

themselves or enlisting other indigenous Congolese movements to create a security buffer on their borders.

In the long run, more stable borders which better reflect the ethnic lines and geographical terrain would enhance confidence and security. In the short run, changing borders would entail such upheaval as to undermine virtually every African state on the continent. Given this fact, confidence will only be maintained when neighbouring states can agree and develop the capacity to jointly patrol and monitor their borders and make them less porous.³⁷

State Weakness and Underdevelopment

There are a number of additional and inter-related factors which contribute to the problem of confidence building in particular and conflict resolution in general. While these issues do exist elsewhere in the developing world, they are especially acute in Africa. The first factor has to do with the problem of weak states. According to the most recent report from SIPRI, "A root cause of the conflicts in Africa is to be found in the weakness of many of its states, which became especially obvious after the cold war. Corruption, lack of efficient administration, poor infrastructure and weak national coherence make governance both difficult and costly."³⁸ Observers of UN operations concur. According to one report, "The most difficult operations undertaken by the United Nations today are internal conflicts occurring within a weak State. ... The absence of recognized avenues for redressing the discontent arising from these weaknesses leads to breakdowns of law and order, to secessionist movements, to outright civil war."³⁹

State weakness, however, is often a consequence of Africa's other principal challenges, most notably, its profound poverty and lack of development. Indeed, unlike other regions such as Europe, where conflicts were rooted in ideologically antagonistic alliances, peace and security in Africa is contingent on overall improvements of conditions in political, social and economic spheres. Since life in Africa is notable both for its precariousness and for its potential wealth, African politics has become an increasingly desperate struggle for state power. Scholars who write about democracy and democratization in Africa have argued that peaceful democratic systems require moderation and restraint; citizens must care enough about politics that they will want to participate in the political

³⁷ The establishment of border commissions with neighbour countries is said to have allowed for good relations between Tanzania and its neighbours. See Abdu Kinana, "The Relevance of CSBMs for Africa," in United Nations Disarmament Topical Papers, #7, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures: From Europe to Other Regions* (New York: United Nations, 1991), p. 84.

³⁸ Chapter summary from SIPRI Yearbook, 1999.

³⁹ Swadesh Rana, *Small Arms and Intra-State Conflicts* Research Paper #34 (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), March 1995), p. 10.