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# Preface

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**A**growing number of political missions work throughout the world to mediate conflicts, devise and monitor peace agreements, and promote good governance, without significant police or military presences.

The first edition of the *Review of Political Missions*, the first comprehensive effort to chart the role of these missions, quickly found its way to policymakers at the UN and in governments, academics and journalists – an effort helped by launches in Berlin, Geneva, Oslo and Washington, D.C. That the first edition was so well received speaks to the talent and dedication of CIC staff and the excellent help and support they received from an array of organizations and individuals.

This second edition updates the analysis of trends and issues affecting political missions. In many ways, it has been a historic year, and the themes addressed in this volume speak to the role political missions can play in regions facing momentous challenges to stability or undergoing unprecedented transitions. As the effects of the “Arab Spring” continue to unfold across North Africa and the Middle East, it is even more critical to better understand the potential positive role of political missions in aiding transitions.

Charles Call makes an important contribution to this volume by analyzing three recent cases of states that

experienced departures from constitutional order. He concludes that political missions, though far from unqualified successes, had a positive impact in limiting violence, restoring order and encouraging the development of more responsive and inclusive regimes.

In other regions, drug trafficking, money laundering and organized crime weaken states and can draw officials into pervasive systems of corruption. In their thematic essay, James Cockayne and Camino Kavanagh analyze the current and potential roles of political missions in addressing transnational threats. They find that most missions currently focus primarily on these threats as “technical problems to be solved through technical means, rather than complex problems that touch on an array of political, economic and social issues.” In addition, political missions have inadequate means to address them. The authors call for strengthening the analytical capacity of missions and developing a more integrated strategic approach to transnational threats.

It is this sort of analysis that we hope can inform and motivate broad discussion of the future of political missions. Ultimately, this is the goal of the *Review of Political Missions* – to provide a resource that can contribute to the evolution of a vital multilateral tool for alleviating and preventing conflicts throughout the world.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was born from discussions with the UN's Department of Political Affairs, and we are grateful for their continued cooperation and encouragement. The UN's Department for Field Support once more enabled us to compile extensive data on UN missions. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of the Government of Norway, the Government of Switzerland and the Government of Germany.

The Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) provided both access to facts and figures on their missions and advised on their missions' activities. The African Union's Peace and Security Department provided considerable data and details on their respective envoys and liaison offices, while the Organization of American States' Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions provided information on their missions.

We are indebted to B. Lynn Pascoe, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Susanna Malcorra, UN Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General, El-Ghassim Wane, Director of the AU's Peace and Security Department, and Christopher Hernández-Roy, Director of the OAS Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions for authorizing their already busy staffs to give us their support and valuable time for a second year.

There is not sufficient space to thank every official who assisted us and answered our numerous questions, but certain names merit special mention. Levent Bilman and Karina Gerlach of the UN Department of Political Affairs have supported the continuation of this

project. We received further support from Sebastian von Einsiedel, Jared Kotler, Adrian Morrice and Alexandra Pichler-Fong. Tania Belisle-Leclerc, who was already involved in the early stages of developing our *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations*, continued to guide this project through DPA. Thanks also goes to Maria Fuentenbro Alonso, who helped navigate our multiple requests.

In the Department of Field Support, we would like to thank Paul Johnson for setting the data collection process in motion and the various departments for providing the requested information and answering additional queries. Special thanks is owed to the UN Cartographic Section, which prepared the various maps in this volume – Ayako Kagawa provided essential support.

At the OSCE, our thanks goes to Gottfried Hanne and Alice Ackerman. Gudrun Van Pottelbergh helped gather data and put us in touch with colleagues in OSCE field missions. Elizabeth Choge-Nyangoro and Beth Mutamba of the AU's Department of Peace and Security provided us with information on the organization's offices, while at the OAS Katalina Montaña assisted with gathering data on their field missions.

A variety of international officials based in West and East Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Western Balkans helped our researchers understand these regions, as did many New York-based desk and public affairs officers. We also acknowledge the assistance of the UN's Field Personnel Division and Logistical Support Division in the Department of Field Support, the Department of Safety and Security, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operation's Force Generation Service (Office of Military

Affairs), Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and the Peacekeeping Situation Center.

The individuals and institutions named here have been pivotal in the making of this volume. The *Review* is an editorially independent publication, however, and all errors of fact, analysis and judgment are very much our own.

We would like to thank Berit Enge and Elin Graae Jensen of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pascale Baeriswyl, Ralf Heckner and Benno Laggner of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their interest in our work and generous support.

Charles Call is due a great deal of thanks for his thematic essay, which has only become more relevant in the face of current events. We are grateful that the International Peace Institute has permitted us to use this work. Thanks as well to James Cockayne and Camino Kavanagh, who contributed the analysis on transnational threats.

CIC staff put a tremendous amount of work into this year's Review. In addition to the authors listed at the start of this volume, we owe thanks to many colleagues including Yvonne Alonzo, Shiri Avnery, Lynn Denesopolis, Molly Elgin-Cossart, Antonie Evans, Noah Gall, Megan Gleason, Tom Gregg, Emily O'Brian, Constance Wilhelm and Sarah Zukerman Daly.

The staff at Xanthus Design – particularly Farhud Batmanglich and Jason Moore – have turned our raw text and data into book and website form with tremendous creativity and cooperation.

Morgan Ashley Hughes once again deftly handled the monumental task of compiling and sorting the data available in this volume. Without her work the detailed presentation of the information would not have been possible.

I would particularly like to thank Alischa Kugel for continuing her excellent oversight of the project. From the project's beginning, she has coordinated the complex web of contributors and led us through the production and publishing process with superb skill, and attention to both detail and timelines.

Last but very much not least, my thanks to Jake Sherman – who in addition to his multiple tasks as Deputy Director for Programs (Conflict) now leads the production of both of our yearly publications, the *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations* and the *Review of Political Missions* – for his guidance and hands on support to this project. Without his patient and diligent efforts – combined with a reserve of New England serenity, this project would not be what it is today.

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