This report outlines a model for anticipating the occurrence of communitarian and ethnic conflict. The intended audience for this report is the intelligence community, though analysts and scholars involved in conflict prevention also should find it useful.

The model is not a mechanistic tool, but a process-based heuristic device with a threefold purpose: (1) to order the analyst’s thinking about the logic and dynamics of potential ethnically based violence and to aid in defining the information-collection requirements of such an analysis; (2) to provide a general conceptual framework about how ethnic grievances form and group mobilization occurs and how these could lead to violence under certain conditions; and (3) to assist the intelligence community with the long-range assessment of possible ethnic strife. The framework presented here is not meant to substitute for the knowledge, reasoning, or judgment of intelligence analysts. It is simply a tool to help order and organize the information and identify information gaps.

This report is the final product of a multiyear project entitled “Ethnic Conflict and the Processes of State Breakdown.” The project included two stages: model design and development, and model testing and validation. The project aimed to improve the Army’s ability to anticipate communitarian and ethnic conflict as one aspect of its overall strategic planning and threat assessment. This report includes a revised version of most of the initial report on the first part of the project (Ashley J. Tellis, Thomas S. Szayna, and James A. Winnefeld, Anticipating Ethnic Conflict, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-853-A, 1997).
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