



Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation



Preventive diplomacy is a diplomatic action taken to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.

Background: preventive diplomacy



The term “preventive diplomacy” came into political use after the publication of the report entitled *An Agenda for Peace* of UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the 47th session of the UN General Assembly on 17 July 1992. This document contained **the conceptual framework for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking**. B. Boutros-Ghali borrowed the concept of preventive peacekeeping operations from the independent Disarmament and Security Commission, chaired by Olof Palme, Swedish Prime Minister, who drafted it back in 1982. In 1985, Johan Galtung, the principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, put forward a concept that included strategies for maintaining international peace and security – peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The report highlights international operations and processes related to preventive diplomacy:

- (1) **peacemaking**: “action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations”
- (2) **peacekeeping**, defined as the deployment of a UN force to the field, usually with the consent of the parties to the conflict and could involve military, police and UN civilian personnel
- (3) **post-conflict peacebuilding** is defined as an “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict”

Timely application of preventive diplomacy and promotion of peace has been recognized by the Security Council and the General Assembly as the most desirable and efficient means for easing international tensions before they result in conflict.



Practice and elements of preventive diplomacy

To improve the efficiency of resources and strengthen the effectiveness of international conflict resolution, new concepts and methods have been evolving in preventive diplomacy area. **Early conflict prevention** is one of these concepts. It is a very



effective conflict management tool, as it saves a lot of resources.

However, the requirements for preventive actions go beyond early warning and evolve into **a timely understanding of the problem** before warning.

Parties anticipate that if they don't take actions now and incur some costs, a future price tag will be much higher. They believe that there is a better chance of achieving more of their goals now than later.

Preventive diplomacy is associated with the concept of foresight, emphasizing that its success depends on identifying uncertainties in the future, which, if successful, will never materialize. It is the need to act against uncertainties that makes preventive diplomacy extraordinary.

It is closely related to actions such as maintaining peace and promoting peace. In the area of promoting peace, it is important to improve cooperation between the UN and regional organizations and subregional structures.

Preventive diplomacy

A. is not a separate type of UN peacekeeping activity and is generally used along with other types and tools of peacekeeping.

B. is often directly linked to actions such as peace promotion and peacekeeping

B. also requires the implementation of measures aimed at establishing a mutual trust

Peacekeeping operations

It is an important vehicle to promote peace and security. Peacekeeping operations have won international recognition. In 1988, the UN peacekeeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, although operations have been deployed since 1948 (year of establishment of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization for the Middle East). By early 21st century, 56 operations had been deployed, 43 of them since 1988.