

# PEACE SCIENCE DIGEST

A PROJECT BY THE WAR PREVENTION INITIATIVE



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Using Cell Phones to Prevent Violence

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Minority Groups, Political Exclusion and Terrorism



Protestors set up their own TV station, broadcasting over the internet from Paris's Place de la République

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Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.

Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.

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On the cover: People have been gathering in Republic place, every night for 10 days, in order to discuss about how to improve society.

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# NEED AND ROLE OF THE DIGEST

Peace and Conflict Studies (henceforth: Peace Science) has emerged as an academic discipline with its own graduate programs, handbooks, research tools, theories, associations, journals and conferences. As with most scientific communities, the slow migration of academic knowledge into practical application becomes a limiting factor of a field's growth, impact and overall effectiveness of its practitioners.

The expanding academic field of Peace Science continues to produce high volumes of significant research that often goes unnoticed by practitioners, the media, activists, public policy-makers, and other possible beneficiaries. This is unfortunate, because Peace Science ultimately should inform the practice on how to bring about peace.

*The research and theory needed to guide peace workers to produce more enduring and positive peace, not only more peace studies, have come to stay. Bridging the gap between the peace movement moralism and foreign policy pragmatism is a major challenge facing everyone who seeks to achieve peace on Earth. (Johan Galtung and Charles Webel)*

To address this issue, the War Prevention Initiative has created the Peace Science Digest as a way to disseminate top selections of research and findings from the field's academic community to the many beneficiaries.

The Peace Science Digest is formulated to enhance awareness of literature addressing the key issues of our time by making available an organized, condensed and comprehensible summary of this important research as a resource for the practical application of the field's current academic knowledge.

## Disclaimer

Research featured in the *Peace Science Digest* is selected based on its contribution to the field of Peace Science, and authenticated by the scientific integrity derived from the peer-review process. Peer-reviewed journals evaluate the quality and validity of a scientific study, giving us the freedom to focus on the articles' relevance and potential contribution to the field and beyond. The editors of the *Peace Science Digest* do not claim their analysis is, or should be, the only way to approach any given issue. Our aim is to provide a responsible and ethical analysis of the research conducted by Peace and Conflict Studies academics through the operational lens of the War Prevention Initiative.

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to introduce the 4th issue of the Peace Science Digest.

As we are well into the first year of publishing the Peace Science Digest, we continue to engage in conversations about the realities of Peace Science, the political nature of peace, and the untapped opportunities for peace research. Part of the debate was addressed in the article "Give Peace Science a Chance" (<http://www.diplomaticcourier.com/give-peace-science-chance/>), which was printed and made available online in the *Diplomatic Courier*.

We are faced with a problem. The domain of expertise on war and peace issues, in particular foreign policy issues in the United States, is full of academics, military experts or long-established political experts whose opinions and the facts they provide shape the dominant discourse. Unfortunately, public peace intellectuals rarely find avenues into mainstream narratives.

We believe there is a tremendous opportunity to integrate the many findings peace scientists produce into many domains. When you read our publication, just think about your own context and your own constituents. Are you an educator working with students? Are you working with young activists around the world towards a huge paradigm shift? Are you on a Rotary Club Peace Committee? Are you in the media and dissatisfied with the "same old, same old" narrative? Are you in the political world and want to broaden your thinking to work more effectively for your constituents? These are just a few examples of groups we hope to reach. Please let us know how you can most benefit from our work. We want you to be able to go out with confidence and a new language and understanding of peace so you can integrate the findings of Peace Science in your own communication.

Inside this issue we aim to provide relevant research examining multiple lenses of war and violence prevention: the proven applications of cell phones to prevent violence, type of governance as more influential than religion when it comes to violence against governments, the importance of shifting to less costly and more effective pre-conflict prevention as opposed to post-conflict protection, the role of nonviolent resistance to defeat ISIS, and the connections of political exclusion, minority groups, and terrorism.

As you can see, the topics covered are very relevant to ongoing political and public debates. Hopefully you will be able to participate in your given context with a more nuanced understanding of what Peace Science adds to the narratives.



Patrick Hiller



David Prater

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# Using Cell Phones to Prevent Violence

Source | Van der Windt, P., & Humphreys, M. (2014). Crowdsourcing in eastern Congo using cell phones to collect conflict events data in real time.

*Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 0022002714553104.

**Key  
words**  
technology  
data collection  
conflict management  
foreign aid  
violence prevention

The spread of accessible technology has become a major tool to monitor, report and participate in social events. Whether it is a text message from a cell phone or a tweet on social media, instantaneous communication is now being used to mobilize for and coordinate social action on an unprecedented scale. More recently, this technology has been used to gather useful information on how to improve the overall participation and organization of these events as well.

This article investigates how information technology can be used to collect conflict data at a micro level, a tool previously underutilized in the field. Most conflict prevention related technological advances deal with monitoring of high-level aggression between states or large parties. The authors expand on this idea by broadening monitoring capacity to the micro level since many conflicts begin or are sustained through the behavior and interactions of individuals.

Micro level conflict data is usually collected from surveys or interviews. However, data collection of this nature is difficult to conduct due to conflicts typically occurring in areas displaying three major characteristics:

- Conflict zones are usually unsafe which limits the ability of researchers to interact with people on the ground.
- Conflict zones are usually difficult to get to; either because of rough terrain or bureaucratic roadblocks.
- People living in conflict zones often exhibit high levels of suspicion and distrust of outsiders - who are usually the ones collecting the information.

These characteristics are important to understand because of the bias they create for data collection. If areas are off-limits while conflict occurs, researchers only have access to a much smaller population that may not reflect the information they are trying to gather. Also, when data is collected after a conflict period, respondents often have trouble recalling how and

when conflict events took place, especially in the case of prolonged conflicts such as civil war. Finally, there is a large risk of ‘reporting bias’ when sensitive questions are asked during a period of distrust and suspicion. This can lead to the deliberate attempt to manipulate or falsify information.

With these considerations in mind, the authors worked to create a system of conflict data collection that could potentially overcome the inaccessibility to conflict areas to researchers and the reporting bias of respondents. Their end result was a “crowd seeding” system that provided local informants with cell phones and asked them to report conflict events via text-message during an 18-month period of violent conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The goal of the crowd seeding project was to identify the viability of text message data collection in the DRC. After their 18-month trial period, the research trial proved successful from the high participation of the conflict reporters and the many possible applications of the data.

In total, the crowd seeding project received over 5,000 text messages informing researchers of the presence of fighting, troop movements, looting, sexual violence and kidnappings. These messages were then visualized into conflict zones on a map as a way to plot and, hopefully, predict future violence. Further applications of this data gathering method can be used to monitor and control the spread of disease outbreaks and to study the movement patterns of armed groups so that policing authorities can intercept before violence breaks out.



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# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

International interventions into conflict zones often focus on the regional or national level and ignore the local level where much of the violence actually occurs. This is where conflicts over land use or political power become self-sustaining and autonomous from the national arena. Crowd seeding projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have helped refocus outside intervention, providing local communities with the tools, and sense of ownership needed to address conflict at the ground level. The Voix des Kivus data collection system in the South Kivu province of the DRC proved to be a reliable and effective way for locals to contribute to conflict prevention in their own communities. Additionally, the project provided important insight into how technology can be used in other conflict prevention applications.

Researchers are developing tools for “near real-time longitudinal and remote monitoring of public sentiment and violence in Kenya” (a technology pitch by Andrew Linke and Sebastian Schutte” at the CalCon Peace Through Technology Conference - <http://sites.sandiego.edu/calcon/speakers/>)

Continued Reading:

## **Voix des Kivus: A Crowd-Seeding System in DRC by Patrick Meier**

(<https://www.usahidi.com/blog/2011/05/16/voix-des-kivus-a-crowd-seeding-system-in-drc/>)

## **Raining on the Parade: Some Cautions Regarding the Global Database of Events, Language and Tone Dataset by Nicholas Weller and Kenneth McCubbins**

(<https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2014/02/20/raining-on-the-parade-some-cautions-regarding-the-global-database-of-events-language-and-tone-dataset>)

## **Policy Uses of Peace and Conflict Data by Peter Wallensteen**

(<https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2012/05/02/policy-uses-of-peace-and-conflict-data/>)



Photo Credit: By Essam Sharaf  
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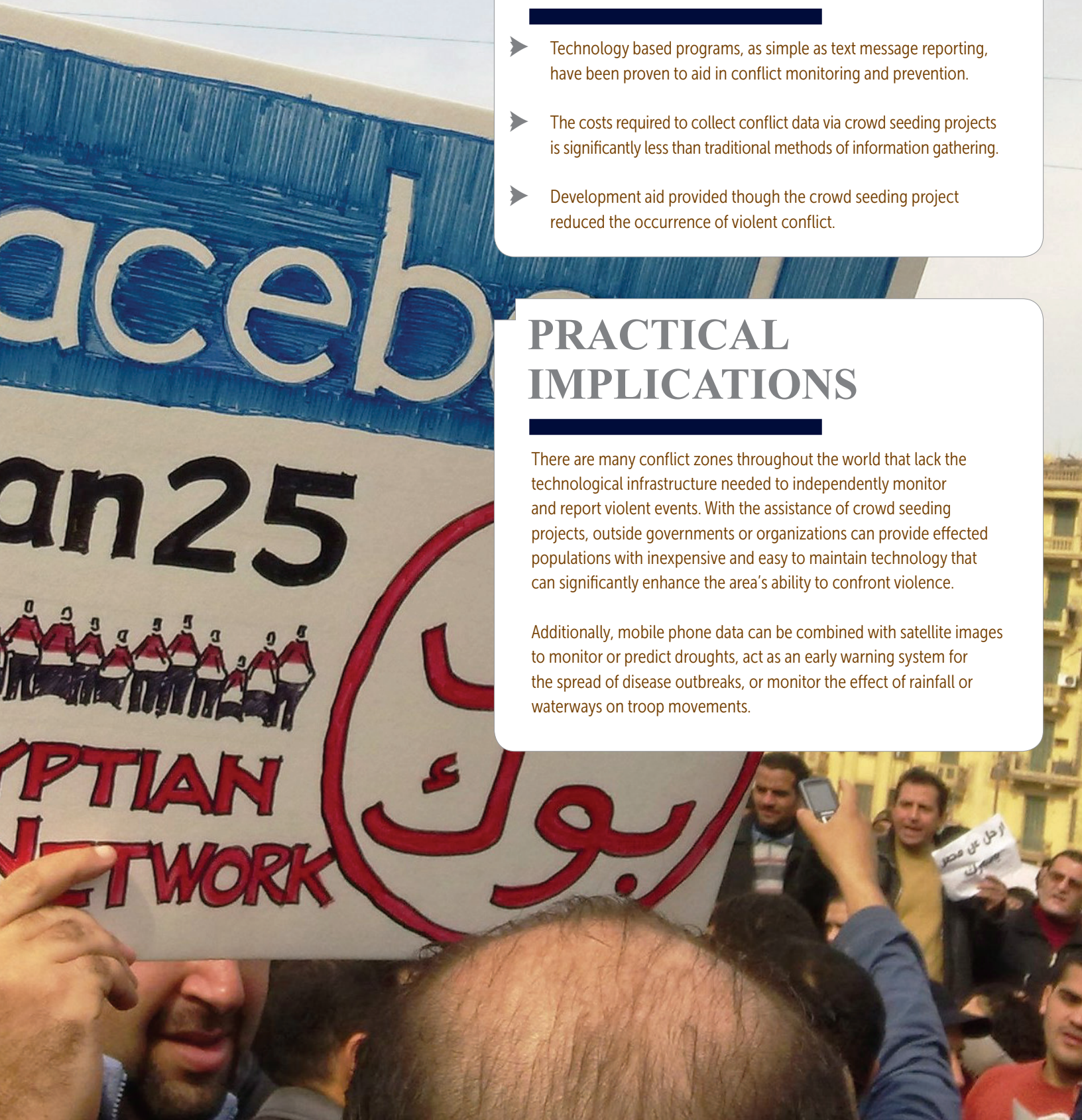
## TALKING POINTS

- Technology based programs, as simple as text message reporting, have been proven to aid in conflict monitoring and prevention.
- The costs required to collect conflict data via crowd seeding projects is significantly less than traditional methods of information gathering.
- Development aid provided through the crowd seeding project reduced the occurrence of violent conflict.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

There are many conflict zones throughout the world that lack the technological infrastructure needed to independently monitor and report violent events. With the assistance of crowd seeding projects, outside governments or organizations can provide affected populations with inexpensive and easy to maintain technology that can significantly enhance the area's ability to confront violence.

Additionally, mobile phone data can be combined with satellite images to monitor or predict droughts, act as an early warning system for the spread of disease outbreaks, or monitor the effect of rainfall or waterways on troop movements.



# Aggressive Governance, not Religion Influences the Choice between Violence and Nonviolence

Source | Dornschneider, S. & Henderson, N. (2016). A Computational Model of Cognitive Maps Analyzing Violent and Nonviolent Activity in Egypt and Germany. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 60(2) 368-399.

**Key  
words**  
nonviolence  
civil war  
governance  
religion

What makes some engage in violent activity against their government while others choose nonviolent methods? Are would-be actors influenced by an aggressive government? What, if any, influence does Islam give to initiate violent or nonviolent action?

To shed light on these questions, this study applied a method called the cognitive mapping approach (CMA) to learn more about why some people resort to violence against their states while others, living under the same social and political conditions, do not. Political violence against a state is most commonly studied by analyzing the behavior and motivations of violent groups. However, this research examines the underlining question of what motivates individuals living under similar circumstances to choose violent, and others to choose nonviolent methods to protest their government.

The authors format their CMA into graphical models to analyze 477,604 different belief combinations connected to violent and nonviolent activity. Their model is then used to analyze and compare the beliefs of 27 violent and nonviolent Muslims from an authoritarian state (Egypt) and non-Muslims from a democratic state (Germany). The analysis of individuals from two different countries and religious beliefs is used to identify whether or not Islam or the type of government has a significant influence over a person's decision to use violence or nonviolence.

The authors found in both violent and nonviolent behavior, an individual's perception of state aggression was the most reliable indicator. Additionally, a person is more likely to use nonviolent methods against the state when s/he believes the severity of state aggression is low.

The authors also found that the belief systems motivating violent and non-violent activity are surprisingly similar and that there were no significant differences between violent Muslims and non-Muslims. This is further evidence against the claim that Islam is a major influence in violent behavior.

The researchers identified several “Chains of Belief” that may influence a person’s decision on whether to engage in violent or nonviolent activity:

**Belief patterns connected to decisions to use violence:**

1. Violence as last resort of defense against increasingly threatening state environments.
2. Violence as a response to existing or increasing state aggression.
3. Violence as means to reach necessary goals and an acceptance of negative consequences.

**Belief patterns connected to decisions to use nonviolence:**

1. Nonviolent activity as means to improve strained living conditions.
2. Nonviolent activity as acceptance of state structures in spite of strained living conditions.
3. Nonviolent activity as response to unacceptable consequences of violence.
4. Nonviolent activity as response to threatening state environment and support by the people.
5. Nonviolent activity as response to threatening state environment and impossibility of reaching goals by violence.

The findings show that individuals decide to choose violence based on beliefs about a threatening government environment. Interestingly, the decision to choose nonviolence is also based on negative beliefs about government environment, confirming the author’s hypothesis that the underlying beliefs between choosing violence or nonviolence are similar. Moreover, the findings showed that an individual’s beliefs about Islam, or contact with violent groups, had very little influence over their decisions to choose violence.



# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

This research is relevant to many of the violent conflicts involving state and non-state actors around the world. If viewed through the lens of the findings of this study, the violent Syrian civil war can be partially traced back to citizens' reaction to an overly aggressive regime. If the government had adopted a more amicable, less aggressive posture, this research suggests that the protests against the government would have likely been nonviolent in nature.

Also relevant is the finding that Islam as a religion is not a significant influence in causing its followers to act violently. There has been a growing level on anti-Muslim rhetoric – Islamophobia – in the media and political debate lately. Research such as this is crucial to the processes of debunking the fear mongering and shaming that many have become accustomed to and which will be normalized in public discourse if not challenged.



Continued Reading:

**Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict** by Erica Chenoweth & Maria Stephan. (2012).

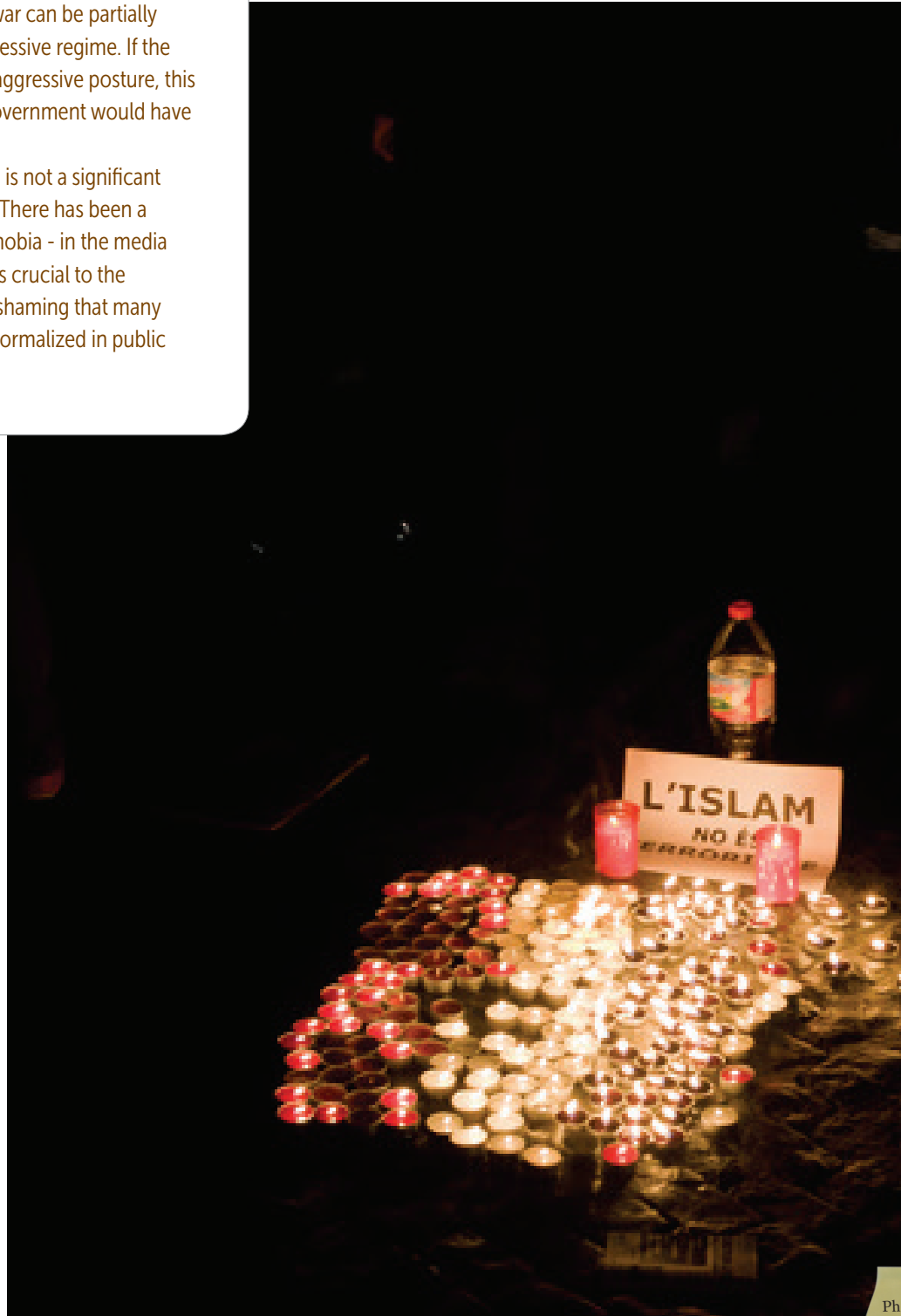
(<http://cup.columbia.edu/book/why-civil-resistance-works/9780231156820>)

**The Truth About Islam** by Andrew Mack

([http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/politics/2016/01/islam\\_isn\\_t\\_inherently\\_violent\\_or\\_peaceful.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2016/01/islam_isn_t_inherently_violent_or_peaceful.html))

**Yes to assertive, no to aggressive** by Tom Hastings

(<http://www.peacevoice.info/2016/05/10/7298/>)



## TALKING POINTS

- Individuals are more likely to turn to violence when they believe they are responding to an aggressive government.
- Individuals are more likely to choose nonviolent methods as a means to improve living conditions.
- Individuals are more likely to choose nonviolent methods in response to unacceptable consequences of violence.
- Individuals use nonviolent methods with the knowledge that violence would make reaching their goals impossible.
- Religion is not a significant motivating factor behind violent activity against a government.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings pointing to the lack of motivation for violent behavior when states do not use threatening behavior suggests that open dialogue and systems to address grievances between a government and its people can be a deterrent to the escalation of violence. The practice of constructive conflict transformation offers numerous viable systemic approaches where the conditions that reduce the likelihood of violent conflict are reduced. So-called 'deep prevention' addresses economic grievances, lack of political access or group discrimination. Inclusive and good governance addresses the structural issues. Existing conflict can be addressed through mediation, dialog programs, or confidence building measures (see Ramsbotham, Oliver, Hugh Miall, and Tom Woodhouse. 2016. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*. 4th ed. Cambridge: Polity.)

# R2P: The Responsibility to Prevent

Source | Welsh, J. (2016). The responsibility to prevent: Assessing the gap between rhetoric and reality. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 51(2), 216-232.

## Key words

violence prevention  
Responsibility to Protect  
R2P



Continued Reading:

### **The Responsibility to Protect**

(<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml>)

**Fulfilling our collective responsibility: international assistance and the responsibility to protect by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** (<http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/NI446379.pdf>)

**The Responsibility to Protect. Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty** ([http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/947&referer=/english/&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/947&referer=/english/&Lang=E))

**In the Aftermath of Libya: A Chance to Define "Responsibility to Protect" by Paul Mutter** ([http://fpif.org/in\\_the\\_aftermath\\_of\\_libya\\_a\\_chance\\_to\\_define\\_responsibility\\_to\\_protect/](http://fpif.org/in_the_aftermath_of_libya_a_chance_to_define_responsibility_to_protect/))

**Syria, Libya, and the Responsibility to Protect by Andrew Kydd** (<https://politicalviolenceataglan.ce.org/2012/06/28/syria-libya-and-the-responsibility-to-protect/>)

It is rightly assumed that preventing violent conflict is preferable to responding to a conflict after it occurs. This is true in terms of reducing potential casualties and the huge financial and political costs of military interventions. Unfortunately, the focus on conflict prevention in the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine is overshadowed by political debate around the various options available after a conflict has begun, thus eliminating the often atrocity-avoiding precautions the international community could have taken in advance.

In this article, the authors engage in the debate surrounding the focus and efficacy of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine and its role in preventing the escalation and recurrence of violence. The research presents a clear picture of the challenges involved in prioritizing prevention over protection and provide real-world examples of the failure of protect and prevent conflict through the UN Security Council's inability to address the violent turn of Arab Spring and Syrian civil war in an effective manner.

Prevention can take many forms, from the long-term focus on political and social institutions needed to resist violence, to more short-term, preemptive action designed to stop an impending catastrophe. In an effort to analyze and improve past methods of intervention, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) report lists the three conditions of effective prevention as (1) knowledge of the situation at risk (via more effective early warning systems); (2) understanding of policy options available (a preventative 'toolbox'); and, (3) sufficient political will.

The most common roadblocks to these conditions of effective prevention are (1) lack of funds available for preventative efforts; (2) dangers of exacerbating domestic tensions through international involvement; and, (3) difficulty of mobilizing political will before a crisis becomes apparent.



# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

The continued failure of UN Security Council members to create effective and cooperative action in Syria and the failed intervention in Libya caused many to question the motivations and efficacy of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine. Labeling protection as a responsibility provides the opportunity for powerful states to frame their military intervention as the responsible humanitarian thing to do. Yet we know that there always are numerous viable nonviolent alternatives that are more responsible and effective means of protection. As this research lays out, prevention is still the most effective approach. Resources and political will needs to follow the already existing knowledge on violence prevention.

# TALKING POINTS

- Shifting focus from post-conflict protection to pre-conflict prevention is more effective and less costly.
- Once violent conflict is underway, political barriers and high social and economic costs limit constructive options of violence prevention.



Photo Credit: Sojoud Elgarrai. UNAMID Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic.



## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Even in cases of successful violence prevention as in Kenya and Guinea, there are limits to what outside states and organizations can do prevent certain conflicts or influence certain leaders. The real opportunity provided by this research lays in the role of local civil society and organizations of preventing violent conflict before it happens.

Tania Paffenholz, for example, presents case studies of civil society peacebuilding efforts at different stages in conflict zones such as Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Israel and Palestine, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Somalia. A framework for analysis and action contains for elements: (1) full understanding of conflict context; (2) protection, monitoring, advocacy and public communication, in-group socialization, social cohesion, intermediation and facilitation, and service delivery are main peacebuilding functions; (3) functions of context and effectiveness of civil society activities need to be examined; and (4) importance of civil society functions, the relations between them and their causations. (see more at Paffenholz, Thania, ed. 2010. *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*. Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers).



# Defeating ISIS with Nonviolent Resistance

Source | Stephan, M. J. (2015). Civil Resistance vs. ISIS. *Journal of Resistance Studies*, 1(2), 127-150. Retrieved from [resistance-journal.org](http://resistance-journal.org)

## Key words

nonviolence  
ISIS  
civic action

Continued Reading:

### Before the Next ISIS, We Need Nonviolent Counterterrorism Strategies by Erin Niemela

(<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2014/07/before-the-next-isis-we-need-nonviolent-counterterrorism-strategies/>)

### A New Era of Nonviolence: The Power of Civil Society Over War by Tom Hastings

(<http://www.mcfarlandbooks.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-9431-6>)

### The role of diplomacy in countering ISIS by David Cortright

(<https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2014/11/24/the-role-of-diplomacy-in-countering-isis/>)

### Nonviolence and Humor: Carnival as a Tool of Nonviolent Resistance and Reconciliation. Janjira Sombutpoonsiri on PeaceVoiceTV

([https://youtu.be/B-4kNTT\\_79o](https://youtu.be/B-4kNTT_79o))

### Burning Issues: Taking on ISIS. TV interview with Phyllis Bennis from the Institute for Policy Studies at:

(<http://www.ips-dc.org/burning-issues-taking-isis/>)

### Understanding ISIS and the New Global War on Terror: A Primer. By Phyllis Bennis

([http://www.interlinkbooks.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=3257](http://www.interlinkbooks.com/product_info.php?products_id=3257))

The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) is a radical religious group possessing the tendencies of both a violent insurgency and a totalitarian regime. ISIS has killed and enslaved thousands of innocent civilians and paved the way to one of the largest humanitarian disasters ever recorded. Their goal of creating an independent Islamic state, and recruiting the armed fighters to do so, has since proved resilient to the military opposition of much stronger nations. This resiliency suggests that ISIS's ambitions will only be weakened through a combined strategy of diplomatic, economic, political, and ultimately local nonviolent resistance.

Maria Stephan lays out a comprehensive outline on the various ways civilian nonviolent action can weaken the strength and authority of ISIS and suggests how such resistance could be supported by the international community. Key to Stephan's outline is the understanding of ISIS as a group trying to exert their control and legitimacy through every facet of society ranging from governance, commerce, health care, education, energy and communication utilities, etc.

By demanding control or influence over every sector of society, ISIS presents a vulnerability by spreading themselves too thin and relying on the passive participation and cooperation of a population who largely dismiss their authority. Acknowledging this vulnerability, highlights opportunities that disrupt patterns of cooperation and obedience depended upon by ISIS and deny them the human and material resources needed to maintain power.

#### ➤ 1. Authority or Perceived Legitimacy

The vast majority of ISIS's authority comes from the ideology acknowledging ISIS leader Abu Bakir al Baghdadadi as the eighth caliph and commander of all Muslims, and ordering all Muslims to accept his rule and fight with him to build a Muslim state. As Stephan points out, simply stating 'ISIS is un-Islamic' is unlikely to affect their authority or legitimacy. More affective would be for Islamic scholars and religious leaders to provide specific renunciations against ISIS' religious interpretations or for media outlets to amplify the voices of ISIS defectors speaking out about their time on the front lines and the dishonesty of ISIS propaganda machine.

## ➤ 2. Humor and Satire

Humor and satire are proven tools when incorporated into nonviolent campaigns, especially through the utility of enabling protestors to undermine a violent oppressor in a way that is often safer and less confrontational than conventional street protests. Satire and humor allows protestors to communicate serious, and potentially dangerous, messages about their oppressors under some level of anonymity or a façade of innocence that makes their actions harder to trace and less threatening to their target. In some of the most oppressive ISIS controlled areas, popular artists and media personalities have used humor to address the hypocrisy and absurdity of ISIS rule and helped lower public fear while poking holes in ISIS's claims to authority.

## ➤ 3. Human Resources

ISIS cannot take or maintain control of an area without the active and passive cooperation of local and outside support. ISIS relies on the skills and resources of civilians in all sectors and professions in order to maintain their control and influence, as well as foreigners to invest government and enlist in their army. This also highlights one of ISIS's greatest vulnerabilities: their obligation to provide reliable governance and services to the community it wishes to govern and to the soldiers they employ. Any disruptions in services, employment rates, inflation, military recruitment etc. are major problems to ISIS if they wish to maintain their façade of legitimacy.

**Dr. Maria Stephan** is a senior policy fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, where she focuses on the dynamics of civil resistance and their relevance for violent conflict prevention. Although no new empirical research is introduced in this article, Stephan's analysis and proposals are influenced by expert knowledge gained through past research and years of professional experience focusing on nonviolence and governance.

Muslims around the world are using the hashtags #NotInMyName and #MessageToISIS to condemn terrorism and reaffirm what Islam stands. The hashtags #MessageToISIS and #NotInMyName have been used widely since ISIS claimed responsibility for deadly attacks in Beirut and Paris.



#Not in my name

Photo Credit: Screenshot from YouTube video from The Active Change Foundation.

While formal mass protests are very risky under ISIS, other nonviolent tactics can be equally effective in undermining authority including ISIS administrative workers deliberately underperforming in their duties, leaking information to outside activists or supporters, non-cooperation of the business community or nonviolent sabotage of oil production or transportation—thus eliminating a major source of ISIS' income. The nonviolent battlefield can also spread to publishing counter-recruitment videos to combat ISIS' highly successful recruitment machine. Former ISIS fighters who have returned home after realizing the lies of ISIS propaganda can speak publicly about their experiences. More broadly, work can be done around the world on demarginalizing young Muslim men and women who are often enticed by ISIS's promise of fighting for a presumably noble cause.

#### 4. Material Resources

ISIS occupies a sizeable amount of land and has successfully controlled the flow of money, land, technology, communication, transportation and natural resources within that area. The US-led air strikes have mostly eliminated their major source of income generated from the regions oil production. ISIS now relies on a system of extortion and taxation of Iraqi government employees and contracts and profits of local companies.

#### 5. Intangible Factors

ISIS focuses on a number of psychological, cultural and ideological “intangible” factors to recruit new fighters and maintain control over their territory. By catering to natural desires to belong, personal identity, and meaningful existence ISIS can cater their propaganda to attract alienated young men and women. In most cases, these young men and women are vulnerable to this type of manipulation, because ISIS promises to fill a void that they lack at home. By addressing inequality and political, social, and economic marginalization in our societies, every community can combat ISIS propaganda by providing their youth with real alternatives addressing desires to belong, personal identity, and meaningful existence.

#### 6. Resisting Totalitarianism

ISIS maintains power by waging war on every aspect of social and political life, trying to intimidate, destroy, or otherwise overpower any semblance of self-determination. Through the use of ideological conditioning, terror, and a functional bureaucracy, ISIS has become both a totalitarian regime and a socio-religious movement.

Stephan claims the most threatening act against a totalitarian regime is a society's ability to organize in spontaneous political action, independent of the laws and ideology of their oppressors. Once people begin to organize against their governments, the façade of absolute power begins to deteriorate.

**“Humor can be a powerful weapon.**

Daash [ISIS] rules through fear. If we can make people laugh at them we break through the fear barrier.”

–Mohammad Khedhr, leader of anti-ISIS satire campaign *Raqqa is Being Silently Slaughtered*

“Undermining ISIS's claim to be providing an honorable, dignified lifestyle is only half the battle. A longer-term effort needs to focus on developing alternative pathways to social and political participation for Muslim youth in both the democracies and non-democratic states where ISIS messaging is resonating.”

–Maria Stephan

## Supporting Autonomous Civic Action

Considering the totalitarian qualities of ISIS control, the most obvious way to combat their authority is to identify safe ways local citizens can protest their government. Insiders (those within ISIS controlled Syria and Iraq) and outsiders (foreign governments and non-governmental organizations) can work together to support community resiliency and non-cooperation with the ISIS bureaucracy. Stephan's strategies include providing educational materials and medical supplies to locals running underground schools or medical clinics, offering trauma support to victims of ISIS or former combatants trying to re-enter normal life, supporting alternative forms of media and communication channels providing anti-ISIS information to ISIS controlled areas, and supporting legitimate local and regional voices capable of challenging the religious, social and cultural tyranny of ISIS.

“ISIS promises excitement, adventure, and glorious afterlife to those who join its ranks. **For alienated Muslim youth in particular, the prospect of joining a seemingly powerful, mission-focused organization holds great appeal.**”

-Maria Stephan

“Those who aspire to total domination must liquidate all spontaneity, such as mere existence of individuality will always engender, and track it down in its most private forms, regardless of how un-political and harmless these may seem.” -Hannah Arendt



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# Minority groups, political exclusion and terrorism

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**Key words**  
terrorism  
ethnic groups  
political inclusion  
political exclusion



Continued Reading:

**Domestic Terrorism in Democratic States: The Important Role Played by Grievances** by Brandon C. Prins, Sambuddha Ghatak, and Aaron Gold

(<https://politicalviolenceataglan.ce.org/2015/09/17/domestic-terrorism-in-democratic-states-the-important-role-played-by-grievances/>)

**Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism** by Alberto Abadie

(<http://www.nber.org/papers/w10859>)

**From Isolation to Engagement: Strategies for Countering Violent Extremism** by John Paul Lederach

(<https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2012/01/25/from-isolation-to-engagement-strategies-for-countering-violent-extremism/>)

Previous research has suggested that instead of turning to civil war, some groups resort to acts of terrorism due to lack of resources required to support an extended conflict. Terrorism is often used as a more cost-effective option. Similarly, this study goes deeper, exploring the relationship between excluding certain ethnic groups from political participation and their likelihood of using terrorism as a way to overcome their exclusion. Terrorist movements often benefit from stable support networks when developed from a group of people with family, social, or cultural ties. The authors argue that the strength and reliability of ethnic bonds make terrorism a viable response, deemed legitimate when included civilians are viewed as complicit in their exclusion, and offer a more accessible and effective target.

The research team formulated the following hypothesis to help understand the relationship between politically marginalized ethnic groups and their likelihood of domestic terrorist activity:

- Countries with larger populations of politically excluded ethnic groups will experience more domestic terrorist attacks.
- Countries with larger populations of politically excluded ethnic groups will experience more casualties from domestic terrorism.

To conduct their study, the research team gathered information from 130 countries from 1981-2005 on the yearly domestic terrorist incidents per country and the yearly total of deaths due to terrorist incidents per country. They then compared this information with a global database measuring political exclusion of groups due to their ethnicity. In the case of this study, exclusion is represented by whether or not a particular ethnic group's members are barred from service or representation in the executive branch of government.

The research team found political exclusion to be very important in predicting a country's chance of experiencing domestic terrorism. The more citizens a country excludes on the basis of their ethnicity, the more prone the country is to terror attacks and consequently its citizens will suffer

higher casualties due to the increased terrorist activity. For example, a country that excludes three quarters of their population is 80% more likely to experience terrorism than a country that excludes half of their population. The research also showed that the percentage of politically excluded ethnic populations was a more important predictor to domestic terrorism than a country's total level of political participation, or the amount of economic discrimination faced by the same ethnic groups. Meaning exclusion from political power or representation is more important to ethnic groups than economic exclusion. Moreover, not the mere political participation forces ethnic groups to turn to terrorist acts, but rather the disqualification from participation.

Research on terrorism and its motivators are most often focused on social and economic factors. This research is very important due to authors' success in introducing the importance of addressing political influences as well. Political exclusion on the basis of ethnicity fuels domestic terrorism. When people are excluded from government power or representation, they are more likely to resort to acts of terror to address or avenge their grievances.



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Protest against the Ethiopian-Israeli Jews  
absorption's failure

# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

This research is particularly important to US post-9/11 counterterrorism policy. In 2005, President George W. Bush created the Millennium Challenge Account which provided development aid to help countries fight terrorism by addressing its political and economic root causes. In exchange for American aid packages, countries are required to engage in political reforms, create free-market economic policies and to fight corruption. However, a recipient country's progress in addressing root causes of terrorism is based on 17 indicators—none of which measure political inclusiveness of ethnic minority groups. Considering the findings of this study - ethnic group political exclusion as a major influence in domestic terrorism - policies aimed at building inclusiveness could be a highly effective counterterrorism tool.





## TALKING POINTS

- Political exclusion on the basis of ethnicity fuels domestic terrorism
- A country's proportion of the politically excluded ethnic populations is a more important predictor to domestic terrorism than the level of political participation or of economic discrimination.
- When people are excluded from government power or representation, they are more likely to resort to acts of terror to address or avenge their grievances.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Although this research found a direct link between political exclusion and increased terrorism, political participation was not a factor. Therefore, it is not the act of political participation that forces ethnic groups to turn to terrorist acts, but rather the disqualification from participation. Thus, this research predicts that terrorist activity won't increase so long as ethnic groups have the option of political participation—regardless if they choose to or not. Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is the current buzz-term in the field of peacebuilding. Adding the variable of political inclusion for ethnic groups is crucial for the complex strategies needed to address terrorism at its roots.

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# [TESTIMONIALS]



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**John W. McDonald**

*U.S. Ambassador, ret.*

*Chairman and CEO, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy*



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*Executive Director, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility Co-founder,  
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<h2>OUR MISSION</h2>	<p>Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.</p>
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<h2>UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS</h2>	<p>We are at a stage in human history where we can say with confidence that there are better and more effective alternatives to war and violence.</p> <p>A Global Peace System is evolving.</p> <p>Poverty, employment, energy, education, the environment and other social and natural factors are interconnected in peacebuilding.</p> <p>Peace Science and Peace Education provide a path to a more just and peaceful world.</p> <p>Multi-track diplomacy offers a sectoral framework for creating peacebuilding opportunities</p>