# Conclusions

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With the emergence of early warning and conflict prevention as subject of study and objective of policy, both scholars and governments, as well as international organizations, are faced with a rich, complex and very challenging field of action and reflection. For all actors concerned it forms a difficult topic. Firstly, more knowledge is required of the origins and causation of violent conflict in order to provide improved predictions – naturally in terms of probabilities – of impending hostilities or escalation of hostilities. Secondly, more knowledge is required of processes of decision-making in and among the various institutions and organs involved in early warning, conflict prevention or conflict containment. Such knowledge is necessary so as to ascertain how best to frame, and when to issue, warnings to political decision-makers. Thirdly, even if our knowledge of a particular conflict situation is correct and timely warnings have penetrated the relevant circles of decision-makers, it is by no means certain that so-called 'early action' will be taken.

The contributions to this volume bear out that all three dimensions of the early warning process – the prediction of violence or escalation as such, the transmission of warnings and the possibilities of, and obstacles to, political action – are in need of better understanding. Thus, Adelman noted in chapter 4 that no particular model of indicators has been accepted by the academic community. More practically, he described how seasoned, on the spot observers of the crisis in the Great Lakes region failed or refused to see the coming of the genocide in Rwanda. There were several reasons for this. These witnesses – many of them representatives of different kinds of NGOs – were either blind to the signals of (impending) mass murder because of the stakes held in some development project or because of their role in encouraging peaceful change or mediation. Alternatively, they did not want to jeopardize their various operations in the country by antagonizing its leadership; or they feared a negative, dismissive reaction from external decision-makers by the use of the label of genocide.

Thus, the key issue in early warning and conflict prevention is not the signal as such. As a matter of fact, many scholars have already pointed out that there are usually numerous early warnings of impending violence. So, rather than generating additional information on particular conflicts, efforts should first be made to understand better other dimensions of the early warning process. Two of those dimensions are the role of perception of conflicts and the influence of the networking process among the numer-



K. van Walraven (ed.), *Early Warning and Conflict Prevention. Limitations and Possibilities*, 163-174.

ous agencies involved in monitoring those conflicts. Adelman's study focuses our attention firmly on the role of perception in conflict prevention, in the sense that he makes clear how the observers or monitors of conflicts are themselves part of the problems of early warning. Networking among observers, which is by itself essential if international early warning is to become a part of the world system, is also necessary because of the different perceptions those observers inevitably have. Such networking will not only enable them to share data and interpretations of data, but will also allow the early warning actors to understand each other, the different mandates and stakes involved and the different institutional cultures and related perceptions. Since perception plays such a crucial part in the early warning process, this is of considerable importance. It allows those participating in the networking system to understand the framework for undertaking the analysis, as well as the implications for action, their advantages and shortcomings.

If the networking process functions effectively the combined agencies involved in monitoring will be able to formulate a so-called 'both/and' response, instead of an 'either/or' one. It will allow them to transmit a broad band of signals encompassing various alternative response strategies for the benefit of the decision-makers. This will also circumvent the tricky element in early warning – i.e. that the warner is proven wrong – by emphasizing that different assessments and related responses may be right under the appropriate circumstances. Of course, this still leaves the decision-makers in the dark as to what is actually going to happen. But, as Adelman continues, it may be better, and in any case easier, to signal what is happening rather than what is about to happen. While this would transform early warning into late warning, timely preparation of worst case scenarios could enhance the potential for preventing escalation.

Based on his analysis of events in the Great Lakes region, Adelman notes that it is probably better to send new observers to a country in crisis, as these will not be blinded by vested interests in the mediation process or other ongoing activities. Furthermore, it is better to focus on aggravating factors, such as the role of external powers in fuelling violent conflict, than to concentrate on the perpetrators of violence as such. This conclusion has important implications for the link between the area of conflict prevention and other dimensions of foreign policy: what in diplomatic parlance is called 'coherence'.

While the observer obviously needs to possess relevant expertise, he should also enjoy considerable prestige in order to maximize the chance of warnings penetrating the circles of decision-makers. In this respect it should be realized that signals of potential conflict may face at least three kinds of barriers before they are able to reach the decision-makers. Firstly, early warning messages could 'drown' amidst signals that convey a contrary assessment. Secondly, warnings may be 'crushed', i.e. pushed aside, by signals of impending trouble from other zones of conflict. For example, both the impending conflagration in Somalia and the civil war in Liberia were not given much attention by Western policy-makers because of other issues, such as the demise of the Soviet bloc and the crisis in the Persian Gulf. Finally, transmitted signals may become



'dead-ended' in the sense that, while having been received, they are not forwarded to the appropriate level for analysis and decision-making. Naturally, even if signals are received and analysed by the relevant actors, this does not mean that preventative action will be taken. This depends, among others, on the timing of the warning, the way it was phrased, the impact of preceding crises and related interventions and, more generally, the political will of the decision-makers concerned.

Political will depends, of course, in part on these issues. Adelman may be right in arguing that explanations of inappropriate responses to impending conflict in terms of deficient political will could reinforce collective impotence and lethargy and provide policy-makers with a rationale to do nothing about certain conflicts – thereby strengthening the lack of confidence the wider public has in the abilities of international organizations to intervene effectively in those conflicts. Explanations of inappropriate responses in terms of political will may, to some extent, also be regarded as tautological, since research should then focus on the reasons *why* the decision-makers involved do not wish to act.

However, arguments that a lack of (an appropriate and timely) response is not due to an absence of political will but an absence of leadership may not bring us further since, at least in terms of the theory of hegemonic stability, the generation of collective political will in the world system is linked to the presence of such hegemonic leadership.[1] Moreover, from a 'realist' perspective on international relations one has to conclude that conflict-preventive action will only be taken if it is congruent with the configuration of interests of the intervening actors – in whatever way that interest is being perceived or produced through the balance of forces at the international and (sub-)state levels.

If, then, as Adelman contends in chapter 4, the distinction between early warning as developed originally by national intelligence agencies, and early warning as developing at present in the post-Cold War context of international organizations, is that the former was designed to counter threats to oneself and the latter to prevent or mitigate the suffering of others, we are presented with a problem. Threats to the actor that is supposed to take or capable of taking preventive action are always likely to generate a speedier response than threats directed at others. Thus, if early warning in its post-Cold War form is motivated by universal humanitarian motives, rather than national

1 See for example C.P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression 1929-1939* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), ch. 14; R.O. Keohane, 'The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regimes, 1967-77', in O.R. Holsti, R.M. Siverson and A.L. George (eds), *Change in the International System* (Boulder, 1980), pp. 136-37; J.Q.T. Rood, *Hegemonie, machtsspreiding en internationaal-economische orde sinds 1945* (The Hague, 1996); J.Q.T. Rood and J.G. Siccama, *Verzwakking van de Sterkste: Oorzaken en Gevolgen van Amerikaans Machtsverval* (The Hague, 1989); and K. van Walraven, *Dreams of Power: The Role of the Organization of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963-1993* (Aldershot, 1998).

interests, it is likely that conflict-preventive activities will only be undertaken in a limited number of cases and under exceptional circumstances.

In chapter 5 Wallensteen therefore argued that the reactions of policy-makers to early warnings will depend not only on the strength of the signal that is 'transmitted' to them, but also on the degree to which the conflict involved challenges their strategic interests. Yet, since post-Cold War conflicts do not challenge the strategic interests of would-be interveners in the same degree as they used to during the era of East-West confrontation, Wallensteen argues that the receptivity of decision-makers to crises that are predominantly humanitarian has improved. However, he also observes increasing reluctance on the part of decision-makers to get involved in conflicts in which national strategic interests are absent.

In other words, is it possible, as Wallensteen claims, that the humanitarian interest has 'replaced' the strategic one? Does this not mean, quite simply, that one should speak of the strategic marginalization of many parts of a post-Cold War world in which the focus on humanitarianism is a transient phenomenon that will wane in the wake of donor fatigue? In this respect the United Nations learnt an expensive lesson in the course of its intervention in Somalia. After having been led there by an external actor that was sufficiently powerful but lacked a strategic objective, UNOSOM ground to a halt – in part because of a lack of direction and determined leadership and, thus, a lack of commitment to see the operation through. The failure in Somalia had serious repercussions for future potential interventions, as the UN and its member states became much more cautious about embarking on such initiatives. Media visualization of human misery is, then, no adequate guarantee that action will be taken to prevent eruption or escalation of violence.

Of course, the concepts of conflict prevention and early warning were in part formulated to circumvent the necessity of expensive foreign policy undertakings that are difficult to sell to national tax payers when no clear national strategic interest is at stake. However, this still leaves the question of under which (humanitarian) circumstances conflict-preventive action is likely to be undertaken. Wallensteen is therefore right to state that the study of receptivity, while fairly new in analyses of early warning and conflict prevention, is very important. What makes the outside world act and what will leave it indifferent and passive? He notes that considerable persuasion is required to make decision-makers receptive to demands for early action. As Adelman argues, pictures of infants being slaughtered or massive numbers of corpses floating down a river may arouse public opinion and increase pressure for action. More specifically, in a study by Barbara Harff cited by Adelman, it is concluded that it is not the magnitude of the humanitarian catastrophe that matters, but the cultural characteristics of the listener/viewer and the ability of the media to link up with this cultural disposition.

However, as pointed out by Wallensteen, this state of affairs means that it will usually not be easy to encourage action before conflicts have already caused considerable damage. In this respect he also distinguishes between conflicts marked by rapid intensification and those in which intensification travels a protracted course. As they do



not like to be taken by surprise, cases of rapid intensification are more likely to attract the eye of decision-makers than those with protracted intensification. Unfortunately, such cases leave little time to prepare for preventative or containment action. Moreover, in such cases the parties to the conflict will probably show little willingness to concede to mediation as a result of all the publicity that their conflict has attracted. Conflicts that are marked by protracted intensification may therefore be more amenable to third-party intervention, while they will, paradoxically, attract less attention from decision-makers. Thus, one important policy-oriented conclusion to this volume is that strategies of conflict prevention ought to focus much more on drawn-out, protracted conflicts.

Such intervention will probably amount to no more than containment action, as it may be very difficult to do something about long-standing conflicts. Wallensteen observes, however, that containment measures alone, such as sanctions, can have a contrary effect on (some of) the conflicting parties, in the sense that they can feel threatened and thereby become intransigent. It may therefore be necessary to combine containment measures with forms of direct action (i.e. with regard to the conflict itself) in order to reassure the combatants that the outside world is positively committed to helping them in finding a solution to the conflict.

Wallensteen also argues very persuasively for sustained action with regard to conflict prevention. This is, indeed, crucial. Since conflicts as such expose the dialectics of interests that are at stake and constitute the manifestation of efforts to resolve those contradictions – in whatever way – the prevention of social or political strife can turn very quickly into a struggle against symptoms rather than causes. This, however, would go against the very rationale underlying the concepts of early warning and conflict prevention as they came into fashion in the post-Cold War world. Unfortunately, recent international intervention in domestic conflicts often had the character of what Shaw, MacLean and Orr in the preceding chapter called short-term palliatives that do little to resolve the problem in the long-term. This becomes particularly acute in situations of state collapse – which are extremely difficult to resolve, among others because they require capabilities that, paradoxically, only states command since the 'power' of international institutions is merely a derivative of that of their members. As in Somalia, international organizations are then almost forced to embark on a process of social engineering for which they are ill-suited.[2] Moreover, in the absence of important strategic considerations to intervene in conflicts, parties may, in the words of Wallensteen, be tempted to 'hibernate' in the sense that they will try and sit out unwelcome international involvement and take up arms again once the interveners have

2 See for example *Comprehensive Report on Lessons-Learned from United Nations Operation in Somalia, April 1992-March 1995* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Germany; Life and Peace Institute, Sweden; and Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, in collaboration with the Lessons-Learned Unit of the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations: no pl., December 1995), especially paragraphs 32 to 39. It remains to be seen whether and to what extent the NATO-led operation in Bosnia will in this respect be an exception.

left. A special dimension of sustained action to realize long-term prevention of violent conflict is therefore the neutralization of so-called 'spoilers', i.e. 'leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, world view, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it'.[3] However, as Wallensteen notes, an international coalition of actors, each of which has its own motives and interests to participate, may be pulled apart in the course of a long drawn out intervention. More generally, he concludes that there is no form of action that will always succeed or fail. It depends on the circumstances which can often be studied in advance. Unfortunately, a systematic evaluation of conflict preventive instruments has not yet come off the ground.[4] Rather than study and establish complex early warning systems, we therefore need, among others, case-studies of intervention that employ a *post facto* analysis.

In retrospect there is no fundamental contradiction in the approach of Wallensteen and the perspective provided by Doom in this volume. While Wallensteen focuses more on the humanitarian dimension of conflict prevention than Doom, his remarks on the linkage between national strategic interests and the willingness to engage in preventive action relate early warning and conflict prevention firmly to the structures of international politics. Unfortunately, because of their relatively recent origins and their rise in the post-Cold War, seemingly disinterested, era, both concepts have been captivated by the humanitarian dimensions of international crisis management, thus forgetting the harsh world of power politics. It is the contribution of Doom to bring the discussion back to the general field of international relations. In fact, one important conclusion to this volume should be that there is an urgent need for an analytical approach to early warning and conflict prevention that places these concepts in the context of the changing structures of post-Cold War politics. This approach should focus, among others, on the borderline between politics at the sub-state and international levels. While there never was a genuine dichotomy between these two spheres of political interaction, the distinction between domestic politics and international relations has become increasingly blurred as state sovereignty has progressively declined – especially in Africa.[5]

The post-Cold War era has taken this development even further. Thus, it was shown in chapter 2 that in many international organizations purely humanitarian considerations can now form sufficient grounds for intervening in intra-state crises or conflicts. They do not have to produce international implications for multilateral institutions to be allowed to act. However, the record of ASEAN shows that this is not the case everywhere. It would therefore be interesting to investigate to what extent the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs is truly on the way out – as so many

3 S.J. Stedman, 'Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes', in *International Security*, 1997, no. 2, p 1.

4 It is the intention of the Clingendael Institute to study the question of effectiveness of intervention instruments in a third, policy-oriented, phase of its conflict research programme.

5 Also Van Walraven, *Dreams of Power*, p. 361.



observers of post-Cold War politics have claimed. This is especially important as genuine preventive action – that is, activities aimed at thwarting the eruption of violence – takes place at a stage in which 'domestic' conflicts have usually not yet generated many international implications. Early warning and conflict prevention therefore take the question of interference a considerable step forward. While few observers could object to such a development from the perspective of human rights protection, it must be realized that the non-interference principle is still a component of what 'order' there is in international politics.

Yet, if Doom is to be believed, the parties engaged in intra-state disputes or conflicts have little reason to fear precipitate intervention by external powers. He concludes coolly that no direct or global change must be expected in 'high politics' on the basis of reports that argue – however persuasively – about the necessity of conflict-preventive action. Thus, like Adelman and Wallensteen, he concludes that the objectives of early warning and conflict prevention should be set less ambitiously and that the debate should move away from grand and challenging, academically oriented, early warning systems to more practically designed conflict preventative policies. Damage control and the avoidance of worst case scenarios, rather than the solution or prevention of each and every conflict, is the best one could hope for – the more so as Doom follows the perspective expressed by Shaw, MacLean and Orr in chapter 9 that the issues of early warning and conflict prevention are inextricably bound up with the nature and structures of the present global political economy.

Peace should therefore be defined, not in terms of an absence of overt violence, but in terms of sustainable development. Here too, however, Doom's perspective is sobering. Observing that the world system is moving towards increasing globalization at the cost of fragmentation at the (semi-) periphery – with attendant generation of conflicts – he argues that a restructuring of the entire global 'order' along the lines of sustainable development would simply be impossible, as it would clearly overstretch the capacities of those who argue in favour of such change. Thus, one should strive for a global development policy in the North that would at least not hinder the development of the (semi-)periphery but positively support it. In terms of a cost-benefit calculus this would also be to the advantage of the Northern hemisphere: in avoiding or dampening at least some conflicts in the South and thus diminishing the general sense of insecurity, such a strategy of sustainable peace and development could be presented as being to the benefit of the North, especially as the world system as a whole – which, after all, works to its advantage – would remain fundamentally intact. Since the strongest rationale for action is self-interest, this would give such a strategy a chance of acceptance among Northern politicians and policy-makers.

If this perspective were pursued, external actors could react to conflicts with a mix of instruments like selective development aid, classical and field diplomacy, and confidence-building measures to reinforce the option of reconciliation between the parties in a conflict. However, Doom is not very optimistic that the international community is willing to work towards such a policy of sustainable peace and develop-

ment. These would, in any case, not appear at once as the socialization of this paradigm would be a slow affair. Here the role of what Doom refers to as the 'peace movement' comes into play. Since morality is not a decisive factor in international relations, the paradigms of early warning and conflict prevention are in need of organized 'counter power' – both nationally and internationally. The problem, however, is that those who have strong ethical motives – such as the peace movement – lack power and that those with power cannot merely rely on ethical motives. Thus, Doom argues that if peace movements want to get results they must resign themselves to compromise and reinforce their roots in civil society, yet have an institutionalized structure beyond the mercy of a relatively amorphous, popular adherence. This, in turn, would strengthen their bargaining position and, since the 'national interest' is, in the end, a product of the balance of domestic political forces, positively affect the chances for a strategy of sustainable peace and development.

In the course of his contribution Doom also notes that effective conflict-preventive policies would at least require the development or reinforcement of regional structures – like regional inter-governmental organizations – not only to monitor and mediate crisis situations but also to avoid quick fixes and, instead, see the reconstruction phase through. These remarks take us to the institutional framework and implementation of conflict-preventive strategies, as well as the potential of, and division of labour between, the institutions involved. Clearly, Sutterlin's contribution on the role of the United Nations underlines that this potential and the related division of labour are in need of considerable improvement. In his description of the collection and analysis of early warning data in the UN system, he notes almost in passing, that no single, central organ is responsible for the gathering and synthesis of information. Despite the enormous fact-finding potential of the world body, this constitutes a major flaw in the UN's implementation of the early warning/conflict prevention paradigms. Moreover, Sutterlin also points to extant, yet untapped, early warning data in the UN system and concludes that the world body is in need of data from regional organizations to buttress its own information sources. However, in spite of their intimate knowledge of their own regions, these structures have yet to prove themselves. Sutterlin links the limited effectiveness of regional organizations to member states' involvement in, and partisan attitudes to, regional conflicts; their lack of leverage and enforcement capabilities; and their restricted aid and peace-keeping potential necessary for the provision of humanitarian and post-conflict reconstruction assistance. There is thus a need for the UN to work with NGOs.

In his conclusions on the (potential) role of Africa's regional inter-governmental organizations, Khadiagala somewhat refines this picture. While deeming the performance of ECOMOG and SADC as by and large successful, he nevertheless points to the tension generated by, on the one hand, the necessity of leadership in crisis management through multilateral institutions and, on the other, resistance to, and distrust of, states assuming such leadership. The only way in which this dilemma can be resolved is through a combination of transparency and leadership. Political transparency refers to



the legitimacy and open, democratic nature of leadership, while leadership involves the deliberate mobilization of resources to resolve problems. More particularly, the latter fosters, or should foster, the institutional context of transparency. In Khadiagala's words, one variable of leadership is the ability of states to impart successful models of managing diverse cultural and political claims.

Here there is an interesting parallel with the concept of hegemony, which, if applied to regional settings, refers to inter-state links grounded in domination and the creation of consensus by the hegemon's manipulation of norms legitimating its dominance.[6] It resembles Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which refers to the consensual basis of a political system in contrast to more simply coercive domination.[7] Ideally, the hegemon's use of force is occasional, resorting to it only if other means of influence fail. The concept thus refers to the ability of a state to establish, maintain and change norms of regional interaction maximizing its own interests. Besides legitimacy, the regional hegemon must naturally dispose of other sources of influence. These capabilities can be military might, an economic base, a solid diplomatic network or a geographical location entailing external support.[8] The problem, however, is that hegemony is a theoretical concept that imputes more legitimacy to the hegemon than seems warranted in practice – at least in Africa, where claims to hegemony are almost anathema to the political culture underlying the continent's international relations. Even if other states concede to the leadership of some powerful regional actor, this may amount to no more than acquiescence in the inevitable rather than genuine consent to such leadership, something that may also detract from the effective influence of that leading state.[9]

Thus, Khadiagala rightly observes that Nigeria's resources allowed it to intervene in the Liberian civil war 'under a politically contentious ... regional mandate'. Even if, in Khadiagala's view, ECOMOG prevented Liberia's major warlord from seizing power by force of arms rather than the ballot-box, and it also contributed to the restoration of democratic leadership in Sierra Leone, he concludes with some justification that the image of Nigeria's military dictatorship as the self-proclaimed protector of democratic values in West Africa raises the key issue of how to combine leadership with transparency: after all, 'leadership without wider domestic credibility and legitimacy is bound to degenerate into domination that is typically associated with regional bullies'. If, as some observers plead, the Nigerian political system cannot be transformed into a transparent political order, this will constitute a fundamental obstacle to the evolution of conflict-preventive policies in the framework of West Africa's multilateral institutions.

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6 R. Iyob, 'Regional Hegemony: Domination and Resistance in the Horn of Africa', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1993, pp. 257-76.

7 W.L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1980), ch. 6

8 Iyob, 'Regional Hegemony'.

9 Van Walraven, *Dreams of Power*.

Similarly, Khadiagala concludes that the conflict preventive potential of East Africa's emergent structures is hindered by an 'unhampered quest for regional leadership [that] by itself can become a source of instability, making a mockery of regional initiatives to settle conflicts'. Thus, the IGADD talks on the Sudanese civil war suffered from the bad state of intra-regional relations. In this respect Khadiagala does not see much potential in the informal alliance of Eastern African leaders either. While having conceded that their predecessors made serious mistakes, these new leaders differ from other political elites on the continent more in style than in substance. Rating their 'transparency' as rather low, Khadiagala is not optimistic about their potential for successful leadership in regional conflict management. Credible leadership requires substantive institutions of shared and reciprocal responsibilities, rather than the current practice of personality-based diplomatic networking.

He makes an exception, however, for the Southern African region. Khadiagala concludes that South Africa's successful transformation after 1994 'forced its neighbours into behavioural patterns that seemed alien only a few years ago'. The transformation of the South African state enabled it to assume the regional leadership in terms of a rule-making actor that encourages the development of a regional consensus around certain basic standards of state behaviour. Thus, SADC is now advocating more open and democratic political systems in the region, so much so that its summits have become, in the view of Khadiagala, an arena for chastising reluctant reformers.

This confirms the views expressed by Stephen Stedman at the Clingendael symposium that lay at the basis of this volume. According to Stedman, conflict prevention is all about the need to 'manage change', i.e. aiding societies to go through processes of political, economic and social transition peacefully. Early warning and conflict prevention must therefore be imbedded in regime-based norms, which are statements or rules about how the member states of an organization should behave or act in their own country or the region at large. Those norms, or rather, the violation of those norms, form the basis on which the organization in question will implement its conflict preventive strategy. However, such a state of affairs will only come about if certain conditions are fulfilled. Firstly, the actors involved must see the need for such management of change. Secondly, they must have the *ability* to formulate policies for peaceful transitions. Furthermore, those countries assuming leadership in managing regional change must set a proper example and have leverage over those that transgress regional norms. The majority of countries in the region must, moreover, adhere to these norms, otherwise regional structures cannot be effective. Finally, no government should be allowed to claim an exceptional status and thereby avoid regional concern with (potential) conflicts in its country.

On the basis of these conditions Stedman held that the OAU and ECOWAS cannot become effective and credible institutions in the field of conflict prevention. Being more negative on ECOWAS than Khadiagala, he dismissed the lip-service paid to conflict prevention inside that organization as the mere influence of 'cognitive scripts'. Organizations or regions are enticed to copy the behaviour of other institutions or



countries as it is the accepted way of doing things. This amounts to the disconnecting of behaviour from norms or, in the case of international organizations, the separation of output from institutions. More particularly, in the field of early warning and conflict prevention it would mean that organs, institutions and discourse are being generated without taking over the intrinsic message of the paradigms concerned.

However, Stedman, too, saw SADC as the exception to the rule. In the Southern African Development Community, 'internal' matters become regional concerns the moment that domestic political problems (threaten to) create regional repercussions, such as refugee flows or, more generally, regional destabilization. Defending the principle – which appears to be supported throughout the region – that violent conflicts must be settled peacefully, SADC benefits from extraordinary pragmatism and the strong leadership of South Africa and Zimbabwe to enforce norm-based performance. Nevertheless, while this proves that inter-governmental organizations, even in Africa, can vary in effectiveness, one would, of course, encounter serious problems if South Africa or Zimbabwe itself ought to become the target of conflict preventive action in the framework of SADC. Moreover, one could argue with Khadiagala's contention that leadership deployed within regional multilateral structures 'serves to blunt the perceptions of diktat'.

Thus, Khadiagala observes that in the autumn of 1997 South Africa's leadership of SADC came under serious attack from Zimbabwe, which would like to keep the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security under its leadership instead of yielding control to SADC as such and thus (in Harare's perception) to South Africa. Even if the argument between Mugabe and the South African government centred on different visions of the kind of political leadership one should have in the Southern African region, this quarrel serves to underline the conflict potential of leadership necessary for the development of regional security policies. In any case, in Khadiagala's view such problems can only be avoided by grounding regional policies of conflict prevention on the construction of domestic political structures that enjoy legitimacy and address the problems of identity and the internal distribution of resources.

Khadiagala's negative assessment of the effectiveness of the OAU and the bilateral, non-institutional approach of the 'new emergent leadership' in Eastern Africa lead him to the ironic conclusion that mechanisms relevant to conflict preventive strategies exist in Africa where they are needed least and are absent where they are needed most. In his view, structures for the prevention of conflict are hardly necessary where the domestic political process is open and inclusive. Still, in the penultimate chapter of this volume Shaw, MacLean and Orr conclude that, by and large, Africa is not yet 'an agent in its own future'. On the contrary, generally speaking initiatives and resources for containing and preventing conflicts and peace-building activities come

from outside, whether one thinks of peace-keeping operations or plans to establish permanent structures to respond quickly to crisis situations.[10]

In other words, we are not witness to a sustainable division of labour, but to different forms of 'subcontracting' of externally driven and supported intervention initiatives to local African actors whose degree of control is limited. While this assessment should obviously be refined in terms of the different cases of, and institutions engaged in, mediation in conflicts, the authors therefore draw the conclusion that the capabilities of the continent's inter-governmental organizations must be enhanced. If Africans do not gain more control of this issue-area, one may justifiably question the effectiveness and utility of peace-building activities. More specifically, African (I)NGOs should become more involved in this field.

Apart from Africa, one needs to recognize that the present global policies of third-party intervention in conflicts mostly involve multi-party coalitions consisting of (I)NGOS, governments and international organizations, especially in the complex situation of collapsed states. Given the range of actors involved, these forms of third-party intervention may create intra-coalition tensions and conflicts that can easily hinder or derail a peace-building process. As the conditions imposed on third parties in the context of severe civil strife are extremely demanding, policies to prevent or contain conflicts will stand a high chance of failure unless the intricacies of multi-actor intervention are understood and tackled. Thus, there is a need to study and formulate policies to sustain the collaboration between NGOs, states and inter-governmental institutions in this area. It is these, what the authors of the preceding chapter call 'novel forms of responsive governance', that could yet make early warning and conflict prevention into important features of crisis management in the post-Cold War era.

10 See for an overview of the – predominantly negative – African reactions to the US African Crisis Response Force (ACRF) initiative J. Ginifer, 'Emergent African Peace-keeping: Self-Help and External Assistance', in *PRIO Report*, 1997, 4, pp. 123-41.