

EVALUATION OF THE CONFLICT PREVENTION POOLS

Greg Austin

Improving the effectiveness of the UK contribution to conflict prevention and management – an assessment of 6 geographical areas and 2 thematic areas of the Conflict Prevention Pools with recommendations for HMG to consider in future strategic planning.

Summary Finding

Pursuing Effective Strategies and Improving International Coordination

1. The Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) and Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) were established in 2001 and are funding worthwhile activities that make positive contributions to effective conflict prevention. Although far too early in the day to assess impact, the progress achieved through the CPP mechanisms is significant enough to justify their continuation. At the same time, additional development of the analytical framework and joint priority setting foreshadowed by the SR2000 cross-cutting reviews that led to their establishment would further exploit the potential of the CPPs.

"The two SR2000 cross-cutting reviews noted that a great deal of inter-departmental coordination and shared assessments for conflict prevention were already the norm. The main new organisational additions were to be an inter-Departmental steering mechanism in each Pool and a process for joint priority-setting for each conflict."

2. More determined pursuit of the multiplier effects and economies available from coordinated international responses would further exploit their potential. The allocation of more administrative resources,

especially staff with appropriate conflict prevention expertise, would also multiply the effectiveness of the CPPs.

The SR2000 Reviews foresaw several components of good machinery for joint assessment and collective priority setting:

- *Cabinet Sub-Committee determination of policy;*
- *a standing inter-departmental body for determination and regular review of spending priorities at the pool level (GCPP and ACPP);*
- *regular (normal) meetings between officials from the three main Departments to review conflict issues in their subject country and appropriate UK responses that might be supported from the CPPs;*
- *a mechanism for early warning that monitors triggers for a conflict identified in the assessment and then reports them to high level policy makers;*
- *a mechanism for updating the original assessment with a view to revisiting earlier decisions on priorities.*

Effect on Preventing New Conflicts and Containing Existing Ones

3. The case studies provided specific examples of how the CPPs have funded UK contributions to conflict prevention measures and peacekeeping operations.

4. In **Georgia**, a number of well-targeted and appropriately diverse GCPP activities, such as funding for community-based reconciliation, the appointment of a high-level Special Representative, and the work of a senior UK military adviser through an advisory board structure, have provided sustained support for peaceful approaches to the resolution of political conflicts, alongside other measures from the international community. One of the principal features of the effectiveness of the GCPP in Georgia, as elsewhere, has been its ability to obtain extra leverage through the funding of other actors, including NGOs and international agencies. The picture of GCPP operations in the rest of the FSU, including Russia, reveals some successful projects, but much less coherence and much less overall effectiveness in achieving specific GCPP aims at the country level than is visible in Georgia.

"The independent states of the former Soviet Union are at serious risk from instability and conflict. We need to find solutions or compromises to resolve 'frozen' or potential conflicts in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Javakhetia), Armenia and Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Moldova (Transnistria). We need to reduce tensions in Central Asia (particularly in the Fergana Valley), and to deal with the potentially destabilising impact of military action in Afghanistan on the region. ... and to help avoid escalating tensions with Georgia and problems over Kaliningrad." GCPP Russia-FSU Strategy.

5. In **Sierra Leone**, the support by the ACPP for security measures and security sector reform has provided a very strong lead in helping stabilise the security situation. It has put the country's security bodies on the path to reform. This support, together with the reintegration of ex-combatants, has been well directed. It appears to be making a significant contribution to avoiding a return to the devastation of the civil war experienced between 1991 and 2000.

"The UK is the largest bilateral donor to Sierra Leone. In 2002 we agreed a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) committing us to the long-term

support to the reconstruction and development of the country... It contains commitments by Sierra Leone to key reforms for UK support. These include action on corruption, reforms to central and local government, public expenditure management, media reforms, effective regulation of the diamond industry, security sector reform, sound macro-economic management and the development of a poverty reduction strategy." DFID Press Release, March 2004.

6. In **Sudan**, the ACPP's part funding of peace negotiations and innovative confidence building missions, together with a small group of other donors, has had a positive effect on prospects for an end to the principal violent conflict in the country. Sustained and rapid funding targeted at sensitive areas of the conflict secured the international guarantees.

Hilary Benn and Jack Straw on Sudan, January 2004: "We welcome the agreement on wealth-sharing between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/ Army and congratulate both parties and the IGAD mediators on this achievement. It is a further significant step towards peace in Sudan.... We reaffirm our determination to do all we can to help the parties reach such an agreement and to implement it.

"However, we reiterate our deep concern at the continuing humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict in Darfur in western Sudan. We call on all those involved to address the problems in Darfur through dialogue, to establish and maintain a ceasefire with independent monitoring and to allow unfettered humanitarian access to those in need. The UK has already contributed over £4 million to the relief effort and remains willing to use its good offices in any way possible to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the conflict." FCO Press Release, January 2004.

7. In **Afghanistan**, the GCPP supports a range of security sector projects that are important to the 'security first' imperative for effective conflict prevention. These include support to the National Security Council. The GCPP is also targeting factionalism and the drug economy.

"There are three strands to the Afghanistan Strategy ... Support to the Security Sector, Dialogue and Community Information, Good Governance/Rule of Law ..."

"The security environment in many parts of the country, particularly the south and east, has deteriorated. The main sources of insecurity are: anti-government forces in the form of neo-Taliban and al Qa'eda groups; regional spoilers; warlords and power holders at the central government and provincial levels; the growth of the drug economy; increased criminality and banditry."CPP Afghanistan Case Study, 2004.

8. The cumulative effect of the GCPP projects under the UN thematic strategy has made an important contribution to international attempts to make the UN more responsive to the political environment in conflict-related situations. The Security Sector Reform (SSR) thematic strategy has helped the UK maintain a leading role in the international community on SSR issues, in particular through the innovative activities of the Defence Advisory Team.
9. At the same time, the Evaluation did not find a consistent set of ideas that officials in Whitehall and UK missions overseas might be able to use as guidance on the ways in which the GCPP or the ACPP should be used to have the maximum effects for the lowest cost on preventing particular types of conflicts. In some of the case studies, the evaluators found a mismatch between the small amount of financial resources available for the CPPs and the ambitious objectives that the cross-cutting review had established.

Effect on International Partnerships

10. When the CPPs were established, Ministers attached great importance to the potential of the new mechanisms to mobilise other international actors and their funding and thereby magnify the impact of the CPP spending.
11. The results from the six case studies indicate that the CPPs have had a generally positive record in this area. The UK is working very well with a number of international partners in Georgia, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Sudan to promote better-coordinated

responses. The UN Strategy has been successful in fostering improvements in support for UN capacities in New York and in peacekeeping practices in the field. The GCPP is setting the pace internationally for other donors in respect of its small arms strategy and its SSR strategy. There are also examples of effective mobilisation by the ACPP of international partners, especially the UN, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for peacekeeping. Yet most UK collaborative action and coordination for conflict prevention still takes place independently of the CPPs. For example, the Africa Action Plan, released by HMG in 2003, reflects the active collaboration and coordination that exists within the G8 for addressing conflict. However, the development and monitoring of the Action Plan does not depend primarily on the ACPP as a mechanism, even though the three key officials who coordinate that policy are the three key officials in the ACPP Steering Group. Similarly, GCPP spending in Afghanistan has been well coordinated with other donors and the transitional government of Afghanistan, but the complex and intense coordination process has not depended on the GCPP as a mechanism for its effectiveness.

12. The most important effect of the CPPs on international partners may be an indirect one. Many interlocutors outside HMG reported that the enhanced profile that the existence of the CPPs has given to the cause of conflict prevention, both in general and in particular cases, was having a positive effect in terms of promoting more effective responses by other actors.
13. The management mechanisms associated with the CPPs appear to offer further potential for achieving economies, especially through greater coordination with EU actions, or better cooperation with some like minded EU states. To maximise this potential to attract partners or like-minded countries, HMG could give more publicity to CPP-funded measures.

Effect on Inter-Departmental Processes

14. One test of the extent of inter-departmental collaboration achieved by the CPPs is the degree to which the

Departments have instituted a method for early warning to facilitate any appropriate rapid, pre-emptive response and an agreed analytical framework for conflict assessment and joint priority setting processes. These were the two main arguments that the SR2000 cross-cutting reviews made for recommending the establishment of the Pools. The reviews described the analytical framework as a 'country conflict profile' which would offer a 'brief analysis of the main elements of the conflict', 'identify risks to local, regional and international interests', and 'identify the level of priority the UK may wish to attach to respond to the conflict and also identify the options for UK intervention'. HMG has not yet put in place an agreed analytical framework along these lines.

15. So far the main new vehicle for joint assessment has been a 'strategy' document of some sort. A diversity of practice exists in both the GCPP and ACPP on what areas of analysis these strategies should cover, what authority they had and whether they were meant to be management tools against which to review resource allocations and policy options.
16. Some strategies in the GCPP have made use of an analytical framework for conflict assessment developed by DFID: *Conducting Conflict Assessments: Guidance Notes* (2002). The framework, now known as Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA), is a sophisticated conflict and policy analysis tool, which in many respects mirrors the collective experience of the FCO, MOD, JIC, Defence Intelligence Service (DIS) and Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). Potentially powerful as the SCA is, it has been treated as an experimental tool in DFID itself. It has not been effectively mainstreamed in the three Departments.
17. The ACPP has not relied on the SCA approach for the bulk of its work. There was a view that the process was unnecessarily protracted and demanding of scarce personnel and financial resources. There is in fact no shortage of conflict analysis from a variety of sources available to personnel engaged in conflict prevention. This includes HMG diplomatic reporting, assessments by other donors, and

detailed and regular reporting by NGOs, such as the International Crisis Group. In the case of Nigeria, HMG joined other donors, the Nigerian government and Nigerian non-governmental groups in writing an SCA.

18. The process of in-country priority setting appears to be tied too closely to the qualifications and experience of key individuals, many of whom reported that they did not have the time to record the basis of their decisions. These findings suggest there may be room for a more standardised approach to the joint assessment process, to provide a process that gives appropriate prominence to the short-term issues and the early warning function. The question also arises as to whether additional personnel resources should be devoted to this function.
19. Officials interviewed shared an almost unanimous view that the CPPs have promoted significantly better interaction and cooperation between the Departments concerned, especially in London. According to several officials, the expanded availability of pooled funds has acted as an incentive for cooperation. Across the CPPs, both in country and in Whitehall, regular formal and informal coordination and information sharing has improved.

Implications for Financial Management

20. The SR2000 cross-cutting reviews assumed that effective conflict prevention through the CPPs would lead to an eventual reduction in UK peacekeeping costs. Since the creation of the CPPs, total UK peacekeeping costs have continued to rise. A number of factors need to be considered such as the time frame over which programmes can realistically be expected to be effective in this regard; the expectation that most future savings in peacekeeping costs, if realised, will accrue to the wider international community, not just to the UK; the need to take into account savings on non-military accounts, including humanitarian assistance and reconstruction costs.
21. The more appropriate reference point for assessing the 'Spending to Save' argument may be conflict specific. At this level, it would be entirely appropriate for the UK, possibly in cooperation with its

international partners, to examine the extent to which proposed conflict prevention programmes could reduce the chances of incurring future post-conflict military and other costs. Such an analysis could be used to inform strategies and priorities.

Areas for Improvement

22. The Evaluation identified a number of areas where there appeared to be room for improvement, and it is of some note that these were also themes raised by some officials. The issue or areas for improvement are as follows:

- the absence of authoritative guidance on how to set priorities within strategies and lack of agreement on who sets them;
- a lack of access to qualified and experienced personnel for continual advice and monitoring of the more sensitive programmes;
- the balance between top-down selection of projects (either from Whitehall or posts) or bottom-up selection (from governments or NGOs in affected countries or areas of thematic activity);
- that the CPPs appear to operate more according to bureaucratic interests which are somewhat removed from the identified PSA and SDA objectives, rather than to those objectives;
- that CPPs are limited by what the three principal Departments (FCO, MOD and DFID) can agree, even though differences can be, and are on occasion, resolved at Ministerial level;
- that there is a gulf between decision-making for the programme side of CPP spending and the peacekeeping side of CPP spending; and
- for the bulk of CPP expenditure, that the CPPs may represent little more than a new accounting mechanism (a new budget line) for pre-existing programs of involved Departments, rather than a way of enhancing UK efforts in conflict prevention.

Recommendations

23. Although incremental improvements are occurring and developing in strongly

positive directions, this approach is unlikely to enable the CPPs to achieve their full potential. Additional policy development drivers are needed with sufficient authority and political will to draw the disparate elements together and to shape and disseminate the missing agreed frameworks. The Evaluation recommended that HMG consider:

- establishing a more disciplined, sustained and economical method of conflict analysis and early warning within the CPP system, and consider whether it should be based on the SCA model developed by DFID.
- how the thematic strategies can be connected more effectively to country strategies.
- a review of the geographic spread of CPP programme spending.
- whether conflict-specific strategies (dealing with only one conflict) should be placed ahead of regional strategies that attempt to address several relatively distinct conflicts, as in the Former Soviet Union or the Middle East.
- a review of the geographical organisation of the CPPs.
- the creation of a new standing mechanism, a process not a unit, to link the CPPs to the rapidly developing EU conflict prevention capacities and activities.
- how to articulate more clearly the way in which the CPPs might be used to meet expectations to mobilise key international partners in specific conflicts.
- increasing the level of staff resources to be made available for managing the CPP system and activities.
- the costs and benefits of creating a Joint Conflict Prevention Coordination Unit, staffed by the three Departments, with a permanent representative of the JIC and DIS, to be located in the FCO.
- the presumed link between increases in programme spending and a reduction in costs to the Treasury Reserve for peacekeeping.
- a review of the joint PSA target and the adoption of an agreed 'outline' set of outline performance indicators.

Internet Links

Reports are available at the following addresses:

Synthesis Report

Security Sector Reform, Nicole Ball

United Nations, Pierre Robert & Andrew Mack

Sudan, Emery Brusset

Sierra Leone, Jeremy Ginifer & Kaye Oliver

Afghanistan, Jonathan Goodhand & Paul Bergne

Russia and the FSU, Greg Austin & Paul Bergne

Portfolio Review, Greg Austin & Malcolm Chalmers

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647.pdf

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647a.pdf

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647b.pdf

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647c.pdf

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647d.pdf

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647e.pdf

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647f.pdf

www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/ev_647g.pdf

Department for International Development

Website: www.dfid.gov.uk

Public Enquiry Point: 0845 3004100

From Overseas: +44 1355 843132

Email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk

Africa Conflict and Humanitarian Unit

West Africa Department

1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE, UK

Evaluation Department

Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8EA, UK

Tel: 01355 843568

Email: EV-Dept@dfid.gov.uk

Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department

20 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0NF

Tel: 020 7023 0778

Email: chadenquiry@dfid.gov.uk

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Conflict Prevention Unit

United Nations Department

King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AH

Tel: 020 7008 5987/020 7008 3730

E-mail: Global.Pool.enquiries@fco.gov.uk

Website: www.fco.gov.uk

Ministry of Defence

Directorate of Policy Planning

Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London SW1N 5PB

Tel: 020 7218 6620

Email: polplanning@mod.gov.uk

Website: www.mod.gov.uk

Cabinet Office

Foreign Policy Team

Defence and Overseas Secretariat

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS

Tel: 020 7276 0407

Fax: 020 7276 0201

Website: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk

Her Majesty's Treasury

1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ

Tel: 020 7270 4558

Email: public.enquiries@hm-treasury.gov.uk

Website: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

ISBN: 1 86192 622 7