

CONTEXTS AND OBSTACLES

Where CBMs are Needed Most: *Intra-State Conflicts*

Building confidence in the foreseeable future will, no doubt; more often involve the establishment of trust *within* states rather than *between* states. Of the 27 major armed conflicts in 26 locations of the world today, all but two of them are internal.¹¹ Indeed, almost all the conflicts which have taken place in Africa since the end of the Cold War have been domestic.¹² Despite suggestions to the contrary, however, this is *not* a post-Cold War phenomenon. Indeed, research suggests that of the wars which took place between 1945 and 1976, 85 percent of them were either "internal anti-regime" or "internal tribal" wars, that is, *civil* wars. Moreover, 10 of the 13 most deadly conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries were civil wars.¹³ The problem of violence and conflict is particularly acute in Africa. Africa's 11 current armed conflicts make it the continent with the highest number of conflicts worldwide. And Africa is the only region in which the number of conflicts is rising.¹⁴ Even when instability and conflict have important international consequences, its roots frequently involve intra-state issues. Therefore CBMs should most often be directed towards these domestic sources. To do otherwise is to address the symptoms rather than the causes of conflict.

Obstacles to Building Confidence in Civil Wars

Conflict resolution in general and confidence building in particular are most difficult where it is most needed: in civil wars. Over half of the interstate wars between 1940 and 1990 were resolved at the bargaining table while only 20 percent of civil wars reached similar conclusions.¹⁵ There are a number of reasons why civil wars present unique challenges to conflict resolution and, indeed, why African conflicts have proved to be particularly difficult to conclude peacefully.

¹¹ "Armed Conflicts Rise Around the World in '98 – SIPRI," *Reuters* (June 15, 1999). The two interstate conflicts are India and Pakistan over the Kashmir, and Ethiopia and Eritrea over their mutual border. Prior to 1991, of course, Ethiopia and Eritrea were one state fighting a *civil* war.

¹² Marrack Goulding, "The United Nations and Conflict in Africa since the Cold War," *African Affairs* 98 (1998), p. 158.

¹³ Daniel S. Papp, *Contemporary International Relations: Frameworks for Understanding*, 4th edition (New York: MacMillan, 1994), pp. 578-79.

¹⁴ "Armed Conflicts Rise Around the World in '98 – SIPRI," *Reuters* (June 15, 1999). Conceivably the total number of African conflicts would be even higher if these figures accounted for their multi-dimensional character.

¹⁵ Barbara Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51(3) (Summer 1997), p. 335; Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991), pp. 4-9.