

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service: A Partner in International Conflict Prevention

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“We consider our commitment to conflict prevention to be an indispensable element in our international actions and initiatives.” (Conclusion of Meeting of G-8 Foreign Ministers, including Colin Powell, Rome, July 2001³)

“We have come to the conclusion that the prevention of deadly conflict is, over the long term, too hard – intellectually, technically, and politically – to be the responsibility of any single institution or government, no matter how powerful. Strengths must be pooled, burdens shared, and labor divided among actors.” (Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict⁴)

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (“FMCS”), an independent agency of the U.S. government with over a half-century of conflict-management and institutional-development experience, is a valuable resource in U.S. efforts to prevent armed conflict and build the foundations for lasting security in the U.S. and around the world. As the September 11 attacks and the events that followed have demonstrated, any strategy for security must include preventive diplomacy, and in doing so must promote democratic pluralism and address the root causes of violence. Colin Powell emphasized this point in his February 2002 address to the World Economic Forum: “With military success achieved in Afghanistan, there is a need now to fight poverty and hopelessness, both of which provide the conditions for terrorism to flourish.”⁵

Given the urgency and complexity of this challenge, the United States should identify, support, and leverage all appropriate resources for preventive diplomacy, including short-term operational prevention and long-term structural prevention. Through its International Program, FMCS has already made important contributions to both types of prevention, drawing on three strategic assets that uniquely position it to support and complement the work of other governmental and non-governmental organizations. These are: its expertise in conflict management and institutional development, including helping other countries build their capacity to prevent and resolve

² The author wrote this on behalf of FMCS’s International and Dispute Resolution Services (“IDRS”) department, with valuable information and ideas from IDRS Director, Rich Giacalone, and the IDRS staff.

³ “Conclusions of the G-8 Foreign Ministers Meeting,” July 19, 2001, posted on U.S. Department of State web site (<http://usinfo.state.gov>).

⁴ *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Executive Summary of the Final Report*, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997, p. x, available at <http://www.ccpdc.org>.

⁵ World Economic Forum press release, Feb. 1, 2002, World Economic Forum web site <http://www.weforum.org>.

conflicts at the organizational, community, societal, and regional levels; the access, credibility, and flexibility associated with its status as an independent agency; and the relationships it has built with governmental and non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and overseas.

FMCS's track record demonstrates the value and potential of its International Program. To fulfill this potential, however, the agency's preventive diplomacy work must be recognized, supported, and connected to other complementary efforts. The article has four sections: 1) an explanation of the need to draw on and integrate diverse resources for prevention; 2) an overview of FMCS, its historical evolution, and its international experience; 3) a strategic analysis of FMCS, including an overview of its strategic assets, a vision for the agency's evolving role in preventive diplomacy, and recommendations for next steps to achieve that vision; and 4) a conclusion, highlighting the value of a more active, supported, and integrated role for FMCS in international conflict prevention.

1. The Need

The need to draw on and integrate diverse resources for preventive diplomacy has never been greater. As the complexity and costs associated with armed conflict have increased, so has the importance of prevention. However, many of the strategies and approaches developed in the past are misaligned with the challenges of preventing contemporary conflicts. To maximize the effectiveness of prevention, we must identify and leverage a wider range of approaches by a broader set of actors than in the past. It is in this context that FMCS has an important role to play, providing high-caliber conflict-prevention services in ways that support, complement, and connect with the preventive diplomacy efforts of other organizations.

a. Contemporary Armed Conflict

Between 1989 and 2000, there were 111 armed conflicts in 74 countries. By 2000, 33 of these were active within 27 countries,⁶ the majority of these "major armed conflicts" in which more than 1000 people died over the course of the year.⁷ The costs have been enormous. Current armed conflicts alone are responsible for several million people killed, 80-90 percent of them civilians, with close to 100,000 more deaths each year.⁸ They have generated over twenty-five million refugees and displaced people and destroyed valuable natural and social environments.⁹ They also have drawn financial

⁶Uppsala University, Conflict Data Project, Year 2000 Data (<http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/data.htm>).

⁷ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Conflict and Peace Enforcement Project web site (<http://projects.sipri.se>).

⁸ JOHN DAVIES & EDY KAUFMAN, "Second Track Diplomacy: An Overview," SECOND TRACK/CITIZENS' DIPLOMACY: CONCEPTS AND TECHNIQUES FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION 1, John Davies and Edward Kaufman, eds, (to be published by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.).

⁹ Davies and Kaufman, p. 1.

resources away from other urgent tasks.¹⁰ In 2000, for example, the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (“OFDA”) spent close to 80% of its budget on man-made disasters, up from 20% in the early 1990s.¹¹ Equally striking, since 1989, the World Bank’s expenditures on post-conflict recovery increased by 800%.¹²

Although both the number of states experiencing armed conflict and the intensity of that conflict, as measured by deaths, dislocations, and other destruction, have dropped since the end of the Cold War,¹⁴ important changes in the nature of armed conflict make the situation particularly challenging. First, there has been a trend away from interstate conflicts and toward intrastate conflicts. Between 1989 and 1996, 95 of the 101 armed conflicts around the world were intrastate.¹⁶ This contrasts with the rest of the twentieth century, in which the majority of conflicts were interstate. However, it does not diminish the impact on states, as conflicts generally spread across geographic and political boundaries, drawing in a range of other state and international actors.¹⁷

Second, there has been a trend toward identity-based conflicts, in which groups are mobilized along racial, ethnic, religious or other lines.¹⁸ In 1996, for example, 22 of the 27 major armed conflicts had a “strong identity component.”¹⁹

Such conflicts are clearly very different from the more straightforward wars between states – over land, resources, political power, ideology, etc. – of earlier times. (Such wars included identity elements as well, of course, but usually not in the same centrally motivating way.) Identity-related conflict is far more complex, persistent and intractable, instantly much less amenable to compromise, negotiation, or trade-off... They go right to the heart of what gives people their sense of themselves, defining a person’s bond with her or his community....²⁰

¹⁰ In 1996, the world’s military expenditures per soldier were over U.S. \$31,000, as compared with the education expenditure per student of less than \$900. Developed countries spent over \$123,000 per soldier and less than \$8,000 per student. Carnegie Commission, p. 6.

¹¹ Kate Semerad and Robert B. Hawkins, Jr., “Conflict Prevention and U.S. Foreign Assistance: A Framework for the 21st Century,” The Institute for Contemporary Studies, November 15, 2001, p. 13.

¹² Semerad and Hawkins, p. 13.

¹⁴ Davies and Kaufman, p. 1.

¹⁶ *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, Peter Harris and Ben Reilly, editors, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998, p. 1.

¹⁷ Even in interstate conflicts, there is often a non-state actor that plays a key role. An example is the role of the Pakistani Kashmiris in the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

¹⁸ According to Taylor Seybolt, “Communal identity, in the form of ethnicity or religious belief, was a common enabling mechanism a tool used by leaders to define and motivate a group. It did not appear to be a cause of violence by itself.” From Taylor B. Seybolt, “Major Armed Conflicts,” *SIPRI Yearbook 2001: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, p. 50.

¹⁹ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, p. 14.

²⁰ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, pp. 10-11.

The security implications are clear:

“Increasingly this kind of conflict, rooted in ideas of human identity and often expressed with frightening intensity, is the major threat to stability and peace, whether at the individual, local and communal levels, or in the collective terms of international security.”²¹

b. Preventive Diplomacy

Given the intensity, complexity, and costs of current armed conflicts, there is consensus within the conflict resolution community, and increasingly within diplomatic and security circles, that prevention is essential. In 1997, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, comprised of international leaders and scholars from around the world, published a final report in which it highlighted the following three conclusions:

First, deadly conflict is not inevitable. Violence on the scale of what we have seen in Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, and elsewhere does not emerge inexorably from human interaction. Second, the need to prevent deadly conflict is increasingly urgent... Third, preventing deadly conflict is possible. The problem is not that we do not know about incipient and large-scale violence; it is that we often do not act.²²

The report focused international attention on preventive diplomacy. Michael Lund, who has written extensively on the subject, defines preventive diplomacy as “action taken in vulnerable places and times to avoid the threat or use of armed force and related forms of coercion by states or groups to settle the political disputes that can arise from destabilizing effects of economic, social, political, and international change.”²³ Joseph Montville, a former foreign service officer who heads the Preventive Diplomacy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (“CSIS”), also emphasizes the importance of preventive diplomacy as “an ethic or a moral principle, a policy commitment by the leading powers toward stewardship in the international community.”²⁴

Preventive diplomacy has three major goals: to prevent the emergence of violent conflict; to prevent the spread of existing conflicts; and to prevent the reemergence of violence. Each implies a different set of activities at different stages in a conflict’s evolution. These include operational prevention, which focuses on dealing with incipient

²¹ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, p. 10.

²² Carnegie Commission, p. 3.

²³ MICHAEL S. LUND, PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT: A STRATEGY FOR PREVENTATIVE DIPLOMACY 37 (U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1996).

²⁴ Joseph Montville, “Strategic Planning in Preventive Diplomacy,” *Facing Ethnic Conflicts: Towards a New Realism*,” Andrea Wimmer, Richard Goldstone, Donald Horowitz, Ulrike Joras and Conrad Schetter, eds., p. 102 (unpublished manuscript on file with the author).

crises, and structural prevention, which seeks to address the underlying causes of conflict in ways “conducive to peace and equitable development (linking security, well-being, and justice.)”²⁵ As indicated above, democracy building is a central component of structural prevention.

c. Resource Limitations

The changes in the nature of armed conflict have left the United States and the world with systems and strategies that are often insufficient to the tasks at hand. Although a number of U.S. government departments and agencies have taken steps to institutionalize conflict-prevention programs, their impact has been limited by misaligned systems and strategies, inadequate support for prevention, and lack of integration of existing institutional resources.

d. Misaligned Systems and Strategies

The majority of institutions for dealing with conflict were established at a time when the principal threat to security came from interstate conflict. As a result, many of them are rethinking their approaches to armed conflict in light of new realities. The United Nations, for example, the primary multi-lateral institution responsible for conflict prevention and resolution, has found itself severely constrained by policies grounded in principles of sovereignty and non-interference. As a result, the U.N. Security Council has proven relatively ineffective in dealing with intrastate conflict. Other multi-lateral organizations are dealing with similar challenges. Although there has been an important evolution toward a concept of “sovereignty as responsibility”²⁶ within the U.N. and other institutions, it will take time for the international community to develop effective multi-lateral mechanisms for dealing with intrastate conflicts.

The U.S. Department of State is grappling with a parallel set of challenges. Established at a time when states were the primary units of analysis and action, its principal strengths are in dealing with formal representatives of governments and in using the methods of traditional diplomacy. Since most of today’s armed conflicts involve non-state actors, the State Department faces significant challenges in determining who can and should represent these groups in official negotiations.²⁷ Moreover, the tools of traditional diplomacy, including negotiation, are often insufficient in dealing with emotionally intense identity-based conflicts, and the State Department’s capacity to broker cease-fires and peace agreements, while important, does not address the underlying issues that fuel ongoing cycles of violence.

²⁵ Carnegie Commission, p. xii.

²⁶ Sovereignty as Responsibility by Francis Deng, Sadikiel Kimaro, Terrence Lyons, Donald Rothchild, & I. William Zartman (Brookings 1996)

²⁷ This is made particularly challenging when the groups splinter over differences in objectives or strategy.

The State Department is not alone. Other U.S. government organizations involved in foreign affairs are finding that their policies and procedures must be adapted to new realities. The Defense Department, for example, is facing the urgent need to deal with threats from non-state actors. According to Michael Noonan and John Hillen, Director and Deputy Director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute's Program on National Security:

Future foes – particularly non-state enemies – will change the nature of warfare so as to strip the U.S. of its overwhelming advantage in conventional warfare. The threats will be global and amorphous, changing form and tactics frequently while seeking to increase their lethality and attack states where they are weakest. The wars of the future will likely contain no front lines, and America's foes will make little distinction between combatant and civilian.²⁸

e. Insufficient Institutional Support for Prevention

In recent years, the United States has taken important steps to affirm its commitment to preventive diplomacy, often as a party to multilateral organizations. In 1999, 2000, and 2001, for example, the G-8 issued statements highlighting the urgent need for prevention. The July 2000 communiqué observed:

The international community should act urgently and effectively to prevent and resolve armed conflict. Many people have been sacrificed and injured, many economies have been impoverished, and much devastation has been visited upon the environment. In an ever more interdependent world such negative effects spread rapidly. Therefore, a "Culture of Prevention" should be promoted throughout the global community. All members of the international community should seek to promote the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.²⁹

As a result of growing recognition of the importance of prevention, several U.S. government organizations have taken steps to integrate conflict prevention into their work. In the 1990s, for example, the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development ("USAID") launched several initiatives to promote cooperation in prevention, including the Secretary's Preventive Initiative ("SPI") and the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative ("GHAI"). According to a recent study by the Institute for Contemporary Studies, however, these efforts were undermined by several factors, including inter-organizational competition and insufficient resources for implementation.³⁰ Recently, USAID established the Agency Conflict Task Force ("ACTF") to "work with bureaus and field missions on ways to institute measures to

²⁸ Michael P. Noonan and John Hillen, "The Coming Transformation of the U.S. Military?" Foreign Affairs Research Institute, February 4, 2002, distributed by e-mail.

²⁹ G-8 Communique, Okinawa, July 23, 2000, paragraph 72, available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/econ/group8/summit00/wwwhfirstcomm.html>.

³⁰ Semerad and Hawkins, p. 47.

prevent deadly conflict.”³¹ There have also been some efforts by the Defense Department and USAID to cooperate in their post-conflict work, for example through in-country coordination with the OFDA and cross-training of employees. Nevertheless, much remains to be done.

f. Insufficient Integration

One of the most significant factors limiting the impact of current preventive efforts is insufficient integration between government departments, between government and NGOs, and between scholars and practitioners.

Within Government: The government departments and agencies responsible for operational and structural prevention have limited interaction with one another, resulting in resource inefficiencies and missed opportunities for synergy. The initiatives cited above, in which the State Department and USAID attempted to institutionalize mechanisms for prevention, demonstrate the challenges involved. Still, the cooperation achieved in some aspects of post-conflict reconstruction, including that between the Defense Department and USAID, proves the value and potential of this work. Such cooperation also highlights the greater attention paid to preventing violence in post-conflict situations than in pre-conflict situations and the need to optimize opportunities for prevention before violence occurs. According to John Gannon, former Chairman of the National Intelligence Council: “Interagency cooperation will be essential to understanding transnational threats, including regional conflict, and to developing interdisciplinary strategies to counter them.”³³

It is important to note that the National Security Council (“NSC”), which is chaired by the President, is his “principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials... [The NSC] also serves as the President’s principal arm for coordinating these policies among various government agencies.”³⁴ According to a recent study by the Institute for Contemporary Studies: “The NSC needs to play a strong role as the convener of interdepartmental discussions on conflict prevention. Its ability to work across sectors because—as one discussant noted—it ‘has no dog in the fight’ is a critical role.”³⁵

³¹ “Democracy Dialogue: Technical Notes from USAID’s Office of Democracy and Governance,” December 2001, p. 1, on the USAID web site. According to the announcement, “The ACTF has a mandate for one year, after which time it is expected to be integrated into other parts of the Agency.”

³² John McDonald, “The Track not Taken,” *Harvard International Review*, Fall 2000, p. 70.

³³ John C. Gannon, Chairman, National Intelligence Council, “Challenges to U.S. National Security,” prepared remarks to the U.S. Army War College, January 24, 2001.

³⁴ Visit the White House website (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/>).

³⁵ Semerad and Hawkins, p. 51.

Between Government and NGOs: There has been a corresponding lack of integration of “Track One” and “Track Two” diplomacy. Track One refers to official diplomatic efforts involving the legitimate representatives of sovereign states. Track Two refers to a wide range of approaches that engage citizens in building the foundations for sustainable peace and justice, including: facilitated dialogue among opinion leaders; joint action between communities in conflict; training in conflict prevention and resolution; use of communications media (e.g., playwriting, radio, television) to promote respect for differences and constructive approaches to dealing with them; institutionalization of systems for conflict prevention and resolution; and post-trauma reconciliation and healing processes.

In recent years, NGOs have made important contributions to conflict prevention, but their collective impact has been limited by competition for limited resources, funding procedures that encourage episodic intervention rather than sustained involvement, and lack of integration of Track One and Track Two efforts.³⁶ According to the Carnegie Commission:

The array of those who have a useful preventive role to play extends beyond governments and intergovernmental organizations to include the private sector with its vast expertise and resources. The Commission urges the combining of governmental and nongovernmental efforts in a system of conflict prevention that takes into account the strengths, resources, and limitations of each component of the system.³⁷

In the future, it will be important for the U.S. government to recognize the value of non-governmental conflict-prevention work, especially as governmental resources encounter institutional, financial, and other constraints. This recognition should extend both to NGOs focused explicitly on conflict management and to those working in other ways to address the root causes of conflict.

Between Scholars and Practitioners: There is a growing body of theory about armed conflict and conflict management that could contribute to more effective prevention. However, scholars and practitioners have failed to create adequate mechanisms for cooperation, resulting in research that often fails to reflect the experiences or research needs of practitioners. In recent years, the United States Institute of Peace (“USIP”), an independent federal institution, has made important contributions to bridging the theory-practice gap by providing research fellowships to practitioners, training diplomats and other officials from many parts of the world, convening symposia for scholars and practitioners, and publishing a wide range of materials of value to both communities.³⁸ A number of NGOs and universities have also taken important steps in this direction, but much remains to be done.

³⁶ See, e.g., Susan Allen Nan, *Complementarity and Coordination of Conflict Resolution Efforts in the Conflicts Over Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transdnistria* (Doctoral Dissertation at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, 1999 (on file with the author).

³⁷ Carnegie Commission, p. 30.

³⁸ According to its website, the U.S. Institute of Peace is “an independent, nonpartisan federal institution created and funded by Congress to strengthen the nation’s capacity to promote peaceful resolution of

2. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service

Given the urgent need to prevent armed conflict and the challenges associated with adapting existing resources to current realities, existing resources for preventive diplomacy must be supported and integrated. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (“FMCS”) has a valuable role to play in conflict prevention. Its International Program works at both the operational and structural levels, emphasizing long-term capacity building, but often doing so in situations of urgent need. Through this work, FMCS has demonstrated a number of strategic assets that enable it to support and complement other preventive initiatives. Before exploring this in more depth, however, it is necessary to provide an overview of the agency, its historical evolution, and the purpose, structure, and scope of its International Program.

a. Agency Overview

FMCS is an independent agency of the U.S. government, established in 1947 to mediate domestic labor-management disputes and build constructive and stable labor-management relations.”³⁹ Although the agency’s primary statutory obligation is to labor-management mediation, its mediators are increasingly called upon to offer a wide range of other conflict-management and institutional-development services in the U.S. and overseas, consistent with its expanded statutory authority. As an independent agency, FMCS is accountable directly to Congress.

The agency employs approximately 280 people, seventy percent of whom are Commissioners of Mediation based at more than 70 field offices around the country. FMCS Commissioners are responsible for providing the majority of the agency’s services, including: mediation of disputes; training in negotiation, mediation, and other aspects of conflict prevention and resolution; convening and facilitation of multi-party dialogues and consensus building processes, including regulatory negotiations; and consulting on conflict management systems design.

The Director of FMCS is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The Director leads a management team that includes the Deputy Director, five Regional Directors, ten Directors of Mediation Service, and the managers responsible for the National Office. In FY 2001, FMCS’s budget was just over \$40 million, including \$38.2

international conflict.” USIP was established in 1984. Its Board of Directors is appointed by the U.S. President and confirmed by the Senate. (<http://www.usip.org>).

³⁹ FMCS was established by the Taft-Hartley Act “to prevent or minimize interruptions in the free flow of commerce growing out of labor disputes, to assist parties to labor disputes in industries affecting commerce, to settle such disputes through...mediation.” 29 USC, Sec. 173(a).

million in appropriated funds and approximately \$1.8 million generated through fee-for-service contracts.⁴⁰

b. Historical Evolution

Although FMCS was established to prevent and resolve domestic labor-management disputes and that continues to be the agency's primary focus, its work has expanded in three significant ways over the past half-century, consistent with both its mission and direction from Congress: Expansion beyond crisis intervention to conflict prevention; expansion beyond the collective bargaining arena to address other conflict-management needs; and expansion beyond the U.S. to other parts of the world.

c. Expansion Beyond Crisis Intervention: Conflict Prevention

In its early years, FMCS's work was primarily oriented toward crisis intervention. When there was a strike, lockout, or other serious disruption in labor-management relations, FMCS Commissioners would mediate the dispute with a focus on resolving the immediate issues at hand. FMCS also engaged in some relationship-building work during this period, but this was overshadowed by dispute mediation.

Dispute mediation continues to be the primary service offered by FMCS. However, over time, the agency has focused increasing attention on prevention. It now offers the following preventive services: customized, joint training programs to build the relationships and skills necessary for constructive working relationships; facilitation of contract negotiations and multi-party negotiations using Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB); and assistance with the design and implementation of Labor-Management Committees, Partnership Councils, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) systems, and other organizational systems to prevent and resolve conflict.

d. Expansion Beyond the Collective Bargaining Arena: Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program

As recognition of FMCS's effectiveness in the collective bargaining arena grew, Congress began to turn to FMCS for assistance with a wide range of conflicts involving and/or affecting the federal government. In the early 1970s, FMCS facilitated land use negotiations between the Hopi and Navajo Native American nations, at the request of Congress and with agreement of the parties. This led to several decades of involvement with Native American communities and nations, including work with the Department of Interior, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Indian Health Service, and this continues to be an area of focus for the agency.

In 1987, FMCS established a new department directly responsible for administering its rapidly growing Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Information provided by Fran Leonard, FMCS Director of Budget and Finance.

⁴¹ John Wagner was the first director of this program.

Three years later, Congress passed the 1990 Administrative Dispute Resolution Act, which designated FMCS as a resource for ADR training and consultation within the federal government.⁴² This was followed in 1996 by passage of the permanent Administrative Dispute Resolution Act, which continued to authorize FMCS to provide a wide range of ADR services. However, the legislation did not provide funding for FMCS's ADR Program, and the agency therefore offers ADR services on a fee-for-service basis.

As awareness of FMCS's services grew, the agency became one of the primary providers of mediation, facilitation, and ADR training and systems design assistance to the federal government. By FY 2001, FMCS mediators had convened and facilitated over fifty regulatory negotiations, mediated thousands of federal sector workplace disputes, trained tens of thousands of federal employees in various aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, and assisted with the design and implementation of ADR systems in over eighty agencies. In FY 2001, reimbursable contracts for ADR accounted for over \$1.25 million in revenue, up from approximately \$65,000/year in the late 1980s.⁴³

e. Expansion Beyond the U.S.: International Program

The development of FMCS's International Program followed a parallel path, beginning with a focus on industrial relations and, over time, expanding to include a wider range of conflict-management services. In 1972, FMCS was asked to provide mediation training to representatives from Panama. Additional requests followed, from U.S. government agencies involved in international affairs (e.g., USAID, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) of the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Information Agency), and various national and international institutions around the world.

In 1989, the agency established an Office of International Programs to coordinate the growing program, with most services provided by the agency's field mediators. By 2001, FMCS had provided training, systems design, and other assistance to representatives of government, labor, and management from over thirty countries in Europe, Central and South America, Asia, and Africa.⁴⁴ These engagements ranged from short briefings for labor attaches based in Washington, DC to multi-year systems design, training, and mentoring projects, including assistance with the design and/or establishment of mediation services in South Africa, El Salvador, Panama, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the former Soviet Union.

⁴² The term "administrative" reflects the ADR Act's focus on the administration of federal agencies.

⁴³ Domestic ADR Program data from interview with John Wagner (Feb. 2002).

⁴⁴ From data compiled by Mery Skolochenko, FMCS's IDRS Department.

The experience in the former Soviet Union is particularly noteworthy. In 1990, FMCS, and several leading NGOs with which it was partnering, helped the USSR to develop a labor mediation system that, within a few years, included a central office headed by a deputy minister and 16 branch offices around the country.⁴⁵ This and other experiences highlighted the importance of information sharing among countries and institutions, and led FMCS to sponsor a number of significant international summits and symposia. In 1997, for example, FMCS and the International Labor Organization (“ILO”) co-convened the First World Summit of Labor Mediation Agencies, which brought together representatives of 29 countries to share experiences related to industrial relations and labor mediation.

In 1998, FMCS formally expanded its international services to address a wider range of conflict-management needs. This expansion reflected: growing demand for assistance with the prevention and resolution of complex conflicts; several successful projects initiated by FMCS mediators in response to requests for such assistance; recognition of the natural linkages between the agency’s industrial relations work and broader capacity-building needs; encouragement from respected leaders in Congress and in the conflict resolution community for FMCS to expand its International Program; and the strong support of FMCS Director Richard Barnes. It also reflected a five-year process of significant organizational change, in which FMCS diversified its workforce, strengthened its internal training and education programs, invested in state-of-the-art technology, and established a more entrepreneurial, service-driven approach to program development and delivery.⁴⁶

f. FMCS’s International Program

The purpose of FMCS’s International Program is to help governmental and non-governmental organizations in other parts of the world develop their capacity to prevent and resolve destructive conflicts at the organizational, community, societal, and regional levels. This includes building the foundations for democratic pluralism through education, relationship building, and institutional development.

The International Program is co-housed with the Domestic ADR Program in FMCS’s International and Dispute Resolution Services (IDRS) department. IDRS’s team of seven professional staff and two support staff has doubled in size since the department was established in 1998. Professional staff members are collectively responsible for developing and leading FMCS’s Domestic ADR Program and International Program. Staff members are experienced in various aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, organizational development, industrial relations, international relations, sociology, public policy, and law. They report to the Director of IDRS, who, in turn, reports to the Deputy

⁴⁵ NGO partners included Search for Common Ground and the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy. Information from interviews with John Wagner and John McDonald (Feb. 2002).

⁴⁶ Under the leadership of John Calhoun Wells, Director from 1993 to 1998, and Richard Barnes, appointed Acting Director in 1998 and confirmed in 1999.

Director of FMCS. The agency does not receive appropriated funds for its international services, and therefore offers them on a fee-for-service basis.

Consistent with its commitment to capacity building, FMCS's international work focuses on training, relationship building, and systems design and implementation. This includes work at the organizational, community, societal, and regional levels. In the past several years, the agency has been involved in a wide range of international conflict-prevention work, in partnership with diverse local and international organizations. Examples include:

- **Argentina:** Training for provincial labor conciliators in techniques for resolving organizational and contractual disputes, in partnership with the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), U.S. Department of Labor.⁴⁷
- **Azad Kashmir:** Ongoing training for parliamentary leaders from Azad Kashmir focused on multi-track diplomacy, negotiation skills, diplomatic protocol, and communications strategies.⁴⁸
- **Bosnia-Herzegovina:** Facilitation of multi-party dialogues on the reconstruction of the power and transportation infrastructure.⁴⁹
- **Brazil:** Training of labor law prosecutors in techniques for the alternative resolution of individual, collective, and multi-party disputes in labor-law enforcement.⁵⁰
- **Former Yugoslavia:** Training in negotiation and mediation for senior diplomatic and academic leaders.⁵¹
- **Indonesia:** Ongoing consulting and training to build the country's capacity to prevent violent conflict, in partnership with U.S. and Indonesian governmental and non-governmental organizations.⁵²
- **Lithuania and Latvia:** Training for women representatives of government, labor, and management in various aspects of interest-based problem solving and leadership.⁵³

⁴⁷ Argentina, 2001.

⁴⁸ In partnership with the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy.

⁴⁹ In partnership with the U.S. Treasury Department, 1997.

⁵⁰ Under the auspices of the ILO's Turin Training Center, 2000.

⁵¹ In partnership with the U.S. Institute of Peace, Greece, 1998.

⁵² The U.S.-based team members were FMCS, CDR Associates, and the Center for International Development and Conflict Management ("CIDCM") at the University of Maryland. The Indonesian partners were representatives of the Indonesian Human Rights Commission, the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law, Kehati, and the University of Indonesia.

⁵³ This involved two related projects funded by USAID and the Panama Canal Commission respectively. Information from interview with Rich Giacalone, Director of FMCS's IDRS Department (Feb. 2001).

- **Mexico:** Coordination of 15-country Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) symposium on best practices in labor-management-government cooperation, followed by coordination of a training program for labor mediators from 21 APEC countries, to be conducted by a multi-national training team in 2002.⁵⁷
- **Panama:** Four-year training and systems design process to build capacity for dispute resolution following the transition of the Panama Canal to Panamanian authority. FMCS trained close to eight thousand employees of the Panama Canal Commission.⁵⁸
- **South Africa:** Education of university students in the theory and practice of multi-track diplomacy and conflict transformation.⁶⁰
- **South Korea:** Conflict-management skills training for women community leaders, with a focus on helping them participate more effectively in emerging democratic processes.⁶⁵
- **Thailand:** Ongoing training, mentoring, consulting, and curriculum development work focused on integrating conflict management into the work of environmental and human rights leaders from Burma (Myanmar).⁶⁶

⁵⁴ The program was intended primarily for women, but included some men. Conducted in partnership with U.S. NGO and corporate trainers, including a representative of the Coalition of Labor Women. Funded by U.S. Department of State, with in-kind support from organizations in the U.S. and Iceland, 2001.

⁵⁵ In partnership with the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy.

⁵⁶ Rand Afrikaans University, 2001. Made possible by a Fulbright fellowship awarded to the author.

⁵⁷ The symposium was in 2001. As part of its work with APEC, FMCS has also produced a 124 page “tool kit” on developing labor-management-government cooperation that will be distributed throughout APEC and the region.

⁵⁸ This involved two related projects funded by USAID and the Panama Canal Commission respectively. Information from interview with Rich Giacalone, Director of FMCS’s IDRS Department (Feb. 2001).

⁵⁹ The program was intended primarily for women, but included some men. Conducted in partnership with U.S. NGO and corporate trainers, including a representative of the Coalition of Labor Women. Funded by U.S. Department of State, with in-kind support from organizations in the U.S. and Iceland, 2001.

⁶⁰ Rand Afrikaans University, 2001. Made possible by a Fulbright fellowship awarded to the author.

⁶¹ In partnership with an NGO based in Thailand and the U.S..

⁶² As part of ILO’s Strengthening Labor Relations in East Africa (“SLREA”) Program, 2001.

⁶³ Argentina, 2001.

⁶⁴ Under the auspices of the ILO’s Turin Training Center, 2000.

⁶⁵ Co-sponsored by Korean Women’s Association United, Korean National Congress for Reunification, Women Making Peace, and American Friends Service Committee, Japan Office, 1999.

⁶⁶ In partnership with an NGO based in Thailand and the U.S..

- **Uganda:** Training for labor commissioners from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in mediation and negotiation skills, as part of ongoing ILO-sponsored capacity-building project.⁶⁷

In addition, FMCS has provided training to the overseas professional staff of the Peace Corps and to the U.S. Army Special Forces with a focus on helping them integrate conflict-management approaches into their work in complex and high-stakes situations.⁶⁸

As indicated above, FMCS's IDRS staff develop and lead the agency's international projects, often in partnership with field mediators who have relevant substantive, regional, and/or language expertise. Before committing FMCS's resources to overseas work, IDRS staff members assess the appropriateness of FMCS's involvement, given the agency's governmental status, its strengths and limitations relative to the parties' needs, U.S. and international political realities, and other relevant factors. Decisions to engage in particularly sensitive or high-stakes situations involve the agency Director's approval.

Once a decision is made to engage in a project, IDRS staff work with the appropriate parties to establish clear goals and plans for the project, often including identifying appropriate funding sources. Whenever possible, briefings on relevant political, economic, cultural, historical, and other background, are set up at the State Department. All decisions, from intake to project design, funding, and implementation, are made with careful attention to their immediate and long-term implications for the parties involved, the countries in which FMCS works, and the U.S. government.

3. Strategic Analysis

FMCS is already making meaningful contributions to conflict prevention, but its potential to contribute is much greater. This analysis of strategic assets and the vision that follows are based on FMCS's on-the-ground experience in conflict situations and highlight a number of concrete ways in which FMCS's contributions can be leveraged.

a. Strategic Assets

As indicated above, FMCS has three related strategic assets that contribute to its effectiveness in international conflict prevention and complement the capabilities of other actors: its expertise in conflict management and institutional development, and its related international experience; the flexibility, credibility, and access associated with its status

⁶⁷ As part of ILO's Strengthening Labor Relations in East Africa ("SLREA") Program, 2001.

⁶⁸ The U.S. Army Special Forces training was conducted in partnership with the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Training programs for both the Peace Corps and U.S. Army involved foreign nationals as participants, by arrangement of the sponsoring organizations.

as independent agency of the federal government; and the relationships it has developed with governmental and non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and around the world.

b. Expertise

FMCS's primary strategic asset is its expertise in conflict management and institutional development. Although the agency's work is grounded in the relevant theory, it approaches conflict management from the perspective of the practitioner, drawing on over fifty years of mediation and facilitation experience. Consistent with this, all of the agency's training and consulting services are provided by full-time, professional mediators. FMCS's areas of expertise include:

- **Conflict assessment:** Engaging stakeholders in the assessment of their conflicts and conflict-management needs. This forms the basis for effective strategy development, action, and evaluation.
- **Mediation:** "Third party" involvement in disputes or negotiations. The agency's approach to mediation depends on the parties and issues involved, and its training programs are based on respect for different norms and experiences related to third-party involvement.
- **Convening and facilitation of multi-party processes:** Identifying stakeholders with diverse experiences and perspectives and facilitating dialogues and consensus-building processes.
- **Training:** Designing and implementing customized training programs in negotiation, mediation, convening and facilitation, systems design, and other aspects of conflict prevention and resolution. Training programs are highly participatory, drawing on the experiences and insights of participants.
- **Systems design and implementation:** Assisting organizations, communities, and countries with the design and implementation of effective conflict-management systems. This includes consulting on the development of organizations, public policy, and legislation.
- **Technological support:** Where the necessary resources exist, providing technology-enabled conflict-management and democracy-building assistance, as well as training and support in the use of technology to assist with many aspects of negotiation, consensus building, strategic planning, elections, and other applications.⁶⁹

A related and equally important strategic asset is FMCS's experience in diverse situations around the world. This diversity of experience enables the agency to share the ideas, experiences, and lessons learned in one part of the world with organizations and communities in other parts of the world, as well as to help the groups with which it works expand their international networks.

⁶⁹ Under the auspices of FMCS's TAGS (Technology Assisted Group Solutions) Program. For more information, see the article by Michael Wolf in this issue, or the TAGS web site (<http://tags.fmcs.gov>).

FMCS also has several areas of substantive expertise on which it draws in its overseas work. These include: collective bargaining and industrial relations; work with indigenous communities and nations; and participatory governance.

- **Collective bargaining and industrial relations:** FMCS has over fifty years of institutional experience in all facets of collective bargaining and industrial relations, from mediation and arbitration to institutionalizing systems for labor-management cooperation. The agency has found that its industrial relations work is a key aspect of democratic capacity building, contributing both indirectly and directly to broader conflict-prevention and resolution efforts.
- **Work with indigenous communities and nations:** As a result of three decades of work with indigenous communities and nations in the U.S., FMCS has developed an appreciation of the historical, legal, economic, cultural, and other complexities associated with these groups' relationships to the federal government. FMCS has found that its capacity to draw on this experience contributes to its effectiveness working with indigenous leaders overseas.
- **Participatory governance:** FMCS's experience convening and facilitating regulatory negotiations and public policy dialogues in the U.S. enables it to provide valuable support to other governments interested in participatory governance. This includes assisting with the institutionalization of participatory governance systems, as well as building capacity for the design, convening and facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes.

c. Organizational Status

FMCS's status as an independent federal agency with an institutional commitment to advancing the field of conflict management sets it apart within both the federal government and the field of conflict resolution. This status provides access, credibility, and flexibility in complex conflict situations that are different from those of other organizations.

Access: Because of its institutional focus on conflict management, FMCS often has access to parties and situations to which other federal departments and agencies do not have access, practically or politically. For example, FMCS is uniquely positioned to engage, on behalf of the U.S. government, in grassroots capacity building for conflict prevention in partnership with local governments and NGOs, as compared to many other U.S. government organizations. FMCS also has access to parties and situations to which NGOs often have more limited access, including meetings involving official representatives of the U.S. and other governments. Moreover, the agency has found that the relationships developed with influential leaders involved in its industrial-relations work often lead to broader involvement in a country or region.

It is important to note that there are also places and situations in which FMCS's official status is a limiting factor, due to U.S. politics and/or on-the-ground perceptions and realities. These include: areas controlled by regimes not recognized by the U.S.

government and/or where there is strong opposition to the United States; situations in which the integrity of unofficial processes, such as Track Two dialogues, could be compromised by any affiliation with government; and situations in which FMCS's long-term credibility as a conflict-management organization could be compromised by the requirements of U.S. foreign policy. These examples point to the importance of prudence in determining where, when, how, and with whom FMCS should work.

Credibility: FMCS's credibility is often enhanced as a result of its organizational status. For example, FMCS's non-diplomatic, capacity-building mandate, demonstrated through its ongoing work, often provides a level of reassurance to parties who question the U.S. government's agenda with respect to their countries. The agency's official status is also an asset in situations in which the agendas of NGOs are questioned, including those involving sensitivities related to funding. FMCS has found that its capacity to emphasize either its governmental role or its conflict-management focus, while always being transparent about both, contributes to the agency's credibility with a wide range of actors.

FMCS also engages in strategic partnerships with conflict-management NGOs and universities. In one recent example, FMCS partnered with a U.S.-based NGO and university program. The U.S.-based team, in turn, partnered with Indonesian government, NGO, and university representatives. This partnership created strong collective credibility and enabled the team to move easily among the governmental, non-governmental, and academic communities, resulting in enhanced access and effectiveness. The agency has also found that strategic partnerships provide valuable opportunities to model collaboration between organizations and sectors, thereby helping the parties with which it works to build constructive relationships.

Flexibility: FMCS's unique status gives it the flexibility to move across organizational and political boundaries with maximum access and credibility. It also provides flexibility with respect to where, how, and with whom FMCS works, ensuring that FMCS can complement diplomatic initiatives. For example, in situations in which U.S. diplomats have successfully brokered a peace agreement, FMCS can partner with organizations working at the grassroots level, helping them to build the foundations for lasting peace among communities. In situations in which the State Department is working to get conflicting parties "to the table", FMCS can support Track Two diplomatic initiatives involving NGOs and help to build appropriate bridges to the official diplomatic efforts. In this way, FMCS is able to contribute to both vertical and horizontal integration of preventive efforts, a strategy gaining increasing attention among both scholars and practitioners.⁷⁰

d. Relationships

⁷⁰ See, e.g., JOHN PAUL LEDERACH, BUILDING PEACE: SUSTAINABLE RECONCILIATION IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES (United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

FMCS's contributions to conflict prevention are significantly enhanced as a result of its relationships with governmental and non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and many other parts of the world. Specifically, the agency's work benefits from its relationships:

- **Within the U.S. government:** FMCS has established strong working relationships with other U.S. government departments and agencies (e.g., State Department, USAID, Treasury Department, Labor Department, U.S. Information Agency), as well as with the U.S. Institute of Peace. These organizations provide key strategic, technical, financial, and other support for FMCS's work.
- **In other countries:** FMCS's relationships with governmental and non-governmental organizations in other countries have developed over several decades, initially through its work with the social partners⁷¹ on various aspects of industrial relations and more recently through its broader preventive diplomacy work.
- **With multilateral organizations:** The agency also has worked with a number of multilateral organizations (e.g., the Organization of American States ("OAS"), the International Labor Organization ("ILO")), thereby laying the foundation for long-term working relationships.
- **With conflict resolution NGOs:** In recent years, FMCS has taken important steps to build relationships of mutual trust and respect with leading conflict resolution NGOs in the U.S. and overseas. One example is FMCS's active involvement as a founding member of the Applied Conflict Resolution Organizations Network ("ACRON"), a new organization that promotes inter-organizational and inter-field collaboration.⁷²
- **With other fields:** The agency has also established working relationships with organizations in other fields whose work is relevant to conflict prevention (e.g., humanitarian relief, economic development, environment, and human rights.) This includes recent contributions to the establishment of the Network for Integrated Change ("NIC") and the Research Collaborative on Integrated Interventions, both of which focus on promoting inter-field collaboration.
- **With universities:** FMCS has established ongoing strategic partnerships with a number of leading universities (e.g., Pepperdine University School of Law, the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution ("ICAR") at George Mason University, Howard University, and the Center for International Development and Conflict Management ("CIDCM") at the University of Maryland.)

e. Vision

⁷¹ The term "social partners" refers to labor, management, and government.

⁷² For more information, see <http://www.acron.iwa.org>.

The above analysis is inspired by a vision for FMCS in which its international work is recognized, supported, and leveraged in diplomatic, security, and conflict-management circles within and outside government. As stated above, a central assumption underlying this vision is that the agency will contribute the most to preventive diplomacy by supporting, complementing, and connecting with the work of other organizations engaged in complementary programs and activities.

f. Principles

Achievement of this vision will depend upon internal and external clarity about the purpose and principles of FMCS's International Program, as well as alignment of the purpose and principles with all aspects of the agency's overseas work. This will require commitment and effort. The following principles are essential to FMCS's evolving role in international preventive diplomacy:

- **Invitation:** Engaging in international work upon request, and staying only as long as wanted.
- **Partnership:** Building appropriate long-term partnerships with local organizations, as well as with other governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in capacity building.
- **Integration:** Providing services that complement and support other efforts, and helping to develop mechanisms to realize the potential for synergy among them. This includes integration between FMCS's industrial relations and broader conflict-prevention work, as well as integration with the work of other organizations.
- **Commitment:** Engaging in international work with long-term commitment to the parties with whom the agency works, and with the institutional capacity to support that commitment.
- **Responsibility:** Engaging responsibly, with sensitivity to the individuals and groups involved and the complexity of their situations. This involves candid assessment of FMCS's strengths and limitations in given situations, including those related to its position within the U.S. government.
- **Confident Humility:** Approaching international work with a learning orientation, confident in what the agency has to offer and humble about all it has to learn. This includes recognition of the diversity of approaches to conflict throughout the world, and of the fact that capacity building involves building on a base of local experience. It also includes an increasingly elicitive approach to training,⁷³ which draws on the values, norms, and experiences of participants.
- **Integrity:** Striving to reflect in its internal and external relationships the principles and practices that underlie FMCS's work in the world.
- **Transparency:** Ensuring transparency about FMCS's roles, responsibilities, activities, funding, and other aspects of its domestic and international work.

⁷³ For more information on elicitive approaches, see JOHN PAUL LEDERACH, *PREPARING FOR PEACE: CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION ACROSS CULTURES* (Syracuse University Press, 1996).

- **Accountability:** Developing increasingly effective means of reflection and evaluation, to ensure that the agency’s services are providing maximum benefit in the short and long terms.

g. Roles

FMCS’s overseas experience and the analysis of its strategic assets suggest the following key roles the agency has played, and should increasingly play, in preventive diplomacy:

- **Capacity Builder:** Helping organizations, communities, and countries strengthen their capacity to prevent and resolve destructive conflict. This includes training, mentoring, institutional development, and other capacity-building assistance.
- **Convener and Facilitator:** Identifying and bringing together diverse individuals and groups whose involvement is necessary for effective prevention. This includes helping to establish NGO networks, supporting interagency task forces, and convening multi-stakeholder dialogues and negotiations.
- **Facilitator:** Facilitating communication, relationship building, and negotiation among individuals and groups. This ranges from informal facilitation among partner organizations to facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues and consensus-building processes.
- **Disseminator:** Sharing information, experiences, innovative ideas, and lessons learned in one part of the world with communities in other parts of the world.
- **Strategic Consultant:** Helping governmental and non-governmental leaders to develop sound strategies for both operational and structural prevention, based on rigorous analysis of opportunities, challenges, and available resources.
- **Integrator:** Helping to build relationships and systems that support communication and collaboration among in-country and expatriate organizations working on various aspects of conflict prevention. This includes cooperation with other organizations playing integrating roles, as well as contributing to vertical and horizontal integration of in-country conflict-prevention efforts through engagement with mid-level leadership.

These roles, distilled from FMCS’s overseas experience, also have implications for the agency’s potential contributions to broader preventive efforts. Because of its expertise in convening and facilitation, as well as its on-the-ground experience in complex conflict situations, FMCS can serve as a facilitator of communication and collaboration within the U.S. government, between the government and NGOs, and between scholars and practitioners, both in the U.S. and “on-the-ground” in conflict situations. FMCS’s capacity to contribute in sustained and effective ways, however, depends on addressing the challenges highlighted below in “Next Steps.”

h. Relationship to Broader Vision

The vision for FMCS is grounded in a broader vision for preventive diplomacy, in which the resources of individual organizations are leveraged through strategic integration with complementary resources in other organizations. There is growing recognition in diplomatic, security, and conflict-management circles, that key elements of such an approach include:

- **Diversity of Resources:** Identifying and engaging appropriate governmental and non-governmental resources for conflict prevention within and outside the U.S.
- **Strategic Analysis:** Analyzing the strategic assets and limitations of various organizations, and mapping them to specific preventive needs in order to achieve a workable division of labor that optimizes available resources.
- **Appropriate Integration:** Linking efforts in communication-focused, non-hierarchical ways to ensure that organizations can identify and take advantage of opportunities for synergy. This must be done in ways that protect the autonomy and integrity of individual organizations and that preserve the useful distance between official and non-official efforts. It must also be based on respect and support for local capacity-building efforts.
- **Evaluation, Reflection, and Adaptation:** Establishing workable mechanisms for evaluation, reflection and adaptation in ways that draw on and support cooperation between academic and practitioner organizations.
- **Financial support:** Ensuring sustained financial support for governmental and non-governmental preventive activities, both within and outside the U.S. This is critical; effective prevention is only possible with sustained financial support.

It is important to note that this strategy involves a decentralized approach to integration. The goal is to ensure that organizations involved in conflict prevention have a range of formal and informal opportunities to: share information, as appropriate, about their missions, strategies, resources, and challenges; identify mutually beneficial opportunities for cooperation; and pilot them in specific situations. The focus is therefore on serving the missions of the organizations involved and delivering concrete results.

As indicated above, the National Security Council has an important role to play in integrating intra-governmental efforts related to national security. USIP also has an important role, especially in bringing together scholars and senior practitioners. FMCS, with its expertise in conflict prevention and its “on-the-ground” focus, is uniquely suited to complement these and other efforts, by helping organizations involved in conflict prevention to: identify appropriate opportunities for cooperation; analyze inter-organizational problems; and draw on that analysis to develop increasingly effective integrated initiatives.

i. Next Steps

With the support of key leaders in Congress, other federal agencies, and conflict resolution NGOs, FMCS has taken important steps to contribute to preventive diplomacy, but much remains to be done if it is to realize its potential in this area. The principal challenges, including strategic and operational integration, internal capacity building, sustainability, and accountability, as well as next steps for addressing them, are highlighted below. Although the emphasis is on next steps FMCS can take, addressing these challenges and achieving the vision presented above will require the involvement and support of organizations in the diplomatic, security, and conflict-management communities.

j. Strategic and Operational Integration

As explained earlier, the intensity, complexity, and costs of violent conflict call for integration of appropriate resources at both strategic and operational levels. For FMCS or any other organization to maximize its contribution to preventive diplomacy, its work must be connected to other complementary initiatives. Steps to achieve this include:

- Convening an informal FMCS advisory body of governmental and non-governmental leaders from the diplomatic, security, and conflict resolution fields, to provide ongoing guidance to the International Program.
- Participating in forums for discussion about preventive diplomacy strategy and implementation, including those convened by other government departments, NGOs, and universities.
- Convening, with other organizations such as the U.S. Institute of Peace, roundtable discussions on preventive diplomacy strategy and on-the ground implementation.
- Engaging in high-level dialogue with representatives of the diplomatic and security communities about opportunities for cooperation.
- Participating in international summits and other forums on various aspects of structural prevention (e.g., World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002).
- Organizing country-specific and/or region-specific forums for information-sharing regarding past, current, and planned future preventive activities.
- Providing web-based systems for information sharing in relation to preventive diplomacy needs and initiatives in specific geographic areas.

k. Internal Capacity Building

FMCS's involvement in complex, high-stakes conflicts carries with it the responsibility to provide the highest quality of services possible in ways that achieve the most positive, long-term results for the communities and societies it serves. To ensure consistent, effective service will require long-term commitment to internal capacity building, in terms of both management systems and professional development. Key next steps include:

- Identifying and optimizing opportunities for synergy between FMCS's industrial relations and broader preventive diplomacy work.
- Ensuring that the International Program both draws on and contributes to the expertise of field mediators through project intake, staffing, and professional development systems.
- Continuing to build the capacity of IDRS staff in areas of relevance to its international work (e.g., international politics and economics, regional expertise; language skills.)
- Expanding and diversifying International Program staff, to address growing service delivery and project management needs.
- Working with the U.S. Institute of Peace, the State Department, the Defense Department, and other relevant U.S. government organizations to identify opportunities for cooperation in professional development (e.g., training swaps, staff exchange programs.)

I. Sustainability

FMCS's ability to contribute over the long term to effective preventive diplomacy depends on the sustainability of both its International Program and the specific projects with which it becomes involved. Currently, the agency receives no appropriated funds for this work, and therefore is required, much like an NGO, to raise money to support specific initiatives. Since FMCS is a government agency, however, it has limited access to funding from corporate foundations and other private sources, relying primarily on inter-governmental contracts. The agency's ability to make long-term commitments to the organizations and communities with which it works, which is essential to effective prevention, will be greatly enhanced if mechanisms are put in place to provide adequate and consistent funding for its International Program. Steps to take include:

- Working with other government agencies (e.g., USAID) to explore opportunities for more sustainable funding for current and future projects.
- Developing interim mechanisms to ensure that the agency is able to provide long-term (e.g., 3-5 years) support for capacity-building initiatives, regardless of interruptions in external funding streams.
- Establishing an internal working group, including the Director of IDRS, the Chief Financial Officer, and the General Counsel, to identify and evaluate options with respect to long-term sustainability.

m. Accountability

FMCS's work in preventive diplomacy carries with it the obligation of accountability to the organizations, communities and societies with which it works, the U.S. government, and the field of conflict management. One of FMCS's most important strategic challenges is to institutionalize mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reflection and adaptation. This is consistent with the federal government's current focus on impact evaluations, and with the conflict-management field's increasing attention to

evaluation and reflection. It also will enable the agency to maximize the long-term positive impacts of its work. Steps to be taken include:

- Partnering with scholars and practitioners involved in developing evaluation methodologies for conflict prevention.
- Participating in forums focused on evaluation and reflection (e.g., Reflecting on Peace Practice.)
- Instituting a rotating internal fellowship for FMCS staff within IDRS and/or the FMCS Institute, for research and publication related to FMCS's international work.
- Establishing formal, long-term links between the International Program and one or more partner universities.
- Working with academic partners to develop an inventory of preventive efforts within the U.S. and foreign governments and an associated cost-benefit analysis of those efforts.

4. Conclusion

This is a time of great urgency, but also of significant opportunity, for the U.S. and the world. Recent events have focused attention on the challenges of achieving lasting security and on the importance of preventive diplomacy as part of this process. There is also increasing recognition that effective prevention includes both operational and structural activities, and that these must be supported and leveraged in ways that deliver positive, sustainable results. All of these factors converge in support of a more active, supported, and integrated role for FMCS in international conflict prevention.

Given FMCS's half-century of conflict-management and institution-building experience, the access, credibility, and flexibility associated with its status as an independent federal agency, and the strong working relationships it has developed with diverse governmental and nongovernmental organizations around the world, the agency is uniquely positioned to contribute to preventive diplomacy. FMCS has already taken important steps in this direction, and in doing so, has demonstrated the value and potential of its international work. To realize this potential will require commitment and support for the agency's evolving international roles, within FMCS and the diplomatic, security, and conflict-management communities.