



LSE IDEAS and Africa Talks public lecture

Africa and the World: the view from Washington

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Former special envoy to the Great Lakes Region for President Barack Obama

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Democracy and Peace-building: Rethinking the Conventional Wisdom

A Presentation of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in partnership with Conflict Management Partners and the Institute for Research and Education on Negotiations in Europe at ESSEC Business School



The Conventional Wisdom

- Assumes principal challenges are rational and structural: get the institutions right, and there will be stability and security
- Rooted in an adversarial paradigm: competition seen as defining characteristic of democracy
- Sees moral and political pressure, combined with legal sanctions, as the most effective means of deterring bad behavior



What is Wrong with this Picture?

Misunderstands Democracy

- Democracy depends not only on competition but on an underlying set of agreements: definition of the national community, rules of the game, styles of communication
- Democracy depends on cooperation as well as competition
- Democracy depends on sense of common ground among members of the national community
- Political competition is tolerable only when these underlying conditions are in place



What is Wrong with this Picture?

Ignores the divided nature of most transitional societies

- Culturally plural societies often have weak sense of national identity and community
- No recognition of “connectedness”
- Tendency toward dehumanization of “outsiders”
- Moral and legal pressure effective only within the “in-group”



What is Wrong with this Picture?

Mistakes differences in perceptions for a conflict over values

- No shortage of “democrats”
- Problem is the definition of the political community



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What is Wrong with this Picture?

Fails to comprehend that the essential task of peace and democracy-building in divided societies is building a recognition of commonalities and interdependence



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A New Strategic Perspective: The Four Imperatives of Sustainable Peace and Democracy

- Transform the war-induced, zero-sum paradigm
- Restore trust and rebuild fractured relationships
- Build a new consensus on “rules of the game”
- Strengthen communication and negotiation skills



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The Missing Link: Building Collaborative Capacity Among Leaders

- Broadening the notion of “capacity building”
- Joining skills of trainers with those of diplomats
- Peace-building through leadership training: Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Timor-Leste
- Re-defining the role of the international community



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Building Sustainable Peace and Democracy Through Leadership Training: The Case of Burundi



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The Challenge

- Humanitarian disaster
- Traumatized society
- Polarized Leadership
- Large gap between leaders and population
- Unequal distribution of limited resources
- Fragmented peace process



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The Response: A Long-term Training Program for Key Leaders

- The BLTP “95”
- Security Sector
- Political party leaders
- Government
- Community-Based Program



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Keys to Building Collaborative Capacity: (1) Trainers and Training Methodology

- Process-centric
- Experience-based
- Interactive
- Communications
- Interest-based negotiations
- Analysis of Conflict
- Climate of Mutual Trust
- Building relationships
- Long-term: no quick fix



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Keys to Building Collaborative Capacity: (2) Getting the Right People into the Room

- Entry Points Will Vary from Country to Country
- Importance of national “ownership” of the process
- Advantages of framing process as “technical capacity building” rather than a political negotiation
- Emphasis on inclusivity
- Participants invited in their individual capacities, not as representatives of their organizations



Conclusions: Lessons Learned

- Importance of addressing process and attitudinal dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction
- Holistic approach to peace-building: need to engage key leaders directly in long-term training program
- Must distinguish between “technical” capacity and capacity in “collaborative decision-making”
- Need for synergy between efforts of diplomats and trainers



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