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SPECIAL REPORT

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CONTENTS

Peacekeeping in Africa

Briefly...

- The Brahimi Report represents the first systematic and comprehensive effort to identify and address the technical problems with UN peacekeeping missions and within the United Nations' Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The conference participants largely agreed that the report is, as one participant said, "the most important document on peacekeeping ever written."

- The Brahimi Report does not, however, address the most serious problem facing contemporary peacekeeping missions: lack of international political will.

- The 1990s witnessed both the changing nature of international conflict and the growing need for peacekeeping operations. Between 1948 and 1988 the UN undertook just 15 peacekeeping operations around the world; between 1989 and 1999, that number jumped to 31.

- In 1999 the African continent was gripped by 16 armed conflicts, 7 of which were wars with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths.

- Currently, the United Nations has four peacekeeping missions in Africa: MINURSO in the Western Sahara, UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone, UNMEE in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and MONUC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

- Today, a distinct possibility exists that more civil wars, like those that gripped Sierra Leone and Liberia during the '90s, will occur on the continent.

- Despite the growing discussion of African affairs in American foreign policy circles, the United States is largely disengaged from security issues on the continent.

- The United States (and the rest of the Western nations) is loath to contribute peacekeepers to African peacekeeping missions.

- Conference participants agreed on the continued importance of the democratization process in Africa.

- Conference participants also agreed that the agenda put forth by the Brahimi Report offers numerous points of entry for members of the international community to promote conflict prevention on the continent.

Introduction

Approximately 50 participants gathered at the United States Institute of Peace on October 24 to discuss the United Nations, the United States, and peacekeeping in Africa in

light of the recent "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations" (known as the Brahimi Report). The group included leading policymakers and academics in the fields of peacekeeping, African studies, and American foreign policy (see the "List of Participants").

Out of these discussions emerged a number of key points of consensus, important areas of disagreement, and several fundamental questions that merit further inquiry. This Special Report will synthesize the proceedings from the discussion and briefly present suggestions for mitigating conflict in Africa. This report will also situate the proceedings in a wider framework of policy issues, for example, UN peacekeeping operations, conflict in Africa, and U.S.-Africa relations, in order to shed light on the current efforts to reform policy and resolve conflict on the African continent.

The October forum was part of the Institute's continuing effort to inform and stimulate dialogue on resolving conflict in Africa. Indeed, the experts assembled for the conference highlighted not only the importance of the Brahimi Report but also the need for organizations like the Institute of Peace to continue to foster meaningful review of and policy development on peacekeeping activities in Africa.

While participant comments were not for attribution, many of their views are expressed in the following report. Nevertheless, no single idea or comment should be ascribed to any one individual or to the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The Brahimi Report

In March 2000, the secretary general of the United Nations convened a high-level panel to conduct a thorough review of United Nations peace and security activities. The 10-person panel was chaired by the former minister of foreign affairs of Algeria, Lakhdar Brahimi, and comprised of an international cast of experts in the fields of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian assistance: Brian Atwood, Colin Granderson, Ann Hercus, Richard Monk, Klaus Naumann, Hisako Shimura, Vladimir Shustov, Philip Sibanda, and Cornelio Sommaruga. The panel undertook three months of extensive research that involved fieldwork in Kosovo and drew upon more than 200 interviews, including discussions with every department within the United Nations. The panel was given a straightforward yet comprehensive mandate: to present a clear set of concrete and practical recommendations to assist the United Nations to improve future peacekeeping activities.

In August, the panel published its report, a critical assessment of UN peacekeeping operations. The Brahimi Report thus represents the first comprehensive attempt to assess the evolution and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions over the years and to specify important ways to improve the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

At the core of the report is a call for change. Indeed, the report can be seen as a damning critique of the UN's "repeated failure" in its military interventions over the past decade. At one point, the report states bluntly, "No amount of good intentions can substitute for the fundamental ability to project credible force." Following earlier stinging assessments of UN failures in Rwanda and Srebrenica, the Brahimi Report is the most recent attempt by the UN to shine the light of self-criticism on itself in search of objective and constructive analysis.

The report's call for change is thus supported by a detailed blueprint for the creation of an enhanced peacekeeping structure. In brief, the Brahimi Report examines every aspect of UN peacekeeping activities, from its current capacities to far-reaching recommendations for technical change within the 189-member General Assembly. At the start of the report the panel makes its conclusions clear: "The key conditions for the success of future complex operations are political support, rapid deployment with robust posture and a sound peacebuilding strategy" (p. 1). Every recommendation that follows is designed to ensure that these three conditions are met in the future.

Expert Analysis of the Brahimi Report

Conference participants praised the Brahimi Report for its utility, honesty, and farsightedness. The group largely agreed that the report is, as one participant said, "The most important document on peacekeeping ever written." Indeed, while many of the technical weaknesses of past peacekeeping missions are well known, Brahimi represents the first systematic and comprehensive effort to identify and address problems in the DPKO. The general feeling of the group was perhaps best summed up by the following comment, "An enemy of peacekeeping has always been ambiguity; this document brings clarity."

Clearly these feelings are shared by the UN general secretary, Kofi Annan, who quickly responded to the report's recommendations with his October 20 "Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations." In it, the secretary general characterizes the panel's findings as "frank yet fair, . . . far-reaching yet sensible and practical," and urges member states to approve and support the report's recommendations. Annan goes on to elucidate a plan of action in order to coordinate actions within the UN system and carry out the report's recommendations quickly.

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Shortcomings of Brahimi

Although the Brahimi Report has been widely praised for its technical merits, conference participants were quick to point out its failure to address the central problem of all peacekeeping missions, that is, the lack of political will by key Western governments to support UN peacekeeping operations. Indeed, this theme became central to the discussion and thus will be returned to later in this report.

Another area that was touched on in the Brahimi Report (and perhaps one that was beyond the mandate of the panel) but was not sufficiently addressed, according to some analysts, was the correlation between underdevelopment and conflict. While empirical evidence on this controversial point is mixed, enough data now exists to establish causal links between poverty and conflict and support Kofi Annan's observation that "the majority of wars today are wars among the poor." "There is a need," one conference participant asserted, "to link conflict prevention with effective development schemes."

Finally, conference participants turned their attention to specific conflict zones in Africa, in light of the report: Would the technical and administrative improvements recommended in Brahimi have made a difference in the way the United Nations and the West responded to recent conflicts in Congo-Brazzaville, Rwanda, or the Democratic Republic of the Congo? The consensus among experts was: no. For in each of these crises the West lacked the will to act. However, had the recommendations contained in the report been implemented prior to UN action in Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique (all crises that elicited some Western response), these conflicts could have been at least mitigated, many participants thought.

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The Changing Nature of UN Peacekeeping Operations: The Rationale for Brahimi

An analysis of past UN peacekeeping missions reveals a sharp increase in both the complexity and frequency of missions since the end of the Cold War. Between 1948 and 1988 the United Nations undertook just 15 peace operations around the world. Of the 15, only three missions received mandates that transcended ceasefire verification and force separation. Between 1989 and 1999, the number of peacekeeping missions jumped to 31,

of which 24 involved mandates exceeding ceasefire observation and often involved the much more complex and dangerous tasks of weapons control, refugee relief work, post-conflict reconstruction, election certification, and many more difficult policing and encampment/demobilization activities (for more information, see the tables at www.stimson.org/unpk/panelreport/unpkstimsondiscussion.pdf, pp. 8–9, prepared by William J. Durch of the Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, D.C.).

The explosion of demands for peacekeepers during the 1990s tested both the capabilities and resources of the United Nations throughout the decade. The unprecedented need for peacekeepers was complicated by the changing role they would play. More and more frequently peacekeeping forces were called upon to intervene in hostile (that is, non-consensual) and dangerous situations to protect besieged populations. Unfortunately, in many cases the organization failed to meet these daunting challenges and UN military failures seemed to become commonplace.

To its credit, the Brahimi Report underscores this fact and describes the United Nations' inability to bring more men, money, and thought to the mission of peacekeeping. The report thus reveals the extent to which today the UN Secretariat is under-staffed and under-funded. At the time the report was completed (July 2000) the DPKO had only 32 military officers to plan, recruit, equip, deploy, support, and direct some 27,000 soldiers that comprised the 15 missions underway. UN police forces faced a similar situation: a staff of only nine police officers working out of UN headquarters were called upon to support 8,000 UN police in the field. The report thus concluded that the DPKO administrative budget (which was equal to 1/50th of the field teams' budget) was utterly insufficient to support the teams in the field.

These numbers illustrate a central point of the report: that the United Nations currently lacks the resources to effectively fulfill its peacekeeping mission. This point also makes clear the UN's lack of independence and inability to assume a leadership role in international crisis situations. Indeed, conference participants pointed out that the United Nations is a body that is in constant search of material and financial support and coherent political backing from member states.

Another factor crucial to the success of UN missions is the ongoing political support of influential member states. While the Brahimi Report fails to address this final point, participants drove home the fundamental importance of gaining international support (especially from the United States) for UN missions. Participants illustrated the cross-cutting character of this issue: (1) "All the recommendations contained in Brahimi for improving UN peacekeeping activities depend on the will of the U.S. Congress to fund the program," (2) "There is a consistent undercurrent within the UN of dissatisfaction and disappointment with U.S. failure to support the institution," and (3) this dynamic is "eroding America's international standing."

In summary, the rationale behind the Brahimi Report is three-fold: (1) to underscore the growing need for peacekeepers around the world, (2) to bring to light the UN's failure to ramp up administrative and logistical support of peacekeepers in the field, and (3) to propose a series of changes to improve the effectiveness of the DPKO.

The Current State of Affairs in Sub-Saharan Africa

Nowhere was the scope and intensity of violence during the 1990s as great as in Africa. While the general trend of armed conflict in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East fell during the 1989–99 period, the 1990s witnessed an increase in the number of conflicts on the African continent. During this period, 16 UN peacekeeping missions were sent to Africa. (Three countries—Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Angola—were visited by multiple missions during this time.) Furthermore, this period saw internal and interstate violence in a total of 30 sub-Saharan states (see table 1).

In 1999 alone, the continent was plagued by 16 armed conflicts, seven of which were

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Table 1. War and significant lethal violence in Africa, 1989–2000												
Conflict state	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Algeria						c	c	c	c	c	c	d
Angola	c	c	c	c	c	c			a	a,c	c	c
Burundi			d	d	c	c	d	d	d	d	d	d
Central African Republic								c				
Chad	c	c	d	d						a		d
Comoros											d	d
Congo (Brazzaville)									c	d	d	
Côte d'Ivoire												d
Dem. Rep. Congo (Zaire)								c	a,c	a,c	a,c	a,c
Djibouti					c	c						
Eritrea	b	b	b							a	a	a
Ethiopia	c	c	c							a	a	a
Guinea											d	d
Guinea-Bissau										c		d
Kenya				e					e			e
Lesotho										a,d		
Liberia		c	c	c	c	d	c	c			d	d
Mali			e			d	d					
Mozambique	c	c	c									
Namibia	b									a	a	a
Niger						d	d					
Nigeria					e					e	e	e
Rwanda		c	c	c	c	c			a,d	a,d	a,d	a,d
Senegal									d	d	d	d
Sierra Leone			d	d	d	d	c	c	c	c	c	c
Somalia	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	d	d	d	d
South Africa	d	e	e	e	e							
Sudan	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
Uganda	d	d	d					d	a,d	a,d	a,d	a,d
Western Sahara	b	b	b									
Zimbabwe										a	a,e	a,e
Totals	11	12	15	10	11	11	8	9	12	19	19	22

a—interstate war

b—war for independence

c—high intensity internal conflict

d—low intensity internal conflict

e—major political or religious violence

Source: S. Mullen and J. Woods, Cohen and Woods International, Washington, D.C., January 2001.

wars with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths (*Journal of Peace Research*, 37:5, 2000, p. 638). In 2000, the situation continued to deteriorate: renewed heavy fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia claimed tens of thousands of lives in the lead-up to a June ceasefire and ultimately the signing of a peace accord in December; continued violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone, Burundi, Angola, Sudan, Uganda, and Nigeria as well as the outbreak of new violence between Guinea and Liberia, in Zimbabwe, and in the Ivory Coast have brought new hardship and bloodshed to the continent.

Indeed, there was a consensus among conference participants that the level of violence present in Africa today suggests that the continent has reached a nadir. Furthermore, the group agreed that the potential exists that more civil wars, like those that gripped Sierra Leone and Liberia during the '90s, will occur on the continent.

In addition to the massive human suffering caused by war in Africa, conference participants pointed out that the long-term effects these conflagrations will have on development are profound. Conflict has already compounded a host of health, environmental, and economic ills. A recent report, "AIDS Epidemic Update 2000" from the joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO), reported that 3.8 million people became infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa during the last year, bringing the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the region to 25.3 million or 8.8 percent of the adult population. This year alone the pandemic will claim the lives of two million Africans; one million more will die from malaria and tuberculosis.

Experts at the conference agreed that among the plethora of conflicts on the continent today, perhaps the worst and most intractable war is in the DRC. Since 1998 this conflict has involved the armed forces of nine different states and at least nine rebel groups (*SIPRI Yearbook 2000*). The complexity of this conflagration, along with the vast territory in play, was seen by the group as a key reason why not to get involved in the conflict. Indeed no one expressed enthusiasm or even suggested a strategy for political engagement in the Congo (although several participants wondered aloud, "Who will help pick up the pieces in the DRC or another Rwanda?"). Finally, it was agreed that the DRC conflict will most likely continue to limit the social, political, and economic development of central and southern Africa for years to come.

In reviewing past UN missions to the continent, the participants agreed that UN successes in Namibia, Mozambique, and South Africa during the 1990s probably did not receive due credit in the international community. Meanwhile, UN failures (especially in Somalia '93 and Rwanda '94) became infamous, and in the United States these calamities became emblematic of a "failed organization" and provided grist for UN bashers in Washington.

As the devastating confluence of economic, health, and political problems continue to submerge the continent in poverty and conflict, the international community will continue to be called upon to act in Africa. With conflicts still raging across the continent and the threat of new outbreaks of violence in places like Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria, Guinea, and Ivory Coast, it is difficult to imagine the need for peacekeeping operations diminishing in the near future. The challenges for the United Nations and the West vis-à-vis Africa are therefore multifold.

Current Peacekeeping Operations in Africa

Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL, 1999-present)

Since the beginning of conflict in 1991, Sierra Leone's population has suffered greatly at the hands of the marauding Revolutionary United Front (RUF). During nearly a decade of fighting, the RUF has systematically killed and maimed tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans. At the start of the war, Sierra Leone's army, with support from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its military observer group, ECOMOG, tried to defend the government and beat back the rebels.

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The following year the Sierra Leonean army toppled its own government and held power until February 1996 when it relinquished control to the newly elected president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. Yet the military spent little time in their barracks, staging another coup in May 1997, this time joined by the RUF.

Following extensive negotiations and numerous broken peace agreements, the UN Security Council imposed an oil and arms embargo on Sierra Leone on October 8, 1997 and authorized ECOWAS to ensure its implementation through ECOMOG troops. After the continued failure of negotiations and repeated attacks on ECOMOG forces by the RUF, ECOMOG launched a military offensive that led to the collapse of the junta and its expulsion from the capital, Freetown. On March 10, 1998, President Kabbah was reinstated as president.

In June 1998, the Security Council established a UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) that documented human rights violations and war atrocities. Yet fighting in Sierra Leone continued, and by January 1999 the RUF held control of much of the countryside and most of Freetown. UNOMSIL personnel were evacuated before ECOMOG forces again retook the capital. By May 1999, negotiations between the government and rebels were underway and on July 7, the controversial Lomé Accords were signed, creating a government of national unity in Sierra Leone.

On October 22, 1999, the Security Council authorized the termination of UNOMSIL and the creation of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), a new and much larger mission with a maximum of 6,000 military personnel, to assist the government and the parties in carrying out the provisions of the Lomé peace agreement. This group has been steadily reinforced since its creation and now carries a Security Council mandate to increase its numbers to 20,500.

Nevertheless, the UN mission has been plagued by missteps and failure. During the spring and summer of 2000, several UN soldiers were killed and hundreds more were captured and held hostage by the RUF. Only through the dubious support of Liberian strongman Charles Taylor (and the dramatically more effective bilateral military intervention of British forces acting outside of UNAMSIL) was the humiliating episode brought to an end and the UN presence rescued.

In recent months, UNAMSIL has been hit with further bad news: India, source of the largest multinational contingent, announced the withdrawal of its 3,150 soldiers by February 2001 after several of its soldiers were killed and its commander, Major General Vijay K. Jetley, became involved in a dispute with the mission's Nigerian leaders. Shortly after this announcement the Jordanian contingent, citing the conspicuous absence of Western soldiers in the mission, also announced the departure of its 1,800 soldiers by the end of the year.

The impending departure of nearly half of the UN forces on the ground in Sierra Leone is a blow to UNAMSIL, and will leave Bangladeshi troops and a new 800-member battalion of Ukrainian troops as the sole non-African actors involved in the mission. While Bangladesh and Ghana have offered to replace the lost troops and maintain the current level of 12,500, it looks unlikely that the Security Council and the secretary general will be able to increase the number of forces to the 20,000 mark. And many Sierra Leoneans worry that the pull-out of the departing forces along with the start of the dry season—typically a time of intense fighting—will lead to more bloodshed. Together, these events cast further doubt on the future of this important peacekeeping mission.

Ethiopia-Eritrea (UNMEE, 2000–present)

In August, the UN Security Council adopted Kofi Annan's proposal to send a strong contingent of 4,200 Blue Helmets to oversee the implementation of the June 18 Algiers ceasefire agreement. This agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea halted two years of intermittent war that killed tens of thousands. The treaty followed Ethiopia's ferocious

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May offensive that pushed deep into Eritrean territory and forced a million Eritreans to flee at a time when regional drought threatened thousands of lives.

The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was established to monitor the cessation of hostilities in this border dispute, and the redeployment of forces to respective sides of a demilitarized zone. The UN mission of 4,500 is currently deploying.

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Congo (MONUC, 1999–present)

The 1997 ouster of Zaire's long-time despot, Mobutu Sese Seko, brought Laurent Kabila and his Rwandan backers to power in the new Congo. But fighting once again erupted in August 1998 when rebels, backed by Rwanda and Uganda, accused President Kabila's government of harboring Hutu militia who had fled Rwanda after committing genocide in 1994.

On July 10, 1999, the DRC along with Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe came together in Lusaka to sign a ceasefire agreement to end hostilities in the DRC. Conspicuous in their absence from the talks were several Congolese rebel groups. Nevertheless, the Security Council proceeded with the peace process and in August 1999, authorized the deployment of up to 90 UN military liaison personnel to the capitals of the signatory states and other strategic military locations.

Since then the mandate of MONUC has grown to a maximum deployment of 5,537 military personnel, including up to 500 military observers. Nevertheless, the UN Security Council and Secretariat have not proceeded with this second phase deployment due to the failure by Congo's government, rebels, and neighbors to implement their commitments under the Lusaka Agreement. The war in the DRC thus continues unabated.

Western Sahara (MINURSO, 1991–present)

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The mission to Western Sahara is the UN's oldest on the continent. This protracted conflict between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Polisario Front) over a stretch of land southwest of Morocco began after the withdrawal of Spain as colonial administrator in 1976. At that time, both Morocco and Mauritania affirmed their claim to the territory, a claim opposed by the Polisario Front.

The United Nations became involved with seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Western Sahara after fighting broke out between the Moroccan army and the Algerian-backed Polisario Front. By 1979, Mauritania had renounced its claims to the territory, leaving the two sides to battle for control. In cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the UN secretary general initiated a mission of good offices that led to "settlement proposals" between the two sides that were accepted in August 1988.

By 1991, a tentative ceasefire was established and the UN Security Council decided to establish the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The settlement plan called for a referendum in which people of Western Sahara would choose between independence and integration with Morocco. At full strength the mission was to consist of approximately 1,700 military personnel and a security unit of 300 police officers.

According to the settlement plan, the referendum was to take place in January 1992, but it was never held. At issue still for the two parties is the composition of the electorate. The United Nations has tried to intercede and facilitate the process of voter identification, but the exercise has been fraught with problems. Kofi Annan's personal envoy to the Western Sahara, James A. Baker III, continues to seek a negotiated settlement between the independence-seeking Polisario Front and Morocco, and UN-mediated talks on the referendum continue.

U.S. Policy toward Africa

Cataloging contemporary conflict and tension in sub-Saharan Africa is a difficult task. The array of conflicts facing Africans today is long (the risk of increased conflict remains high in Algeria, Angola, Burundi, DRC, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe) and presents Western policymakers with a daunting task: how to design foreign policy toward a region with the breadth and depth of socio-economic trouble and political instability that is currently found in Africa.

Conference participants agreed that the "lack of political will" by Western powers is the major impediment hindering the deployment and success of UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. Yet as one conference participant said, "It is just not here in the United States where political leaders have to sell peacekeeping missions to their populations, it happens in all democracies." In short, few foreign leaders are willing to risk the loss of soldiers in poorly understood lands where there may be no perceived national strategic or economic interests.

The aversion to peacekeeping among the American military and policymakers runs deep. American critics of peacekeeping missions, and of conflict prevention programs in general, often chastise the United Nations for its unrealistic planning, weak mandates, and feckless command and control procedures. For these critics the ill-fated UN mission to Somalia (1992–94) confirmed their cynicism and became emblematic of international peacekeeping efforts. Moreover, the death of 18 Army Rangers in the streets of Mogadishu had a profound and traumatic effect on the way American foreign policymakers in general looked at peacekeeping, especially in Africa.

Since the tragedy in Somalia, the trend has been for Western nations to refuse to send troops into Africa's hot spots. Jordan recently underscored this point when it expressed frustration with the West's failure to commit soldiers to the UNAMSIL mission as a reason for the withdrawal of its troops from Sierra Leone.

America's aversion to peacekeeping in Africa also reflects broader U.S. foreign policy on the continent. Africa occupies a marginal role in American foreign policy in general (a point highlighted by conference participants).

Today, the foundation of U.S. policy toward the vast sub-Saharan region (with its 48 states) is being built on relations with South Africa and Nigeria. Secretary of Defense William Cohen stressed the importance of these two relationships earlier this year on a trip to Cape Town when he said: "South Africa and Nigeria will be critical for the stability and the future prosperity of African nations, . . . and we estimate that their participation in maneuvers and joint training programs, seminars, exchanges in military personnel and also academic exercises aimed at military/civilian relations will strengthen ties between these nations" (*Armed Forces Journal International* 138:2, September 2000, p. 30).

Despite the apparently fruitful cooperation between the United States, South Africa, and Nigeria, the road ahead for broader U.S.-Africa relations is unclear.

The future for much of Africa looks bleak. As war and humanitarian disasters continue to unfold across the continent, they are accompanied by growing numbers of refugees, spreading instability, and in some places anarchy. The rise of lawlessness and stateless societies in Africa brings the risk of the development of new terrorist and drug networks. Weak economic growth, the AIDS pandemic, the degradation of Africa's physical environment, and the spread of humanitarian crises in sub-Saharan Africa combine to create a depressing regional portrait.

Each of these realities poses a unique threat to peace everywhere on the continent. Thus, conference participants agreed: Given the menacing socio-economic setting in Africa today, the United States must be encouraged to re-engage in both the United Nations and African affairs.

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Conclusion

Conference participants were unanimous in their conviction that the Brahimi Report is a landmark document on the American foreign policy scene. Not as a source of seminal theory or original analysis of peacekeeping operations—indeed, much of what is contained in the report has been known and talked about for years—but rather for its straightforward simplicity, candor, and ability to synthesize timely and urgent issues. The report should thus be seen as more than a plan for improving the technical capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; it is also a project around which the multitude of concerned actors can coalesce to construct a unifying vision and effect change. In the atomized and unharmonious world of international policymaking, one must seize upon the rare opportunities to work together and concentrate resources in pursuit of a common goal.

While conference participants were unable to reach a consensus on what next steps should be taken by U.S. and international policymakers in support of Brahimi, numerous recommendations were put forward. One former government official argued that a direct causal link exists between poverty and conflict in Africa and advocated a redoubling of aid and development efforts on the continent by Western governments. Others from the academic community suggested that the United States adopt a policy of selective engagement in Africa that focuses on vital interests and achievable goals. Several participants recommended that U.S. policymakers should continue to strengthen key African allies (such as Nigeria and South Africa), support regional organizations (like ECOWAS and SADC, the Southern African Development Community), strengthen the American embassies and diplomatic corps, collect better intelligence on the continent, and bring economic and other pressures to bear on warlord governments. Although none of these proposals received unconditional support from the group, consensus was reached over the continued importance of the democratization process in Africa.

The agenda put forth by the Brahimi Report offers numerous points of entry for members of the international community. As the report states, "Peacekeeping and peacebuilding are inseparable partners."

The group also agreed that the agenda put forth by the Brahimi Report offers numerous points of entry for members of the international community. As the report states, "Peacekeeping and peacebuilding are inseparable partners" (p. ix). The U.S. Institute of Peace and other concerned organizations have a longstanding record and ongoing programs that have taken concrete steps toward conflict prevention on the continent. The Brahimi Report both confirms the importance of this work and illuminates new areas of need.

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