

Learning to be Quiet: A Blueprint for Conflict Prevention in  
the European Union

Dr. Michael Johns

Laurentian University at Georgian College

Room C310, One Georgian Drive  
Barrie, Ontario, L4M 3X9

mjohns@georgianc.on.ca

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Those involved in the prevention of conflict must be seen in the same light as we look at airline mechanics. If the mechanic does his or her job the plane arrives at its destination safely and the passengers leave the plane never once thinking about the mechanic or being aware of how much work went into keeping the plane in the air. Conversely, if the mechanic fails to properly prepare the plane, disaster results and immediately the mechanic and his or her work faces intense public censure. Those involved in conflict prevention walk the same line between obscurity resulting from success and scrutiny resulting from failure. It is often therefore difficult to judge what specific strategies employed were in fact successful. Failures can be analyzed and critiqued but success is often harder to explain. What is clear however is that conflict prevention is needed to give volatile environments a chance at peace. Whether it be international conflict, class conflict or internal ethnic conflicts, mediation, monitoring and engagement is often required.

The question then becomes: who is the legitimate authority to undertake such a task? Traditionally, the state or states involved in the conflict have had to perform their own or seek their own outside arbiter for conflict prevention and resolution. There has recently been a move away from this more simplistic approach, simply because it is no longer often effective. As Lund notes: “the ability of hitherto powerful individual states to influence world events through their traditional foreign policy tools is diminishing” (1996, 24). Where local attempts have proven ineffective, the United Nations has stepped in and taken an active role in conflict prevention (Lund, 2004). Between the local and the United Nations there resides a third potential partner in the monitoring and prevention of all forms of conflict: regional international organizations. These large and increasingly powerful organizations combine the weight and perceived legitimacy of an international organization with the localized knowledge of the situation. Moreover, as these organizations either contain or border the conflict zone there is greater incentive to find a peaceful solution to a conflict without having to deal with claims of bias that occur with ‘winner take all’ localized forms of conflict prevention. Unfortunately, both the United Nations and most regional organizations have been fixated on the post-conflict world of peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and the rebuilding of societies once the conflict has ceased (Van de Goor and Verstegen, 2004, 138). There are fewer regional inter-governmental organizations currently dedicated to early warning and conflict prevention.

One region of the world that has had a great deal of success in the prevention of conflict, particularly ethnic conflict, has been Europe. While the continent has a long and continuing history of violence by and large conflict has been avoided, particularly in the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the democratization of the East European states. What is interesting about the European case is that the majority of this conflict prevention has been done outside of the largest international organization in the region, the European Union. In fact, referring back to the analogy above of the airline mechanic, in regard to Europe the plane’s maintenance has been sub-contracted out to a smaller contractor. The main institution involved in ethnic conflict prevention in Europe generally since the 1990’s has been the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and specifically the OSCE’s High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). The EU has helped the High Commissioner in his work and has supported his efforts but has rarely attempted to undertake conflict prevention strategies on its own. As Cameron notes the EU has attempted to be more involved in issues surrounding

international conflicts he acknowledges that there is “further room for the EU to improve its performance as regards conflict prevention” (Cameron, 2004, 207-208).

This paper will examine the success of the High Commissioner as an agent of conflict prevention with particular emphasis placed on the early work down in Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War. The paper will examine the High Commissioner’s use of the policy of ‘Quiet Diplomacy’ in the prevention of a break-out of ethnic conflict throughout Eastern Europe and will then provide an analysis of what aspects of Quiet Diplomacy could be transferred to the European Union as it attempts at adding to its preventative ‘toolkit’. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the need for the European Union to become more active in this field both due to its ever increasing influence on the lives of most Europeans and the questionable future of the OSCE and by extension the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

*The High Commissioner on National Minorities- an overview*

Much has been written of the High Commissioner’s work at the conclusion of the Cold War (see for example Czáký, 2001; Daag, 2001; Rönquist, 1994; The Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, 1997; Chandler, 1994 and Holt, 2001). A brief description of the High Commissioner and his work is necessary however. The High Commissioner position was created in the early 1990’s in the wake of the changes confronting Eastern Europe. The (then) CSCE ratified the position at the 1992 Helsinki Summit. Providing the first High Commissioner, former Dutch politician Max Van Der Stoel the following mandate:

The High Commissioner will provide ‘early warning’ and, as appropriate ‘early action’ at the earliest possible stage in regard to tensions involving national minority issues, which have not yet developed beyond an early warning stage, but, in the judgment of the High Commissioner, have the potential to develop into conflict within the CSCE area, affecting peace, stability or relations between participating states (Zellner, 2002, 19).

This mandate was made purposely vague by the countries drafting the position. In fact much of the mandate outlines where the High Commissioner could not go. His mandate precludes him from working in his home state and in areas with active terrorist campaigns and he must be invited into the country (Kemp, 2001, 14). While such a mandate could have limited the effectiveness of the position, Van Der Stoel used the vagueness to his advantage and proceeded as he saw fit. He chose the areas where he felt his influence could be most useful and he proceeded without the restraints that a clear mandate would place on him (Interview Van Der Stoel, 2003). Van Der Stoel moved forward as he perceived his mandate but made it clear to all those he came in contact with his own addition to the mandate. He felt that in order to be able to effectively prevent conflict he needed to emphasize to all parties that he was the High Commissioner *on* National Minorities, not the *for* National Minorities (Packer, 2005, 255). He was to be a mediator not ombudsmen. Facilitator, not advocate.

As Packer (2005) notes, while the High Commissioner position was envisioned as a purely a form of conflict prevention, the reality of the position has been much different. Due to the reality on the ground in the countries where he felt a need to become involved as well as his interpretation of his position the High Commissioner became engaged in

both conflict prevention and conflict management. Packer goes as far as to describe the High Commissioner's role as threefold: Pyrometer, Prophylactic and Pyrovestis (Packer, 2005). This is a useful description in that it covers all of the work carried out by the High Commissioner, in both watching for conflict, preventing conflict and also ending conflicts that have already begun. This expansion of the High Commissioner's mandate was deemed necessary by the HCNM and his staff as it is not practical to assume that conflicts can be easily assessed as to where they are in a particular cycle. Conflicts can lie dormant and then suddenly ignite, while others can begin to move into conflict but not go beyond low-level violence. As Packer notes, the High Commissioner decided to be involved at all levels of conflict prevention, including low level active conflict. This was an attempt to avoid the large-scale ethnic conflicts that were predicted by the OSCE after the fall of communism. As it was the threat of these conflicts that necessitated the creation of the HCNM it made sense for him to do what was necessary to prevent them.

Beginning with trips to the Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia the High Commissioner has been very successful in fulfilling both the mandate set out by the OSCE and the expanded mandate created by Van der Stoel himself. He began in the Baltic states simply due to his belief that in the early 1990's this was where he could make the greatest impact quickly (Van der Stoel interview 2003). His focus was on improving the ability of the large Russian minorities to integrate into Estonia and Latvia. Here he focused on citizenship and language laws because as Bernier notes they "constituted the most fertile ground for an escalation on inter-ethnic conflict" (Bernier, 2001, 347). He met several times in private with members of both the Estonian and Latvian governments and the leaders of the Russian minorities. While his initial attempts at brokering agreements were not successful, as seen with the resistance in Estonia to change the Law on Aliens which was designed to encourage the Russians to return to Russia, over time the High Commissioner was able to bridge the gap between the two sides and make the citizenship and language laws in both countries more acceptable to the Russian minorities and reduced the possibility of conflict in the region.

Based on the success in the Baltic region, the High Commissioner employed a similar strategy throughout the rest of Eastern Europe. Immediately after the signing of the Dayton Accord concerning Bosnia, the HCNM began working in the region, concentrating initially in Croatia and Macedonia. He worked to improve the conditions of the remaining minorities in Croatia and lobbied the government to change its policies towards the Serb minority in particular (Kemp, 2001). His work was similar in Macedonia where his greatest success involved negotiations to create an Albanian language university which opened in 2001. He was so instrumental in steering the negotiations through the daunting process that there were rumours that the school would be named "Max van der Stoel College" (Kemp, 2001, 195). The importance of this university cannot be overstated. By working to create the conditions necessary to allow for its construction the HCNM created a long term "element of a strategy aimed at a political solution to the conflict and the isolation of terrorist forces" (Zellner, 2002, 21).

In Slovakia the HCNM had to negotiate between the new government, the Hungarian minority and the new government of Hungary over their diaspora. He first visited the region in 1993 and continued to be involved in maintaining peaceful relations through the end of the decade and early into the new millennium. Here he focused on two issues, convincing the Slovak government to follow through on the various international

agreements it had signed in regard to minorities and increasing the opportunities for Hungarian students to go to school in their own language (Kemp, 2001, 258). Moreover, he was able to convince law makers to work with municipalities to provide services in a secondary language if the minority group comprised more than 20% of the population (Zellner, 2002, 21).

Along with his work on the Hungarian issue, the HCNM also worked in Slovakia (and elsewhere) on issues concerning the Roma. Without a great deal of political mobilization within the Roma community throughout Europe, the High Commissioner (both past and the present High Commissioner, Rolf Ekeus) has had to modify his strategy of diplomacy and work more on behalf of the Roma and pressure states to change their policies. A secondary problem with the Roma is that they may fall outside of the HCNM mandate as set out by the OSCE. As discussed above the HCNM is to prevent conflict in order to maintain security in Europe. As a non-political, non-mobilized minority, the Roma do not technically meet this standard (Kemp, 2001, 261). With these two limitations the HCNM has been constrained in his work for the Roma, the Office of the High Commissioner has managed to improve Roma rights not just in Slovakia, but in many other East European states as well (Johns, 2003).

Currently, the second High Commissioner has focused his attention more on the far reaches of OSCE territory, with greater emphasis on states in Central Asia. For example, he is working on issues involving Armenian minorities in Georgia ([www.osce.org/hcnm](http://www.osce.org/hcnm)). The current High Commissioner has placed great emphasis on the importance of education and access to education in the prevention of conflict and has worked throughout Europe on improving these conditions for minorities.

How do we then judge the success of the position of the High Commissioner on National Minorities? Returning to the analogy at the beginning of this paper, the plane has certainly not crashed during the time of the HCNM. The conflicts that were anticipated at the beginning of the 1990's that precipitated the creation of the HCNM position did not happen. After the Dayton Accord and subsequent NATO mission in Kosovo Europe has been relatively conflict free. There continues to be tension in the region and there remains active terrorist organizations, both national such as the ETA in Spain and international, but when observed as a totality, the HCNM appears to have been highly successful in fulfilling his mandate. Zellner goes as far as to state that the HCNM has been "the success story of the OSCE" (Zellner, 2002, 19).

There are some questions as to how much of a role the High Commissioner actually played in keeping this peace. One can question whether it was the High Commissioner himself, or the pull of the European Union that was actually compelling the minority group and the state to co-operate. Moreover, the long-term impact of the HCNM's actions is also questioned. As the mandate of the HCNM prevents him from being engaged in areas with active terrorist movements, he has had to concentrate on Eastern Europe. This has meant that there is a divide between the East and West in Europe in terms of the treatment of minorities (Johns, 2003). The HCNM may have in the long term created more conflict and dissatisfaction particularly in Western Europe minorities due to his success in helping East European minorities. The current HCNM appears to be aware of this potential problem and has indicated that he would like to see the mandate expanded so that he could be more active in Western Europe. As he stated in a speech in 2003 while discussing the Copenhagen Criteria on minority rights "the

standards on which the Copenhagen criteria are based should be universally applicable within and throughout the EU, in which case they should be equally- and consistently-applied to all member states” (www.osce.org).

With the expansion of the European Union there has been rumblings that the long term future of the OSCE in general and the HCNM in particular are in doubt. The HCNM has found less receptive audiences in Eastern Europe now that those countries have met EU accession. In fact, even before they were officially accepted leaders in these countries were already arguing that once they were a part of the EU, the HCNM should not be involved in their states (Interview with Rummo, 2003). With the European Union now seen as the main or only source of legitimacy in Europe other international organizations such as the Council of Europe or the OSCE may have outlived their usefulness. If so, then successful or not, there is a more pressing need now than ever to move the successful aspects of the HCNM into the European Union.

### *Quiet Diplomacy*

What has made the HCNM so successful has been his reliance on ‘Quiet Diplomacy’. The main principles of this style of diplomacy are “impartiality” and “confidentiality”. As discussed above it was vital for the HCNM to be seen by both sides as a neutral arbiter. While he was able to pressure both sides, he needed to be seen being interested in a peaceful resolution of tension, in which both sides managed to save face (Packer, 2005, 257). Through an emphasis on talking to both sides, working towards common solutions and brokering an understanding between the minority group and the government the HCNM could present himself as “a problem-solving aid” (Packer, 2005, 257) rather than an ombudsman for either side. As the first HCNM noted, this was one of the most difficult aspects of Quiet Diplomacy as in many cases the only thing both sides agreed on was that he was biased against them (Interview with van der Stoel, 2003).

One way to prove his impartiality was the second aspect of Quiet Diplomacy, confidentiality. While some of the HCNM’s meetings are public and he periodically speaks with the press, the majority of his work is done in private. The confidentiality aspect of the HCNM’s work is so important that his mandate states that he does not have to report to the OSCE Permanent Council about where he goes and what he speaks to the parties about (The Foundation on Inter-ethnic Relations, 1997, 22). One check of the HCNM website ([www.osce.org/hcnm](http://www.osce.org/hcnm)) illustrates how little of his meetings are made public. This has been done for one reason: “confidentiality bred confidence” (Kemp, 2001, 42). By meeting in secret and only discussing the negotiations with the parties involved the HCNM was better able to find positions of agreement and work on plausible, mutually beneficial solutions outside the glare of the media or opposition politicians and interest groups. As Kemp notes:

Confidential meetings allowed the parties to open up to the High Commissioner, and to each other. If they knew that they would not be subject to external pressures or would not be seen to be climbing down from entrenched positions, they were usually willing to consider issues and solutions which would be less politically palatable if they were discussed under public scrutiny.

(Kemp, 2001, 42-43)

While Quiet Diplomacy is dependent on confidentiality, as discussed earlier, when necessary the HCNM will make public statements and early in his mandate was more active in putting recommendations on his website. While this periodically angered those he was speaking with, it was a calculated gamble to make sure the government or minority group understood the seriousness of the situation. Kemp refers to this as “quiet diplomacy plus” which meant that “he tried to remain confidential as long as possible, but he would not hesitate to mobilize others to take up the cause if he was unsuccessful” (Kemp, 2001, 43).

The unique strategy employed by the HCNM has been highly successful. The HCNM and his staff were well versed on the issues, were willing to take an incremental approach and through Quiet Diplomacy were able to create a very high level of trust and confidence with all sides involved. As the former Estonian Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs Paul-Eerik Rummo noted some of the steps recommended by the HCNM during the EU Accession process were met with great resistance, but they were necessary and the HCNM always was able to bring useful ideas and suggestions to the table which allowed the changes to be made (Interview with Rummo, 2003). This strategy has allowed the HCNM to make recommendations and push both sides into agreements they otherwise would have been unable to reach. As Kemp reiterates: “they may not have liked the fact that he was involved in a particular situation and they may have disagreed with some of his recommendations, but they at least respected the fact that he was mandated to do so and that his words carried considerable weight” (Kemp, 2001, 45).

#### *Moving Quiet Diplomacy into the European Union*

While the European Union has been involved in both conflict prevention and conflict management, the strategies that it has employed are strikingly different from the HCNM’s Quiet Diplomacy approach. While it has numerous tools available to it it has focused mainly on the funding of development projects and through high level public mediation. Moreover, the European Union has been reactionary with preference placed on conflict resolution rather than prevention. As seen with the intervention by the EU in Bosnia, it prefers to be involved in peacekeeping rather than in preventing the problem beforehand (Diehl, 2007, 536). As Eavis and Kefford note: “The EU’s emphasis on promoting measures to enhance military and civilian crisis management are important, but efforts to balance this approach with more effective preventative action are long overdue” (Eavis and Kefford, 2002, 4).

It is important to note that the EU has been involved extensively with conflict management throughout the world. Here, it is natural to assume that the EU would use its political, economic and military weight publicly. West Africa for example the EU has worked on conflict prevention through development programs and has worked on creating a “check list for root causes of conflict” (Youngs, 2006, 334). Through identifying these root causes it has been assumed that the EU will be better able to target programs that could do the most amount of good in the shortest amount of time. An important problem remains in that while the EU has emphasized development and democratization as the main routes through which they engage in conflict prevention; the agencies within the EU that are responsible for democratization and conflict prevention have historically failed to interact with one another (Youngs, 2004, 531). As Gourlay observes: “The challenge of coordinating EU crisis management policies is particularly

acute because the broad spectrum of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict activities span these pillars and are therefore governed by distinct decision-making processes and implemented by different institutional actors” (Gourlay, 2004, 405-406). In many ways in the field of international conflict prevention the left hand of the EU does not know what its right hand is doing. The International Crisis Group is more frank in their analysis when they say that in terms of conflict prevention as a foreign policy there “is still considerable room for improvement” (International Crisis Group, 2005, 2). They go on to say that there “are glaring weaknesses in EU ability both to prevent conflict and to manage conflicts as they arise” (International Crisis Group, 2005, 2).

Within the EU the situation is even worse. While internationally the EU has tried to exert influence through foreign policy, there has been less emphasis on internal conflict prevention. Due to the strong economic and political links between the EU countries there is little need for the sort of mediation and development work carried out in other parts of the world. Within the EU the potential for conflict lies in internal state conflict and more specifically ethnic conflict. The EU has historically not been concerned with the internal matters of its member states. In fact it was only with the most recent round of expansion into Eastern Europe when minority rights first became part of the accession process (Sasse, 2004, 65). Even when this finally occurred the EU did not have any legislation of its own from which to work and had to rely on the Copenhagen Criteria on National Minorities as set out by the Council of Europe. During the Accession process it relied on the monitoring of minority issues by the OSCE HCNM and took the HCNM reports and added them into their own reports (Johns, 2003, 689).

Currently there are no specific aspects of the EU’s vast legislation that deals with conflict prevention within states. Many of the European Union’s early members (West European states) do not want to have any outside interference when it comes to their minority groups. This includes the OSCE and the European Union. As they do not want these organizations coming into their state, they are resistant to using any potential tool for conflict prevention in any of the other states for fear of being next. Therefore the one current option the EU has in regard to minority rights within member states; Article 7 TEU requires 4/5ths support by the European Commission and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all states. Even then, this article states that the EU can mediate or impose sanctions on a member state only if there is a “clear risk of a serious breach by a member state” (Hoffmeister, 2004, 100). At that point the EU would have to appoint a panel of experts to determine if sanctions would be required. It is not surprising that with such a restrictive and convoluted process, it has never been implemented.

#### *Quiet Diplomacy as a Tool for the European Union?*

Adding Quiet Diplomacy into the European Union’s toolkit will be a difficult but necessary task. It will require a conscious effort to change how the EU views conflict and it will require the emphasis of the EU’s work to move from conflict management to conflict prevention. There are several steps that could be taken almost immediately without changing the overall structure and operating procedures. Hoffmeister notes in regard to ethnic conflict prevention that more could be done by the European Commission. “The Commission, as a political body, could engage in more systematic review. It could enrich its present monitoring through the experience gained in the enlargement process” (Hoffmeister, 2004, 104). If the HCNM now finds that he is unable



to negotiate effectively with the member states it will fall to the EU and in particular the European Commission to pick up the slack. As states are hesitant to be seen as letting outside actors have influence, Quiet Diplomacy is the ideal tool. The Commission would be able to enter into confidential, secret negotiations in order to resolve conflicts before they become active. As illustrated by the accession process, the EU holds the biggest sticks and carrots when negotiating with states (Johns, 2003). If the Commission could take on a more proactive, yet understated role in minority issues, much could be done. As time passes, it may be necessary to fully establish a position similar to the HCNM who has greater powers to invoke change, but that would be in the future and would require the consent of the member states to create the position and changes to the structure of the EU to make the position permanent (Hoffmeister, 2004). In the interim the European Commission could informally begin this process. By proving to the various member states that the principles of Quiet Diplomacy (confidentiality and impartiality) were the pillars that the Commission was operating, it would be seen as being less intrusive and therefore states would be more open to changing the structure of the EU in the future and move towards a position similar to the HCNM.

Quiet Diplomacy can also be added to the toolkit internationally as well. As the EU is more open to international conflict prevention, it will be easier to implement the strategy in this field. Once again it will fall to the European Commission. The main challenge here is to better co-ordinate the EU's conflict prevention strategies into one coherent plan. Eavis and Kefford note that "measures can strengthen national security and promote democracy, but they must be allied to other policies, such as halting the proliferation of arms into civilian hands" (Eavis and Kefford, 2002, 13). This is where Quiet Diplomacy could be a vital tool. While peacekeeping, democratization movements, development and mediation may need to take place in the public sphere, both due to their obvious international importance and to promote the EU's influence abroad, the secondary long-term issues could be handled behind the scenes using Quiet Diplomacy. By taking an overarching view of conflict prevention/management the EU could solve active conflicts and prevent future ones at the same time and by using the principles of Quiet Diplomacy for the prevention aspects of the EU's foreign policy it would be limiting the opportunities for conflicts to begin and therefore lessening the chances of needing to call on the more public aspects of their foreign policy toolkit, such as peacekeepers.

The Commission has a structure already in place that could better co-ordinate what would be the public and quiet aspects of conflict prevention. The EU already relies on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to help in this area. Established in 1993 the CFSP was expanded in 1999 to include a High Representative of CFSP (Eavis and Kefford, 2002, 4). This High Representative and his staff would be ideally suited to co-ordinate the EU's conflict prevention strategy and to undertake the work necessary to employ a Quiet Diplomacy strategy. There appears to be a realization within the EU that having several agencies all involved in various aspects of conflict prevention, mediation and management is inefficient. This needs to be rectified. A restructuring would allow the CFSP to work "efficiently by clarifying composition, structure and links in order to close the gap between analytical capacity and early action" (Cameron, 2004, 220). By folding all of these functions into the CFSP the EU would be better able to exert influence both publicly and behind closed doors.

The failure to get the constitution passed may actually prove to be an advantage in this one aspect of EU policy. While the constitution had engrained more of the CFSP into law ([www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)) it did not go far enough in co-ordinating the EU's foreign policy. With the constitution delayed, this movement towards greater coherence and potentially a new emphasis on conflict prevention rather than management could be added to the next constitution. That is if a new constitution is forthcoming.

This paper is not naïve to believe that the suggestions outlined above will be easy or plausible in the short term. The paper argues that these changes are necessary, but there will be difficulties. The main advantage the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities had when carrying out his work using Quiet Diplomacy was his anonymity. The OSCE itself is a relatively unknown international organization, and the vast majority of people would be unaware of the position of High Commissioner. He therefore can work without the pressure of public scrutiny. The European Union is obviously a much higher profile international organization and would therefore be under greater pressure to operate in a public manner. That said, this does not eliminate Quiet Diplomacy from the EU's toolkit. The HCNM has managed to continue to employ the strategy even when public awareness of him and his work increased. In the East European countries where he was very active in the 1990's the HCNM was a household name. Moreover, while the EU as an evolving potential counter to United States hegemony is well known, the structure of the EU and the people in positions of power remain guarded from the public eye. With the suggestions in this paper that the European Commission be responsible for the implementing of Quiet Diplomacy for both internal and external conflict prevention strategies would further shield it from the public eye. The Commission is relatively anonymous and very independent (Ginsberg, 2007, 174). It would be able to carry out much of the Quiet Diplomacy necessary to prevent conflict without the public or media being aware of their work, or their potential influence. It is also important to remember that for the EU's external foreign policy Quiet Diplomacy would only be an addition to their already very public work and therefore would be able to operate similarly to the High Commissioner in terms of confidentiality.

### *Conclusion*

This paper had advocated the need for the European Union to learn from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and begin to employ Quiet Diplomacy as a tool in its ever growing conflict prevention role. The paper has argued that this strategy can be used both for external foreign affairs where the EU has been very active and for the prevention of ethnic conflict within the EU, an area that the EU has neglected entirely. The paper advocates the use of Quiet Diplomacy for very simple reasons. "Simply, the quiet diplomacy of conflict prevention as undertaken by the HCNM works. It is also indisputably cheap, both in terms of human lives saved and suffering avoided and in terms of actual financial expenditures" (Packer, 2005, 268). We are reminded everyday that the old forms of conflict prevention are not working and we need to try new ideas. As Chayes and Chayes note "the demands of post-Cold War international crises for flexible and innovative responses are forcing departures from ... traditional attitudes" (Chayes and Chayes, 2000, 295). Chayes and Chayes cite specifically the HCNM and his unique conflict prevention strategies as a potential answer for these issues not just in the European Union, but elsewhere.

Beyond the international crises that need new strategies, old ethnic problems remain within the EU. The revival of the Basque terrorist group the ETA in the Spring of 2007 show that these problems remain inside the EU's borders. The Basque case as well as the Corsican problems in France and the rise of Muslim violence in numerous EU member countries fall outside of the OSCE's High Commissioners mandate yet they threaten the political and economic stability of the Union. The EU needs to accept more responsibility in the field of ethnic conflict and it needs to do so quickly. Taking the success of the HCNM and adding the weight of the EU to it appears to be best chance for success in preventing the spread of these conflicts and to prevent further issues arising.

Regional organizations have begun to take on more and more of a conflict prevention role in world politics. Each organization will address these issues in its own way based on its interests and capabilities (Diehl, 2007, 548). The European Union has a unique role to play in both ethnic conflict within its borders and international conflict outside of its borders. To face these constant challenges it will need to rely on every tool available to it. The decision makers in the European Union would be wise to look at the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and his use of Quiet Diplomacy. The EU should learn from the High Commissioner and where possible, duplicate his methods and hope to duplicate his successes. The EU has many planes in the air at all times and the mechanic will continue to be very busy. Time will tell if they all land safely.

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