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The U.S. Contribution to Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution in Africa

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- Africans should determine under what conditions it is helpful to have the international community engaged in conflict resolution efforts.
- Africans should be aware that all stages of a peace process are equally important. Although considerable attention is focused on getting the parties to the table or reaching an accord, less attention has been paid to ensuring that the agreement is properly implemented.
- Over the long term, Africans must work to arrest the decline in state capacities. Many African states are losing control of territory and the ability to tax, to maintain roads and transportation links, and to provide basic services to their people.
- The capacity of the newly formed Organization of African Unity (OAU) mechanism for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict should be strengthened, and the OAU should develop a clear sense of what aspects of the mechanism the international community can best support.
- The work of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in intervening to resolve disputes should be improved, as well as their capacity to provide policy-relevant information and analysis.
- The U.S. is unavoidably involved in Africa because of continuing national interest in the stability of the continent and to further other foreign policy aims such as democratization.
- The U.S. should be engaged, when appropriate, at each step of the conflict resolution process: prenegotiation (bringing the parties to the table); negotiating a peace accord; and the peace-building or implementation phase.
- The U.S. should support the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management, and resolution by providing mediation and problem-solving training, organizational training and assistance, and logistics or support for specific missions. U.S. diplomatic efforts should be coordinated to support, when desirable, OAU conflict resolution initiatives.
- When appropriate and feasible, the U.S. should support promising peacekeeping operations on the continent, including United Nations

(UN) and possible future subregional missions. Support can come in the form of conflict resolution skills training, military equipment, training of soldiers for nontraditional operations, logistics, and communications.

Background

The failure of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II) to build a new state in that war-ravaged country, after the costly U.S. military intervention is often viewed as a critical lesson about the problems associated with the international community's attempts to resolve conflict in Africa. The widely publicized killings of U.S. and other peacekeeping troops by Somali militiamen hardened attitudes among American policymakers and the public about the efficacy and costs of U.S. military intervention in Africa, the limitations of UN peacekeeping, and the ability of Africans to resolve their own conflicts. A mood of "Afro-pessimism" and "peace fatigue" has prevailed.

Thus, when genocidal strife erupted in Rwanda in 1994, causing millions of Rwandans to flee into neighboring countries, there was a strong reluctance to allow U.S. forces to become engaged in a conflict where many believe the U.S. has no obvious strategic interests. Although several thousand U.S. troops helped deliver humanitarian relief to Rwanda and to refugees in camps in neighboring countries--after the worst of the brutality and the massive refugee crisis had eased--the mission was narrowly confined to humanitarian relief, and U.S. engagement in broader efforts to resolve the conflict has been limited. Only about 200 U.S. troops were actually deployed to the Rwandan capital of Kigali, with a mission to keep the airport open for relief flights.

Yet, in the recent past, the U.S. has played a significant role in successful efforts to manage or resolve conflicts in Africa--for example, in Namibia, South Africa, Ethiopia-Eritrea, and Mozambique--and has provided assistance to Africans as they attempt to resolve conflicts such as those in Liberia, Lesotho, and Sudan. African security institutions, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), have recently embarked on initiatives to resolve conflict on the continent. The OAU's Mechanism for the Prevention, Management, and Resolution of Conflict, established after the Cairo summit in 1994, is an example of efforts to create new institutions to bolster regional capacities. Despite Afro-pessimism and peace fatigue, some developments augur well for future conflict prevention and resolution.

Most analysts who study Africa believe that the U.S. will continue to be engaged in African conflict resolution because of interests in stability and trade as well as environmental and humanitarian concerns. In light of the wariness to become militarily engaged in Africa after the experience in Somalia, what options exist for the U.S. to strengthen the capacity of Africans to resolve conflicts within or between African states?

There is broad consensus that conflict prevention, management, or resolution

in Africa requires that Africans themselves act as a rudder, guiding peace processes forward and working with local disputants to bring about conciliation. Outside parties such as the U.S. can contribute by providing support to propel the search for peace forward, but peace cannot be imposed from abroad. Yet conflicts in Africa have international ramifications, evident in refugee flows and environmental damage, for example, but also in purely humanitarian terms. The recent genocidal conflict in Rwanda demonstrates perhaps more than any other case the interconnectedness between African conflict and the global agenda. A failure by Africans and external powers alike to address and mitigate conflict in Africa can have disastrous results that will eventually--and usually at a considerably higher cost--capture the attention of the global community and compel an international response.

Broad consensus also exists that the old adage of "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is especially applicable to conflicts in Africa. In both Somalia and Rwanda, it is argued, there were early warnings of impending crisis, but African institutions and the international community failed to act decisively as the conflicts escalated. The real problem is not just early warning, but translating knowledge of an impending crisis into preventive action. A related question is, who should respond to ameliorate conflict at various points in its escalation?

One answer to this question is the notion of "layered responses." As a crisis escalates local organizations respond first, then subregional and regional organizations, and finally the international community. Local actors such as states, NGOs, or regional organizations may be able to deal with small-scale crises with mediation, conciliation, and negotiation assistance, particularly when they are supported by larger powers in the international community. The U.S. and other outsiders may support intervention to end conflicts at various stages of their development. Only when a crisis has gone beyond the capacity of African institutions to respond should military intervention by the international community be considered. Above all, close coordination among myriad actors at all stages is required for successful peacemaking, peacekeeping, or peace-building.

Therefore, in the post-Cold War world -- where the doctrine of noninterference in the affairs of sovereign states is being reconsidered--there is a growing mutual interest in a cooperative approach between Africans and the international community aimed at conflict prevention, management, and resolution. Africans have expressed a commitment to do more to address conflicts on the continent in this new environment and have established new institutional mechanisms in the OAU to promote conciliation and negotiation. Likewise, the international community--especially the UN--has sought to devolve more responsibility for peacemaking and peacekeeping to regional and subregional organizations. Given these trends, a basis for a partnership for peace arises, implying mutual commitment and obligations. This report summarizes the views and recommendation of symposium participants on the broad principles behind a cooperative approach to fostering peace in Africa and the specific options available to Africans and to the U.S. in developing the terms of partnership.

I. Conflict Resolution in Africa

[Principles of African Conflict Resolution](#)

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Some analysts have referred to recent changes on the African political scene as a "second independence." With the end of the Cold War and the onset of widespread democratization initiatives throughout the continent, old paradigms have given way to new realities. The end of apartheid and white minority rule in South Africa has given new impetus to changing relationships within and among African states. The post-Cold War environment has brought a new emphasis on conflict resolution, which is seen as a precondition to further economic and social development and democratization.

The conflict management role of the OAU is already being strengthened. For example, the OAU sent observer missions to South Africa during its transition to democracy (in conjunction with UN, European Union, and Commonwealth teams) and now has missions deployed in Mozambique and Burundi. The roles of regional and subregional organizations are also being reconsidered. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was called on to intervene militarily in Liberia's bloody civil war and the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), a subregional organization in the Horn of Africa, is mediating between Sudan's government and rebel factions. Finally, African leaders such as Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and South Africa President Nelson Mandela have launched peacemaking efforts in Angola and Lesotho. What principles should guide African efforts to deal with conflicts? Symposium participants suggested the following.

Principles of African Conflict Resolution

- Africans should concentrate on adherence to clearly defined norms and standards, such as respect for election outcomes and the inviolability of borders, the violation of which would prompt collective intervention.

The absence of clearly defined norms and standards for dealing with the causes and manifestations of conflict in Africa contributes to the lack of an effective response mechanism. Although the inviolability of borders has been upheld as a norm since the founding of the OAU, similar norm-building should occur on issues such as democratization, sovereignty, and border delimitation and demarcation. Regarding democratization, efforts should be focused on ensuring that governments uphold basic human rights, tolerate opposition, and respect election outcomes. In its 1991 Santiago Declarations, the Organization of American States declared that violations of basic

democratic norms, such as a military coup, affected regional stability and would trigger a collective response if member states considered the problem sufficiently serious. This statement is viewed as a model that Africans could emulate. Sovereignty issues may address, for example, the role of minorities in a given state and the degree of autonomy (territorial or cultural) that may be afforded to minorities that seek it. Such norm-building could contribute to the development of criteria for action and more extreme cases of military intervention. Some criteria suggested for the most extreme intervention (deployment of a military force with a peace enforcement mandate authorized under Chapter VII of the UN charter) include the full collapse of a state, the threat of tyranny to others in the region, and low costs and low risks.

In the Kampala Document outlining the creation of a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (an institution similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), proposals for principles and standards and for specific mechanisms are raised. The mechanism proposals have been essentially adopted by the OAU; but work needs to continue on the development of principles.

- Africans should determine under what conditions it is helpful to have the international community engaged in conflict resolution efforts.

In some instances, "African solutions to African problems" may be appropriate, while in others, the engagement of the international community may be desirable. Some observers suggest that there is a dilemma: Africans do not want interference in their affairs, but such intervention is often requested by parties to the conflict who seek to bolster their hand or weaken an opponent's. One option for dealing with these issues is the concept of layered responses, described earlier. A critical element in implementing the concept is capacity-building at each layer. Local NGOs, states, subregional and regional organizations, and the OAU all have comparative advantages for dealing with certain types of conflict situations in certain instances. Capacity-building involves the development of the ability to both act immediately and to institutionalize the ability to respond over the longer-term.

- Africans should be aware that all stages of a peace process are equally important. Although considerable attention is focused on getting the parties to the table or reaching an accord, less attention has been paid to ensuring that the agreement is properly implemented.

Implementing peace agreements is a critical step in the process of moving from war to peaceful relations, as shown in the tragedy of renewed fighting in Angola after the November 1992 elections to implement the Bicesse Accords. Getting parties to the table and reaching an agreement are considered the most important steps in the

peace process, but ensuring that the agreements are actually implemented helps build peace and makes relationships more durable. Both the international community and Africans must pay more attention to ensuring that sufficient resources are available to help consolidate agreements once they are reached. Emphasis should be placed on both the process by which new constitutions are created and the rules of the game by which politics are conducted in the long term.

- Africans should consider whether, in some instances, power-sharing or coalition government may be a desirable short-term or transitional device to resolve intrastate and interethnic conflicts.

Although there are concerns about power-sharing as a panacea for crises of governmental legitimacy in Africa, in some instances agreeing to create a government of national unity in a postconflict environment can instill confidence in new political institutions and entice all significant parties to a dispute to accept them. South Africa's government of national unity, in which most significant political forces in the country are represented, is an example of a power-sharing pact that emanated from the parties themselves. However, power-sharing may pose difficulties for governance. In a coalition government, decisionmaking is difficult and potentially inefficient, the absence of an opposition may inhibit accountability and transparency, and an inclusive government may delay action on the root causes of a conflict (for example, socioeconomic disparities). If such an accord arises from a democratization process in which the parties engage in efforts to build a new national consensus, an initial period of power-sharing may prove stabilizing. Most important, however, the states must adopt a constitutional framework to which all parties are willing to subscribe, one that creates a durable structure capable of mediating social conflict through legitimate, democratic political institutions.

- Over the long term, Africans must work to arrest the decline in state capacities. Many African states are losing control of territory and the ability to tax, to maintain roads and transportation links, and to provide basic services to their people.

Underlying sources of conflict in Africa are underdevelopment and deprivation, overpopulation, environmental stress, and refugee and migration flows. Attention is rightly focused on cases such as Somalia and Rwanda, in which these problems have exacerbated already tense social relations, particularly among ethnic and religious groups. But even in states that are or were once considered relatively successful, such as Kenya and Algeria, the capacity of the state to administer territory has been severely eroded. Failure to address the issue of state capacity will create additional and potentially critical economic stresses, thereby stimulating conflict and increasing competition over scarce resources. Conflict resolution in Africa will be successful only when the underlying sources of violence are addressed and ameliorated and when citizens of African states perceive that

economic resources are distributed fairly to all segments of the population.

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The U.S. Contribution to Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution in Africa

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- The capacity of the newly formed OAU mechanism for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict should be strengthened, and the OAU should develop a clear sense of what aspects of the mechanism the international community can best support.

Capacity-building needs for this mechanism include training and professionalizing staff, developing an information or documentation center to provide analysis to staff and diplomats, and creating a cadre of capable diplomats trained in negotiation, mediation, and problem-solving skills who can be quickly deployed to attenuate incipient conflicts. Current or potential problems with the mechanism include concerns that it may violate the sovereignty of individual states, that the OAU may be unable to intervene in large or powerful states, and that--given its rule providing for decisionmaking by consensus--the OAU may be unable to act if a single state or small group of states exercises veto rights.

One proposal for building institutional capacity is that the OAU develop an ongoing list of current or potential violent conflicts, including a profile of each conflict, the principal disputants and their stakes, and what kind of intervention (by whom and when) might ameliorate the problem. Such a comprehensive list does not presently exist. Criteria for developing one might include location of major political leaders (in country or in exile); the presence of significant displaced populations or refugees; and recent arms transfers or procurement.

- The OAU should consider new structures to bolster the organization's capacity to act.

Suggestions for new institutions within the OAU or adjunct to it include a parliamentary entity similar to the European parliament (proponents suggest that there is too much emphasis on executive preeminence in

Africa); a pan-African senate, composed of former heads of state or eminent persons; an African Security Council, with pivotal states such as Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, Zaire, and South Africa serving as permanent members; a standing pan-African emergency force that could be deployed quickly to conflict situations or humanitarian tragedies; and an African Court on Human Rights to investigate alleged human rights violations on the continent.

- Cooperation between the OAU and the UN on peacekeeping operations could improve, and new options for collaboration should be explored.

A need exists for the creation of an African capability for peacekeeping and for greater cooperation among the UN, OAU, and subregional organizations such as ECOWAS. Although many OAU countries have provided troops for UN peacekeeping operations, including those in Africa, new capacities for peacekeeping can be developed. One proposal is to use African troops for peacekeeping operations on the continent, with support for command, communications, and coordination provided by the UN and logistics and other material support by major powers with interests in Africa, such as the U.S., United Kingdom, France, and Belgium.

- The conflict resolution capacities of regional or subregional organizations should be bolstered.

Although there is wide enthusiasm for the OAU's new mechanism, doubts linger about whether the OAU is the best mechanism in each instance. A layered approach would suggest that resorting to the OAU is not necessarily a first or best step. For example, when the OAU was unable or unwilling to act in the Liberia civil war in 1990, ECOWAS deployed a peacekeeping mission to restore order and promote negotiations. Likewise, IGADD's activities to promote peace between Ethiopia and Somalia and among the warring factions in Sudan is an example of the comparative advantage of subregional organizations. The Southern African Development Commission (SADC) could play a similar role with regard to conflicts in that subregion.

- Over the longer term, the capacity of African states to manage intrastate conflicts should be improved.

To ameliorate the sources of internal conflict and to better structure intergroup relations in African states, efforts should be focused on the ability of African states to resolve internal conflicts. Specific sectors should be targeted for capacity-building, including judicial and legal structures, institutions and instruments aimed at the protection of minorities and minority cultures, and public service broadcasting.

- The work of NGOs in intervening to resolve disputes should be

improved, as well as their capacity to provide policy-relevant information and analysis.

NGOs can play an important role in actually intervening in conflict situations, often at an unofficial level, to ease tensions or provide mediation and facilitation functions. The All-Africa Conference of Churches, for example, has played this role in the past. Many South African NGOs were active in resolving conflict during that country's turbulent transition; indeed, some have suggested that the surplus capacity of conflict resolution professionals in South Africa could be used to help diminish conflicts in other parts of Africa now that South Africa has become a full member of regional institutions. The capacity of labor unions and business associations, universities, think tanks, development bodies, and other sectors of civil society should be bolstered with a view to developing these organizations as potential conflict resolvers.

Another pressing need in the NGO sector in Africa is to improve nongovernmental or quasi-governmental capacity for policy formulation. The creation of an African "Council on Foreign Relations" is one idea. The Institute for Diplomacy and International Studies in Nairobi, the African Leadership Forum, and the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs were cited as examples of the kind of institutions that can provide information and analysis to policymakers. Strengthening ties between the intellectual community and policymakers also entails a strong commitment to African universities, which are perceived to have a diminishing, not growing, capacity for policy-relevant work. Finally, an oft-heard recommendation is to establish conflict resolution centers at African universities to increase the resources available to states and international organizations and to provide training grounds for future diplomats and international civil servants.

II. The United States and Africa

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U.S. policy toward conflict resolution in Africa is characterized by "donor fatigue" or, more recently, "conflict fatigue." This is the notion that after many years of providing development aid and several attempts to work directly to resolve conflicts in Africa, it seems that little progress has been made. On the development front (African incomes are declining) and though there have been some conflict resolution successes, the failures tend to stand out. The "Somalia syndrome" may be used to justify inaction or inattention to conflicts in Africa. The perceived failure of that extended and expensive mission forms the pretext for general nonengagement in Africa. Some suggest that the Somalia

experience has produced a consensus among policymakers that the U.S. can no longer provide clear, direct, and effective leadership in response to African conflicts and crises because there is insufficient public support for such initiatives.

Many Africa specialists believe that this conclusion is both unwarranted and potentially disastrous for Africa and for American interests in Africa. A variety of external responses are available to meet the challenge of conflict in Africa, and the U.S. can do much to bolster an indigenous capacity to act. The U.S. should not be expected to intervene directly in all conflict situations, but U.S. involvement--even symbolic involvement--in multilateral initiatives provides a critical catalyst for others to act. Conversely, the lack of U.S. involvement may trigger the collapse of such multilateral efforts.

A variety of foreign policy instruments apart from direct, U.S. combat or military intervention can be brought to bear in U.S. or multilateral initiatives to mitigate conflict in Africa. Many measures can be taken at lower cost and risk that are potentially as effective, if not more effective, than military deployment. If expectations are lowered about what U.S. initiatives can accomplish, the political will can be found to act decisively to stem an escalating conflict. Whether in support of African initiatives or initiatives of multilateral organizations, U.S. involvement in African peacemaking is imperative.

The U.S. will likely remain engaged in African conflict resolution. Indeed, U.S. diplomatic personnel in the field take action almost daily to diffuse conflicts and prevent situations that would demand intervention or international attention of a higher order. Those favoring U.S. engagement in African conflict resolution also seek to bolster local capabilities. For example, the U.S. has provided logistical and material support for the ECOWAS military operation in Liberia, financial support for IGADD mediation on Sudan, and diplomatic support for peacemaking initiatives by Mandela and Mugabe on Angola and Lesotho. The African Conflict Resolution Act (P.L. 103-381) authorizes the expenditure of a portion of U.S. assistance to Africa for improving the conflict resolution capabilities of the OAU and subregional organizations.

How can the U.S. become more effectively engaged in African conflict resolution? In what way can the U.S. strengthen African capacity for resolving conflict? How can a secondary support system be provided, involving the U.S. but also the UN and other interested powers, especially former colonial states? When African states are unable to intervene in conflict situations--for example, in powerful states such as Nigeria, Zaire, or Algeria--what can the international community do to promote conflict resolution?

Principles of U.S. Policy

- The U.S. is unavoidably involved in Africa because of continuing national interest in the stability of the continent and to further other foreign policy aims such as democratization.

Although the leadership role for resolving conflicts in Africa rests primarily with Africans, the U.S. will continue to have considerable national interest in the stability of the African continent. Humanitarian and democratization concerns aside, beneficial trade requires a stable partner, and conflicts often have cross-border implications and effects on the global environment. Although the leadership for resolving conflicts should come from Africans, the U.S. will be asked to play an important supporting role, often in concert with international organizations such as the UN. Even when it is only symbolic, U.S. involvement is considered critical; likewise, noninvolvement sends a message of indifference.

- The United States does not have to go it alone; working with allies-- particularly Britain and France--will continue to be a cornerstone of U. S. policy on African conflict resolution.

Very often, sustained peacemaking or peacekeeping efforts in Africa will require multilateral initiatives and burden-sharing. U.S. policy should be aimed at creating variable mechanisms through cooperative efforts with allies. Processes such as the decade of negotiation that led to the 1988 Angola/Namibia Accords require sustained commitment, energy, prestige, and effort; such high-profile multilateral efforts are rare precisely because they require such a long-term commitment. Low-key, ad hoc peace processes are more common. Either way, multilateral cooperation is essential; the critical question is how the United States can best use its resources to catalyze a peace process and coordinate the work of others. An example of this coordination is a proposal to assemble an international consortium of "Friends of the IGADD Process" to bring resources to bear to help break the impasse among factions in the talks to end the civil war in Sudan.

- With regard to the range of possible U.S. responses to a conflict in Africa, policymakers should seek to weigh appropriate responses at various points in the conflict sequence.

It is important to differentiate between types of conflicts and the appropriate policy instruments to be applied. Although it is natural to think of conflict situations as comparable, in many cases they are not. The collapse of the state in Somalia is an example of a failed state that requires massive international engagement or response; this is a much different situation than transition processes in which the role of regional actors may be sufficient to help resolve a conflict. When conflicts are in an incipient stage, preventive diplomacy may prove fruitful. An example is the current tension in Nigeria. One suggestion is to send a high-ranking current or former American military officer as an interlocutor to Nigeria's ruling military junta with a message that continued refusal to respect the results of democratic elections will have serious consequences for bilateral relations. As with all interventions, preventive diplomacy can have unintended consequences -- such as threats of retaliation -- that should be

anticipated when possible. Calibrated, carefully considered approaches may prevent the conflict from escalating to the point where intrusive action is required.

- The U.S. should be engaged, when appropriate, at each step of the conflict resolution process: prenegotiation (bringing the parties to the table); negotiating a peace accord; and the peace-building or implementation phase.

Attention to peacemaking is often limited to clinching an agreement, but implementing the agreement is an integral part of the process, as the Angolan experience showed. Insufficient attention to implementation can result in "orphaned settlements" to conflicts that appear resolved but are in fact very volatile. A recent example is Rwanda. Given the extensive engagement of France, Belgium, the European Union, and the U.S. when the crisis was at its height, the current inattention is difficult to explain. If the conflict erupts again or spreads to neighboring Burundi, a repeat of the massive intervention effort may be required. By strongly supporting efforts such as the war crimes investigation, the U.S. can help prevent a resumption of the cycles of violence that have plagued Rwanda and encourage adherence to international norms.

- The U.S. should accept the fact that its efforts at peacemaking and peacekeeping in Africa may produce a mixed record at best.

A powerful mediator such as the U.S. can help alter the terms of interaction among disputants, but even the best mediator can do little to alter the deep insecurities of those engaged in a conflict. Consequently, it is important to realize that the U.S. legacy on conflict resolution will include successes and failures.

U.S. Policy Options

- The U.S. should support the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management, and resolution by providing mediation and problem-solving training, organizational training and assistance, and logistics or support for specific missions. U.S. diplomatic efforts should be coordinated to support, when desirable, OAU conflict resolution initiatives.

The OAU conflict resolution mechanism was launched in 1993 and further developed in 1994. However, support is needed for staff training and infrastructure to maintain an ongoing capacity to act swiftly on warnings or in a crises. Through direct support and by marshaling the support of other potential donors, the U.S. can help institutionalize the OAU initiative. The Peace Fund for contributions to the OAU initiative may prove to be an appropriate and innovative instrument for pooling the resources of various contributors.

- The U.S. should consider supporting the creation of a standing unit of trained administrators -- sometimes referred to as "blue hats" -- to help with peacemaking and post-peace agreement reconstruction and development.

For situations in which state capacity has collapsed or has been seriously eroded, the international community should consider developing a reservoir of administrative and technical personnel who can be dispatched to a region or country to help with post conflict peace-building. Although such activity is often conducted by private voluntary organizations, a civilian adjunct to complement the military component of peacekeeping missions may have advantages.

- When appropriate and feasible, the U.S. should support promising peacekeeping operations on the continent, including UN and possible future subregional missions. Support can come in the form of conflict resolution skills training, military equipment, training of soldiers for nontraditional operations, logistics, and communications.

The U.S. can support peacekeeping operations in Africa through education and training, material support, and ad hoc logistical aid. As many African armies are being demobilized, a surplus of trained military professionals exists at the same time that there is a need for peacekeeping in conflict areas. Many African countries--notably Botswana, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, and Tanzania--have considerable experience in peacekeeping; through force integration and standardized training these experienced militaries can work with less experienced ones on developing the specialized work of peacekeeping operations. A related recommendation is to reinstate U.S. military assistance to enhance military-to-military cooperation with the aim of helping to shape African military institutions and orienting them toward conflict avoidance and management. The U.S. can also help with demobilization and demilitarization when appropriate.

- The U.S. should provide wide exposure through education and cultural exchange programs for U.S.-based experts on mediation, problem-solving, early warning, and preventive diplomacy.

Although conflict resolution training is already part of U.S. educational and cultural exchanges with Africa, this component can be strengthened and targeted toward areas or institutions in Africa that need to develop an indigenous conflict resolution capacity. Another proposal for enhancing exchange relationships is the creation of a U.S.-African discussion group on conflict resolution similar to the Dartmouth Conference, which provided a vehicle for the unofficial exchange of ideas between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

- Continued support for political liberalization and good governance in

Africa can help mitigate conflicts.

The U.S., through its aid programs, has long been a leader in support of democratization and improved governance in Africa. Agency for International Development and U.S. Information Agency programs should continue to facilitate political change that results in greater tolerance, transparency, and popular participation in decisionmaking. Conflicts in Africa can be prevented or resolved only when African governments improve their records of protecting basic human rights and fairness for all regions and ethnic and religious groups.

- The U.S. should help create an indigenous capacity for humanitarian relief operations by Africans.

Over the years, and especially since the Ethiopian famine of 1984, many Africans have been trained to work with international voluntary relief organizations to provide humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters or conflict. With careful assistance and planning, Africans can use these trained individuals to develop an indigenous capacity for humanitarian relief operations. The U.S. can help with training and by providing prepositioned material support and targeted development programs--communications equipment, warehouses, and transportation infrastructure--to bring such a plan to fruition.

About the Symposium

On September 28, 1994, the United States Institute of Peace brought together forty specialists from Africa and the U.S.--including former and current diplomats, academics, policymakers, policy analysts, and journalists--to discuss ways to improve U.S. assistance to African efforts to prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflicts.

The purposes of the discussion were to (1) assess lessons learned from past U.S. peacemaking efforts in Africa (2) gauge the capacity of African states, regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to take more responsibility for peacemaking and assess what kind of outside assistance could enable African institutions to be more effective peacemakers and (3) consider the U.S. role in conflict resolution in Africa. This report summarizes the proceedings (which were held on a not-for-attribution basis) and outlines some of the principal recommendations offered by participants.

The symposium is part of an ongoing program at the U.S. Institute of Peace of activities on Africa, addressing continent-wide issues as well as localized crises such as those in Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique, South Africa, and Rwanda. For further information on the Institute's Africa activities, contact [David Smock](#) or [Timothy Sisk](#).

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