



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

**CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**



**The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States**

*Papers from a Managing Global Order conference hosted by the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute*

**May 2012**



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

## **CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**The world faces old and new security challenges that are more complex than our multilateral and national institutions are currently capable of managing. International cooperation is ever more necessary in meeting these challenges. The NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC) works to enhance international responses to conflict, insecurity, and scarcity through applied research and direct engagement with multilateral institutions and the wider policy community.**

**CIC's programs and research activities span the spectrum of conflict, insecurity and scarcity issues. This allows us to see critical inter-connections and highlight the coherence often necessary for effective response. We have a particular concentration on the UN and multilateral responses to conflict.**

# Table of Contents

## **The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States**

*Papers from a Managing Global Order conference hosted by the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC) and the Brookings Institution*

May 2012

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States</b> Reflection Paper April 2012	<b>3</b>
<b>The Responsibility to Get Serious</b> Concept Note for “The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States” February 2012 Bruce D. Jones, Richard Gowan, Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Emily O’Brien	<b>10</b>
<b>Participant List</b> Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates 21-22 February 2012	<b>14</b>
<b>Conference Agenda</b> Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates 21-22 February 2012	<b>15</b>

---

## Introduction

The papers included in this report relate to a conference co-hosted by the New York University Abu Dhabi Institute, the NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC) and the Brookings Institution on 21-22 February in Abu Dhabi on “The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States.”

The third in a series of annual conferences in Abu Dhabi on cooperation between the U.S. and emerging powers, the meeting gathered policymakers and academics to discuss how to rebuild trust around international crisis management after the recent disputes over Libya and Syria. A list of participants can be found towards the end of this publication. The conference was held under the Chatham House Rule. This report draws on conference discussions, but it is not a comprehensive account of the event. The views expressed do not represent a consensus position.

Although the discussions showed that deep differences among the major powers on the use of force will persist, most participants agreed that there is a need for intensified dialogue on crisis management between the U.S., its allies and emerging powers. There are many areas where progress is possible. Conference members highlighted potential for enhanced cooperation on preventive diplomacy, mediation, human rights monitoring and peacekeeping.

This report features:

- A **reflection paper** drafted after the event that reflects on the views expressed by conference participants and outlines policy recommendations based on the conference discussions.
- “The Responsibility to Get Serious,” a **concept note** that served as a background paper for the conference to guide discussions.
- A conference **participant list**; and a **conference agenda**, outlining the discussion sessions and speakers.

The conference was organized as part of the Managing Global Order program, a joint initiative of the Brookings Institution, the NYU Center on International Cooperation and the Stanford University Center on International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). I am especially grateful to Martin Indyk and the Brookings Foreign Policy team, and to Richard Gowan and Emily O’Brien at CIC. The conference was, however, only possible thanks to the generous support and expertise of the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, and I would particularly like to thank Fabio Piano, Reindert Falkenburg, Jason Beckerman, Sharon Hakakian Bergman, Gila Bessarot-Waels, Amber Deister, Antoine El Khayat and Nils Lewis. We are also very grateful to Philip Kennedy, who has been a longstanding supporter of CIC’s cooperation with the Institute.

### **Bruce D. Jones**

*Director, NYU Center on International Cooperation*

*Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution*

---

# The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States

## Reflection Paper

*NYU Center on International Cooperation and the Brookings Institution, Managing Global Order Program, April 2012<sup>1</sup>*

### A. Debating crisis management after the Arab Awakening

1. In the last eighteen months a series of crises – most obviously those in Libya and Syria – have created divisions among major powers. These divisions have not followed easily predictable patterns. The decision to use force in Libya split NATO. South Africa voted in favor of action in the Security Council, but then joined the other BRICS powers (Brazil, Russia, India and China) in criticizing the length and scale of the ensuing Western air campaign. All the BRICS opposed putting serious pressure on Syria in 2011, but a majority of smaller non-Western powers called for a tougher line. In early 2012, India and South Africa changed position, backing calls for regime transition in Damascus.
2. Although the rhetoric around these crises has often been vitriolic, there has also been a general recognition that disputes must be contained and diplomatic channels kept open. Despite their differences, Western and non-Western powers alike have repeatedly returned to the Security Council to debate options for post-conflict reconstruction in Libya and crisis management in Syria. There have also been renewed efforts to restart stalled diplomacy over Iran's nuclear program.
3. There have also been attempts to find common ground on the principles of crisis management such as Brazil's initiative to discuss a "Responsibility While Protecting" – a set of guidelines for regulating the

use of force in cases such as Libya. While Western officials have raised doubts about the details of this proposal (noted below) they have welcomed the opportunity for a more constructive debate.

4. Relatively constructive debates on crisis management, and even on the use of force, are possible because both Western and non-Western governments and commentators have moderated their positions over time. Few non-Western leaders have argued for the strict application of the principle of non-interference during the Arab Spring, as their predecessors might have done during the Cold War. Equally Western – and especially American – officials have recognized both the need for multilateral support for their policies and the limits to their ability to transform Arab societies.
5. In conceptual terms, therefore, there is a (gradual and complicated) international convergence towards agreement on the need for international engagement in crisis management. This has been engendered by three factors: (i) conceptual debates such as that over the Responsibility to Protect; (ii) practical experience of cooperation among established and emerging powers in handling weak states such as Haiti and Sudan; and (iii) awareness among emerging powers of their global interests.
6. However, this process of convergence still has clear limits. Deep differences remain over the how to legitimize interference in other states' affairs. Conversely, general debates about legitimacy are typically sidelined when crises affect major powers' own national interests. And even where there is some diplomatic consensus on the need for action, there is often little common understanding of how to mix and match the conflict management tools (such as mediation and sanctions) available. The question of whether to use force, and its relationship to other tools, is still more divisive.

---

<sup>1</sup>This reflection paper is based on a conference of the same title, hosted in association with NYU's Abu Dhabi Institute on 21-22 February 2012. The opinions expressed here reflect lessons from – and reactions to – the conference, but do not represent a comprehensive summary of all views expressed or the official positions of any of the institutions.

---

## B. Conflict management, international legitimacy and major powers' interests

7. The last eighteen months have demonstrated that the Responsibility to Protect (the obligation to protect civilians from mass atrocities) is now an established element of international debates over crisis management. However, the Libyan crisis has raised new questions about how "R2P" is implemented. Non-Western powers argue that NATO used the mandate provided by the UN to pursue regime change. Western officials argue that in such a case (as also in the simultaneous crisis in Côte d'Ivoire) it is impossible to guarantee the protection of civilians without regime change.
8. This argument is linked to more technical debates over how to combine diplomacy and the use of force in situations like Libya and the accountability of the military forces involved, discussed in Section D below. But broader political dynamics are also involved. Leaders are obliged to take into account how both their domestic publics and public opinion in other states will view the use of sanctions or force. Both action and inaction carry potential reputational costs. Domestically, moral and political considerations are also weighed against economic concerns, especially in the West.
9. Recent crises have also renewed a long-established debate over the relative significance of the UN and regional organizations in legitimizing crisis responses. The Arab League played a crucial role in persuading the Security Council to authorize force in Libya, and in challenging the Security Council for inaction over Syria. The African Union, meanwhile, prioritized the search for a diplomatic solution in Côte d'Ivoire (acting as a brake on the Council) and also tried to mediate in Libya, to Western frustration.
10. These regional organizations' activities have not, however, rendered the Security Council irrelevant. Instead, the Council has proved a resilient mechanism for all the major powers (including Brazil, India and South Africa in 2011 in addition to the permanent members) to debate and calibrate their interests. Overall, debates over crisis management and the use of force continue to take place at multiple levels (including domestic, regional and UN debates) and no one standard of legitimacy for action is consistently predominant. Yet there is widespread recognition that in a globalized world the struggle for international legitimacy is now a major part of any power's response to a crisis.
11. Even those actors – mostly American – who view UN Security Council legitimation of decisions over the use of force as desirable but optional must confront the fact that in other states, including key European powers, both popular opinion and domestic legislation now require UN authorization prior to participation in any forceful action. Memories of 2003 are still strong. The United States faces a choice between acting with UNSC authorization and allies, or with neither.
12. It is probable that ideas such as the Responsibility to Protect will continue to inform debates over legitimacy, as they have been shown to have widespread traction. But although conceptual debates over crisis management techniques can help build trust, some current and looming crises touch directly on the national interests of major powers. While there has been an extended discussion of the principles and proportionality of NATO's Libyan campaign, Western and non-Western governments had limited direct interests in the conflict. The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire impinged even less directly on great power politics. By contrast, events in Syria and Iran are of immediate and considerable concern to Russia, the U.S., and European powers and (especially) to key Arab states.
13. Where such direct interests are concerned, abstract discussions of concepts such as the Responsibility to Protect are far from completely irrelevant – basic humanitarian principles have played a role in shaping powers' responses to the Syrian crisis. Nonetheless,

it is clear that both the terms of diplomatic debate and national calculations are fundamentally different in such cases. In a case such as Iran, there is no immediate Libyan-style humanitarian crisis to mobilize action – instead, the diplomatic priority is to avert or at least reduce the risk of a looming regional or international crisis, in addition to the overriding goal of deterring Iranian nuclear breakout.

14. In a multipolar context in which a range of emerging and established powers have expanding webs of overlapping (and sometimes incompatible) economic and security concerns, it is essential that debates over crisis management and the use of force clearly reflect evolving national interests.
15. Yet the need to balance major powers' interests may arguably allow for more concrete debate about crisis management tools, as major powers have an incentive not only to (i) manage crises per se; but also (ii) reduce the potential risks for direct or indirect conflict with other powers in doing so.
16. The following sections of this note summarize (i) potential areas for cooperation among major powers on non-military crisis management; (ii) possibilities for more cooperative approaches to military options; and (iii) potential diplomatic structures for easing cooperation in both categories.

### C. Cooperation in non-military crisis management

17. Non-military crisis management tools include mediation, human rights monitoring and international justice and sanctions regimes (including targeted economic sanctions and arms embargos). In a period when economic and political power is becoming more diffuse, increasingly complex coalitions of states may be needed to utilize these tools effectively. While emerging economies are yet to rival the U.S. in terms of military might, their economic engagement is increasingly necessary if sanctions regimes are going to be comprehensively

applied. Regional organizations and powers such as Turkey often have better political networks for mediation in their neighborhoods than even the U.S.

18. Although recent debates around crisis management have typically revolved around the use of force, therefore, discussions of issues such as mediation, sanctions and other tools of coercive diplomacy may have more concrete results. However, many emerging powers have misgivings about the West's use of sanctions in particular.
19. It is crucial to distinguish between tactical questions over how non-military crisis management tools are used – such as how to implement an arms embargo – and strategic questions over the political goals the tools are used for. Too many inter-governmental debates are stuck at the tactical level.
20. There is a tendency to argue over whether, for example, a UN human rights investigation is justified in a specific situation rather than how it will contribute to an overall conflict management strategy. In the case of Syria, there have been repeated procedural debates about whether the Security Council can and should take heed of advice from officials appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. Such debates undercut any deterrent effect the human rights observers might have.
21. Appealing to international justice is often also treated as an end in itself, with little reference to its strategic implications. In the case of Libya, the Security Council's decision to involve the International Criminal Court arguably reduced the Gaddafi regime's (minimal) readiness to bargain.
22. Similarly, international organizations and governments often view deploying mediators to a crisis as an end in itself. Once an envoy has been selected, there is often insufficient attention to (i) ensuring that he or she is not duplicating or clashing with other envoys; or (ii) ensuring that the individual's diplomacy is fully backed up by interested powers;

or (iii) coordinating mediation efforts with the implicit or explicit reference to coercive measures. In the Libyan case, UN and AU mediation sat uneasily together, and some major non-Western powers appeared to use these diplomatic processes as an alibi for their failure to engage more directly in conflict resolution themselves. In Syria, prior to the choice of Kofi Annan as a joint UN-Arab League envoy, numerous would-be mediators and monitors had come and gone in a poorly-coordinated fashion. By contrast, when Annan mediated an end to Kenya's post-electoral violence in 2008, he was firmly in the lead of all international mediation efforts and had the explicit support of the U.S. and other powers.

23. Many sanctions regimes also lack a true strategic purpose. An analysis of past regimes shows that they have been an effective tool where the goal is to persuade a government to enter constructive negotiations. In those cases (as arguably in Syria) sanctions are applied without a sufficiently clear set of conditions for lifting them – potentially hardening the target's willingness to resist pressure.
24. Equally, strategic debates about sanctions must take into account their effects on regional and global economic dynamics. The UN sanctions regime applied to Côte d'Ivoire had relatively few knock-on effects, as the country's main export was cocoa. Sanctions on Libya and Syria have had a peripheral impact on energy markets. But the new Western sanctions on Iran have threatened to complicate everything from Indian food exports to Europe's fragile economic recovery. Inevitably, many powers have tried to avoid implementing these sanctions in full in a period of economic uncertainty.
25. There are cases in which major powers will differ over how to use non-military crisis management tools because they have fundamentally different interests in the outcomes of a crisis. This was arguably the case over Syria for much of the last year. But there are also occasions on which (i) the confusion and mixed messages that characterize any crisis lead to

inefficiencies, even though major powers do not have deep differences; and (ii) a lack of sustained dialogue means that major powers cannot find at least a minimum of agreement on a crisis, even where it is possible. Arguably the Brazilian/Turkish 2010 negotiation with Iran falls into this category. In the Syrian case, all sides began to grope towards such a minimal consensus very late in the day in March 2012.

26. There is thus a need for intensified dialogue between established and emerging powers to address three major aspects of non-military crisis management. First, it is necessary to build greater common understandings of how to use mediation, human rights monitoring and international justice mechanisms to manage and end crises – and how to give them maximum political support.
27. Second, it is necessary to consider how to combine sanctions regimes and other tools of coercive diplomacy with traditional diplomatic efforts (and the range of crisis management tools noted above) more effectively, creating incentives for dialogue. Third, there is an ongoing need for confidence-building among the major powers over how to manage the economic effects of large-scale sanctions regimes, especially involving energy.

#### **D. Addressing military crisis management**

28. Military crisis management of state-based crises has two major dimensions: (i) the use of force against states; and (ii) peacekeeping and stability operations.
29. The basic diplomatic dynamics around the use of force have changed less markedly than those affecting sanctions and mediation, as the U.S. (and to a lesser extent NATO as a whole) maintains a much clearer advantage over non-Western powers in the military field than in economic or diplomatic affairs. This was spectacularly evident in the early days of the NATO bombing campaign against Libya, and arguably contributed to the emerging powers'

- unease with that effort. It is easy for debates over military intervention to fall into a “West vs. The Rest” pattern.
30. However, this is deceptive. Non-Western governments’ attitudes to the use of force are not set in stone. African forces have, for example, recently shifted from peacekeeping to de facto war-fighting in Somalia with some success. Brazil, India and China are all building up their military capacities and may have significantly increased capacities to engage in offensive operations over the medium term. Meanwhile, they voted unanimously in favor of the use of force in Côte d’Ivoire when mediation and peacekeeping failed there in 2010, and have both authorized and participated in “robust peacekeeping” actions in Haiti, the D.R. Congo and elsewhere.
  31. Nonetheless, much of the conference debate about the use of force focused on questions of legitimacy. However, specific concerns were raised over (i) how to balance the use of force to protect civilians in a case such as Libya with diplomatic efforts to conclude a conflict; and (ii) whether is it desirable or possible to hold an organization like NATO accountable for its use of force under a UN mandate.
  32. The challenge of combining diplomacy and force in a humanitarian crisis is in part similar to mixing and matching diplomatic tools and sanctions (although the costs and risks are different). In the Libyan case, NATO and a number of Arab powers undertook military operations while the African Union led mediation efforts. Although the UN was also involved in mediation, its focus shifted to post-conflict reconstruction. The African Union initially did not join the Contact Group set up to give political guidance to the NATO campaign, while the West failed to invite the BRICS to participate in this group at all, alienating them from the get-go (see Section E). It was soon clear that there was little or no linkage between the formal search for a political solution and NATO’s use of force.
  33. It is unclear that the Gaddafi government was ever amenable to serious negotiations. It is certain that his opponents were emboldened by NATO’s ongoing support. While it was impossible to heal the rifts over Libya, one clear lesson is that where force is used in crisis management, it is crucial that diplomatic and military activities are closely aligned to give the diplomatic track increased traction.
  34. The debate over accountability – related to Brazil’s proposal of a Responsibility While Protecting – centers on the view that while Western powers drew their mandate for action over Libya from the UN Security Council, they did not keep the Council sufficiently updated on their operations. This made it harder for Council members to question the eventual extent and scale of NATO’s campaign.
  35. Western officials contend that, even if this accusation is correct, it would have been impracticable and unwise for NATO to keep the Council informed of all operational details, for fear of leaks. If a coalition of powers were asked to undertake high-intensity operations under close Security Council supervision in future, many would refuse to join the proposed campaign. Nonetheless, this debate raises important questions about how powers can better exchange information over crisis management – whether on military operations or non-military affairs – to consolidate cooperation.
  36. While the problems of diplomacy and accountability affected NATO’s operation in Libya, the disputes involved were not sufficiently intense to disrupt the campaign. There was much diplomatic sniping after the campaign was over, arguably complicating talks on Syria, but the lasting damage was limited. By contrast, it should be clear that in a military campaign involving major national interests – such as any mission involving Iran – it will be far harder to keep diplomacy going. However, the risks and costs of such a crisis mean that it is crucial that all powers consider how they would maintain diplomatic channels, and search for a mutually acceptable solution, in such a crisis.

- 
37. Peace operations are less controversial than the use of force. Peacekeeping has become a central part of international crisis management, with over 100,000 personnel under UN command alone. However, there are reasons to be concerned for the future of peace operations. In the past, governments have often been content to treat peacekeeping (like mediation) as an end in itself. In many cases, multinational forces are deployed for largely symbolic purposes – often meaning that they lack the capacity to fulfill their mandates, or that the troops involved are poorly motivated.
38. Some major powers, such as India, which have a long track record in peacekeeping have begun to question this commitment. Many Western powers, which have traditionally paid the majority of peacekeeping costs, now question whether it is worth the price. No major power advocated for a large-scale peace force in Libya or has suggested such a force for Syria. Yet peacekeepers have been asked to manage cases – such as Darfur and South Sudan – that present huge challenges.
39. These tendencies suggest that peacekeeping is affected by the same type of drift that affects mediation and sanctions. A more strategic approach to mandating and deploying missions – backed up by new military resources – could restore credibility to peacekeeping in the medium term.

#### **E. Diplomatic mechanisms for crisis management**

40. Reviewing the military and non-military dimensions of crisis management, two issues are evident. One is the need to ensure that crisis management tools of all types be framed with overarching political strategies if they are to have a significant effect. The second is that creating such strategies is in itself extremely difficult, especially in a period of shifting power dynamics. As we have noted, there are potential crises (i.e. Iran) in which the diplomacy will be very much harder.
41. As we noted above, the Security Council has proved a resilient mechanism over the last year, despite breakdowns among the major powers over the Middle East. However, the Council is not well-placed to act as a forum for long-term strategic discussions either (i) in a case like Libya, where an acute crisis extends for a significant period of time; or (ii) a case like Iran, in which efforts to avert a crisis can carry on for years, and which involves competing interests among the major powers.
42. While regional organizations are also important platforms for crisis management, they are by their nature exclusive and can antagonize major powers such as the U.S., China and India. By contrast, some ongoing conflicts have generated specific diplomatic formations – such as the Six Party Talks on Korea – that engage all the concerned major powers and develop some habits of cooperation. In the case of Sudan, for example, a contact group has given the UN essential back-up for many years.
43. These crisis-specific formations have parallels in other parts of the multilateral system, such as the Nuclear Security Summit and the Global Counterterrorism Forum, although both are still in their infancy. It remains to be seen whether the exercise of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Forum, which perhaps inevitably only had a limited impact under the Mexican Presidency, will be repeated. Such adaptive entities have the potential to play an important part in deepening international cooperation on foreign policy and security issues in the future in parallel with the Security Council.
44. The Libyan and Syrian crises have both generated crisis-specific groups of their own. But both have been flawed. In the Libyan case, Western and Arab powers pulled together a Contact Group that excluded China, Russia and other emerging powers – arguably easing its internal discussions but ensuring that the BRICS felt alienated from its decision-making. By contrast, China and Russia have both refused to join the recently-formed Friends of the Syrian People, claiming it is anti-Damascus.

- 
45. Nonetheless, it should be a long-term strategic goal of the major powers to pull together and consolidate similar contact groups to address future crises – preferably initiating discussions before a crisis comes to a head, so that all sides have some grasp of the interests and positions involved. Such groups can be initiated informally around the UN (where working-level Groups of Friends are a well-established tool) or potentially as offshoots of the G20, allowing for some high-level inputs.
46. Such groups do not necessarily have to represent a common political vision. Indeed, they will be more effective if they bring together major powers with opposed positions to either (i) find a minimum of common ground; or (ii) at least keep channels of communication open during crises. Like-minded states have myriad channels of communication to concert their policy.
47. Groups of this type can take on many of the confidence-building and strategic coordination tasks laid out above: addressing the unintended economic consequences, for example, or ironing out clashes between mediation, the use of force and other forms of coercion in complicated crises. Above all, groups of this type can ensure that diplomacy – both inside a state in crisis and among major powers – is not crushed under the weight of military operations, sanctions regimes and vicious rhetoric.

## F. An agenda for cooperation

48. This paper has outlined a series of recommendations – some relevant to decision-makers and others of more immediate concern to policy-planners and their academic advisers. These ideas include:
- An intensified effort at all levels to build a common understanding of when and how mediation, human rights instruments and international justice mechanisms affect crises;

- A related discussion of how to apply sanctions more strategically and combine them with other crisis management tools more effectively to influence those they target;
  - A parallel dialogue on ways to combine multilaterally-approved military and diplomatic efforts so as to (i) achieve common policy goals; and (ii) minimize great power frictions;
  - Confidence-building around the effects of sanctions on the economic interests of major powers, regional trade networks and the overall international economic system;
  - A technical analysis of how to share information on multilaterally-mandated military campaigns better, without compromising the basic security and efficiency of operations;
  - A drive to construct more robust diplomatic frameworks for (i) shaping discussions of immediate crises; and (ii) encouraging longer-term dialogues on challenges to international security, both by theme (i.e. energy issues) and by region.
49. All these suggestions have a common theme. Major power diplomacy can identify more effective cooperation over preventing, managing and mitigating crises – and, where necessary, rebuilding states affected by violence. The alternative is intensifying competition over crisis-affected states, with potentially damaging effects on the evolving international system in the long-term. Despite the many disputes of the last year, there is evidence that major powers (and the U.S. above all) want to foster more resilient and effective mechanisms for cooperation. This will take diplomatic courage – including a willingness to speak frankly about national interests – if it is to have a chance of success.

---

## The Responsibility to Get Serious

### Concept Note for “The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States,” February 2012

Bruce D. Jones, Richard Gowan, Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Emily O’Brien

The crises in Libya and Syria have revealed fierce differences over the principles and politics of crisis management, creating rifts among both established and emerging powers. The case for using force over Libya was a source of divisions within both the United Nations and NATO (not to mention many capitals including Washington). The Arab League’s members have differed over how to handle Syria, although the League has hardened its position as the situation has deteriorated. And the BRICS countries, having initially presented a united front against European-led efforts to put pressure on Damascus through the UN, have now split on the issue – as the most recent Security Council vote on Syria demonstrated.

It is tempting to compare the poisonous diplomacy of recent months to the debates over intervention sparked by the Iraq war in 2003. But the comparison is misleading. In both the Libyan and Syrian cases, all sides including the U.S. have placed the United Nations at the center of their diplomatic strategies. And all parties have also genuinely attempted to utilize options other than force: prior to the debate over the use of force in Libya, the Security Council unanimously approved sanctions against Tripoli, invoking the “Responsibility to Protect” and involving the International Criminal Court. But there has been frustration over the limitations of non-military crisis management tools. In the Libyan case, many (though not all) diplomats feared that the initial package of measures were unlikely to have much impact in less than six months, making them of little use in isolation. In the Syrian case, non-UN-mandated sanctions have done real economic damage to the economy, while human rights monitoring by the UN and Arab League has highlighted the level of abuses by security forces. Yet this combination of tools has failed to cause President Assad to make any real political concessions or accept a transition.

Meanwhile peace operations – another standard response to many crises for the past decade – have also struggled. UN forces in Côte d’Ivoire came close to disaster in early 2011, but the Security Council delayed deploying significant reinforcements until the last moment. Western members of the Council also set severe limits on the number of UN troops available in the nascent nation of South Sudan, apparently for financial reasons. The peacekeepers there have been unable to stop ethnic violence.

These crises have demonstrated flaws in the international crisis management system that experts have long warned about. It is not hard to find examples of the system breaking down elsewhere: a mix of peacekeepers, sanctions and ICC indictments failed to halt the killing in Darfur. Yet, while the horrors of the Darfur and Ivorian crises both rightly seized public and political attention, neither represented an overarching strategic priority for the U.S. or emerging powers. By contrast the future of Syria, with its links to Iran and its potential to spur regional instability, is unquestionably a first-order strategic issue.

There is a pressing need to review the state of international cooperation on crisis management. Yet passions remain high, especially over events in Libya. Some Non-Western diplomats argue that NATO’s pursuit of regime change in Tripoli made it hard to believe Western promises that the military option was off the table in Syria. U.S. and European officials argue that this is disingenuous – American diplomats at the UN made the scale of the Libyan air campaign clear in advance – but most accept that the emerging powers were affronted by the way NATO (over)interpreted its mandate to protect civilians. The fact that the BRICS were left out of the Contact Group on Libya made matters worse.

Is there a way to get beyond the finger-pointing and tactical posturing involved in such debates? It is very hard to break away from the specifics of the Libyan and Syrian situations, but strategists from all sides of the debate should be able to agree that these crises show up flaws in the framework for crisis management that need addressing. After the fall of Tripoli, the Brazilian government made a widely-noted contribution to debate by arguing that the Responsibility

---

to Protect needed to be buttressed by a concept of “Responsibility while Protecting” which could guide the use of force in cases like Libya. The Obama administration has launched an important initiative to boost the tools for genocide prevention.

Yet it can be argued that there is an even more fundamental need to recognize the “*Responsibility to Get Serious*”: a commitment by all powers to restore credibility to international crisis management. While all governments profess their commitment to international institutions, concepts such as the Responsibility to Protect and tools like peacekeeping, their contributions to multilateral security cooperation are often *ad hoc* and piecemeal. The mechanisms set up to coordinate international efforts in crisis management (such as the UN’s department of peacekeeping operations and the EU’s crisis management structures) have grown stronger since the Cold War but work under severe political and institutional constraints. The financial crisis has placed a new set of significant limits on these entities.

But retooling international crisis management cannot be reduced to strengthening various bits and pieces of the multilateral system. Much more broadly, it is about the willingness of major powers to find common ground over the utilization of different types of crisis management tools, up to and including the use of force itself. Crises can inspire a new level of cooperation in support of specific mechanisms: the Libyan and Syrian cases have seen a high level of agreement on efforts to use the UN human rights machinery to observe and deter violence, although China, India and Russia have been skeptical. As we have noted, Libya marked a step forward in the ICC’s role as a conflict prevention mechanism, with full support from Security Council members who have never ratified the Rome Statute (including China and the U.S.).

This conference aims to explore other areas for enhanced cooperation. Options include:

- **Mediation and preventive diplomacy:** while “conflict prevention” is a recurrently fashionable topic, few foreign ministries and international institutions

invest significantly in these tools. When crises like that in Libya or Syria arise, numerous mediators rush to the scene, but (i) many are poorly-prepared, and (ii) they often lack the whole-hearted support of all major powers. In the Libyan case, South Africa tried to mediate a solution with Gaddafi – but NATO governments gave half-hearted support, making it unclear whether any compromise would be honored. But the emerging powers’ insistence on mediation seemed to be based on a naïve assessment of Gaddafi’s character, allowing the Colonel to exploit and exacerbate the splits among major powers. How can preventive diplomacy and mediation be given more credibility in future?

- **Sanctions:** in cases such as Saddam-era Iraq and present-day Iran, Western and non-Western powers are able to agree on sanctions regimes but not on how to implement them. Western officials accuse non-Western governments of avoiding the full implementation of sanctions that could do them economic harm (although, as the recent European debate about an oil embargo on Iran showed, Western countries have their own sensitivities in this area too). Non-Western observers argue that the U.S. and Europe (i) fail to recognize the human damage of sanctions regimes; and (ii) often fail to devise diplomatic mechanisms for governments affected by sanctions to bargain a way out. Often, as now in Syria, the only way for a government to escape sanctions is to surrender power. Is it possible to agree on sanctions regimes that are (i) better-implemented, but also (ii) more politically flexible?
- **Peace and stability operations:** although peace operations have expanded exponentially over the last decade, non-Western powers argue that Western countries privilege a few missions (such as those in Afghanistan and Lebanon) and treat others as an afterthought. Western officials argue that they provide the bulk of funding for UN operations, and raise concerns about the emerging powers’ willingness to put their troops in harm’s way in many cases. There are significant exceptions – such as Brazilian troops

---

in Haiti or Indian forces in the Congo – but there is a lack of overall strategic shared purpose. There is also a need for greater innovation around alternative types of peace operations, such as robust ceasefire monitoring for cases like Syria.

- **The use of force:** coercive military interventions are inevitably a uniquely sensitive issue and one where inter-governmental debate is often nastiest. In cases such as Libya, the U.S. and Europe stand accused of (i) resorting to military operations to the exclusion of diplomacy; and (ii) shifting the goals of operations as they unfold. U.S. and European officials respond that other powers' refusal to countenance the use of force can allow crises to drag out and deteriorate (although the West is often equally divided over force, as over Iraq and Libya.) The search for clear rules for interventions is a long-standing and frustrating process. Is it possible to align initiatives like Brazil's "Responsibility while Protecting" and the American efforts to address mass atrocities to create a basis for more constructive debates?
- **Post-conflict responsibilities:** although a great deal of attention has been given to peace-building and state-building, Western and non-Western powers alike appear increasingly wary of investing in post-conflict reconstruction. NATO powers, already heading for the exit in Afghanistan, wanted to avoid any heavy post-war presence in Libya. While engaged in peacekeeping, many non-Western emerging powers have yet to develop fully-fledged strategies for using development aid to assist peace-building processes. It is not clear that anyone has a strategy to sustain the secular and multi-ethnic nature of Syrian society and the rights of minorities after Assad. Can the emerging and Western powers seek a common understanding on the responsibility to ensure political and social stability in the post-conflict setting?

- **Aligning crisis management tools:** while there are significant debates to be had over specific types of crisis management tools, a broader discussion is needed over how the various tools are aligned and used in parallel. How can mediation be more effectively coupled with sanctions, threats of force or ongoing military operations, for example? In the Libyan and Syrian cases, diplomatic efforts by differing governments and organizations created a cacophony of views and initiatives rather than forming coherent strategies. Is it possible for different groups of states to use a variety of conflict management tools in parallel to achieve common goals, whether in a coordinated or ad hoc fashion? Discussions such as these may prove to be most productive, as they are more about tactics than underlying principles.

If today's major powers are able to find more common ground on any of these issues, it might be a recipe for more successful crisis management in future. But the "seriousness" of a crisis management effort is not only defined by the tools used. It is also affected by (i) the speed with which powers agree to apply the tools available to an emerging crisis; (ii) the frankness with which they negotiate; and (iii) their willingness to follow up diplomatic initiatives with all resources and admit when they have failed.<sup>1</sup>

In the Libyan case, the Security Council initially moved unusually quickly by its own standards. This was not true over Syria: the U.S., European and non-Western powers alike held back at first in the hope that President Assad would choose liberalization rather than violence. Although Assad encouraged this with promises of reform, the failure to put pressure on him at an earlier stage arguably let the crisis worsen. The problem of frank discussion has – rightly or wrongly – been highlighted by accusations that NATO overstepped the boundaries of its UN mandate in Libya. Yet it can also be argued that claims by NATO's critics that any form of pressure on Syria should be treated

---

<sup>1</sup> It should also be noted that the recent composition of the Security Council – which involved all the BRICS in 2011 and still includes India and South Africa as well as China and Russia – created a framework for frank discussions with the emerging powers that is only temporary. Once India and South Africa leave the Council at the end of this year, there will be renewed questions about the forum's ability to reflect the concerns of all emerging powers. Security Council reform is, of course, the theoretical answer to this problem. But in reality it will be necessary to find alternative mechanisms to keep Brazil, India, South Africa and other emerging powers engaged in discussions.

---

as the prelude to force were distractions. Both crises also saw many diplomatic initiatives sputtering out with little consequence: the Arab League, gradually strengthening its pressure on Syria when Assad has defied it, has been the main exception.

There are other lessons to be learned from these crises. The purpose of “The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States” is not to rehash the controversies of 2011. Instead, the goal is to identify the terms for a substantive discussion of the “Responsibility to Get Serious” in managing the ongoing crisis in Syria, the risk of instability in Libya and other crises that still lie ahead.

# The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States

## Participant List Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates 21-22 February 2012

<b>José Humberto de Brito Cruz</b>	Head of Policy Planning, Ministry of External Relations of Brazil
<b>Chen Qi</b>	Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Tsinghua University
<b>Richard Gowan</b>	Associate Director, NYU Center on International Cooperation; Senior Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations
<b>Jean-Marie Guéhenno</b>	Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution and NYU Center on International Cooperation; Director, Center for International Conflict Resolution, Columbia University
<b>Huang Jing</b>	Professor and Director, Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore
<b>Martin Indyk</b>	Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy, Brookings Institution
<b>Bruce Jentleson</b>	Professor of Public Policy and Political Science, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University
<b>Bruce D. Jones</b>	Director, NYU Center on International Cooperation; Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
<b>Stephen Krasner</b>	Professor of International Relations; Senior Associate Dean for the Social Sciences; Deputy Director, Freeman Spogli Institute; Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University
<b>Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens</b>	Multilateral Affairs Expert, Policy Planning Division, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>Dong Hwi Lee</b>	Professor, Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Republic of Korea
<b>Emily O'Brien</b>	Senior Program Officer, NYU Center on International Cooperation
<b>Ted Piccone</b>	Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of Foreign Policy, Brookings Institution
<b>Shyam Saran</b>	Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi; Former Foreign Secretary of India
<b>Kori Schake</b>	Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University; Associate Professor of International Security Studies, United States Military Academy
<b>Sam Selvadurai</b>	Strategy Adviser, Politico-Military issues and International Organisations, Policy Unit, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<b>Jeremy Shapiro</b>	Staff Member, Policy Planning Staff, US State Department
<b>Shen Dingli</b>	Professor of International Relations; Director of the Center for American Studies; Executive Vice Dean of the Institute of International Affairs, Fudan University
<b>Shi Yinhong</b>	Professor of International Relations and Director of Centre on American Studies, Renmin University of China
<b>W.P.S. Sidhu</b>	Senior Fellow, NYU Center on International Cooperation
<b>Andrew Small</b>	Transatlantic Fellow, German Marshall Fund
<b>Stephen J. Stedman</b>	Freeman Spogli Senior Fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law and FSI; Affiliated Faculty Member, CISAC; Professor of Political Science (by courtesy), Stanford University
<b>Alcides Costa Vaz</b>	Professor of Political Science, University of Brasília
<b>Adam Ward</b>	Director of Studies, International Institute for Strategic Studies
<b>Richard S. Williamson</b>	Senior Fellow for Multilateral Institutions, Chicago Council on Global Affairs
<b>Thomas Wright</b>	Fellow, Brookings Institution

---

## The Use of Force, Crisis Diplomacy and the Responsibilities of States

### Conference Agenda

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
21-22 February 2012

#### DAY 1 – Tuesday 21 FEBRUARY 2012

9.00am-9.30am *Coffee and registration*

9.30am-10.00am **Welcoming remarks**

- Dr. Bruce D. Jones  
*Director, NYU Center on International Cooperation;  
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution*

**10.00am-12.00pm Introductory debate: the use of force and crisis management**

Events in Libya, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire have stimulated new debates over the use of force in international diplomacy. Although the arguments involved are far more complex than those over Iraq, they have created severe divides between the U.S. and rising powers. Is there any common ground on when to intervene in escalating crises and how force can be used?

- Chair: Dr. Thomas Wright  
*Fellow, Brookings Institution*
- Dr. Bruce D. Jones  
*Director, NYU Center on International Cooperation;  
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution*
- Dr. José Humberto de Brito Cruz  
*Head of Policy Planning, Ministry of External Relations of  
Brazil*
- Professor Shen Dingli  
*Professor of International Relations; Director of the  
Center for American Studies; Executive Vice Dean of the  
Institute of International Affairs, Fudan University*

12.00pm-1.30pm *Lunch*

**1.30pm-3.00pm: Responsible sovereignty:  
the wider context**

The last year's debates over interventionism point to broader dilemmas in international security. Do today's major powers have a shared concept of common security? Has the rising powers' growing stake in the world economy shaped their security concepts? To what extent are individual powers' responses to crises constrained by domestic factors?

- Chair: Mr. Richard Gowan  
*Associate Director, NYU Center on International  
Cooperation; Senior Fellow, European Council on Foreign  
Relations*
- Professor Stephen J. Stedman  
*Freeman Spogli Senior Fellow at the Center on  
Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law and FSI;  
Affiliated Faculty Member, CISAC; Professor of Political  
Science (by courtesy), Stanford University*
- Ambassador Shyam Saran  
*Former Foreign Secretary of India*

3.00pm-3:30pm *Coffee break*

**3.30pm-5.00pm The changing dynamics of  
crisis diplomacy in the Middle East**

This session will focus in more detail on how governments and international organizations have responded to events in the Middle East. What caused variations in major power cooperation over Libya, Syria and Yemen? Were significant diplomatic opportunities missed? How has the emergence of the Arab League as a crisis management organization affected international calculations, and what are the implications of recent tensions with Iran for great power diplomacy?

- Chair: Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno  
*Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution and NYU Center  
on International Cooperation; Director, Center for  
International Conflict Resolution, Columbia University*
- Dr. Martin Indyk  
*Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy, Brookings*

---

*Institution*

- Professor Shi Yinhong  
*Professor of International Relations and Director of Centre on American Studies, Renmin University of China*
- Professor Kori Schake  
*Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University; Associate Professor of International Security Studies, United States Military Academy*

**5.00pm** *Practical announcements*

**7.00pm-9.00pm** **Dinner**

**DAY 2 – Wednesday 22 FEBRUARY 2012**

**9.00am-9.30am** *Coffee and registration*

**9.30am-11.00am** **Alternatives to the use of force: options for cooperation**

While military interventions are uniquely controversial, emerging powers also have significant differences over issues such as sanctions and the politics of mediation. These have been highlighted during the Arab Spring, and plague discussions of Iran and Syria. This session will explore current debates over non-military tools and how to resolve them.

- Chair: Dr. Ted Piccone  
*Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of Foreign Policy, Brookings Institution*
- Professor Bruce Jentleson  
*Professor of Public Policy and Political Science, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University*
- Professor Alcides Costa Vaz  
*Professor of Political Science, University of Brasília*
- Professor Huang Jing  
*Professor and Director, Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*
- Ambassador Richard Williamson  
*Senior Fellow for Multilateral Institutions, Chicago Council on Global Affairs*

**11.00am-11.30am** *Coffee break*

**11.30am-1.00pm** **Rebuilding trust**

How can the U.S. and emerging powers rebuild trust about the terms for the use of force and coercion in international affairs? What are the best platforms for such a debate: the Security Council, regional dialogues, a G20-style forum? What roles can middle powers and civil society play in shaping this debate, and who is best placed to lead it politically? What policy options exist for improving major power cooperation over conflict prevention, mediation and peacemaking as potential alternatives to coercive measures? How can new initiatives on these options be developed, and what are the best openings for talks?

- Chair: Dr. W.P.S. Sidhu  
*Senior Fellow, NYU Center on International Cooperation*
- Professor Dong Hwi Lee  
*Professor, Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Republic of Korea*
- Professor Stephen Krasner  
*Professor of International Relations; Senior Associate Dean for the Social Sciences; Deputy Director, Freeman Spogli Institute; Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University*
- Professor Chen Qi  
*Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Tsinghua University*
- Mr. Adam Ward  
*Director of Studies, International Institute for Strategic Studies*

**1.00pm-1.15pm** *Closing remarks*

**1.15pm** **Buffet lunch**

## Managing Global Order (MGO)

*Rising powers. Evolving threats. Managing global order.*

*A joint initiative of the NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC), the Brookings Institution and the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) at Stanford University*

The international system faces a series of evolving threats to state and human security, economic prosperity, and the environment. These risks are rising just as U.S. leadership is constrained; new emerging powers are taking positions of increasing influence on the international stage; and international governance arrangements are struggling to cope. Coming to grips with these threats and evolving international realities requires major innovations in both strategy and governance. MGO works to foster that innovation through its research expertise and convening power.

MGO produces independent research and policy recommendations for U.S. and international policy makers, and convenes high-level, informal sessions between the United States and the emerging powers.

## The NYU Abu Dhabi Institute

Please visit <http://nyuad.nyu.edu/institute/> for more information about the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute.



Related Publications from the  
**Center on International Cooperation**

**Security Council Working Methods and UN Peace Operations: The Case of Chad and the Central African Republic**

Alexandra Novosseloff and Richard Gowan

**Security Council Working Methods and UN Peace Operations: The Case of UNMEE**

Richard Gowan with Teresa Whitfield

**Review of Political Missions 2011**

**The Role of the United Nations in Middle East Conflict Prevention**

Elizabeth Sellwood

**ECOWAS and Conflict Prevention in West Africa: The Triple Threats**

Alhaji M.S. Bah and Kwesi Aning

**Cooperating for Peace and Security: Evolving Institutions and Arrangements in a Context of Changing U.S. Security Policy**

Bruce Jones, Shepard Forman, Richard Gowan, eds.

**Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2012**

**Power and Responsibility: Building International Order in an Era of Transnational threats**

Bruce Jones, Carlos Pascual and Stephen John Stedman

**A Plan for Action: A New Era of International Cooperation for a Changed World 2009, 2010 and Beyond**

Managing Global Insecurity (MGI)

**Conflict Prevention in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific**

Elsina Wainwright

More information about these and other recent publications can be found at [www.cic.nyu.edu](http://www.cic.nyu.edu).

# CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**New York University  
726 Broadway, Suite 543  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 998-3680  
[cic.info@nyu.edu](mailto:cic.info@nyu.edu)  
[www.cic.nyu.edu](http://www.cic.nyu.edu)**