

1

INTRODUCTION

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On September 28, 1994, the United States Institute of Peace brought together forty specialists from Africa and the United States—including former and current diplomats, academics, U.S. policymakers, and policy analysts—to discuss ways to improve the U.S. contribution to African efforts to prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflicts. The purposes of the discussion were to (1) assess lessons learned from past U.S. peacemaking efforts in Africa; (2) gauge the capacity of African states, regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to take more responsibility for peacemaking; (3) assess what outside assistance could enable African institutions to be more effective peacemakers; and (4) consider the U.S. role in conflict resolution in Africa.

This book is the product of that symposium. Its major recommendation is that the United States continue active engagement with Africa and creatively support African initiatives to manage and resolve African conflicts. Africa has a new willingness to assume responsibility for peacemaking, but its institutional and financial capabilities are limited. African initiatives have no chance of success in promoting greater peace without significant and sustained international, and particularly American, involvement.

The 1992 U.S. intervention in Somalia and the failure of the subsequent United Nations (UN) effort to build a new state in that war-ravaged country might be viewed as a turning point in U.S. involvement in African conflicts. The widely publicized deaths of U.S. and other peacekeeping troops at the hands of Somali militiamen hardened attitudes among American

policymakers and the public about the efficacy and costs of U.S. military intervention. A mood of “Afro-pessimism” and “conflict fatigue” has prevailed since then.

Most Africa analysts agree that the United States will probably continue to be engaged in African conflict resolution—where U.S. national interests are real but not always apparent—and will generally be guided by the principle of “African solutions to African problems.” But, as noted by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake in an address to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in December 1994, “Those of us who recognize the importance of continued active engagement and support for Africa are confronting the reality of shrinking resources and an honest skepticism about the return on our investments in peacekeeping and development.”¹

Given this wariness about military engagement in Africa following the experience in Somalia, what options does the United States have to strengthen the capacity of Africans to resolve conflicts within or between African states? How should the U.S. government and American NGOs contribute to conflict resolution in Africa? These are the issues addressed in this volume, and they are addressed by American and African scholars, policy analysts, and former high-ranking officials.

One can point to notable successes in international efforts to achieve peace in Africa, including South Africa, Namibia, and Mozambique, but devastating conflicts still plague the continent. Sixteen African nations are involved in some form of civil conflict, spawning an estimated 6 to 7 million refugees, close to half of the world’s refugee total. An additional 17 million Africans are internally displaced, in most cases because of civil wars. Since the 1960s, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have suffered from deadly conflict to a greater degree than any other world region except Southeast Asia.

Prospects for the future are not promising. A U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) intelligence estimate prepared at the end of 1994 reportedly stated, “In the next 12 to 18 months, ethnic conflict, civil war, and natural disasters will place a greater demand on humanitarian support in Africa than at any time since the 1960s.” This estimate depicts sub-Saharan Africa as the “most strife-torn region in the world” and anticipates that 30 million people there may be at risk of malnutrition or death in 1995 if emergency aid is not provided. Five African nations—Zaire, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia—are in danger of complete collapse, and Nigeria, Chad, and Mali are listed as “trouble spots . . . where major factional fighting could break out” in 1995.² In January 1995 *Africa Confidential* concluded



that the nation-state is losing its grip in Africa because of unstable borders, large refugee flows between states, massive international migration within Africa, civil strife, criminal cross-border trading networks, the emergence of warlords in several countries, and foreign intervention.³

African states spend \$8 billion annually on their militaries, scarce resources that could more productively be spent improving the African standard of living. Significant steps have been taken in some countries to reduce the size and expense of armies. Such countries as Mozambique, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, and Namibia have made impressive progress in dismantling their war machines and reintegrating the combatants into civilian society or into scaled-down national armies.

Dating back to the time of the UN intervention in the Congo in the 1960s, the United States has made a significant commitment to peacemaking in Africa. This involvement has grown over the past fifteen years. The United States took the lead in the mediation process that gave Namibia its independence and removed Cuban and South African troops from Angola. The United States also has been successfully engaged in peacemaking processes in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Africa. U.S. assistance also has helped sustain the peacekeeping and mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia. Recent large-scale American involvements, including use of American troops, occurred in Somalia and Rwanda.

American interventions to resolve African conflicts before 1992 did not arouse much domestic public attention or debate, because they generally were relatively inexpensive and did not engage American ground troops. But the involvement of large numbers of U.S. troops in Somalia raised public awareness and anxiety to a new height. Moreover, budget cutters have pointed to the annual average of \$1.5 billion that the U.S. government spends on relief operations in Africa, mostly in countries suffering from civil wars.

As Herman Cohen writes later in this book, increasing caution toward major commitment of American resources to international peacemaking and peacekeeping began in 1992 after the price tag of the Cambodia operation was announced. Then the American humanitarian intervention in Somalia in December 1992 generated a new level of American awareness of and involvement in Africa's wars. Television images of mass starvation and intimidation of women and children aroused compassion and laid the basis for impressive public support for American intervention. But unrealistic expectations led the public to believe that the American-led international



force could not only save millions of Somalis from starvation but could also return Somalia to the path of peace and stability. Although many lives were saved, several factors conspired to make the mission much more difficult than the public had expected. The Somali warlords proved intransigent; the goal of peace- and nation-building proved to be extraordinarily complex in a sociopolitical situation that few outsiders comprehended; and U.S.-UN policy took a wrong turn in the summer of 1993 when operations became fixated on arresting General Mohamed Aideded.

The killing of eighteen American Rangers on October 3, 1993, and the dramatic television pictures of the body of an American being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu dramatically undercut public and congressional support for the American and UN missions in Somalia, and forced a rethinking of future U.S. international commitments to peacemaking and peacekeeping. President Clinton quickly announced that U.S. troops would be withdrawn from Somalia by March 1994.

In September 1993, in a speech on peacekeeping to the UN General Assembly, Clinton stated, "The United Nations must know when to say no." Work was initiated on a new set of policy guidelines, embodied in Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25), to govern U.S. involvement in UN-sponsored peacekeeping and peacemaking. The policy, published in May 1994, articulated a set of criteria for deciding which peace operations the United States should support and participate in. PDD 25 established a checklist of questions, including whether UN involvement would advance U.S. interests; whether the objectives and mission are clearly understood; whether realistic criteria for ending the operation are in place; whether U.S. military personnel would be at risk; whether U.S. participation is essential to success; whether prospects are good for public and congressional support; whether there is a plan and a commitment to achieve a decisive outcome; and whether an endgame can be explicitly identified. Taken as a whole the criteria are so demanding that they read like a rationale to excuse American inaction. Some viewed the new policy as a justification for American neglect of future crises in Africa. The unfortunate lesson drawn from the American-led UN intervention in Somalia was that in the future such large-scale interventions should be avoided. The fact that the mission, despite all the difficulties and mistakes, saved hundreds of thousands of lives has largely been ignored.

The first major test of the new U.S. policy in Africa came with the Rwanda crisis in April 1994, when the genocidal slaughters commenced. Unfortunately for Rwanda, it did not meet the tougher test for intervention



set down after Somalia. In June 1994, Herman Cohen, former assistant secretary of state for African affairs, described the U.S. reaction to Rwanda in this fashion: "American policy on Rwanda is difficult to understand. Statements made by Madeline Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, indicate that Rwanda is viewed as a traditional peacekeeping problem, when it is really a 'Call 911!' problem. Rwanda . . . is a case of planned, systematic murder of men, women, and children who happen to belong to a particular group—the Tutsi. . . . The administration sees no vital American interest engaged in Rwanda, and therefore does not want UN troops to have a muscular mandate even though African troops would be willing to take on such a difficult and dangerous assignment."⁴ Serious delays were later encountered in providing equipment to African troops prepared and authorized to enter Rwanda. Moreover, U.S. officials were very reluctant to call the slaughter of half a million Tutsis "genocide" because such a declaration would have obliged a more active UN and U.S. intervention. The United States later welcomed France's unilateral intervention to establish safe havens for displaced Rwandans.

Roger Winter, director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, wrote this after a visit to Rwanda in June 1994: "The United States whines that it cannot be a global policeman and that this nation is too exhausted to supply troops to halt genocide—this despite the fact that the 69,545 UN troops currently on peacekeeping assignments worldwide include only 867 Americans. If America chooses to turn its back on Rwanda, it cannot be because this nation is overstretched by the burden of supplying 1 percent of the UN's peacekeepers."⁵

Despite such strong criticism, the Clinton administration held firm against military intervention to stop the slaughter, although the United States has provided significant humanitarian assistance to Rwandan refugees. It was one of the first nations to begin flying relief supplies to Rwandan refugee camps in Tanzania. A major relief effort continues to the Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire, and 2,350 American troops were used to help deliver water, food, and sanitation to refugees in Zaire as well as to facilitate the return of refugees to Rwanda.

As the United States has grown less willing to intervene in Africa's wars, the OAU and some African regional organizations have indicated preparedness to shoulder more responsibility for Africa's peacemaking. Mention has already been made of the substantial contribution that the ECOWAS states have made since 1990 to restoring peace in Liberia, after the United States failed to take the lead there. Troops have been provided,

principally by Nigeria and Ghana, and innumerable mediation sessions have been assembled in an effort to find a formula for peace among Liberia's several warring factions. Starting in 1994 the regional organization for East Africa, IGADD (Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development), has hosted and facilitated negotiating sessions between the government in Khartoum and the rebel forces from southern Sudan to try to end Sudan's devastating civil war.

At the OAU summit in June 1992, African heads of state agreed that the OAU should establish "a mechanism for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in Africa." At the 1993 summit the heads of state formally approved the mechanism as it was proposed by the OAU secretary-general. Rather remarkably for an organization that hitherto has avoided involvement in internal conflicts, the new OAU mechanism has a clear mandate to concern itself with such conflicts. The mechanism is charged with anticipating and preventing conflicts, as well as engaging in peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

The commitment of African heads of state to the OAU initiative is impressive and promises new energy in addressing Africa's wars, but it is also clear that the mechanism will for some time be a weak instrument on which to pin hopes for a peaceful Africa. The OAU needs substantial assistance in training staff, developing systems, and financing peacemaking operations. James Gustave Speth, administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has advocated establishing an African Peace Fund to which donors would contribute up to \$300 to \$400 million to assist the OAU's peacemaking program. Speth points out that this would represent only 10 percent of the \$3 to \$4 billion that the international community has already spent on conflict resolution in Africa.⁶

At a speech to the White House Conference on Africa in June 1994, Salim A. Salim, secretary-general of the OAU, called for a partnership to promote peace in Africa. He pointed to the OAU's new conflict resolution mechanism as an indication of "Africa's new resolve to take the mantle of leadership" in addressing its conflicts. Salim also said that only through taking initiative will Africa deserve external assistance for its efforts. Setting up the mechanism is part of Africa's effort to "wean itself from the dependence syndrome. . . . We see in the continent greater realism and preparedness to depart from established habits of blaming others for its ills and of looking to outsiders for their resolution." Although Africa will assume new responsibility, it will still need outside support and assistance of various kinds, with the United States taking the lead.⁷



The Clinton administration and Congress seem prepared to provide some support for African peacemaking initiatives. In 1994 the United States gave the OAU \$3.3 million to strengthen its peacekeeping and peacemaking operations. Additional funds have been earmarked to provide equipment and training to enable African states to participate in international and regional peacekeeping endeavors. Aid is also being provided for military demobilization in countries like Uganda and Ethiopia.

In October 1994 President Clinton signed the African Conflict Resolution Act of 1994, which originated in the Africa subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This act authorizes \$1.5 million annually for FY 1995 to FY 1998 to assist the OAU's conflict resolution program. An additional \$25 million is authorized in 1995 and 1996 to pay for the demobilization and reintegration of African military personnel into civilian societies.

Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott led an American delegation to five African countries in October 1994 to explore how the United States could strengthen African peacekeeping capability. Talbott was quoted as saying, "There is no shortage of African countries willing to take part in peacekeeping efforts," but they don't have the capacity to do it on their own.⁸

Similar sentiments have been voiced elsewhere. At the summit of francophone states hosted by France in November 1994, the French indicated that they are tiring of their traditional role as the region's gendarme, and they encouraged African leaders to organize a standing peacekeeping force. "The time has come for Africans themselves to resolve their conflicts and organize their own security," stated French President Francois Mitterrand.⁹ The African leaders present recognized that continued reliance on intervention by France or other western powers was unrealistic, but they foresaw enormous political, logistical, and financial obstacles to creating a standing force of peacekeepers.

The most far-reaching proposals to guide African states in assuming responsibility for security and peacemaking in Africa are in the Kampala Declaration, formulated under the sponsorship of the Africa Leadership Forum in 1991. This declaration, prepared at a gathering of 500 African leaders, called for a conference on security, stability, development, and cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA). CSSDCA would be expected to organize continental peacekeeping machinery and initiate confidence-building measures and nonaggression pacts among all African states.¹⁰ These proposals were introduced at the OAU summit in 1992, but they were too radical to permit quick adoption or implementation.



In 1994, the World Bank-assisted Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) proposed the creation of a conflict prevention network in Africa to be known as Africa Reconciliation to be jointly sponsored by the OAU and the GCA. Africa Reconciliation would organize an early warning system for developing crises and maintain a network of volunteer mediators and intervenors who would provide good offices in an effort to reduce tensions and defuse confrontational political situations.

This book, in an effort to advance consideration of these issues, includes the papers presented at the Institute's September 1994 symposium and summarizes the discussion and debate. Chapters 2 and 3 offer the perspectives of two leading Africans. The second chapter, by Ali Mazrui, diagnoses some of the major sources of civil conflict in Africa and speculates about actions that Africans, African states, and African organizations might take to promote peace. In chapter 3 B. A. Kiplagat emphasizes the importance of early warning and preventive diplomacy, by both African NGOs and African governments, in heading off conflict and the fundamental role that civil society and strong democratic institutions can play in helping to resolve future African conflicts. The next two chapters assess American experience in trying to resolve African conflicts and draw lessons for the future from these cases. Donald Rothchild offers a scholarly analysis of these issues in chapter 4, while Robert Oakley provides a diplomatic perspective in chapter 5. Chapter 6, by Herman Cohen, assesses African potential and recommends specific U.S. actions and policies. In chapter 7 William Zartman provides some guidelines for preserving peace in Africa. In chapter 8 Timothy Sisk summarizes the symposium discussion and delineates the recommendations that emerged from that discussion. A concluding chapter by Chester Crocker offers recommendations for American policy, based on an overview of the papers and the discussion.¹¹