

# Invitation to an International Conference on "Conflict Prevention – analysis, policies and practice"

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Despite intense efforts to establish conflict prevention on the international agenda, preventing violent conflicts has not yet become a common practice. The international community is still searching for ways and means for early action to follow early warning. There is a need to shift perspective from reaction to prevention of violent conflict.

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Centre for European Studies at Lund University and the Folke Bernadotte Academy will hold an international conference on bridging the gap between theory and practice in conflict prevention, taking as a point of departure the need to address the root causes of conflict as well as the necessity to establish norms and values as the foundation for conflict prevention.

The conference will be held at Lund University, Lund, Sweden the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2003. A tentative program is enclosed.

We are pleased to invite you to participate in the conference.

We look forward very much to your positive response. To confirm your participation please contact Ms Lilian Dahl (Phone: +46 46 222 88 10 or e-mail: Lilian.Dahl@kansliS.lu.se) by the 28<sup>th</sup> of March and for further inquiries please contact Professor Magnus Jerneck, Centre for European Studies, Lund University (Phone: +46 46 222 9777 or e-mail: Magnus.Jerneck@svet.lu.se).

Yours sincerely,

Professor Magnus Jerneck  
Centre for European Studies  
Lund University

Professor Sven Tägil  
Research forum  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Director Dr. Michael Sahlin  
Folke Bernadotte Academy

## **Programme:**

### **International Conference on "Conflict Prevention – analysis, policies and practice", Lund 8<sup>th</sup> –9<sup>th</sup> of May 2003**

Conflicts can no longer be treated as straightforwardly as confrontations between discrete nations with clearly defined state borders. Contemporary conflicts are frequently internal in character and encompass disputes over fundamental values, identity and culture. The dramatic violence of these conflicts attests to the depth of feeling and emotion and to the set quality of perceptions. To be able to successfully prevent conflicts over values, identity and culture from taking a violent turn, representatives of the international community must attempt to

understand the inner workings of these types of conflicts. This international conference is concerned with contributing to develop new thinking on international conflict prevention.

### **Agenda 8<sup>th</sup> of May**

- 12.00-14.00 Lunch in Sångsalen, Akademiska föreningen
- 14.00-15.00 Plenary session I: “Bridging the gap” – theory and practice of conflict prevention  
Keynote speaker (30 min): Dr. David Hamburg, former President of the Carnegie Cooperation on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict (confirmed).  
Chair: Dr. Michael Sahlin Folke Bernadotte Academy (confirmed)  
Commentators (30 min): Director Espen Barth Eide, NUPI, (to be confirmed) Dr. Karin Aggestam, Lund University (confirmed).
- 15.00-16.00 Plenary session II: Norms and values – the foundation for conflict prevention.  
Keynote speaker (30 min): Professor Robert Jackson, Boston University (confirmed)  
Chair: Professor Magnus Jerneck, Lund University (confirmed)  
Commentators (30 min): Dr. Renata Dwan, SIPRI (confirmed), Professor Adrian Hyde-Price, Leicester University (confirmed).
- 16.00-16.30 Coffee break
- 16-30-17.30. Plenary session III: Structural prevention – addressing the root causes of conflict.  
Keynote speaker (30 min): Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Sri Ram College (to be confirmed)  
Chair: Professor Sven Tägil, Research Forum, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (confirmed)  
Commentators (30 min): Dr. Leif Ohlsson, Padrigu, University of Gothenburg (confirmed) Danish development researcher (to be confirmed).
- 19.00-19.30 Drinks in the pillared hall, University Building
- 19.30 Dinner in the pillared hall, University Building
- 21.00 Entertainment – Boelspexarna

### **Agenda 9<sup>th</sup> of May**

- 9.00-11.00 Parallel Roundtables:  
*Theme I: A culture of conflict prevention- A pre-condition for common international preventive practices?*  
Chair: Associate Professor Dr. Thomas Jordan, Gothenburg University (confirmed)  
Introduction: Dr. Eli Stamnes, NUPI (to be confirmed)

As the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan noted “[t]he transition from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention will not be easy...but the difficult task does not make it any less imperative”. One way of contributing to strengthening this culture is to spread the norms and values that underpin the culture of prevention. A vast number of actors on the international arena are already favouring the notion and support the imperative of conflict prevention. Yet, there are those not yet convinced and those that only give rhetorical support to this culture without adopting its core values such as peaceful resolution of conflict, the rule of law and human rights. Hence, the norms and values inherent in the culture of prevention need to be diffused to these reluctant supports to strengthen not only the culture of prevention but also the practice of preventing violent conflicts.

*Theme II: Can terrorism be prevented?*

Chair: Professor Magnus Jerneck,

Introduction: Dr. Magnus Ranstorp, St. Andrew’s University (to be confirmed)

The usual definition of terrorism is "the use or threat of violence, by small groups against non-combatants of large groups, for avowed political goals." The key to this definition is the combination of small groups killing non-combatants. Terrorism is the warfare of the weak, the recourse of those desperate for a cause that they cannot win by conventional means. Hence, can the conventional toolbox for conflict prevention be used to thwart international terrorism? Does the international community need to develop additional means and ways to prevent acts of terrorism? It may be impossible to identify the early warnings of ad hoc terrorist attacks. Yet, it seems feasible to detect the fertile ground in which terrorism grows. A proactive approach to manage international terrorism therefore may need to focus on addressing the structural root causes of terrorism rather than attempting to prevent individual terrorist acts.

*Theme III: The Economic Agendas of Civil War*

Chair: Jonas Alberoth, Folke Bernadotte Academy (confirmed)

Introduction: Professor Mats Berdal, King’s College (to be confirmed)

The motivating factors behind civil conflict appear as being based on ethnic identity fuelled by grievances, which are so severe as to have burst the banks of normal political channels. However, the main grievances – inequality, political repression, and ethnic and religious divisions – do not provide a sufficient explanation for why intense political conflicts turn into violence and why civil conflicts are difficult to prevent and resolve. But, as the distinction between the political and the economic is breaking down, it is important to add to the analysis the economic motivations to better understand the incentives of the parties in the “new wars”. By studying the political economy of civil wars and the “asset

transfer” i.e. the redistribution of existing assets in favour of the fighting units and their leaders it is possible to identify the economic incentives that contribute to perpetuate the conflict. The political vacuum and the parallel war economy that emerge in civil wars in combination with a globalized economy provide opportunities and incentives for many actors to profit from the war. Since to date conflict prevention has paid scant attention to the economic agendas of civil wars, there is probably considerable scope for policy, both domestic and international, to prevent civil conflict more effectively.

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| 11.00-11.30 | Coffee break  |
| 11.30-11.45 | Concluding remarks by Professor Magnus Jerneck, Lund University, (confirmed) Professor Sven Tägil, Research Forum, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (confirmed) and Dr. Michael Sahlin, Folke Bernadotte Academy (confirmed). |
| 11.45-12.45 | Keynote speech:<br>Minister for Foreign Affairs Anna Lindh (confirmed)  |
| 12.45-14.0  | Lunch Old Bishop’s House  |

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