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Book Review: David Carment and Albrecht Schnabel (eds.), *Conflict Prevention: Path to Peace or Grand Illusion?* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2003, 296 pp., \$33.00 pbk.). Andreas Wenger and Daniel Möckli, *Conflict Prevention: The Untapped Potential of the Business Sector* (Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003, 233 pp., \$45.00 hbk.)

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'The evil in the world comes almost always from ignorance', French novelist Albert Camus once asserted. The debate on conflict prevention is inspired by a similar humanist credo, which posits that warfare can be avoided through enlightened policies. What such measures consist of, who should implement them at what stage and how they are to be evaluated remain, however, central questions on the conflict prevention agenda. The two books under review, one edited by David Carment and Albrecht Schnabel and the other authored by Andreas Wenger and Daniel Möckli address these issues from altogether different angles: that of international organisations, and that of the business sector, respectively.

Conflict Prevention attempts to 'evaluate the institutional record on conflict prevention' (p. 2). The first part of the book retraces the genesis of the conflict prevention concept and clarifies typological matters. Carment and Schnabel state that the argument for preventive diplomacy has been boosted by the ability of intra-state conflicts to spread vertically and horizontally. Bruce Jentlesen appealingly demonstrates that 'there is realism, not just idealism, to preventive statecraft' (p. 26). He emphasises the necessity of combining diplomacy with credible threat of coercive force to enhance prevention strategies. Jentlesen pleads for the strengthening of 'the norm of sovereignty as responsibility' (p. 42) and calls for a new paradigm of 'preventive statecraft'. Cases of successful (Macedonia and Cambodia) and failed (Kosovo and Bosnia) prevention are examined in the two chapters authored by Raimo Väyrynen and Andrea Kathryn Talentino. While Väyrynen admits that the degree of and reasons for preventive success remain debatable, Talentino identifies internal political circumstances, the commitment of domestic parties, and the long-term engagement of external actors as critical factors.

Preventive efforts and institutional mechanisms of European regional organisations are the focus of the volume's second part. Simon Duke construes the nascent Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union and NATO's embryonic European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) as complementary, politico-military components of evolving prevention capacities. Hans-Georg Ehrhart elucidates the European Union's engagement in Southeast Europe and provides a slightly more optimistic, yet mostly descriptive contribution. Natalie Mychajlyszyn illustrates the OSCE's positive

conflict prevention record in the context of the organisation's involvement in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine. Here, two lessons can be learned: the 'importance of continual, on-site presence' (p. 138) and 'the value of a non-institutional, confidential, and flexible approach' (p. 142).

The third section commences with an excellent review of the limitations of UN military observer and fact-finding missions. David Last spells out the many improvements required to convert these missions into balanced and multifunctional early warning delegations with a strong presence on the ground. John Cockell discusses organisational constraints to and opportunities for effective conflict prevention within the UN system. He presents an elaborated methodology for an early warning and response system that functions as an 'integral part of the very process which supports the operational planning and implementation of conflict prevention' (p. 202). New territory is explored by Dane Rowlands and Troy Joseph who focus on the IMF as a potential contributor to averting conflict. Although their large sample statistical analysis suggests that 'IMF programmes do not... have an adverse effect on civil order' (p. 221), they recommend the establishment of a country-specific risk assessment procedure within the IMF.

The growing importance of regional bodies in conflict prevention is assessed in the final part of the book. Rasheed Draman optimistically argues that African organisations such as the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD or SADC possess the political will to intervene in conflict situations, but lack the financial resources to do so. Osvaldo Kreimer screens the institutional rules and legal entities within the OAS that can play 'a significant role in preventing or reducing conflict in the Americas' (p. 274). Thanks to substantial contributions and good editing, this volume offers an in-depth familiarisation with conflict prevention by international organisations. While the idea that preventive action constitutes a 'path to peace' runs throughout the book, it cannot always be substantiated as contradictory definitions of the scope of prevention render a final conclusion difficult.

Conflict Prevention represents a fervent plea for the inclusion of business actors into conflict prevention efforts. The authors' reasoning can be summarised as follows: since its inception, the 'culture of prevention' has been monopolised by state and civil society organisations whose success proved modest at best. The private sector exhibits several comparative advantages, such as strong management skills, state independence and abundant financial resources, which should make it an ideal contributor to conflict prevention. Wenger and Möckli advocate an expanded conception of governance that implicates companies alongside states and NGOs.

In their opinion, 'business actors have a strong interest in a world without violent conflict' (p. 81), as global stability is a precondition for accessing new markets. The latter are increasingly found on the liberalised, yet unstable fringes of the industrialised world where

political unrest invariably translates into lost profits. Corporations thus possess an incentive to promote 'systemic', 'structural' and 'operational' conflict prevention. They can do so in a number of ways, for instance as corporate enablers who 'support and improve current preventive action' (p. 138) by funding existing programmes, offering in-kind donations or committing themselves to know-how transfer to and investment in local partners. Likewise, three roles are envisioned for 'corporate economic peacebuilding' (p. 147): contracting services and products to local and international actors involved in relief and peace operations, linking commercial interests with private sector development in conflict-related countries, and promoting a favourable business environment.

Central to the reflection on how to engage corporations in conflict prevention is a comprehensive approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR). For Wenger and Möckli, CSR is 'about the preservation of corporate reputation and brand value and is thus about profit' (p. 116). Consequently, the private sector should embrace conflict prevention as a 'particularly credible and powerful manifestation of CSR' (p. 119). More fundamentally, the authors strongly believe in the benefits of liberal market economies and the presence of transnational companies that promote trade, attract investments and develop local capacities. The cumulative result is economic growth, which — in their opinion — is synonymous with structural socio-economic prevention of warfare. Many formidable terms such as 'trisectional governance' or 'corporate economic peacebuilding' are proposed in this volume. For the moment, this terminology reflects a managerial conception of conflict prevention with limited meaning and relevance for real-life capitalism and conflict. Nonetheless, the authors deserve credit for an elegantly written manifesto, featuring an informed state of the art of the conflict prevention *problématique*, an extensive bibliography and internet resources.

Both books under review constitute stimulating contributions to present discussions. Concurrently, both reveal the theoretical deficits inherent in the entire conflict prevention discourse. To name just a few: definitions of conflict prevention are notoriously vague and inconsistent; dissimilar types and intensities of political violence are not differentiated; and a proper theory of conflict causes is largely absent and criteria for evaluating preventive endeavours appear arbitrary. An optimistic neo-liberalism underlies the idea that the 'evil in the world' can be eliminated. Unfortunately, this does not completely grasp the complex realities of developing countries and societies, home to the vast majority of today's wars.

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