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EXPLORING THE U.S. ROLE IN CONSOLIDATING PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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EXPLORING THE U.S. ROLE IN CONSOLIDATING PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2007

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Russ Feingold (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Feingold and Bill Nelson.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RUSSELL D., FEINGOLD, U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN

Senator FEINGOLD. I'll call the committee to order. Good morning.

Over the August recess, I traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda to better understand the complex challenges facing these two countries at this critical time. This hearing continues this learning process, with the aim of developing long-term, coordinated U.S. and international support for the negotiation and implementation of sustainable political agreements that will improve security, enhance and extend democracy, and create conditions for peace and prosperity in this strategically significant part of the world.

This hearing coincides with the visits of President Kabila of the DRC and President Museveni of Uganda, to Washington, DC, and without overlooking the rest of the region, it is on these two countries that I would like to focus on, given the critical stages at which they both stand.

In northern Uganda, two decades of violence between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda have forced an estimated 1.8 million people to seek refuge in squalid camps that lack access to basic resources, health care, and education. The Government of Southern Sudan has been hosting peace talks between delegations representing the Ugandan Government and the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) since July 2006, and, although slow and prone to disruption, those talks have improved security in the North and prompted renewed optimism for a legitimate and much-awaited peace.

Meanwhile, the recent escalation of violence in the DRC's restive eastern provinces prompted more than 100,000 people to flee their

homes last month alone, with rising insecurity preventing humanitarian agencies from reaching 150,000 displaced civilians.

Although not perfect, the current negotiations for northern Uganda are, in many ways, a model for the Congolese Government, as they indicate the potential of regionally led negotiations that are backed by the international community. While legitimate governments may be understandably reluctant to enter into negotiations with rebel groups, they should also take into account the possibility of securing a viable peace that addresses longstanding grievances and curtails heinous acts of violence.

After numerous fits and starts, the current peace negotiations for northern Uganda appear to be moving in the right direction. Certainly, a number of core issues still need to be resolved, including justice, livelihood development, security, and the rule of law. But the Juba process remains the best hope to end this 20-year conflict. However, in light of the harsh rhetoric and deadlines we have seen in the past from the Ugandan Government, including President Museveni, regional and broader international support in the form of consistent and coordinated high-level engagement will be essential to keep this process on track.

Across the border, the situation in eastern DRC is unfortunately moving in the reverse direction, with a significant deterioration since late August. Late last week saw a surge of militaristic rhetoric by the Congolese Government and these words may soon turn into action. Indeed, President Kabila has ruled out negotiating with renegade General Laurent Nkunda and, last week, ordered his troops to prepare to disarm rebels, "by force, if necessary." The United States and other donors must send a strong signal that a more militarized policy is simply not acceptable.

When I was in these countries recently, I visited camps for the internally displaced in both the eastern DRC and northern Uganda. The United States and others are funding the bulk of emergency assistance on which these people depend, and they are unquestionably grateful. But what they really want is peace. They want to be safe in their own homes, free to earn their own livelihoods, and supported by their government. I hope that this hearing will help generate ideas and commitments for greater U.S. contribution to the achievement of this vision.

On our first panel will be Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Jendayi Frazer, and USAID's Assistant Administrator for Africa, Katherine Almquist. They will discuss the administration's strategy for dealing with these countries, and also discuss the programs and resources the U.S. Government has in place to address the various challenges and contingencies facing this region.

On the second panel of nongovernmental witnesses, we will hear from Gayle Smith, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and formerly the Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council. We also get a from-the-ground report from CARE's Uganda Country Director, Kevin Fitzcharles, as well as a regional perspective, from Mauro De Lorenzo, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Thank you all for being here today and for contributing to this timely hearing on a collection of complex issues. I look forward to hearing your testimony and asking you some questions about how

the United States can engage more actively and effectively to consolidate peace and democracy in this region.

And, Ms. Frazer, seeing as you successfully got through the rain traffic in Washington right on time, you may deliver your statement.

STATEMENT OF HON. JENDAYI FRAZER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ambassador FRAZER. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Chairman Feingold, for inviting me to testify here today on the situation in the African Great Lakes.

I appreciate the concern and interest your travel to the region last August showed. We are keenly aware of the urgency of the situation in eastern Congo, including the potential impact of that situation on Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. I have a longer written statement, and ask that it be submitted for the record.

Senator FEINGOLD. Without objection.

Ambassador FRAZER. Thank you.

Throughout this administration, we have been actively implementing a long-term strategy for lasting peace in Central Africa. Ending the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo has required the direct and sustained effort of President Bush and Secretary Rice to try to build a regional approach to that conflict, including President Bush's meeting in 2002 in New York with President Mbeki, bringing together Presidents Kabila and Kagame in many subsequent meetings, as well as many calls by Secretary Rice to regional leaders.

Our efforts are focused on building democratic and prosperous countries to prevent future conflicts, countries with the capacity to protect the sovereignty of their own borders. And we are also continuing to focus on building democratic institutions and regional security mechanisms for conflict resolution in the region. Our challenges today must be considered in the context of how far we have come since 2001.

Our political commitment and our partnership, especially with South Africa, were critical factors in affecting the withdrawal of all foreign occupying armies from the Congo. The Lusaka peace process, culminating in the Sun City Accord, provided a framework for the Congo's transition to democracy.

We're also working multilaterally, taking the lead in the United Nations Security Council, and, of course, the United States is one of the largest contributors of the United Nations Mission to the Congo (MONUC). We have financed many of the mechanisms that promoted the success of the Sun City Accord.

I, myself, went to Kinshasa to observe the first round of the national elections, and was a member of the Presidential delegation led by Secretary Chao to President Kabila's inauguration. And so, the first long-term strategy is, in fact, to build these democratic-capable states. And it was important to conflict resolution in the region for the Government of the Congo to be legitimized through democratic election.

In terms of building regional security mechanisms the Tripartite Process is our effort to initiate confidence-building mechanisms

among the former Great Lakes belligerents. And we continue to pledge our lasting commitment to stability and good neighborly relations in the Great Lakes.

Last month, ministers from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda met, as a Tripartite Plus, with Burundi's participation, Joint Commission in Kampala. We have also facilitated the coming together of the Defense Ministers, the Chiefs of Defense staff, and the Intelligence Ministers of those four countries to try to again build this regional security mechanism and to establish greater confidence.

When the ministers came together in Kampala, they reaffirmed their core mission to end the threat of regional peace and security from negative forces and agreed to redouble their efforts to achieve that objective. And, before going into more specific details, I'd like to talk very briefly about Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, in terms of the democratic countries.

Our efforts in Burundi were key in facilitating the peace process. Following direct National Assembly elections on July 4, 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza was elected President. Burundi's young democracy recently weathered a parliamentary crisis and overcame a break in negotiations with its one remaining major rebel group, the FNL. My deputy, James Swan, visited Burundi in September to underscore our commitment to the peace process and democratic reform, and I've met with the Burundian Foreign Minister many times, but, again, most recently on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly meeting last month.

Rwanda has made enormous strides in overcoming the legacy of its devastating 1994 civil war and genocide. It has become a very reliable partner in the promotion and economic growth in central Africa, and an important contributor to African peacekeeping.

The recent adoption of a law expanding the scope of political parties to operate, and reforms that address the judiciary's substantial backlog of genocide-related cases, are noteworthy positive developments. Our efforts to encourage dialog among Great Lakes neighbors has paid off in visits between senior officials, including a recent visit of a Rwandan Foreign Minister, Murigande, to Kinshasa, and Presidents Kagame and Kabila meeting on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly last month.

In Uganda, progress toward peace in recent years has allowed hundreds of thousands of northerners to return to their homes. Not too long ago, the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, wreaked havoc on the North and forced millions of northern Ugandans to flee to IDP camps. Prospects for peace were bleak in this conflict, which lasted almost a generation.

I am pleased that the Government of Uganda and the LRA have made significant progress in peace talks, and we have strongly supported this African-led effort in which the Government of Southern Sudan and former Mozambique President Chissano have played key roles. There is much to be done, but security is improved and over 400,000 people are returned home and more are poised to return—and so, there's been significant progress.

We are committed to working to help the parties conclude the remaining agreements necessary when they resume talks in Juba in the coming weeks. My Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution, Tim-

othy Shortley, soon will attend those talks to ensure that our views are heard. We are pleased that the Government of Uganda has already taken advantage of the reduction in hostilities to launch its peace recovery and development plan designed to address the North's development needs in a systematic, coordinated manner.

I went to Uganda in early September, and we look forward to continuing to work with President Museveni on these difficult issues.

The Juba peace talks continue to provide the best opportunity for all parties involved to bring the 20-year conflict to an end, but the U.S. Government will not support an open-ended peace process that drags on indefinitely. And, for this reason, we look forward to the resumption of the peace talks in the coming days. And, in October 2005, after being forced out of northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, the LRA has relocated to Garamba Park, in eastern DRC, and we are pleased that the Congolese Government has also stated that the LRA is not welcome in Garamba Park and should not expect to stay there indefinitely.

Congo, as well, has seen dramatic progress. The historic 2006 elections, the first democratic election since 1960, represent the best chance in a generation to overcome a legacy of violence and malfeasance and rebuild a nation that has suffered 4 million deaths in the last 10 years.

Because of the multitude of problems the people of the Congo face, and the sheer vastness of their country, a nation the size of Western Europe with 300 miles of paved road, it may be easy for us to lose sight of how far we have actually come.

We are working with this new government, democratically elected by the people, to forge an effective partnership in our efforts to bring peace, stability, and democracy to Central Africa.

Our short-term approach, or immediate approach, to the eastern Congo crisis focuses on four critical areas: Extending state capacity, including the ability for the Government of Sudan to secure its borders and to deliver services to its people, and to—most importantly—to protect civilians; supporting a common and more effective approach to security sector reform and demobilization activities and reintegration (DDRR), and training for the Congolese Armed Forces, FARDC; promoting intercommunal dialog and supporting authorities in eastern Congo to address local protection, social, and economic needs; and, finally, supporting Congolese U.N. and civil society efforts to protect vulnerable populations and end human rights abuses and crimes against humanity—in particular, the epidemic of sexual and gender-based violence. We're working very, very closely with the government and with MONUC in this area.

I directed Mr. Shortley to lead our efforts to—in the persistent instability in the East, particularly dealing with the negative forces, the FDLR, LRA, and ADF. He is now also working intensely to resolve the crisis in North Kivu. He has met with Congolese officials, MONUC political and military leadership, and European partners in the Congo, New York, and Washington.

Following interagency discussions, we are implementing a plan to promote stability on a variety of fronts. In addition, I have directed Embassy Kinshasa to establish a field presence in Goma. I

hope USAID team on the ground will increase our visibility and effectiveness and allow us to participate as international observers to the Government of Congo and MONUC's efforts to disarm militias and negative forces in the East.

As you know, Congolese President Kabila is visiting the United States this week, and will meet with President Bush on Friday. Our goal is for this meeting to advance the creation of a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Central Africa that can be an engine of growth for the continent.

In conclusion, we must recognize the tremendous progress made in the Great Lakes in the last 7 years, as well as the serious challenges that remain. Active U.S. diplomacy addresses regional aspects of the residual conflicts, as well as internal domestic and communal factors. We also have a robust assistance program in the region, and we will continue to work closely with South Africa, with the immediate neighbors, with the United Nations and our European partners to address and end the crisis in eastern Congo.

I am pleased to respond to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Frazer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JENDAYI E. FRAZER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

I would like to thank you, Chairman Feingold and members of the committee for inviting me to testify here today on the situation in the African Great Lakes. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the concern and interest you personally have shown by your travel to the region last August. I share your concern that the continuing instability and the recent spike in violence in parts of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has forced hundreds of thousands of Congolese from their homes and many of them to seek refuge in neighboring states. We are keenly aware of the urgency of the situation in eastern Congo, including the potential impact of that situation on Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. I would like to brief you on our efforts to resolve it, including intensive engagement with key regional leaders in the field in New York, during the recent General Debate of United National General Assembly and upcoming discussions here in Washington.

We have a good story to tell. Throughout this administration, we have been actively implementing a strategy for lasting peace in Central Africa. When we started our work, more than six national armies were engaged in a regional war waged on the territory of the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose population became its greatest victims. Ending that conflict required the direct and sustained effort of President Bush and Secretary Rice, including the President's meeting in 2002 in New York with Presidents Kabila and Kagame, not to mention numerous calls by the Secretary to all of the regional leaders involved in or influential to ending the conflict. We still face many grave challenges in the region today, but I believe today challenges must be considered in the context of how far we have come in our efforts to promote lasting stability in Central Africa.

The United States is committed to end the conflict in northern Uganda through the Juba peace process and to bring real demonstrable benefits of peace to the people of Uganda.

REGIONAL BACKGROUND

The road from the regional conflict of 1998–2002 to today is important when we look at the situation in Central Africa. The United States played a key role in the diplomacy that secured the withdrawal of foreign armies from the Democratic Republic of Congo to the current situation in Central Africa. The Lusaka Peace Process, culminating in the Global and Inclusive Agreement—the "Sun City Accord"—provided a framework for the Congo's transition to democracy. Throughout this process, the United States played a hands-on role. We urged the parties to the peace table and coaxed them to stay there. Our political commitment and our prestige were critical factors in effecting the withdrawal of all foreign occupying armies from the Congo. We took the lead in the United Nations Security Council, and, of course, as one of the largest contributors to the United Nations Mission to the Congo (MONUC). We financed the Joint Verification Commission established under the

Lusaka Accord and the Third-Party Verification Mechanism of the 2002 Pretoria Agreement. We provided the initial support to launch the Congolese Independent Election Commission. I went to Kinshasa to observe both rounds of national elections and was a member of the Presidential delegation led by Secretary Chao to President Kabila's inauguration.

In launching the Tripartite Process, we initiated confidence-building measures among the former Great Lakes belligerents, and we pledged our lasting commitment to stability and good neighborly relations in the Great Lakes. Relations among the neighbors have come a long way since we organized the first meeting in 2004. Recent visits and meetings among regional leaders from Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda, undertaken without the facilitation of the United States, are a testament to our success in initiating lasting dialog among former enemies.

Ministers from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda met as the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission in Kampala, Uganda most recently on September 15–17. As usual, the United States Government served as the facilitator.

The Ministers reaffirmed the core mission of the Tripartite Plus to end the threat to regional peace and security from Negative Forces, and agreed to redouble efforts to achieve that objective. They agreed on the importance of accelerating integration of Congolese Armed Forces in order that they may act against Negative Forces and assure the security of the local population. Member delegations appealed to the United Nations Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to intensify efforts to work with Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) to eliminate the Negative Forces through full application of its mandate.

All delegations expressed concern about deteriorating security conditions in eastern Congo, in particular the destabilizing roles of former General Laurent Nkunda and the ex-FAR/Interahamwe. All delegations committed to support the DRC in its efforts to end the violence and reduce the regional security threat of these and other Negative Forces in eastern Congo.

We welcome the increasing number of high-level bilateral exchanges among Tripartite Plus member countries. These include the September 7–8 summit between DRC President Joseph Kabila and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the September 3–4 visit by Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Dr. Charles Murigande to Kinshasa to meet with his counterpart, the DRC Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, and meetings of senior officials at many regional fora, including the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the East African Community (EAC), and the Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL).

I would like to note that The Great Lakes Contact Group, whose members include the European Union (EU), France, the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands and the United States, was created to support Tripartite Process efforts to normalize regional relations and address the threat of negative forces. We will host the next meeting of the Contact Group in Washington on November 16.

I would also emphasize that our efforts, regionally and through a range of bilateral assistance programs, are focused on building inclusive, democratic, and economically successful countries in the region so as to prevent future conflicts in the region as well. Even as we work urgently to address the legacies of past conflicts, we continue to give our attention to building democratic institutions and equitable economic growth.

Now, let me speak briefly about Burundi and Rwanda before focusing my remarks on Uganda and the Congo.

BURUNDI

Our efforts were key in facilitating the peace process in Burundi. There were National Assembly direct elections on July 4, 2005, and Pierre Nkurunziza was elected as President of Burundi on August 19, 2005. Burundi's young democracy recently weathered a parliamentary crisis and overcame a break in negotiations with its one remaining major rebel group. My Deputy James Swan visited Burundi in September to underscore our commitment to the peace process and democratic reform. I met with the Burundian Foreign Minister several weeks ago in New York on the margins of the General Assembly. We welcomed the newly democratic Burundi into the Tripartite Commission, renaming it the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission, in September 2005, and have been encouraged by Burundi's performance as a Great Lakes neighbor. As a post-conflict democracy, Burundi is already taking on a larger role in the international community by offering to contribute troops to African Union peacekeeping efforts in Somalia.

RWANDA

Rwanda has become a very reliable partner in the promotion of economic growth in Central Africa and an important contributor to African peacekeeping. Rwanda has made enormous strides in overcoming the legacy of its devastating 1994 civil war and genocide. Our relationship has helped Rwanda to enhance its security through regional cooperation. We work consistently with the Government of Rwanda to encourage balance among its goals of internal security, democracy, protection of human rights, and economic development. We are encouraged by Rwanda's economic success and take pride in Rwanda's commitment to peacekeeping in Darfur. Assisting the Rwandan Government to bolster its ability to rule justly and fairly, to provide basic services for its people, and to foster economic growth are key U.S. priorities. We support good governance programs and programs that strengthen civil society. The recent adoption of a law expanding the scope for political parties to operate and reforms that address the judiciary's substantial backlog of genocide-related cases, are noteworthy positive developments. Our Embassy continues to engage the Government to build a more constructive relationship with the media. In promoting regional security, our efforts to encourage dialogue among Great Lakes neighbors have paid off in visits between senior officials, including a recent visit of the Rwandan Foreign Minister to Kinshasa. We continue to encourage Rwanda to play a positive role in regional efforts to resolve peacefully the situation in North Kivu. Last week Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Karan K. Bhatia hosted the second high-level meeting under the United States-Rwanda Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.

UGANDA

In Uganda, progress toward peace in recent years has allowed hundreds of thousands of northerners to return to their homes. Not too long ago, the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, wreaked havoc on the North, and forced millions of northern Ugandans to flee to internally displaced persons camps for peace and security. Prospects for peace were bleak in this conflict, which lasted almost a generation.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Government of Uganda and the LRA have made significant progress in peace talks. The United States has strongly supported this African-led effort, in which the Government of Southern Sudan and former Mozambican President Chissano have played key roles. There is much to be done, but as security has improved under the cessation of hostilities, 400,000 formerly displaced people have now returned home. In addition, more are poised to return. It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of this development for the people of Uganda, and for regional stability in general. Uganda's "peace dividend" is most visible in the North, where my newly appointed Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution, Timothy Shortley, recently traveled. Homes are being rebuilt, commerce is starting up, security is present, and hope is evident.

We are not resting. We are committed to working to help the parties conclude the remaining agreements necessary when they resume talks in Juba in the coming weeks. My Senior Advisor for Conflict, Timothy Shortley, soon will attend the talks in Juba to ensure that our views are taken into account. We are pleased that the Government of Uganda is already taking advantage of the reduction in hostilities to launch the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan, which is designed to address the North's development needs in a systematic, coordinated manner. The Government of Uganda's pledge to provide 30 percent of all costs associated with the reconstruction of northern Uganda is a substantial commitment. But let there be no misunderstanding: The northern Uganda peace process has made an unmistakable difference to the lives and prospects for over a million people. Uganda is a different place than it was only a few years ago. Securing the gains through the successful and timely resolution of the talks and ongoing support for the reconstruction process is absolutely crucial.

The United States has been actively engaged in promoting this progress. I personally traveled to Uganda in early September, and we look forward to welcoming President Museveni for a meeting with President Bush on October 30 to discuss northern Uganda, peace, reconstruction, and development issues, and other bilateral and regional topics.

Fighting in northern Uganda between the Ugandan Government and the LRA has continued for more than 20 years. The LRA terrorized northern Ugandans, forcing as many as 1.8 million to live in internally displaced persons camps for their own protection. Since June 2006, however, the Government of Southern Sudan has been brokering peace talks between the Ugandan Government and the LRA. In late August 2006, the parties agreed to a "cessation of hostilities" to move toward a cease-fire agreement. There have been no LRA attacks in Uganda for more than a year.

In 2005, the International Criminal Court indicted five of the top LRA leaders for war crimes, one of whom was subsequently killed in a Ugandan military operation.

The Juba peace talks between the Ugandan Government and the Lord's Resistance Army are scheduled to resume in early November in Juba, Southern Sudan. The talks, which have faced a number of starts and stops in the past year will resume shortly and continue to provide the best opportunity for all parties involved to bring the 20-year conflict to an end. I have stated repeatedly that the U.S. Government will not support an open-ended peace process, and for this reason, we look forward to the resumption of the peace talks in the coming days. The U.S. Government supports fully the African-led negotiating team, and we will continue to provide them with encouragement and support. We are fully confident in the negotiation team and expect it to continue to make progress. We will continue to stress, to all involved, that their commitment to the peace process should be full-time.

In October 2005, after being forced out of northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, the LRA relocated to Garamba Park in eastern DRC. The Congolese Government has stated that the LRA is not welcome in Garamba Park and should not expect to stay there indefinitely. Cooperation between regional leaders has been, and will continue to be, a crucial element of ending the conflict.

In northern Uganda, there is regular interaction between U.S. Embassy officials, U.S. Government officials and key participants from the Ugandan Government, African observers, donors, and Government of Southern Sudan officials. The U.S. Government has provided expertise and financial support to negotiators from the Government of Uganda, including providing funding for nationwide consultations on accountability and reconciliation. The U.S. Government has worked with the U.N. Special Envoy for LRA-Affected Areas, Joachim Chissano, African observers, and the Ugandan Government to coordinate public messages in support of the peace process. At the request of the Ugandan Government and the Special Envoy, the U.S. Government issued a statement in February expressing support for the Juba venue and Government of Southern Sudan mediator Riek Machar, which helped keep the talks on track.

In August, my Senior Advisor Shortley traveled to Uganda and met with government officials, local leaders, and displaced persons. His trip focused on the Juba talks, the return of displaced people to their areas of origin, and ongoing reconciliation and recovery efforts. He worked to help the parties minimize gaps between their positions, to maximize opportunities in the Juba Peace Process, and to encourage the Ugandan Government to launch its Peace, Recovery, and Development plan. He emphasized the importance of establishing a clear and reasonable timetable for the peace process, and the need to restructure assistance programs to address the needs of people who are returning home. In September, he also accompanied me on my trip to Uganda. We discussed the peace process with Ugandan President Museveni and stressed the need for a speedy peace agreement. Our visits helped explain U.S. policy and our engagement in the region. We were impressed with how the situation is improving.

Our goals and efforts in northern Uganda are to support the African-led peace process between the Ugandan Government and the Lord's Resistance Army; ease the effects of the conflict on people in the North; ensure the people of northern Uganda receive the development that conflict denied them for a generation; and emphasize to all participants that the peace process is not open-ended.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In Congo, as well, there has been dramatic progress in recent years. Congo's historic 2006 elections, the first democratic elections since 1960, represent the best chance in a generation to overcome a legacy of violence and malfeasance and rebuild a nation that has suffered 4 million deaths in the last 10 years.

Because of the multitude of problems the people of the Congo face and the sheer vastness of their country—a nation the size of Western Europe with no more than 300 miles of paved road—it may be easy for us to lose sight of how far we have come. Indeed, with the Congo we have a great distance yet to go, and it is vital that we remain fully engaged in assisting the Congolese and their international partners in addressing the enormous challenges that remain. What is new, and what we—along with many other friends of Congo—have helped make possible, is a legitimate government democratically elected by the people. We are hopeful that this government will be an effective partner in our efforts to bring peace, stability, and democracy to Central Africa, and a variety of USAID and DRL assistance programs have the goal of assisting in this process.

In order to respond to the current humanitarian and security crisis in eastern Congo, I directed Mr. Shortley to take the lead in expanding and intensifying imple-

mentation of our strategy to resolve the crisis in North Kivu. He has met with government officials, U.N. Organization Mission to DRC (MONUC) political and military leadership, and European partners in the Congo, New York, and Washington. Following interagency discussions, we are implementing a plan to promote the extension of state authority and intercommunal dialog, expand protection efforts for displaced persons and other vulnerable citizens, support the accelerated reintegration of demobilized combatants, and expand U.S presence in the East. We are also expanding our efforts to train Congolese military to uphold human rights and conduct disciplined and effective security operations. This training will underpin diplomatic efforts in the East to neutralize renegade military units and foreign armed groups. Mr. Shortley is departing Friday to return to the DRC where he will meet with senior government officials and travel to the East with MONUC to identify next steps in our diplomatic efforts to bring peace, stability, and justice to eastern DRC. He will continue on to Rwanda to discuss efforts to neutralize the ex-FAR and Interhamwe.

To accelerate this transformation, at my direction, Embassy Kinshasa is in the process establishing a field presence in Goma. State and USAID personnel are expected to begin the staffing process. The presence of this team on the ground will increase our visibility and effectiveness. It will also provide a staffing level that will allow us to participate as international observers to the GDRC and UN/MONUC's efforts to disarm militias and negative forces in the East. Our approach in the East focuses on four critical areas:

- Extending state authority by strengthening civilian institutions through the decentralization process and preparing for local elections in 2008.
- Supporting a common and more effective approach to Security Sector Reform (SSR) and DDRRR activities, and simultaneously supporting specialized security training for the FARDC (e.g., operational training of the FARDC integrated brigades).
- Promoting intercommunal conflict resolution and supporting provincial and local authorities in eastern Congo to address the protection, social, and economic needs of the population.
- Supporting Congolese, U.N., and civil society efforts to protect vulnerable populations and end impunity, human rights abuses, and crimes against humanity in eastern DRC, in particular the epidemic of sexual- and gender-based violence.

Congolese President Kabila is visiting the United States this week and will meet with the President on Friday. Ugandan President Museveni will be here next week. Our goal is for these meetings to advance the creation of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Central Africa that can be an engine of growth for the continent.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we must recognize the tremendous progress made in the Great Lakes in recent years as well as the serious challenges that remain. Active U.S. diplomacy addresses regional aspects of the residual conflicts as well as internal domestic and communal factors. We also have a robust assistance progam in the region, which my colleague from USAID will now describe.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you about the critical issued facing the Great Lakes.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary, for your testimony.

And now we will go to Ms. Almquist.

STATEMENT OF HON. KATHERINE ALMQUIST, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR AFRICA, AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. ALMQUIST. Thank you, Chairman Feingold. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss USAID's contribution to consolidating peace and democracy in the Great Lakes region.

My testimony will add to that of Assistant Secretary Frazer, who has provided the subcommittee information on the USG strategy and considerable contribution to the consolidation of peace and democracy in the Great Lakes.

The countries of the Great Lakes region in Africa are linked by ecological landscapes that contain some of the most important biodiversity in the world, and by bountiful and lucrative natural resources that fuel economy and trade, but also by militias that owe allegiance to ethnic groups that transcend national boundaries, and by refugees in IDPs who have sometimes traveled hundreds and thousands of miles across borders to flee violence.

As history has shown, these linkages ensure that violence in one country is not contained by borders and will spread to engulf all or part of the region if not stopped. Our strategy to address fragility in the Great Lakes takes into account this regional dynamic and seeks to leverage the resources we have available to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Given the current importance of the events in northern Uganda and eastern Congo, I will focus the majority of my remarks on these two countries, and request that my longer written testimony be included in the record.

The cessation of LRA attacks in northern Uganda more than a year ago, and ongoing peace negotiations between the Government of Uganda and the LRA, have encouraged IDPs to move home, or closer to home. More than 920,000 IDPs in northern Uganda have voluntarily left the camps. If peace negotiations make further progress, we anticipate a considerable increase in IDP returns, especially this November and December, because it is during these months that grasses used to build thatched roofs mature.

Anticipating and responding to improving conditions, USAID has shifted increasing amounts of its resources to the North. The amount of USAID's resources allocated to the North has increased steadily from $77 million in 2005, to $84 million in 2006, and to $106 million in 2007. Over half of this assistance in 2007 is long-term development assistance.

Further evidence of USAID's commitment to the reconstruction and reintegration of the North is the opening of our field office in Gulu in June 2007.

Building upon these successes, and recognizing the enormity of the challenge ahead for northern Uganda, USAID is committed to working with the Government of Uganda to bring solid and lasting stability to the North. USAID's strategy for northern Uganda includes support for the Government of Uganda's national Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for northern Uganda, or the PDRP. The first objective of the PRDP is to consolidate state authority. To support this objective, USAID is funding programs to increase the Ugandan Government's capacity at the local level, including the ability to deliver services to its people.

The second objective is to rebuild and empower communities, which USAID is supporting through its health and education programs.

The third objective is to revitalize the economy, which USAID is supporting through livelihoods and agriculture programs that will reach over 60 percent of all people in north and central Uganda.

The fourth objective of the PRDP is peace-building and reconciliation, which USAID is supporting through radio programs to inform northerners about the peace process and assistance available

in return areas, conflict resolution, and reintegration of former combatants.

Now turning to eastern Congo, recognizing that eastern Congo's continued insecurity and weak governance is destabilizing for the region and threatens to undermine the progress being made in the DRC as a whole, USAID has also increased its focus on both humanitarian and development resources to the East as part of a broader stabilization effort.

In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, USAID has provided an average of over $120 million in development and humanitarian assistance to the DRC, with an average of $80 million per year allocated to the East. Over 25 percent of this assistance to the East is longer term development assistance.

USAID's strategy is based upon the premise that, to contribute to stability in Central Africa, the newly elected government must uphold the rule of law as embodied in the country's new constitution, and deliver tangible results and services to the Congolese people. Security-sector reform and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs for former combatants, and livelihoods are a critical part of this development process. Gender-based violence is also a critical component of this strategy, with USAID programs providing medical care, psychosocial support, and legal referral, where appropriate.

USAID is using the additional $15 million in supplemental funds provided by the Congress to reinforce our current strategy to fund timely and critical interventions to stabilize the eastern Congo. Supplemental funding will focus on fostering dialog and agreements among key leaders and reducing conflict, particularly in North and South Kivu. This dialog will be bolstered by "stabilization centers" in eastern Congo that will strengthen existing democracy centers USAID established in 2004. Supplemental funding is also being allocated for reintegration programs for ex-combatants. These programs will provide livelihood options, equipment, and training to willing former arms carriers or combatants that voluntarily put down their guns. This program is already taking advantage of a fragile window of stability in Ituri and northern Katanga. That's also the worst militia fighting and population displacements in the Congo, and will move to North Kivu as soon as there is security and the combatants have entered the demobilization process.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a potential leader in sub-Saharan Africa because of its central location and vast array of natural resources. USAID has committee significant resources and achieved significant results in the Congo, and will continue to support the broader USG goals of peace and stability in this country and in the region.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Almquist follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. KATHERINE J. ALMQUIST, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR AFRICA, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC

Chairman Feingold, Ranking Member Sununu, and other members of the Subcommittee on African Affairs, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss USAID's contribution to consolidating peace and democracy in the Great Lakes region. My testimony today will add to that of Assistant Secretary

Frazer who has provided the subcommittee information on the USG strategy and considerable contribution to the consolidation of peace and democracy in the Great Lakes region. I will provide you more detail on USAID's support to this goal, focusing on humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, reintegration, and development assistance in the Great Lakes region.

The countries of the Great Lakes region in Africa are linked by ecological landscapes that contain some of the most important biodiversity in the world, by bountiful and lucrative natural resources that fuel economy and trade, by refugees who have traveled hundreds and thousands of miles across borders to flee violence, and by militias that owe allegiance to ethnic groups that transcend national boundaries. As history has shown, these linkages ensure that violence in one country is not contained by borders and will spread to engulf all or part of the region if not stopped. Our strategy to address fragility in the Great Lakes takes into account its regional dynamic and seeks to leverage the resources we have available to bring about peace and stability. Given the current importance of events in northern Uganda and eastern Congo, I will focus the majority of my remarks on these two countries.

NORTHERN UGANDA

Since 1986, protracted conflict between the Government of Uganda (GOU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has created a complex humanitarian situation in northern Uganda. This conflict has been marked by violent attacks against civilians, extensive displacement, and the abduction of children for forced conscription, labor, and sexual servitude. Prolonged conflict has had a dramatically destructive effect on the lives of virtually all citizens of northern Uganda and produced the fourth largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. At the height of the conflict in 2004, there were almost 1.8 million IDPs in northern Uganda. Some of these people have not returned home for 10 to 20 years. Some, born in camps, have never lived in their parents' homelands.

The cessation of LRA attacks more than a year ago, and ongoing peace negotiations between the GOU and LRA have encouraged IDPs to move home, or closer to home. More than 920,000 IDPs in northern Uganda have voluntarily left the camps. If peace negotiations make further progress, we anticipate a considerable increase in IDP returns, especially this November and December, because it is during these months that grasses used to build and thatch roofs mature.

The possibility of reliable, long-term security has set the stage for an eventual end to the extreme suffering of residents of north-central Uganda, where despite gradual increases in food production and improved harvests, approximately 2.1 million people remain food insecure, and IDPs continue to depend upon food aid for nearly 50 percent of their nutritional requirements.[1] The enormity of this challenge cannot be underestimated. Reintegration and recovery will be taking place in a region that, according to President Museveni, "has consistently fallen behind the rest of the country within the realm of human development," and where "access to basic services is poor by national standards," resulting in a pervasive sense of alienation in the region. Sustainable reintegration and recovery will occur neither quickly nor easily.

Anticipating and responding to improving security conditions, USAID has shifted increasing amounts of its resources to the North. In 2007, USAID provided $106 million in assistance to northern Uganda, and a similar amount is intended to assist the North this year in support of the GOU's Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), which was released earlier this month. The amount of USAID's resources allocated to the North has increased steadily from $77 million in 2005 to $84 million in 2006, and $106 million in 2007. Over half of this assistance is long-term development assistance. Further evidence of USAID's commitment to the reconstruction and reintegration of the North is the opening of our field office in Gulu in June 2007. This office has already improved relationships with local government officials and community and religious leaders, and enables our team to better respond to northern Uganda's needs with timely and flexible programs. USAID Uganda, USAID Africa Bureau, and USAID DCHA Bureau have begun drafting a framework for transition from emergency assistance to recovery and development assistance. The goal is to ensure that proper resources are available to meet the changing conditions in northern Uganda. As needs shift from emergency care to programs that target recovery USAID will work to meet the needs as they arise with appropriate funding to appropriate partners to support sustainable returns.

[1] FEWS NET, August 2007.

Before discussing our current programs and preparations for significant IDP return and reintegration, I will briefly review USAID's history in Uganda, and then highlight the success of USAID's programs to date in northern Uganda.

USAID's History in Uganda

USAID has been providing assistance to Uganda since 1961, working hand in hand with partners in government and nongovernment sectors. In the 1960s, USAID programs focused on alleviating poverty, building the newly independent country, and helping to jump start its economy. More specifically, USAID programs worked to increase agricultural productivity, secondary school enrollment, and training of Africans to assume leadership positions in public service. In 1973, USAID suspended assistance due to the political and human rights problems associated with the dictatorship of Idi Amin.

In 1981, USAID reestablished its presence in Uganda after an 8-year hiatus. USAID/Uganda's 1981 interim strategy gave priority to short-term relief, recovery, and reconciliation issues. During the 1980s and 1990s, USAID's longer term development programs accomplished significant success in southern regions, in partnership with the GOU. USAID programs focused on rebuilding the economy; providing support for health programs, especially those focused on HIV/AIDS, and malaria; and basic education. Our programs have also provided support for strengthening democracy and governance, with a particular focus on building political party capacity and supporting decentralization. During this time, we also provided humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of vulnerable populations affected by conflict, especially in northern Uganda. In 2005, because of new dialogue between the GOU and LRA that inspired hope for peace, preceded by a sharp increase in the number of IDPs the year before, USAID significantly increased both development programs and humanitarian assistance. These programs are now assisting in the recovery and reintegration of IDPs and increasing stability in the North.

Results Achieved in Northern Uganda[2]

USAID's programs directly supported the Juba peace process through assistance to the GOU for the planning, design, and implementation of national consultations on accountability and reconciliation, a critical element of the on-going peace negotiations in Juba. Addressing the strong need for reconciliation among the Acholi population, USAID's programs provided essential services to 23,646 night commuters and survivors of abduction, enrolled 13,221 formerly abducted children in school or vocational training, and assisted 361 returnees (including 150 women) to live and work side by side with community members in 14 IDP camps in Gulu and Kitgum districts. Our programming supported 53 traditional cleansing ceremonies, in addition to holding 180 peace committees and the resolution of 2,537 local disputes using dialogue, mediation, agreements, and legal referrals. Our programs also facilitated 12 local radio programs carrying messages fostering intra-Acholi reconciliation.

With market and agricultural infrastructure destroyed throughout much of the North, food assistance is critical during the return process. In FY 2007, USAID provided over 64,000 MT of emergency food targeting 270,000 returnees in Gulu, Lira, and Pader districts, making the United States the largest contributor to the World Food Program in Uganda. To support the return process, USAID provided 270,000 resettlement packages of 3-month rations to IDPs returning home.

Improving health and education services is one of the most critical needs for IDPs as they transition to self-sufficiency. USAID protected 371,846 people through Indoor Residual Spraying to prevent malaria and distributed 78,039 insecticide treated nets. USAID's robust HIV/AIDS program has provided voluntary counseling/testing for HIV at 158 sites to over 140,000 people, assisted to prevent over 1,200 cases of mother-to-child transmissions of HIV, provided nearly 10,000 people with life-saving antiretroviral therapy and reached over 110,000 youth with HIV prevention messages in northern Uganda. These programs were implemented in coordination with our partners in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In addition, USAID trained over 8,000 teachers, in 1,762 primary schools across northern Uganda in improved student counseling and psychosocial support for war victims.

IDPs have cited water availability in areas of origin as a prominent factor influencing returns to home villages. As of August 2007, USAID and other humanitarian partners have increased the supply of potable water to IDP camps by 50 percent[3] since the height of the crisis. USAID reached more than 570,000 northerners with programs to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene. These programs include drill-

[2] For the last 18 months.
[3] According to OCHA.

ing and rehabilitating boreholes, installing water tanks and taps, constructing latrines and hand-washing facilities, and distributing hygiene kits both at IDP camps and in return areas.

Helping displaced people regain their livelihoods and their ability to support themselves and feed their families is critical to recovery in northern Uganda. USAID provided agriculture and food security assistance to nearly 800,000 people in northern Uganda including training, seed and agricultural inputs, and land tillage to increase land area for cultivation. USAID has also funded road rehabilitation to increase access to markets and to clear roads to villages that have been deserted for years, in some case for decades. Opening up these abandoned roads will not only enable IDPs to go home, but will also ensure access for the police to provide security to the area. USAID also provided livelihoods assistance including income-generating activities for returnees.

USAID is also working to promote commercial high value agriculture that supports small holders. USAID's programs supported a Ugandan company to procure 32,000 tons of sunflowers with a farm-gate value of $7 million mostly from smallholder farmers in Lira, Apac and Masindi. With these inputs, the programs launched four sunflower producer Savings & Credit Cooperatives in Lira and Apac districts with a total membership of 1,840 and combined assets of $9,500.00. Our programs worked to educate over 40,000 Ugandans in conflict-affected districts in a national savings mobilization campaign and assisted 12,000 small holders to open up their land for organic cotton production, which promises a guaranteed price and market through a public-private partnership with U.S. cotton company Dunavant. Recognizing the important economic, environmental, and cultural relationship between northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, USAID established three cross-border Conservation Landscapes for Peace with the Government of Southern Sudan.

Other important successes in northern Uganda facilitated by USAID include the dissemination of voter education messages, public dialogues and candidate debates to millions of citizens in IDP camps in the leadup to the February 2006 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. USAID also supported radio programming to increase information about return conditions and available assistance in areas to which IDPs were returning. USAID worked with the GOU to increase budget flexibility to meet the unique needs of displaced populations. As a result, local governments can now allocate up to 50 percent of their expenditures to locally determined projects, as compared with 10 percent in the rest of the country. Importantly, USAID developed and rolled out software to improve effective budget management, public expenditure tracking, and local government procurement, which will be particularly important for the success of the GOU's recently launched PRDP.

Meeting the Challenge Ahead

Building upon these successes and recognizing the enormity of the challenge ahead for northern Uganda, USAID is committed to working with the GOU to bring solid and lasting stability to northern Uganda. That means people in the north have to feel that their government is supporting them and that they have a stake in their country. This will require the government to deliver basic services to help people move back to areas they left more than a decade ago. This necessarily includes work on the justice sector. Stability and reintegration is about the restoration of livelihoods, so people can feel the pride of supporting themselves and their families. Reintegration and recovery is about working through the painful process of reconciliation with family, neighbors, and community members who have been pitted against each other and who must reconcile atrocities committed against each other. USAID is committed to funding programs in northern Uganda to achieve reintegration and recovery for northern Uganda with long-term development that will ensure that the stability now enjoyed in northern Uganda will benefit generations to come. These programs will need to collaborate regionally, with Southern Sudan in particular, as increasing economic ties between the two have contributed to significantly increased economic growth in northern Uganda.

USAID's strategy for northern Uganda is to support the GOU's National Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda (PRDP).

The objectives of the PRDP that USAID are supporting are as (1) consolidation of state authority, (2) rebuilding and empowering communities, (3) revitalization of the economy and (4) peace-building and reconciliation. Details under each objective are as follows:

(1) Consolidation of state authority

Increase the capacity of GOU administration to govern effectively, deliver essential services, and provide security for the population.

In support of this objective, USAID is sponsoring programs to build a more effective legislature, which will include training for MPs and staff so they can operate effectively in a multiparty Parliament and strengthen their engagement in anticorruption initiatives and with constituents, civil society, and local government. USAID is also providing support to local governments (particularly in the North) to become more accountable, by strengthening civil society and local engagement in anticorruption initiatives. In northern Uganda, USAID is disseminating messages to civil society to help community members know what their rights are and to ensure that their local-level political leaders are helping their communities.

(2) Rebuilding and empowering communities

Improved social service infrastructure and capacity of local government to provide basic services that increase the quality of life of the population.

USAID trains community outreach workers in treatment of tuberculosis and malaria, supports immunizations against childhood diseases, provides insecticide treated bed nets, and improves the quality of and access to family planning services. In addition, Uganda is a focus country for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). Through the Emergency Plan and PMI in Uganda, USAID and other government agencies collaborate with government, religious, and community-based institutions to deliver comprehensive prevention, care, and treatment for both diseases. These programs are working through the GOU's public health system, building capacity not only at district centers, but also at the parish level, thus enabling many returning IDPs to receive care at home similar to that which they were receiving while in IDP camps. USAID and HHS support health programs focusing on HIV and malaria across all of Uganda; however, a significant portion of this support is channeled through a program specifically for northern Uganda.

Additionally, USAID is improving the quality of basic education through support to teacher training, strengthening school management, and increased parental and community involvement. USAID will also continue to provide water assistance to return communities, and community access roads to enable IDPs to access their home villages. Community grants will assist returnees to build infrastructure based upon their own collective priorities.

Access to water, sanitation, and hygiene remains a significant concern across the Acholi and Lango subregions, particularly in areas of return that lack the services available in the IDP camps. USAID is working to extend water, sanitation, and hygiene programs to return areas by continuing to provide water assistance to communities of high return.

(3) Revitalization of the economy

Reactivation of the productive sectors with a focus on agriculture and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure with a focus on increasing cross-border economic trade.

After years of conflict which resulted in over 90 percent of the population being forcibly located to IDP camps, revitalizing the economy and jump starting agriculture is the key element to helping people regain self-sufficiency and USAID has several programs supporting this objective. USAID is providing agriculture and livelihoods support to return communities, reaching over 60 percent of the population of Acholiland (by 2009), including agricultural inputs and extension, training and equipment provision to establish off farm activities such as tailoring, carpentry, and beekeeping. Additionally, much of the community road rehabilitation work planned will be cash-for-work, thus resulting not only in improved infrastructure, but also in a badly needed infusion of cash into an economy that was until not long ago reliant largely on barter-only trade. This will include community-based livelihoods programs for the reintegration of excombatants and their families.

USAID is continuing its work with public private alliances, which leverages funds from private companies for important development programs. The alliance with the Dunavant Cotton Company, for example, will provide 12,000 farmers in northern Uganda with inputs and training to increase cotton and food crop production, in addition to a guaranteed cotton market. USAID assistance will increase and diversify commercial agricultural production and increase competitiveness in local and international markets. This will be accomplished by improving agricultural productivity and strengthening producer organizations, increasing access to credit and savings services for rural people, and ensuring greater food security. By increasing the production and marketing of food and cash crops, rural incomes will rise.

(4) Peace-building and reconciliation

Increase access to information and media, increase access to trauma counseling services, strengthen intra and intercommunity conflict resolution, and support to the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) plan.

USAID will provide support to address the social challenges in northern Uganda that have arisen as a result of fractured social relationships in order to resuscitate the peace-building and reconciliation processes. This will require putting in place mechanisms for rehabilitating the victims of war and reintegrating them into communities while strengthening the local conflict resolution mechanisms, and the relationship between civilians and government. USAID will support programs to provide a platform for ongoing reconciliation. Peace forums will be developed to facilitate relationships between citizens and the government, as well as among communities and individuals across the North. An important component of this program will be to increase access to accurate and reliable information, particularly regarding the Juba Peace Talks. Additionally, programs will focus on improving access to justice, including legal aid and dispute resolution, and increasing awareness of human rights and property rights.

In sum, significant USAID resources across all sectors, complimented by diplomatic and defense-related initiatives, will work synergistically and in partnership with the Government of Uganda and with other donors to continue to provide the social, economic, and political foundations for a lasting peace in northern Uganda.

EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is emerging from 15 years of protracted conflict, a conflict that involved nine neighboring countries, cost as many as 4 million lives and caused social and economic damage that will take generations to overcome. Recognizing that eastern DRC's continued insecurity and weak governance is destabilizing for the region and threatens to undermine the progress being made in the DRC as a whole, USAID has increased its focus on both humanitarian and development resources to the East as part of a broader stabilization effort. In FY 2006 and 2007, USAID has provided an average of over $120 million in development and humanitarian assistance to the DRC, with an average of $80 million per year allocated to the East. Over 25 percent of assistance allocated to the East is longer term development assistance.

The impact of the protracted instability in the DRC is far reaching. Poverty is widespread in the country, and the education and health care systems have eroded due to a lack of resources and looting. Throughout eastern DRC, insecurity hinders access to agricultural land and traditional markets. Gender-based violence (GBV) is rampant. The DRC has a vast supply of natural resources that has been a key source of conflict and exploitation for well over a century. If managed in a transparent manner and under a legal environment where laws are enforced, those resources could present an opportunity for economic growth that will benefit the population and provide an alternative to war. However, grossly inadequate infrastructure, a weak and ill-trained security apparatus and the legacy of generations of bad governance persist throughout the country. Major change will be required before the Congolese public gains confidence in its government.

Insecurity and conflict have resulted in major humanitarian crises across eastern DRC, with conflict and tension presently strongest in the Kivus. In 2007, North Kivu province witnessed the most significant population displacement in more than 3 years, with an additional 318,000 people displaced, bringing the total IDP population in North Kivu alone to 745,000.[4]

To respond to the humanitarian crisis in the East, the USG[5] has provided more than $683 million to support life-saving humanitarian activities in the DRC since 1999, in addition to the $311 million USAID has spent on development programs. In FY 07, USAID provided 33,822 metric tons of emergency food assistance. USAID has distributed emergency food rations to over 300,000 persons displaced by violence in the North Kivu. USAID has distributed emergency relief supplies to nearly 250,000 displaced persons in North Kivu, and maintains an emergency relief supply stockpile (for 100,000 people) in Goma, North Kivu province. Importantly, USAID has supported activities to improve access to isolated areas in eastern DRC, including humanitarian flights to transport relief personnel to conflict-affected areas and road rehabilitation.

USAID has supported emergency health interventions in the East, working through local structures to provide free access to 24-hour primary and maternal health care and referral services in temporary settlement areas. Throughout eastern DRC, USAID partners improved access to health care for more than 545,000 bene-

[4] OCHA estimates that in the DRC there are 1.1 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as well as 2.2 million former IDPs and refugees returning to their areas of origin that continue to require emergency assistance.

[5] Includes funds from entire USG, including State/PRM.

ficiaries. Programs focused on the restoration of primary health services, training of health staff, availability of essential medicines, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of health structures as well as roads and bridges for people to reach these facilities. In addition, food security and agriculture initiatives benefited more than 600,000 conflict-affected Congolese.

Assistance included distributions of seeds and farming and fishing equipment as well as training programs covering seed and soil conservation and marketing techniques. USAID also supported economic and market systems activities to ensure sustainable food security, benefiting more than 150,000 people through activities such as tailoring, banking, carpentry, and masonry.

In addition to USAID's important humanitarian work, which is directed mostly to eastern DRC, USAID's programs also seek to promote reconstruction, stability, and transformational development. Before discussing our current program, I will provide some background on the history of USAID's work in the Congo.

USAID's History in the Congo

USAID has had a continuous presence in the Congo since 1961 but our programs have had to remain flexible over the last 50 years due to chronic instability and periods of intense conflict. In 1964, USAID programs were directed at the development of a new role for the U.N. as coordinator of bilateral assistance activities; the implementation of a comprehensive economic stabilization program to contain inflation and the improvement of internal security through programs for military and police training. In subsequent years, programs also funded expatriate personnel to work with the Congolese Government to maintain administrative effectiveness until Congolese were trained.

In the 1970s the Congo became increasingly stable as the Mobutu regime managed to put down the insurrectionary movement of the 1960s. During the economic boom of the first half of the 1970s driven by high world prices for copper (the major export product), the USAID's assistance focused on transport infrastructure development. Most USAID financing was in the form of loans to support road, river, maritime and air transport.

The fall of world prices for copper in mid-1970s and poor economic policies adopted by the Government of the Congo eroded the capacity to respond to the basic needs of the population. In response to this situation, the aim of the USAID's assistance shifted to meeting the basic needs through development projects in health, nutrition, agriculture, rural development, human resources development, etc.

In late 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, due to the deepening economic crisis, other components were added to USAID-funded development assistance programs, these included balance of payment support (commodity import programs and P.L. 480 programs) to support the manufacturing sector and reduce food deficits; policy dialogue to encourage the adoption of sound fiscal and monetary policies; and support for private sector initiatives.

USAID's emphasis on economic development and policy reform continued into the early 1990. However, in June 1991 the Government of the Congo became 1 year in arrears of debt due to the U.S. Government. Brooke sanctions became effective restricting further development assistance to the country. A wind-down plan was being developed when in September 1991 the Congolese Armed Forces went on the rampage, looting industries and businesses.

As a result of the Government's inability to maintain order and security, the USAID Mission drastically reduced its presence in December 1991. Lacking sufficient staff, USAID shut down its development program in April 1992. USAID provided only humanitarian assistance until March 1996 when the mission was closed completely and humanitarian programs were managed from Washington. After Laurent Kabila came into power in May 1997, USAID reestablished its development assistance to the DRC with a small staff, and opened a full mission in 1998. USAID's programs focused on building democracy, stabilizing population growth and protecting human health, encouraging broad-based economic growth, and protecting the environment.

USAID's Current Program in DRC

The real opportunity for the DRC is a new, legitimate government; one at peace with its neighbors and poised to engage in sustainable development. Attaining this goal will also contribute significantly to peace in the region. USAID's strategy is based upon the premise that to contribute to stability in Central Africa, the newly elected government must uphold the rule of law as embodied in the country's new constitution and deliver tangible results to the Congolese people. Security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs for former combatants are a critical part of this development process.

USAID is supporting coordinated donor efforts to help provide access to basic services, build on democratic structure, and contribute to economic growth to help consolidate the democratic transition, thus demonstrating the results of the democratic process at the community level. Large flows of donor assistance and support are needed to capitalize on this opportunity and make the transition irreversible. Despite prolonged insecurity, successful, democratic elections in 2006 have resulted in the establishment of a new government. Insecurity persists, however, and civilian authorities are unable to operate effectively, especially in large parts of eastern Congo. USAID's strategy is focused on several key objectives, which are discussed below along with results.

Enhance Protection of Individuals From Physical Violence

Despite concrete gains in the area of peace and security, violence, notably Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a critical problem and an instrument of conflict. The authors of a recent U.N. report describe GBV in the DRC as the "worst they have ever seen." Ungoverned space in eastern DRC, coupled with the ongoing conflict fueled by armed militias and other negative forces, provide an environment in which the cycle of violence against women and children can perpetuate and poses serious threats to efforts to protect these vulnerable populations from sexual violence and abuse. Ongoing population displacement due to continued conflict puts individuals at increased risk for abuse and threatens to undermine progress achieved through USAID-supported interventions. In an environment of lawlessness that permits the Congolese Army and police as well as numerous rebel groups to act with impunity, rape is used as a weapon against local populations, with women and children continuing to be the most vulnerable. U.N. agencies indicate a 60-percent increase in reported rape cases in North Kivu province from August to September 2007, with 351 cases in September alone.

Since 2002, USAID has been supporting interventions that respond to GBV in eastern Congo and which address the immediate, medium, and longer term consequences of sexual violence for victims, their families, and communities. Programs help victims to resume their roles within families and communities and help to prevent new acts of GBV. USAID programs are designed around a holistic approach to GBV care and treatment, ensuring medical assistance (including fistula repair), psychosocial support, advocacy, sensitization, and socio-reintegration services, while promoting judicial support and legal referral when appropriate. To date, USAID has provided medical assistance to 45,000 survivors of sexual violence, and 70,000 have received counseling support.

Separation and Abandonment of Children

Child separation and abandonment has been a reality in DRC for many years, fueled by more than a decade of conflict, internal displacement, and a deteriorating economic situation. Since 2003, USAID has supported a program that aims to reintegrate separated and abandoned children (including former child-soldiers, street children, and IDPs) into their families and to reduce further separation and abandonment. The current program achieves reunification through family mediation; awareness-raising on the rights of the child; income generating activities for vulnerable families and children; training of parents, government social workers, and religious leaders; training and support to centers for street children, and; public media campaigns. USAID's child protection activities have resulted in the reunification of more than 6,000 children with their families, and extensive effort to prevent further separation through community support outreach and livelihoods activities.

Reintegrate Persons Affected by Crisis

USAID's program works with the Government of the DRC to provide support for the reintegration of former combatants in eastern DRC, to support the development of stable communities in areas of return, and the forging of links between communities and government. USAID has contributed to the reduction in hostilities in Ituri and Katanga, including the reintegration of 13,000 former combatants, with plans to reintegrate up to 5,700 more. Reintegration of former combatants includes livelihoods assistance, which provides training and or equipment necessary to begin a small enterprise either back on the farm or for other nonfarm activities.

Livelihoods

USAID is supporting the dissemination of disease-resistant stable crops such as cassava and plantain that have suffered a 50- to 100-percent reduction in yield in the last 10 years. The 3-year, $5 million DRC cassava program ensures the availability of 960,000 food rations annually nationwide, at less than $1 per ration; no other food assistance program is known to achieve this cost efficiency in the DRC. This DRC program is part of a regional initiative to combat the same diseases in

staple crops across several countries in Central Africa. The DRC's 18-month crop crisis control project has just been assured on-going funding by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Increase Access to Essential Services

USAID supports a package of integrated health sector services to increase access to and quality of primary health care and increase the capacity of national health programs and structures. While DRC is not a focus country, the U.S. Government HIV/AIDS activities in the DRC are part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and USAID and HHS work with the Government of the DRC to implement HIV/AIDS activities in prevention, care, and treatment and to build capacity in the DRC Ministry of Health (MOH). Under the Emergency Plan, USAID is combating HIV/AIDS through a regional approach, focusing activities on principle transport corridors across the Great Lakes that are important vectors of the disease. USAID support for strengthening routine immunizations has shown steady increases in terms of access and use of services, as is evidenced by the increase in vaccination coverage in program areas from 60 to 78 percent. Health programs are implemented throughout the DRC, with significant programming in the East.

Additionally, USAID is working to improve access to, and quality of, basic education, especially for girls, in the eastern DRC through innovative teacher training, distribution, and proper use of educational materials, and encouraging community participation in education. USAID is training over 1,000 teachers and education officials in participatory learning methods, and providing them with teacher guides, textbooks, and didactic materials. In addition, first and second grade teachers receive training in and lead their students through daily learning sessions in interactive radio instruction. This activity has resulted in a 35-percent increase in student achievement, and has increased enrollment and retention of students by 22 percent. Through USAID programs, over 107,000 students have access to learning kits and materials. In order to play a more active role in school decisionmaking, approximately 3,000 community members have received training in the development of income-generating activities, and in school administration and management. As a result, community groups have raised USD 31,390, most of which goes to supporting the schools in the communities and 1,249 parents now play an active role in school management committees.

Advance Democratic Governance

Building upon the success of the 2006 elections and installation of the new government, provincial governors, and provincial assemblies—an electoral processes for which USAID provided significant support—USAID is supporting the transformation of the Independent Electoral Commission into a permanent institution. USAID continues to support efforts to strengthen judicial independence, expand access to justice, build the capacity of new judiciary personnel, advocate for human rights, and support peaceful means to ease tension and manage conflict. U.S. assistance was instrumental in the preparation of new laws on magistrates and the passage of a law against sexual- and gender-based violence. Programs also focus on strengthening political party leaders, civic activists, elected local and national government and government officials to address the challenges inherent in the consolidation of good governance in a rebuilding state.

USAID is also supporting activities to clearly define the roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government while simultaneously working to create a legal framework for decentralization. Furthermore, the USAID is working with civil society organizations and media to build a more active and representative civil society.

Public/Private Partnerships

USAID is also working with large mining companies to promote transparent practices and reinvestment in communities. Global Development Alliances with three mining companies have leveraged USAID's $3.5 million investment to raise $10 million in funds from these companies to support 38 community infrastructure projects such as schools, clinics, markets, and water points. Nearly 2,000 families received support for agriculture activities, over 900 women are participating in microsavings and literacy programs and 252 small-scale miners were trained to begin new jobs and businesses.

Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE)

USAID is improving livelihoods for inhabitants of the Congo Basin while promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation. CARPE activities take place in 12 key biodiversity landscapes in seven countries: Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Equa-

torial Guinea, the DRC, and Gabon, with over half of its activities located in the DRC. Many of these landscapes are transboundary in nature and require consultation and cooperation among different national governments. CARPE also supports cross-cutting activities that serve the entire basin, such as monitoring of deforestation trends, natural resource governance, and harmonization of policies.

$15 Million Supplemental

In addition to the programs described above that address critical humanitarian and development problems in the East and other regions of the DRC, USAID is using the additional $15 million in supplemental funds provided by Congress to reinforce our current strategy to fund timely and critical interventions to stabilize the eastern DRC. These funds are being used to support stabilization activities, demobilization for former combatants, peace initiatives, and the consolidation of democratic gains in critical areas of eastern DRC, focusing on the Kivus where escalating tensions threaten to erupt into large scale conflict. USAID has maintained a temporary office in the east and will reinforce our presence in the east to respond to increasing insecurity, and vulnerability of the local population.

The supplemental will fund the following activities:

(1) Reconstruction and reintegration in North Kivu

In order to strengthen the scope and impact of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) activities in North Kivu, supplemental funds will be used to expand, accelerate, and complement DDR options for excombatants. Considerable flexibility is required in the programming of these funds given the uncertain timing of a breakthrough in dialogue leading to demobilization, the undetermined number of demobilizing combatants, as well as uncertainties regarding the timing of funding through the World Bank Program. First priority will be placed on a timely response to demobilization and reintegration requirements, modeled on successful activities in Ituri and Katanga. In order to create additional incentives for combatants to demobilize and return to communities in the Kivus, any remaining funding will be used to extend the reach of civilian institutions and extend U.S. presence, support community-based programs to restore basic services and provide opportunities for job creation, and address fundamental needs for nonviolent conflict mitigation as a means of achieving post-conflict reintegration. Should the FDLR demobilize in great numbers, USAID will cooperate with the World Bank regional Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) program to support needs on both sides of the border as the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, Repatriation or Resettlement (DDRRR) process takes these excombatants across the border to reintegrate in Rwanda, their country of origin.

(2) Dialogue and conflict mitigation in North and South Kivu

Supplemental funding will focus on fostering dialogueue and agreement among key leaders and reducing conflict, particularly in North and South Kivu. This dialogueue will be bolstered by "stabilization centers" in eastern Congo that will strengthen existing democracy centers that USAID established in 2004. These democracy centers will provide continual presence and the ability to negotiate agreements in the east where conflict is greatest. Funds will also go to support upcoming local elections in North Kivu and other critical areas in eastern DRC to ensure that all groups are confident of their representation in local government.

(3) Stabilization in Ituri and northern Katanga

Supplemental funding is also directed to DDR and stabilization activities in Ituri and northern Katanga. This program is already taking advantage of a fragile window of stability in these two areas that saw some of the worst militia fighting and population displacements in the DRC. The program will provide livelihoods options to excombatants to assist in their reintegration in the two areas, and will also provide a peace dividend in Ituri.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a potential leader in sub-Saharan Africa because of its central location and vast array of natural resources. USAID has committed significant resources and achieved significant results in the DRC and will continue its support of broader USG goals of peace and stability in the DRC and in the region.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you both for your testimony. I was thinking we went from the Great Lakes to the Great Lakes. I've just been dealing with low-water-levels issues for Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, and to go there and to be looking on to Lake Kivu from Goma is really a sight—the places couldn't be more dif-

ferent, but it's sort of the whole challenge we have as this country, to focus on our own country, but also make sure that we're doing the right thing in such a critical area. So, I thank you for your leadership in this area.

Secretary Frazer, you mentioned, in your testimony, that the Embassy is opening a presence in Goma. I'm pleased to hear that. Would you give me a sense of what that presence is going to look like?

Ambassador FRAZER. Well, initially it will be small. The most important thing we're going to do is try to send an individual, while initially on a temporary-duty basis, to go out to start engaging, on a daily basis, with MONUC and the Congolese Government to try to get that individual to also be a presence in observing the process of brassage between Nkunda's forces and also to be a presence in, perhaps, an international observer delegation to ensure that the population in the North Kivus are protected during this process of brassage, getting Nkunda's forces to integrate. And so, it's initially going to be a small presence, but, of course, our Embassy in Kinshasa will also continue to ferry out individuals. And, as I said, my Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution also is traveling frequently to the region. But the permanent daily presence will be one individual from the U.S. mission, the State Department, and then we're hoping AID will also have a person there.

Senator FEINGOLD. That sounds like a small step in the right direction. That is as complicated a situation, I'm sure you agree, as I've ever seen, so I'm pleased to hear that.

As you know, the October 15 deadline set by President Kabila for General Nkunda's forces to reintegrate into the national army had to be extended to the end of this month because so few of Nkunda's forces had come forward for reintegration. Then, last Wednesday, President Kabila announced the Congolese Army would disarm the rebel fighters by force if they do not meet the new deadline for reintegration. What is the administration's position on how the DRC Government should deal with General Nkunda and his forces should this deadline be missed?

Ambassador FRAZER. Well, we've worked very closely with President Kabila to ask him to extend that deadline, to give more time. His forces are in position, some 23,000, to address this militarily, but we're very concerned about the civilian population being caught in the crossfire. And so, we will continue to push a diplomatic resolution of this problem. I've talked to President Kabila at least two or three times since our meetings with him in New York in September, so we're in constant contact with him. We've also had contact with Nkunda, as well, and so, it really takes two sides, and we've urged Nkunda to allow his forces to go to brassage. Many that have gone have escaped and gone into brassage. We're asking him to allow his forces to go into brassage, and that, for him, that he actually seek exile. So, we're working very closely with South Africa, MONUC, and others to pursue a diplomatic end to this crisis.

Senator FEINGOLD. Even if this deadline is missed?

Ambassador FRAZER. Well, the deadline——

Senator FEINGOLD. Correct?

Ambassador FRAZER [continuing]. Was not—I mean, President Kabila took a conscious decision to extend the deadline, and that was a conscious decision that came about as a result of our dialog with him. I——

Senator FEINGOLD. But what about this deadline, when it comes?

Ambassador FRAZER. Well, I think——

Senator FEINGOLD. What's the message, if that's missed?

Ambassador FRAZER. I think that President Kabila's view, as he has said to me many times, is that he would prefer to resolve this, diplomatically. He reserves the right, given that he's the head of a sovereign legitimate government with a renegade general on his hands, to deal with it militarily, if necessary. But his first choice, his first option, is to address it diplomatically.

And so, we will have to see where we are when the deadline approaches next, but what we're trying to do in the interim period is to talk to Nkunda, with President Kabila fully informed of those conversations, to encourage him to allow his forces to go to brassage and to find a diplomatic solution. But, right now, frankly, he is the block to this ending diplomatically, not President Kabila.

Senator FEINGOLD. No; I understand that, and I understand President Kabila's rights, but I hope that our message will continue to be what you articulated, which is that diplomacy should be used, rather than a military solution, even if this deadline isn't met. That should be our message. And I hope you'll consider that seriously.

In eastern DRC, the brassage process has stalled and fighting between forces loyal to General Laurent Nkunda and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) is ongoing—with, as you well know, disastrous consequences for ordinary civilians. Please describe the objectives, activities, and scope of the U.S. assistance for security sector reform efforts in the DRC. How successful have these efforts been? What are the challenges we continue to face?

Ambassador FRAZER. Our efforts on security-sector reform and training of the FARDC have been limited. That hasn't been our area, in terms of the division of labor, internationally. The South Africans and the Belgians have been at the forefront of security-sector reform, with some help from the Angolans, as well. We have worked to try to train noncombatant officers—staff officers—to try to strengthen the backbone of FARDC. We have undertaken to work on the military justice survey; we've done a survey, and we're looking at strengthening the military justice system. And we are now considering direct military training of a limited number of FARDC units so that they can have the capacity to deal with the negative forces. President Kabila has requested it, we're considering it, but we haven't determined who would implement that type of training. So, it's primarily staff officer training and assessing the justice system for further support.

We're also doing work with demobilization. And Kate Almquist perhaps can discuss that in greater detail, especially the focus on child soldiers.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, let me just go back to the Congolese Army itself. Regarding the human rights issue, which you alluded to, the army is one of the worst human rights offenders in the country. We heard this directly from victims in eastern Congo.

Recent U.N. reports state that the FARDC continue to be responsible for an alarming number of human rights violations. What is our strategy to address the role of the FARDC as a source of human rights violations, rather than as a force to protect the people?

Ambassador FRAZER. As I'm saying, I think that we are increasingly realizing that we need to move beyond the confidence-building efforts that we're doing with the neighboring countries to get more directly involved in security-sector reform. We will try to work on military justice.

Normally, our training programs deal with issues of code of ethics. So, when we look at the training that we may do, we would certainly incorporate that as a component of it. But, frankly, the FARDC is an undisciplined army; it is integrating many different rebel forces, and it needs training and professionalization. And, as I said, this was not an area that the United States was expected to carry out, in terms of the division of labor, internationally, but it is certainly an effort in which now, President Kabila has asked us to increase our participation, and we see the need to do so, and we need to find an implementing agency, as such, whether it be the new AFRICOM command that's standing up, or it's EUCOM, or it is a contract with retired military personnel through State Department security assistance programs. We are looking at—and that will be part of the conversations between President Kabila and President Bush—how we can we do more directly to train this army to behave professionally with the rule of law and a code of conduct?

Senator FEINGOLD. A number of press reports recently have indicated that there may be a relationship between the FDLR and the FARDC. What can you tell me about this collaboration?

Ambassador FRAZER. I know that that is alleged, and there certainly may be local commanders of the FARDC that have ties with commanders of FDLR. In the past, when the Congolese Government was fighting against Rwandans and Ugandans on their territory, there was a relationship between those militaries, certainly. And so, those ties exist. According to President Kabila, it is not official Congolese policy to in any way work or associate with FDLR. In fact, he's come up with a plan for dealing with the FDLR, hopefully to get them to peacefully repatriate to Rwanda. But there may be ties, at the local level.

Senator FEINGOLD. OK. What is the administration's view on dealing with the numerous rebel groups in the East—is it better to deal with them sequentially or simultaneously?

Ambassador FRAZER. Well, we would like them to be dealt with simultaneously, but we recognize the limits of the capacity of the Congolese Government and FARDC, and we also have been urging, over the years, for MONUC to step up its activities, as well, against these negative forces, because it's part of their mandate. We are happy that MONUC is providing significant assistance to FARDC in dealing with Nkunda, and we understand that President Kabila, if he's going to have the army capable of addressing the negative forces, certainly has to have discipline within his forces. And so, a renegade general has to be a priority of the government. And so, we understand his need to deal immediately with Nkunda,

and we're trying to help him deal, as I said, diplomatically with that problem. But if he could—if we could build capacity quickly, then simultaneous is necessary.

Senator FEINGOLD. But you expect it will be sequential at first; is that what you're suggesting?

Ambassador FRAZER. We expect that the priority will be to Nkunda, yes.

Senator FEINGOLD. And then perhaps a simultaneous effort?

Ambassador FRAZER. Yes. Well, I mean, it is going on simultaneously, in the sense that he has developed a plan for dealing with FDLR, so he's not "waiting for," but, in terms of the forces able to actually address the FDLR, whether militarily or diplomatically, I think his attention is very much, right now, on Nkunda.

Senator FEINGOLD. Let me switch to Uganda for a moment. How is the administration planning to work with the Ugandan Government and other donor countries to support the reconstruction in northern Uganda? And what resources are in place to fund these efforts?

Ambassador FRAZER. Well, we certainly will work with the Ugandan Government on their new recovery plan in northern Uganda, and we've urged them to develop such a plan as part of the process of reconciliation. We will look at using some of our supplemental funds to deal with that plan. The plan still needs to be vetted in the Ugandan Parliament. It needs buy-in from the local community. And so, we're going to work with that process of trying to get stakeholder ownership of this plan, that it's not just a government plan, but that the northern Ugandans also buy into it. But we certainly will look to help fund and assist the government in this recovery plan.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, Secretary.

Ms. Almquist, despite the completion of the elections in late 2006, poor governance and corruption remains rife throughout the DRC particularly in the lucrative mining sector. What is the U.S. Government doing to promote good governance in the sector to ensure that mining revenues benefit the population as a whole?

Ms. ALMQUIST. Mr. Chairman, we're doing several things. We have a couple of our global development alliances in Congo that are working specifically on the extractive industry sector to, one, try and get more of the revenues to flow back into community-based programs that do support the people and benefit those in those regions. So, we have several activities in that regard. And then, we're also working on about 87 local anticorruption committees, particularly in the mining areas, that are intended to empower and train local authorities on anticorruption efforts, as well as civil society, so that they can hold accountable their governments for the resources in those areas.

All of that builds toward Congo's participation in the Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative, EITI.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you. The current humanitarian situation in northern Uganda is complex, with people moving between camps and transition sites and their homes of origin. Therefore, an effective humanitarian response must respond to both emergency and early recovery requirements. How are OFDA and USAID coordinating a strategy that maximizes their ability to serve these

short- and medium-term needs? Have they developed a joint plan? What kind of funding is going to be required from Congress for this?

Ms. ALMQUIST. Mr. Chairman, in the near term, we anticipate ongoing levels of humanitarian funding, approximately where they've been, in the $10 to $12 million range from OFDA for northern Uganda the last couple of years, as well as support from the Office of Food for Peace for food assistance. There are about 2.1 million conflict-affected or food-insecure individuals in northern Uganda and central Uganda. So, that will be ongoing, even as more and more displaced persons move closer to home or all the way back to home.

We've already seen, since 2005, half of the displaced population leave the camps. Over half of those, 520,000 or so, have actually returned home to their home areas, and the other 400,000 are in between, in interim sites. So, OFDA is working hard on access to clean water and sanitation in those areas, livelihood support for people who have either gone home or are on their way home, as well as road rehabilitation and the food assistance that I mentioned.

The mission has also dedicated a significant number of resources in the last couple of years to northern Uganda, working closely with our humanitarian program to support efforts to improve basic services in health and education. I think you're aware that we have a significant malaria and HIV/AIDS program, related to both the President's malaria initiative and PEPFAR, running in northern Uganda, intentionally done not just to address those two critical issues, but also to expand basic health services for the population as a whole.

We're also working on education, in terms of teacher training and school management, student counseling, radio instruction, things we can do to normalize life for individuals.

Our mission, together with our humanitarian colleagues from OFDA and Food for Peace, have recently had a planning meeting in Uganda—and in the North, specifically. We had a joint team go up, and they are putting together the strategy that will articulate the criteria for when humanitarian assistance can and should phase out. But, for the moment, we anticipate continuing to ramp up on the development and reconstruction side, while we maintain the humanitarian assistance necessary to facilitate the return process.

Senator FEINGOLD. To what extent do you think the Juba talks have impacted the humanitarian conditions on the ground? And how can we make sure that these—and I know this is what you were talking about, in part, here—how can we make sure that these are irreversible improvements?

Ms. ALMQUIST. Well, I think the Juba talks have given the people in northern Uganda a lot of confidence and hope that peace will really come. We've certainly seen an improvement in the security situation in northern Uganda since the start of the talks, and security is the most important factor for people who decide to go home. Those who still are in their interim sites aren't yet convinced to go all the way back to their farmlands, although they are within—in most cases, within several miles of their home farms, and are able

to access farmlands during the day and then come back to the interim sites in the evening.

So, I think, as the peace process continues to move forward in Juba, we will see more and more people take advantage of the stability that's provided there to really return home, and that's where ensuring that our assistance is there in a timely way to support the return process, as well as to work with the government's plan on recovery and reconstruction—so, there's a peace dividend that consolidates the efforts that are going on at the peace talks are very important.

And we're working closely with the Government of Uganda. We are reviewing the plan that they just launched on October 15, and we'll see how we can further shape our activities to respond to the government's plan and to prioritize additional resources, if needed.

Senator FEINGOLD. One thing we were very struck by was just how resource-rich northern Uganda is. And since the region is already a supplier of a substantial amount of food for Southern Sudan, people may not understand that this is the kind of a place, where, if we can stabilize it, the potential is great.

Ms. ALMQUIST. It's tremendous. Both northern Uganda and Southern Sudan have the potential, along that border, to be a breadbasket for each of their countries. And so, agricultural activities are already ongoing to get seeds and tools out, to do farmer training, to increase access to markets. We're working with a couple of—through a couple of our public/private partnerships on sunflowers and cotton already in northern Uganda, to further boost the economic activity and take advantage of the peace, too—the more economic activity there is, the more normalcy, the more, I think, reason people have to support peace, rather than be dissatisfied with political realities that may still take some time to work out. But we're very optimistic about the peace process, and very focused on it in Juba, and I think that's going to give the opportunity for long-term stability in the North.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, that surely is right.

Let me go back to eastern Congo for a minute. As you know, Virunga National Park has been on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger since 1994, but the recent escalation in violence threatens to cause irreversible damage to the exceptional biodiversity of this property. For example, at least 11 rare mountain gorillas have been killed in the past several months, and many park rangers have fled due to fighting. I was very pleased, therefore, when the State Department made available $496,000 in new funds to support Virunga Park's rangers and endangered wildlife.

Ms. Almquist, can you delineate exactly how this money will be used and the mechanics of ground implementation in terms of NGO and government collaboration?

Ms. ALMQUIST. Well, as you point out, $496,000 additional has been prioritized to respond to this situation; $120,000 of that is to support intensive gorilla protection activities, in particular, round-the-clock park ranger efforts to patrol and provide surveillance. In addition, we will be increasing the height of an existing free-standing stone wall that's 50 kilometers in length and half a meter wide already. This wall marks the park boundary in the sensitive area frequented by mountain gorillas, and keeps the crop-raiding

wildlife contained inside the park. So, that's one very specific thing that we're going to be doing, as well as intensifying the dialog and working with the communities in and near the park area to cut down on the poaching and the insecurity and violence that's getting to these gorillas, along with the civilian population. That's certainly quite concerning. So, the remaining $375,000, more or less, will be used to support our ongoing landscape program that we have already focused on Virunga through our CARPE program.

Senator FEINGOLD. As you obviously know, on the Rwandan side, Virunga has become a key tool for ecological tourism. What steps is the United States taking to encourage the Congolese Government to make the same commitment to Virunga Park and to prioritize protection of not only the gorillas but of the national park as a whole?

Ms. ALMQUIST. Well, we are working closely with the Congolese Government, as well as about nine other countries across Central Africa, to focus on preservation and conservation of the natural resources there, biodiversity issues. And Virunga is part of that larger CARPE program. So, it's an important area for us. We're working with the Ministry in Kinshasa, as well as with the local officials and authorities on both sides of the border there, to do just what you've said.

Senator FEINGOLD. I thank both of you for your testimony and your answers and for your work in this area. Thank you very much.

I'd ask the next panel to come forward.

Good morning, and my thanks to the second panel.

We'll start with the testimony of Ms. Gayle Smith.

STATEMENT OF GAYLE SMITH, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator, very much. And thank you both for convening this—thank you both for convening this hearing, and also for your leadership on U.S. policy toward Africa. It's most welcome.

As I prepared this testimony, I was struck by something, which was that, 10 years ago, when I was working on these issues, both Congo and Uganda, I was looking at the same problems: Rampant militia violence in eastern Congo, structural poverty, the prevalence of arms, the absence of trade that might unite communities, regional tensions.

I think we've seen considerable progress since then, and the fact that the regional war is ended is to be congratulated and is huge. But I think we've got to look at the fact that there hasn't been more progress in a decade and take into account that some of it is—some of that is due to circumstances beyond our control, but some of that, I think, has to do with our own limitations. And, if I may, I would like to both submit my written testimony for the record, but also indulge, with your permission, my confidence in your leadership of this subcommittee to talk about some of the bigger things we might do to consolidate progress.

Frankly, when I look at the situation, and the progress report of the Assistant Secretary notwithstanding, I am not overly confident that we can consolidate peace and security in the Great Lakes at

this point, and I fear that what we're doing is chipping away at the edges of success, largely because we don't have the strategies or tools that we need to make a real difference. I'd like to mention four, if I may.

I don't think anyone in this room would disagree that Congo qualifies as a weak and, some would argue, failing state. This is something we've all talked about a lot, it's a big issue in the foreign policy community, it was mentioned in the President's national security strategy. Experts believe there are 53 around the world; the majority in Africa. We do not have a strategy for dealing with weak and failing states. I would argue, it's just as important to reach agreement on that as it has been on terrorism, homeland security, climate change, or trade, any of the other issues where our national interests meet up with global realities. If we don't have that, we're trying to use individual projects, partly staffed embassies, to solve huge, huge problems. And the first panel, I think, exposed what those are.

The second—and, I think, Senator, you know this well; and I also serve on the HELP Commission, which is mandated to look at this problem—I have come to the conclusion that our foreign aid system is, at present, irretrievably broken. We talk about unleashing our full development—or unleashing the full development potential of our partners. We need to unleash our own. I think the Assistant—or Deputy Assistant Administrator described some very, very good projects in the Congo and Uganda, but I think we suffer considerable constraints. We have too many pots of money and not enough professionals. We have multiple good projects, but fewer long-term investments. Most important, I think we need to elevate assistance much, much higher in our foreign policy strategy. And, particularly with the Congo, if you think about it, even if we make gains in the East on the security situation, even if we make political gains on a stable government, consolidating those gains means that the country needs enough trade to link people together, enough infrastructure to unite them, sufficient social services to build strong communities. And, again, we don't have those tools or investments, at present.

Third is our diplomatic presence. I'm delighted that there's going to be a diplomatic presence in Goma, and I wish them all success. One person TDY in Goma, with all due respect, even if he or she is the best and brightest in the entire State Department, is not sufficient. And that's not a criticism of the Department. That is a reflection, I think, of the fact, and as you know—that our diplomatic capacity in Africa is far less than we need. We've got the same problem, I believe, in the peace talks in Uganda. We need a much greater diplomatic presence there. I think we need to look at two things there. One is an overall increase, or something that I believe you have spoken to, which I think we might be able to do in the shorter term, which is to create diplomatic surge capacity by creating regional diplomatic cells. In this case, I would put one in Nairobi, where we could deploy high-level Foreign Service officials who are able, if the Ugandan peace talks need a steady, full-time presence, to put somebody there. If this lone individual in Goma starts to make success, he or she can be buttressed by other people with the skills and resources we need.

Finally, Senator—and I'm sure you've seen the Post this morning—one of the most stunning things about this region and about the Congo is our failure, as yet, to give meaning to the responsibility to protect. I think we all believe that this doctrine that embraces our common humanity is of critical importance, but it doesn't make much sense when we look at what is the worst instance of sexual violence on earth. One U.N. official has said that rape in the eastern Congo is not about destroying the enemy, it's about destroying women. I believe it's more than a crime against an individual, it's a violation of the family, community, societies, and our common humanity. Again, we need to light a house on fire on this issue. This is one of the most grave crimes against humanity we've seen in a region that is, tragically, known for it. But, again, that's something that is at the, if you will, 30,000-feet level, and I hope that, with your leadership, we can start to get some of these.

Finally, in questions, I'm more than happy to deal with specifics, but I thought I'd take the opportunity to go big-picture this morning.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GAYLE E. SMITH, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS AND COFOUNDER, ENOUGH PROJECT, WASHINGTON, DC

Senator Feingold and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify. For the purposes of this hearing, I would like to focus my remarks on the Democratic Republic of Congo. The DRC demands our urgent and sustained attention because it is poised to make progress toward ending a long-running crisis—or fall victim to its recurrence.

There are concrete steps that can and must be taken today. As militia forces are pressed to disarm in the east, we must put in place the programs needed to support and sustain disarmament and ensure that civilians are protected. In the wake of elections, we must redouble our support for security sector reform. To consolidate newfound peace and security, we must increase our investments in the groundbreaking program led by the Wilson Center's Howard Wolpe and designed to overcome mistrust and rebuild the cohesion of the state by training officials in collaborative decisionmaking—in communications, negotiations, group problemsolving, and the analysis of conflict. There are countless other steps we must take, many of them outlined in "Averting the Nightmare Scenario in Eastern Congo," a recent ENOUGH Project report that I am submitting for the record and for the subcommittee's consideration.

But while immediate action is needed to consolidate progress in the DRC, what may be most pressing is our need to start responding structurally and with an eye to the long term. I say this because with perhaps only a few changes to detail, the recommendations that I offer today are little different than those I would have provided 10 years ago. And this, Mr. Chairman, gets to the heart of the problem.

Ten years ago I was living in Africa, then as senior advisor to the Administrator and Chief of Staff of USAID, just prior to assuming the position of senior director for African Affairs at the National Security Council. The issue of the day in the DRC was militia violence in the East, where we faced a crisis borne of the spillover of the Rwandan genocide into a region beset by weak governance, poverty, local conflict, the availability of arms and the presence of valuable natural resources. Today, though some of the names have changed and many battles have been waged and ended, we are facing what are fundamentally the same challenges.

The successful legislation introduced by Senators Obama and Brownback represents an important step in the right direction, as it calls for a comprehensive bilateral strategy coupled with increased multilateral engagement. I believe we must build on this foundation, and do much more.

Let me be clear—that we have not seen a greater return on our investments of diplomatic and development capital is in part due to circumstances beyond our control. But it is also, in large measure, the result of our own limitations.

Let us pretend for a moment that we had in hand the strategies, tools, and resources necessary to have a real and lasting impact on developments in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Let us pretend for a moment that we had concluded that our interests in Africa required sweeping reform and the introduction of new and innovative policies and programs. Let us pretend for a moment that our policy inputs matched our desired policy outcomes.

If the scenario I describe was real, I would testify today that our 10-year plan for U.S. engagement with the DRC had been approved by the interagency in an exercise led by the joint NSC/NEC Directorate for International Development. I would tell you that our regional diplomatic cell in Nairobi had surged to ensure that we had ample diplomatic coverage in eastern Congo and could align our diplomatic efforts in DRC with those throughout the Great Lakes region.

I would report that with its recently reconstituted professional staff, our reformed foreign assistance agency had launched programs designed, on site, to address DRC's vulnerabilities and build its capacities, focusing in particular on security sector reform, institution-building, the creation of jobs and small-scale enterprises able to deliver an urgently needed "peace dividend," and the development of a low-cost renewable energy sector. I would add that we were coordinating our efforts with those of other donors in order to ensure that all of the development bases were covered. I would testify that now that our internal policies had been harmonized, DRC was on the path to accessing expanded AGOA benefits, domestic trade support and a new post-crisis debt relief facility.

I would tell you that our efforts to collaborate with private philanthropy and leverage the engagement of the private sector were paying off—that our new "Post-Crisis Jobs Creation Program" had just launched in the DRC, and that the Europeans had responded positively to our invitation to participate. I would tell you that the New Mines Program, built on Liberia's successful effort to negotiate new, safer, and more equitable terms for the extractive industries, was off the ground in Kinshasa.

And I would testify that our decision to lead an international effort to modernize and improve the agility of the United Nations was also bearing fruit, and that we and other Security Council members had agreed to contingency plans for ensuring that a fully funded MONUC could provide for civilian protection in the east, where militia forces were resisting pressure to disarm.

With some great relief, I would tell you that incorporating tools to prevent and respond to rape into the standard operating procedures of OFDA's DART teams was a good idea—that women had been registered, protection officers had been put in place, rapes were being reported with greater regularity and treatment and counseling were available in 90 percent of affected communities. I would also report that our emphasis on accountability for crimes against humanity was paying off—and that we and our partners had stepped up prosecutions against those employing rape as a tool of war.

I would then report that our foreign aid agency, the State and Defense Departments, our intelligence agencies and the Department of Homeland Security were working together to conduct a transnational threat assessment for the DRC, designed to identify its vulnerability to the ebola virus and pandemic flu, international crime syndicates, money laundering and terrorism. I would tell you that our aim was to launch a capacity-building program with our international partners by December, and that our first priority was working with the government to secure fully the DRC's supplies of uranium.

And finally, of course, I would thank you for the full funding Congress had provided.

I only wish that such testimony was possible. What is possible is to tell you that we are getting some things right: We supported elections and are engaged in support of further democratization; our aid dollars are up; we have a senior advisor for Conflict Resolution; the President of the DRC will meet President Bush next week.

But let us be frank. At best, we are chipping away at the edges of success; at worst, we are creating expectations—in the executive and legislative branches of our own government, amongst our public, and, most importantly, in the region—that we cannot meet. Let me point to four key reasons why this is the case, and offer up as many potential solutions.

First, we lack a strategy or the tools for building the capacity of weak and failing states. The DRC is a weak state, and, arguably, a failing one. Whatever its intentions may be, the government cannot protect its people or its borders, is unable to provide basic services, and, despite the gains represented by recent elections, the state does not yet command the full confidence of the citizenry. The government's institutions are weak and impaired by decades of misrule, and civil society institutions are young and few.

State weakness is a function of capacity and/or intent. During the tenure of Mobutu Sese Seko, the balance hung heavily on the side of intent; today, with the regional war brought to an end and national elections concluded, the balance falls more squarely, though not entirely, on the side of capacity. Today, the DRC lacks the physical, social, human, institutional and financial infrastructure needed to consolidate peace or pursue a democratic path that delivers to its citizenry.

We know—from Afghanistan and now from Iraq—that weak states readily spawn conflict, undermine regional stability and threaten our own security for the simple reason that they offer vast ungoverned spaces to any and all who would exploit them. We know that weak states are unable to participate effectively in the world economy, and thus risk engaging in globalization as beggars and bystanders rather than as full participants. We know that weak states yield a disproportionate level of human suffering. Yet more than 2 years after President Bush cited the threat posed by weak and failing states in his National Security Strategy, the United States has neither a strategy nor the tools to address this challenge.

What is needed is agreement—between the executive and legislative branches of government, and among Democrats and Republicans—on the contours of a U.S. strategy for weak and failing states. That strategy requires that we attain new capabilities across all of our foreign affairs agencies, fix our foreign aid system, and, even more challenging, that we adopt a long-term approach. War-torn societies are not healed in 12 months; weak and failing states cannot be rendered capable in 2 years. Transforming countries that, like the DRC, have suffered decades of misrule, political dysfunction, economic distortion, and unchecked violence requires that we formulate and build consensus around policies and strategies that extend beyond our 1-year budget sequence and 4-year Presidential election cycle.

Second, our foreign aid system is broken. The legislation mandating our foreign aid program was written almost 50 years ago, and is littered with competing goals, objectives, and directives. Our professional development corps has been eroded, and replaced by a cadre of functionaries focused on managing outside contractors. We have witnessed the steady proliferation of aid programs, accounts, instruments and initiatives across multiple agencies and departments but have lacked a meaningful mechanism for coordination within government. The latest round of reform through the "F Process" has compounded and not solved these problems. Meanwhile, the vacuum created by the inability of the State Department or a weakened USAID to develop new and robust development capabilities is being filled by the Department of Defense, which may have good intentions and an accurate diagnosis of the problem, but should not, in my view, be the frontal face of America's support for development.

If we want to serve our national interests and do right by the Congos of this world; if we want to tackle the enormous challenges posed by weak and failing states; if we want to promote prosperity and consolidate peace and security; then we need a foreign aid system that is both nimble and accountable. Having worked for USAID and served as a member of the HELP Commission, it is my view that reform on the margins is inadequate, and that what we require is a complete overhaul.

This means a new Foreign Assistance Act, one that reflects the modern era in which we live and which provides the executive branch with flexibility and the legislative branch with appropriate oversight. Most importantly, it means a new structural alignment within government, one that elevates development from its current status as the poor stepchild of foreign policy to a top priority.

Consider, again, the Democratic Republic of Congo. It lacks the infrastructure required to unite its population behind a common economic agenda. It has little or no capacity to provide the social services needed to sustain families and communities. It cannot presently offer the jobs needed to produce the tangible dividends that can counter the appeal of joining armed militias. It lacks the institutions that can provide transparent, peaceful, and fair means for resolving disputes, preventing conflict, or promoting justice.

These gaping holes in the DRC's capacity to function as a capable, democratic, and peaceful state can only be filled by development initiatives—and the success of peace negotiations, disarmament, the elections and MONUC depend on our ability to fill these gaps. Development assistance is, in other words, necessary for our success. I believe that we must, therefore, reorganize our development policies and programs to reflect this priority status; to develop and sustain a core of development professionals; to ensure that a senior official has both the responsibility and the authority to lead within the Cabinet; to coordinate and harmonize our myriad development instruments; and to ensure that we are able to promote and invest in long-term economic strategies that span the lifetimes of multiple administrations.

My personal preference is for an independent agency modeled on the U.K.'s Department for International Development, but there are other models worthy of in-

vestigation and consideration. The bottom line is that we must, if we believe that development is critical to our efforts to consolidate peace and security in the Great Lakes or any other region of the world, arm ourselves with a system that works.

Third, our diplomatic investments are insufficient to the task at hand. Despite the stated intentions of the Department of State's "Transformational Diplomacy" plan, Africa remains underserved—the number of diplomatic personnel serving on the continent has increased by only 10 since last year, and our diplomatic missions in Africa generally have fewer and less experienced personnel than do their counterparts in other more developed parts of the world. This problem has been and will continue to be exacerbated by the need for skilled diplomatic personnel in Iraq.

The net result is that we lack the hands on capacity to work the issues. We do not, given our limited diplomatic coverage, have the ability to conduct the intensive diplomacy that is required to achieve durable peace agreements, to forge regional linkages, to coordinate with our partners and allies, or to serve the full range of our national interests.

Two things are needed. First, we need to increase the number of qualified diplomats assigned to Africa. Second, we need to establish a surge capacity that allows us to augment our diplomatic capacity in times of crisis or opportunity, to ensure a constant presence and full-time engagement in peace efforts, and to support the special envoys that have been and will continue to be assigned to the continent. Surge capacity could be supported by regional cells staffed by professional Foreign Service officers; it cannot, in my view, be sustained by visits from Washington officials or the occasional high-level meeting.

Fourth, and finally, we are failing to give meaning to the "responsibility to protect." As members of the subcommittee are aware, the doctrine of the "responsibility to protect" posits that when a government is unable or unwilling to protect its citizens, the international community has a responsibility to act. It is a doctrine that has been endorsed by a majority of members of the U.N., but is a doctrine without either teeth or practical meaning.

The DRC today is home to the worst instance of sexual violence on earth. Building on a pattern that was established during the Rwandan genocide, rape has reached epidemic proportions—literally tens of thousands of women, girls, and even young boys have been raped, often by more than one man. Most of them are raped and then tortured with sticks; many of them are violated in front of their families.

As one U.N. official has said, rape in the eastern Congo is not about destroying the enemy—it is about destroying women. Rape is more than a crime against an individual; it is a violation of the family, of communities, of societies and of our common humanity. It degrades and destroys the backbone of the community, weakening its caretakers and most productive members while deepening the mistrust that fuels ongoing conflict.

Rape is on par with every other act of violence that we have seen in the Great Lakes region over the last 15 years, but it has warranted neither the attention nor the resources that other crimes have engendered. This is both morally wrong and practically foolish, for unless and until we act on the belief that the mass rape we are seeing in eastern Congo constitutes a crime against all of humanity, and not just individual women, we can have little hope that the cycle of impunity will be broken.

Solving this problem is complex and difficult, but the first steps we must take are clear and straightforward. The rape epidemic sweeping eastern Congo must be a priority: It should be a central focus of our humanitarian response and development efforts; it must be front and center in our diplomatic statements and initiatives; we need to raise and act upon it the U.N. Security Council; we should factor it into our plans for disarmament; and we must lead efforts to prosecute it as a crime against humanity.

Mr. Chairman, my critique may be pointed, but it is aimed neither at a political party or any particular administration. It is borne of my strong belief that both parties, and the administrations of today and tomorrow, must enact sweeping policy and institutional changes if our aim is to consolidate peace and security in the Great Lakes region or, indeed, anywhere in the developing world.

My recommendations may be bold, but after 30 years working on Africa, 20 of them spent on the ground, it is both easy and necessary to go to 30,000 feet. Our intentions may be good, and we have thankfully reached the point of consensus between our political parties that Africa is important to the United States. But our progress is not keeping pace with our challenges, and I believe that our ability to support the emergence of a majority of capable and democratic states united behind a common purpose depends on our ability to think bigger and act more boldly. We owe it to ourselves and to the people who look to us to lead.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you for your excellent testimony. I have urged greater diplomatic resources in both Kinshasa and in the East. Surely, I agree with you, having been in that region for a couple of days and seen just Goma itself, let alone the exceptional situation where that region interfaces with the other countries and crises in the area. If there ever was a place that was begging for a diplomatic surge, that is one. And it's perhaps a kind of surge I could support, unlike the one that——

[Laughter.]

Senator FEINGOLD [continuing]. I didn't support, and don't support.

Mr. Fitzcharles.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN FITZCHARLES, COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR UGANDA, CARE USA, KAMPALA, UGANDA

Mr. FITZCHARLES. Yes; thank you. Good morning.

It's an honor to be here on behalf of CARE. I'd like to thank Chairman Feingold, Ranking Member Sununu, and the other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for holding this vitally important hearing on the Great Lakes, a region that should be considered one of the United States top foreign policy priorities.

The continuing instability in these countries serves as a destabilizing factor for the entire African Continent, and, indeed, poses serious implications for the rest of the world.

Excluding food aid, the DRC received only $50 million in U.S. humanitarian and development assistance in FY06, which hardly reflects a strategic commitment to a country the size of Western Europe, where more than 4 million lives already have been lost. Northern Uganda also receives inadequate assistance for the 900,000 people still in IDP camps and the 500,000 in halfway camps, trying to return home.

All of this said, humanitarian assistance, as vital as it is, only addresses symptoms. To make serious, lasting progress in the region, the United States and wider international communities' attention span and depth of engagement must increase by an order of magnitude.

In the interest of time, I'd like to highlight three areas where U.S. efforts should be concentrated. One is lasting peace and security; second, protection; and, third, long-term equitable development.

First, regarding peace and security, there is no hope that the humanitarian situation can be significantly improved or that economic development can take hold in a region where insecurity constantly looms. Furthermore, improved security is a prerequisite for organizations like CARE in providing humanitarian assistance in hard-to-reach areas. For these reasons, the following steps must be taken to advance peace and security in the region.

First, the United States must actively support the extension of a robust MONUC force with adequate resources to implement its mandate to protect civilians. MONUC provides a critical security presence that benefits the people in the DRC, humanitarian actors, and the broader Great Lakes community. A drawdown would be catastrophic.

Next, the United States should also continue and scale up its work in security-sector reform of the DRC's military, ensuring that it is capable of protecting vulnerable groups.

Third, the United States must provide greater support and higher level commitment to the Juba peace process, put pressure on all armed factions in the DRC to negotiate, and promote women and marginalized groups' involvement in negotiations. The United States could have an immediate impact in both crises by employing, much more vigorously and steadily, its high profile and diplomatic clout.

Next, an integrated U.S.-Great Lakes policy and strategic plan must be articulated, adequately resourced, and aggressively implemented. No such overarching and coherent plan currently exists, to our knowledge.

Finally, the United States must work with the Government of Uganda to increase the focus on the situation in Karamoja at the same time as steps are taken to negotiate and finalize a peace agreement with the LRA. The Karamoja situation is one of the main reasons that IDPs remain in camps, and addressing it must become a priority.

Second, with respect to protection, CARE has been asked to address, specifically, the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence, a major focus of our work on the ground.

As detailed in our written testimony, CARE research on SGBV in the Great Lakes demonstrates not only the prevalence of these atrocities in the midst of armed conflict, but also a frightening trend toward the use of sexual violence in the wider culture. The idea that being raped is normal is increasingly taking hold.

The following steps can and must be taken to address the current situation. The U.S. Government should provide increased and focused assistance toward SGBV prevention and response through support for community-level initiatives to raise awareness and action, and expansion of access to justice, medical care, and psychosocial support, especially in conflict-affected areas.

Second, the United States should support Great Lakes countries' capacity for implementing national, regional, and international instruments addressing SGBV. All governments in the region have existing laws and policies in place on SGVB; however, their ability to enforce them is weak, and the resources to do so are lacking.

Finally, the U.S. Government should pass the International Violence Against Women Act, which I understand will be introduced soon by distinguished members of the committee. This bill would be a step forward in U.S. leadership on the problem.

Third, on long-term development, implementing peace agreements, and preventing countries in the region from sliding back into war will require constant and robust engagement for decades to come. The following steps will be essential.

The United States must dramatically increase its humanitarian and development assistance to the region. The current level of U.S. assistance does not match the scope of the need and the strategic importance of the region. It cannot be expected to make a meaningful impact.

Second, U.S. assistance must be comprehensive and well phased, aimed at both immediate needs and longer term support. In other

words, not only the rebuilding of infrastructure and delivery of basic services, but also serious investments in human rights, democracy, rule of law, and reconciliation.

Third, the United States should urge the Governments of Uganda and the DRC to take meaningful steps to address economic and political disparities in marginalized areas, which has been a driver of instability in the region.

In conclusion, securing peace in the Great Lakes is a process, not an event. Major and sustained investments of political and economic capital by the United States could turn the tide toward peace. This window of opportunity must be seized, and must be seized now.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fitzcharles follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEVIN FITZCHARLES, COUNTRY DIRECTOR, CARE USA, KAMPALA, UGANDA

I would like to thank Chairman Feingold, Ranking Member Sununu, and the other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and subcommittee on African Affairs for holding a hearing to explore the U.S. role in addressing longstanding crises in this critical region of the world. It is an honor to be here on behalf of CARE and to share the perspective of an organization which has provided humanitarian assistance and development programming in the Great Lakes region for decades.

I currently serve as the Country Director for CARE in Uganda, and am pleased to provide my view point on the situation in the north of that country. However, I would like to note that I am also here today to represent all of my colleagues in CARE's Great Lakes country offices in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Burundi and hope to do justice in addressing our collective concerns about this vast and troubled region.

CARE has been operational in northern Uganda since 1979—intensively in the Acholi region since 2003—and in the DRC most recently since 2002. Our programs in the Great Lakes region focus on food security, health, HIV/AIDS prevention, education, conflict resolution, microfinance, and community development and natural resource management. We do what we can—along with our colleagues in other humanitarian and development organizations—to address the enormous need of the people in these countries and the near total absence of basic services and livelihood opportunities that they face due to years of conflict and resulting underdevelopment.

The numbers of displaced are so large and the degree of suffering so intense that the figures almost become numbing; an estimated 4 million dead in the DRC due to the conflict, 2 million displaced in the north of Uganda due to the terror campaign of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and hundreds of thousands of refugees relegated to squalid camps across the region. However, we must stop and remind ourselves to put a face on these numbers, to remember the human scope of the ongoing political and security situation in these countries. The depravity and suffering are real for every child who does not have access to basic health care, for every woman who fears being raped as she travels long distances through insecure areas to collect water and for entire communities whose futures have been irrevocably altered by years of terror and abandonment.

Both the situations in the DRC and northern Uganda require a level of humanitarian and development assistance that match the scope of the crises. However, only a fraction of the needs are addressed, reflecting the low global priority of ending the suffering in the region.

We thank the U.S. for what it has given to address these humanitarian situations and underdevelopment in the Great Lakes countries, but note that in order to have a meaningful impact in terms of lives and increased security, much more will be required.

Excluding P.L. 480 Title II food aid, the DRC received only $50 million in humanitarian and development assistance in FY 2006, precious little to begin to address the enormous humanitarian and development challenges in one of the most underdeveloped and unstable countries in the world; a country the size of Western Europe upon which the security of the entire Great Lakes region largely hinges. The proposed funding level in the administration's request to Congress in FY 2008 is even

lower, hardly reflecting the compelling nature and strategic rationale for assistance to the DRC.

U.S. foreign assistance in Uganda has largely been geared toward HIV/AIDS prevention and relief through the PEPFAR program, and has not been sufficiently focused in other critical areas including conflict resolution, peace-building and the strengthening of governance and key institutions. Inadequate assistance levels are provided in northern Uganda to deal with one of the largest displacement situations in the world. Humanitarian assistance funding for the 900,000 people still in IDP camps remains inadequate and very little has been directed to assisting those trying to return home. Currently, 500,000 IDPs are residing in halfway resettlement areas, moving back and forth to the camps to access basic services like water, health care, and education that are not available outside of them. Very little planning in terms of providing the right transitional assistance to returnees has been conducted, jeopardizing lives and the success of the peace process.

All that said, humanitarian assistance—as vital as it is—only addresses symptoms; symptoms that have been widespread and evident for far too long. The conflicts in northern Uganda and the eastern DRC are distinct from each other and require different solutions to the unique underlying challenges they pose. However, there are commonalities that I would like to highlight today, particularly regarding the role that the United States has to play in ending these longstanding conflicts. To make serious, lasting progress in the region, the U.S. and wider international community's attention span and depth of engagement must increase by an order of magnitude. Achieving peace agreements or national elections are vitally important signs of progress but not at all the end of the road. The following must be addressed both immediately and over a very long haul:

- Security and Lasting Peace—People need to be assured they can live, work, and access services and markets in a secure environment;
- Protection—People need more capable and professional policing and access to justice, as well as much stronger medical care, psychosocial support, and child and women protection strategies; and
- Long-Term, Equitable Development—People in the long-neglected regions of the eastern DRC and northern Uganda need competent, transparent, and accountable governance and major investments over time in infrastructure, basic services, and economic opportunity.

Let me address each of these in turn, underscoring the importance of regional approaches throughout. Resources, violent conflict, and insecurity all travel across borders in the Great Lakes region and integrated, regional planning, and interventions by all stakeholders are essential.

PEACE AND SECURITY

Security is critical in protecting human lives and preventing more displacements. There is no hope that the humanitarian situation can be significantly improved or that economic development take hold in the region as long as conflict and resultant insecurity reign. Furthermore, improved security is a prerequisite for organizations like CARE in providing humanitarian assistance in hard-to-reach areas. This issue is highlighted by the recent spike in insecurity in the North Kivu region of the DRC due to the activities of General Laurent Nkunda, which has caused NGOs and some U.N. agencies to evacuate many areas.

For these reasons, a drawdown in the U.N. Peacekeeping force in the DRC—MONUC—would be catastrophic. Though stretched thinly across a vast region, MONUC provides a critical security presence that benefits the people in the DRC, humanitarian actors and the broader Great Lakes community. We would encourage the U.S. to actively support the extension of a robust MONUC force with adequate resources, capacities, and accountabilities to implement its mandate to protect civilians.

The U.S. should also continue and scale up its work in security sector reform of the DRC's military (FARDC)—ensuring that they are adequately trained and paid, so that they are capable of providing security in the violence-racked East and do not commit atrocities against the local population themselves.

In northern Uganda, a growing conflict between the Ugandan military and Karamoja cattle rustlers is causing further deterioration to regional security and is one of the reasons that nearly 900,000 million people remain in IDP camps. Addressing the Karamoja situation must be viewed as an urgent security priority and must be done at the same time as steps are taken to negotiate and finalize a peace agreement with the LRA.

The U.S. could have an immediate impact in both crises by employing its high profile and diplomatic clout. To date, U.S. attention to both of these conflicts has

been inconsistent at best, without adequate attention to the regional dimension of these crises or a focus on addressing the underlying causes that drive them. Infrequent visits by U.S. policymakers, resulting in brief talks and weak public statements, have done little to convince actors in the region that the U.S. considers these crises priorities or will take any meaningful actions to address them.

A consistent demonstration of interest and commitment to the Juba peace process would have a tremendous impact on the likelihood of the talks resulting in an agreement. The U.S.'s influence over all actors involved, including the Government of South Sudan and the Government of Uganda, is a resource that should not be discounted and one that should be utilized to the maximum extent. Recent developments suggesting that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of South Sudan and the Sudanese Government is in jeopardy—possibly resulting in the collapse of the Juba Peace Talks—highlight the fragile nature of the peace process and underscore the need for third parties to maintain consistent engagement to ensure that the entire process does not unravel.

The U.S. also has a critical role to play in ensuring that the newly elected government of the DRC and its neighboring countries find and abide by a resolution to the ongoing conflict in the eastern part of the country, including how to deal with the armed groups that continue to undermine stability in the region. The U.S. has engaged in the Tripartite Plus process, and these regularized discussions must continue well into the future to move toward a durable solution to longstanding tensions between the Great Lakes countries, including competition over natural resources.

We applaud the decision by the State Department to appoint a Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary on Conflict Resolution, tasked with following the situation in the Great Lakes. We encourage that this position be accompanied with increased resources to support ongoing peace talks in the region as well as attention at the highest levels of in the Department of State. Furthermore, we encourage the State Department to ensure that its approach be regional in nature given the connections between Sudan, the LRA, Uganda, Rwanda, and the DRC and its armed factions. Failing to focus on the whole picture, or only parts of it, will seriously compromise the U.S. and the international community's efforts to address any one of these situations. This high degree of interconnectedness means that if there are weak links in the diplomatic chain, it will surely break.

On a more local level, vulnerable groups, especially women, must be provided opportunities to engage in peace and reconciliation initiatives. Women are often most adversely affected by conflict, due to the fact that conflict tends to empower male-dominated armed groups, leads to abuses of authority and increases the labor burdens placed on women, who are often responsible for a majority of the activities that families need to survive.

For this reason, CARE integrates a gender focus in its programs. In northern Uganda, for example, CARE is working to harness the potential of women in doing everything from reintegrating formerly abducted women and child mothers into communities to calling for peace negotiations. However, despite their role as one of the most vulnerable and conflict-affected groups, women have not had a significant role in the peace negotiations. Losing the perspective of the most impacted groups means that many of their most deeply felt concerns may not be addressed in the peace process. The U.S. and others in the international community should work with all parties to negotiations to ensure that local women are represented in peace talks and that resources are provided for local level peace and reconciliation initiatives.

Summary of Peace and Security Recommendations

- Support the extension of MONUC with adequate resources, capacities, and accountabilities to implement its protection mandate while scaling up security sector reform efforts with the DRC military.
- Support and engage with, consistently and at a high level, the Juba Peace Process and the Tripartite Plus Process, as well as efforts to deal with Uganda's ongoing Karamoja conflict.
- Provide adequate resources and weight to the new Senior Advisor on Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes ensuring that U.S. diplomacy in the region responds effectively—and in integrated fashion—to the cross-border issues fueling conflict.
- Provide resources for local level peace and reconciliation initiatives in which women and other marginalized groups are adequately represented.

PROTECTION

Security must be understood in broader and more holistic terms than merely protection from violence perpetrated by armed groups. Security depends not only on military and policy prescriptions, but on people's ability to make free choices and exercise control over their lives.

Unfortunately, protection is a long called-for priority in the Great Lakes region but, to date, not more than a dream for vast numbers of conflict-affected people in the region. The range of rights abuses against the population in the eastern DRC and northern Uganda is extensive. In addition to the millions who have died as a direct or indirect consequence of violence and the hundreds of thousands who continue to be displaced, the abduction and recruitment of children into armed groups has been another tragic characteristic of both conflicts. In northern Uganda the number of abductions since the onset of conflict is estimated at 25,000,[1] while UNICEF has recently noted that increased fighting in the eastern DRC has been accompanied by forced recruitment of children by all groups.[2]

For purposes of this hearing, CARE has been asked specifically to address the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), a major focus of our work on the ground. We welcome the recent surge in attention to this long-ignored issue, including the cover story on SGBV in the DRC that appeared in the New York Times earlier this month[3] and hope that this renewed focus on the issue and the resultant public outrage will translate into meaningful and sustained action on the part of donor governments and the international community at large.

October marks 7 years since the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, declaring its intention to effectively address violations of women's human rights in conflict situations. Yet in many parts of the Great Lakes region today, sexual- and gender-based violence remains one of the gravest manifestations of the insecurity facing ordinary people. In the case of eastern DRC, the rates of these violations have risen to catastrophic levels and their increasing regularity and brutality over time is well documented.[4] Armed groups in eastern Congo are effectively using sexual violence as a weapon of war and destruction, inflicting grievous physical, psychological, and social harm on women, children, and entire communities.

According to the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA), over 2,000 cases of rape have been reported in North Kivu between January and September of this year alone.[5] The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) further reports 18,000 cases of rape reported in 2006 in three Congolese provinces, including North Kivu.[6] The estimate is that children represent at least 31 percent of the victims.[7] These figures, as outrageous as they are, mask the true scope of the problem as they do not take into account the many violations that go unreported for a variety of reasons, including stigmatization of victims by communities, a lack of redress for survivors, and an environment of impunity. As one CARE health worker in Maniema province put it to a colleague there, "Women who experience rape or sexual violence are punished three times: Once by the violence itself, once by their communities if they dare complain, and a third time when they see the culprits walking the street."

Our own research in the Great Lakes region has revealed the widespread prevalence of this crime against humanity. For example, a recent survey that CARE conducted in the eastern Congolese province of Maniema revealed that 70 percent of victims of sexual violence surveyed reported that they knew other women who had undergone similar experiences and that 80 percent of these victims said that they

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[1] Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 13 August 2007, (A/62/228).

[2] DRC, North Kivu Crisis—"Humanitarian Situation and UNICEF Response," December 2006–October 2007, UNICEF, 18 October 2007.

[3] "Rape Epidemic Raises Trauma of Congo War," New York Times, October 7, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/07/world/africa/07congo.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin (last accessed October 20, 2007).

[4] Information on the atrocities can be found in the UNICEF–V-day initiative "Stop Raping Our Greatest Resource: Power to Women in the DRC" http://www.vday.org/contents/drcongo (last accessed October 20, 2007).

[5] "DRC: Rape Cases up by 60% in North Kivu"—Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) News and Analysis online October 11, 2007. http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=74767 (last accessed October 20, 2007).

[6] "DRC: Sexual Violence the Scourge of the East" (OCHA) News and Analysis online, October 16, 2007. http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=74801.

[7] Briefing by John Holmes, U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator, to the U.N. Security Council, September 11, 2007. http://ochaonline.un.org/AboutOCHA/Organigramme/TheUnderSecretaryGeneral/SpeechesandStatements2007/tabid/1156/Default.aspx.

had been gang-raped.[8] While much of the sexual violence in this area is perpetrated by armed men associated with the Mai Mai, the Congolese Army, the FDLR and militias loyal to Laurent Nkunda, CARE research also indicates that sexual violence committed by civilians is now on the rise, demonstrating a disturbing trend toward the inculcation of sexual violence as a phenomenon into the wider culture. This is particularly alarming, as the end of insecurity itself will not bring about a cessation to this heinous crime. The idea that "being raped is normal" has taken hold in an environment where outright war has transitioned to banditry, and lawlessness, and impunity reign.

Rampant sexual- and gender-based violence against women and girls is also alarmingly prevalent in northern Uganda. Even at this moment of relative peace, less than 20 percent of defilement cases are taken to the police because of a lack of a functioning judicial system in the region.[9] A recent survey of local perceptions of the peace process in northern Uganda indicates that many women fear that the high levels of gender-based violence that characterized life in displacement will continue after resettlement.[10]

All this calls for an increased emphasis on programs focused both on prevention and response to sexual- and gender-based violence. CARE's experience with gender-based violence programming in the region underscores the need for strong awareness-raising and educational efforts to tackle social norms around gender roles, identity, and violence, as well as for initiatives that involve both men and women in networks of activism against gender violence. Also essential is the expansion and improvement of locally accessible medical, psychosocial, and legal services and better coordination among the entities offering these services.

Finally, there is an urgent need to support stronger implementation by national governments of national, regional, and international legal commitments, including through inclusive action planning and ongoing learning and monitoring of progress, in order to improve and expand prevention efforts, basic service provision, and access to justice and accountability for such crimes. We note the adoption in November 2006 of the "Great Lakes Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children" in particular, and encourage its urgent implementation. At an international level, we note the need for the U.N. Security Council to show leadership on this issue by developing a mechanism, such as a working group, to monitor grave violations of women's human rights such as SGBV in conflict.

We are pleased that distinguished members of this committee will shortly introduce the International Violence against Women Act (I–VAWA), which seeks to establish mechanisms to aggressively address GBV in developing countries in both conflict and peacetime settings. CARE supports this legislation as a critical first step on the U.S. Government's part. We would also note that addressing GBV in the Great Lakes will require tackling the larger challenges in the region that the other panelists here today and I have outlined, including: Rampant insecurity; a near total absence of legitimate, accountable government institutions; a culture of impunity; the marginalization of women and the resulting abject poverty that so many people in these countries face.

Summary of Protection Recommendations

- Support national government capacity and accountability for implementing national laws and regional and international instruments addressing women's human rights and, particularly, national action plans and initiatives aimed at addressing SGBV.
- Increase funding to meet survivors' immediate needs, including the full range of essential medical care, legal aid, and psychosocial support, while investing in national and decentralized institutions charged with providing access to justice and key social services.
- Increase support to community-based awareness raising and dialog on social norms that contribute to SGBV and to interventions that reduce women's vulnerability to over time—e.g., through greater access to education, inheritance rights, economic livelihoods, and political empowerment.

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[8] CARE Survey undertaken Nov. 8–15, 2006, in southern Maniema province.

[9] "CARE Baseline Survey for Women's Empowerment Project," September 2007.

[10] "Report of Consultations on Reconciliation and Accountability Held With Communities in Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile Sub-Regions" August 2007, Civil Society Organizations for Peace In Northern Uganda (CSOPNU).

LONG-TERM, EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ending the instability and meeting immediate- and short-term humanitarian assistance and protection needs in the region can only be the first part of a long-term strategy to ensure a durable peace. Implementing peace agreements and preventing countries in the region from sliding back into war will require consistent and robust engagement in years and even decades to come to address the underlying drivers of insecurity, build legitimate, accountable, and effective governance down to provincial and local levels, and strengthen systems and capacities for basic service delivery for all.

Of course, a balanced approach is required. In the DRC, the U.S. should provide substantial, long-term funding and technical assistance to strengthen governance, including service delivery, at national and decentralized levels, but should couple those efforts with ongoing humanitarian and development funding to assist local populations as the government of the DRC develops its own capacity to do so. Focusing on governance and institutions without simultaneously addressing immediate needs would not be a sound strategy, nor would focusing only on current needs to the exclusion of meaningful efforts to set up the right institutions and strengthen capacities for the DRC to govern itself.

Similarly, a "peace dividend" will have to accompany any agreement that is reached to end the longstanding conflict in northern Uganda. A peace process will only be as good as the improvements that it brings to people's lives; therefore ensuring that people have something to go home to is of paramount importance. Major efforts to rehabilitate infrastructure and provide basic services to IDPs as they return home must be the central focus for both donors and the Government of Uganda, and plans for these activities must be prepared now in anticipation of a peace agreement, not after one is struck. Many IDPs have already begun to return home, encouraged by progress in the peace talks, so it is critical that this assistance begin to be phased in.

Furthermore, the U.S. must play a role in ensuring that the Government of Uganda makes efforts to even out the levels of economic development and service provision between the north and the more prosperous south of the country. This inequality in wealth and opportunity was one of the underlying causes of the conflict and must be addressed head on to prevent the resurgence of fighting.

Summary of Development Recommendations

- Provide comprehensive, well-phased assistance for humanitarian and development needs in both countries, while simultaneously supporting governance and institution-building.
- Support rehabilitation of amenities and services for returning displaced persons in anticipation of peace agreements.
- Urge the Government of Uganda to move beyond rhetorical promises in addressing the longstanding neglect and economic disparities between northern Uganda and the rest of the country by dedicating significant resources to do so.
- Ensure that state-building in the DRC includes a major focus and major investments in strengthening governance and service delivery in the East.

CONCLUSION

There is hope in the Great Lakes region for movement forward in ending the complex and horrific conflicts that have racked the region for decades. Both the situations in northern Uganda and the eastern DRC stand at a critical juncture in which effort on the part of the international community—and in particular the U.S. Government—could turn the tide toward peace. This window of opportunity should be seized by employing both diplomatic and foreign assistance resources in full force, and doing so with a regional mindset that ensures integration across country-level strategies, plans, and interventions.

In closing, I would note that peace in the Great Lakes will not come in a single moment—the conflicts in these countries will not be concluded by successful elections or the signing of a peace agreement. Securing peace is a process, not an event, and the U.S. Government and its partners in the international community should view it as such and orient their actions toward a long-term, consistent and robust engagement across the Great Lakes in order to realize a durable solution to the trouble the has plagued this critical region.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. Fitzcharles, for your testimony and your work. And let me just underscore this phenomenon of sexual violence, particularly in eastern Congo, is easily one of the most sickening things I have ever seen, 15 years on this com-

mittee, reviewing crises all around the world. This needs far, far more attention.

Mr. De Lorenzo.

STATEMENT OF MAURO DE LORENZO, RESIDENT FELLOW, FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY STUDIES, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. DE LORENZO. Chairman Feingold, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear here today, and thank you, also, for your sustained attention to this region over many, many years.

In the interest of time, I'm going to summarize, and would ask that my full testimony be submitted for the record.

And, before talking about some of the outstanding challenges in eastern Congo, I want to emphasize that, contrary to conventional wisdom, the prospects for sustained peace and security in the Great Lakes region today are actually better than they have been at any time since the mid-1980s. That's not always apparent, because of the horrific things that continue to go on. And the U.S. engagement across two administrations has played an important role in this fairly remarkable turnaround.

Rwanda, today, slightly less than 15 years after the genocide, is at peace, it's become a model of sound economic and business policy, good governance, and the use of aid. The country's leaders often have less confidence in the durability of their own achievements than they ought to, which causes them to exercise extreme caution about the political and the media space. But, I think, as they gain more confidence that press and political freedoms won't be used by extremists to reconnect with the population, we can expect, or I hope we can expect, to see more liberalization in the years to come.

Most significantly, I think, for peace in the region, Rwanda made a strategic decision in 2004 to shift to a more pragmatic foreign policy, emphasizing dialog with its neighbors, and deemphasizing the use of force as a means to settle its differences.

Burundi is enjoying a fragile, but real, peace, bar one party, and this is the place, also, I think, to single out Congressman Wolpe's Burundi leadership training program, which is supported by USAID, and which has made a real difference, most recently this summer, in bringing together everyone in Burundi to talk about that country's problems. Just a few years ago, it would have been impossible to imagine that that would—that that could take place. It underscores that nongovernmental U.S. action or U.S. engagement in this region is as important as official action.

Congo is not fully at peace, but, thanks to massive international support, including very substantial U.S. support from MONUC, democratic elections there were held in 2006. However, for many years to come, the country is going to remain disordered and its public institutions prone to human rights violations, even if the international community remains substantially engaged. If the international community disengages, most of the gains that have been made since 2003 will be reversed.

The most serious threat to peace in Congo is to be found in Kivu, as has been the case since 1960. And the current standoff there between government forces and General Nkunda does, indeed, have

the possibility to derail the Congolese transition and, in fact, erase the gains of the entire region. But if the crisis is managed carefully, I believe this doesn't have to happen.

I'll say a few words, I think—or a few caveats, really—about Congolese Tutsi and the Nkunda problem in North Kivu. He justifies his refusal to join the national army with an appeal to fears for the safety of Congolese Tutsi in eastern Congo. If past is prologue, the fears of this community are justified.

And General Nkunda receives substantial support from his community precisely because they're afraid that incidents of killing, expropriation, and expulsion that have happened over the years would be repeated. In other words, the current crisis in eastern Congo is political, it's related to the architecture of security forces in the East, and it's not about an individual.

Even if you were to sideline Nkunda, to arrest him, or if he were to be killed or defeated, the people that give him support would continue to fight, because they feel they're fighting for their own survival. There are many commanders who would step up to take his place.

Neither would putting pressure on President Kabila solve their problem. He's not the cause of the problem. The problem is a political one, in that he's too weak to rein in the extremist politicians who have, for very many years, called for the expulsion of Congolese of Rwandan origin, both Hutu and Tutsi. These hardliners are urging a military solution on the President. And, because his base of political support in Congo is so narrow, confined to Kivu and Katanga and some other Swahili-speaking parts of the country, he can't lose Kivu politically and maintain a secure grip on power.

So, you have a situation where, ironically, it's the very democratic process of 2006 that has produced a political constellation that has strengthened political extremists in Kivu and made it extremely difficult for Kabila to act against their priorities and wishes. Nkunda and his supporters are aware of this, and it strengthens their resolve not to disarm and not to trust the government.

For this reason, my view is that the conditions are currently not ripe for a negotiated political settlement of the standoff in North Kivu. And they won't be ripe until Kabila has a broader base of political support in the DRC, potentially by allying himself with other forces in the country. U.S. and MONUC policy should focus on managing the crisis to contain the risk of a return to war in the region until a political solution is achievable, and also focus on the urgent humanitarian needs.

I'll run through four scenarios, all of which are unattractive.

In one, the Congolese Army attacks Nkunda's forces and is defeated. In that scenario, Kabila would be fatally weakened and may lose his grip on power. MONUC could also take casualties and the U.N. could find it, across Africa, more difficult to field large-scale peace operations.

If Kabila gives in to Nkunda's demands through a negotiated settlement—dropping charges against him, for example—similarly, he could be seen as weak and lose the support of his base, and you could see a destabilizing competition for political power.

Similarly, if Nkunda gives in to Kabila's demands, he would probably be sidelined by his own officers and supporters before any such deal could be put in effect, and they have the capacity to continue fighting in the East for a number of years to come.

The most dangerous scenario is one, which is currently being contemplated, where Nkunda is defeated militarily by a joint Congolese Army/MONUC operation. If Nkunda is defeated, so long as the FDLR, the Rwandan rebels and extremist Mayi-Mayi militias are still a force to be reckoned with in Kivu, they will likely attack Banyarwanda civilians, an expulsion of those civilians, or worse, would be a predictable consequence. This scenario might also signal the reemergence of the FDLR as a military force on Rwanda's border.

The ENOUGH Project and other observers have already documented cases of known FDLR units cooperating with Congolese Army units in recent months. There's some debate about whether that has official sanction.

Rwanda could be forced to act under such a scenario, even though it's actually not in their national interest to do so and they have no interest in doing so. In this connection, it's important to recall that the FDLR has been designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Department of State and should not be treated as if they're just any other party to this conflict. They killed Americans in Uganda in 1998.

A caveat that applies to all of these scenarios that involve military action, particularly where MONUC through logistical support, is enabling the Congolese Army to be more active and have more control over the countryside. A predictable consequence of that is an increase in sexual violence, since, as we know, those forces are one of the main perpetrators. Similarly, support from MONUC that enables the FDLR and the Mayi-Mayi to roam more freely across the countryside will also result in more sexual violence against women, not less.

I have a number of other things to say about the role of the United States, but I think I'll just sum up by saying that a pragmatic U.S. and international policy recognizes that North Kivu was a problem to be managed for some time to come by promoting concrete intermediate confidence-building measures and using U.S. diplomatic and military leverage to deter a return to all-out war while managing some of the humanitarian challenges.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. De Lorenzo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAURO DE LORENZO, RESIDENT FELLOW, FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY STUDIES, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, DC

Chairman Feingold, Senator Sununu, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

A REMARKABLE TURNAROUND

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the prospects for sustained peace and security in the Great Lakes region are actually better today than they have been at any time since the mid-1980s. Moreover, quiet U.S. engagement there across two administrations has played an important role in this remarkable turnaround.

In the 1990s, a series of interlocking crises in Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda produced some of the worst horrors anywhere in the world since the Second World War.

Today, 10 years later, Rwanda is not only at peace, it has become a model of sound economic and business policy, good governance, and the judicious use of aid. The country is making slow but steady progress on reconciliation. The country's leaders often have less confidence in the durability of their achievements than they ought to, causing them to exercise extreme caution about the political and media space. As they gain confidence that the proponents of the ideology that gave rise to the genocide of 1994 will not be able to use press and political freedoms to reconnect with the population, we can expect to see further liberalization in the years to come. Most significantly for peace and security, Rwanda made a strategic decision in 2004 to shift to a more pragmatic foreign policy by deemphasizing the use of force and attempting to resolve differences with neighbors through dialog. As a result, bilateral relations Rwanda on the one hand, and Uganda, Congo, and Burundi on the other, have never been better.

Burundi is also enjoying a fragile but real peace, bar one faction of the most extreme party to that conflict, the Palipehutu-FNL. The credit for this progress is due to Burundian political actors themselves (with crucial support from South African mediators and the South African military), but this is the place to single out the work of former U.S. Congressman Howard Wolpe and his colleagues at the Woodrow Wilson Center, whose Burundi Leadership Training Program, supported by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, created a unique space for dialog that helped Burundians from opposing sides to build confidence in one another. Nongovernmental U.S. engagement is as fundamental in this region as official action.

Congo is not fully at peace, but, thanks to massive international support—including very substantial U.S. support to MONUC[1]—democratic elections were held there in 2006. When assessing Congo's progress, it is useful to bear in mind that the country has never been well-ordered nor able to fully administer its territory. Its military has always been a predatory force. The success of interventions must therefore be judged using realistic yardsticks. For many years to come, the country will remain disordered and its public institutions prone to human rights violations, even if the international community remains substantially engaged. If the international community disengages, most of the gains that have been made since 2003 will be reversed.

The most serious threat to peace in Congo is to be found in Kivu—as has been the case for more than 40 years. The current standoff there between the Congolese Government and forces led by Laurent Nkunda has the potential to derail the Congolese transition and erase the gains of the entire region. But if the crisis is managed carefully, this does not have to happen. The United States has an important role to play through its management of the Tripartite Plus process and through its ability to help shape the mission and doctrine of MONUC.

It is important that the remaining obstacles to peace, serious as they are, not obscure the basically positive trends. The United States has played a helpful role in this evolution, from the mediation efforts of the late 1990s to today's Tripartite Plus framework. I expect that the United States will continue to play an important role, particularly if any increases in funding are targeted at key areas where they will have the most immediate impact: Security-sector reform and DDR, regional economic integration, the Tripartite Plus process, and the continuation of MONUC's mission.

CONGOLESE TUTSI AND THE "NKUNDA PROBLEM" IN NORTH KIVU

Brigadier General Laurent Nkunda, a Congolese Tutsi officer who formerly served as a commander in the RCD[2] rebel movement, refused to be integrated into the Congolese Army after the transitional government came into being in 2003. He controls territory in North Kivu and maintains a substantial military force whose capacities, by some accounts, exceed that of the Congolese Army itself. He justifies his refusal to join the national army—and accept the consequent dispersal of his forces around the country—with an appeal to fears for the safety of Congolese Tutsi in eastern Congo,[3] both from attacks by the Rwandan FDLR rebel group—the rem-

[1] MONUC is the U.N. Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

[2] The RCD is the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, the rebel movement that controlled eastern Congo between 1998 and 2003. It is now a political party that is represented in the Congolese legislature.

[3] It is important to be aware of the distinction between Banyamulenge and Congolese Tutsi. The Banyamulenge community of South Kivu is a subset of the Congolese Tutsi, with a distinct history and culture. Laurent Nkunda is a Congolese Tutsi from North Kivu, and thus not a member of the Banyamulenge community, even though some Banyamulenge officers serve under him. The two groups are however subject to the same forms of political exclusion and physical

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nants of the militias that carried out the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, who remain ensconced in the hills and valleys of Kivu—and from Congolese Mayi-Mayi militias, which are linked to ethnic extremists within the Congolese political establishment, who have always denied that Banyarwanda[4] can be Congolese. Many Mayi-Mayi militias in Kivu have also refused to disarm and integrate into the national army, despite orders to do so.

If past is prologue, the fears of the Congolese Tutsi community are justified. The recent violent riots which drove the United Nations briefly out of Moba in South Kivu were caused by the mere rumor (unfounded, as it turned out) that the United Nations was planning to repatriate Congolese Tutsi refugees. The fears of Congolese Tutsi that they could again be expropriated, expelled, or killed, as they were in the early 1960s, 1993, 1996, 1998, and 2004, explain why General Nkunda receives substantial support from his own community.

In other words, the current crisis in eastern Congo is political and related fundamentally to the architecture of security forces in the East. It is not about an individual. The question of the citizenship status of Congolese Banyarwanda—both Hutu and Tutsi—caused fighting in the early 1960s. Fighting broke out again in the early 1990s, before the Rwandan genocide took place. Bukavu and Uvira in South Kivu were cleansed of Tutsi in 2004 after Nkunda withdrew his forces from Bukavu after trying to capture the city. They have not been allowed to return, and local leaders in the city have expressed satisfaction that it is finally "clean." That was followed by the massacre of 150 Congolese Tutsi refugees at Gatumba refugee camp in Burundi by a joint force of FNL,[5] Mayi-Mayi, and FDLR[6] units, apparently with links to some Congolese officials. This year, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security resettled several hundred survivors of that massacre to the United States.

Because Nkunda represents the rational fears of his community, removing him from the scene will not solve the problem, despite the hopes of some external observers looking at the situation for the first time in search of a quick fix. There are many other commanders who would step up to replace him if he were killed or arrested. Furthermore, he would quickly lose the support of his commanders, soldiers, and financial backers if he were to make significant concessions to the Congolese Government—and become politically irrelevant. Like virtually everyone else in Congolese political and military establishment, Nkunda has very serious blemishes on his record because the conduct of forces under his command between 2002 and today clearly contravened international law. But when he is singled out for punishment while the crimes of others have been forgiven, it reinforces the sense of fatalistic isolation in the Tutsi community that leads some of its leaders to conclude that they cannot hope for a place in the new democratic Congo.

KABILA'S POLITICAL POSITION

Neither will putting pressure on President Kabila solve the problem. He is too weak to rein in the extremist politicians who have long called for Congolese Banyarwanda (both Hutu and Tutsi) to be expelled from the country (the first Congo war in 1996 was sparked off by an attempt to do so), and who raised vociferous alarm earlier this year when the government was negotiating with Nkunda. These hard-liners are urging a military solution on the President, and because his base of political support in Congo is so narrow (essentially Kivu, parts of the northeast, and his father's home base of Katanga), he cannot "lose" Kivu politically and maintain a secure grip on power. Kabila is not the cause of the crisis, except inasmuch as his leadership has been feckless and lacked vision. There is no evidence that he personally is anti-Tutsi, though he was happy to instrumentalize anti-Rwandan sentiment in Kivu as part of his strategy for electoral victory in 2006.

Kabila's personal vulnerability on this issue is heightened by persistent rumors, almost certainly unfounded, that he himself had a Tutsi mother—an allegation deployed against him with great effect by his opponent Jean-Pierre Bemba in the 2006

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attack, though the Banyamulenge response has tended to be much less organized than that of Congolese Tutsi in North Kivu.

[4] The term "Banyarwanda" refers to the ethnic group, not the citizenship. "Rwandans" refers to citizens of Rwanda only. "Banyarwanda" includes members of the broader ethnic group that lives mostly in Rwanda, but also in Congo and Uganda. In this case, Banyarwanda refers to Congolese Banyarwanda, both Hutu and Tutsi.

[5] The Forces Nationales de Libération, a Burundian Hutu rebel movement with extremist tendencies.

[6] The Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda, an umbrella organization that includes the former *interahamwe* militias that carried out the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, members of the former Rwandan Army that helped execute the genocide as well as various political exiles. It has been designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Department of State.

election. Kabila's margin of maneuver to cut a deal with Laurent Nkunda or to empower moderate political forces in Kivu is thus very small.

Ironically, it is the very democratic process of 2006 that has produced a political constellation that strengthened extremists in Kivu. This makes it extremely difficult for Kabila to act against their wishes. Nkunda and his supporters are aware of this, and it strengthens their resolve not to disarm and not to trust the government.

For this reason, the conditions are currently not ripe for a negotiated political settlement to the standoff in North Kivu. The conditions will not be ripe until Kabila achieves a broader base of political support in the DRC, possibly by allying himself with political groups that are strong in Kasai, Bas-Congo, or Equateur. This will make him less dependent on the favor of the most extreme figures in Kivu politics, and more able to empower moderates.

Furthermore, because MONUC has recently openly allied itself with a government which is itself dependent on anti-Banyarwanda extremists, MONUC's credibility amongst Congolese Tutsi is currently nil. This limits MONUC's ability to serve as an honest broker, and potentially exposes it to reputational risks that I will describe below.

U.S. and MONUC policy should focus on managing the crisis to contain the risk of a return to war in the region until a political solution is achievable.

FOUR RISKY SCENARIOS

A number of analysts with deep experience of the region believe that the North Kivu crisis does not represent a significant risk to the new democratic order in Congo or to the security of neighboring states. But there are at least four scenarios under which an attempt to resolve the crisis by force results in greater tragedy.

Scenario 1: The Congolese Army attacks Nkunda's forces, with logistical support from MONUC, and is defeated. Nkunda's forces are well-trained and experienced, and above all they have a clear sense of purpose, because they feel they are fighting for the survival of their community. Kabila would be fatally weakened as a leader because of such a defeat, and might be forced from office. If MONUC units take casualties, the mission may be forced by troop-contributing countries to withdraw or effectively retreat into a tortoise shell for the remainder of its mandate. As a result, the ability of the United Nations to field similarly large and ambitious peacekeeping missions elsewhere on the continent, as they will inevitably be called upon to do, could be imperiled. Action of this type is being contemplated, and would, in my opinion, be very unwise.

Scenario 2: Kabila gives into Nkunda's demands, dropping charges against him, and allowing him to integrate into the national army and remain in the East with his forces more or less intact. Kabila would be seen as weak, and would lose the support of his base. He might not be able to survive as leader, opening the political space to a destabilizing competition for political power.

Scenario 3: Nkunda gives in to Kabila's demands, accepting integration into the national army for himself and his troops. He would probably be sidelined by his own officers and supporters before any such deal could be put into effect. They would keep fighting because they have no confidence in the willingness, much less ability, of Congolese security forces to protect them and their community. Nkunda's forces have the capacity to maintain an insurgency of some type for many years, and they can do so without any support from the Government of Rwanda. Their funds and footsoldiers are generated internally, within their community.

Scenario 4: Nkunda is defeated militarily by a joint FARDC–MONUC operation.[7] This is actually the most dangerous scenario. If Nkunda is defeated so long as the FDLR and extremist Mayi-Mayi militias are still a force to be reckoned with in Kivu, they will likely attack Banyarwanda civilians. At a minimum they will loot their property and attempt to expel them to Rwanda and Uganda. If they are bolder, they will murder many of them, as they have repeatedly done in the past. This scenario would also signal the reemergence of the FDLR as a dangerous military force on Rwanda's border.

The ENOUGH Project and other observers have already documented cases of known FDLR units cooperating with Congolese Army units in recent months. Rwanda could be forced to act under this scenario, even though its own national priorities dictate that it remain out of involvement in the Congo. Furthermore, the reputational damage to the United Nations (whose reputation in Congo has already been severely dented by sex scandals and illegal gold trading) would be significant if a military victory they helped bring about resulted in the ethnic cleansing of an

[7] The FARDC are the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo, i.e., the Congolese Army.

entire community. In this connection, it is important to recall that the FDLR has been designated a Foreign Terrorist Group by the Department of State, and was responsible for the targeted murder of Americans in Bwindi National Park in Uganda in 1998. They must not be treated as if they are just any other party to the conflict.

A caveat that applies to all scenarios involving military action: They will all dramatically increase the already unfathomable levels of sexual violence against women in Kivu. The FARDC are one of the leading perpetrators of such violence, and any help from MONUC that enables the FARDC to operate more freely throughout the countryside before the units are disciplined and under firm supervision could be considered complicity, since a rise in sexual violence would be a predictable consequence. Support from MONUC that inadvertently allows the Mayi-Mayi and FDLR militias, the chief perpetrators of the rapes, more freedom to roam would be equally devastating.

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

The Great Lakes region is an area where U.S. engagement has made an appreciable difference since the late 1990s. The real credit for the positive changes is due to the actors themselves, but the U.S. has often stepped in at crucial moments to make it possible for adversaries to discuss their differences and find pathways to resolution. This was the case during the period of tensions between Rwanda and Uganda in 1999–2000, during the negotiations that led to the peace agreements for Congo and Burundi, and it is the case now with the innovative (and mostly unheralded) Tripartite Plus mechanism. This mechanism creates a venue for military and security officials from Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda to meet regularly and work out the differences in a structured manner. It is cost-effective, produces results, and is a form of U.S. engagement that is welcomed by the regional governments, because it allows them to maintain control of the agenda.

This is also the place to salute the small cohort of professionals in the U.S. Government who know this region very well and have grappled with its complexities for many years. With limited resources and infrequent attention from senior policymakers, they have done remarkable work in helping to consolidate peace and security in the region, and in helping policymakers make sense of a complex and mysterious region about which it is very difficult to obtain reliable information.

A more substantial U.S. engagement would most profitably focus on security-sector reform (as a major component of a strategy to reduce sexual violence), regional economic integration, and continuing to facilitate high-level contacts between the countries of the region. It would also commit to supporting MONUC for several years to come.

In summary, the Great Lakes region stands at its most auspicious moment in a generation, despite outward appearances of crisis. Nevertheless, the remaining obstacles to peace and security in the region are real, and, if mismanaged, could have catastrophic consequences.

The United States has a key role to play by maintaining its bilateral engagement while ensuring adequate funding for MONUC even as it makes sure that MONUC applies its mandate in the most even-handed manner possible, by being more aggressive with all illegal armed groups in the country, to include the FDLR, the Mayi-Mayi, the LRA, as well as Nkunda's forces. The fact that Congo now has a democratically elected government does not require the international community to acquiesce in (and pay for) policy choices which will predictably result in political disaster and violations of human rights law.

Every effort must be made to discourage the Congolese Government from pursuing a military solution to the problem of the dissident officers in North Kivu. Both defeat and victory would be fraught with danger, as I indicated above. The human consequences, though impossible to predict, could, based on the recent experiences of the region, dwarf that of any other current crisis on the continent.

A pragmatic U.S. and international policy recognizes that North Kivu is a problem to be managed for some time to come by promoting concrete, intermediate confidence-building measures and using its diplomatic and military leverage to deter a return to all-out war.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you very much.

I certainly acknowledge the situations that have improved over the last 15 years, and I certainly think you were accurate in your general description of what has happened in the DRC. But I just want it very clear on the record, the elections in the DRC were surprisingly good and credible compared, for example, to what hap-

pened in Nigeria. On the other hand, what's happening in eastern Congo is not simply a situation where there's sort of a huge humanitarian crisis and sort of a mopup of remaining military problems. The situation is militarily very complex, involving so many international players that the humanitarian situation, as you just suggested, cannot be seriously addressed unless those pieces are very aggressively addressed.

It is just so important that people get the right impression about what's happening here. It's good news, but there's also very bad news, and it's not something that's almost taken care of, by any means. And I think that that's something I want everyone following this to realize about this crisis in the eastern Congo.

Ms. Smith, despite last year's historic election in the DRC, my recent visit highlighted how fragile the domestic political situation remains. Within the government, a lack of capacity, political will, and democratic experience have hobbled forward movement, with almost no progress on key political issues such as decentralization, resource management, and military reform. Meanwhile, the local population is increasingly disenchanted with President Kabila's government, since, for the most part they've seen little change in their daily lives.

What do you think the United States and other donors should prioritize in our diplomacy and assistance to help ensure that the Congolese Government follows through on critical policy initiatives and that the Congolese people see evidence of a "democracy dividend"?

Ms. SMITH. This is a really key question, I think, we've seen around the world that—where democracy doesn't deliver. We see setbacks. And I think that would be a real mistake in Congo, given, as you pointed out, that the elections were far better than any of us had anticipated.

I think there are a couple of things that—I'm pleased that my colleague also mentioned the work of former Congressman Howard Wolpe, who is doing this work all over the region, at this point, in Burundi and also in the Congo. And he's just started the project in the Congo. And what's interesting there is that it attacks, head on, this problem in the Congo of "winner takes all." That's been the political culture for decades. And so, essentially what they do is get everybody in the same room and train them in, how do you make joint decisions about resource allocation, so it's not a discussion of which political entity gets how much of the pie, but how do they collectively make decisions, based on the national economy and before a national citizenry. That's a—the kind of initiative that will take time to bear fruit, but, I think, is an absolutely critical instrument of our success. It's being funded by USAID, but I would certainly expand that funding.

Second, I would urge that we concentrate the investment of our aid dollars so that we can help, to the greatest extent possible, see real returns, probably, most appropriately, in agriculture, so that people can see tangible gains, either in agriculture or education. We're spread out, as we are in every country around the world. We do a little bit of everything. I'd narrow those resources to a couple of key priorities so that the government doesn't face the problem that President Obasanjo did in Nigeria, right when he came into

power, which was trying to do everything, and being a mile wide and an inch deep, and have nothing substantive to deliver a couple of years into the game. So, I'd concentrate, and I'd invest much more in our friend Howard.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, first, let me acknowledge Congressman Wolpe's tremendous leadership in this area. I learned from him a great deal in my extensive trip to Africa in 1999, and he really has been an incredibly well-informed and able person in this area.

I'm also so pleased that Senator Nelson has joined us, and, when I finish my round, I'll turn to him for a round of questions.

Ms. Smith, one of the root causes of the current conflict in DRC was the historical exploitation and neglect of Congo's eastern provinces. Even today, as the World Bank and bilateral donors invest in energy and AIDS-related projects just across the border in Rwanda, almost no national or international resources are being directed toward the Kivus. I believe that there will never be sustainable peace in the region as long as these states—which make up an area the size of Rwanda itself—continue to be disregarded by the Congolese Government and the international donor community.

What do you see as the best way to increase the energy, health care, and other essential resources available to Congolese in the East?

Ms. SMITH. One of the things, Senator, I'd take a serious look at doing is seeing how we, working with the international financial institutions, the U.N., NGOs, and others, can put together a regional economic agenda that focuses on a couple of things. One is cross-border trade, and the second is petty trade within and between communities. I honestly believe—and I think the other panelists have alluded to this—that unless people have tangible assets that they want to protect, it's very easy to fall into war, and there's less resistance, as, I think, we've seen throughout. So, I think that would be one thing.

The second would be to do some joint regional programming. Even though the regional war has ended, I would not suggest, at this point, that there are warm, fuzzy relations between and among all the governments in that region. There is still a lot of skepticism. So, to the extent that we can, for example, in a field like energy—they all need affordable sources of energy that are not based on fossil fuels, because they can't afford it. Look at a regional energy facility that brings all of them into the same mix. Again, I think regional is absolutely critical.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you.

Mr. Fitzcharles, what kind of programs exist to deal with these problems of sexual and gender violence—both in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic experience like that, but also in terms of negating any social acceptance of such acts? From your on-the-ground perspective, what is missing from these programs in terms of resource and support that could make them more effective?

Mr. FITZCHARLES. Thank you.

Types of programs for SGBV generally focus on the three areas of prevention, which deal with community awareness of SGBV: Women's rights, decisionmaking in the household, how husbands and wives—or even not husbands and wives, but living together—make decisions. Then, second, what happens when SGBV occurs?

What happens to the survivor? Where can she go?—normally "she," sometimes "he"—go? What kind of assistance can they get under the law? And what kind of health assistance can they get? So, those are, basically, the three areas that most programs on SGBV are funded—are predicated.

I think you then asked the question: What can be done to increase that? Currently, there's very little funding specifically for SGBV. We've had a very difficult time. We have funding from UNFPA at the moment. It's only 6-month funding, which, I'm sure you'll agree, is quite absurd to try to do much about sexual/gender-based violence with a 6-month window. Unfortunately, we—the way we program—"we," the development community, is very sectoral, as I think you know, as well, so we'll have an SGBV component under that—under a health program, or we'll have an SGBV component under a women's rights program. But it's rare—quite rare to find a stand-alone SGBV-integrated program.

Senator FEINGOLD. Of its own, yes.

Mr. FITZCHARLES. And that's a shame, I think. I'm quite certain the U.S. Government is not funding any in——

Senator FEINGOLD. All right.

Mr. FITZCHARLES [continuing]. In northern Uganda, at least, and, I don't think, in Congo, as well.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, that's a useful comment.

Let me turn to Mr. De Lorenzo. Rwandan President Paul Kagame has publicly stated that General Nkunda has legitimate political grievances against the Congolese Government, and there is a widespread perception that Rwanda is providing support to Nkunda's forces. How would you characterize Rwanda's overriding interest in this conflict in the region and what impact—positive or negative—do you think it is having on stability in the Great Lakes region?

Mr. DE LORENZO. At the moment, I believe their role is essentially positive and fundamentally different from the way they dealt with these issues in the late 1990s and throughout the period of the RCD rebellion. The two Presidents meet often and talk often. They met most recently at the U.N. General Assembly in New York. President Kabila himself didn't raise the issue of any Rwandan support to the FDLR. The Congolese Government asked the Rwandan Government—the Rwandan Army—to help mediate between the Congolese chief of staff and General Nkunda, which they did.

Rwanda decided, in 2004, to have a go and to try and see if they could work with Kabila. Rwanda's priorities are very different now than they were in the last 1990s, and the main reason is that Rwanda has a lot more to lose, economically and in terms of the goodwill it's built up around the world with people like former President Clinton, who's very active in Rwanda, with Bill Gates, with a number of other American business leaders whose involvement in Rwanda depends on it not sullying their own reputations. And President Kagame is very aware of that. And the chief economic constraint faced by Rwanda is the price of energy and its own energy security, and solving that problem depends upon cooperation with the Congolese Government, because the only viable

source of energy for the short term is methane gas extraction from Lake Kivu, which is shared between the two countries.

So, that's why you find, at the Presidential level, but also at the ministerial level, back-and-forth exchanges, even as this crisis has unfolded. For that reason, I think it's unlikely that we'll see any direct support by Rwanda. To Nkunda, they're, in fact, kind of, annoyed with him and find him difficult to deal with. And, in fact, Nkunda is independent of them, because he has his own sources of funding and his own sources of troops from his own community.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, I think the more Rwanda can assure us that they're not giving this kind of help—and prove that they're not giving this kind of help—to General Nkunda, the more likely I and others are ready to believe that their overall influence is positive. And I of course, I want to think that, but I got a strong feeling when I was in eastern Congo that that may not be the case, but I am open to information and persuasion.

Senator Nelson.

Senator BILL NELSON. The United States is setting up a new military command, the Africa Command. Unlike its typical military commands, this is one that is going to try to integrate all the agencies of the Federal Government working together cooperatively. I'd like to know what you think about this, and what kind of advice would you have for the U.S. Department of Defense as this command is set up.

Ms. SMITH. Senator, thank you for asking that question. I think this is a huge development, and it's one where I find myself able to support the analysis that underpins it, but not the actual decision to move forward.

I think the notion of forward deploying a command in Africa—while a unified African Command may be a good idea, and an idea that's time has come, I think forward deployment is something I would look at very seriously, for a couple of reasons. If we're forward deployed, and Darfur happens, the eastern Kivus blow up, Zimbabwe goes into a greater crisis than it is already in, I think there are going to be questions about what we're going to do, and I think we would have to have that sorted out.

There are questions about the African Union and its plans and roles on the continent. I think that AFRICOM would need to be lashed up with those, and I think the response from a lot of African chiefs of staff, thus far, is that they've got more questions than answers.

The other thing is this notion of coordinating all U.S. Government agencies within and behind AFRICOM. I think their analysis of the development imperatives as tied to security in Africa are spot-on. I'm not persuaded that the frontal face of the U.S. engagement in development in Africa should be the Department of Defense. I personally would rather see a development agency out there in front on that. The coordination is critical, but I'm of the view we need to start doing that back here, across the whole of government first before experimenting it—with a forward command on the African Continent.

So, I think there are more questions to be answered before this should be launched.

Mr. FITZCHARLES. Yes, thank you. From the Uganda perspective, I've met the—some of the AFRICOM people, and the Embassy there has done a good job in introducing AFRICOM to civil society. They're working mostly in bridges, road reconstruction, et cetera. There's actually a civil-military team in northern Uganda, where, I believe, maybe, Senator Feingold may have met when he was there. They seem to be doing good work. They're—the underlying reason given for their presence is—which is very visible, of course, in northern Uganda, when you have a bunch of Army engineers and marines running around—the reason given is that they're training UPDF troops in human rights and civil-military relations.

I think they probably are trying to do that. I think there are only about 12—12 to 15 on the ground at the moment. It's a big job. We applaud their engineering work. There is some concern in Uganda, particularly among civil society, about the role—the military taking a leading role in humanitarian assistance, doing things like building bridges, and particularly in civilian clothes, which sometimes mixes, as we've seen in Afghanistan and other places—blurs the line between humanitarian actors and military humanitarian actions. So, there is that concern.

But, otherwise, we have an open mind about the question. And I know AFRICOM has been a political issue—South Africa and other countries.

So, I think that's all I'd comment on that. Thank you.

Mr. DE LORENZO. I would just say that AFRICOM is going to do pretty much very similar things as the previous structures did—EUCOM, PACOM, CENTCOM—but, because it was announced sort of brusquely, and because it was called Africa Command, as if you're commanding Africa, it raised a lot of concerns and doubts in Africa. And the Defense Department responded to that by emphasizing AFRICOM's possibilities to contribute to development, that there would be State Department involved, that there would be USAID involved. And what that did, paradoxically, is make people confused and think that the Defense Department is now going to be running U.S. foreign policy in Africa and U.S. development policy, even though, as I understand it, the Defense Department has no interest in doing any of those things, and now realizes that it's made an error in strategic communications and is trying to backpedal and find a way to recalibrate the message and let's say, "Look, we're going to focus on security."

I think there are two outstanding issues which they need to address. One, we need to come to some kind of definitive statement on the presence and basing question. That's still up in the air, even though the command is now operational since October 1. Is there going to be a headquarters? Where is it going to be? A lot of people are asking that question.

And, finally, there's a perception in Africa, because of timing, that AFRICOM is a reaction to the China-Africa issue, which I believe actually was not part of the Defense Department's calculations when they were making this decision. Nevertheless, Africans believe it. And one thing they're worried about is that they have memories of the cold war, and they don't want to be in between or underneath two giants. And so, I think that's something we have

to address head on when we're explaining the purpose of this command and why it's there.

Senator BILL NELSON. I want to ask you about the child soldiers in northern Uganda. How have our U.S.-funded programs addressed this problem?

Mr. FITZCHARLES. Thank you.

The problem of child soldiers, which you—I'm sure you know, there are estimates of 25 to 30,000 who have been abducted, and many of them have not returned, of course. I think the numbers of returnees are probably between the 5 and 10,000 range.

There are a number of programs, many run by faith-based organizations, that collect children, working closely with UNICEF, register them, put them through courses of psychosocial counseling, often find their families again, reunite them with families. If they can't find their families, they find uncles or aunts or grandparents. And I think they do a good job in the initial reception, training, and then reintegration.

The big problem lies in any followup, particularly for the girls. There are no markets, there are no jobs, there's nothing—you can train a returnee until the cows come home, but, if there's no job and no markets, it's impossible for that person to make a living.

What happens often is, they return to the streets. There's a growing number of street children in all the cities in the North. Many of them are returnees. Some of them are then initially accepted by the communities, and then some of them are rejected after that, by the same communities, when life becomes difficult for them or when they're not contributing something.

So, definitely longer term programs, psychosocial, and reintegration programs are lacking, and that's a real need, I think.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, both panels, and, of course, Senator Nelson, for his strong involvement on the subcommittee. I'm determined to keep the focus on this Great Lakes region, and I believe this hearing today has really helped us keep some momentum going on this, so I thank you very much.

And that concludes the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 10:55 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

ENOUGH PROJECT REPORT—STRATEGY PAPER NO. 7, SEPTEMBER 2007, SUBMITTED BY KATHERINE ALMQUIST

AVERTING THE NIGHTMARE SCENARIO IN EASTERN CONGO

By John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen

Between 1996 and 2002, the two massive wars fought in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were arguably the world's deadliest since World War II. With almost no international fanfare, Congo is on the brink of its third major war in the last decade, and almost nothing is being done to stop it.

A dissident Congolese Tutsi General named Laurent Nkunda and at least 3,000 loyal forces have carved out control of parts of North Kivu Province. The Congolese government has responded by realigning itself with the FDLR—a militia composed of more than 6,000 Rwandan Hutu rebels, many with links to the 1994 genocide in their home country—to fight Nkunda's more effective force.

Fighting between the two sides has intensified in recent weeks. Troops are being deployed to the front line and more are being forcibly recruited, and the potential for Rwanda to be drawn back into Congo—as it was in the two previous wars—increases with each day the international community drags its feet.

War in the Great Lakes region has been in a state of suspension over the last few years, despite the Congolese peace deal, and it ominously appears that the conflict has not yet reached its conclusion. Despite a complex peace deal and successful Congolese elections in late 2006, Congo will head down the road to a third cataclysm if the international community does not take much more robust action.

Incredibly, the world's largest peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Mission in the Congo, or MONUC, is not engaging in any official dialogue with Nkunda, and there is no comprehensive diplomatic effort to head off what could return eastern Congo to the status it has held for much of the past decade as the world's deadliest war zone. And while the U.N. Security Council President issued a statement in July urging all actors in the conflict to use diplomatic and political means to resolve the crisis, no one has stepped up to make that happen. The international community is not bringing strong pressure to bear on the Congolese government or Nkunda and his backers to negotiate. To arrest a bloody slide toward a catastrophic regional war, the international community must act quickly to implement a comprehensive political, economic, and military strategy, which involves launching negotiations between the Congolese government and Nkunda and dealing concurrently with the pretext for his rebellion—the FDLR.

Nkunda and the FDLR are inexorably entwined. The continued presence of the FDLR, the danger they pose to civilians, and the failure of the Congolese army to protect its citizens enables Nkunda to portray himself as a protector of his Tutsi community. At the same time, human rights abuses by Nkunda's forces reinforce anti-Tutsi and anti-Rwandan sentiment in the region, and bolster calls for a decisive military solution to his rebellion. "Nkunda is a pyromaniac masquerading as a firefighter," says Congo expert Jason Stearns. "The abuses committed by forces under his control fuel pervasive anti-Tutsi sentiment in the Kivus, yet he claims to be the only person who can protect his people."

Recent attempts by Kabila's government to co-opt Nkunda and his forces have backfired, strengthening Nkunda's hand and emboldening hardliners in the Presidential circle who prefer a military solution. Given the systemic weaknesses of the Congolese army, the Congolese government has allied itself with the FDLR for military operations against Nkunda.

In a true nightmare scenario, the Congolese alliance with the FDLR could draw Rwanda back into eastern Congo, and full-scale war could again engulf the Great Lakes. Rwandan President Paul Kagame recently told ENOUGH, "The FDLR is not a strategic threat as long as there is no one behind them, supporting them. They become a strategic threat only if someone uses them."

Inevitably, civilians are caught in the crossfire of military operations, and the prevailing climate of impunity allows all sides—Nkunda, the FDLR, the Congolese army, and local militias—to exploit the local population without fear of consequences.

Within the context of the ENOUGH Project's 3P's of crisis response (Peacemaking, Protection, and Punishment), the international community must immediately develop a "carrots and sticks" approach to avoid the resumption of full-scale war and deal with the intertwined challenges of Nkunda and the FDLR.

Peacemaking: MONUC must enlist strong support from the United States, EU, and key African states such as Rwanda and South Africa for a diplomatic initiative that focuses on the carrots: Political negotiations to integrate Nkunda's forces into the Congolese army and a redoubled effort to demobilize willing FDLR forces.[1]

Protection: While maintaining its focus on protecting civilians and humanitarian operations, MONUC must assume the lead in developing the military sticks necessary to concentrate minds on finding non-violent solutions to the crisis. These sticks include credible military threats both to deal with Nkunda if political talks fail and to go after FDLR units that refuse to demobilize.

Punishment: Non-military sticks are also needed. The international community must move aggressively on three fronts: Cutting off supply lines to belligerent parties in eastern Congo; collecting data on new crimes against humanity to support future prosecution by the International Criminal Court; and increasing support for military justice reform and capacity building to effectively punish crimes committed by the Congolese military and ensure that a responsible, professional, and capable military force emerges over time.

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[1] The U.S. is well positioned to support regional diplomacy through the "Tripartite Plus" mechanism, a U.S.-backed forum for the governments of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi to discuss common security concerns.

A CYCLE ATROCITIES IN EASTERN CONGO

The vast majority of eastern Congolese are ensnared in the criminal livelihoods of numerous predatory armed groups. They are suppliers of "wives" for the army and militia, labor for the landowners, and food producers for the combatants who loot their harvests. Because of the persistent violence and displacement caused by these armed groups, one of the highest excess death rates in the world—1,200 people per day by the last comprehensive mortality study—stubbornly persists.[2] Newly elected Congolese President Joseph Kabila's government faces an uphill battle to establish security in the eastern Congolese regions of North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, Maniema, and Ituri.[3]

The Congolese army is the most guilty of human rights violations, but it is joined by roughly 8,000 to 9,000 Rwandan and Ugandan rebels (including the Lord's Resistance Army) and 5,000 to 8,000 local militiamen that operate in the East.[4] These armed groups clash with each other and with the Congolese army, and they target local villagers in a continuous cocktail of below-the-radar violence.

Heavier bouts of fighting occasionally burst onto the international radar screen. In November 2006, for example, fighting in North Kivu—between government army forces and FDLR militia on the one hand and Nkunda's forces on the other—displaced 120,000 civilians overnight. This recurring displacement experienced by civilian populations has left most communities on the knife-edge of survival.

Continued atrocities in the East have two underlying causes:

1. The long-standing structural weaknesses of the Congolese state, in particular the predatory nature of its armed forces and the general state of impunity and lawlessness across the country; and
2. The rise of parasitic armed groups—driven by competition for vast natural resources, struggle for political power, communal tensions, and legitimate security concerns—which fill the vacuum of the state and feed off its people.

Unsurprisingly, there is a very tight correlation between continued conflict and high death rates. According to the U.N., at least 1.2 million people are displaced inside Congo, most of them in the East. In the western part of Congo, death rates are similar to those in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In the East, the rates are double. People die in eastern Congo in huge numbers, indirectly due to the ripple effects of violence: Continuing attacks, ongoing rapes, and routine looting and forced labor all lead to waves of displacement, frequent epidemics, limited access to basic health services, persistent hunger and malnutrition, and spiraling impoverishment.[5]

A non-functioning state means that there is no recourse but to the slivers of international assistance that trickle in via heroic aid agency efforts, but the scale of the problems in the Congo dwarfs the response of donor governments. Moreover, humanitarian access to these vulnerable populations is under constant stress, and U.N. agencies and nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, are fighting an uphill battle to save lives. Where aid agencies do get involved, death rates go down. However, the humanitarian aid trickling through is a small drop in an ocean of need, and U.N. officials report they have less access now in parts of North Kivu than they did in the fall of 2006.

One of the most important regional developments of the last year was a thawing in relations between the Congolese and Rwandan governments, and the Ugandan and Rwandan governments. This helped the Congolese elections to occur without major incident and also de-escalated the regional confrontation between Rwanda and Uganda, which often played itself out on Congolese soil. This strategic decision by Rwanda to focus on becoming the "Singapore of Africa" and improving regional relations was perhaps the most important element in reducing large-scale conflict in Congo. All this is now put at risk because of the recent escalation between

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[2] Learn more about death rates in the Congo from the International Rescue Committee (www.theirc.org).

[3] The root causes of crimes against humanity in eastern Congo are as complex as its land is vast. ENOUGH will release a series of papers and briefings to build understanding and awareness among policymakers and activists. This strategy paper provides analysis and policy recommendations for how to thwart the growing threat of a devastating new regional conflict.

[4] To learn more about Uganda Lord's Resistance Army rebels and how to achieve peace in northern Uganda, read ENOUGH's most recent northern Uganda Strategy Paper at www.enoughproject.com.

[5] The pervasiveness of sexual violence in eastern Congo is one of the most destructive legacies of the war. Kidnappings and sexual slavery are common, as armed groups continue to ravage communities already ripped apart by years of atrocities. Prof. Yakin Ertürk, Special Rapporteur of the U.N. Human Rights Council on violence against women, who visited Congo in July 2007, stated: "From the perspective of my mandate, which focuses on violence against women, the situation in the Kivus is the worst crisis I have encountered so far."

Nkunda and Kinshasa, particularly in light of the latter's realignment with the FDLR.

Multiple motives are at play in Kinshasa and Kigali, some of which tend to reinforce some level of instability on the Congolese side of the border. Disturbingly, Nkunda has recruited from within Rwandan borders and, according to the more than 100 Rwandans who have deserted from Nkunda, Rwandan officials appear to have been complicit in this recruitment. Their motives include protection of the Tutsi community, dealing with FDLR, but also possibly protecting remaining financial and resource extraction networks in North Kivu.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO SUCH A COMPLEX EMERGENCY?

What, then, is the required response to the potential for the resumption of full scale war overlaying the chronic low-grade violence in eastern Congo that leads to continued displacement and death?

The focus must be first on the proximate causes of the violence: The military elements—foreign and Congolese, state and nonstate—that continue to prey upon the population of the East. The overarching objective must be to reduce the core level of violence through eroding the numbers of rogue armed elements and affecting the incentive structure of those that loot and kill with impunity. A successful strategy must balance a combination of diplomacy, disarmament, and reintegration of excombatants, military reform, international and domestic legal prosecution, and, as a last resort, military action.

CARROTS AND STICKS TO AVERT FULL-SCALE WAR—ENOUGH'S PROPOSALS

Security in eastern Congo is the responsibility of the government, but there is no locus of responsibility for mediation. The government wants to make bilateral deals with various militia groups and keep outside entities like MONUC away during the critical follow-up period. Too often, these deals have merely sanctioned impunity and caused other militia to break off. The atrocities continue.

Negotiation can work in Congo, but only if the U.N. and key states, including the United States, commit themselves to an initiative with tangible carrots and sticks to deal concurrently with Nkunda and the FDLR.

1. Laurent Nkunda

Nkunda is a Congolese from the ethnic Tutsi community who, off and on, has been fighting against the national army for three years and leads a rebel operation in North Kivu. He emerged to protect the Tutsi community and its interests in the East when Rwandan-backed political structures in the Kivus collapsed. Nkunda is also driven by self-preservation. His forces have been responsible for grave human rights violations in the context of military engagements, such as the forced displacement of civilians, rape, looting, and extrajudicial killings (including the massacre of civilians in Kisangani in 2002). The Congolese government issued an international arrest warrant for him in September 2005.

In January 2007, Nkunda and the Congolese government reached a tenuous agreement to "mix" their troops. According to the regional army commander, "This 'mixage' process was supposed to dilute Nkunda's control by breaking down his command structure." He went on to explain that "every Nkunda commander would have one of my men as his deputy, and vice versa." Unfortunately, by March 2007, these efforts had produced the opposite effect. Instead of diluting Nkunda's power and reining in his abuses, they reinforced his strength. His soldiers were all given new uniforms and received salaries, but they remained largely independent of the government army.

In April, with command over his forces more or less intact and with newly increased military capacity, Nkunda launched an offensive against the FDLR. Because the FDLR cohabitates with civilians in villages, Nkunda's brutal counterinsurgency tactics displaced more than 200,000 people, the largest new displacement of Congolese since 2003. The "mixage" experiment collapsed, and the Congolese government has begun deploying two additional brigades to North Kivu in preparation for an attack on Nkunda while also using ethnic divide-and-conquer tactics to break down his forces from within.

We propose the following carrots and sticks strategy:

(a) The Carrots

Carrot: MONUC, supported by partners in the donor community and key African states, should mediate a two-track political process.

- The first track should be political negotiations between the Congolese government and Nkunda aimed at the full integration of Nkunda and his forces into the Congolese army.
- The second track should be discussions between the Congolese government, the Rwandan government, MONUC, and donors on how to jointly address the root causes of violence in the Kivus.

The Congolese government sees Nkunda's rebellion as a military problem that demands a military solution. Rwanda supports Nkunda's political demands and evidence suggests that some Rwandan officials turn a blind eye to his recruitment of refugees, including children, inside Rwanda. Rwanda could easily be pulled into the conflict as evidence mounts of Congolese government support for the FDLR.

Unfortunately, MONUC has no official dialogue with Nkunda, and there is no formal mediation process focused on a solution. The Security Council must press MONUC to take a lead role in political talks, and member states must exert their leverage and press the Congolese government to back away from a military solution to Nkunda's rebellion. Member states must also press for dialogue and with the Rwandan government to end its support for Nkunda and encourage him to engage in talks with Kinshasa.

Nkunda's core political demands are the dismantling of the FDLR and the return of Congolese refugees in Rwanda back to Congo,[6] and he hopes to link negotiations on military integration to these issues, and his own security, to larger reconciliation efforts with the Congolese Tutsi community. However, like the LRA in northern Uganda, because of the horrific human rights abuses for which he is responsible, Nkunda cannot be viewed as the sole representative to negotiate on behalf the community he claims to protect. The Congolese government must work with MONUC to establish a parallel process to deal with root causes such as the one we propose above.

(b) The Sticks

The international community must demonstrate that there will be clear consequences for Nkunda—or the government—if a political settlement cannot be achieved, both as leverage to push Nkunda to the negotiating table and as an assurance to pull the Congolese government back from the brink of renewed war.

Military Stick: MONUC should work with the Congolese army to develop a joint contingency military strategy to deal with Nkunda if political negotiations fail. This would require additional special forces units from MONUC to conduct offensive operations with the Congolese army as well as for an increased emphasis on protecting civilians from the fallout.

Economic Stick: The U.N. Security Council should authorize a panel of experts to investigate lines of support for Nkunda and recommend targeted sanctions.

Legal Stick: Donors should provide increased support through MONUC for military justice reform to effectively punish crimes committed by Congolese security forces, including those loyal to Nkunda.

2. The FDLR

The FDLR are Hutu rebels with links to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Their continued presence in the Kivus, which border Rwanda, undermines stability in the East and strains Rwandan relations with Joseph Kabila's government in Kinshasa. As one senior Rwandan official told ENOUGH, "A 6,000 to 7,000 force is always a threat. They have the numbers, sophistication, ideology and training, and can be a highly disruptive force when they target key infrastructure."

Many FDLR units are self-financing. The militia has contol over mines in some areas, and local taxation of commencial routes in others. They are difficult to confront militarily because they do not stand and fight, but rather they retreat into the jungle and attack civilian populations. When they are attacked by MONUC, Nkunda's forces, or others, there are usually large numbers of revenge killings of civilians in the area, often forcing ever more people to flee their homes.

(a) The Carrots

Carrot: The Rwandan government should publish a list of FDLR members suspected of involvement in the genocide who are most wanted and clearly state that others will not be prosecuted.

Carrot: The Rwandan government should offer positions in the Rwandan army to senior FDLR commanders not on the list.

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[6] The issues are closely linked. There are 45,000 Congolese Tutsi refugees still in Rwanda who cannot return home partly because the FDLR has occupied their lands.

Carrot: MONUC should step up information campaigns and sensitization initiatives that use demobilized FDLR to explain what happens to ex-combatants who return to Rwanda.

Carrot: Working through the United Nations, donors should significantly increase the reintegration packages offered to moderate FDLR as part of the DDR strategy.

Stated broadly, the carrot is an internationally backed, multi-faceted, incentive-laden DDR program to co-opt the moderate FDLR leadership, isolate the genocidaires, and induce the rank-and-file to leave the FDLR and either return to Rwanda or demobilize and resettle inside Congo, farther away from the Rwandan border.

ENOUGH spent considerable time interviewing former FDLR fighters who had returned to Rwanda. Many had experienced interference by the Congolese army when trying to escape.[7] Some had friends who had tried to escape but were killed by the FDLR, All of them felt Radio Rwanda and Radio Okapi[8] were important factors in giving them the confidence to escape. Through the broadcasts, they all knew that they would not be arrested by the Rwandan government if they were younger than 27 years old (and therefore minors during the genocide). Hearing people they knew on the radio who had already gone home was key in influencing their calculation to run away.

All ex-fighters felt that more people who had escaped should be sent back to eastern Congo with MONUC protection to demonstrate to those FDLR still in the bush who were not part of the genocide that it is safe to go home. Some of those we spoke to were willing to go back themselves and hand out photographs and letters to demonstrate that it is indeed safe to return to Rwanda, Not a single ex-combatant we interviewed had any regrets about escaping.

In the absence of any real economic opportunities, however, DDR is often a revolving door. FDLR who are demobilized will likely go right back to their previous militia employers. At present, a combatant who makes the decision to return to Rwanda will receive only $300 with which to begin a new life. As one diplomat close to the process told ENOUGH, "A large percentage of FDLR militia would like to get out. They need to be given incentives and opportunities."

(b) The Sticks

The carrots are unlikely to work without effective sticks—military, economic, and legal.

Military Stick: MONUC should work with the Congolese army to develop a military strategy to attack FDLR who refuse demobilization.

Military Stick: MONUC should enhance its special forces capacities to carry out offensive operations, should they become necessary, in close coordination with Congolese forces.

Counterinsurgency operations are inevitably fraught with significant risk, and military action against the FDLR must only be used as a last resort. ENOUGH interviews with former militia found vast divisions over the efficacy of military attacks, but a credible military threat must remain on the table to create leverage for effective DDR.

There is much debate over the military strategy to deal with the FDLR, but the best option remains MONUC supporting Congolese army brigades (though not including Nkunda's "mixed" brigades) against the FDLR. However, the Congolese army is too weak to take the lead and MONUC lacks both the capacity and the will to engage in counterinsurgency operations that could result in civilian casualties. Regardless of who takes the lead, MONUC must develop a more coherent strategy than we have seen in the past. There must be safe areas established for would-be FDLR defectors as military operations are launched against FDLR positions. MONUC must also establish a presence closer to those positions to facilitate such defections. And escapees who flee to MONUC centers must be transferred out quickly to present a credible and safe-escape strategy.

Economic Stick: The U.N. Security Council should target the international support network for the FDLR by enforcing targeted sanctions against its diaspora leaders and others who violate the U.N. arms embargo.

Legal Stick: MONUC, the European Union, and capable states should collect data on new crimes against humanity to support prosecutions through the ICC.

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[7] Some described being turned away by Congolese army units when they tried to turn themselves in. Others felt collaboration between Congolese army and FDLR soldiers at the local level jeopardized program security.

[8] Radio Okapi is a joint project of MONUC and the Hirondelle Foundation.

CONCLUSION

What the U.S. Can Contribute

The United States should become more involved in eastern Congo now for four principal reasons.

First, the resumption of full-scale war in eastern Congo will catapult that region back to the top of the charts of human suffering. There is a humanitarian and moral imperative to prevent such a conflagration.

Second, the United States is providing nearly a third of the budget of the largest U.N. peacekeeping operation in the world, and is paying for the bulk of a massive relief operation. It is time to start investing in solutions rather than just the maintenance of an unstable status quo.

Third, consistent with the U.S. national security strategy, it is critioal to not leave huge swathes of mineral-rich territory largely ungoverned and unstable. Terrorist organizations have a history of laundering money in the mineral sectors of such unstable regions.

Fourth, the United States has growing economic interests across Africa, and Congo has the potential to be a turbocharged engine for economic growth across the entire continent. Diplomatic and economic investment in ending conflict in eastern Congo and helping the Congolese people build effective institutions would have a positive ripple effect on security and economic growth in the region.

But all of this is nothing new. Despite massive investment and international assistance, Congo's unrealized economic potential has gone unfulfilled for decades, and Congolese will not soon forget the unqualified and unconditional U.S. support for one of Africa's worst ever heads of state, the corrupt cold war dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

The U.S. government can help Congo escape the conflict trap and secure U.S. interests there (and across the continent) by taking a greater role in diplomacy to resolve the crisis in the East, providing more funding and technical assistance in DDR and SSR, maintaining strong support for MONUC, and increasing humanitarian assistance.[9] As is the case with Darfur and northern Uganda, U.S. citizens who care about ending crimes against humanity must be the catalyst to press policymakers to take urgent action.

TWO ACRONYMS—SSR AND DDR

Two acronyms familiar only in international diplomatic parlance are crucial to ending crimes against humanity in eastern Congo: DDR and SSR. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants is important after any war, to help turn former fighters into productive members of society. In Congo, it is a matter of life and death. And when the military and police represent a grave threat to the civilians they are supposed to protect, as they do in Congo, Security Sector Reform (SSR)—restructuring and training the military and police to more effectively secure the country—is fundamental to improving human security.

A major international role—in funding, monitoring, and evaluation—is a prerequisite for successful DDR and SSR. Thus far, the United States has been a minor player in coordinating with other key actors to help Congo to meet these objectives.

A DAILY STRUGGLE IN NORTH KIVU

In February ENOUGH visited an IDP camp near Rutshuru in North Kivu that is a microcosm of the under-the-radar violence that marks today's post-election eastern Congo. The residents of the camp, mostly Congolese Hutus, had been there for nine months. The FDLR had occupied the area around their village of Binza. They had uneasily coexisted with village residents, occasionally coming into the village to forcibly take some of the young girls away to be their ″wives.″ Thirty girls had been taken over the last couple of years.

The government army had attacked the area, failed to dislodge the FDLR, and then taken vengeance on the local population. Government forces accused villagers

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[9] In its budget request to Congress for 2008, the Bush administration asked for $80.2 million in foreign assistance to the Congo, $10 million less than the United States spent in 2006. Nearly half of this funding—$39.9 million—is for humanitarian assistance programs, while only $6.6 million is for a small military training program, with nothing given to support critical DDR programs that help prevent conflict from reigniting. Humanitarian aid is essential to deal with the immediate needs of Congolese, but humantarian band-aids do not and will not address the root causes of their suffering.

of collaborating with the FDLR and burned down their houses. Adding insult to injury, the FDLR then occupied the houses that remained standing.

The villagers could not return home, they had not received food from international agencies since October, and people were dying.

One 46-year-old woman lost two of her seven children during this attack. Her house was burned down by the Congolese army, and her fields have turned to bush. She had five goats and 16 chickens, but the Congolese army looted everything she owned.

"Some days we go without food," she said matter-of-factly. "Many of the women here have been raped." First they get raped by the FDLR, and then they are raped by the Congolese army, the force that is supposed to protect them from the FDLR. She earns 70 cents a day working other peoples' fields, not remotely enough to feed her family. "Peace is the only solution," she concluded.

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