
Preface

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.

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