & Celeste Wallander, *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

⁵⁴ Mattli Walter, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Kao Kim Hourn & Din Merican, *Peace & Cooperation in ASEAN: Alternative Paradigms* (London: ASEAN Academic Press, 1997); Alao Abiodun, "The Role of African Regional And Sub-regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention and Resolution", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, Working Paper No. 23, 2001 <<http://jha.ac/articles/uo23.htm>>; Nkosi Nthabiseng, "The African Union: Forging links for greater unity and security", *Conflict Trends* 1 (2002).

undertake action. In addition, by adopting a regional approach to conflict prevention, the measures become potentially more effective since they can be developed to suit the context and specific circumstances of a particular region.⁵⁵ Moreover, regional trade and economic interdependence facilitates a positive development in conflict prevention and integration.⁵⁶ Also, there are many internal conflicts that have substantial regional dimensions and would benefit, or even require regional solutions. For example, the ethnic diversification in Central Asia, potential refugee flows from for example North Korea and Nigeria in the case of conflict, and other “spillover” effects necessitate regional solutions. Despite the advantages of regional organizations as hosts for conflict preventive measures, there are also some negative aspects to the regional framework. The negative traits of regional organizations are their relative weakness and lack of logistical capability to deal with conflict prevention. Moreover, it is by definition impossible for any regional state to be impartial to a conflict in its neighborhood. Finally, regional organizations are many times constrained by their members' preferences, demand for consensus, and refusal to give a strong mandate to the organizations.⁵⁷ The OSCE is one of the major exceptions to this rule as it is given a strong mandate to act independently.

Conflict Prevention in Regional Organizations

Previous publications on regional organizations include several generic studies on Africa, Asia, Central America, Europe, North America, and the Middle East. However, few comprehensive studies on the conflict prevention mechanism in regional organizations have been conducted,

⁵⁵ Michael Lund, *Preventive Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy* (Washington DC.: United States Institute of Peace, 1995), 176-78; Niklas Swanström, "China and the Security of Southeast Asia", *Journal of Malaysian Studies* 18, 1-2 (2000).

⁵⁶ Geert Laporte, "Regional cooperation and integration in Africa: An agenda for action at the national level", in *Regional Cooperation and Integration in the World Today* (Papers from the First Open Forum, Maastricht, 20 April 1993). Too great interdependence could potentially also be problematic. In the case of the Taiwan Strait, both Beijing and Taipei are worried that the strong economic interdependence will negatively impact the political independence towards the other unit.

⁵⁷ Michael Lund, *Preventive Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy* (Washington DC.: United States Institute of Peace, 1995), 176-78.

especially in regards to Asia.⁵⁸ This is problematic, as Asia has emerged as one of the most important regions in the world both politically and economically, but also as a region with some of the worst conflicts and threats to regional and global stability. There is a growing fear among smaller states in all regions that stronger states will grow too strong and develop a strategy of regional intimidation to reach a position of regional domination. This has led to a situation where states in some regions are virtually involved in an arms race as a vain attempt to prevent one or a few states to dominate the other states. This is especially apparent in Northeast Asia, but it is a global problem and has worked against conflict prevention in several regions.⁵⁹

The ending of the Cold War and the development of post-Cold War values in Northeast Asia, such as democracy, human rights (HR), and free trade that are considered to be structurally preventive, have at least initially, somewhat paradoxically, created new problems. It has created societal and interstate tension that potentially could lead to violence and other serious challenges to states and societies.⁶⁰ A large number of states and regions are in the process of changing from autocratic or totalitarian forms of governance to open and free systems in the post-Cold War era. The problem is that many states in transition encounter large-scale violence and war, and in this regard democracy and free trade could, in the short run, be destabilizing, rather than conflict preventing.⁶¹ In addition to the newly created tension, there is an array of old conflicts that have continued at a high level or even intensified. These include secessionist, demographic, and environmental conflicts, as well as disputes over water and resources. In

⁵⁸ Hugh Miall, *Peacemakers: Peaceful Settlement of Disputes Since 1945* (London: Macmillan, 1992); Michael Lund, *Preventive Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy* (Washington DC.: United States Institute of Peace, 1995); Gabriel Munuera, "Preventing Armed Conflict in Europe: Lessons learned from recent experience", *Chaillot Paper* 15/16 (1994).

⁵⁹ Elisabeth Sköns, Evamaria Loose-Weintraub, Wuyi Omitoogun and Petter Stålenheim, "Military expenditure", in *SIPRI Yearbook 2000: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶⁰ Michael Lund, "Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy", in *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, eds. Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson & Pamela Aall, (Washington D.C.: USIP Press, 1996), 16-30; Gordon Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Random House Inc., 2001).

⁶¹ Edward Mansfield & Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War", *International Security* 20, 1 (1995): 5-38.

many ways, this has created more insecurity and potentially more conflicts around the globe.

To counter these new and old threats there are many regional organizations that have made conflict prevention a part of their mandate, at least on paper. The tremendous diversity among these organizations regarding mandate, members, focus and structure can be seen in the considerable organizational differences. These organizations do, however, share the desire to prevent conflicts at a multilateral level and increase good relations among their members. Among the international organizational actors, the United Nations remains the only one with a global mandate to intervene with conflict prevention measures. On a regional level, the OSCE is the only organization with a similar mandate.⁶² Yet this is slowly changing on the international arena, where for example NATO has adopted a more global approach in its strategies and arguably also in regards to conflict prevention. However, in the regional sphere, the OSCE still remains the only organization with a strong mandate to undertake conflict prevention. Jan Eliasson et al have argued that the European experience is unique, as Europe is the only region that has given an organization (the OSCE) an explicit *carte blanche* to penetrate national sovereignty in an effort to increase conflict prevention.⁶³ Nonetheless (from a perspective of conflict

⁶² Michael Bothe, Natalino Ronzitti & Allan Rosas eds., *The OSCE in the Maintenance of Peace and Security* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997); Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Charter for European Security* (Istanbul: November 1999); United Nations Charter (<http://www.un.org/>).

⁶³ Jan Eliasson & Robert Rydberg, "Preventive Action and Preventive Diplomacy", in *Preventing Violent Conflicts: Past Record and Future Challenges*, ed. Peter Wallensteen (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1988), 43. The OSCE experience is very interesting and differs widely from the experience made by many of the other regional organizations, especially regarding depth, function and mandate. It is a possible draw-back of this study to exclude this organization, but the European experience has been markedly different from the Asian so to gain interesting results it would be necessary to compare Asia and Europe in an in-depth study, which is not the purpose of this study. For an in-depth study of the OSCE see Kari Möttölä, "The OSCE: Institutional and Functional Developments in an Evolving European Security Order", in *The OSCE in the Maintenance of Peace and Security*, eds. Michael Bothe, Natalino Ronzitti & Allan Rosas, (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997). For the institutional and functional aspects see Arie Bloed, "The OSCE Main Political Bodies and Their Role in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management", in *The OSCE in the Maintenance of Peace and Security*, eds. Michael Bothe, Natalino Ronzitti & Allan Rosas, (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997). For conflict prevention see Merja Pentikäinen, "The Role of the Human Dimension of the OSCE in Conflict Prevention and

prevention), the development of conflict prevention in regional organizations is not only positive, but could have a darker side to it as well. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan warned that "conflict prevention, peace-keeping, and peacemaking must not become an arena of competition between the United Nations and regional organizations", i.e. NATO.⁶⁴ This is currently not a problem but could very well become one if the interests of the UN and NATO, or any other regional organization, may come to differ in the future. However, not all regional or international organizations have developed a conflict prevention strategy. NATO has, for example, been relatively successful in crisis management, but has, as of today, not established successful tools for conflict prevention. However, the OAS, ASEAN, OSCE, EU, AU, OAU and to some extent the Andean Community has established both structural and direct preventive strategies that impact regional security.

The strategy behind conflict prevention in regional organizations differs from attempt to attempt and is very different from the strategies of non-regional organizations and national governments.⁶⁵ The experience in Asia's regional organizations is also very different from that of European organizations, especially regarding sovereignty which in the Asian case is highly protected at the expense of effective conflict prevention. The focus in Asia has to a much larger extent been on informal mechanisms, such as consultations. This stands in sharp contrast to the much more legalistic approach to conflict prevention in the Americas and Europe.⁶⁶ This does not, however, hinder the positive development of conflict prevention in regional organizations in Asia. Bjurner has pointed out that the role of

Crisis Management," in *The OSCE in the Maintenance of Peace and Security*, eds. Michael Bothe, Natalino Ronzitti & Allan Rosas, (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997).

⁶⁴ Kofi Annan, *Millennium Report - We, the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (New York: United Nations, 2000).

⁶⁵ Smith has studied the World Bank and a number of US organizations to understand the instruments for conflict prevention, to learn more about the possibilities for the European Union and to gain a more in-depth knowledge about the experiences of other organizations (Julianne Smith, *Instruments for Peace-Building and Conflict Prevention: Learning from other Actors for the European Union Selected Contributions 6* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Conflict Prevention Network, 1999). This study is relevant for other regional experiences and lessons can be drawn from this research.

⁶⁶ Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002), 247-248.

regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the ARF and ASEAN, is increasingly important, even if their efficiency still is limited.⁶⁷ The protection of sovereignty has also played an important role in the work of African organizations, which has resulted in a failure to create effective early warnings systems. Yet the failure of both the AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to function as tools for conflict prevention is due to their lack of leading organization and lack of resources. In addition, regional agreements are rarely integrated into national legislation on the African continent.⁶⁸ Moreover, ECOWAS has basically focused on crisis management through its military observer groups rather than long term prevention (even if its strategies among the refugees in Guinea add up to effective prevention).⁶⁹ Most regional organizations have, however, enjoyed the creation of a new set of norms and values, most strikingly in the EU and least noticeable in SAARC.⁷⁰ South Asia's development of conflict prevention strategies, both within and outside the existing organizations, is effectively prevented by the Indian-Pakistani dispute that overshadows the region. There are, moreover, some organizations that remain untested by political disputes among its members, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). However, the Central Asian experience shows that most organizations, such as the Commonwealth of Independent states (CIS), NATO PfP (Partnership for Peace), and the Turkic State Grouping, are secondary to bilateral relations

⁶⁷ Anders Bjurner, "Security for the Next Century: Towards a Wider Concept of Prevention", in *Preventing Violent Conflicts: Past Records and Future Challenges*, ed. Peter Wallensteen (Uppsala: The Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998).

⁶⁸ Anyang'Nyong'o, *Regional Integration in Africa: Unfinished Agenda* (Nairobi: African Academy of Sciences, 1990); Alao Abiodun, "The Role of African Regional And Sub-regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention and Resolution", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, Working Paper No. 23, 2001 <<http://jha.ac/articles/u023.htm>>; William Zartman, *Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa*, The Johns Hopkins University & UN Vision Project on Global Public Policy Networks (2001), <<http://www.globalpublicpolicy.net>>.

⁶⁹ International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002), 3.

⁷⁰ Hossain Kamal, "Towards a Single Market for South Asia" in *SAARC 2000 and Beyond*, eds. L.L. Mehrotra, H.S. Chopra and Gert W. Kueck (New Delhi: Omega Scientific Publishers, 1995); Chopra Pran, "SAARC and the Assymetry Issue" in *The Challenge in South Asia: Development, Democracy and Regional Cooperation*, eds. Poona Wignaraja and Akmal Hussain, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1989); Musharraf Pervez, "President's Speech at 11th SAARC Summit," Kathmandu, January 5 (2002); Mattli Walter, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

and their focus seems to be crisis management in general, and the battle against terrorism in particular.⁷¹

The OAS has emerged as a very positive example of how regional organizations can include prevention in their mandate. The focus has been on democratic and economic development, human rights, civil society and fighting the trade in narcotics.⁷² The structural prevention of OAS' engagement can not be underestimated, even if some argue that the US has used the organizations to achieve its own goals.⁷³

The above discussion has, so far, not taken into consideration the preventive effects that economic cooperation can have. Several researchers have argued that economic interdependence decreases the likelihood of conflict.⁷⁴ This argument rests on the presumption that conflicts are more costly when the economies of states are intertwined. Thus, as the interdependence increases between states, the risk of war decreases. Bruce Russett has reinforced this argument by finding support for the hypothesis that the more international organizations a state belongs to, the less prone it will be to engage in conflicts, i.e. the higher the interdependence, the lower level of conflicts.⁷⁵ These arguments increase the relevance to deal, in detail, with economic as

⁷¹ Niklas Swanström, "The Prospects of Multilateral Conflict Prevention in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey* 23, 1 (2004); Roy Allison, "Regional Threats and Prospects for Multilateral Defence Cooperation", *Caspian Sea Basin Security Conference* (Seattle, April 2003).

⁷² Organization of American States, AG/RES 1080 Representative democracy (1991); Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002), 158-164.

⁷³ The OAS was highly unpopular for a long time and several Latin American states abandoned the organization in the 1960's and 70's and relied on the UN and other strong states in the international community. The Spanish abbreviation of OAS, OEA, was translated to *Otro Engaño Americano* - Another American Fraud (Slater Jerome, "The Limits of Legitimization in International Organizations: the organization of American States and the Dominican Crisis", *International Organization* 23, 1 (1969): 63).

⁷⁴ Mattli Walter, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Richard Higgot, "The international political economy of regionalism: the Asia-Pacific and Europe compared", in *Regionalism & Global Economic Integration*, eds. William Coleman & Geoffrey Underhill, (London: Routledge, 1998); M. Dutta, "Economic regionalisation in Western Europe: Asia Pacific economics (macroeconomic core: microeconomic optimization)", *American Economic Review* 82 (1992).

⁷⁵ Bruce Russett, "Preventing Violent Conflict Through Kantian Peace", in *Preventing Violent Conflicts: Past Records and Future Challenges*, ed. Peter Wallensteen (Uppsala: The Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998), 260; Michael Lund, *Preventing violent conflicts: a strategy for preventive diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996).

well as political regional organizations as tools for conflict prevention. North Atlantic Free Trade Area, EU, OAS, the Andean Community etc, but also Northeast Asia that lacks regional organizations but where trade has made the region financially interdependent, are examples of how interdependence decreases the likelihood of armed conflict. Other organizations like the SCO, SAARC and AU are trying to decrease the number of conflicts through increased economic interdependence.⁷⁶ On the other hand, increased interdependence could also increase tension and the fear of being dominated by a larger actor, i.e. a regional hegemonic power. This is something that the Central Asian governments have begun to realize and their focus has increasingly been to balance China, Russia, the EU and the US against each other.⁷⁷ It is evident from the European and NAFTA experience that economic integration has functioned preventively, but strong evidence points to the fact that prevention is far from dependent on economic factors. It should also be noted that several organizations, such as the Central American Common Market (CACM) and ASEAN, have functioned preventively with a high degree of success although little economic interdependence exist despite a formal interest in financial integration.⁷⁸

When analyzing conflict prevention and regional organizations, it is important to note that conflict prevention is much more than the formalized conflict prevention and conflict enforcement that seems to be the preference of Western institutions. The argument has been made that some regional organizations, such as the AU and the ASEAN, are failures since they have no functional formalized conflict prevention and crisis management system. These organizations are, however, much more effective than is proposed as

⁷⁶ Mattli Walter, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Niklas Swanström, "The Prospects of Multilateral Conflict Prevention in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey* 23, 1 (2004); Monica Rosell, *Institutional framework and judicial security in the Andean Community*, Andean Community 2002, 4, <<http://www.comunidadandina.org/ingles/document/Canada.htm>>.

⁷⁷ Niklas Swanström, "The Prospects of Multilateral Conflict Prevention in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey* 23, 1 (2004); Roy Allison, "Regional Threats and Prospects for Multilateral Defence Cooperation", *Caspian Sea Basin Security Conference* (Seattle, April 2003).

⁷⁸ International Peace Academy, *Creating Conditions for Peace: What role for the UN and Regional Actors* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002), 6; Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

they create a new set of informal norms and values for economic development, which in turn decreases the tendency for violent conflict. The informality of these mechanisms also keeps the conflicts out of the public eye and facilitates the continuation of interstate relations even in times of conflict. The argument can be made that the developing world will face major problems if it attempts to formalize its institutions and thereby its conflict prevention mechanism.⁷⁹ This is, it is argued, due to the relative weakness of the states involved and their need to protect sovereignty and the, in many cases, relatively newly won independence. Although the formalization of regional conflicts is positive for many regional structures, such as NAFTA and the EU, for others, such as SAARC, ASEAN and ARF, the formalization of structures could threaten to destroy multilateral as well as bilateral relations. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that informality in regional organizations, like the ASEAN, is a prerequisite for successful conflict management and conflict prevention in.⁸⁰ I argue that the need and possibility for formalization is dependent on three major factors: trust, cultural attitudes and state strength. First, low levels of trust and a lack of mutual confidence will not support a formalization of preventive mechanisms, such as early warning and structural prevention at a regional level. Second, the cultural attitudes towards the character of a relationship differ. There are cultural differences between the legal and formal cultures in the Americas and Europe and the informal cultures of Asia, the Middle East and, to a certain extent, Africa.⁸¹ Finally, the relative weakness of the states and the regional organizations involved in prevention do matter.

Amitay Acharya has argued that there is a close linkage between an effective conflict resolution mechanism and regional cooperation in the

⁷⁹ Mohammed El Sayed Said, "The Arab League: between Regime Security and National Liberation", in *Regional Security in the Third World*, ed. Mohammed Ayoob (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 258-259); Amitav Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual Analysis of the Relevance and Limitations of ASEAN", *Journal of Peace Research* 29, 1, (1992): 9; Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

⁸⁰ Niklas Swanström "China and the Security of Southeast Asia", *Kajian Malaysia* 18, 1-2 (2000); Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

⁸¹ Niklas Swanström, *Regional Cooperation and Conflict Management: Lessons from the Pacific Rim* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2002).

military-security field.⁸² This argument is based on the hypothesis that without the willingness and active participation of the members in the organization, there will be no effective policy. Geert Laporte argues, in the case of Africa, that political will is essential for effective prevention in regional organizations, and that this partly can explain some of the drawback in African multilateral cooperation.⁸³ The same logic follows conflict prevention and regional cooperation in most regions - without the willingness and active support there will be little success in preventing conflicts. Looking at the South Asia (SAARC) and Northeast Asia, there has been no political will to use or create regional organizations, which can explain the low levels of preventive strategies. The unwillingness to create or engage in regional organizations can be traced to a strong emphasis on the centrality of the state and the protection of sovereignty, largely following a realist perception of world affairs with focus on power and a lack of trust.

External support will not, over the long term, create the necessary engagement for an effective conflict prevention mechanism since it cannot stimulate the creation of organizations with a regional "soul". In financially weak regions, financial assistance from outside actors is needed to keep the organizations running. However, the low levels of political engagement and financial commitment from, for example, the African states have to a large extent made the organizations appear as external creations that attempt to dominate regional affairs.⁸⁴ The conflict on the Korean peninsula is another example of the problem with external interference. In this case, external intervention (by the US) has impacted the conflict negatively over the past

⁸² Amitav Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual Analysis of the Relevance and Limitations of ASEAN", *Journal of Peace Research* 29, 1 (1992): 9.

⁸³ Geert Laporte, "Regional cooperation and integration in Africa: An agenda for action at the national level", in *Regional Cooperation and Integration in the World Today* (Papers from the First Open Forum, Maastricht, 20 April 1993).

⁸⁴ Between 1993 and 1996, 75% of the OAU budget came from non-African sources, and OAU pointed out that without the external support it would not have been possible to deploy the observer missions to Burundi, Rwanda and the Comoros. There is a similar tendency for conflict prevention and confidence building. The reliance on external sources limits the independence of OAU and many states are reluctant to use the organization to solve their internal disputes. Indeed, the solution is not found in the pockets of the foreign governments. Rather, the regional states need to learn to take responsibility for their own organization. If the African governments do not find the OAU worth sustaining, it is questionable if the efficiency of the organization would improve with external resources.

years and a solely regional approach would be immensely more constructive.⁸⁵ There is, however, a need for regions, like Northeast Asia, with little trust or unclear leadership to permit assistance from external actors. Northeast Asia is one of the more apparent cases where the US or ASEAN are needed - whether or not the regional states appreciate it - since they seem unable to engage in regional cooperation by themselves. Examples of external involvement in Northeast Asia include the six-party talks, KEDO and ASEAN+3.

Regional organizations are, as has been pointed out, only a small part of the conflict prevention mechanisms in the world at large. The regional conflict prevention mechanisms have, however, proven to be of increasing importance. Today, regional organizations take a more active role in regional conflicts and the UN is also actively encouraging regional organizations to be more proactive in conflict prevention in their regions.⁸⁶ Empirically, in some regions not much has been accomplished in the area of conflict prevention, despite longstanding regional cooperation structures, such as the Arab League and SAARC. Crucial to note is that Northeast Asia, in general, has become a relatively neglected region in the field of conflict prevention and more attention from scholars and practitioners is needed.⁸⁷ Further studies are required, both in specific regions and on how

⁸⁵ Niklas Swanström, "The Korean Peninsula in the U.S.'s Post-9/11 Military-Security Paradigm, in Taeho Kim, ed, *The Changing ROK-U.S.-China Relationships and the Future of the Korean Peninsula*, 2004, Hallym University.

⁸⁶ There are several interesting studies about regional organizations and conflict prevention, but hardly anything has been published in regards to Asia (Sophia Clément, *Conflict Prevention in the Balkans: Case Studies of Kosovo and the FYR Macedonia* (Aalen: Institute for Security Studies of WEU, 1997); Alao Abiodun, "The Role of African Regional And Sub-regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention and Resolution", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, Working Paper No. 23, 2001 <<http://jha.ac/articles/u023.htm>>. The assumption that regional organizations will manage this better than national or international actors is dangerous since the organizations will lose their legitimacy if the attempt fails. This could be devastating, as the regional organization will not be able to carry the regional identity and confidence building function over the longer time-span.

⁸⁷ Few comparisons have been made between the experience of Asia and that of other regions, both empirically and theoretically (Vinod Aggarwal, Beverly Crawford and Cédric Dupont, *European Integration as a Model for Asia-Pacific Regionalism*, Paper presented at the Conference on Global and Regional Economic Security and Integration, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, December 14-15, 2001; Alan Dupont: *The environment and security in Pacific Asia* (London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic

regions interact with each other in conflict preventive work to maximize the positive outcomes.

Regional Cooperation and Conflict Prevention: A Future?

The relationship between conflict prevention and regional organizations is a theoretically underdeveloped area, even though regional organizations seem to be important carriers of the preventive thought. But before going into a discussion on the impact of regional organizations, it should be stressed that regional organizations do not operate in a vacuum. They are, quite contrary, directly dependent on the cooperation between nations (their member states) and international entities such as the WTO, the UN and NATO. It is clear that all levels and dimension of conflict prevention have a function but that this function varies from situation to situation.

A closer look at regional organizations and conflict prevention at large reveals that there are many positive, as well as negative aspects. For example, in regards to prevention, regional approaches seem to have more success than trans-regional and national prevention schemes. This is not only due to the regional organizations capacity and their success rate. Regions have been forced to take up the challenge of preventing conflicts due to the failure of international organizations and states to do so. Regions do so with the assistance of national and international actors, but nonetheless as the primary actors despite their shortcomings. Regional actors seem better equipped to handle preventive measures as potential conflicts (inter- as well as intra-state) often involve regional issues. Moreover, regional organizations have a greater political commitment to take a long-term approach than do international actors and there is also often a greater willingness to accept solutions that might have negative political effects for the own state if it is linked to the greater good of the region. Regional actors also tend to be more concerned with long-term prevention, as opposed to crisis management and resolution of already initiated military conflicts, which tend to be the focus of other actors. In short, there are both greater incentives as well as greater possibilities for regional organizations

Studies, 1998). The lack of comparison is especially notable between Asian and Western institutions.

to act.

Regional organizations have shown to be important for the creation of 'cultures of prevention' (acceptance of core principles by more than one actor). This is, however, in many regions a case of default as the international level has been less than successful in creating a global culture of prevention. However, it does seem like regional organizations have a greater tendency to accept a common set of core principles, which is the basic foundation of a culture of prevention which in turn makes prevention possible beyond the national borders. The major drawback for many regional organizations dealing with conflict prevention is that the regional culture of prevention often is weak and very difficult to develop. Since successful conflict prevention rests upon a regional understanding (regional culture) of what conflict prevention should encompass and enforce, the lack of core values explains the absence of regional cultures of prevention. To create effective regional cultures of prevention, the levels of trust and confidence between the regional member states need to increase. The level of trust and the states' relative weakness also determines the structure of the preventive mechanism in the regional organization. Without trust the levels of prevention are very low and the organizations seem incapable of creating effective mechanisms.

Some aspects of the culture of prevention are grounded in the legal versus the informal traditions of different regions. It has been noted that in high context societies, such as in Asia, there is a reliance on long term relationships and informal prevention. In low context societies, such as the Americas, there is a reliance on legal traditions and formality. This has created problems regarding the implementation of preventative measures in trans-regional organizations such as the ARF. Other trans-regional organizations are likely to share this experience and this has to be recognized if effective preventive measures are to be established.

In regions where states or the region at large are weak, there is a reluctance to let other states interfere in internal affairs in fear of being dominated. This concern, or even fear, can at least to some extent be bridged by international organizations such as the UN. The weakness of the states does not only create concerns about other states intent, it also affects the actual implementation process as infrastructure in many cases is lacking and

political commitment is, at best, whim.

The implementation of conflict prevention measures in regional organizations is, moreover, stalled by the lack of political will, lack of resources, fear of giving up sovereignty and historical animosity among its (potential) member states. These premises indicate that regions in need of prevention, in many cases are incapable of implementing effective mechanisms. On the other hand, regions such as EU and North America, where prevention is less important, are able to implement far reaching measures. This does not mean that regional organizations have failed in the construction and enhancement of conflict prevention measures. Rather, they have implemented some very interesting mechanisms, but the primary challenge in relatively weak regions is related to norms and values.

One of the more important effects of regional organizations in relation to conflict prevention is their ability to create new norms and values among its member states. Regional organizations have proven able to create regional cultures of interaction, even if the success of creating regional cultures of prevention has been limited to Europe and possibly the Americas. This is due to the long term interaction within these regions and the organizations' ability to break down old norms and values and create new. Other regions are only in the beginning of this process, but the AU and ASEAN have been very successful in the process of creating values and norms and they are also likely to provide strong assistance in creating regional cultures of prevention.

When examining regional cultures of prevention, the preventive strategies can be separated into two categories: structural and direct prevention. Structural prevention aims at hindering conflicts from erupting in the first place, and direct prevention refers to measures applicable for immediate crisis. Structural prevention is, in many cases, easier to apply as it follows as a consequence of interaction in other spheres, such as economic integration. There has been a problem to engage states and regional organizations in direct prevention of specific issues, such as border or minority issues since they see it as a threat to the sovereignty of the state. The limited success of prevention in regional organizations can be traced back to the sovereignty issue and the low level of trust between actors. In regions where trust has been greater, the implementation rate of preventive mechanisms is higher.

Regional approaches and cultures of prevention are hoped to bridge regions and create an international culture of prevention. It is, however, not easy to transfer regional mechanisms and ways to create regional cultures from one region to another. Chandra Lekha Sriram has pointed out that many tools for conflict prevention are not even transferable to other regions, even if the principles are similar. This indicates an explicit need for regional oriented tools.⁸⁸ In Northeast Asia, this would transfer to tools are specifically designed for informality and different second-track processes. Theoretical and practical tools designed in the West have been exported to other parts of the world. Often, these tools have created more instability rather than less. The assumption that 'what works for us should work for them' has repeatedly been proved wrong and it is clear that regional and national differences do matter. This is not to say that efforts to create an international culture of prevention should be abandoned, only that it will be far more difficult than earlier expected. The best way to achieve this still seems to be by strengthening regional cultures of prevention and furthering the understanding that prevention is a necessity, rather than a luxury. Over time, globalization will make regions increasingly compatible. Although this process may be less satisfactory, it is still the only realistic one. Conflict prevention is, however, here to stay and regional organizations seem to hold the banner of prevention. But it is, so far, moving slowly and patience has to be a virtue if conflict prevention is to succeed. Regional, national and international actors need to engage in a process to change norms and values and make them more prone to prevention and long term strategies. This is a process that has been initiated and needs to continue over the long term if prevention and peaceful management of relations is to be improved.

⁸⁸ Chandra Lekha Sriram, "Refining Conflict Prevention - Sharing Best Practices and Improving Partnering", *Sharing Best Practices on Conflict Prevention* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002), 4.