.b3497823(E)

doc
CA1
EA365
2000C51
ENG

Confidence-Building Measures in Africa

Ian Spears

International Security Research and Outreach Programme
International Security Bureau

March 2000

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international

CA1 EA365 2000C51

Confidence-Building Measures in Africa

Ian Spears

61664828

International Security Research and Outreach Programme
International Security Bureau

March 2000

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères

MAI MAY 16 2001

Return to Departmental Library
Retourner à la bibliothèque du Ministère

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface iii
Acknowledgements iii
Executive Summary v
Résumé vii
INTRODUCTION 1
Definitions and Terms 1
CONTEXT AND OBSTACLES 4
Where CBMs are Needed Most: *Intra*-State Conflicts 4
Obstacles to Building Confidence in Civil Wars 4
Effects of Anarchy 5
A Lack of International Will to Intervene 5
Sovereignty and Suspicion 6
Divided Actors 8
Mythico-Histories 10
Third World and African Exceptionalism 10
Assessing Respective Force Levels 10
Africa's Unchanging Borders 11
State Weakness and Underdevelopment 12
International Pressures and Constraints 13
SELECTED CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES FOR AFRICA 14
Signals of Benign Intentions 14
Statements of Goodwill 15
Visits by Leaders or Elders 16
Unilateral Disarmament 17
Dialogue Among Factions 18
Infrastructure and Development Projects 19
Changes in Leadership or Lead Negotiators 20
CBMs Which Reduce Vulnerabilities Associated with Peace Processes 21
Dispersed Catonment 21
Decomposition of Agreements 21
Presence of Monitors and Peacekeepers 22
Disarmament, Demobilization and Verification 23
Stabilizing Measures 24
Telephones, Radios and Communications 24
Bipartisan Commissions to Consider Violations and Provide Talking Forums 25
Confidence Negating Behaviours 25
Partisan Radio Stations and Hostile Propaganda 25
Forceful Expulsion of Foreign Citizens 26
Indications of Noncompliance in Disarmament Processes 26
Past Exploitations and Defections and Their Historical Contexts 26
SUPPORTING CONDITIONS FOR CONFIDENCE IN NEGOTIATIONS AND BEYOND 27
A Desire for Peace 27

Confidence Building Must Be Seen as an *Iterated* Process 28
The Peace Process Must Involve the Smallest Number of Players 28
Confidence Is Best Developed Under Existing Political Structures 29
Critical Resources Must Be Forthcoming 29
Disputants Must Have Confidence in Mediators and Peacekeepers 30
ISSUES IN BUILDING CONFIDENCE 31
Is Disarmament a Necessary Priority in the Process of Building Confidence? 31
To What Extent Should the International Community Involve Itself in Building Confidence? 34
SECURITY BUILDING MEASURES IN AFRICA 36
Democracy and Power-Sharing 36
Economic Development 37
Microdisarmament 37
CONCLUSIONS: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANADA 38
Questions of Resources, Expedience and Patience 38
Look to Indigenous Means of Conflict Resolution 38
Assist in Providing Appropriate and Credible Mediation Services 39
Assist in the Provision of Technologies to Assist Verification and Control 39
Assist in the Provision of Communications Technologies 39
Facilitating, Assisting Logistics During Negotiations 39
Providing Funds or Expertise in Uncovering and Destroying Weapons and Weapons Caches 40
Encourage Generalized Development 40

PREFACE

The International Security Research and Outreach Programme commissioned a study to identify and explore issues pertaining to the design and implementation of CBMs in the African context. This report stemmed from that study.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade or of the Government of Canada.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
March 2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade wishes to acknowledge the work performed under contract through the International Security Research and Outreach Programme in the preparation of this report by the author: Ian Spears.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper seeks to fill a vacuum in the literature on confidence building by considering specifically African contexts of conflict resolution. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) describes CBMs as "measure[s] undertaken by states to help reduce the danger of armed conflict and of misunderstanding or miscalculation of military activities." Other definitions usually also include elements of reciprocity and verifiability and the establishment of trust and transparency between parties.

This paper suggests that greater attention needs to be paid to the *intra*-state nature of contemporary conflicts. Most conflicts in Africa and elsewhere are civil wars not interstate wars. Civil wars are more difficult to resolve peacefully than interstate wars because, among other things, at least one of the disputants is required to disarm and thereby increase its vulnerability. Other factors such as an international community which is reluctant to intervene, issues of sovereignty, the nature of the rebel movements themselves and the multi-dimensional nature of Africa's wars also present obstacles to the effective use of CBMs.

Despite these constraints, however, there are a number of techniques which can be used to establish or restore confidence and trust between disputants. A number of these borrow from traditional methods of confidence building. In this paper, CBMs are divided into three categories: 1) signals of benign intentions; 2) measures which reduce vulnerabilities associated with peace processes, and; 3) various stabilizing measures. The first of these three categories involves statements of goodwill, visits and dialogue among factions, disarmament and development projects — measures which are meant to convey an adversary's desire for peace to its opponent. The second type of CBM includes measures which minimize the adverse effects of an adversary's defection from the peace process. They include the dispersal of troops during demobilization processes, the decomposition of agreement implementation, the effective use of peace monitors, and disarmament. The third and final type of CBM involves measures which attempt to stabilize relations between parties by increasing their ability to communicate with each other. An additional section outlines various behaviours which have the effect of undermining confidence.

There are a number of supporting conditions which increase the chances of successful implementation of CBMs. First, disputants must be genuinely committed to peace and not merely using CBMs as a tactic to buy time. Second confidence building must be seen as an iterated process. Third, peace processes must involve the smallest number of participants. Fourth, confidence is best developed under existing political structures, where the effects of anarchy are minimized. Fifth, certain resources – particularly food and money – must be easily mobilized. And finally, local disputants must have trust and confidence in mediators and peacekeepers overseeing the peace process.

This paper also considers two additional issues associated with confidence building: the roles of disarmament and of the international community. Concerning disarmament, this paper argues that while the eventual reduction of weapons must be seen as an objective, local parties and mediators

must be aware of the ways in which such processes can also undermine confidence and increase insecurity among disputants. Second, while the international community has an important role to play in conflict resolution processes in Africa, disputants have become remarkably adept at overcoming many of the verification problems which usually justify international intervention in the first place. This is particularly important given that the international community has often had to overcome its own limitations in conflict resolution processes.

The penultimate section of the paper considers various *security*-building measures in Africa. These are measures which are like CBMs insofar as they may provide a sense of security and well-being for disputants, but are ultimately unverifiable (except in the long term) and potentially reversible. Democracy and power-sharing, economic development and micro-disarmament are all important security-building measures.

Finally, this paper concludes with a brief listing of policy recommendations for Canada which have emerged out of the previous discussion. These include the prompt approval and implementation of peace missions; the encouragement of indigenous means of conflict resolution; the identification of credible and capable individuals for mediation purposes; the provision of various technologies to assist verification, demobilization and communications; assistance for various conflict resolution processes through transportation and facilitation; assistance in processes of disarmament and demobilization; and, finally, the encouragement of generalized development and the reduction of external demands on conflict-prone states.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce document vise à combler une lacune dans la documentation sur les mesures de confiance, en prenant en considération des contextes spécifiquement africains de la résolution des conflits. L'Institut international de recherche pour la paix de Stockholm, décrit les mesures de confiance comme étant des « mesures prises par des États pour contribuer à réduire le danger des conflits armés et de la mauvaise interprétation ou des erreurs de calcul des activités militaires ». D'autres définitions incluent aussi habituellement des éléments de réciprocité et de vérifiabilité et l'instauration de confiance et de transparence entre les parties.

Ce document suggère qu'une plus grande attention soit accordée à la nature intra-étatique des conflits contemporains. La plupart des conflits, en Afrique et ailleurs, sont des guerres civiles et non des guerres intra-étatiques. Il est plus difficile de résoudre pacifiquement les guerres civiles que les guerres intra-étatiques car, notamment, au moins l'une des parties est tenue au désarmement, augmentant ainsi sa vulnérabilité. D'autres facteurs tels qu'une communauté internationale réticente à intervenir, des questions de souveraineté, la nature des mouvements rebelles mêmes et la nature multidimensionnelle des guerres de l'Afrique représentent également des obstacles au recours efficace à des mesures de confiance.

Malgré ces contraintes, cependant, il y a un certain nombre de techniques que l'on peut utiliser pour instaurer ou rétablir la confiance entre les parties. Certaines d'entre elles s'inspirent des méthodes traditionnelles de renforcement de la confiance. Dans ce document, les mesures de confiance sont divisées en trois catégories : 1) les intentions ou les signes bienveillants; 2) les mesures de confiance qui réduisent les vulnérabilités associées aux processus de paix, et 3) diverses mesures de stabilisation. La première de ces trois catégories concerne les déclarations de bonne volonté, les visites et le dialogue entre les parties, les projets de désarmement et de développement – des mesures qui visent à traduire le désir de paix d'un adversaire à son rival. Le deuxième type de mesures de confiance inclut des mesures qui réduisent les effets négatifs de l'abandon du processus de paix par un adversaire. Elles comprennent la dispersion des troupes pendant le processus de démobilisation, la décomposition de la mise en oeuvre d'un accord, l'utilisation efficace de surveillants de la paix, et le désarmement. Le troisième et dernier type de mesures de confiance porte sur les mesures qui tentent de stabiliser les relations entre les parties en augmentant leur capacité de communiquer les unes avec les autres. Une section additionnelle met en évidence divers comportements ayant pour effet de miner la confiance.

Il existe un certain nombre de conditions secondaires qui augmentent les chances de réussir la mise en oeuvre de mesures de confiance. En premier lieu, les adversaires doivent avoir pris un engagement sincère en faveur de la paix et ne pas se servir simplement des mesures de confiance comme d'une tactique visant à gagner du temps. Deuxièmement, la consolidation de la confiance doit être considérée comme un processus itéré. Troisièmement, les processus de paix doivent faire intervenir le plus petit nombre de participants. Quatrièmement, la confiance se développe mieux dans le cadre de structures politiques existantes, quand les effets de l'anarchie sont réduits.

Cinquièmement, certaines ressources – en particulier la nourriture et l'argent – doivent être facilement mobilisées. Enfin, les parties locales doivent faire confiance aux médiateurs et aux soldats de la paix supervisant le processus de paix.

Le présent document examine aussi deux questions additionnelles associées à la consolidation de la confiance : les rôles du désarmement et de la communauté internationale. En ce qui concerne le désarmement, ce document fait valoir que, bien que la réduction éventuelle des armes doive être considérée comme un objectif, les parties locales et les médiateurs doivent être conscients des manières dont de tels processus peuvent également miner la confiance et accroître l'insécurité parmi les parties au conflit. Deuxièmement, bien que la communauté internationale ait un important rôle à jouer dans les processus de résolution des conflits en Afrique, les parties aux conflits sont devenues remarquablement expertes pour surmonter en premier lieu les nombreux problèmes de vérification qui justifient habituellement une intervention internationale. Ceci est particulièrement important, du fait que la communauté internationale a souvent eu à dépasser ses propres limites dans les processus de résolution des conflits.

L'avant-dernière section du document porte sur diverses mesures de consolidation de la *sécurité* en Afrique. Il s'agit de mesures qui ressemblent aux mesures de confiance en ce qu'elles peuvent donner un sentiment de sécurité et de bien-être aux parties, tout en étant, en fin de compte, invérifiables (sauf à long terme) et potentiellement révocables. La démocratie et le partage du pouvoir, le développement économique et le micro-désarmement sont tous d'importantes mesures de consolidation de la sécurité.

Finalement, ce document donne en conclusion, à l'intention du Canada, une brève liste de recommandations en matière de politique, qui se sont dégagées de la discussion antérieure. Elles incluent l'approbation et la mise en oeuvre rapides des missions de paix; l'encouragement des moyens locaux de résolution des conflits; l'identification de personnes crédibles et compétentes à des fins de médiation; la fourniture de diverses technologies pour aider dans les domaines de la vérification, de la démobilisation et des communications; l'aide en matière de transports et de facilitation pour divers processus de résolution des conflits; l'assistance dans le cadre des processus de désarmement et de démobilisation et, pour terminer, l'encouragement du développement généralisé et la réduction des demandes extérieures adressées aux États prédisposés aux conflits.

CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN AFRICA[1]

INTRODUCTION

There is a broad literature which considers confidence building measures (CBMs) in various regions of the world. Largely absent from this literature, however, is a discussion which explicitly links confidence building with specifically African contexts. In spite of this deficiency, it is incorrect to state that CBMs are not utilized in African peace processes. Regardless of whether they think of CBMs in such formal terms, Africans, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and mediators employ measures meant to increase security, trust and cooperation between disputants. An objective of this paper, then, is to fill in this gap in the literature. The paper will be organized as follows: first, efforts will be made to define CBMs and its related terms; second, there will be a discussion of the contexts in which CBMs are likely to be implemented and the challenges that present themselves; third, a variety of different CBMs will be analyzed; fourth, the conditions most conducive to the effective implementation of CBMs will be presented; fifth, will be discussion of the controversial issues of disarmament and international involvement; sixth will be a brief discussion of various *security*-building measures; and seventh, Canada's role in supporting various confidence building measures will be considered.

Definitions and Terms

Most contemporary definitions of confidence building measures say more about their goals and objectives than what they actually are and how they might be utilized. In its broadest terms, confidence building measures can refer to any gesture made by one adversary to another which indicates goodwill or relieves tension.[2] In fact, CBMs and CSBMs (Confidence and Security-Building Measures) have their origins in the Cold War. The first formal efforts to utilize CBMs came in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. Contemporary definitions continue to reflect the militarized, inter-state nature of the predominant conflict of the Cold War, that between the Soviet Union and the United States.[3] The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), for example, defines CBMs as

> measure[s] undertaken by states to help reduce the danger of armed conflict and of misunderstanding or miscalculation of military activities.

---

[1] I would like to thank Sarah Atkinson, Bob Matthews, Ellen Thomson, René Unger, Bill Lowery, Jim Kirkwood and Hussein Adam for their kind and patient assistance in this project.

[2] In the recent negotiations over Northern Ireland, for example, Canadian General John de Chastelain noted that the respective parties' appointment of representatives to an arms decommissioning body would be an important confidence building measure. See "Compromise Near, Mediators Say," *Globe and Mail* (November 16 1999), p. A13.

[3] For an in-depth examination of the Act, see United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Research Paper No. 3, *Confidence-building measures within the CSCE process: Paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of the Helsinki and Stockholm régimes* (New York: United Nations, 1989).

Similarly, CSBMs are defined as

> measure[s] undertaken by states to promote confidence and security through military transparency, openness, constraints and cooperation. CSBMs are militarily significant, politically binding, verifiable and, as a rule, reciprocal.[4]

Other recent definitions of the term stress the same issues but reverse the emphasis so that the stricter definition is attributed to CBMs. Stedman and Rothchild, for example, define CBMs as,

> limited, incremental, transparent, verifiable actions that demonstrate compliance with promises made through a treaty. Specifically, they involve information and communications measures to eliminate misperceptions about military action and constraining measures that aim to prevent military activities that may generate hostile perceptions.[5]

Certain terms stand out in these definitions which deserve further attention. For example, to the extent that CBMs expose vulnerabilities, they must be *reciprocal*. Knowing that both sides are equally vulnerable, parties are inclined *not* to take aggressive action because they can be certain that such actions can be reciprocated by their adversary. Alternatively, in not exploiting an adversary's vulnerabilities one sends a message of a willingness to cooperate. The longer one lives with mutual vulnerability, the more confidence one has in the benign intentions of one's neighbour.

In the strictest terms, confidence building also involves elements of *verifiability*. In an effort to maintain definitional and operational clarity, Stedman and Rothchild insist on considering only those measures which are verifiable as confidence-building measures. They do not consider rhetorical commitments to peace or declarations of peacefulness as CBMs, citing evidence that such pronouncements do little to instill confidence among adversaries.[6] Nor do they consider other measures such as power-sharing, decentralization and development as confidence building measures *per se* but *security*-building measures (to be discussed later). This is because these measures are not readily and definitively verifiable except until some undetermined point in future. Such a distinction is justified. Cooperation between adversaries is limited by the ability to recognize when an opponent is violating or complying with agreements.[7] Certainty or confidence that an opponent is committed

---

[4] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook, 1998* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998), p. xx.

[5] Stephen John Stedman and Donald Rothchild, "Peace Operations: From Short-Term to Long-Term Commitment," *International Peacekeeping* 3(2) (1996), p. 29.

[6] Stedman and Rothchild, p. 31. The authors cite Craig D. Parks, et al. "Trust and Reactions to Messages of Intent in Social Dilemmas," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40(1) (1996), pp. 134-51. In light of this research Stedman and Rothchild note that, "It is not enough to bring about a handshake between adversaries" – a fact which is borne out by recent experiences in Angola and Rwanda.

[7] Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (Basic Books, 1984), pp. 139-41.

to a peace process – and not just buying time until a more favourable opportunity arrives – confirms that one is also justified in complying with the agreement. Repeated and verifiable demonstrations that an opponent is meeting its obligations confirms that an adversary's intentions are benevolent. This distinction between CBMs and CSBMs will be applied here.

Finally and, perhaps, most importantly, confidence building involves transcending communications barriers and establishing trust and *transparency* where none currently exists. Stedman and Rothchild argue that peace agreements usually fail because "fear is high and trust is low among antagonists," and parties, therefore, "may fail to carry out their commitments in the belief that their adversary will take advantage of them." Ubiquitous in the literature on African conflicts are statements to this effect. In Angola, for example, the UN Special Envoy, Margaret Anstee, observed the ideological differences, the radically dissimilar personalities and the "deep personal animosity" between the leaders of UNITA and the MPLA. "The gulf of personal mistrust between the two was so vast as to be probably unbridgeable," she later wrote. "I hardly ever attended a meeting with either that did not contain some comment of suspicion or disdain – even contempt – for his rival."[8] Profound mistrust and an inability to forgive are best understood not as a result of rational conflicts of *interests* but as the legacy of the unthinkable atrocities that may have been committed by one community against another. In view of the episodes of violence between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, author René Lemarchand cites former Rwandan President Kayibanda's comments that "there is no intercourse and no sympathy [between the nations. They] are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers of different zones, or inhabitants of different planets."[9] In yet another remark concerning the political divide between the north and south in the Sudan, Aggrey Jaden, of the Sudan African National Union (SANU), argued that "there can never be a basis of unity between the [north and south]. There is nothing in common between the various sections of the community; no body of shared beliefs, no identity of interests, no local signs of unity and above all, the Sudan has failed to compose a single community."[10] Obviously these are not conditions which are conducive to conflict resolution and cooperation.

---

[8] Margaret Anstee, *Orphan of the Cold War: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process, 1992-93* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), p. 147.

[9] Cited in René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 169. The fact that recent wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone have been marked by atrocities ranging from the severing of limbs, gouging of eyes and instances of rape – but frequently *not* death – means that civilians are continually reminded of the cruelty of their adversary.

[10] Cited in Francis M. Deng, "Sudan's Conflict of Identities," in I. William Zartman ed., *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars* (Washington: Brookings, 1995), p. 87.

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.

The Effects of Anarchy

Traditionally, political theorists have accounted for interstate war by pointing to the anarchic nature of the international system. In the domestic realm, by contrast, disputants can look to their governments as a guarantor to resolve political conflicts and ensure the well-being of winners and losers alike. It is assumed that conflict resolution is much more difficult in the international realm where there is no higher authority to adjudicate issues of conflict or impose a decision on the disputants. With no higher authority to back up their claims, states cannot trust their adversary to fulfill their obligations under a peace agreement. The fact of anarchy in the international realm in a sense forces states to look out for themselves and to, if need be, forego cooperation in favour of protecting their own interests.[16]

However, in cases where there are weak or collapsed states – where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart – the distinction between international and domestic politics is not so clear.[17] The viability of African states has always been in question given their vulnerabilities *vis-à-vis* the developed world, but state *collapse* has been particularly apparent in the post-Cold War era because regimes may have lost the patronage of the superpowers. In any event, conflict resolution in collapsed states is at least as difficult as it is internationally. Under these conditions the state is frequently unable to act as a guarantor and, in many cases, may be an actual participant in the conflict. Moreover, because the resolution of civil conflicts almost always requires at least one of the parties to relinquish their weapons, they are extremely reluctant to commit to an agreement. With no external guarantor nor any means to protect themselves should their opponent "defect" from the agreement, parties have little reason for confidence in either the peace process or their adversary. In other words, in weak or collapsed states the vulnerability associated with anarchy in the international realm is replicated in the domestic realm and is further complicated by the expectation that parties will have to disarm as part of a peace agreement. It is no wonder, then, that settlements are so difficult to achieve in civil wars.[18]

A Lack of International Will to Intervene

In the face of state failure, the international community can have an important, even essential, role in building confidence. It can do this by verifying compliance by parties to an agreement, providing administrative resources and solving other problems associated with peace processes. On the other hand, the prospect of casualties in distant foreign countries and the sheer magnitude and

---

[16] For a lucid theoretical examination of these two realms, see Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University, 1954), and *Theory of International Politics* (Reading Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), chapter 6.

[17] On this issue, see I. William Zartman, "Posing the Problem of State Collapse," in I. William Zartman ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), p. 1.

[18] See Walter, pp. 335-64.

cost of contemporary peace processes weakens the chances that the kind of intervention necessary to guarantee a peace will be offered.[19] Indeed, Rothchild and Stedman urge dispensing with the term "guarantees" in reference to pledges from the international community to assist in conflict resolution since when a peace process breaks down, neither the UN nor the United States are likely to intervene to enforce a settlement. Consequently, there is a need to find ways to persuade parties to honour their commitments in the absence of external enforcement.[20]

Sovereignty and Suspicion

Alternatively, when the international community is willing to make a commitment, it can run into governments reluctant to allow foreign troops onto their soil. In Mozambique, for example, government concern over issues of sovereignty and pride was a major source of friction throughout the United Nations peacekeeping operation. The Mozambican government had expected a deployment of 100-300 unarmed military observers, arguing that an election could be held with little or no UN supervision. Following accusations that it had been ill-prepared to guarantee peace in Angola, however, the United Nations insisted on sending a troop contingent to Mozambique large enough to guarantee law and order and to instill sufficient confidence for the disputants to disarm and demobilize. The government's subsequent antagonism towards the UN meant that UN troops could not move freely throughout the country to verify compliance with the peace agreement. The government resisted an expanded UN presence and, in the end, discounted the UN's role in bringing peace to Mozambique. In summary, issues of sovereignty mean that the international community is obstructed from providing the kind of forceful intervention which would give weaker parties confidence in the peace process.[21]

Issues of sovereignty are compounded by the fact that the disputants themselves are highly suspicious of their adversaries, mediators and the peace process itself. While some communities emphasize the role of dialogue and debate as a means of conflict resolution, this view is often not shared by the senior leadership or military officers in a country. Hence, while grassroots discussions are frequently advocated and proudly embraced as part of the larger nation's political culture, they may be anathema to those who wield the most power. In Mali, for example, the military was

---

[19] Even in the case of a geographically small country such as Liberia massive intervention is not considered. The American National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, argued that "it was difficult to see how we could intervene without taking over and pacifying the country" – a commitment which had few advocates in Washington. Cited in Terrence Lyons, *Voting for Peace: Postconflict Elections in Liberia* by Terrence Lyons (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1999). Also notable is the "stomach" issue: the Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni asked recently, "Which U.N. troops will stay in these mountains for six months? They will just run away like they did in Rwanda. European soldiers go only to areas where there is no death." Cited in Donald G. McNeil Jr. "Bombing Won in Kosovo. Africa is a Tougher Case," *New York Times* (July 25, 1999), sec. 4, p. 16.

[20] Rothchild and Stedman, p. 22.

[21] Eric Berman, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Mozambique* (New York and Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996), pp. 34-9.

determined not to internationalize its conflict with northern rebels. According to observers, "after thirty years of Soviet training, the Malian officer corp is secretive to a fault. This leads to the situation where no one will release even an opinion (let alone a fact) without the authority of his superiors ... which he will never dare to request."[22] The level of suspicion, of course, varies from country to country. While the TPLF and EPLF[23] in Ethiopia and Eritrea respectively, are suspicious of outsiders, the TPLF has encouraged a greater degree of discussion within its ranks; the EPLF, by contrast, lacks a similar culture of debate and instead confines decision-making to a small group of senior cadres. Consequently, building confidence can be easier at the grassroots level than where it is needed most, at the senior-most echelons of power.

Rebel groups are likely to be secretive for different reasons. Unlike states (which are entitled to maintain arms to protect their sovereignty) the possession of weapons or the maintenance of armies by anyone other than the central government is intolerable and necessarily, therefore, clandestine.[24] Consequently, rebels also have reason to limit access to information regarding their own force levels and are reluctant or unable to express their force structures in the same concrete terms utilized in *inter*-state confidence building. Traditional CBMs, which often rely on verification or exchanges of information on military-force levels and acquisitions, are not applicable or are extremely difficult to facilitate in civil war contexts.

Some scholars have emphasized that the extreme discipline which is characteristic of "successful" rebel groups makes them reluctant to compromise. Again using the case of Ethiopia, the TPLF's political vision has been described in terms of its "Darwinian socialism," which allows little room for compromise and, on the contrary, insists that victory will only go to the strongest and best organized.[25] The ferocity with which the current war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been waged is indicative of two extremely competitive political cultures that allow few concessions to be made. Alternatively, less disciplined groups and movements may not be amenable to confidence building measures but for the opposite reasons. While insurgent movements may have a generous supply of arms, they may be inexperienced in the give-and-take of negotiations, lacking transparent lines of authority and unfamiliar with expectations of international behaviour. Moreover, irregular forces may be motivated by causes notable for their bitterness than by clearly defined objectives.

---

[22] Robin-Edward Poulton and Ibrahim ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu: Democratic Governance, Development and African Peacemaking* (New York and Geneva: UNIDIR, 1998), pp. 153-54.

[23] Tigrean People's Liberation Front and Eritrean People's Liberation Front, respectively.

[24] The most obvious non-African example is the case of Northern Ireland whereby the Ulster Unionists refused to comply with the Good Friday agreement until Sinn Fein disarmed. Similarly, in Ethiopia in 1992, the EPRDF government refused to allow the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to maintain its own army and eventually took aggressive action of its own – an action which did undermined any confidence the OLF had in the EPRDF's claim to be inclusive.

[25] John Prendergast and Mark Duffield, *Liberation Politics and External Engagement in Ethiopia and Eritrea* Horn of Africa Discussion Paper Series #8 (Washington: Center of Concern, April 1995). pp. 10-1.

These tendencies can inhibit the rational nature of effective confidence building.[26]

Divided Actors

These problems are compounded by the fact that many contemporary African conflicts involve an innumerable and ever-changing collection of disputants. The wars in Somalia (some of which are continuing), for example, have involved dozens of armed clan-based factions. More immediately, the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has involved at least 13 separate disputes and at least 15 actors many of which originate from neighbouring countries.[27] Even more problematic is the fact that many of the participants are fighting over mutually incompatible issues. Consequently, there is unlikely to be a single solution that will satisfy all domestic and foreign parties. These factors present several problems for confidence building and conflict resolution. First, studies using game theory suggest that cooperation is more likely when there are fewer players or when they interact in small clusters of discriminating individuals. Alternatively, when there are multiple actors, cooperation is infrequent.[28] Even if some of the disputants would prefer cooperation, their chances of interacting with one another are rare. Building trust and confidence is also dependent on *repeated* interaction between disputants. But since protracted conflicts often lead to the splintering of rebel groups into different factions, there is less opportunity for reputations of trust and confidence to be built. A further problem is that a lack of cohesiveness among or within parties or ethnic groups makes it difficult to attribute cheating to a party's leadership – a requirement if adversaries are to be confident that obligations are being fulfilled. Alternatively, a lack of cohesiveness also presents difficulties in terms of a leadership's ability to control its dissidents. In Liberia, for example, some of the multiple factions which emerged during the mid-1990s acted as proxies to continue the fighting while the signatories to the peace agreement claimed to have no authority over them.[29]

Even when there are as few as three disputants to a conflict, the problems of confidence building is complicated. In Zimbabwe, the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) had to contend not only with agreement violations between the forces of the white minority government and the black majority but also between the two movements, ZANLA and ZIPRA, representing the black

---

[26] Marrack Goulding, "The United Nations and Conflicts in Africa Since the Cold War," *African Affairs* 98 (199), p. 160.

[27] John Prendergast and David Smock, "Putting Humpty Dumpty Together: Reconstructing Peace in the Congo," Special Report (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, August 31 1999), p. 3; The number of conflicts and disputants has led some observers to label the conflict Africa's "Great War." See, for example, David Shearer, "Africa's Great War," *Survival* 41(2) (Summer 1999), pp. 89-106.

[28] Robert Axelrod, "The Emergence of Cooperation Among Egoists," *American Foreign Policy Review* 75 (1981), pp. 306-18.

[29] See Lyons, *Voting for Peace*, p. 32.

majority.[30] Similarly in the Sudan, violence has broken out between rebels associated with the Nuer and the Dinka ethnic communities in addition to the larger conflict between Muslim north and Christian south. The significance of this type of conflict is that confidence building measures which require disputants to disarm are virtually impossible to complete. In such multi-dimensional conflicts one cannot be certain that, even if a reconciliation process begins between two of the parties, they will not become vulnerable to attacks from the third. Disarmament is essentially precluded in such conflicts unless it is part of a, perhaps unattainable, comprehensive and all-inclusive agreement.

Alternatively, there can also be gaps between a civil society determined to bring about peace and the leadership of the respective disputants. In the case of Angola, for example, fabulous diamond and oil wealth has insulated elites from what most assume to be a desire on the part of ordinary citizens for peace. Not only have such vast resources raised the stakes and helped fuel the conflict, but they have also led to the creation of an elite which has been able to disregard societal pressures for peace virtually at will.[31] To avoid these problems during the 1993-94 UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), there were frequent calls for peacemakers to deal with Somali clan elders rather than the armed warlords. Such an approach seems justified. In the case of northern Somaliland, for example, elders have been essential to facilitating peace between armed factions. But other factors, such as a colonial history which circumvented traditional leaders, may erode these important relationships. Indeed, others have argued that in southern Somalia the links between elders and civil society were tenuous and that the image of wise, uncorruptible clan leaders was seductive but ill-founded.[32]

A group's willingness to consider CBMs and its sincerity in implementing them also depend in large measure on the respective relative power positions of the adversaries and, more importantly, whether their relative military power is on the increase or the decrease. The constant breakdown and rebuilding of coalitions and the relative ease with which weapons can be acquired in contemporary civil wars means that power relations between groups can be extremely dynamic. Building trust in an environment of constant flux and change is difficult. Elites may accept confidence building measures only as a means of buying time when they are threatened by the possibility of losing total power. In other words, by accepting CBMs for the short run, when they have little intention of implementing them, the long term of objective of building reputations and trust is undermined.

---

[30] The Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) was the armed wing of ZANU, the Zimbabwe African National Union; the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) was the armed wing of ZAPU, the Zimbabwe African People's Union. Zimbabwean guerrillas were also referred to collectively as PF, or Patriotic Front.

[31] See Ian S. Spears, "Angola's Elusive Peace," *International Journal* LIV(4) (Autumn 1999), pp. 572-76.

[32] William Finnegan, "A World of Dust," *The New Yorker* (March 20, 1995), p. 70.

Mythico-Histories

Finally, consideration must also be given to some of the psychological obstacles to confidence building. While journalists too frequently resort to "ancestral hatreds" as explanations of current conflicts, contemporary group identity may indeed be defined in terms of real or constructed historical injustices at the hands of others. Oromos in various regions of Ethiopia, for example, regard Tigreans or Amharas (viewed collectively as "highlanders") as having established domination over them through a long history of conquest. Similarly, the Ovimbundu of central Angola see themselves as having been enslaved by Kimbundu-speaking peoples of the region around Luanda. Other "mythico-histories" – blendings of fact and fiction – have the effect of offering each community "retrospective validation of its own interpretation of the genesis of ethnic conflict."[33] The effect of "cognitive dissonance" is for each group to select historical evidence which supports their own perceptions of past events and omit events which do not. Consequently, respective party's interpretation of past events or their larger historical contexts may directly contradict each other.[34] Such processes present problems for confidence building since sincere gestures of reconciliation by one side may be greeted with suspicion by the other; alternatively, other actions may inadvertently be perceived as only reconfirming an adversary's hostile intentions. Indeed, views of one another may be so contentious and historically well entrenched that it is inconceivable for one side to imagine a genuine gesture of reconciliation from an adversary. Even the most overt confidence building measures may be ignored or dismissed by an opponent as having malevolent intentions.

Third World and African Exceptionalism

There are a number of additional factors which make Africa's experience with confidence building measures particularly unique and European-style CBMs, perhaps, less relevant.

Assessing Respective Force Levels

The European emphasis on verification, for example, is problematic in African contexts. In European contexts, troop size and type and quantities of weapons tend to be more consistent across forces and, therefore, are reasonably reliable indications of military capacity. In Africa, however, notoriously low troop morale, and weaponry which may be wholly unsuitable to the type of – usually guerrilla – war being fought, makes assessing force levels much more difficult. Indeed, in recent

---

[33] René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center and Cambridge University, 1994), p. 19. The idea of "mythico-histories" is attributed by Lemarchand to Liisa Malkki.

[34] Even at the time of Angola's independence, John Marcum observed that "the foreign intervention and factional fighting that ensued in 1975 proved so chaotic and opportunistic that its exact sequence may remain forever arguable." John Marcum, cited in Fred Bridgland, *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1986), p. 451. Similarly, Fred Bridgland writes, "I've striven to ensure that [my] book is factually accurate. But the trouble with Angola is that every fact is in dispute ... the facts are so contentious...." Bridgland, p. 10.

African wars a small number of poorly equipped but highly motivated individuals have effectively routed much larger and better armed standing armies. In Ethiopia, for example, the disciplined TPLF and EPLF overcame a government army that numbered in the hundreds of thousands. In Rwanda in 1994, a relatively small group of Hutu extremists were able to initiate a chain reaction leading to the deaths of nearly one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus; yet they were unable to contend with a highly motivated group of guerrillas, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). If the fear that can be generated by a disputant does not correspond with the size of its arsenal, or if a small guerrilla force can overcome a larger government army, then verification becomes a more complicated and, in some cases, dubious process. Conventional CBMs which depend on rigorous verification are indeed of questionable relevance in such situations.

Africa's Unchanging Borders

But Africa's uniqueness is also notable because of factors which *strengthen* confidence building. Significant in this respect is the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter which pledges African governments to respect the sanctity of Africa's inherited colonial borders. This commitment has, perhaps more than any other factor, contributed to the stability of interstate relations.[35] Indeed, prior to Eritrea's independence in 1993, no African country had succeeded in changing its boundaries with a neighbouring state.[36]

The paradox of Africa's borders, however, is that because they may encircle several ethnic groups or cross ethnic lines, state boundaries can do more to exacerbate ethnic tensions within states. Moreover, there is a dilemma regarding Africa's borders. They are difficult to defend and, therefore, easy to traverse, making them subject to "spillovers" of conflicts in neighbouring countries. This fact forces African governments to attempt to control both sides of their borders – an act which necessarily encroaches on the sovereignty of neighbours. In other words, governments are forced to take defensive measures in other countries even if such actions jeopardize relations with those countries. The experience of the Congo during the past two years, for example, has been that Kinshasa has been unable to control its vast territory. Consequently, neighbouring countries have sought to compensate for Kinshasa's inability to restrain rebel movements by occupying territory

---

[35] An obvious counter argument to this claim, however, is that the unchanging nature of Africa's borders is more a reflection of state weakness and *domestic* challenges to state power, rather than the OAU Charter per se. For an account of the juridical nature of African states, see Robert Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics* 35(1) (1982), pp. 1-24.

[36] Oluyemi Adeniji, "Characteristics of CSBMs in Africa," in United Nations Disarmament Topical Papers, #7, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures: From Europe to Other Regions* (New York: United Nations, 1991), pp. 90-91. The author argues that reaffirmations of the 1964 resolution would be a useful confidence and security-building measure. Of course, there have been instances when borders have come under threat. Aside from the most recent conflict over the Ethiopian-Eritrean border, Ethiopia and Somalia fought a war in 1977-78 over the Ogaden. Similarly, Chad and Libya have fought over their mutual border. See United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, "Workshop on the Role of Border Problems in African Peace and Security: A Research Project," Disarmament (New York: United Nations, 1993).

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.

process but not care so much that they cannot contemplate defeat or exclusion.[40] But the incentives which lead disputants to "defect" are particularly strong in African political contexts. The zero-sum quality of African politics is precisely the condition under which confidence building measures are most needed but are least likely to operate.

Underdevelopment and inadequate infrastructure present other practical problems for confidence building. If confidence building was a challenge in the European or Cold War context where sophisticated communications and satellite technologies exist, then it is enormously more problematic in Africa where the communications infrastructure is rudimentary or nonexistent. An absence of communications may be a major impediment to acting and reacting prudently. In such circumstances, incidents may take on disproportionate political significance and lead to major confrontations. What is most remarkable about the violence in Angola in 1992, Rwanda in 1994, and between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998 is that the aggressors so grossly underestimated their foe's capacity to wage war. The decisions by aggressors in all three instances might have been different had they been persuaded that their military actions would ultimately be fruitless. Moreover, if confidence in the international community as a peacemaker is to be instilled, then the international community has to overcome the crumbling communications and transportation infrastructure ubiquitous in many African countries. In Mozambique, the list of tasks to be completed by the United Nations – disarmament, demobilization, the creation of a unified armed forces, and the repatriation of displaced persons – was to be completed within a year in a country with a minimal and war-ravaged communications infrastructure.

International Pressures and Constraints

There is also a larger concern that these conditions are not helped by current political and economic reforms being encouraged by the international community. Roland Paris, for example, has argued that pressures on states to create a liberal democratic polity and a market-oriented economy must compete with efforts to "build peace" in war-torn countries. Processes of political and economic liberalization, he states, have had the perverse and unintended consequence of undermining the achievement of peace and even igniting renewed fighting.[41] In Mozambique, for example, economic liberalization has made life more difficult for ordinary citizens, increased economic disparities, reduced the government's capacity to rebuild infrastructure such as roads, schools and health facilities and coincided with increased banditry. In Angola, the political liberalization associated with the Angolan elections led to increasingly bellicose rhetoric as one party began to slide in the pre-election polls and led to increased suspicions – well founded as it turned out – that the loser would subsequently return to war. In sum, the very elements Canada and other

---

[40] See, for example, Larry Diamond, "Nigeria: Pluralism, Statism and the Struggle for Democracy," in *Democracy in Developing Countries: Volume 2, Africa* Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset eds. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1988), p. 69.

[41] Roland Paris, "Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism," *International Security* 22(2) (Fall 1977), p. 56.

countries emphasize in Africa and elsewhere to encourage political and economic *competition* as a means of facilitating prosperity and government responsiveness may be incompatible with efforts to increase confidence and cooperation between local parties. Even if these are worthy goals over the long term, their rigorous implementation in the short run may derail the process before peace is ever achieved.

SELECTED CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES FOR AFRICA

Given the many constraints facing conflict resolution in Africa what realistic courses of action are there? In fact there are a number of ways to overcome the specific challenges Africa presents. And the experience of confidence building in other regions is not wholly irrelevant to Africa provided certain modifications are made in light of these challenges. What is important is to keep in mind essential functions and objectives of confidence building and consider innovative ways in which these functions can be fulfilled and these objectives achieved. These functions are as follows:

1) establish *reputations* of trust and good will between actors and with mediators which allow negotiations and interaction to proceed.

2) ensure *protection* for disputants by minimizing the amount of damage it will suffer in the event that its adversary "defects."

3) *insulate* interactions between disputants from unexpected events and allow any settlement to be self reinforcing so that peace may be sustained indefinitely.

Framing confidence building in these terms allows us now to consider specific CBMs, how they might be implemented, and potential problems they are likely to encounter.

Signals of Benign Intentions

These CBMs are designed to convey one side's good intentions to an adversary. They are signals meant to suggest that one would prefer a peaceful settlement rather than a violent one. The most effective measures involve parties taking risks and making themselves vulnerable in order to convey their sincerity. In this regard, leaders engaging in confidence building face a difficult trade-off: one side is usually reluctant to risk making a large gesture, while the other is rarely trusting enough to respond to a small one. To reduce risks to themselves, leaders are more likely to make gestures which are reversible and cheap, even though these are the very measures that are least likely

to persuade an adversary of its good intentions.[42] In order to stimulate real progress in building confidence, more dramatic measures must frequently be taken. The other obvious problem with gestures is that they may be regarded as signs of weakness rather than indications of a desire for peace. To the extent that they are seen as the former, they may only encourage further aggression. Examples of CBMs which signal benign intentions might include the following:

Statements of Goodwill

Verbal or signed commitments to peace are frequently used in conflict resolution. For example, the modalities component of the recent effort to settle the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict called on the two parties to affirm their commitment to the principle of non-use of force to settle disputes and commit themselves to implement the agreement in good faith.[43] But do less risky statements of regret or good intention really build confidence? Are they a useful means of generating good will in the early stages of conflict resolution?

As previously noted, Stedman and Rothchild argue that such gestures are meaningless. And it is not difficult to see why. Skeptical NGOs and diplomats have noted recently that the Sudanese government has begun a so-called "charm offensive" which involves statements claiming that huge oil profits now coming to the government will be dispersed across the nation and used to construct roads, schools and irrigation projects. Such claims undoubtedly have an international audience. But the government is also providing the incentive of oil-based development to appeal to all parties – particularly those in the south – to consider a peace agreement.[44] In this case, one does not know for certain whether such gestures are the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel – a genuine offer of reconstruction and reconciliation – or that of an oncoming train – a government effort to retrench and consolidate its forces. This is why the verification and irreversibility elements of CBMs are so important. They allow groups to distinguish genuine gestures of peace from potentially false gestures because parties will be unlikely to make such offers if they know their claims will ultimately be exposed as insincere. It is not that non-verifiable and reversible measures are always insincere but they allow actors to make minimal or no commitments and are, therefore, *interpreted* by their adversary as having little weight.

Nonetheless, verbal statements of peace and goodwill have frequently been an important element in processes of healing and reconciliation. In Mali during the 1992 National Conference, a junior officer formally apologized on behalf of the armed forces for the loss of life which had taken place under the regime of Moussa Traore. Similarly, Mali's *Flame of Peace* – whereby

---

[42] Janice Gross Stein "Confidence Building and Dilemmas of Cooperation: The Egyptian-Israeli Experiment," in Gabriel Ben-Dor and David B. Dewit eds. *Confidence Building in the Middle East* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), p. 211.

[43] See "Eritrea Accepts OAU Modalities to End War With Ethiopia," *PanAfrican News Agency* (July 15, 1999).

[44] In the case of the Sudan, these initiatives may be as much for the benefit of the international community as for southern Sudanese rebels.

decommissioned weapons were incinerated in a formal public ceremony to mark the end of the war in March 1996 – was meant to symbolize the efforts of both parties to put a violent past behind them. In both cases important bridges were said to have been built between the disputants, and between the disputants and civilians. In 1993, the assassination of ANC leader Chris Hani by white radicals in South Africa might have derailed the process of reform and reconciliation had not Nelson Mandela appealed to all South Africans for calm. In fact, Mandela's public intervention is said to have been crucial in maintaining black confidence in the process and in having strengthened his own credibility in the eyes of both black and white communities.[45] Undoubtedly, the established integrity of the person making the statements has an impact on the credibility attributed to the statement itself.

Visits by Leaders or Elders

Still there is no question that actions speak louder than words when it comes to confidence building. Singled out as one of the most important measures in instilling confidence between Arabs and Israelis – and one which ultimately led to a successful negotiation process – was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977. This visit was crucial for several reasons. First, it was irreversible insofar as it signaled Egypt's willingness to recognize Israel and its security concerns; second, it came at substantial political cost in terms of Egypt's standing in the Arab world and, consequently, suggested his sincere commitment to peace; and third, it challenged the conceptions of both Israeli leaders and, perhaps, more importantly, the Israel public regarding the Arab world as necessarily hostile and, in doing so, mobilized Israeli public and official opinion in favour of a settlement.[46] Evidently, Sadat's visit was not merely a statement of good intentions but an unequivocal, verifiable and ultimately irreversible commitment to the peace process. Moreover, to the extent that it essentially forced the Israelis to make meaningful concessions, this confidence building measure was reciprocated.

What might appear to be a traditional confidence building measure which is only relevant to *inter*-state conflicts in fact has applicability to African civil wars as well. Efforts to bring peace among the Nuer and the Dinka of the southern Sudan, for example, have involved exchanges of visits by their respective chiefs. In the early stages of the peace process during 1998, Nuer chiefs stated their intention to walk to Dinka territory to demonstrate to their own people and that of their adversaries that their lives were not in danger and that they were justified in proceeding with the peace process. According to a participant in the process, the gesture was to state in effect, "I am

---

[45] In his speech Mandela stated that "A white man, full of prejudice and hate, came to our country and committed a deed so foul that our whole nation now teeters on the brink of disaster. But a white woman [who reported the crime], of Afrikaner origin, risked her life so that we may know, and bring to justice, the assassin." See Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Road to Change* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), p. 187-89.

[46] Stein, p. 210.

going to bring my leadership to you and then you will prove that we will be safe."[47] The overture was then reciprocated by Dinka leaders who accompanied the Nuer back to their own territory. Establishing such trust was essential, particularly for the Nuer, who were sending their people into Dinkaland for a subsequent conference without international monitors. Indeed, it was only after confidence had been established in this meaningful way that the next stage of the peace process was even possible.

Unilateral Disarmament

In her article on the difficulties in resolving civil wars, Barbara Walter argues that peace agreements force parties into a "paradoxical and unfortunate dilemma." Because civil war adversaries cannot maintain independent armed forces following the implementation of a peace agreement, any attempt to proceed with a peace process necessarily leaves at least one of the parties vulnerable. In her words, "as soon as they comply with a peace treaty they become powerless to enforce the terms over which they had bargained so hard." Alternatively, it is frequently safer and less risky to continue fighting than to negotiate an agreement which ultimately leaves one at the mercy of an adversary.[48] In theory, this is a compelling argument and one with considerable practical evidence to support it.

But, in fact, while rare, there are instances when groups have been so bold as to relinquish their weapons unilaterally. Disappointed with the progress on disarmament following the 1993 establishment of a new constitutional structure in Northern Somaliland, for example, one major clan faction entered the city of Hargeisa and unilaterally surrendered its heavy weapons. The action was regarded as enormously symbolic and is said to have "shamed" the remaining armed factions into following suit. The fact that so many heavy weapons were turned in had the effect of launching a much more widespread disarmament process.[49] While the act involved obvious risks insofar as it momentarily left the clan faction exposed, the dramatic nature of the event unequivocally conveyed its intention to pursue peace and its trust in its adversaries – confidence which was almost immediately reciprocated by the remaining clans. This series of events does not invalidate Walter's overall argument; indeed, it was *because* of the risks involved that this single act was such a meaningful confidence building measure.

---

[47] William Lowery, Sudan Partnership Facilitator for the Presbyterian Church (USA); interview with the author, October 18, 1999.

[48] Walter, p. 338.

[49] My thanks to Hussein Adam of Holy Cross for alerting me of these events during the Peacebuilding Workshop at the University of Toronto, May 29, 1999, and for providing further details in subsequent correspondence.

Dialogue Among Factions

Aside from gestures of goodwill, confidence can also emerge from dialogue between adversaries. Indeed, social scientists see ongoing interaction as an important means by which cooperation can evolve under conditions of anarchy. If the "shadow of the future" is cast backwards it tends to favourably influence early decisions on whether or not cooperation should be pursued.[50] That is, if actors know they will meet their principal opponent repeatedly, they are more likely to consider cooperation on the first encounter as a means of currying favour for all subsequent encounters. For cooperation to emerge, then, interaction must be frequent and personal so that one can distinguish those who have previously cooperated from those who have not.

Perhaps the most successful interactions in restoring confidence have been grassroots discussions between clan leaders, elders and other prominent members of society. In the early stages of interaction participants focus their attention on healing and problem-solving rather than bargaining and confrontation. The objective of such efforts is to get behind the *positions* of the adversaries to consider *interests* and *motivations* for actions. Offenders learn about the pain and suffering their actions have caused, while victims gain insight into the factors which induced these actions in the first place. Because both sides in any civil conflict have usually committed offenses and endured pain, the process of understanding and healing is assumed to flow in both directions.

While there is a diversity of methods that could be used in this approach, the most effective examples appear to draw from local or traditional methods of story-telling and ritual. At a 1998 peace conference in Loki, Kenya, for example, which dealt with the conflict between the Nuer and Dinka of the southern Sudan, individuals were encouraged to sit on either side of a rope meant to represent the Nile river. Representatives were then provided with as much time as was needed to relate stories of injustices which had been done to their people by their adversaries. Their adversaries, in turn, were then given the opportunity to describe the injuries that their opponents had caused them during the war. Both sides were able to speak at length of their respective experiences without interruption and to hear their adversaries' interpretation of their own actions as well.[51] Similar palavers in Mali during 1994 involved various members of civil society addressing issues from arms control, refugee return to disarmament. The belief that "jaw is a solution" for war significantly enhanced inter-ethnic understanding and reduced banditry.[52]

---

[50] See Axelrod (1984), pp. 10-1.

[51] This account was provided by William Lowery in interview with the author.

[52] President Konaré referred used this term in reference to the dozens of meetings involving civil society in Mali during 1995 and 1996 and which culminated in Mali's "Flame of Peace." Robert Lacville, "Beacon of Hope for Mali," *Guardian Weekly* (April 14 1996), p. 23. For descriptions of other forms of "traditional" peacebuilding and mediation, see Bethuel Kiplagat, "Is Mediation Alien to Africa?" *The Ploughshares Monitor* XIX(4) (December 1998).

Grassroots-oriented methods of confidence building, however, do not mean concrete issues are avoided or that genuine authority figures are excluded. Indeed, each of these conflict resolution processes resulted in documented settlements where the elements and resolution of specific issues were spelled out in detail. And senior representatives often insisted on being part of these processes.[53] But confidence building was required *before* the more difficult issues could be confronted. It allowed the two sides to find common cause and to relate to their common suffering. As these layers of trust and confidence were established, participants were encouraged to tackle more sensitive issues and then "buy into" commonly arrived-at solutions. If adversaries are able to see such interaction not as a one time event but as part of a larger stream of reconciliation and conflict resolution – as these kinds of reconciliation processes encourage – the benefits of iteration mentioned above are also likely to be reinforced.

Infrastructure and Development Projects

Discussion thus far has considered methods for building confidence which have involved little or no international involvement. The cases described above involved participants from various NGOs and church organizations and funds for transportation provided by donor countries, but the mediators deliberately kept their role to a minimum. Doing so ensured that trust and confidence was established through the actions and responses of the adversaries themselves and not through any form of coercion.

Donor countries and NGOs can, however, have an important role in other types of confidence building. Development projects, for example, can be an important way for one side (usually the government) to signal to its adversary that it has no intention of going war in the future. A meaningful indication that one is not planning aggressive actions in future can be transmitted through tangible investments in infrastructure – particularly if it can be shown that one's own scarce resources are being invested. Since infrastructure is frequently damaged during times of war, such investments are essentially held hostage as a test of one's sincerity.[54] In an African context, this kind of CBM can be used in conjunction or in collaboration with other development projects and, obviously, has the added value of benefitting ordinary citizens.

Indeed, in some contexts such an investment is an important means of restoring the confidence of ordinary citizens in the government and signaling the end of war. Angolans, for example, have noted that they will know peace has been achieved when they see the railroad operating from Benguela on the coast to the Congo in the east. Until recently the Angolan government had made little tangible effort to use its vast resources to win over the population in this

---

[53] In the case of the southern Sudan, documents and accounts of these peace processes are available on the world wide web at: members.tripod.com/SudanInfonet. Participants in these conferences involved community leaders, up to Commander Salva Kiir, the second in command to SPLA leader John Garang.

[54] For a similar example in the case of confidence building between Egypt and Israel, see Stein, p. 207.

way and instead used funds only to conduct its war effort or to enrich its own cadres.[55] In Ethiopia, on the other hand, the EPRDF has since 1991 made substantial investments in infrastructure at the expense of the military – an action which was applauded by the donor community. Regrettably, in retrospect, such a policy appears to have been naïve given the investment the Eritrean government made in its military forces during the same time and the destructive war which ensued.[56] Certainly, for this kind of CBM to be effective, it must be explicitly demonstrated and interpreted as a confidence building gesture – one that clearly indicates a willingness to risk considerable and scarce resources for the sake of peace.

Changes in Leadership or Lead Negotiators

A final determinant in this approach to confidence building is the individual(s) chosen to represent the respective adversaries. Since the prospects for cooperation are enhanced if the participants are familiar to each other, there is value in having the same individuals meet regularly. Continuing interaction between individuals allows for cooperation based on reciprocity to be stable.[57]

On the other hand, *whom* one side sends to negotiate or mediate can say a lot about one's intentions to cooperate. Obviously, finding appropriate mediators and negotiators – whether one is a known "hardliner" or "softliner" – is central to maintaining the confidence of all disputants. Accounts of successful negotiations frequently make reference to the role of specific individuals and their ability to instill trust and facilitate an agreement. In the case of Mali, for example, General Brehima Siré Traore was regarded as instrumental in bringing about an agreement satisfactory to all sides, a result in part of his many previous missions into the field to meet with rebels and consequent ability to understand their grievances. Similarly, in Liberia, Nigerian Major General Victor Malu's assertive leadership of ECOMOG was central to restoring the confidence of Liberians in the peace process after an inauspicious beginning. On the other hand, the replacement of key moderates in the MPLA negotiating team and cabinet following the 1992 elections in Angola could not have been overlooked by UNITA and, indeed, signaled the much more aggressive military posture being taken by the government.

---

[55] There is still considerable criticism among Angolans and in the international community that the Angolan government has squandered its vast diamond and oil wealth. There are, however, notable albeit small, exceptions. In 1997, for example, the Angolan government enlisted BP Amoco in conjunction with the United Nations to assist local fisherman revive an abandoned fishing port.

[56] John Young, "Post War Ethiopian Futures," (unpublished paper), p. 9.

[57] Axelrod (1984), p.125.

CBMs Which Reduce Vulnerabilities Associated with Peace Processes

Unlike the previous set of CBMs, this second set of measures attempt to *reduce* the risks associated with participating in the peace process. By ensuring protection and minimizing inevitable vulnerabilities, parties are more likely to be confident in and embark on conflict resolution. These CBMs focus primarily on increasing warning times and enhancing possibilities for disarmament and verification. Such CBMs are described with a mind to the fact that Africa remains a continent where peace must often be constructed in the absence of large and forceful international peacekeeping contingents. Among these measures are:

Dispersed Cantonment

In the nuclear era states have looked to various means to lengthen the warning times prior to an attack so that decision-makers may be able to respond appropriately to threats. The same principle applies in civil wars. Should there be a breakdown of mutual confidence, the geographic dispersal of respective parties can have an important role in increasing warning times before a coordinated attack can take place. Dispersal makes it more difficult for either side to quickly form a military force sufficiently large for it to ensure the destruction of the other. Moreover, the wide dispersal of troops ensures that one side is never so exposed that it could be completely emasculated were an attack to take place. This can be an important confidence building measure particularly in situations where there is limited or no international assistance to provide protection for states complying with an agreement. Indeed, this kind of CBM – used effectively during Zimbabwe's transition from white minority to black majority government – means that a smaller number of peace *monitors* can be utilized instead of a larger force of peace*keepers*. Notably, however, CBMs which seek to reduce vulnerabilities through the separation and dispersion of disputants preclude the interaction which may promote long-term confidence building.

Decomposition of Agreements

Confidence building is frequently conceptualized in terms of stages. Stages allow for the progressive implementation of "small tests of trust" to be simultaneously completed by adversaries.[58] Ideally, each stage allows for a greater degree of political commitment and for adversaries to progress to more difficult or risky measures only after each side is confident that its adversary has completed the previous tasks. In this way, decomposition facilitates verification; one does not move forward until one is sufficiently confident that previous measures have been carried out and that one's security is not being jeopardized. Particularly if a party is unable or unwilling to make a large gesture, a series of less costly ones is a possible alternative provided sufficient progress is made to develop a reputation one way or the other.

---

[58] Michael Krepon, "Conceptualizing and Negotiating CBMs," in Shai Feldman ed. *Confidence Building and Verification: Prospects in the Middle East* JCSS Study #25 (Boulder: Westview, 1994), pp. 42-4.

Such "decomposition" is a widely practiced principle. Businesses often require customers to pay for large orders in phases, as deliveries are made, to minimize the risk to it should the customer not be in a position to pay for the goods. The same effect can be achieved when peace settlements are broken down into stages or decomposed. Indeed, in both bargaining and implementation contexts, stages minimize the risks assumed by each party. Since peacekeeping operations are increasingly complex they are amenable to decomposition. By breaking one or two large moves on disarmament into numerous smaller moves, for example, the parties are better able to ensure compliance and reciprocate. Decomposition also minimizes the chances of cheating. Because the incentives to cheat on any one move are relatively small compared with the gains that may be achievable by sticking with the process, the stability of cooperation is enhanced.[59] And even if cheating does take place, decomposition means that the other side is only marginally worse off than it was before.

Presence of Monitors and Peacekeepers

Neutral monitors and peacekeepers have a number of obvious roles to play in peace processes and in restoring confidence. Their presence alone can be an important source of confidence. Since peacekeepers and monitors remain in a country at the pleasure of the disputants themselves (at least the sovereign government), a request for their withdrawal is an indication of a party's intention *not* to comply with an agreement any longer. Alternatively, as long as the monitors and/or peacekeepers remain in place, a party is assured of its adversary's ongoing compliance. In this way, monitors and peacekeepers are seen more as fire alarms than fire brigades. There is no illusion about their limitations in actually preventing conflict. But because a withdrawal is requested before such an attack, it can provide valuable warning times for those still complying with an agreement.[60]

Monitors and peacekeepers can provide assurances in other ways as well. During the Kissinger-Vorster negotiations over Zimbabwe in 1974, many guerrillas were killed in ambushes during bogus cease-fires. Consequently, past experiences can mean that there are good reasons why one party should not trust an adversary. Indeed, unlike European CBMs, which were meant to provide clarity and confidence to a conflict which had not (yet) taken place (between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, for example), CBMs in Africa are faced with the much more difficult task of pulling disputants out of existing conflict situations or restoring confidence in *post*-conflict situations. Thus, following the signing of a peace agreement, it can be difficult to entice rebels out of the bush because they are, not without justification, fearful that they will be killed. During the implementation of the Lancaster House agreement in Zimbabwe, this problem was overcome by the use of African liaison officers (LOs) who worked with the Commonwealth Monitoring Force. LOs accompanied the international monitoring force to assure guerrillas that the agreement was genuine and that CMF officers were legitimate and non-threatening. To further ensure that the assembly points could be distinguished as safe neutral zones for guerrillas to congregate, these areas were amply floodlit at

---

[59] Axelrod (1984), p. 132.

[60] Stein, pp. 203-4.

night, were deliberately noisy, had Union Jacks well displayed, and were patrolled by monitors wearing white arm bands. According to one account of this process, it was doubtful that guerrillas could have been induced into coming into the cantonment areas had LOs not been made available to provide such assurances.[61] Evidently, having confidence in an external monitor force may come before, and be part of the process of, developing confidence in one's adversary.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Verification

International relations theorists refer to the "security dilemma" to describe a situation in which the acquisition of weapons by one side in an effort to increase its security undermines the sense of security of everyone else and invites a counter acquisition of arms.[62] The contrary would also appear to be true. Knowing one's opponent has fewer arms or troops reduces one's perception of threat. Indeed, disarmament is an obvious, though perhaps not essential, aspect of confidence building. Information regarding each side's capabilities can be important in indicating the true intentions of the parties. Effective verification is not only a role which can be carried out by the international community, but it is essential if peace processes are to be completed with confidence. The international community's ability to independently and accurately verify disarmament processes can be an critical tool in allowing each side to gauge its opponent's compliance with a peace accord.[63]

Disarmament and verification, however, can be an extremely delicate and difficult process. Success is often dependent on their complete execution. When demobilization succeeds but disarmament fails there can be a dramatic increase in the amount of unaccounted-for weaponry in circulation. In Mozambique, progress towards demobilization was greater than towards disarmament and the subsequent increase in violent crime was attributed to the fact that weapons were so easily available. Even if a war has formally ended, increases in random banditry can undermine the local population's confidence in the peace process. Ironically, there can also be a problem if demobilization programs are too successful. Generous incentive programs meant to encourage demobilization in Mozambique led to such a mass exodus from the respective armed forces that both sides feared that their security was being jeopardized by an otherwise successful peace process.

---

[61] Jeremy Ginifer, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Rhodesia/Zimbabwe* Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (New York: United Nations, 1995), p. 30.

[62] Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30(1) (1978), pp. 167-214.

[63] The MPLA government in Angola has been critical of UN failings in this regard. It claims that despite having committed $1.5 billion to its peacekeeping mission it ultimately failed to ensure that UNITA was disarmed (and that it stayed disarmed) as UNITA was required to do under both the Bicesse Accords of 1991 and the Lusaka Accord of 1992. Claiming to have lost faith in the UN's ability to ensure that UNITA did not rearm, the MPLA asked the UN to leave Angola in mid-1999.

Stabilizing Measures

This third category of CBMs is meant to ensure that unexpected events do not undermine confidence or unnecessarily increase existing tensions between hostile parties. They help to stabilize conflict situations by increasing communications and transparency between disputants on an on-going basis.

Telephones, Radios and Communications

During the Cold War, telephone "hotlines" were seen as a significant confidence building measure insofar as they ensured that the principal adversaries would have a means to communicate with each other during crisis situations. By developing such means it was hoped that unintended actions or events would not be misinterpreted as hostility. Of course, hotlines or other forms of communication have an obvious limitation; they do not eliminate the conditions which give rise to insecurity and could, conceivably, only confirm that an adversary is indeed hostile.[64] Nonetheless, hotlines continue to provide an additional means by which misunderstandings might be avoided.

Given the infrastructural constraints in much of Africa, telephone hotlines would appear to have limited utility in conflict situations. On the contrary, the very lack of reliable means of communication has made such technology all the more essential. Most notable in this respect has been an experiment between the American Presbyterian Church and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) to provide radios for adversarial groups in the southern Sudan. These radios are multiple frequency, allowing communication not only between the radios themselves (which were in various locations in the south), but also providing an important contact with the outside world. As with telephone "hotlines" there is the potential to abuse such forms of communication. However, the adaptation of a "traditional" CBM to an African context has proven to have a number of sometimes unexpected benefits: the provision of such equipment requires and demonstrates an element of trust being placed by the donors on the parties themselves; the radios have provided communities with the ability to keep in touch with and become informed about the outside world; they have been important in drawing together the communities themselves to listen to international broadcasts; and, most importantly, for a relatively small investment, they have provided a means to reduce tensions and misunderstanding between communities.[65]

---

[64] Following the installation of a hotline between Moscow and Washington, President John F. Kennedy remarked that "If [Khrushchev] fires his missiles at me, it is not going to do any good for me to have a telephone at the Kremlin ... and ask him if it is really true." Cited in Theodore C. Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 727.

[65] Interview, William Lowery.

Bipartisan Commissions to Consider Violations and Provide Talking Forums

Cease-fire commissions established by or following a negotiated settlement can also provide an important means of communication between parties. Aside from their role in assessing cease-fire violations, such commissions provide ongoing forums for dialogue and in times of crisis can be the only means by which delicate issues can be addressed by the senior-most leadership. The bipartisan structure of such commissions also provides additional legitimacy when it comes to conflict resolution. Moreover, because of this bipartisan nature, they are a form of interim powersharing which may allow an element of trust to be built and set a precedent for a subsequent inclusive governing structure. In Angola, the threat of a move from what was essentially an internationally backed, though imperfect, power-sharing body under the Joint Political Military Commission (CCPM) to a winner-take-all election undermined any confidence between the UNITA and the ruling MPLA.[66] While participants and mediators alike in Zimbabwe initially regarded such commissions with suspicion or skepticism, they were later viewed by some individuals as *the* "agency which principally achieved reconciliation." Indeed, the cease-fire commission was "instrumental" in the implementation of the Lancaster House agreements, particularly since, given that the respective military forces were separated and dispersed, it provided the only means for the eventual integration of the two sides.[67]

Confidence Negating Behaviours

Finally, confidence building measures must be seen in terms of actions taken not only to strengthen trust between parties, but also actions which inevitably undermine trust. Confidence negating behaviors are obviously actions which are to be avoided because they convey to an adversary that their trust is unwarranted. This conduct has the effect of undermining confidence and even precluding the establishment of positive relations at any time in the near future. Briefly, these kinds of activities include the following:

Partisan Radio Stations and Hostile Propaganda

Observers of the current conflict in Ethiopia note the impact of a media campaign undertaken by the Ethiopian government to undermine the government of Issias Aferworki and his policies. This campaign, coming as it did in the months prior to May 1998, may have been a contributing factor in the outbreak of war. The adversaries may not be aware of or concerned with the possibility that any short term gains that might arise from whipping up nationalist fervor may be offset by long term insecurity and inability to cooperate.

---

[66] Author's interview with UNITA deputy, Abel Chivukuvuku, November 24, 1997.

[67] CMF commander, Maj. Gen. Sir John Acland, quoted in Ginifer, pp. 46 and 49.

Forceful Expulsion of Foreign Citizens

Actions such as the expulsion of foreign citizens – perhaps an inevitable event in any interstate conflict – has the dual effect of generating support for one's cause but also eroding the confidence of one's adversary. This is particularly unfortunate given that in times of peace such expatriates can be a source of regional or inter-state solidarity. In the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, both sides have been responsible for expelling citizens of the other country under the not-surprising claim that they represented a security risk. The consequences for many such citizens have included sudden job loss without compensation, forced migration, the abandonment of children and splitting up of mixed Ethiopian-Eritrean families.[68] Such hardships may be seen as unforgivable and do considerable long-term damage to interstate relations.

Indications of Noncompliance in Disarmament Processes

In disarmament processes, the quality of the weapons that are handed in is an indication of an adversary's willingness to comply with the agreement as a whole. Handing in weapons that are no longer serviceable ("junk or mostly junk") undermines confidence insofar as it suggests that an adversary is withholding its most lethal weaponry. A party's conviction that an adversary is not disarming as required only leads to increased fears that it may soon be subject to an attack.

Past Exploitations and Defections and Their Historical Contexts

In many cases it is the compounding of these and other behaviours which undermines trust and, worse, makes its restoration even more difficult in future. In the case of Angola, recent events have led both groups to be profoundly suspicious of the other. The ruling MPLA, for example, is mistrustful of UNITA because: 1) UNITA appears to have rejected the elections of 1992, suggesting that it could never accept a decision made by Angolans in a free and fair election (by some accounts, UNITA never intended to honour an unfavourable election outcome); 2) UNITA avoided and did not fulfill the requirements that it fully disarm and, indeed, appears to have increased its military strength; and 3) UNITA refused to hand over territory to the government as it was required to do under the 1994 Lusaka Protocol. For its part, UNITA mistrusts the government for what it believes to be equally compelling reasons: 1) following the 1992 elections, the MPLA killed some of UNITA's most senior and talented members who had taken the risk of being in Luanda at the time of the elections (an action, which some UNITA officials maintain was deliberately intended to decapitate UNITA); 2) following the initialing but prior to the formal signing of the 1994 Lusaka Accords, the government undertook one "final push" to capture the UNITA stronghold of Huambo, a violation of the spirit, if not the letter of the Lusaka process; and 3) government actions during the process of handing UNITA territory over to the central administration was seen as tantamount to that of a "conquering army" and suggested to UNITA that control of resources (control which UNITA regards as central to its survival) in future would not be conducted in a way which showed concern

---

[68] J. Abbink, "Briefing: The Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Dispute," *African Affairs* 97 (1998), pp. 560.

for UNITA's interests and security.[69] Of course, these perceptions are compounded to the extent that they confirm a larger history of mistreatment by an adversary as discussed above. For successful conflict resolution it is incumbent that mediators appreciate both the more recent past "defections" and the larger contexts in which they are perceived and find appropriate means to address them.

SUPPORTING CONDITIONS FOR CONFIDENCE IN NEGOTIATIONS AND BEYOND

It can be difficult to determine, except in retrospect, whether conditions exist for successful confidence building. But even under the most dire conditions there are reasons for optimism. Lasting peaceful settlements have, indeed, emerged out of the most difficult situations. Regarding the case of Zimbabwe, for example, Jeremy Ginifer writes that "Almost all the indicators were unfavourable: the protagonists were hostile to the [international monitoring force];its mandate was perceived as flawed; fighting continued despite a cease-fire; and the peace process was precarious." Yet he adds that the mission in Zimbabwe has since "been regarded as one of the most effective demilitarization processes that has been mounted."[70] Some of the conditions which strengthen confidence building have already been noted. What are some other conditions that might enhance confidence building?

A Desire for Peace

CBMs work only where there is a genuine desire for peace. They are meant only to *reassure* an adversary that peaceful intentions exist and that one is justified in proceeding along this course. Where peaceful intentions do not exist, CBMs do nothing to create them. In fact, however, such circumstances are rare and more often than not parties commit aggressive actions as a result of their uncertainty over an adversary's potentially aggressive intentions. Indeed, the behaviour of certain leaders is often brazen but can often be seen as conveying fear rather than bluster.[71] Ginifer provides an important insight in this respect, stating that, despite suspicions between them, the parties in Zimbabwe "showed a dogged commitment to the peace process." He adds that, "although there were 'tactical' contraventions of the cease-fire ... in the run-up to the elections, the parties' overall commitment to demilitarization remained intact. Indeed, the attitude of the PF [Patriotic Front

---

[69] References to the MPLA's conquering army-like behaviour were made to the author in separate interviews with UNITA's representative to Washington, Jardo Muekalia, on July 7 1999, and with the UN spokesman in Angola, David Wimhurst, February 6, 1998.

[70] Ginifer, pp. 3-4.

[71] Notably, Stedman and Rothchild take an opposing view, stating that "Mediators, who have a vested interest and substantial investment of time, energy and honour in seeing settlements implemented, tend to interpret acts of non-compliance as motivated by fear rather than insincerity," (p. 24).

guerrillas] was remarkable given their insecurity...."[72] In instances where a desire for peace is not apparent, efforts must be made to find moderates who are willing to participate in the peace process.

Confidence Building Must Be Seen as an *Iterated* Process

Problems of insecurity can be alleviated if there are many "plays" or "moves" and if the parties understand that their adversaries will have an opportunity to reciprocate their actions the next time they meet. Effective conflict resolution frequently involves having disputants consider the "shadow of the future": players learn from past plays and concern themselves with reciprocity in plays to come. In the southern Sudan, variations of this technique have been successfully employed. In peace conferences among the Dinka and Nuer, for example, elders and members of civil society were urged to recall what their ancestors had told them about conflicts they had experienced and how they resolved them. Then they were urged to think about their own descendants and how they would need a peaceful environment in which to live. The objective, then, was to connect the wisdom of the past to the generations of the future. Linking the present with the past and the future has the effect of extending the length of the game, thus making groups aware that they are not playing *one* but an indefinite number of games.[73]

The Peace Process Must Involve the Smallest Number of Players

Conflicts involving numerous actors, many of which continue to emerge as rebel groups factionalize, can be difficult to resolve. In such situations, the large number of actors means that one is frequently facing new actors, and opportunities to establish trust are minimized. Alternatively, the prospects for cooperation and trust are increased when other actors are kept away and interaction maximized. But how can this be achieved when African conflicts often involve many participants? Decentralized approaches to peace building – peace through "building blocks" or "peace by parts" – has been considered in Somalia because it reduces the number of players in any one conflict. Such approaches are also less likely to lead to the collapse of the whole process should any one of the agreements break down. The ability of clan units to create localized zones of peace and the failure to recreate a central government in Mogadishu make this an important option.[74]

---

[72] Ginifer, pp. 52.

[73] Lowery interview with the author.

[74] See "Somalia: Are 'Building Blocks' the Solution?, *Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN)* (July 19, 1999).

Confidence Is Best Developed Under Existing Political Structures

Degrees of state collapse range from weakened or illegitimate governments (in the Sudan for example) to near or outright state failure (for example, Sierra Leone, Liberia or Somalia). Where anarchy undermines the likelihood of stable interaction between disputants, prospects for peace may be improved as its effects are minimized. Ideally, peace processes need to be conducted under a coherent indigenous state structure rather than the chaos of a collapsed state. In Zimbabwe, a coherent state structure and a functioning bureaucracy onto which peacekeeping operations could be "bolted" is said to have been a "major contributor to the success of a peace process and demilitarization."[75] Similarly, Northern Somaliland avoided much of the violent upheaval experienced in the south in the early 1990s in large part because of the presence of a respected indigenous government working in conjunction with credible local clan elders. Those regions of the south which avoided anarchy did so because a more secure environment was established through assertive peacekeeping and the expedient re-establishment of indigenous institutions. Indeed, where local institutions no longer exist, multilateral organizations can have an important facilitation role in recreating them. In Baidoa, for example, Australian efforts to put in place a 'military governor' and to quickly restore a functioning legal system helped rebuild local confidence in the rule of law and improve security relative to other regions of the south.[76]

Critical Resources Must Be Forthcoming

The establishment of confidence comes not just from the *presence* of a stabilizing force but the *execution* of the peace process itself. The confidence of warring parties is contingent on the prompt arrival of a peacekeeping force and the provision of resources to meet obligations. Conversely, the failure to provide funds promised during the negotiation phase or to follow through on promises made to demobilize factions can undermine confidence in the peacekeepers and the peace process in general.[77] In Zimbabwe, tensions increased dramatically when inadequate food provisions were available for guerrillas in the assembly areas. The guerrillas claimed that the monitoring force was either trying to "wipe them out" or to force them to abandon the assembly areas so that they might be accused of breaking the agreement. In Somalia, American efforts to disarm the local population through a food-for-guns program were derailed when UNITAF forces began to run short on wheat flour.[78] Such a failure not only left American forces with no other

---

[75] Ginifer, p. 55.

[76] On the different experiences of peacekeeping in southern Somalia, see Robert G. Patman, "Disarming Somalia: The Contrasting Fortunes of United States and Australian Peacekeepers During United Nations Intervention," *African Affairs* 96 (1997), pp. 521-22.

[77] Stedman and Rothchild, pp. 26-7.

[78] Food-for-guns initiatives were probably the only realistic option in these cases. At the time, various proposals were made in the popular press calling for massive cash-for-guns plans. See, for example, Raymond Bonner,

choice than to adopt the more threatening task of confiscating weapons, but it also showed disregard for the safety of those who had already surrendered their weapons. The lesson is clear: once a peace process is initiated critical resources must be forthcoming or peacemakers risk losing the confidence of those they are trying to help.

Disputants Must Have Confidence in Mediators and Peacekeepers

Confidence building involves not only the establishment of trust between adversaries but also, and perhaps more importantly, its establishment between mediators and local parties. Parties see their survival as dependent on their continued possession of weaponry and the even-handed execution of the peace process. Disarmament or other risky elements of a settlement requires them to place enormous trust in those overseeing the peace process. The personal attributes of the individual, his or her nationality, or the organization presiding over the peace process can have an impact in this respect. Relations between the UN and Somali factions went through a roller-coaster as the principal individuals leading the process changed from Mohamed Sahnoun to Jonathan Howe to Robert Oakley. Similarly, relations between the OAU and the Eritreans improved when the OAU presidency changed from Burkina Faso (seen as a favouring Addis Ababa by Eritrea) to Algeria. And while questions have been raised over the untimely death of UN Special Envoy to Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, he was regarded by all parties as an exceptionally skilled and impartial mediator who ultimately succeeded in bringing about a settlement.[79] Of course, a neutral mediator is not free from accusations of bias. In Zimbabwe, Patriotic Front guerrillas accused the CMF of having struck secret deals with the Rhodesians (which they had), while the Rhodesian Security Forces maintained that the CMF was favouring the rebels. Similarly, American State Department officials claim that they have been accused by both the Ethiopians and Eritreans of showing favouritism towards the other – an occurrence regarded by some within the State Department as an indication of their impartiality.[80]

"Buy Up the Somalis' Guns," *New York Times* (December 2, 1992), p. A23. Most buyback schemes fail because they either attract new weapons from outside or because they provide an opportunity for rebels to unload their junk at a significant profit.

[79] See, for example, the comments of Ambassador Paul Hare in *Angola's Last Chance for Peace: An Insiders Account of the Peace Process* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1998), pp. 20-1, 23. UNITA's representative to Washington, Jardo Muekalia remarked: Maître Beye was ... a skilled negotiator. ... Now certainly at some points the government liked him more than UNITA; at other points UNITA liked him more than the [government] — just depending on what the issue was on the table and who had to take the bitter pill." Interview with the author, July 7, 1999.

[80] Anonymous interview with the author, September 17, 1999. For a counter-view on the possibilities and wisdom of attempting to maintain impartiality in civil conflicts, see Richard K. Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* 73(6) (1994), pp. 20-33.

It is not clear, however, whether a more robust form of peacekeeping is more effective in instilling trust than a non-threatening one. In Somalia, the more assertive approach of both Australian and UNITAF forces contrasted sharply with the subsequent UN operation which was severely tested by local factions. In Zimbabwe, on the other hand, temptations to adopt an explicit show of force were resisted in favour of a deliberately nonthreatening and even friendly presence. As with other CBMs, the peacekeepers' willingness to take risks was meant to reassure potential aggressors. The reasoning was that Zimbabwean guerrillas were more likely to risk committing themselves to the peace process if the monitors themselves were vulnerable. It was also hoped that the PF was unlikely to attack monitors with which they had formed personal relationships.[81]

ISSUES IN BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Two other more controversial issues in confidence building in African conflict situations require further discussion. These issues include: 1) the centrality of disarmament in confidence building, and 2) the extent to which the international community needs to be involved for successful confidence building efforts.

Is Disarmament a Necessary Priority in the Process of Building Confidence?

There are obvious risks in allowing hostile groups to maintain weapons in peace processes. Discussions of the mistakes made in Angola inevitably dwell on the failure to disarm UNITA rebels prior to the 1992 elections. Similarly, in other regions, a failure to disarm Serbian troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1994 is regarded as having allowed an "open season" for the shelling of civilians in Sarajevo. In Northern Ireland, the Good Friday peace agreement was held up for months because Unionists could no longer tolerate an armed Irish Republican Army. The reasoning in each case is obvious; confidence comes from knowing that one's adversary does not have the capacity to inflict harm. Disarmament is essential if ordinary citizens are to feel secure and have their lives return to normalcy.

It is not clear, however, that disarmament is always a viable option or that it should always be the priority. The UN's unhappy experience in Angola was reflected in a much more aggressive subsequent effort to disarm clan factions in Somalia – which had equally disastrous consequences. Indeed, there are compelling reasons for *not* pursuing disarmament or at least establishing confidence *prior* to disarmament.

---

[81] There were, however, limits to the extent cantoned guerrillas were willing to trust peace monitors. Although personal relations were good, guerrilla fighters were advised by their commanders not to confide in the British. The suspicion was that the British were befriending them as a means of extricating information from them. See Ginifer, p. 33. The experience in Rwanda in 1994, however, in which thirteen Belgian peacekeepers were killed by Hutu extremists, suggests that creating vulnerabilities for the peacekeepers can have tragic consequences.

The first of these reasons is that while small arms do most of the killing in African conflicts – accounting for some 90 percent of the deaths and injuries[82] – they are notoriously difficult to control or to definitively verify their elimination. Unlike large weapons systems, small arms can be concealed and stored virtually indefinitely without detection. Moreover, small arms are ubiquitous in Africa. While precise figures are difficult to determine, an estimated six million AK-47s were reportedly "at large" in Mozambique in the mid-1990s.[83] In the Horn of Africa, an estimated US$18 billion worth of arms, much of it small arms and ammunition, was in circulation following the collapse of the Mengistu and Siad Barre regimes in Ethiopia and Somalia respectively – a consequence of patron-client relations with the superpowers during the Cold War.[84] During UNOSOM II, in Mogadishu alone there were an estimated two million small arms. Even when disputants are disarmed, they can easily reacquire weapons from a seemingly endless list of suppliers.[85] Weapons pipelines established during the Cold War continue to flourish along Africa's eastern seaboard and into the "arc of conflict" in central Africa. It is also worth noting the fact of "homegrown" weapons – often consisting of a nail, a spring and strips of inner tubes or water piping and manufactured in backyard workshops – or other rudimentary weapons such as knives and machetes which are virtually impossible to detect let alone confiscate until they have been put to use. When weapons are so widely available and when it is so difficult to verify their eradication, greater confidence may exist when each group knows the other is armed than in disarming and having to live with uncertainty over whether an adversary can still attack them.

Disarmament also involves other important cultural issues of which outsiders may be unfamiliar. Small arms possession among local populations may be a response to a "complex array of human security needs" in addition to national or local security and may be "deeply embedded in a culture's characterization of masculinity or of attained manhood." [86] A belief in one's right to bear arms can mean that well-intentioned but clumsy efforts to disarm local populations may do more to

---

[82] Sverre Lodgaard, "Preface" in Swadesh Rana, *Small Arms and Intra-State Conflicts*, Research Paper #34, (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR, March 1995).

[83] Berman, p. 50-1. Of course, even these figures are highly problematic. Rana, for instance, claims that there are a [relatively low] 1.5 million AK-47s which are unaccounted for in Mozambique. Rana, p. 6.

[84] Clement Adibe, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Somalia*, Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (New York: United Nations, 1995), p. 71. The fact that such weapons require little maintenance in order to function properly means that the killing life of small arms is extended into the future indefinitely.

[85] Rana reports that there are currently 300 companies in over 50 countries involved in the manufacture of small arms — a 25 percent increase in the number of weapons manufacturing countries from a decade earlier. See Rana, p. 4. Even Canada, which has an explicit policy to reduce small arms exports, has had to defend itself against accusations that it has failed to reduce such exports in recent years. See "Ottawa Criticized for Boosting Arms Exports," *CBC New News Online* (October 4, 1999); "Ottawa Trims Trade in Arms: Axworthy," *CBC News Online* (October 5, 1999).

[86] Ginette Saucier, "Small Arms Proliferation and Peacebuilding," Policy Paper presented to the Third Annual DFAIT/NGO Peacebuilding Consultations (February 1999), p. 3.

undermine confidence than to instill it. To the extent that it is perceived as being carried out unevenly, the disarmament of factions may be equivalent to a declaration of war. Unless the body carrying out the disarmament program is sufficiently robust, coercive approaches to disarmament can be extremely risky and invite attacks on the peacekeepers themselves. Vendetta-like disarmament, such as that conducted by UNOSOM II in 1993 against the rogue Somali general, Mohamed Farah Aidid, can distract peacekeepers from other more important objectives and jeopardize the credibility of the operation.

There are other reasons why local disputants may be, not without justification, unwilling to disarm. In a war economy, for example, persuading individuals to disarm is extremely difficult when people without weapons are starving and those who do have weapons are not. Moreover, because of the multiple vulnerabilities that are involved, disarmament may be precluded in multidimensional conflicts. It is unreasonable to expect, for example, one group to surrender its weapons when it faces threats from other sources and adversaries. Even in conflicts which appear to be less complicated, early disarmament may be a dubious priority. According to Jeremy Ginifer, in Zimbabwe, "none of the parties would contemplate disarmament. The CMF and the British government did not see it as a viable option; indeed, disarmament was never seriously considered."[87]

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for *not* disarming, however, are the peace processes where disputants kept their weapons: in Mozambique disarmament was initially the prerequisite to holding elections but became little more than an "afterthought"[88]; in Mali, the disputants proclaimed their objective was "security first"; in the southern Sudan, disarmament was not discussed until the second stage of negotiations when confidence and trust had been established; and while the use of weaponry was proscribed in Zimbabwe, parties to the conflict were entitled to retain their arsenals. Indeed, Ginifer proposes that "the success of the mission [in Zimbabwe] was due to the very lack of disarmament." He adds, "If the PF and RSF [Rhodesian Security Force] had given up arms they might only have heightened their own insecurities – was it really credible in the eyes of the PF that the RSF would hand in its arms or *vise versa*?"[89] The objective is not to discount disarmament as a form of confidence building, but rather to suggest that successful disarmament is, or may be, contingent on the prior or simultaneous achievement of confidence and trust.

---

[87] Ginifer, p. 54.

[88] Berman, p. 85.

[89] Ginifer, p. 52.

To What Extent Should the International Community Involve Itself in Building Confidence?

A central goal in a peace process involves developing security and confidence for ordinary citizens. A robust force is important in this respect insofar as it provides a buffer between hostile parties (or effectively underwrites the security of the weaker party) and controls banditry. This latter objective was the motive behind UNITAF's "decisive intervention" in Somalia where civilian access to food had been obstructed by clan fighting and lawlessness. More recently, the announced peacekeeping force for Sierra Leone is to be sufficiently large so as "to create the conditions of confidence and stability required for the smooth implementation of the peace process."[90]

The credibility of the peacekeepers can be critical in this respect. The perceived legitimacy of the UN and its generally good record on peacekeeping make it an important and obvious candidate for peacekeeping duties. Its multi-national character means that it is less likely to be regarded by civilians as representing the interests of any one state. On the other hand, this attribute also makes it more cumbersome and unresponsive. Its general inaction in Angola – aside from a series of resolutions – and failure to ensure UNITA's disarmament following the signing of the 1994 Lusaka Agreement, led many ordinary Angolans to become disenchanted with UN's utility as a peacekeeping force. Similarly, the effectiveness of the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) was undermined by acrimony between the American and Italian contingents over the most appropriate means of dealing with General Aidid. The legitimacy of the UN, then, can frequently be subverted by a lack of centralized decision making and ineffectiveness.

The OAU has been an important partner in post-Cold War conflicts, but it has had to deal with resource limitations and, in the case of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, with the handicap that its headquarters are in Addis Ababa. During Zimbabwe's transition to majority rule, the OAU as well as individual Front Line States (FLS) and the Commonwealth were all central in pressuring disputants to negotiate and keeping the peace process on track. Regional peacekeepers such as Nigeria, and South Africa, or former colonial powers can also offer important improvements in this regard because of their more centralized decision-making and greater familiarity with local issues. Despite having to contend with criticism that it lacked impartiality, the Nigerian-led ECOMOG was central to the process which brought about elections in Liberia in July 1997. More recently, the UN has looked to Nigeria to provide many of the troops for the impending mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) – a hybrid alternative which may be implemented elsewhere. But regional powers also have to contend with inadequate resources or reluctant domestic constituencies. In the Congo, for example, South Africa has been reluctant to commit itself beyond that of a mediator. In other situations, smaller actors, such as Zimbabwe, may act under the pretense of supporting a legitimate regime only to become another combatant in an already complex war. Unilateral intervention by former colonial powers tend to lack legitimacy and risk accusations of neo-colonialism. Provided

---

[90] Kofi Annan cited in "Annan Recommends 6,000 Peacekeepers for Sierra Leone," *IRIN* (September 28, 1999).

such involvement is endorsed by other neigbouring countries, however, these problems can be overcome. Indeed, in Zimbabwe, the British resisted UN involvement because it believed it could move more quickly ("fast in-fast out"), operate more efficiently and effectively, and be more responsive to the provision of goods and services.[91]

The provision of security for civilians, however, is often at odds with the establishment of conditions necessary to build trust between the adversaries. To the extent that it prevents interaction and communication, a heavy-handed interventionist force may do little to develop confidence between the disputants themselves. By separating the parties, such an approach avoids interaction and therefore precludes important opportunities to promote reconciliation and confidence building. On the contrary, according to one observer, "the empirical record would tend to suggest that demilitarization operations in which UN personnel adopt a minimalist, non-threatening posture tend to achieve better results. With the UN reluctant to enforce demilitarization – even assuming demilitarization is enforceable – consensual methods seem to be an increasingly viable approach."[92]

But is a minimalist style of confidence building compatible with the requirement that CBMs also be verifiable? In other words, does confidence building *require* outside forces if only to provide the service of verification? In fact, the nature of small arms means that rigorous verification of the kind utilized in European CBMs is almost never an option in African contexts. This does not, however, preclude disputants from developing their own methods of ensuring their safety and their adversary's compliance with an agreement. Indeed, parties that are willing to proceed with peace processes, yet cautious enough not to jeopardize their security, develop innovative ways to overcome verification problems. During the cantonment process in Zimbabwe, for example, PF forces would typically send an unarmed youth to scout the rendevous points. If the situation was found to be satisfactory, this was followed by inspection by one or two guerrillas. Only when a degree of trust was established with the monitoring force would remaining guerrillas arrive at a rendezvous point. Such practices are common to peace processes. In Mali, cantonment also began with the arrival of only a few guerrillas, as commanders sought to test the sincerity of the authorities. As greater confidence in the peace process developed, larger numbers of guerrillas followed. The organization of meetings with civil society was also interpreted by the guerrillas as an important indication that progress was being made and that the peace process was genuine. Coincident with these indications, instances of rebel-led banditry stopped almost completely. In any event, in lieu of more rigorous methods of verification, confidence building in Africa requires sufficient patience for local disputants to ensure that their security is not at risk.

---

[91] Ginifer, p. 17.

[92] Ginifer, p. 55.

SECURITY BUILDING MEASURES IN AFRICA

Security-building measures are neither fully verifiable nor irreversible. They are also difficult to reciprocate. While they can indeed improve the security of a people and improve their sense of autonomy, their implementation relies on the on-going goodwill of those offering them. They are not, then, CBMs in the strictest sense. In Ethiopia, the failure to honour pledges to allow Eritrean autonomy made by both Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam eventually led rebel movements not to accept anything less than independence in the years following Mengistu's fall in 1991. Similarly, in Mali, pledges were also made to allow a significant degree of autonomy and even special status for the north in the 1992 *Pacte Nationale*. The fact that this agreement was not fulfilled led to a renewal of violent conflict. Security-building measures such as powersharing, decentralization, economic development and *micro*-disarmament are also long-term processes that can take years to evolve. Still it is worth considering some of these measures given that their use is frequently proposed by academics and members of the international community.

Democracy and Power-Sharing

Opening up the political process to democratic governance and decentralization is an important means of developing greater government accountability. Decentralization is a key component of security-building strategy because it lessens the stakes (and thus the motivation) for violent struggle and because it deflects potential confrontations away from the capital city. Democratization usually encourages those operating underground to come into the open and organize themselves politically. But if authorities use this opportunity to identify adversaries or to expose individuals they could not previously locate, such measures obviously have a deleterious effects on confidence building. Recent experiences in East Timor and Angola are examples of what can go wrong. In the case of Angola, much of UNITA's senior-most leadership was killed by government militias following the elections of 1992 – an outcome that almost certainly led to Savimbi's subsequent refusal to return to Luanda. In East Timor, the rampages of government militias in September of 1999 undermined any goodwill that the government had previously inspired in its initiative on Timorese autonomy.

Relatedly, power-sharing is a tempting and frequently advocated means of building peace.[93] Indeed, offering ever-larger slices of power may be a means of signaling to an adversary that one is willing to make important political and economic concessions. While there is an obvious desire to avoid winner-takes-all elections, it should also be kept in mind that formalized power-sharing agreements have yet to live up to expectations. While there is evidence that inclusivity can mitigate conflict, power-sharing agreements are difficult to arrive at, even more difficult to implement, and

---

[93] See for example, I. William Zartman, "Dynamics and Constraints in Negotiations in Internal Conflicts," in *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, I. William Zartman ed. (Washington: Brookings, 1995); pp 22-23; Marina Ottaway, "Democratization in Collapsed States," *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, I. William Zartman ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), p 248.

even when implemented, such agreements rarely stand the test of time.[94] Leaders may be wary of a trap and seek to avoid any agreement which constrains their exercise of power. Anticipating electoral victories both Charles Taylor in Liberia and Jonas Savimbi in Angola objected to any political compromises which might limit their post-election power.[95] Even the voting electorate may prefer to give a disproportionate share of power to one party rather than have a weak, if reconciled, government. Despite Taylor's implication in atrocities during the civil war of the early 1990s, many ordinary Liberians also worried that a power-sharing pact and broad-based government would result in a weak regime not unlike those under which they had lived for the previous six years.[96]

Economic Development

Good governance must be supplemented by other measures which diminish the importance of the state or at least the necessity of controlling government. Not only does a generalized effort toward economic development increase the standard of living for all citizens but it also reduces the need to possess weaponry. Moreover, it helps people maintain their security even if they do not wield political or military power. Genuine development reduces the stakes in the political game and leaves individuals with several favourable options to consider both within and without the government. Alleviating the misery of the displaced, providing access to employment, land, health care and education are important security-building measures which can help deter a return to violence.[97]

Microdisarmament

Micro-disarmament refers not only to the type of weapons which are involved but also to the *individual* level at which disarmament is to take place. An obvious problem in conflict resolution in many African countries is that weapons which are owned by individuals for domestic protection or as part of a larger sentinel system, can also be used for killing in times of conflict and war. However, the multiple roles of such weaponry – as weapons of war, as a right of manhood, and as a legitimate means of domestic self-defense or even a legitimate means of livelihood – make

---

[94] See Ian S. Spears, "Understanding Inclusive Peace Agreements in Africa: The Problems of Sharing Power," *Third World Quarterly* 21(1) (2000).

[95] Initially, following the signing of the 1994 Lusaka Accord, Jonas Savimbi appeared amenable to a power-sharing agreement. But according to one UNITA representative, Savimbi was only willing to take part in such a government provided "as long as it was not simply to cut ribbons." Muekalia interview with the author. Indeed, governments must strike a difficult balance between offering a substantial enough portion of power to satisfy an adversary and maintaining control.

[96] Lyons, p. 48.

[97] Stedman and Rothchild, pp. 32-3.

disarmament processes more complex.[98] Efforts such as the Mali initiative on small arms and the Southern African Action Programme can be important means of combating weapons smuggling and reducing small arms use. But micro-disarmament is more likely to be a reflection of an increased sense of security felt by ordinary citizens than a means for achieving security. Those engaged in banditry out of a sense of survival will surrender their weapons only when they are relieved of that necessity. And, of course, both of these will occur only when the authorities can provide a sufficiently secure environment and succeed in improving the economic conditions for ordinary citizens.[99]

CONCLUSIONS: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANADA

There are a number of areas in which Canada can provide important assistance in conflict resolution processes in Africa. Some of these should be clear from the previous discussion. In many of these areas, Canada already makes important contributions. Each of the recommendations below is specifically targeted at increasing the disputants' confidence in each other and in the peace process itself.

Questions of Resources, Expedience and Patience

Confidence can be undermined when those overseeing the agreement's implementation cannot meet their stated commitments in a timely fashion. There is a need to be realistic about what can be achieved and when. On the other hand, there is an important role for Canada insofar as it can make use of its many contacts in the international community to speed up approval and implementation procedures and to ensure the expedient dispatch of resources needed to facilitate conflict resolution.

Look to Indigenous Means of Conflict Resolution

Issues of sovereignty and a lack of international will often preclude large scale peacekeeping initiatives for Africa. This should not be a cause for concern. From the discussion above, it should be clear that CBMs can be used with and without the assistance of the international community. Certainly successful confidence building does not *require* massive foreign intervention. CBMs are *facilitated* not imposed from outside. Indigenous means of conflict resolution and confidence building need to be considered not because it is cheaper (which it is) but because it works. Work

---

[98] Saucier, p. 7.

[99] See the comments by the leader of the UN advisory mission on small arms, William Eteki-Mboumoua, in Poulton et al. (footnote 22), p. 155. See also, Paul Eavis, "Awash with Light Weapons," *The World Today* (April 1999), pp. 19-21.

done through indigenous organizations is more effective, more economical and more credible.

Assist in Providing Appropriate and Credible Mediation Services

Canada has an important role in ensuring that there is good leadership in UN missions. For confidence to be established, special representatives and other key individuals in New York and on the ground need to be well qualified, of sufficient stature and amenable to the disputants themselves. It is incumbent on Canada to identify these individuals and make effective use of their skills and expertise.

Assist in the Provision of Technologies to Assist Verification and Control

Demobilization and cantonment can be extremely complex processes given that they involve the management of thousands of often transient individuals and enormous resources. The finger-printing and photographing of soldiers alone can be a logistical challenge. Reliable and accurate information about respective military preparedness can be an important means to avoiding catastrophic miscalculations. The provision and maintenance of a centralized and computerized registration data base to overcome such management difficulties is another appropriate role for Canada.

Assist in the Provision of Communications Technologies

As discussed, the provision of two-way radios has been a low cost, low risk investment with large payoffs. This kind of initiative could be expanded to incorporate other reliable forms of communication such as cell phones and satellite technology to ensure that links between communities are in place when needed.

Facilitating, Assisting Logistics During Negotiations

Working through various NGOs on the ground, outside parties such as Canada can also focus attention on *facilitation*; bringing key groups and leaders together. This is not an inconsiderable task given the lack of transportation and infrastructure in many post-conflict societies. The quick dispersal of funds by the American Presbyterian Church through the NSCC in 1998, for example, was critical to delivering Sudanese elders to a planned reconciliation conference. Similarly, in Mali, a "lubricating fund" was essential in providing transportation, accommodation, provisions and fuel during the numerous civil society meetings of 1994. Again, the provision of relatively modest funds can be critical not only in rebuilding confidence but in keeping lines of communication open so that

conflicts are avoided.[100]

Providing Funds or Expertise in Uncovering and Destroying Weapons and Weapons Caches.

One of the most unsettling aspects of disarmament and demobilization processes is that, unless weapons can be destroyed in *situ*, they can lead to increased circulation of armaments among the general population. While progress was made in demobilizing troops and guerrillas in Mozambique, for example, enormous quantities of weapons remained unaccounted for because there were insufficient resources to locate and destroy these caches. Providing means which allow excess or unaccounted weapons to be located and destroyed is an essential "stabilizing" element in reducing insecurity and building confidence and one to which Canada could also make a contribution.

Encourage Generalized Development

If a failure to promote equitable development is what ultimately is at the root of Africa's violent conflicts, then prospects for peace are not good in the short term. Working through NGOs, Canada needs to vigorously promote development to ensure that there are alternative means of gaining a livelihood other than through guns. Continued assistance in the development of basic infrastructure and health and education — "human security" — are important avenues to avoiding conflicts and generating confidence in post-conflict situations. More generally, genuine and direct action needs to be taken to address the sources of state weakness in Africa. Efforts need to be focused on alleviating Africa's foreign debt crisis and establishing equal trading relations between Africa and the industrialized West.

* * * *

Implicit in the literature on confidence building is the belief that CBMs alone do not resolve or end conflicts. This makes their success harder to gauge. On the one hand, since CBMs are often the smallest steps in a large and lengthy process of conflict resolution, it is frequently difficult to establish what contribution specific CBMs make. On the other hand, the inability to resolve conflicts does not necessarily mean that the effort to build confidence was a failure. Indeed, the effective use of CBMs can still mitigate the worst effects of an otherwise unsuccessful peace process. What is clear from the experiences of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and even regions of Somalia is that confidence can help pull adversaries out from seemingly hopeless situations. Confidence building is an essential element in peace processes in Africa and continuous efforts must be made towards finding new and innovative ways to make CBMs more effective.

---

[100] Of course, as always, there are risks that these resources might be abused. The UN came under fire in 1994 when it was reported that the Somali peace process involved nothing more than endless talk by Somali leaders who were being put up in Nairobi's luxury hotels at UN expense. An agreement between the warlords came only when the UN refused to continue paying the hotel bills of the clan leaders and their entourages, but its effects were fleeting.

DOCS
CA1 EA365 2000C51 ENG
Spears, Ian
Confidence-building measures in
Africa
61664828