



*Strengthening Africa's Economic Performance*

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## *Report of the 2008 Tswalu Dialogue, 8-11 May 2008*

### **Towards Conflict Resolution Best Practice**

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*The Tswalu Dialogue was established in 2002 as a premier African forum to discuss issues of concern to continental development and security. It is hosted Jonathan and Jennifer Oppenheimer and is organised by The Brenthurst Foundation in conjunction with the Commission of the African Union (AU), Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), African Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS), S Rajaratnam School for International Studies (RSIS), Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies, University of Tel Aviv, The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), and Business Leadership South Africa. It is supported by the Government of Denmark. The 2008 Dialogue examined a range of topical and relevant international case-studies in aiming to develop current best practice towards conflict resolution and management.*

DAY ONE – 8 MAY 2008

#### **After-dinner Talk: Reflections on the Namibian Independence Negotiation Process Twenty Years On**

**Andre Jaquet** reflected on his personal involvement in the Namibian independence negotiations at the end of the 1980s, noting that against the backdrop of the unacceptably high mortality rates from disease and conflict on the African continent, conflict resolution does on occasion succeed. He observed that certain elements must be present to facilitate success; in the case of Namibia, possibly a unique set. The international climate was conducive to a settlement and the major changes of the late 1980s forced the world to adapt – the situation was ‘ripe for change’; the senior mediator was immensely capable and knowledgeable; the establishment of a series of informal meetings facilitated a much deeper understanding of both sides’ fears and anxieties, and encouraged empathy; joint press statements locked the parties together and the announcements of fixed dates for subsequent rounds of negotiations concentrated the minds of the governments on the issue at hand; consistency in the membership of the teams generated confidence and opportunities were specially created to enable the heads of delegations to meet privately, particularly on sensitive issues; and most importantly of all, the necessity to build confidence between all parties was accepted as *sine qua non* to the process.

DAY TWO – 9 MAY 2008

#### **Session One: What have we learnt from conflict resolution in Africa?**

In his Keynote Address **Terrence Lyons** examined what we have learned from conflict in Africa and studies of conflict resolution. He observed at the outset that

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there is no 'African-type' of conflict; that is, global comparisons are always possible. Africa can, however, be set apart because of its relatively new state system, and research shows that the very process of state-building typically is violent. He went on to highlight several critical issues impacting the likely success of conflict resolution, prominent among them was the relative centrality of the ethnic dimension and inter-ethnic rivalry; the competition for resources; and the nature of third-party involvement, which done well can help overcome the security dilemma confronting many African societies, but done poorly can exacerbate existing divisions and provide succour to spoilers bent on undermining conflict resolution efforts.

## Discussion

The discussion that followed the keynote presentation alighted on one key issue – the problematic categorisation, or institutionalisation, of conflict in Africa – and how it affects internal and external conflict resolution strategies. It was suggested that the uniqueness and complexity of Africa, which derives in large part from its colonial and state-building experience, is not captured in the vocabulary used both in academia and the policy-making world. Terms like 'failed states' – the utility of which was vigorously challenged by several discussants – not only lead to erroneous comparisons with countries such as Iraq, but they also inform our approaches to conflict resolution in ways that are often inappropriate to the circumstances. In other words, the way we describe conflict determines to a great extent how we attempt to deal with it. As such, there is a prior question that we need to ask ourselves – why do we institutionalise conflict in a certain way? There needs to be much wider recognition of the fact that our response will be driven by that institutionalisation.

A related point emerged on the need to be very modest in establishing general criteria. Conflict *resolution* is, in fact, extremely rare. In recent decades we have seen some 'big fires' in Africa brought down to 'glimmering fires', but real conflict resolution has proved largely elusive. It was asked in this regard: What is the legitimate participation of the international community in conflict resolution? In what circumstances is it likely to be most efficacious? One discussant robustly argued that only in the case of 'a big fire' is international involvement likely to produce positive results.

The problem in the past has been the entwinement of the international community in local dynamics and issues which are beyond their control and comprehension, often because it is driven to act – to simply 'do something' – by the 'CNN Factor'. But the avalanche of international assistance in this regard can have a number of pernicious impacts, significant among them is the disempowerment of local African actors. Typically there is also a bias of third parties towards the government; coups, rebellions, and the like have been delegitimised as a tool for change. Elections are now the *sine qua non* for change. But worryingly, people in Africa are beginning to lose faith in this mechanism as elections themselves are becoming delegitimised because of vote-rigging and lack of openness, such as in Zimbabwe. But contrary examples, such as the recent free and fair election in Sierra Leone, we also put forward.

One discussant suggested that if we look for appropriate comparisons for Africa, the concept of 'predatory warlordism' might have more utility in devising conflict resolution strategies than those which derive from the failed state paradigm. One possible example cited was China, where the state emerged from efforts to combat predatory warlordism in various parts of the country.

One tension identified in the discussion was between the academic perspective on conflict resolution and the policy making perspective. The latter emphasises the *sui generis* and searches for a unique mix of ingredients to resolve a particular crisis or conflict. The former, however, seeks to find congruencies and common themes. How we bridge the gap is critical to devising more effective strategies.

Lastly, the well-known poverty trap elaborated by Paul Collier and others was discussed, as was the extent to which inequality, especially between ethnic groups, is a driver of conflict. One discussant suggested that Africa was stuck in various sorts of 'traps' – conflict, poverty, governance – which require renewed attention in our analyses. Of key importance is the breakdown in Africa from the state-centric norm. Going forward, drawing out the limitations of what external actors and third parties can do, and what we can glean or conclude from the categorisations we make, is a key challenge.

## Session One – Part I

**Shannon Field** presented the case of Sudan as an example of destabilisation and marginalisation of peripheral regions. The bilateral agreement negotiated with Tigray, for example, triggered similar requirements in Darfur; government intransigence over the future of Abiye has hurt the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) and it is expected that the 2009 elections will be demographically manipulated by Khartoum. This is complicated by the international community's lack of real assistance with implementation of the CPA and the focus moving to Darfur. Resulting from shared frustrations, there are indications that Darfur will vote with the SPLM in 2009, so the government (the NCP) has instituted a programme of violence in Darfur to stop it voting as a block. She argued that UN and AU mediators are weak, with insufficient political and military capacity; local mediators are driven by their own interests, primarily Libya and Eritrea, who want to see the NCP remain in power. What is lacking is an understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the region, for example the use of the Lord's Resistance Army as a proxy force by the NCP in Darfur in concert with Chad rebels.

**Medhane Tadesse** highlighted the challenges faced in the Horn of Africa, arguing for three policies: confronting the state, confronting the region's unstable power hierarchies and strategic concerns, and confronting the legacies of war. These challenges encompass transformation of an unrepresentative state; the acceptance that changes of government will not change the regional geography, such as the flow of the Nile and the borders; and the inheritance of a series of militarised political systems and cultures. To this is added the legacy of turning disputes over grazing and un-demarcated borders into conflict and the propensity of political elites to use security measures to deal with political problems. A new approach is required to introduce stability, including strong state institutions, representation, an equitable social order, emphasis on economic integration and the demilitarisation and democratisation of the security institutions. He concluded with an application of these guidelines to Sudan, Somalia and Somaliland – providing examples of where they have led to defusing a potential conflict situation or indeed fuelling it, as in the case of Somalia, where the process of reconstruction has been driven externally, ignoring existing major cultural and historical structures.

**David Zounmenou** emphasised the lessons learned from the peace process that followed the civil war in Liberia. Of interest in this case was the intervention by a regional organisation – the first of its kind in Africa – to address the crisis. This intervention was based on three main objectives: to persuade Samuel Doe to step down as he had lost control of the majority of the country; to disarm the combatants; and to establish an environment for elections. The success of the mission and the transition from war to peace, from a Liberian viewpoint, could be attributed to: the commitment of the parties in conflict to end hostilities and the leading role played by the regional organisation; international capacity to enforce decisions coupled to a new security framework to secure the peace; and a generally acceptable, inclusive and transparent system of post-conflict governance. However, despite the undeniable value of international intervention, the close relationship between the internal parties to a conflict and the regional states, resulting from the 'knock-on' effects of the conflict, can lead to the initiative emanating from regional decision-making.

## Discussion

The discussion which followed the Somalia/Horn, Sudan and Liberia case studies highlighted the role of regional groupings, in particular their marked ineffectiveness in devising collective approaches to conflict resolution. The example of the Arab League was cited: its record in tackling conflict within two of its members, Sudan and Somalia, is woeful. Regional organisations often have opposing strategies and objectives. It was provocatively suggested that ad hoc arrangements are often more successful than those borne of regional organisations and even the UN. The successful British-led operation in Sierra Leone was noted in this regard. In the case of Darfur, it was observed that something akin to 'negotiation fatigue' has set in. Regional leaders are perhaps simply too overstretched with other local and regional issues to devote sufficient resources to even begin to ameliorate the crisis, let alone resolve it.

The negative incentives for foreign involvement in conflict resolution were also raised. Conflict resolution has, in many respects, become an industry. Often the amount of foreign funding up for grabs for such activities is staggering – but precious little of it 'hits the ground', that is reaches beyond the exorbitant consultancy fees and hotel bills paid to external 'experts'. Indeed the case can be made that humanitarian assistance often unwittingly furthers conflict; whilst in other cases there are economic incentives for the prolongation of conflict.

Positive examples of foreign involvement were also cited, however, in particular the Mandela-Zuma peace mission to Burundi. A number of reasons for its apparent success – possible lessons for other conflict resolution efforts – were highlighted, including the fact that the mediators were unbiased, they had clout, and they were committed to the process over an extensive period of time, in this case a number of years. But that description of the Burundian peace process was challenged by some discussants.

A key question which emerged from the discussion is how do you sequence peace processes with justice processes? At what point do you insert transitional justice issues into a fluid 'conflict management' effort? (Many discussants noted that 'conflict management' was a more accurate description and reflection of current international engagement than 'conflict resolution'). In general, it was argued, unless

you link humanitarian aid and DDR (Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration) in the transition, it is doomed to failure.

Also critical to success is addressing the aspirations of the youth and the needs of war veterans, and more generally integrating with extant civil society networks. The indigenous modes of resolving conflict, local coping strategies and the repositories of local knowledge and skills to resolve conflict are too often given short shrift by foreign actors. They should instead be at the very centre of conflict resolution strategies.

## Session One – Part II

The focus of **Martin Kimani's** paper was Kenya and primarily the unrest following the elections in January 2008. His approach, at one time closer to the 'give conflict a chance' school, changed with the realisation that the events in Kenya lay close to the heart and where previously he felt that conflict was innate to people and constituted a part of shaping the world, he took the opposite view and actively promoted reconciliation and resolution of violence. This highlighted the argument that experience was not only the basis of learning lessons, but that there was also a need for cogent conceptual understanding of the ideas that lead to and out of conflict. Politics would continue to be a struggle between friends and enemies; it would not cease and would remain subject to the principle of escalation of paranoia, rumour-mongering and propaganda on both sides. He offered the argument that Kenyans had moved beyond anti-colonialism and the crude assemblage of power-seekers who seek to exploit recidivist ideas to further their own interests. He noted that the mainstream wanted to distance themselves from the old politics.

**Frank Rusagara** drew the attention of the participants to the Tswalu Protocol and its application to peace-building in offering guidelines to assist in off-setting the inherent limitations on multilateral operations designed to address the aftermath of conflicts. In Rwanda, the parties to the conflict were forced to the negotiation table in 1993 to agree to a cease-fire which collapsed at the first signs of threat, and shortly led to the well-documented genocide. The UN's collusion in facilitating the withdrawal of the *genocidaires* into the DRC added to the level of distrust of external interference. This encouraged the decision by the Rwandan Government to take full responsibility for the peace-building efforts in the country. In summing up, he focused on the lessons derived from the Rwandan experience. Primarily, a major effort ensured that there were neither victors nor vanquished and that peace-building can be a positive-sum game; the plan cannot be assembled elsewhere, it must reflect the desires of the local parties; and the importance of building local capacity, especially in security and defence, should not be taken lightly.

**Michael Holman** asked why the West had been taken by surprise at the events in Zimbabwe and Kenya. He argued that it was the culmination of a number of factors, including the decline in the quality of reporting on Africa, the intrusion of wishful thinking on analysis, the lack of experience of correspondents, an unhealthy mutual support relationship between the media and NGOs and a reticence to criticise or question the motives of the host country. Given the West's poor record of involvement in Africa, it came as no surprise that African leaders tend to treat any advice with caution. He further argued that aid was no alternative to foreign policy and that the basis for establishing a stable foundation on which to formulate such policy rested on knowing and understanding the region and the people. Local solutions were far more likely to succeed, recognising the local and regional

interests, ensuring that more experienced people were appointed to provide information on national and regional developments. Advances in technology were a mixed blessing – particularly in the media.

**Thomas Nziratimana** began his presentation by drawing a comparison between twentieth-century levels of conflict in Africa and Europe, concluding that the latter inflicted levels of violence and destruction unmatched in Africa. The influence of international organisations like the United Nations, in defusing situations of confrontation, only became felt after the cessation of the worst European conflicts. The aim of his paper was to investigate the means available to end African conflict, based on his experience of the DRC. In spite of the climate of international pessimism following the savage civil war that raged from 1996 to 2002, the DRC, primarily through the efforts of its internal actors, established the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) which led to a cessation of hostilities and opened the way to future nationhood and co-operation. He maintained that dialogue continues as the primary tool of conflict resolution as it provides a means for people to engage without the dangers of confrontation inherent in debate, but retains the ability to expose the causal issues and investigate their solution. What emerged from the ICD, and can be applied generally to conflict situations, was the realisation that common interests exist and that much of the conflict was in pursuance of very similar objectives; that international and regional support would follow an agreement, contributing to an improvement in quality of life; and that it is always of greater benefit to identify and prevent a developing conflict than to react to it after it has begun.

In analysing Burundi, **Jan van Eck** argued that the present fragility in Burundi can be attributed to serious internal political differences, alleged human rights violations by the government and resumption in open hostilities with the Palipehutu-FNL. Why this has developed can be traced back to the 1993 massacres in Burundi followed by the 1994 genocide in Rwanda when the international community reacted with extreme urgency to forestall any re-occurrence, and forced the internal parties to the negotiating table at Arusha – before the climate was right. Attempts by the internal parties to address the problems were largely ignored; the negotiation process was not accompanied by a structured confidence-building process. Since priority was given to ending the violence, the root causes of the conflict were neglected. This amounted to an external solution being imposed with obvious potential for dissatisfaction. Complicating the issue was the internal division within the Hutu grouping leading to an increase in the complexity of the process. In 2006 the FNL were coerced into becoming signatories, creating the impression that the organisation had been defeated – a principal error in any negotiation process. He concluded by stating that the danger exists of focusing on ending the violence and neglecting the causes, resulting in the conflict simply evolving, rather than being resolved.

## **Discussion**

The recent crisis in Kenya and the peace processes in the DRC and Burundi featured prominently in the subsequent discussion, and gave rise to a number of ancillary issues and questions – over the role of identity, ethnicity, the media and civil society, elite personalities, and external intervention. Regarding the latter, the role of South African mediation in both the DRC and Burundi was the subject of contrasting interpretations on its relative success or failure, though there was wide agreement that 'resolution' of conflict in both remained elusive – and far from certain. The external response to events in Kenya was criticised for its lack of coherence and

decisive diplomacy, in particular the UK's apparent 'flip-flop'. The media response also came in for sharp criticism.

It was observed that external intervention whilst not preferable, and best avoided if local solutions can be found, is a reality that we are often too reluctant to address forthrightly and credibly. Given the violent crises affecting parts of Africa, for the foreseeable future there must, argued one discussant, be a role for robust intervention – if we are serious about fulfilling our international commitments to a 'responsibility to protect'.

The role of personality, both in creating conflict and in managing conflict, was highlighted as a frequently neglected but nevertheless vital factor. Indeed it is an overarching issue. Of many examples cited, the recent crisis in Kenya, and the way the personalities of Kibaki and Odinga impacted upon it, was especially pertinent. The case of Zimbabwe was also instructive: a firm understanding of the personality and motivations of President Mugabe is central to any strategies to resolve the crisis.

Developing vibrant civil society and the necessity to establish legitimate political bases within national populations was highlighted as an issue of pressing concern in a number of societies, especially Kenya. One discussant observed that we must take care not to confuse the 'noise' civil societies make with vibrancy – civil society is under threat. For instance, in Kenya it was noted that the recent violence arose in part because leaders and elites have failed to police themselves and as such have no moral weight, no real legitimacy within Kenyan society. The mechanisms internally to create legitimate centres of power have broken down; there is no political base from which leaders derive legitimacy and are accountable.

Kenya, as elsewhere throughout Africa, must look to build associations and parties – a civil society which defines its interests as affecting the political realm. Institutions have a place in combating predatory politics led by elites who want to limit the power of, more often than not, the judiciary. They have a key role in facilitating a democratic or public dialogue, which examines questions of substance, such as what constitutes citizenship. A fear expressed by one discussant was that the recent bloodletting in Kenya was a catalytic event, launching the country on a dangerous path where criminal elements, gangs, who are able to accrue legitimacy much more readily than the eroding political system, continue to proliferate until legitimate politics effectively disappears.

Ethnic strife was (and in most cases remains) central to the cases of Kenya, Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda. These are not new problems; problematic compromises were made at the founding of those states. Identity politics needs to be tackled as part of a long-term problem; it is not a 'single' event / conflict that can be finished. The depth of hatred evident in all cases has created a mindset which will take much longer to bring to an end. There are reasons behind the 'bad blood'; and people have an irresistible need to give vent to their feelings in some way. As such, it is unrealistic to expect societies to become de-ethnicised, even within a few generations – but it was observed that we cannot wait that long to bind people together in some form of common identity or national vision. So how can we best manage ethnicity in the interim? No panacea was proffered, but *government legitimacy* was cited as essential to overcoming the most insidious ethnic divisions which have affected these and other African societies.

Yet a health warning was put forward: legitimacy is not necessarily borne of elections. If they are not conducted according to accepted international standards,

they can have a profoundly destabilising effect, indeed they can provoke more conflict than had they not occurred at all. The case of the 1993 election in Burundi was highlighted. Since that election people have been motivated by a sense of not having their democratic will recognised.

The last key point to emerge from the discussion was a reaffirmation of the need to bridge the gap between theoretician and practitioner, or in the case of conflict resolution efforts between the negotiators and the experts in the field. The vital knowledge gained in the field needs to have more impact on, and better access to, the powerbrokers.

## **Session Two: What can we learn from conflict resolution in Asia, and Central and Latin America?**

In his paper on Indonesia and the 'Aceh question', **Leonard Sebastian** examined the strategy of the Yudhoyono government in dealing with the separatist challenge posed by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The primary focus of analysis was on the changes evident in these recent developments and the contributions they made to the success of the Helsinki process. The President set the example by seeking a permanent peace through termination of the conflict and improvement in political communication with GAM. The military successes achieved by the Army placed pressure on GAM leaders to negotiate and make concessions. The intervention of nature, by way of the Boxing Day Tsunami, led to a major assistance programme. He observed that rather than stemming the tide of secessionist sentiment in Aceh, the successful military operations increased pro-independence feelings, caused in the main by the hatred of the military rather than a motivation to secede. He concluded by arguing that resolution of the Aceh conflict was greatly assisted by a head of state who understood that there was no military solution to the problem, that the core concerns of human security and equitable economic distribution had to be addressed and that only negotiation could ultimately lead to a political settlement.

In analysing the failure of the 1996 peace treaty in Guatemala, **Markus-Alexander Antonietti** emphasised that the expected peace dividend after thirty-six years of civil war did not materialise, creating frustration and entrenching the belief that the country's elite had no interest in changing an economic structure that concentrated productive wealth in their hands. With an unchanging economic system, the social model also did not change, entrenching the disparity between the indigenous and non-indigenous sectors of the population and consequently the political model remained the same – reflecting simple representation as opposed to participation in the democratic process. The state is unable to exercise its monopoly on the legitimate use of force resulting in increased violence and lawlessness. It is unable to provide basic goods and services to a large proportion of the population and is increasingly viewed as a non-legitimate framework for the exercise of power. He concluded by arguing that peace is not the end of conflict; demobilisation is merely a component of the process. The political and economic issues must enjoy priority without ignoring social reforms. The real causes of the conflict must be addressed. Furthermore, the international community must provide a coherent contribution to the solution.

**Malcolm Ferguson's** analysis of the internal conflicts in Guatemala and El Salvador indicated that both conflicts lent themselves to outside engagement and assistance. Both countries suffered from polarisation within their societies stemming from social injustice, landlessness, increasing poverty and extreme disempowerment – almost

exclusively of the indigenous peoples. He argued that the end of the 1980s and early 1990s saw three developments that contributed to addressing the conflicts – a change in the international order and an end to the Cold War; an acceptance by the parties to the conflict that the cost of outright victory was unaffordable; and a realisation that democratisation of the societies was inevitable. Although achieving differing levels of success, there are certain lessons to be extracted from both peace processes. High levels of destruction and dislocation sometimes are a pre-condition for seeking a resolution. External actors fulfil the role of facilitators once local leaders have accepted that they should seek a better alternative to continuation of the war. Major changes on the international stage have an effect on states with internal conflicts. Without addressing social injustice, disparity of wealth and disenfranchisement, there is little chance of reaching accommodation and there are minimal prospects for an enduring peace.

## **Discussion**

In the discussion which followed Session Two, the key factors which have contributed to the attenuation of violence and armed conflicts in Indonesia and Latin America were analysed. The ways in which violence has, in the past, taken on a self-perpetuating dynamic when there was a security vacuum were highlighted. In such environments violence itself becomes (or creates) an identity around which (often marginalised or repressed) males coalesce.

Among the most significant factors which compelled groups to lay down their arms was the role (in Latin America) of religious organisations, namely the Catholic Church. Comparisons were drawn with South Africa, where religious figures, most especially Archbishop Desmond Tutu, were key driving forces behind the reconciliation process. Also emphasised were regional organisations, which because of their physical proximity are often (but not always) perceived as less threatening than far-away powers, and economic growth and opportunities. In this latter respect, El Salvador was highlighted as a country which emerged from a long period of violent conflict in part through the provision of wisely-targeted aid and economic opportunities for the country's youth; through local conflict resolution programmes; and also through far-sighted policy by the United States, who assisted enormously in the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure.

The case of Indonesia shed light on the near universal sentiment within developing countries: ultimately people want employment and opportunities, not aid. The restive Indonesian province of Aceh illustrated the efficacy of third party mediation, in this case led by Martti Ahtisaari, provided that it is 'fit for purpose' and local constituencies are signed-up to the process.

## **Session Three: What can we Learn from Conflict Resolution in the Middle East?**

**Bruce Maddy-Weizman** highlighted several reasons why, despite a major commitment over much time to settle tensions in the Middle East, this has not been successful. The Oslo Accord was, he argued, flawed; the situation was not ripe for resolution (only negotiation); it was incorrectly implemented; and the end-game was undefined. It is generally agreed, moreover, that the Camp David Accord of 2000 was a mistake. There was a failure of the Palestinian state-building initiative in the 1990s when the international community was very supportive of their aspirations;

Fatah became increasingly corrupt and Hamas capitalised on this, resulting in its election victory in the Palestinian Authority in 2006. A major obstacle to reaching accord is the issue of the right of return of the Palestinian people to their pre-1967 lands. There is no coherence between the Arab states to pursue a comprehensive peace plan; and the rise of Iran is a destabilising factor. Consideration should be given to separating Israel and Palestine to permit an opportunity to pursue fresh ideas towards an agreement, away from the pressures of being under continual scrutiny – ‘divorce under one roof’, in other words.

**Alistair Harris** outlined the current challenges in still-fragile Lebanon. The internal situation is highly complex due to the existence of eighteen religious and sectarian confessions. In addition, there are external actors who contribute to the generation of conflict, and mitigation plans and resolutions are invariably based on self-interest. These fault lines have threatened, and still threaten, the cohesion of the state. A major contributor to this problem is evidence that the concept of being ‘Lebanese’ does not appear to exist – there is no national identity. Efforts to address the challenge through concepts like consociational government have been attempted, but this has not defused the threat of non-proportional representation – particularly for the Shia. Currently, the constitution, which prescribes government by the elite, does not allow for this to be addressed and there is increasing evidence that ‘quiet pressure’ will give way to open disobedience. The only feasible option is an inclusive dialogue, but this possibility appears remote. The absence of regional peace is considered a major contributory factor to the instability in Lebanon.

**Christian Koch** asserted that there is presently no internal conflict in the Gulf. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has emerged as the only successful example of a functioning Arab organisation, which has as one of its roles addressing common security concerns. In spite of this, the organisation still has inherent weaknesses. The region faces instability and insecurity, unresolved border issues, bilateral agreements with outsiders and the lack of regional security architecture. The reliance on the US as a regional protector is not the solution and has resulted in an increased terrorist challenge – particularly to Saudi Arabia. The recent shift to internal investment is of obvious benefit to the local populations, resulting in reduced potential for tension although in the large expatriate populations, the possibility of unrest from wealth disparity remains high. The concerns for the GCC include Iran, Afghanistan, Israel and Iraq. The Iranian challenge remains the priority due to a lack of clarity regarding its intentions but an environment of ‘no trust, no talks’ exists which precludes an inclusive approach. A factor that cannot be ignored is that regime security is the regional priority; ruling monarchies are not prepared to lessen, let alone relinquish, their power.

## Discussion

Several discussants observed that the region has, in the areas of conflict resolution, much to teach Africa about what *not* to do – insofar as the roles played by local politicians and external actors. The most significant driver of discord in the region, the Israel-Palestine issue, threw up myriad examples of the insidious impact of external involvement, including the overriding and steadfastly prejudicial role (in favour of Israel) of Washington and the numerous regional players who have acted as spoilers. It was stressed that to date there has not been a proper dialogue on reconciliation within the region and reforming constitutions. The Arab League came in for particularly harsh criticism from some discussants, owing to its continuing ineffectiveness and lack of coherence. One of the touchstone issues in the Middle

East is democracy: as the case of Algeria demonstrated, there remains, however, a certain reticence (in the region and even in Washington) to let the democracy genie out of the bottle because of what might result.

### **Options for Zimbabwe**

At the end of Day Two of the Dialogue, the worsening situation in Zimbabwe following the country's disputed first-round elections provoked an impromptu discussion on international options to help ameliorate the crisis. There was broad agreement that ordinary Zimbabweans had been grossly let down by their leadership, the principal regional organisation (SADC), the African Union and the international community – but no consensus on the most efficacious way forward. The role of South Africa and the SADC – whose future relevance was at stake over Zimbabwe, according to some discussants – was heavily scrutinised. Several alternative diplomatic and other means to affect change in Zimbabwe were proposed.

The forcible removal of a government by an international coalition has occurred several times during the past decade. But when applied to the case of Zimbabwe discussants cited myriad factors which militated against that option, not least were the complete absence of regional or international willingness to consider an invasion and the dim prospects that it could be conducted without unacceptable consequences for human life and regional stability. Instead, there was broad agreement that very soon economic factors were likely to present a tipping point – 'even the printing press is going to stop working at any moment now' – but there was an alarming absence of courageous regional thinking and action on how to respond when it comes. Whatever the results of the second-round of elections – and there was considerable doubt it could be undertaken even relatively peacefully and fairly – Zimbabwe teeters on the edge of an extremely turbulent period.

It was observed that outside the African continent, Zimbabwe fuels deep cynicism not just about the current regime but also Africa as a whole. From the UK perspective, in particular, there is a perception that African countries have shied away from uncomfortable truths in their own backyard: a regime has blatantly refused to accept the democratic will of its people, but neighbouring governments do not call for democracy to be upheld and the defeated party to go. In other words, what is understood as democracy and fairness within the African context is superficial, and that leads to increasing apathy towards what goes on in the continent. What's more, South Africa's hard-won international reputation for good governance and enlightened diplomacy has taken a battering over its government's stance on Zimbabwe. Were it not to change, the damage would be very difficult to undo, at least in Western minds. That being said, it was also recognised that there is little the West could do to usefully influence the situation in Zimbabwe. Most agreed that the only viable solution rests within the continent and in particular the region.

DAY THREE – 10 MAY 2008

### **Breakaway Sessions**

***Group One: What role should outside parties best play in conflict resolution?***

**Christopher Clapham** made three general observations at the outset of his presentation: there are no clear guidelines on what role outsiders should play in

conflict resolution in Africa; there are a staggering array of national and international actors involved in conflict resolution-type activities; and such activities will always need to be highly contextualised, that is, it is invariably dependent on local, country-specific dynamics. It is an open question, in other words, whether there are ground rules or commonalities which can be applied to other cases.

In responding to the presentation, **Michael Clarke** observed that, first and foremost, we need to recognise that the vocabulary of conflict resolution is new, but in fact the issues at stake are still largely the 'bread and butter' of traditional international relations. He then put forward a number of questions which framed the subsequent discussion.

*What and who are 'outsiders'?* There was general consensus that the divisions between outsiders and insiders are more fluid, and not as sharp, than is typically recognised. It was also stressed that we need to differentiate between 'outside pressure', 'outside negotiation' and 'outside intervention'. There are gradations of involvement. And in defining the outside world, it was suggested that what we are really talking about is the prevailing conscience of the international, globalised system. And that prevailing conscience is inherently difficult to read.

*What are the triggers for outside involvement, and do we need outsiders at all?* How valid is the provocative entreaty of the American strategic thinker Edward Luttwak that we should 'just give war a chance' and not interfere. In grappling with this issue, it was observed that external actors cannot *create* opportunities for conflict resolution – that doesn't work. But what the international community can do is seize the *first* opportunity that presents itself because of the willingness of the parties to the conflict to seek help. We therefore need to capitalise on windows of opportunity before they shut again. It was also suggested that too often external actors reflexively think in terms of force, coercion, 'when shall we go in?' Military force may be necessary but the danger is that we are driven to reach for it too quickly.

*Which outsiders should become involved and why?* There is a kaleidoscope of actors, often with competing agendas, involved in the myriad elements of internationally-assisted conflict resolution. Friction between them sometimes spawns further conflict. A further complication relates to time-scales: the most effective members of the response community often stay for only a short time, as little as six months, before moving onto the next crisis.

*Is conflict 'resolution' setting the bar too high?* There was broad consensus among the discussants that resolution in many cases is unrealistic, and more generally the international community needs to be more modest in its aims. What the myriad national and international organisations operating in places like Afghanistan and the DRC *can* do is mitigate conflict, they can help manage and contain it, provide the space for local actors to find solutions that work for them. Conflict resolution cannot be 'completed' by outsiders.

*How can settlements be made to stick?* This is a thorny and difficult question, though there was broad agreement that the prospects of success are strengthened the more 'local' the negotiation process is. Nevertheless, it was stressed that in some cases there is a vital role for major powers, for example in the process leading up to the Dayton Agreement, which ended the war in Bosnia. US involvement and strong pressure was essential to securing that agreement. On a smaller scale, the example of the independence of Zimbabwe was highlighted, and the vital role of pressure by

Mozambique's then leader, Samora Machel, in the 1979 Lancaster House agreements.

*Are elections the only way?* This question was the source of considerable debate. In South Africa the election was a symbolic and constitutional watershed, absolutely central to the conflict resolution process in this country. But equally, it was suggested that we should not fetishise elections – there are grave dangers in doing it too quickly, in terms of legitimising divisions, but also dangers in doing it too late. What's more, the case of Zimbabwe illustrates that elections, if not done according to best international practice, can in itself be a source of further tension and conflict.

*How do international actors get out?* Several discussants observed that this task is made more difficult by the international obsession with an 'exit strategy'. It provides succour to spoilers bent on undermining peace and hamstringing the international response. Thus foreign partners need to think less about 'how to get out' and more about 'how to stay'. No outside involvement will be successful without a long-term commitment. The difficulty for governments, in particular, is in convincing their electorates that the commitment is worth it, that all nations deserve a chance to resolve their conflicts themselves.

*Who are the best mediators?* It was emphasised that once a decision on the type of involvement is made, the right tools are required. At the local level there is no substitute for brave and decisive leadership, of the kind demonstrated by Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk in the early 1990s. Such figures can also play a vital role in catalysing peace discussions in other countries, as Mandela has done in Burundi. But the task of complex mediations and negotiations is a job for experts not grandees. Top priority should be given to more funding and better training of the international mediation teams deployed to assist local parties.

*Lastly, what are the checks on foreign involvement which, if applied, should enhance the prospects for successful external engagement in conflicts?* The first check involves assessing the range of options available. At one end of the spectrum is Luttwak's injunction: the circumstances of the conflict are such that if outsiders do anything other than to leave it alone they are likely to make things worse. A lot of evidence would suggest that Somalia fits in this category. Closer to the centre of the spectrum are the options to 'freeze' the conflict, as in Cyprus, where the 'hot' war had to be halted by external powers (because it threatened to break apart NATO) but there was no realistic prospect of them settling the dispute; or to actively encourage a negotiated settlement through various forms of external pressure and inducements, top-level informal negotiations – the so-called Track 1.5 processes which proved successful in Namibia – and contacts within the respective civil societies. And at the other end of the spectrum is the kind of direct involvement witnessed today in Afghanistan, where by its nature foreigners become part of the problem but also, hopefully, its solution, too.

### ***Group Two: How might domestic protagonists best get on with settling conflict?***

**Knox Chitiyo** focused on the case of Zimbabwe in his presentation on how domestic protagonists might best approach the settlement of conflict. He sketched the history of internal conflict from 1896 and characterised the four selected conflicts as 'Anti-Colonial'; 'Anti-Settler'; 'Anti-Dissident' and finally the existing political conflict over national power. In each he identified causal factors and how resolution was

achieved; he pointed out that two of the conflicts – the anti-colonial and the anti-dissident – were settled through domestic conflict resolution; the anti-settler war was resolved through a combination of internal and external conflict resolution. He pointed out that if the domestic protagonists have a shared history, this is often useful in helping them to overcome their political differences and resolve the conflict. Where there is no shared history, and/or a generational cleavage or personal antipathy, as is currently the case between President Mugabe and MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, then positions become more entrenched, and it is harder to resolve the conflict(s) on the basis of mutual interests and the common good. The following factors emerged from the paper, the response by **Andre du Pisani** and the ensuing discussion.

*The fusion between Party, State and the Spirit of the People has to be separated.* This fusion is particularly present in countries that mythologised their Wars of Liberation. Zimbabwe was the starting point and being currently in the eye of the storm, both the reference case and, the group generally believed, the case where success or failure will have direct consequences for four other regional neighbours (South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola) and, it was suggested, also for other states such as Kenya or Ethiopia. This fusion is now forty or fifty years old. It is a product of a generation of post-colonial actors who are now ageing and beginning to leave the stage. The group believed that it was very important for this form of political narrative either to be superseded, or to be incorporated in positive ways into the post – nationalism. It should not be transferred wholesale to the next political generation in, for example, Zimbabwe or South Africa. This meant that the centrality of what Knox Chitiyo terms the 'liberation theology' narrative had to be rigorously scrutinised.

*How history is used is more important than the history itself.* The group found a strong agreement that the multiple histories of Africans needed to be legitimated and placed alongside the "liberation theology" narratives. There was discussion of whether the nature of the liberation narratives, given their status as sacred texts, could only be altered by breaking the icon. But the group felt that it would be prudent and possible to explore ways of raising those hitherto hidden histories to visibility. There was a feeling that this issue was not academic, but of deep social and political importance; and that the matter was at present under-explored.

*The pre-eminence of the 'domestic'.* On this there was less consensus. One discussant noted that power was becoming more diffused between institutions and individuals. What did this mean for the belief that ideally local actors should resolve their own differences; that if this failed, the regional actors should join to help; that if this failed then continental agency (the AU) would engage. In the Zimbabwe case, it was generally felt that local actors alone could not succeed. But what should be the forms of external assistance?

*The resolution of Zimbabwe's agony was of importance for the future happiness and security of the region.* What – precisely – could and should local actors now do was the subject of intense discussion but little consensus. Given the decision announced during the meeting that the MDC would agree to participate in a second round of presidential voting, should, for example, domestic actors insist on terms of engagement? Should the diaspora be enfranchised? Should the domestic voters' rolls be refreshed under regional supervision? How exactly could the safety of voters from intimidation prior to and on election day best be assured? The group felt able to recommend enhancement of SADC monitoring missions, and felt that there was more to say and to do; but it could not agree what those precise steps should be.

DAY FOUR – 11 MAY 2008

### **Summary Session: Towards conflict resolution best practice**

In summarising themes emerging from the Dialogue, **Paul Lever** began the final session noting that the starting point of all the preceding discussions was, rightly, specificity – the unique context and detail of each case must inform our responses to conflict resolution.

Lever stressed that whilst there was consensus on the doctrine of the 'ripe orange' – that conflict resolution is best attempted when parties to a conflict have tired of fighting and are thus ready for a solution – the reality is that external attempts will be made when the time is *not* right, that is when the situation is complex and messy. Waiting for the violence to exhaust itself is often, in practice, a highly unattractive option. He highlighted the two main types of conflict, over 'control' and over 'belonging', and the wide range of external interventions, from full-scale military solution to various forms of external mediation assistance. He also warned against the tendency to equate strong governance with a highly centralised system. There are downsides to such systems, and in some circumstances it may be preferable to have a significant degree of decentralisation. On a related point, elections, he observed that by their nature they produce 'winners' and 'losers', and as such we need to think very carefully about when 'power sharing' may be more appropriate; the priority above all should be the establishment of 'representative systems'.

Lever cautioned against expecting too much of the 'international community'. Its willingness to become involved in the continent's largely internal conflicts is minimal, and probably waning. When it does on the diplomatic level, it needs to guard against having a multiplicity of mediators and teams. There needs to be some mechanism whereby the single mediator or international grouping is decided upon. He ended his summary by highlighting three issues which did not figure in the Dialogue's discussion but which doubtless will be significant to the continent going forward: Islamic fundamentalism and the growth of Al Qa'ida networks in areas of Africa; the absence of early-warning mechanisms to spot potential conflicts in advance; and Nigeria, which possesses all the elements of a potential cataclysm in the future.

In his concluding remarks **Barry Desker** examined negotiations and highlighted the following points vis-à-vis conflict resolution in Africa: firstly, by and large negotiations lead neither to clear resolution or cessation of conflict; secondly, negotiations invariably are initiated when violence has abated but is nevertheless still ongoing; thirdly, negotiations sometimes lead to the splintering of one side; fourthly, we have to recognise that the nature of the system, whether based on strong leadership or decentralised, will have an impact; fifth, the willingness on the part of major powers to become involved in disputes on the African continent is waning, so regional solutions and involvement will be essential; sixth, the settlements we seek cannot be absolutely clear-cut, black and white, but rather must contain a measure of ambiguity, a level of flexibility in the way they can be interpreted so neither party to the negotiations feels they have been ignored or 'lost'; and last, there needs to be much greater attention to the way control over resources will feature in future African disputes and conflicts.

In the final presentation and summation of the 2008 Tswalu Dialogue **Greg Mills** began by issuing five health warnings. First, seldom is conflict resolved. The process

may better be described as conflict management or containment. Some conflicts may not be solvable, at least in the short term. Moreover, the absence of hot conflict does not imply peace; indeed, it may be the very point at which the tough peace-building work begins. Even those cases regarded as the gold standard of conflict resolution (such as South Africa) are work in progress and must be dealt with as such. Indeed, a failure to realise this could lead to social polarisation at best, or a resurgence of open fighting at worst. As Paul Collier reminds us, reversal to war is much more prevalent than stability: 'More than half of post-conflict states slide back into conflict within five years of peace.'

While democracy (in the form of democratic elections) is often cited the end-goal, in reality it is just a step on the way. There is the danger of the 'election fetish'. Just as elections should be seen as the conclusion rather than the start of a process of democratisation, there is a need to deepen the 'culture' of democracy that goes beyond the creation of formal democracies through elections. Until this forms part of the essence of polities in Africa and beyond, the potential for political reversal remains, as does the danger of continent-wide recovery programmes such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) faltering. The setting and monitoring of such governance standards and establishment of such a culture has to be a bottom-up, civil society-oriented process, rather than one that is only elite-driven and oriented. This may in turn help to explain NEPAD's lack of traction and delivery.

Second, if there is a single issue that must be addressed, it is the need to instil governance. The conditions of patrimonial politics and economics that often lie behind conflict in the first instance must be replaced. But the problem is often deeper, given that conflict often goes to the heart of questions of national identity – who, exactly, makes up the state – and statehood itself. Peace can thrive in diverse societies, but only in a context of tolerance. Tolerance depends upon members of a society knowing who they are, that they belong and the terms of engagement. *E pluribus unum* ('Out of many, one') is written on the US dollar bill for good reason.

Third, would-be peacemakers should be aware that resolution comprises a spectrum, just as conflict is part of a process of contentious politics. It is the violent resolution of such conflict that concerns most, given the wider and human impact, but there are other profound questions at play regarding the formation and viability of the state itself.

Fourth, there is a danger in applying foreign methods, interests and templates, and not just those from outside Africa. Put differently, for peace to hold, sometimes a marriage is necessary; sometimes a divorce. South Africa's negotiation problems in Burundi illustrate the importance of understanding dynamics outside of one's own conflict paradigm. Just as the continent of Africa is today highly differentiated in terms of state size, capacity and performance, solutions have to be different and nuanced, tailored to local needs, weaknesses and strengths. No one size fits all. Beware, in other words, foreign fingerprints, interests and solutions. The record of foreign solutions sticking is very poor. Outsiders must consider their role and its likely impact before intervening. This means that local politicians have to be given the space and freedom to resolve their own issues. There is a need additionally to consider what tools – from doing nothing to intervention in its various forms – can be employed by the external community as a means of doing so. In this, the pernicious impact of apparently benign forms of intervention must be flagged: of the impact, for example, of humanitarian food aid on politics and economies alike. For good reason are humanitarian agencies known as 'non-Somali warlords' in that

country. There is a need, too, to be aware of the self-sustaining nature of conflict resolution efforts themselves. Of course, this may have humanitarian and security costs, and may invite different forms of engagement from 'freezing' the conflict to encouraging different forms of engagement such as through civil society.

Fifth, and finally, there is an imperative to analyse and understand the comprehensive on-the-ground conflict realities, to guard against mythologies and not to rely solely on media as well as donor interpretations.

With these 'health warnings' in mind, Mills asserted that it was possible to make a number of observations about conflict resolution experience – in terms both of the overall *context* and *mechanics*. First, successful resolution of inter-communal problems fundamentally rests on the need for communities to recognise the rewards of co-operating – and, conversely, the costs of not doing so. Thus, there has to be a real basis for an internal settlement, at its core being the recognition that all parties face the same problems, that the parties should want peace rather than war and be prepared to compromise rather than continue the conflict. As Sir Jeremy Greenstock has noted in this respect, 'Political problems can only be resolved through a partnership between the willing and the able.' Spoilers must be identified and, if necessary, isolated and marginalised or co-opted. This requires legitimising one's key opponent and partner, seeking to understand what they require to deliver to their constituency while knowing what one's own constituency can tolerate. In other words: good political skills.

A second imperative is thus for the negotiating parties to realise that they can gain from peace, that peace settlements should thus not be viewed as a *zero-sum* game, even though hard choices must be made. A way has to be found by which the major conflicting parties can both achieve essential elements of what they want; though first they have to understand what they want. If the settlement merely puts off the day of reckoning, then mediation efforts are not going to progress far; nor will any agreement 'stick' for a prolonged period. In South Africa, while the African National Congress (ANC) wanted to be in government, it recognised, too, that it required (at least initially) the co-operation of the white governmental and business establishment if it was going to succeed. At the same time, that white establishment wanted to preserve its position, but needed the involvement and support of the ANC government in order to prosper and achieve this goal. It follows that the current threat to South Africa lies in that fraction of the ANC which rejects these terms of engagement and which looks wistfully at a Mugabe-like purging of whites, albeit in a less crude, longer game.

Solutions emerging in this way are more likely to bring about a relatively peaceful transition, in which a critical mass of the skills necessary for economic transition are retained (as in South Africa) rather than scared off (as in Mozambique and Angola). There is an important link between the population and the negotiators. Civil society can play a significant role in creating this middle ground – or normative values – in which leadership can be nudged towards compromise. It can also assist the development of democratic practices and institutions, though we should always critically assess the relationship between foreign funding and civil society.

Third, there has to be a reasonably united and peaceful international *and regional* community in which different outside parties can bring pressure – military, diplomatic, humanitarian and economic – to bear *equally* on the rival domestic parties in favour of settlement. We must distinguish between external pressure, facilitation and support. Asymmetrical pressure must be recognised as a tactic,

however. Such qualifications apply equally to the Middle East as they do to Africa. For a region at war is unlikely to produce a state at peace. Apart from South Africa, the only post-Cold War cases in which a negotiated solution to an African conflict situation has worked successfully are Mozambique, Namibia in the late-1980s and perhaps (depending on how you judge success) the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Mozambique, as in the transfer from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in 1979, the amount of leverage that the external mediators and regional allies could exert on the domestic combatants was critical; even though in the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe case it may only have postponed (and indeed, created the conditions for) the day of final reckoning.

Fourth, while elite deals are not enough, there is a need for prescient and brave leadership with a sense of purpose and timing. Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk played crucial roles in South Africa's transition, recognising the need for compromise and seizing the moment – or assessing the moment of 'ripeness'. In many other cases – including South Africa today – there are few, if any, De Klerks and Mandelas in view. Leadership is especially crucial where the state is weak and the politics divided, though this need goes beyond the political arena to include religious and other civic movements. Paradoxically, religious patronage has, at best, complicated the search for Middle Eastern peace.

Fifth, if it is to become involved at all, the external community should be willing to offer the necessary follow-up resources, notably in the peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building phases. For example, the 350 UN peacekeepers in Angola were insufficient for UNAVEM's mandate between 1991 and 1995, leading Margaret Anstee to comment, 'I have been given a 747 to fly with only enough fuel for a DC-3', referring to UN Security Council Resolution 747 forming the mandate. A contemporary reluctance to commit sufficient resources to Africa is partly a result of a world-weariness of the continent's seemingly insoluble problems, partly a reaction to the Africans' wishes to develop their own solutions to their own problems, partly a result of perceived African mediation failures such as Zimbabwe and demanding commitments elsewhere including Iraq and Afghanistan. Success not only depends on external actors committing themselves, but the local partners creating the conditions and argument to enable them to do so. This resource question may apply equally elsewhere beyond Africa; for example, in finding a solution in the case of Israel and Palestine, in ensuring any divorce settlement enabling the creation of a Palestinian state is respected. But external agencies (like negotiators) should guard against doing harm or of doing the job of government, whether by design (Sierra Leone) or by default (Angola or the Congo or Zimbabwe). This may be through a reliance on external advisers, aid and humanitarian assistance. Aid agencies need to be kept (or put back) firmly in their boxes as contractors, not as amateur peacemakers and diplomats. Where aid has played a useful role in cementing peace, it has been carefully targeted, notably on infrastructure in the example of El Salvador.

Sixth, external mediators have to organise themselves – in terms both of their own methodologies and role, and in dealing with local communities. Their role can range from reconciling the losers to regulating the winners. But while the provision of external facilitators or mediators may sometimes be important, this should not obscure the importance of developing local talent and pursuing local solutions. Without a clearly delineated role and the necessary skills, external mediators can quickly move from offering assistance to becoming part of the problem. There is a need also to distinguish between the use of prominent personalities as *patrons* of a

peace process and the use of professional *facilitators* to actually do the job. Deadline diplomacy by foreigners can insert fatal flaws into solutions.

But *when* should outsiders become involved? There is a need to distinguish carefully between when outsiders are needed and when they are wanted. Their mandate has to be clear. Care has to be taken by outsiders not only to reactively support the weak. Their effectiveness requires all parties welcoming their involvement, since solutions cannot be imposed from outside. Outsiders should guard against creating opportunities for their own engagement. Outsider involvement can also freeze societies (such as in Cyprus) and not assist in permanently solving conflict. We may, however, have to (however reluctantly) recognise that some conflicts are not solvable, at least in the short term, and this 'fixing' of problems may be a step on the way.

Seventh, political programmes have to be accompanied by explicit plans including the reorganisation of the armed forces through demobilisation and integration and the rebuilding of the local economy to give all a real stake in peace. More attention should be paid, in the post-conflict phase, on creating jobs and getting the basics in place in terms of services, policing and local security, the rule of law and traditional economic drivers. More needs to be done beyond that initial phase. Critically, the ability to avoid a resurgence of conflict nearly always circles back to economic conditions; just as these conditions play a central part often in instigating and perpetuating conflict.

These issues can run deep. For example, in the Congo, the challenge to create a single state with the governance attributes therein is crucial in realising the ambition of peace, unity and better governance. There, as elsewhere, this includes the judiciary and allowing space for the fourth estate, as well as dealing with difficult questions of national identity. The problems of the Congo, Sudan and Somalia, as in Lebanon, centre on state and identity crises. It is uncertain whether peace agreements will seed coherent states in these territories. They may instead undermine long-term stability by both legitimising apparatus without real power and authority and institutionalising a fallacy of statehood.

Eighth, there is a need to lay the foundations to enable the peace agreements to hold, for instance in knowing one's own negotiating opponent well enough to inculcate a sufficient degree of trust. In South Africa's example, the period between 1985-90, when feelers were sent out between the ANC and Pretoria, was crucial in building the personal relationships and understanding necessary to make the move to the negotiating table possible. Discreet brokerage was vital in avoiding further violence.

Ninth, there is a need to follow the broad principle of *inclusivity* in devising solutions. Hence, democracy is preferred, though this is not the only model and may have unintended (and violent) consequences, notably in the Middle East. A clear distinction is needed between the use of a government of national unity as a means to a political end, and its use as an end in itself. The latter might be taken to legitimate fraudulent elections rather than be a conduit for reconciliation. The Zimbabwe case is moot. We must recognise that there may be a tension between holding elections (where there is a winner and loser) and peace settlements (which should be win-win). There is a need also to flag the emergent danger of 'fast-learning autocrats', where tampering with electoral processes creates a democratic façade establishing conditions for volatility and failure. But elections are vital for

cementing legitimacy and demilitarising power struggles. Post-election exit strategies can be an inducement to settle.

Tenth, there is a need for careful mechanics in making peace: proper analysis is necessary to understand the causes of conflict and the possible means of resolution. Small steps are important, as are other confidence-building measures. Report-back mechanisms are crucial; as is the trust of the principals in the actions of their negotiators. Techniques such as proximity negotiations can do the trick. Finally, negotiators can create their own pressure for settlement, through covert intelligence, parallel channels including alternative non-governmental track 1.5 and track two discussions, the careful setting of timelines and ratcheting of pressure around them and diplomatic manoeuvring. Local actors can also use elections to clarify their mandate and negotiating position, as in the 1993 South African referendum.

But the biggest lesson of all is, in essence, Clausewitz meets Tip O'Neill: of the primacy of (local) politics. It is not essentially that we require better negotiation methods, or more joined-up governance between development agencies and other actors and better external methods of peace-making to make conflict resolution stick and work. It depends, fundamentally, on the recognition that not all conflicts can be solved by diplomatic negotiation and development engagement. Instead, it should be left well alone or at least the moment and method of intervention carefully chosen. We have to guard against our instincts and self-interest to 'want to do something'.

## **Discussion**

Several issues were noted as likely to feature significantly in the short to medium term in Africa, prominent among them was the prospect of increasing transnational terrorist activity on the continent, the spread of Chinese influence, land redistribution, rising food prices, reform of states' security sectors, and the fallout from the acute crisis in Zimbabwe. The 2008 Dialogue ended with a plea for the liberation ethos, which so heavily informed the way post-independence governments in Africa have perceived the world, to adjust and transform to remain relevant to the challenges of our globalised, 21<sup>st</sup> century. Whilst the liberation ethos will for some time (and in many ways, rightly) remain constitutive of African states' identities, their governments' authority must inhere to a far greater extent than hitherto from other sources of legitimacy, such as good governance and the rule of law.

## PARTICIPANTS

1. Albrecht Conze (Dr), Ambassador to Benin, Germany
2. Alistair Harris (Mr), Pursue, Lebanon
3. André du Pisani (Dr), University of Namibia, Namibia
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5. Barry Desker (Prof/Amb), RSIS, Singapore
6. Bruce Maddy-Weizman (Prof), University of Tel Aviv, Israel
7. Christian Koch (Dr), Gulf Research Centre, Dubai
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42. Terry McNamee (Dr), RUSI, UK
43. Thomas Nziratimana (Mr), Former Deputy Governor South Kivu (RCD), Congo
44. Werner Böhler (Dr), Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Germany

## PROGRAMME

### Thursday 8 May 2008

Departure from Johannesburg  
Arrival; settling in – possible game drive

17h15-18h00: Drinks

18h00-19h30: Dinner – Welcome: Greg Mills

19h30-21h00: After-dinner Talk: Andre Jaquet – ‘Twenty years on: Lessons learned from the SA-Angola-Cuban-US negotiations after Cuito Cuanavale.’

### Friday 9 May (Motse)

07h00 onwards: Breakfast

08h30: **Session One: What have we learnt from conflict resolution in Africa?**

(Chair: Patrick Mazimhaka)

Keynote Paper: ‘What do existing studies on conflict resolution tell us?’ Terrence Lyons

Presenters: Shannon Field (Sudan), Medhane Tadesse (Somalia/Horn), David Zounmenou (Liberia)

10h45: Tea

11h00: Session One (cont): What have we learnt from conflict resolution in Africa? (Chair: Peter Chaveas)

Presenters: Martin Kimani (Kenya), Thomas Nziratimana (Congo), Jan van Eck (Burundi), Frank Rusagara (Rwanda), Michael Holman (Kenya and Zimbabwe)

13h15: Group Photo

14h30: **Session Two: What can we learn from conflict resolution in Asia, and Central and Latin America?**

(Chair: Patrick Mugoya)

Presenters: Leonard Sebastian (Indonesia), Markus-Alexander Antonietti (Guatemala/El Salvador), Malcolm Ferguson (Central America)

16h30: **Session Three: What can we learn from conflict resolution in the Middle East?**

(Chair: Stephan Klingebiel)

Presenters: Bruce Maddy-Weizman (Israel/Palestine), Alistair Harris (Lebanon), Abdulaziz Sager (Gulf perspective)

### Saturday 10 May (Motse)

7h00-onwards: Breakfast

Break-away into two groups: Session to run from 08h00-12h30 (with 10h30-11h00 tea-break)

**Group One: ‘What role should outside parties best play in conflict resolution?’**

(Chaired by Malcolm Chalmers (Boma))

Presenter: Christopher Clapham

Response: Michael Clarke to be followed by discussion

**Group Two: ‘How might domestic protagonists best get on with settling conflict?’**

(Chaired by Peter Edopu (Motse))

Presenter: Knox Chitoyo

Response: Andre du Pisani to be followed by discussion.

12h30: Reconvene for short report-back by two selected rapporteurs

13h00: Lunch

Afternoon Free/Game Drives/ Walk or Drive to Dune for Supper

20h30: Talk on Stars by Tswalu Staff  
Retire hurt to Motse for After-Dinner Drinks

**Sunday 11 May (Lekgaba)**

07h00 onwards: Breakfast  
08h15: Depart for Lekgaba

09h30: **Summary Session: Towards Conflict Resolution Best Practice?**  
(Chair: Michael Spicer)

Presenters: Greg Mills, Barry Desker, Paul Lever

11h00: Conclusion  
11h30: Brunch at Waterhole  
13h00: Depart for Johannesburg  
15h00: Arrival in Johannesburg

