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From “Triangle of Death” to “Starting Point for Iraqi Reconstruction”

USIP Catalyzes Peacebuilding Conference in Iraq’s Mahmoudiya District

The Institute’s Baghdad office recently facilitated a remarkable reconciliation conference entitled “Mahmoudiya: Cornerstone of Unity and National Accord.” The event convened 31 tribal sheikhs—18 Sunni and 13 Shia—from Mahmoudiya, a district south of Baghdad that has come to be known as the “Triangle of Death” due to its recent history of violence. The U.S. Army’s 10th Mountain Division asked the Institute to help the local sheikhs develop common goals and courses of action to restore stability to their troubled region. The sheikhs focused on addressing critical needs in the areas of security, governance, economy, rule of law, and social well-being.

Mahmoudiya’s proximity to Baghdad and its role as a breeding ground for terrorists seeking to destabilize the city make it a particularly compelling case for reconciliation. As many Iraqis involved in this initiative noted,



USIP’s Baghdad Chief of Party Rusty Barber briefs the media at the signing ceremony and press conference.

if stability and reconciliation are achieved in Mahmoudiya, the likelihood of achieving the same in Baghdad will increase significantly.

The conference was the culmination of a four-month initiative undertaken at the request of local government, tribal, and civil society leaders weary of the havoc wrought by militants and criminal gangs on their communities.

Convened by USIP in coordination with the 2nd Brigade of the U.S. Army’s

10th Mountain Division; the Provincial Reconstruction Team for Mahmoudiya; USAID; and the State Department, the conference broke new ground. At the event’s conclusion, tribal leaders agreed on 37 goals to put the region on the path to social and economic recovery, a first since the American presence in the country began.

Reflecting on the event, USIP Baghdad Chief of Party Rusty

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that since the reconciliation accord was signed in October, there has been a “high degree of awareness” of the effort throughout the Mahmoudiya district.

USIP’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Patricia Thomson said, “The Mahmoudiya effort is a great example of a successful partnership between USIP, the military, USAID, and the State Department. This type of project draws on one of the Institute’s greatest strengths—acting as an independent convener and facilitator in resolving fractious international conflicts.” USIP Vice President Daniel Serwer observed, “To me what was so striking about the event was the degree to which people were prepared to focus on the future and try to improve their lives.”

About Mahmoudiya

Mahmoudiya, a district of 400,000 people bordered by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, lies 20 miles south of Baghdad and was once known for its rich agriculture, busy wholesale produce markets, and convenient transport links. The breakdown of civil and military authority after 2003, however, resulted in massive population displacement, largely at the expense of the Sunnis. The ensuing violence undermined both civil and tribal authority structures, tearing apart Mahmoudiya’s social fabric and destroying its infrastructure. Today, much of the district lies in ruins.

However, recent months have seen a dramatic improvement in the overall security situation.

U.S. and Iraqi forces have captured or killed large numbers of al Qaeda and other insurgents and are making progress against the militias and armed gangs. Attacks on coalition forces have declined sharply, and local residents confirm that a measure of calm not seen in years has returned to the district.

Pursuing the Peace

Anxious to take advantage of the improvement in security, local government and tribal leaders reached out to the district’s Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT—organized by the Department of State), which in turn contacted USIP’s Baghdad office to help to devise a reconciliation strategy.

Initial discussions between USIP and local leaders established that a key first step in

المحمودية الحجر الأساس للسلام والوئام الوطني

عقد شيوخ عشائر المحمودية مؤتمراً للمصالحة في فندق الرشيد في بغداد للفترة من 16 - 18 من شهر تشرين الأول/علاوة على دراسة وتقييم الوضع الحالي للعشائر الأمثلة لامهالي للتضامن ووضع خطة لتحقيق الأهداف المستقبلية للمحمودية للسنوات الثلاثة القادمة واقتراح مخطط لها لتتمكن العشائر بمساعدة سلطات القضاء لتقديم نحو الامام من أجل مصلحة الناس.

الوضع الحالي

المحمودية عانت من العنف والارهاب والانفلات الأمني منذ سنة 2003. اهالي القضاء يعانون من الخوف والارهاب والعصابات الإجرامية والعنف الطائفي والوضع الاقتصادي المتردي والتهجير، والتي تضافرت جميعاً في تحطيم النسيج الاجتماعي واضعاف العشائر والتي كانت تاريخياً تلعب دوراً مهماً في حياة العشائر والمجتمعات في المحمودية. في الاشهر الماضية تم ملاحظة بعض التحسن في الوضع حيث عمل معظم رؤساء عشائر المحمودية على استقلال هذه الفرصة الثمينة للثامن تقدم أكثر بتكثف الجهود لتحسين الامن والخدمات والنظام الحكومي والوضع الاقتصادي وسادة القانون بالتعاون مع ممثلي الحكومة المحلية وقوى الامن.

النظام الحكومي

- تحقيق انتخابات محلية حرة وازدية مستقبلاً، وعمل رؤساء العشائر على تشكيل لجان من أجل التعاون مع منظمات المجتمع المدني والقضاء وقادة المجتمع لمراقبة الانتخابات والإشراف عليها.
• رفع توصيات لاعتماد سيطرة القوائم الانتخابية في الانتخابات المستقبلية.
• من أجل تفعيل الدور الحكومي في قضاء المحمودية سيقيم رؤساء العشائر:
• الطلب من مجلس محافظة بغداد والحكومة بتخصيص حصص أمن لتحسين الوضع الاجتماعي في قضاء المحمودية وحسب النسبة السكانية.
• التعاون مع مجلس قضاء المحمودية لارسل ممثلين لحضور اجتماعات مجلس محافظة بغداد والتعاون معه لتفعيل العمل بقوانين المجالس.

ميادة القانون

- ان جهاز الشرطة في قضاء المحمودية بحاجة الى مراكز شرطة جديدة مع تجهيزها بالمعدات وخاصة الاسلحة والابوات. ان المحاكم المحلية تحتاج ان تكون بعيدة عن التقلبات الحزبية والتقلبات الاخرى وسيعمل رؤساء المحاكم على:
• مساعدة مجلس قضاء المحمودية للبحث عن مصادر اضافية لتمويل الشرطة وكذلك تشكيل محكمة جنائية خاصة بقضاء المحمودية وانشاء محاكم البداية والاحوال الشخصية في كل ناحية مع زيادة جنائيات خاصة بقضاء المحمودية.
• دعم قطاع النجدة في المحمودية باليات لتاسب الملاك الحالي مع تخصيص بنائة مناسبة للتقاطع.
• ترشيح اعضاء مؤهلين من ابناء العشائر والمستقلين للشغل مناسب في الشرطة والاجهزة الامنية.
• مساعدة الشرطة في حماية المواطنين والمجتمع من خلال تشجيع افراد العشائر عن طريق توعية المواطنين حول اهمية الجهات الامنية ودورهم في منع الجريمة.
• تمديد يخدم التدخل بصلاحيات القضاء من خلال العلاقات الشخصية والوساطة.

الاقتصاد

- المحمودية كانت منطقة انتاجية زراعية مهمة ومركز تسويق مهم والان بحاجة الى تفعيل اقتصادها المتضامن في الزراعة، رؤساء العشائر سوف يقومون ببذل الجهد بالتنسيق مع المنظمات المختصة لاجل:
• توفير المعدات والمستلزمات الزراعية، اعادة تأهيل مشاريع نظام الري.
• توفير الدعم المادي من خلال القروض ذات الفائدة الميسرة، اطفاء ديون الفلاحين، والغاء اجور البقي وكذلك ضمانت الارض الزراعية.

A page from the original Arabic accord.

Barber said, “This reconciliation conference was unique because it used a combination of training and facilitated problem solving. The facilitators were Iraqis trained by USIP in conflict mitigation techniques. These dedicated individuals came from all over Iraq and—to their great credit—have remained engaged in the Mahmoudiya initiative in order to help ensure follow-up.” Barber added

“To me what was so striking about the event was the degree to which people were prepared to focus on the future and try to improve their lives.” —Daniel Serwer

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Iraqi sheikhs at the reconciliation conference.

establishing a conference was to reach out to Sunni sheikhs, most of them former Baathists, who had fled to Jordan following the collapse of the regime. Embittered over the loss of their positions and property and the detentions of tribal members, and fearful of the rise of Shia militias, many of these sheikhs were believed to actively support the Sunni insurgency.

With the Institute's help, the mayor of Mahmoudiya led a trip to Amman, Jordan, for a mixed Sunni-Shia delegation of local government and military leaders, tribal sheikhs, and civil society representatives in an effort to reach out to the sheikhs. USIP sent four observers to help facilitate the Amman meeting, and the Iraqi Ministry of Dialogue and Reconciliation approved the mission and appointed a representative to accompany the delegation.

Though initially received with suspicion and in some cases hostility on the part of the sheikhs in Jordan, the delegation convinced key Sunni leaders of the sincerity of the initiative. These asylee sheikhs, in turn, agreed to support the reconciliation process and the Baghdad conference.

The Conference

Mounting such a logistically challenging and sensitive event required close coordination among USIP's Baghdad office, the Provincial Reconstruction Team, and the 2nd Brigade. The brigade provided funding, security, and transportation for

the event, while USIP worked with local representatives to craft an agenda and a participant list that would ensure broad geographic and tribal representation. Barber called this coordination "exceptional."

USIP staff designed an agenda that combined training in negotiation, mediation, and group problem solving with facilitated goal setting and development of action plans to achieve objectives. The conveners focused on current problems rather than historic grievances in order to help participants recognize common interests and encourage the sheikhs to take responsibility for conditions in their region.

The sheikhs were divided into working groups under five topics—security, governance, rule of law, economy, and social well-being—and asked to define three goals each over a three-year time horizon.

The most distinguishing feature of the meeting, however, was that it was conducted entirely by Iraqis trained by USIP in conflict management techniques. Two Iraqi lead facilitators and six colleagues moderated discussions, led the participants through the exercises, and helped bring the proceedings back on track when tensions flared.

The final day of the conference commenced with prayer led by a prominent Baghdad imam, who drew from passages in the Koran that speak of forgiveness and reconciliation. Final touches on the concluding statement were negotiated and added to the final statement, and a press conference convened to announce the results and cover the signing ceremony. Thirty Iraqi television, radio, and print outlets covered the event.

Serwer singled out the military and PRT for their efforts in bringing about the conference. "One of the reasons we were able to do this was because there was already

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Assessing the Threat

As part of the conference, USIP asked the participating sheikhs to respond to a survey about the situation in Iraq and the Mahmoudiya district as well as to provide suggestions on how the region can move ahead. The sheikhs were asked to list three real problems that they have faced since 2003. Security dominated this set of responses, a number of which were quite graphic. One sheikh wrote about the horrific trend of militants immolating entire families inside their cars. Another pointed to "deliberate insults from U.S. troops to the citizens, especially against older people. They put their shoes on the heads of people."

However, security threats were not the only issue that the sheikhs identified. Other topics mentioned included conflict among farmers for access to water, struggles related to displaced families, and squabbles over land and vehicle ownership.

One Iraqi participant urged that the entire country take into account the Mahmoudiya experience, saying, "When we reconstruct the Mahmoudiya district, it will be a starting point for the reconstruction of Iraq, and we must be transparent and honest and admit our mistakes so we can solve them." Others proposed that the participating sheikhs travel to the United States and the UN General Assembly to explain the problems they and other Iraqis face. 🌐

"When we reconstruct the Mahmoudiya district, it will be a starting point for the reconstruction of Iraq, and we must be transparent and honest and admit our mistakes so we can solve them."



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a sustained effort by the 10th Mountain Division and the Provincial Reconstruction Team” to stabilize the area, he said.

Next Steps

Mahmoudiya’s present respite from violence is fragile. According to Barber, failure to reinforce the agreement with immediate, visible efforts to improve basic services, rebuild vital infrastructure and restore the agriculture sector will likely result in backsliding into the violence that has characterized the district for the past three years.

Follow-up by the sheikhs themselves, in coordination with local government and civil society leaders, is the most critical next step. To help ensure this opportunity is not lost, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, in concert with USIP and USAID, are coordinating efforts to direct reconstruction resources to the district and encourage direct engagement from the Baghdad regional council and government ministries.

“I want to emphasize that these things can’t be successful if it’s just a one-shot deal,” said Serwer, commenting on the need for coordination and follow-up.

SnapShots

USIP Partners to Form Genocide Prevention Task Force

On November 13, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen announced that they will cochair a Genocide Prevention Task Force jointly convened by the U.S. Institute of Peace, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the American Academy of Diplomacy. The task force will generate practical recommendations to enhance the U.S. government’s capacity to respond to emerging threats, genocidal violence, and mass atrocities.

“The world agrees that genocide is unacceptable and yet genocide and mass killings continue. Our challenge is to match words to deeds and stop allowing the unacceptable. That task, simple on the surface, is in fact one of the most persistent puzzles of our times. We have a duty to find the answer before the vow of ‘never again’ is once again betrayed,” said Secretary Albright.

“We are convinced that the U.S. government can and must do better in preventing genocide—a crime that threatens not only our values but our national interests,” said Secretary Cohen.

Task force members include Senator John Danforth, Senator Tom Daschle, Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, Michael Gerson, Secretary Dan Glickman, Secretary Jack Kemp, Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Ambassador Tom Pickering, Julia Taft, Vin Weber, and General Anthony Zinni.

“The task force will harness tremendous expertise from

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“A Think and Do Session”

The Institute Makes Its Mark at Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting

The atmosphere crackled with synergy as approximately 1,800 luminaries from the government, business, non-governmental organizations, and other sectors huddled to tackle the planet’s most pressing challenges at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) 2007 Annual Meeting in New York City in September. USIP made its mark at this major gathering.

Two specialists from the Institute, Senior Fellow Betty Bigombe and Senior Adviser Tara Sonenshine, who moderated, were featured on a CGI panel entitled “Emerging from Crisis and Investing in the Future,” which also included Ashraf Ghani, chairman of the Institute of State Effectiveness, and noted Oxford economist Paul Collier, author of *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Approximately 300 people attended the panel, including prominent civil rights activists Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, and former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

“This session is a think and do session,” said Sonenshine to kick off the event. “We are not going to have endless intellectual arguments over strategies of how to intervene over failed states. What we want to do now is to find solutions. Let’s get down to not just fixing roads, but fixing



(l to r)
Sonenshine,
Ghani, Collier,
and Bigombe at
the Clinton
Global Initiative
Panel.

“The very people who were responsible for the deaths and destruction [in African conflicts] have been rewarded.” —Betty Bigombe

the future. Not just turning on lights, but knowledge and information. Not just Band-Aids, but what will systematically change fragile states and people that are suffering everywhere.”

Bigombe said that in Africa, most of the population consists of youth under 15—as is the case in her native Uganda, where 50 percent of the population fall into this category. “In most cases, international interventions do not target youth. In decades, youth will take over.... If not enough is invested in them, then the country is lost,” she explained.

Bigombe also pointed out that even in areas ravaged by war that offer free education, children often do not benefit. She

recalled that she was shocked to learn in her research that even when granted full scholarships, girls in Burundi often drop out of school because they do not attend classes during the three to four days a month when they menstruate.

She cited the level of brutality among children who have experienced war and shared the anecdote of a student who asked a teacher, “Do you know how many people I’ve killed? Why did you give me a bad grade?” However, according to Bigombe, the first thing that 99 percent of children in such post-conflict situations want to do is return to school.

She elaborated on this point, highlighting the importance of not saturating post-conflict countries with training focused on only limited skill sets. For instance, she pointed out that

*“What we
need is Betty
Bigombe!”
—Paul Collier*

“What we want to do now is to find solutions. Let’s get down to not just fixing roads, but fixing the future.”—Tara Sonenshine

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USIP-Cosponsored Minnesota Conference Offers Fresh Insights into Islamic Culture

Interactive theater. Muslim Barbie dolls. Comic books. The “Geek Corps.” Koranic verses to a reggae melody. And insights into Arab politics.

These elements were showcased at the “Building Bridges of Understanding and Peace with the Muslim World” conference, which the Institute, in collaboration with Education for Global Learning, recently sponsored at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Century College, both in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. The location was a particularly appropriate for the meeting, as some 65,000 to 80,000 Somali immigrants reside in the area. The program consisted of two main aspects—a forum theater presentation and an academic conference that was followed by a student simulation.

Forum Theater

Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) has an unusually large Muslim and Somali student population. Total enrollment is about 4,500 students per semester. Of that number, staff estimate that there are about 450 students of Somali origin, with about 600 Muslim students in total. In fact, MCTC has established a partnership with Puntland State University in Somalia. On campus, there is a distinctive and visible Muslim presence.

This environment provides a unique forum in which to explore peacebuilding opportunities. In this light, USIP Senior Program Officer David J. Smith and Safiya Ghorri, director of government

relations at the Muslim Public Affairs Council served as respondents to a unique, interactive theater presentation.

In the presentation, students acted out a skit that explored tensions revolving around the Muslim community—with a twist at the end. First, a group of five students, consisting of two Muslims and three non-Muslims, were portrayed as working on a project together. The focus of the skit was on tensions between Muslim and more conventional “American” students working together on a project. The positions of both sides hardened as the sketch continued, and the progress of the imagined student group was hobbled as a result of all the bickering.

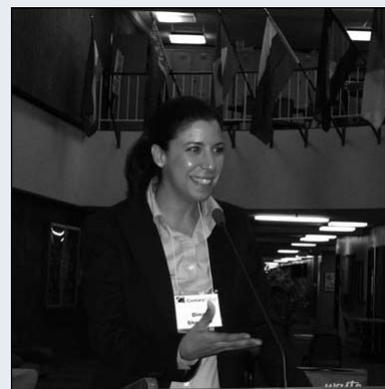
A unique feature of the brief play was the “Geek Corps—Media’s Disembodied Messengers,” which represented the shadow of media messages in American culture. These were two women who portrayed incessant messages of hate and discord on Islam-related issues, within the frame of a TV. Each used a double-sided mask consisting of both Osama bin Laden and a popular TV commentator.

The most unique aspect of the play came after the first presentation. Subsequently, audience members jumped into the play, replaced the actors, and assumed the role of specific characters in order to mitigate the tension. With these new participants subsuming the roles of the original participants, the characters, after much nattering, came to an agreement on how the group would resolve the conflict.

Afterwards, the audience identified a number of themes that emerged as a result of the theatrical exercise: differences in time management between traditionally Muslim and Western cultures; how to express one’s faith; standards of conformity; the role of women; mistaken perceptions of prayer and ethnic origins; disrespectful language; and the media’s role in fear-mongering.

Smith said of the group afterwards, “This is very important work they’re doing, the type of

Photos (from left to right, below): The cast of the forum theater, along with Smith (center row, third from left). Century College students. Dina Shehata, senior adviser to USIP’s Muslim World Initiative, speaks at Century College.





OF MUSLIM YOUTH

dialoging we need in this country on these critical issues.” Of key significance, he noted, was that the theater replicates the peace-building process. “During the play, even the simplest things the actors agree on can be the basis for moving ahead on something else, not unlike a peace process.”

The next session was held at Century College, in the Minneapolis suburbs. To kick it off, Century College Vice President John O’Brien welcomed the group. “Today is a day of hope, because we have all these people gathered... with passionate intensity,” to explore the issue of enhancing ties with the Muslim world. An aim of Century College, he explained, was to become “committed to global education, peace, and international understanding,” as well as “to become a more welcoming campus for people from other cultures.”

Smith said, having taught for fourteen years in similar educational institutions, “My heart is with community colleges. The Washington community would learn a lot if they got out and talked more with academics and community leaders ‘beyond the Beltway’ as was the case in this conference,” he continued.

He explained that many environments, not only community colleges, are coping with changing demographics that are a result of large immigrant population changes. “Now we’re dealing with

students that represent these new diasporas. Their identity is not quite American, not quite where they come from,” Smith observed.

Dr. John Voll, professor of Islamic history and associate director of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, then spoke on “Religious Faith, Pop Culture, and Terrorism.”

The first part of his speech, delivered while he strolled through the audience, centered on common threads among Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religious and effective approaches to dialogue. He played strains of Yusuf Islam’s (previously known as Cat Stevens) new album.

Voll noted that a group of 138 Muslim leaders, spanning all the various interpretations of Islamic theology, recently issued a statement calling on the need for Muslims and Christians to work together.

The second part of the talk centered on the symbols, images, and concepts that constitute a group’s religious repertoire. To demonstrate, he played three versions of the commonly heard Muslim Shahada (declaration of belief that there is no god but the One God). The first was a commonly heard Arabic recitation. The second was a recording from a Malaysian group, which presented the Shahada in a dis-

cotheque-type style. The third, mixing English and Arabic to a Reggae beat, was from an American Muslim hip-hop artist.

Voll then highlighted some examples of pop culture directed at Muslim audiences, including “Razanne,” a Muslim Barbie-type doll, sold worldwide. Another example of this trend was an Australian woman’s design of a “Burqini,” designed to allow Muslim women to swim easily. Voll showed the audience an Islamic-based comic book, published in Germany, called “The 99,” in which the superheroes each represent 99 virtues commonly found in the religion. In the series, no single superhero can triumph alone. Instead, attributes such as generosity, power, and nobility have to work together to resolve crises.

Engaging Moderate Islamists

The Institute’s Special Adviser to the Muslim World Initiative, Mona Yacoubian, delivered a presentation entitled “Engaging Moderate Islamists: Democratic Promise or Political Peril.” She assessed the experiences of democracy promoters in Morocco, Yemen, and Jordan and offered insights into how moderate Islamist parties might contribute to broader U.S. strategic goals such as promoting democracy in the Middle East and combating Islamic extremism.

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Photos (from left to right, below): MCTC students engage in an imagined argument at the Forum Theater workshop. Smith (center) with conference organizers Diane Pearson (r) and Tracey Wyman (l) from MCTC. Yacoubian addresses an “outside the Beltway” audience.





Still, the Witch Hunt Is There

USIP-Sponsored Panel Discusses Burma

Recent events have once again thrust Burma into the international spotlight. The situation in this country overlaps the three core areas of the Institute's work: conflict prevention, mediation, and post-conflict development, according to Gene Martin, executive director of the Institute's Philippine Facilitation Project.

In this light, USIP recently cosponsored, with the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), an event entitled "Burma's Saffron Revolution—Next Steps." The panelists included Martin; Bo Hla Tint, a prominent Burmese opposition leader; Priscilla Clapp, former U.S. charge d'affaires, Burma, and author of the Institute's special report, "Burma's Long Road to Democracy"; Dr. Carla Freeman, China Studies, SAIS; Keith Luse, Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and Dr. Bridget Welsh, Southeast Asia Studies, SAIS.

Bo Hla Tint opened the session by discussing some statistics about the challenges Burma faces. Thirty-five percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Per capita income is around \$164, the lowest in the region. Seventy-one percent of income is used for food, and inflation is at 53 percent. Whereas 60 percent

"The conditions in Burma are abysmal. They have been getting worse and worse, instead of better and better." — Priscilla Clapp

of the country's budget flows to the military, 7 and 3 percent are allotted for education and health, respectively. Moreover, the specter of diseases like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria adds further difficulty to conditions in the country.

It is critical to grasp this overall situation, he emphasized, in order to understand that the origins of frustration, manifested in the recent protests, have widespread roots. Bo Hla Tint noted that the monks whom the regime's backlash targeted are the most respected layer in Burmese society. According to him, in the crackdown more than 200 demonstrators were killed and 3,000 people arrested—including 1,400 monks, 200 members of opposition parties, and 15 members of parliament.

Pointing out that midnight raids and selected arrests are increasing, he said, "Still, the witch hunt is there." Among the recent arrests, Bo Hla Tint said, were a former student from the "88 generation" (a reference to the anti-junta movement of 1988), detained at the hospital where he sought

medical treatment, and a famous actor.

In a call for action, Bo Hla Tint declared that, "It is not enough making speeches and strong statements," and that concerted action from the international community is required.

Clapp's presentation focused on four elements: the ingredients to build a stable democratic base in Burma; what the military might be expected to do; what the international community can do; and potential directions for U.S. policy. "The conditions in Burma are abysmal. They have been getting worse and worse, instead of better and better," she said.

According to Clapp, a few at the apex of Burmese society—the military and their cronies—are currently making large amounts of money from exports of natural resources. Change in that country will be gradual and over a long period, she noted. The country faces enormous obstacles, such as in education. "Even in public schools, people cannot afford to send their children to school anymore. That's why the monasteries are brimming over with children, both in orphanages and in schools that the monasteries run. The orphans are not really orphans. They are children whose parents cannot afford to keep them at home anymore," she said.

Freeman discussed the state of China-Burma relations and China's potential to foster politi-

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Burmese monks protest, September 2007 (AP).

cal change in its neighbor. Trade and investment are major factors in this relationship, as China has major investments in hydropower, state factories, and contracts to exploit Burmese gas and oil. Moreover, Beijing plays a major role in modernizing Burma's military.

Immigration is another key factor in this relationship, she noted. As much as 30 percent of the population of Mandalay (a major Burmese city) are Chinese immigrants. "Some observers have labeled Burma another Chinese province," she said.

According to Freeman, China has not had a stronger public response to recent events in Burma for several reasons. First, Beijing is committed to principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in foreign affairs. Second, ethnic tensions with respect to the Chinese population in Burma have been present for decades, and Beijing does not wish to exacerbate this situation. Third, China supported former Burmese strongman General Ne Win, who was subsequently deposed. She pointed out that we're likely to see China pursue a strategy of

"regime shift" in Burma, with no "quick fixes."

Luse discussed the dynamics within the ruling Burmese military junta and possible avenues for U.S. policy vis-à-vis the country. "Personally, I am skeptical that the generals comprising the junta will ever agree to actual peaceful reconciliation," Luse said.

He compared Burmese leader Senior General Than Shwe, known to be a history buff, with the Burmese monarchs of the past. "He seems content in trying to replicate, in some form, past warrior kingdom dynasties," Luse observed, noting that Than Shwe is "confident that he can continue to leverage China and India against each other, and that European and Asian weapons suppliers will 'take a low profile until the tempest has passed.'"

Luse pointed out some possibilities for U.S. policy in the country, including: the possibility that junior officers will seize power; a peace process involving regional states; prosecution of the military junta in the International Criminal Court; and an arms embargo.

Welsh outlined key steps that would be needed to foster change

within the regime and empower the opposition. One prospect was that of splitting the military. "Lessons in regime change of military governments show that it's critical to have division in the military apparatus," she observed. Welsh went on to discuss conditions to facilitate dialogue and the need to improve human rights conditions in the country, and stressed the need for an arms embargo on the regime.

Welsh emphasized, "This is not about outsiders. This is about the Burmese people and the Burmese making decisions for their future."

"Some observers have labeled Burma another Chinese province." — Dr. Carla Freeman

She highlighted the value of news services such as the VoA and BBC, which broadcast into the country. "Most Burmese continue to get their news from outside, rather than inside," she noted.

Welsh discussed the role of regional countries. India, she said, has taken a "soft approach" recently, signing economic deals amidst the crackdown. Russia is circumspect regarding Burma, while Singapore facilitates the country's banking system. Bearing in mind the broader picture of regional alliances, she said, "I would encourage ASEAN members to be thinking carefully about what are constructive, common measures" that can be taken regarding Burma. 🌐



Interactive

- **"Burma's Saffron Revolution: Next Steps"**
http://www.usip.org/events/2007/1011_burma.html
- **USIP Special Report: Burma's Long Road to Democracy**
www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr193.html
- **Program Officer Susan Hayward discusses the situation in Burma in "On the Issues"**
www.usip.org/on_the_issues/burma.html

"Personally, I am skeptical that the generals comprising the junta will ever agree to actual peaceful reconciliation." — Keith Luse



Remarkable Commitment

USIP
Facilitates
Nepal
Rule of Law
Dialogues



A burned-out bus after violent riots in Lahan, Nepal.

“You’re seeing the things that you’ve read about, but this made it real.”

—Colette Rausch



Rausch facilitates a dialogue between civil society and police.

Traveling on the road near Lahan, in the Terai region in the plains of Nepal, Colette Rausch, the Institute’s deputy director of the Rule of Law program; Shobhakar Budhathoki and Karon Cochran, USIP’s Nepal-based advisers; and Devendra Dhungana, a journalist who agreed to serve as their interpreter, were forced to take a long detour on their way to a USIP-facilitated Rule of Law workshop between Nepali civil society and police groups. The more direct route to their destination was too dangerous to make the passage.

Signs of recent fighting between government forces

and various armed groups and criminal gangs were evident in the burnt-out hulks of a bus and buildings.

Their Nepalese hosts told them, “This is where a doctor was kidnapped. This is where a member of one of the armed groups was arrested.” “You’re seeing the things that you’ve read about, but this made it real,” said Rausch.

The searing 115-degree temperatures and the destruction they witnessed en route set the stage for the workshop. They entered the meeting and sensed tension between the two groups. Rausch noted that it is always sobering to meet the participants in such a conflict and see what they go through on a daily basis. After long sessions of dialogue marked by what Rausch described as a “remarkable commitment” to peacebuilding, she said it was heartening to see that the room was filled and that the Nepalese were working to improve the situation in their country.

“After each session,” Rausch recollected, “it was like a balloon of frustration and tension had deflated. By the end of the session, the balloon was deflating significantly.”

Background

This was one of seven sessions that the Institute’s Rule of Law staff facilitated in Nepal between



Panelists at release of the final report at USIP, September 7. From left: Kapil Shrestha, Hem Bahadur Gurung, Yagya Murti Banjade, Lord John Alderdice, and Shobhakar Budhathoki (from USIP).

According to one Nepalese participant, “We started out first of all blaming each other. Then we started to take our side’s responsibility. At the end, we all came together and worked for a common purpose.”

February and August 2007 to promote dialogue between civil society and police. The sessions took place in Kathmandu, and across six districts of the Terai, which was recovering from a ten-year armed conflict between Maoist insurgents and the government. After each meeting between police and civil society, USIP held additional sessions with representatives of political parties and local government to share and discuss recommendations developed in prior meetings.

These dialogues came about serendipitously. Rausch and USIP program officer Vivienne O’Connor originally arrived in

See *Nepal*, page 12



Civil society representatives at police and civil society dialogue sessions in Lahan, Nepal.



Interactive

- To view a slideshow of these and other photos of Nepal, please visit www.usip.org/nepalphotos
- Read about USIP’s Nepal activities at www.usip.org/ruleoflaw/projects/countries/nepal.html



Left: Police and civil society dialogue in Lahan, Nepal.

Right: (l to r) Richard Monk (UN police commissioner for Kosovo), Karon Cochran, Collette Rausch, Vivienne O’Connor, and Shobhakar Budhathoki in Nepal.



Nepal

continued from page 11

April 2006 to conduct research and consult with Nepalese actors on the development of criminal law codes for use in post-conflict situations. However, they arrived at end stages of a movement that resulted in the country's monarch ceding his grip on power and the convening of parliament for the first time in two years.

Inspired by these new developments, the two shifted their focus to the rapidly evolving political situation to the point that they extended their trip and stayed for more than three weeks. During this period, they shared USIP's conflict resolution and rule of law-related resources with Nepalese actors engaged in building peace and democracy.

Rausch and O'Connor met with a wide variety of representatives from across the country's political spectrum, including members of civil society, security forces, foreign diplomats, and Maoist rebels. A Nepalese NGO, the Informal Service Sector Centre, asked them to act as a resource on transitional justice issues by conducting a workshop, which they did. As their consultations and information sharing continued, their focus on examining the relationship between civil society and the security sector crystallized. They also met Cochran and Budhathoki, whose work focused on conflict resolution and human rights.

USIP President Dr. Richard Solomon (second from left) and Rausch (second from right) with Nepali police delegation at USIP, September 2006.



Journalist Devendra Dhungana interviews Rikma Biswakarma, a Dalit (formerly known as "untouchable") woman.

Sharing the vision of building peace in Nepal, Cochran and Budhathoki began working with USIP.

Rausch arranged to bring a delegation of Nepalese police to the Institute's Washington, D.C., headquarters in September 2006. The police officials met with senior staff to discuss future USIP programming. They also met with representatives of the U.S. Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, who shared expertise on democratic policing, including strategic planning, ethics and accountability. "I am impressed with USIP's noble cause, 'peace,' and truthfully admire the courage you have taken to implement this new vision," one of the police officials later wrote to Rausch.

Dialogue Sessions

After the D.C. meeting, Budhathoki and Cochran led a series of meetings in Nepal. The first session began with a discussion with members of civil society groups in the country and their role in post-conflict

transition. This sector, according to Rausch, can work with police to identify policy-level decisions that can enhance rule of law in the country. "After a conflict, civil society can work not only as a watchdog and an advocate but can also work to constructively engage with the state and the police," she said.

The USIP staff next met with representatives from law enforcement. The discussion revolved around policing in systems under autocracy, democracy, and transition from conflict, and how to make police more public service oriented. The police themselves, according to Rausch, identified challenges and solutions related to their work.

The groups were joined together in the third discussion. The Nepalese took control of the meeting themselves, as each side reported its findings to the other. After much dialogue, the groups came to an accord on what constructive steps could be taken to improve rule of law in the country. "From both sides, there were constructive, very motivated people," Rausch observed. According to one Nepalese participant, "We started out first of all blaming

See Nepal, page 15

Perspectives on Great Power Diplomacy in Northeast Asia

A Conversation with USIP Program Officer John Park

John Park had to drive the minivan. His passengers were a group of North Korean diplomats in Boston for “Track II” talks at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government in 2004. Park said that following the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the visitors were anxious over the prospect of a U.S. strike on their country. Reports had circulated that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il had not been seen for more than fifty days during the prelude to the Iraq war. “The North Koreans’ paramount concern at that time was getting a security guarantee from the United States. They were worried about the outbreak of conflict on the peninsula,” he recalled.

Ensnared in rush-hour traffic in front of the Fenway Park baseball stadium, Park, then project leader of the North Korea Analysis Group at Harvard, chatted with his guests in Korean and informed them about another conflict—the American League Championship Series. “Boston was on the verge of elimination by New York. They asked me about the history and nature of the rivalry,” he said. “Why are the Yankees hated so much by Red Sox fans?” After a detailed explanation, the North Koreans expressed

amazement at the “intensity and periodic irrationality of ‘Red Sox Nation.’”

That episode sums up much of what Park, the Institute’s new program officer for Northeast Asia, focuses on—analyzing and explaining nuanced differences in the context of Northeast Asian diplomacy.

Park works on Northeast Asian security issues and U.S. foreign policy toward the region. He is the director of USIP’s Korea Working Group, a consultative body comprising senior North Korea experts from the government and think tank communities. His current research examines multilateral diplomatic efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis. He also leads the U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Project, with aims to foster greater policy discussion and coordination among the three alliance partners. His third responsibility is cochairing the U.S.-China Crisis Analysis and Cooperation project, which focuses on geopolitical events in the Middle East and their potential impact on Sino-U.S. relations.

In a recent conversation with *PeaceWatch*, Park discussed his academic studies, insights into Track II diplomacy, and the current situation in East Asia.



John Park

Formative Experiences

Park’s academic career began with undergraduate studies in international relations at the University of Toronto and a master’s degree from Cambridge University. In 1998, Park joined Harvard University’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs as a predoctoral fellow. While there, he was a member of the Managing the Atom Project, a MacArthur Foundation-funded research group, which examines the military and civilian applications of nuclear energy.

After completing his Cambridge doctorate, Park sought practical experience in regional finance and economics. Working for Goldman Sachs in post-Asian financial crisis South Korea provided insights into how private sector firms and government agencies can work together to restore financial and economic stability. Operating within partnerships spanning different countries,

See *John Park*, page 14

After a detailed explanation, the North Koreans expressed amazement at the “intensity and periodic irrationality of ‘Red Sox Nation.’”



John Park

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organizations, and sectors left a strong impression on Park on how to foster change effectively. While at the Boston Consulting Group's Financial Services Practice in Seoul, he gained valuable experience advising senior banking executives in designing and launching new business units.

It was during this phase that events just north of his office once again catalyzed Park's interest in international security policy. In October 2002, State Department diplomats confronted the North Koreans with intelligence on clandestine uranium enrichment activity in contravention of the 1994 Agreed Framework. As nuclear tensions rapidly rose between Washington and Pyongyang, Park rejoined the Managing the Atom Project at the Belfer Center.

Convening Track II Talks at the Kennedy School

As the project leader of the North Korea Analysis Group, Park addressed a major drawback in examining North Korea policy—the inability to directly exchange views with North Korean officials. Convening a Track II dialogue at Harvard with North Korean diplomats provided unique insights in this regard. As project leader, he also traveled to northeast Asia and met regularly with government officials and advisers from stakeholder countries dealing with North Korea as part of the Six-Party Talks.



North Korean soldiers peer into South Korea at the border. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon)

A benefit of that experience was the ability to work directly at an early stage with the principals who had been involved in the talks in Beijing. “You had people who were in the room when a lot of these big events were going down. Their perspectives shed more light on the fragmentation of national interests of the stakeholders,” he said.

During one of the Track II meetings at the Kennedy School, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, a keynote speaker, and a group of senior professional staffers from the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services committees attended to parlay with the North Koreans. The first session, Park noted, was quite formal, with the North Koreans reading a 20-minute-long statement—all care-

fully screened by senior officials in Pyongyang.

What followed was simple, but highly effective. Park's boss asked each person seated around the table to pose a question or make a comment. Park said that this method was “very fruitful in getting dialogue going,” as most North Korean delegations follow a strict hierarchy which means that only the senior official speaks. This gesture, intended to make everyone feel welcome and demonstrate an openness to differing views, had a “snowballing effect.”

The second day, a morning “Blue Sky” session revealed that the North Koreans were adamant about security guarantees from the United States—but with a twist. The North Koreans sought private U.S. investment in their country to reduce the likelihood of a U.S. attack.

Park commented that “the private investment was deemed to be a huge confidence and trust building measure.” He went on to say that the exchange “made me view the

“I think it's important to carefully listen to the nuance of their perspective first, then make an assessment. Analysis of North Korea is predetermined in many cases.”

—John Park

See John Park, page 16

Nepal

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each other. Then we started to take our side's responsibility. At the end, we all came together and worked for a common purpose."

The USIP representatives then took these recommendations to representatives of political parties, including Maoists, the next day. In the end, all were "receptive" to the findings, said Rausch.

At that point, the Nepalese asked that this facilitation-based model be implemented elsewhere in the country, especially in the Terai region. "There's a groundswell of frustration coming out of that region due to their lack of inclusion in the process."

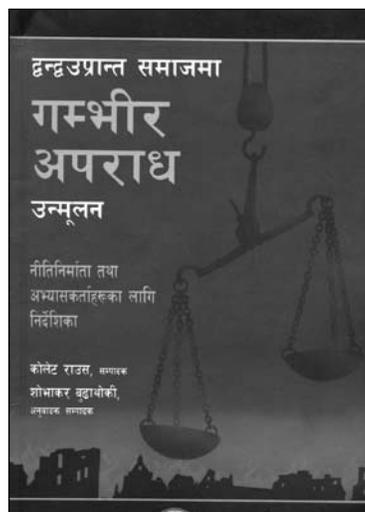
Keys to Success and Positive Outcomes

Rausch reflected on the reasons behind the success of this undertaking. "It's been an organic process because of USIP's nimbleness. Because of this, we could immediately identify a need with our Nepalese colleagues and move ahead quickly." The modus operandi was to consult and listen. "Everything we've done is a consultative exercise. We can provide ideas, tools, and examples from other places. We can share our perspectives and views, and they can determine how that might be useful in Nepal."

Presenting this methodology to the Nepalese yielded timely results. During one of the sessions in the Terai region, police complained that Maoists, who had a representative present during the dialogue sessions, had stolen a number of police cars. The next day, the Maoists returned the vehicles to the police.

Following another session, clashes occurred at a bonded laborers' camp because some of

their huts had been set on fire. Police feared that violence would spread if the laborers retaliated. The primary police representative at one of the sessions contacted his civil society counterpart for assistance. The two jointly went to the camp and talked to the representatives of the laborers about the problem and nonviolent means to resolve it. The police



Cover of the Nepali version of USIP publication "Combating Serious Crimes in Post Conflict Societies"

agreed to investigate the crime and no retaliation occurred.

Reinforcing these efforts was the publication of a USIP Special Report *Nepal in Transition: Strengthening Security and the Rule of Law*. To roll out this publication, USIP held a discussion session on Nepal with Lord John Alderdice (from the UK House of Lords), a central figure in the Northern Ireland peace process; Yagya Murti Banjade, attorney general of Nepal; Hem Bahadur Gurung, additional inspector general of the Nepal Police; and Kapil Shrestha, professor and former member of the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal. In addition, the USIP publication *Combating Serious Crimes in Post Conflict Societies: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners*, edited by Rausch,

was translated to and edited in Nepali by Budhathoki.

"The reason for the translation was so that there could be accessible information related to issues that arise in countries in post-conflict transition, specifically regarding the challenge of serious crime and how it can be dealt with. It is more accessible if it is translated into Nepali, whereas an English version would not have been as suitable to a wide range of Nepalis," said Budhathoki. According to him, legislators have used the book as a tool to help formulate policy and begin the process of addressing post-conflict security issues.

Rausch stressed that the partnership with Budhathoki and Cochran, who are residents in Nepal, was essential. "They were an integral role in the success of the initiatives. This wouldn't have happened without them," she emphasized.

As this process continues, Rausch said, "Ultimately, follow-up will be critical." Within Nepal, a series of outreach efforts at the national, district, and village levels are being planned. In 2008, it is anticipated that an interactive dialogue will be held with Nepalese participants on transitional justice initiatives. 🌐

Snapshots

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across the spectrum and include distinguished Americans with experience in politics, diplomacy, economics, humanitarian, and military affairs," said Ambassador Brandon Grove, executive director of the Genocide Prevention Task Force. "It is a unique partnership of organizations and individuals that care deeply about preventing genocide."

The task force will issue a report in December 2008. 🌐



John Park

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“Regime collapse in Pyongyang is South Korea’s nightmare scenario. You would have 21 million North Koreans with a low level of skills. On top of that, they live in the most closed, economically isolated country in the world. What are you going to do with them?” —John Park

North Koreans in a different light. That kind of logic revealed that there was something specific they were looking for. I think it’s important to carefully listen to the nuance of their perspective first, then make an assessment. Analysis of North Korea is predetermined in many cases.” Park emphasized the need for more substantive, structured dialogue with the North Koreans.

Being stuck in Boston rush-hour traffic with the North Koreans was a formative experience in engaging this “captive audience” as discussion moved from baseball to enquiries about the mindset and logic of the Bush administration. “I just felt they were displaced, still trying to figure out where they fit in the post-Cold War environment. A big part of the puzzle for them was trying to get a better understanding of the Bush administration and how to deal with them,” said Park.

“Atomizing” National Interests in Northeast Asia

Referring to the arduous Six-Party negotiations, which led to a recent agreement to dismantle North Korean nuclear facilities, Park observed that, “The nuclear issue was just a symptom of a

larger malaise... There are many things going on under the surface of the Six-Party Talks.” Each country involved in the talks with North Korea—the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, and Russia—he explained, is pursuing its own distinct agenda and views relations with North Korea through its respective lens.

For South Korea, accelerating economic development in the North is seen as an overarching objective that will lead to more stability, improvement in the living conditions of North Koreans, and peaceful coexistence. In this respect, the October 2007 summit between the two Korean leaders was viewed as another critical step in this process.

According to Park, however, this task is extremely complex. The North has “decayed so much that it’s almost as if the infrastructure and various industries had been destroyed in a conflict situation,” he said.

Park pinpointed the perils of a sudden collapse of the North Korean regime, and the acute challenges that would ensue. “The headaches would be enormous. Regime collapse in Pyongyang is South Korea’s nightmare scenario. You would have 21 million North Koreans with a low level of skills. On top of that, they live in the most closed, economically isolated country in the world. What are you going to do with them?”

However, Pyongyang has an upper hand of sorts at the moment, according to Park, because of Beijing and Seoul’s specific policies to enhance economic ties with North Korea. “North Korea is in an advantageous position right now, despite the fact that without strategic aid from and

economic cooperation with China, and humanitarian assistance from South Korea, it would be a failed state,” Park observed.

Both Beijing and Seoul now view North Korea as an extension of domestic priorities, Park observed. For the former, stability on its borders is required to thwart interruptions to sustained internal economic development. For the latter, closing the gap in economic disparity is considered pivotal to the future of the Korean peninsula.

Unfortunately for North Korea, noted Park, such huge South Korean investment is viewed with caution as “political contamination” is seen to accompany large-scale investment from the South. Revelations about the wealth of South Korea would highlight the failure of the North Korean system, undermining the legitimacy of the Kim Jong Il regime.

With respect to Japan, a unique feature of its relationship with North Korea is the unresolved issue of Japanese citizens whom the North Koreans abducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Japanese were abducted to train North Korean spies to masquerade as Japanese tourists in overseas assignments. Due to the lack of progress on this issue, Japan recently extended its sanctions on North Korea. While other countries appear to be progressing in their relations with the North, Park pointed out, Japan remains an anomaly.

Aside from the well-documented media reports of U.S. diplomatic efforts at resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, a key gap between the United States and the core regional countries remains underexamined. While Beijing and Seoul have already made the strategic decision to peacefully coexist with and economically engage North Korea, Washington remains adamant about the primacy of denuclearization.

“The nuclear issue was just a symptom of a larger malaise... There are many things going on under the surface of the Six-Party Talks.”—John Park



Oil resources are like “oxygen” to China, which has a “desperate need” for them.

U.S.-DPRK Diplomatic normalization and a peace treaty are all contingent upon full nuclear disarmament in the North, Park noted.

The Chinese Perspective

Park’s area of specialization extends beyond the Korean peninsula to include China. In its dealings regarding North Korea, Park noted, China carefully considers the broader picture of its foreign policy. “China feels that their early efforts with the Six-Party Talks has saved the U.S. a major headache,” he said, commenting that the Chinese are proud of their leadership in facilitating agreements with North Korea. However, Beijing feels somewhat let down by Washington as there were Chinese expectations that Washington would counsel Taiwan to tone down pro-independence activity, as evidenced in a December 2003 press conference between Bush and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.

At the moment, as Park points out, a top national priority for China is reaching a series of development goals by 2020, including an average yearly GDP of \$3,000 per capita. However, in China, there is a marked difference by region, as “different provinces act like different countries.” Certain provinces in China, such as Guangdong in the south, are economic powerhouses, while the area that abuts North Korea is “truly the rustbelt of Asia,” said Park. However, the porous China-North Korea border has made de facto normal trade relations and nascent market activity a reality in the northeastern corridor.

A key area of Park’s research is China’s energy security. Oil

resources are like “oxygen” to China, which has a “desperate need” for them, according to Park. He explained that the military competes with the government and the private sector for oil. “If there’s a sudden disruption with rumors of scarcity on the horizon, that would have a huge impact,” he remarked. China has been late in oil exploration, compared with other industrialized countries. Hence, it has not been able to access choice areas. As such, Park commented, we will see increasing Chinese oil exploration worldwide. In the interim, Beijing will continue to deepen its relations with countries like Sudan and Iran in an ongoing effort to fuel China’s economic rise. 🌐

CGI

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in Uganda, the World Bank and other donors provided for training in tailoring on a massive scale. “You end up with thousands of tailors without clients,” she said.

Bigombe noted the need to foster relations between communities, often deeply scarred, in post-conflict situations. Referring to the need to balance justice with reconciliation, she said, “The very people who were responsible for the deaths and destruction [in African conflicts] have been rewarded” in this process.

Collier cited a Ugandan radio show in which one of the callers, alarmed at the prospect of renewed conflict in Uganda, exclaimed “What we need is Betty Bigombe!”

Bigombe then highlighted the need for merit-based appointments and local familiarity with well-intentioned international or-

ganizations. When she was a government minister in Uganda, she recollected, “We didn’t even know the difference between NGOs and the UN.” 🌐

Minnesota Conference

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“It was extremely gratifying to talk about my paper to an ‘outside the Beltway’ audience,” she said. “I gained a fresh perspective on the issues with their interesting questions and comments.”

“There is an obvious hunger for information on this region on American campuses and I was glad USIP was able to meet some of these needs by providing expert analysis.” —Dina Shehata

Authoritarian Political Regimes in the Muslim World

USIP senior adviser to the Muslim world initiative Dina Shehata delivered a presentation on “Authoritarian Political Regimes in the Muslim World.” The talk examined current reasons for authoritarianism within the Arab and Muslim World at present. According to Shehata, Arab regimes did not democratize during the 1970s and 1980s because of enhanced oil revenues, which

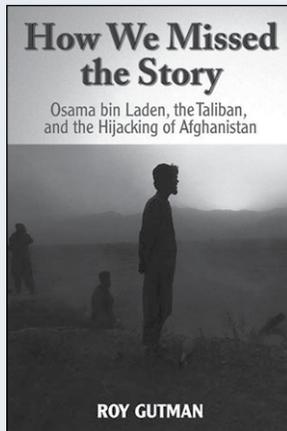
“It was extremely gratifying to talk about my paper to an ‘outside the Beltway’ audience. I gained a fresh perspective on the issues with their interesting questions and comments.”

—Mona Yacoubian

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Scholarship in Action



HOW WE MISSED THE STORY

Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Hijacking of Afghanistan

Roy Gutman

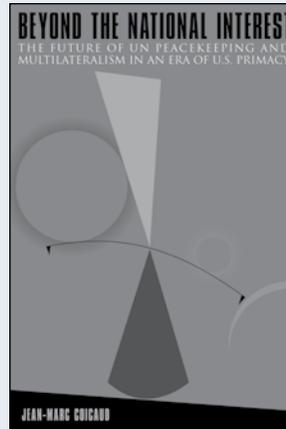
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—Lee H. Hamilton
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

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BEYOND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

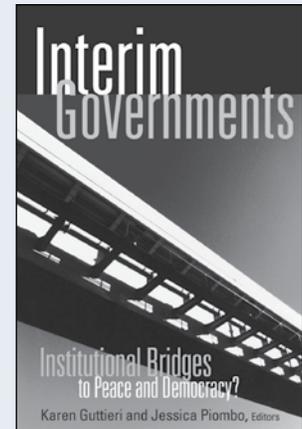
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INTERIM GOVERNMENTS

Institutional Bridges to Peace and Democracy?

Karen Guttieri and Jessica Piombo, editors

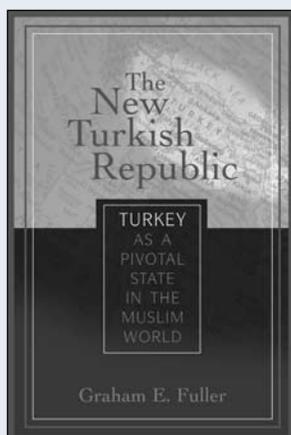
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Columbia University, and former assistant secretary-general, United Nations

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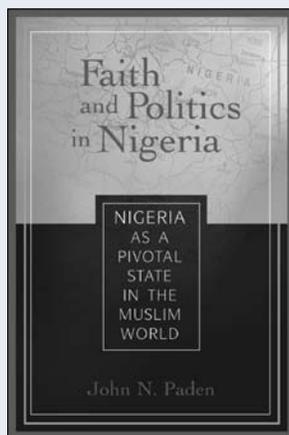
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John N. Paden

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—Darren Kew
University of Massachusetts, Boston

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Minnesota Conference

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allowed oil monarchies to co-opt opposition and influence neighboring countries during the Cold War. At present, she noted, two factors dictate against increasing democratization in the region: high oil prices and the U.S. preference of regional stability over democratic normalization.

Reflecting on the experience, Shehata noted, "There is an obvious hunger for information on this region on American campuses and I was glad USIP was able to meet some of these needs by providing expert analysis."

Simulation

On the last day of the conference, a group of thirty Century College students participated in a simulation based on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Students took on the roles of Israeli or Palestinian students in a fictional college in East Jerusalem that was experiencing rising levels of tension between students. A student facilitator met with each student group in an effort to promote dialogue on issues that the students were facing.

During the debrief, one student remarked that he "was able to understand how complex the problem in that part of the world is from a personal standpoint—something we just don't appreciate here." 🌐

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