



## UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

An independent institution established by Congress to strengthen the nation's capacity to promote peaceful resolution to international conflicts

### USIP Applies Facilitated Dialogue to Resolving Conflict New Book Highlights Benefits and Challenges

For Immediate Release

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(Washington)—The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) releases “Facilitating Dialogue: USIP’s Work in Conflict Zones,” edited by David R. Smock and Daniel Serwer, a new volume that showcases USIP’s efforts to apply the tools of facilitated dialogue to international conflicts.

Through a collection of eight illuminating case studies in which USIP has facilitated dialogue to promote peace, the authors look at conflicts in Colombia, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Kosovo, Nigeria and Nepal. By analyzing each case in detail and then drawing comparative conclusions, the book provides practical insight into the planning, execution, and evaluation of facilitated dialogue programs that can solve societal problems, help groups work incrementally toward common goals, and build sustainable relationships that can lead to lasting peace.

Facilitators must be more than neutral traffic cops: they need to be experts on the conflict, skilled in problem solving, and actively engaged in directing discussions and helping the participants reach agreement.

By looking at different approaches to facilitated dialogue in widely different contexts between 1998 and 2010, the book both informs the scholarly study of peacebuilding and serves as a source of guidance and experience for practitioners working today to resolve ethnic, religious, political and other disputes. “Each case illustrates the value of facilitating joint problem solving and planning at various levels when key stakeholders can be brought together around a limited set of common objectives,” said Smock and Serwer.

The book also analyzes the unique role that facilitated dialogue can play in the zone between official “Track 1” government-to-government diplomacy and unofficial “Track 2” person-to-person diplomacy, and dialogue’s important role in resolving disputes at subnational levels.

Insider accounts by USIP conflict resolution experts intimately involved with the cases illustrate how to be an effective facilitator and how to confront the difficulties of working in conflict zones. They demonstrate how to identify and collaborate with local partners, earn the trust of conflict parties, help communities recognize and overcome past suffering and address spoilers who have vested interests in continuing a conflict.

Cases include a 2007 interclan negotiation in Iraq, a coordination of reconstruction efforts (2008–2010) for refugees in Iraq; dialogues between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo (1998–2002); dialogue among Muslim, Christian and Jewish leaders from Israel and the Palestinian territories beginning in 2002;

collaboration between Catholic and Protestant women in Colombia; a series of dialogue meetings between Colombian civil society groups, American non-governmental organizations and U.S. government officials organized to promote peace in Colombia; interethnic and intergovernmental negotiations in the Niger Delta region; and trust-building initiatives between the civilian police and local communities in Nepal.

“Lessons drawn from these cases have been instructive to USIP in its current and future peacebuilding activities,” the editors noted. “It is hoped that they will also be helpful to other individuals and organizations pursuing the same goals.”

## **ABOUT THE EDITORS**

**David R. Smock** is the senior vice president of the Centers of Innovation and Religion and Peacemaking Center at USIP. Previously he served as director of the Institute’s Grants program and coordinator of Africa activities. **Daniel Serwer** is a professor of conflict management at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Previously he was Vice President for Centers of Innovation and for Peace and Stability Operations at the United States Institute of Peace.

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## **ABOUT THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE**

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan conflict management center created by Congress to prevent and mitigate international conflict through nonviolent means. USIP saves lives, increases the government’s ability to deal with conflicts before they escalate, reduces government costs, and enhances national security. USIP is headquartered in Washington, DC. To learn more, visit [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org).

### **Facilitating Dialogue: USIP’s Work in Conflict Zones**

**United States Institute of Peace Press**

**October 2012 • 176 pp. • 6 x 9 • \$19.95 (paper) • ISBN: 978-1-60127-140-2**

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### Praise for *Facilitating Dialogue*

“*Facilitating Dialogue* is an essential body of work that contributes to the professional dialogue for all those involved in both ensuring stability and restoring peace. Most important, it frames potential solutions with real examples and creates a better understanding of the challenges with these undertakings. High praise to USIP once again! Well done!”

—**Edward C. Cardon**, Major General, United States Army

“An engrossing collection of cases of track II dialogue processes in five regions, this volume should find a place on the shelf of educators and trainers and in the luggage of practitioners. Seven well-structured and accessible case essays provide essential background to the narratives. Most important, the collection is rich in lessons to be drawn from the cases and an important addition to the case literature on nonofficial diplomacy.”

—**Chester A. Crocker**, James R. Schlesinger Professor of Strategic Studies, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

“The U.S. Institute for Peace has pioneered the facilitated dialogue as a technique for conflict prevention and resolution. David Smock and Dan Serwer have assembled accounts of seven such USIP led efforts. These all involve peacebuilding at the retail level, engaging individuals, albeit influential ones, not governments. Personalities naturally play a major role, and these accounts are full of touching, inspirational, sometimes amusing, and often frustrating moments. Building peace from the bottom up is no substitute for traditional diplomacy but as this volume illustrates, it is often an essential support and even prerequisite for government led efforts.”

—**James Dobbins**, director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center and the RAND Corporation and former U.S. assistant secretary of state.

“Testimony to the vital work the U.S. Institute of Peace does in the field, as well as an important contribution to theories and strategies of conflict resolution, and the track 1.5 dialogue approach in particular.”

—**Bruce W. Jentleson**, Duke University

“With daily reports of the horrifying humanitarian consequences of violent conflicts around the world, *Facilitating Dialogue* offers fascinating practical and realistic alternatives to seeking peace and justice through dialogue among conflicting parties. The insights on how to build problem-solving relationships before, during, and after conflicts drawn from specific case studies are refreshingly honest, down-to-earth, and thought-provoking both for veterans and newcomers to peacebuilding processes.”

—**Soren Jessen-Petersen**, professor, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, and former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Kosovo.

“Smock and Serwer have pulled together a set of rich case studies which reinforce the takeaway that facilitated dialogue and track II diplomacy are a crucial, if underappreciated, tool in enhancing communication and helping to define shared interests. In a number of the case studies, increasing the parties’ understanding of each others’ grievances is a critical outcome and arguably a prerequisite to progress in any track I negotiation. The depth and diversity of these cases demonstrates the value of USIP’s work and, more broadly, the need for an expansion of track II and facilitated dialogue efforts at peacebuilding globally.”

—**John Prendergast**, Co-Founder, Enough Project and former USIP Executive Fellow

“This book makes a fundamental point: Resolution of deep-rooted conflict requires more than the traditional instruments of conflict resolution such as mediation, negotiation, and arbitration. It requires a comprehensive and intensive political process aimed not just at resolving issues but at transforming the conflictual relationships that fuel those issues. The practitioners featured here exemplify the careful analysis of the interactions among parties to conflict and the persistence in gradually developing the relationships that can grow out of wisely constructed dialogue sustained over time.”

—**Harold H. Saunders**, president of the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, former member of the National Security Council staff and assistant secretary of state.