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# PeaceWatch

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UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE ■ WASHINGTON, DC ■ [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

## Iraq Study Group Begins Its Work

The Iraq Study Group, co-chaired by **James A. Baker, III**, and **Lee H. Hamilton**, held its first working meetings on April 11–12 at the United States Institute of Peace. The bipartisan, independent group, publicly announced on Capitol Hill on March 15, was formed at the urging of several members of Congress, spearheaded by Rep. **Frank Wolf**. The Institute is the lead facilitator of the Study Group, together with the Center for the Study of the Presidency, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.

“This is important for the country,” Wolf stated during the unveiling of the effort in March. “The country is divided, but a group of men and women of integrity and character [have] come together to take a fresh eye, a fresh approach [to the Iraq situation].”



Present for the initial meetings at the Institute's headquarters were co-chairs Baker and Hamilton, **Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.**, **Sandra Day O'Connor**, **Leon E. Panetta**, **William J. Perry**, and **Charles S. Robb**. **Robert M.**

**Gates** participated by phone. Only two members were absent due to prior engagements, **Rudolph W. Giuliani** and **Alan K. Simpson**.

The group received a briefing on the situation in Iraq by **Tom**

Iraq study group co-chair **Lee Hamilton** discusses the new initiative as fellow co-chair **James Baker** (right) and others look on.

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## Study Group

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**Fingar**, chairman of the National Intelligence Council, and then discussed procedures for drawing on the expertise of specialists who will support their deliberations, as well as consulting with members of Congress and other officials.

“One of our fundamental objectives is to see if we can come together with bipartisan suggestions to see if we can be helpful to Congress and the Administration,” explained Baker. He went on to express a desire to keep the work of the study group out of the political debate.

Following the briefings and discussion, the study group principals were introduced to the four expert working groups who will provide analysis in four broad areas: the strategic environment in and around Iraq; economics and reconstruction; military and security issues; and political development. More than forty experts from throughout the country are participating in the working groups and will bring a wealth of experience to the project.

“I am impressed that each member of the Iraq Study Group has a deep commitment to help the country with this extraordinary challenge,” stated co-chair



**ISG co-chairs Lee Hamilton and James Baker (right) address a press conference at the Institute.**

Hamilton during a press conference following the first day of meetings. “We know our task is difficult. We know that as we go forward, we will have to track and respond to events on the ground in Iraq. We are committed to moving forward in a spirit of bipartisanship, and—as Jim [Baker] detailed—we will be assisted by some of the best and brightest minds this nation has to offer.”

The study group looks to pursue its work over the coming year. The effort has been publicly welcomed by the White House and has bipartisan support in Congress.

“The Institute is honored to have the opportunity to support the study group, together with the other co-sponsors,” stated **Richard Solomon**, president of the Institute. “Congress was satisfied with our management of the

Task Force on United Nations Reform, a study headed by former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. The Institute, as a nonpartisan, independent government organization, is a natural cosponsor for work of this nature.”

**Retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is one of the Iraq Study Group members.**



## PeaceWatch

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# A Virtual Town Hall Meeting for Liberians

## Institute plays host to Africa's first democratically elected woman leader

In collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in Washington, DC, the Institute hosted a “townhall meeting” for **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, President of Liberia, on the occasion of her first official visit to the United States. President Sirleaf spoke in March 2006 to an audience of more than 150 people, the majority of them members of the Liberian diaspora. The event was also webcast live.

Africa's first female president leads Liberia at a critical time. The elections of November 2005 capped the end of Liberia's two-year process of transition from strife to democracy, following fourteen years of devastating civil war. Sirleaf outlined her policies to strengthen the financial and economic systems of Liberia, and proposed ways the United States and the international community could help in Liberia's reconstruction and development.

Sirleaf acknowledged the grim realities facing Liberia today: its depressed economy, low employment rate, and poor infrastructure. But she declined to be pessimistic. “The majority of our people are ready to start again, to seize back their dignity, their honor. They are ready to work. If you go into the city today, go into the country today, you see much more economic activity,” she said.

The president answered questions from the audience as well as



*The president answered questions from the audience as well as those submitted by viewers of the live webcast via e-mail.*

those submitted by viewers of the live webcast via e-mail. Speaking directly to the Liberian diaspora, she said, “Many of you are returning and we want to encourage more and more of you to bring back your skills and your talents and to join us in the process of nation-building.”

Sirleaf was introduced by Institute president **Richard Solomon**. He observed that “Liberia's democratic success is

something that is not only very important for Liberia but very important for the foreign policy hopes and goals of our country.” And he noted that it was President Sirleaf's second visit to the Institute. She had spoken at the Institute in December 2002, when she was an independent scholar and leader of the opposition party, and had addressed the topic of armed conflict and instability in West Africa. 🌐

President Sirleaf (right) discusses her country's future with Institute President Richard Solomon (left), and Executive Vice President Trish Thomson (center).



# Afghanistan in the Crosshairs

Broad agreement on the problems; no consensus on the solutions

*The past four years of assistance and state building have had little impact at the local level, Thier said.*

Assessments of Afghanistan's current political and military situations vary, but there is broad agreement on the nature of the problems facing the country: continuing attacks from the Taliban and other antigovernment militia, the need for economic development and justice sector reform, and, above all, the resurgence of the opium trade. The Institute recently held two meetings of the Afghanistan Working Group to discuss these problems and assess possible solutions. **Beth DeGrasse**, coordinator of the Institute's Afghanistan Working Group, moderated the discussions.

The first meeting focused on the security situation. Counterinsurgency experts **Seth Jones** of the RAND Corporation and Colonel **David Lamm** of the National Defense University [and now at the Pentagon] briefed the group, saying that despite earlier predictions that the insurgency was dying down, it has, in fact, maintained its presence in the southern and eastern provinces. In 2005, the insurgency produced almost 1,500 casualties, including 100 American deaths. This deteriorating situation has also caused several respected nongovernmental relief organizations to withdraw.

The insurgents have also adopted new techniques, attacking "softer" targets such as government personnel and religious



**Barnett Rubin** (standing), of New York University, and **Alex Thier**, senior advisor in the Rule of Law program, gave contrasting accounts of Afghanistan's recent progress.

leaders, rather than the military. Beheadings, kidnappings, and suicide bombings have all become more frequent. The insurgency is composed primarily of the Taliban and Mujaheddeen (the fighters who fought off the Soviet Union in the 1980s), but it is beginning to attract support from abroad—including al Qaeda and Islamic jihadists.

Lamm offered a more optimistic picture. As a result of intensified efforts, U.S. Special Operations forces, together with newly minted Afghanistan troops, have made great strides in tempering the insurgency, he said. With cooperation from Pakistan, U.S. forces have eradicated insurgent

sanctuaries as far as ten kilometers into Pakistan. Broadly, the U.S. counterinsurgency rests on five pillars, Lamm said: defeating the Taliban, enabling the Afghan security structure, reconstructing the country, sustaining area ownership, and engaging regional states.

Jones indicated that a particular cause for concern is the U.S. effort to transfer a significant portion of its responsibilities to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces. Although NATO has approved a more "robust" approach to peacekeeping, its focus is still on maintaining order rather than aggressively rooting out insurgent forces. Both Lamm and Jones argued that

*Afghanistan, said Rubin, deserves the international community's sustained attention and support as it continues with its nation-building efforts.*

NATO needed to develop specialized counterinsurgency capacities if it is to assume control of southern regions of Afghanistan, where unrest prevails.

The second meeting of the working group focused on reconstruction. It featured **Alex Thier**, senior advisor in the Institute's Rule of Law program, and **Barnett Rubin**, director of studies at the Center on International Cooperation at New York University. Rubin spoke about the London Compact, the then just-completed agreement that outlines the responsibilities of the international community in Afghanistan's reconstruction. The compact represents the next big step forward for the Afghan government, said Rubin. Afghanistan has successfully completed its obligations under the 2001 Bonn Agreement, which called for democratic elections at the parliamentary and presidential levels, and deserves the international community's sustained attention and support as it continues with its nation-building efforts.

The compact represents the views of high-level leaders, including U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and the Afghan government. It focuses on three themes. The first is to strengthen Afghanistan's security forces. Soldiers' salaries will come out of the government's pocket rather than that of the donors. The goal is to create an army of 45,000 troops and a police force of more than 60,000. A second theme is to develop a successful



Afghan children participate in the women's "shara" held in Khwst for International Women's Day.

counternarcotics strategy based on the interdiction of traffickers, the generation of alternative livelihoods for farmers, and the creation of viable institutions in provincial areas. The third theme is to ensure the effectiveness of aid. More than \$10.5 billion in aid has been pledged for the next five years, and overseeing its expenditure will require effective mechanisms emphasizing accountability and transparency.

Effective aid is essential, Rubin observed, because Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Infant mortality rates are soaring and literacy rates remain low. Life expectancy, among the lowest on earth, has not increased since the overthrow of the Taliban.

Thier focused on the situation at the local level, where problems were most evident. He had just returned from three weeks in Afghanistan, where he had met

with leaders of both the official state justice system and the unofficial, locally based system. The past four years of assistance and state building have had little impact at the local level, Thier said. Many Afghans have become skeptical about the central government and perceive it to be a client of the international community. Corruption is rife among local government officials. Justice sector reform has been a glaring failure. The Supreme Court is corrupt, personalized, and erratic.

Thier and Rubin agreed that a great deal of work remains. While the temptation is for donors to do the work themselves, it is vital that Afghans be given the chance to strengthen their own fledgling institutions. Addressing the "mutual interdependence" between security, governance, and development is the key to Afghanistan's future. 



# President Bush's National Security Strategy Unveiled

Preemption remains an integral part of the strategy, says the National Security Advisor

*"We are at war, and defeating the terrorists is America's most immediate challenge."*

A large contingent from the diplomatic community assembled at the Mayflower Hotel in mid-March to hear National Security Advisor **Stephen J. Hadley** outline President Bush's 2006 National Security Strategy at an Institute-sponsored talk. Hadley said the president is focused on integrating all the tools of statecraft—diplomatic, economic, and military—to meet today's global challenges and opportunities.

"The president's strategy," Hadley said, "is to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

This goal, said Hadley, is based on five important themes. The first is to keep America strong and secure. "We are at war, and defeating the terrorists is America's most immediate challenge," he said. To do that, he said, we must stay on the offense: "We must defeat the terrorists abroad so that we do not need to face them here at home."

Central to this goal is the doctrine of preemption, which, Hadley emphasized, remains an integral part of U.S. strategy. "Under longstanding principles of self-defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks occur, even if uncertainty remains



National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley outlined the administration's 2006 National Security Strategy.

*"The president's foreign policy initiatives are united by his conviction that we are living at a moment of choosing for our nation and the world."*

as to the time and place of the enemy's attack."

The second theme is the defeat of the ideology that underlies terrorism. "We do this," said Hadley, "by promoting a positive vision—the promise of freedom and democracy." But freedom and

democracy are not just means to an end, said Hadley; they are "the birthright of every human being."

The president's second inaugural address proclaimed this unity of vision most clearly, Hadley explained. In his address Bush

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## Marr Examines Iraq's New Leaders at an Institute Press Briefing

Institute Senior Fellow Phebe Marr gave a press briefing in early May on Iraq's new political leadership. There has been a revolutionary change, she said, in the forces shaping the new leaders and their political orientation. Compared to their Baathist predecessors, the new leaders are highly educated, ethnically diverse, and contain many more women. But, with the exception of the Kurds, the new leaders are inexperienced and have not yet had time to build networks or institutions. If anything, said Marr, Iraq has suffered from "too much democracy," developing a political process that has intensified polarization around ethnic and sectarian identity. Marr based her analysis on extensive background data and personal interviews with over forty top leaders since 2003. 🌐



## NSA

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stated, "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this Earth has rights and dignity and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and Earth."

Thus, said Hadley, "we champion effective democracy as the best way for nations to secure the freedom of their citizens, as well as their prosperity and security."

But if human freedom is released by the defeat of terrorism, it is only secured by the creation of effective, sustainable democracies. Such democracies uphold human rights, submit to the will of the people, exercise sovereignty, maintain order, and fight corruption. "The administration recognizes that the journey to effective

democracy is long, and supports countries as they make the journey," said Hadley.

A fourth element of the president's national security strategy is the creation of opportunities for people to prosper and build better lives. "Economic freedom and political freedom cannot be long separated," said Hadley. "As people experience the freedom to buy, to sell, and to produce, it is only a matter of time until they demand the freedom to assemble, to speak, and to worship."

Hadley spoke briefly about the president's development strategy, focusing on the Millennium Challenge Account, which delivers substantial aid to countries that govern properly, fight corruption, and invest in the health and education of their people. Also critical to the president's development agenda are his support of debt reduction and efforts to address such deadly diseases as malaria and AIDS.

The final element of the president's strategy, said Hadley, is to build a community of effective democracies to address the regional and global challenges of our time. "The challenges we face are enormous," said Hadley. These "transnational threats" include public health, environmental, and energy challenges, in addition to the global drug trade, organized crime, and the trade of human beings for sex and slavery.

Hadley concluded by situating today's challenges within the sweep of history. "The president's foreign policy initiatives are united by his conviction that we are living at a moment of choosing, for our nation and for the world. America can choose a path of fear, leading to isolationism and protectionism, or a path of confidence, leading to international engagement and the expansion of freedom and democracy."

A spirited question and answer session followed Hadley's prepared remarks. 🌐



# Lebanon's Confessionalism: Problems and Prospects

Can Lebanon be a model for other countries in the Middle East, such as Iraq?

Over the past year and a half, Lebanon has witnessed great political progress. Nevertheless, it remains mired in political inertia and suffers from a seeming inability to institute deeply needed reforms in its political structure and governing arrangement.

*Melhem argued that Lebanese confessionalism is nothing less than “a cancer on the country’s body politic.”*

In an effort to shed more light on how Lebanon might move forward, the Institute convened a panel of experts to consider whether Lebanon can escape its sectarian politics and whether it can offer itself as an example for the region. The panelists included **Hassan Mneimneh**, columnist for the Arabic-language *al-Hayat* newspaper and director of the Iraq Memory Foundation; **Marwan Kraidy**, professor at American University and fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; and **Hisham Melhem**, Washington bureau chief of the Lebanese *an-Nahar* newspaper and senior analyst for the al-Arabiya television network. **Imad Harb**, senior program officer in the Institute’s Education program, moderated the discussion.

The Lebanese political system is based on confessionalism, which proportionally allocates political power among a country’s communities—whether religious or ethnic—according to their percentage of the population. While the original confessional formula established early in the 20th century facilitated civic peace and gradual democratic development, it created other problems. A political system recognizing religious divides eventually extended religious considerations into political affairs. Today’s troubles stem from the interaction between this formula and the intrusions of regional political dynamics. While the country has worked hard to maintain its civic peace and democracy, regional influences are drawing it into unwanted conflicts.

Mneimneh argued that the communal political arrangement is a long-standing manifestation of the country’s indigenous politics and that the state as a legal entity was never designed to interfere in communitarian politics. He said that a dissonance has developed between the traditional model of governance and the concept of the secular state as it has evolved in the twentieth century. Such a clash is exploited—and thereby made more acute—by regional actors, be they Israeli, Syrian, Palestinian, or American. He concluded on an optimistic note, however, saying that pros-

pects for social stabilization in Lebanon are quite good.

Kraidy focused on the role of the media in shaping identities, the competing visions of Lebanon they embody, and their own emerging, autonomous political weight. His remarks concentrated on media behavior during the 1975–1990 civil war when about fifty television and 150 radio stations crowded the spectrum

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A man holds a photo of Lebanon’s slain former Premier Rafik Hariri, right, together with his son and political successor Saad, left, during a rally for Saad Hariri’s electoral coalition in the northern port of Tripoli, Lebanon.

# Questions Linger over North Korea

Book launch author proposes a less confrontational approach

North Korea remains an enigma, but research over the past decade suggests that a less adversarial posture toward it may bring greater dividends, according to **Hazel Smith**, a former senior fellow at the Institute. Smith presented her findings at a book launch for her USIP Press-published *Hungry for Peace: International Security, Humanitarian Assistance, and Social Change in North Korea*.

**Richard Solomon**, president of the Institute, opened the launch by enumerating four questions policymakers face in their dealings with North Korea: Can the so-called Six-Party Talks help resolve the crisis involving North Korea's nuclear weapons program? Why, after initially allowing humanitarian organizations into the country to help feed the hungry, did North Korea recently ask them to leave? What are the unresolved issues affecting U.S. relations with South Korea, and how do these relate to the conflict with the north? Finally, what is the state of the North Korean leadership? How stable is it, and what might replace it?

Recently, said Solomon, there has been a loosening of U.S. policies for dealing with North Korea. Can this space lead to the prospect of greater cooperation?

Smith began by acknowledging how much still remains unknown about North Korea. "Leadership issues are still

*Smith argued that U.S. preoccupation with the "menace" of Kim Jong Il and the "demonization" of North Korea results in bad policy.*

extremely opaque," she said. But compared to a decade ago, there is vastly more knowledge available. Because of the North Korean famine of the mid-1990s and the influx of foreign humanitarian organizations, "today we can check our sources and develop knowledge," she said.

North Korea's leadership believes that U.S. foreign policy is focused on the "axis of evil"—North Korea, Iraq, and Iran—and worries that the United States may launch a preemptive strike against it. Since the mid-1990s, the population has disengaged somewhat from the state, and a spontaneous "marketization" has occurred. Political status is no longer as rigid as it once was, and cross-cutting inequalities have become more prevalent.

The reasons for North Korea's recent ejection of international humanitarian organizations are unclear. Tension between the government and the humanitarians arose out of the government's face-saving insistence that North Korea was not confronting a humanitarian emergency, and the



A doctor for World Vision checks North Korean children during a 1997 trip to Pyongyang.

donors insistence that they were not engaged in "development assistance." But those tensions appear to have faded somewhat as the World Food Programme and others began to implement what they called a "protracted relief and recovery program."

Smith argued that U.S. preoccupation with the "menace" of Kim Jong Il and the threat of a nuclear standoff steers U.S. policymakers to adopt a "worst-case" approach to North Korea. This "demonization" results in bad policy, because it assumes that North Korea's leadership is either irredeemable or wholly unpredictable. A better approach would be to assume that North Korea is a rational actor influenced by its own historical perspective. She concluded that change through rapprochement rather than confrontation ultimately may yield a better outcome. 🌐



# Rethinking the War on Terror

**Institute researchers have developed an innovative approach to thinking about and responding to the threat of Islamist terrorism**

**T**he terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, brought home the extent and character of the new security challenges facing the United States in the aftermath of the Cold War. Using improvised weapons of mass destruction—passenger aircraft—religiously inspired terrorists announced in spectacular and deadly fashion the arrival of a new threat that will likely be with Americans for at least a generation.

But just as it took well over a decade to understand the nature of the threat facing the United States in the aftermath of World War II and to develop the capacities, institutions, and political consensus to deal with that threat, so today experts are still in the process of formulating a clear and coherent understanding of the nature of Islamist extremism and how to counter it. As Institute president **Richard Solomon** has observed, Americans are only in the beginning phases of developing an effective set of policies for confronting this unprecedented challenge.

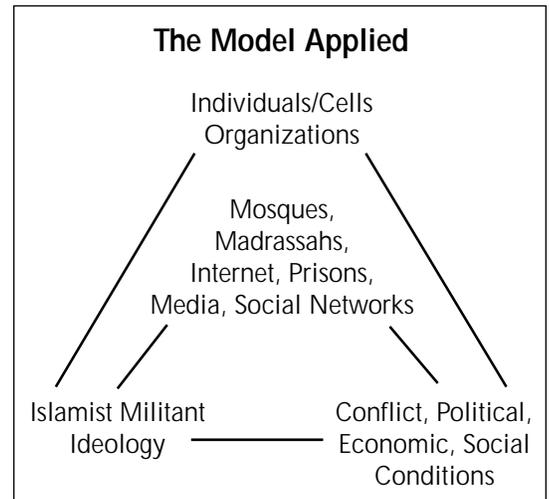
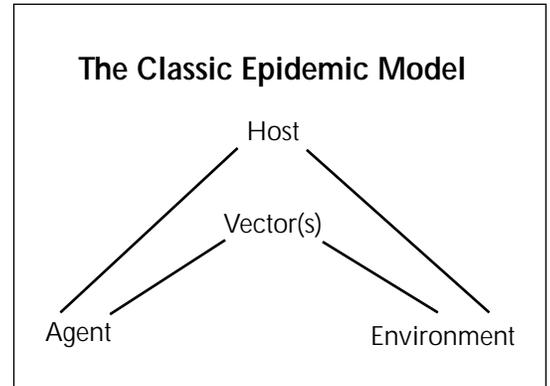
One of the Institute's goals is to help develop the intellectual apparatus to comprehend the nature of the threat of Islamist terrorism, with the goal of learning how to contain, disrupt, marginalize, and otherwise reduce or eliminate it.

**Paul Stares**, vice president of the Institute's Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention, and **Mona Yacoubian**, special advisor to the Institute's Muslim World

Initiative, have developed an approach to thinking about Islamist extremism that draws on the principles and practices of epidemiology as well as a growing body of social scientific research on "social contagion" phenomena such as fads, fashions, and rumors.

The conceptual leap required of this approach is not as great as it would seem, Stares and Yacoubian argue, since disease metaphors are routinely employed to describe the threat. Thus terrorism is often equated with an infectious virus, while al Qaeda is often described as "mutating" or "metastasizing" and madrasahs and mosques are sometimes referred to as "incubators" of extremism.

Stares and Yacoubian draw on the standard model epidemiologists use to study epidemics, which focuses on four components: the agent, the host, the environment, and the vectors. The agent is the infectious pathogen or bacterium—in this case, the jihadist narrative or ideology that animates the



terrorists and their supporters. The host is the group or person who becomes "infected" by militant Islamist ideology. The environment refers to the conditions that facilitate the spread of the disease—aspects of the Muslim world that render its inhabitants susceptible to this ideology, such as political repression, economic stagnation, and social alienation. And the vectors—the propagating pathways that spread disease—are in this case such conduits as



mosques, madrassahs, prisons, the Internet, and satellite TV.

The primary virtue of this model is that it provides a coherent way to think about the nature of the threat facing us and thus enables us to develop a convincing strategy for confronting it. That strategy rests on three prongs:

- To contain the most threatening outbreaks through such measures as quarantines, treatments, and rehabilitation;
- To protect those susceptible to the disease by “immunizing” them—developing an ideological antidote to the attractions of Islamist extremism;
- To remedy the environmental factors that foster the spread of extremism by helping to resolve the ongoing conflicts between Muslim and non-Muslim countries, and by

dealing with the social alienation of many Muslims living in European countries.

One key lesson from this model is that there is no magic bullet, no panacea with which to eliminate extremism. Just as epidemics can be rolled back only with a systematically planned, multipronged international effort, so success in the war on terror will depend on sustained commitment over years by a broad coalition of states acting in partnership with a multitude of nongovernmental actors. A counterterrorism campaign inspired by classic counterepidemic measures would simultaneously seek to contain the spread of extremism, protect those who are most susceptible, and remedy the key environmental factors that foster it. 🌐

## USIP Conference on Terror

Stares and Yacoubian presented their model at a two-day conference in Washington, D.C., focusing on terrorist organizations and how they work, cosponsored by the Institute and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). The conference marked the four-year anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Participants, most of whom were Institute grantees or members of the SSRC project on political violence, addressed four essential questions to discern what we know and still do not know about terrorist organizations:

1. How do terrorist organizations communicate with the world?
2. How are they financed?
3. How do they learn and change?
4. In what ways should governments and international organizations respond to terrorism?

Driven by the belief that better policy responses to current and emerging threats require a better understanding of how violent political organizations operate, participants discussed an integrated combination of theoretical perspectives and detailed case studies, ranging from al Qaeda to the Irish Republican Army. 🌐

## Lebanon

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and later forced the government to adopt an audio-visual Media Law and licensing regulations.

Increasingly, he said, television coverage is not entirely confessionally based. For example, during the 2005 parliamentary elections, the maverick Christian politician Michel Aoun received favorable coverage on New TV, established by the Communist Party with assistance from a Sunni billionaire at odds with the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Indeed, the majority of Lebanese are fed up with confessional politics and thus are watching non-confessionally identified stations. Kraidy also argued that media outlets, no matter their identification, are beginning to act more and more as a cohesive, corporate entity in defense of their right to free speech.

In contrast to the two earlier speakers, Melhem argued that Lebanese confessionalism is nothing less than “a cancer on the country’s body politic.” He discouraged talk of applying it elsewhere in the region, as is now being attempted in postwar Iraq. He stated that while Lebanon has always had democratic politics and practices, it has never really had full democracy. Its sectarian politics allows interference from outside actors, specifically Iran, Israel, Syria, and the United States. In a sharp critique, Melhem blamed the Lebanese for inviting outsiders to interfere and settle scores on Lebanese soil.

Reminding the audience of the liberal era between the two world wars in the Arab world, Melhem called for a more open and secular political arrangement. Political parties and associations flourished during the liberal period and everyone had a chance of thinking and acting within the parameters of nationhood, and not simply according to their sectarian identities. If democracy is to find a foothold and succeed in Lebanon, an emphasis on secular principles must be encouraged. Confessionalism, as it has been applied in Lebanon and as it is being advocated for in Iraq, is the wrong formula for sustainable and peaceful democratic development, he said. 🌐



# Teaching History in Divided Societies

“What are we trying to do when we teach history?”

*In the aftermath of genocide, with the poisonous legacy of ethnoracial myths still prevalent, the Rwandan government issued a moratorium on the teaching of history.*

At a public event held in late November, vice president for the Grants and Fellowships Program **Judy Barsalou** and several Institute grant recipients presented findings from their research and practical experience on teaching history at the secondary school level in societies emerging from violent conflict. The Institute had sponsored a large conference earlier in November at Airlie House in Virginia, and Barsalou observed that the subject encompassed a broader range of issues than she had initially imagined. “What are you trying to do when you teach history?” she asked. “Are you promoting national identity? Developing social cohesion? Teaching tolerance? Or are you simply trying to give a more accurate account of the nation’s past than the distorted histories that are often promulgated in times of war?”

Teaching history in the aftermath of conflict has been a long-standing concern at the Institute, said Barsalou. “We have made more than twenty grants totaling \$1 million on this topic, because we see it as critical to postconflict and conflict management, and to the prevention of renewed conflict.”

**Charles Ingrao** of Purdue University observed that textbooks often reflect a nation’s hegemonic culture and propagate a national myth that can dramatize the wrongs done to it by



A school sign for children is destroyed in the Croatian city of Vukovar.

others and sweep its own misdeeds under the rug. “The general effect is devastating,” he said. “Once you educate a generation one way, you make it impossible to teach history any other way because other histories may undermine the legitimacy of the very politicians who decide what schoolbooks get published.” Speaking of his own work with historians from the former Yugoslavia, Ingrao said that in practice, even historians of formerly opposing groups can reach a consensus view of their history if Western scholars prod them enough. If this more complete and intellectually honest vision gains enough legitimacy, it may eventually filter down to the high school level and displace the parochial and tendentious histories currently taught in schools.

**Karen Murphy**, of the non-profit organization Facing History and Ourselves, focused on her work in Rwanda along with the University of California at Berkeley to build indigenous capacity. In the aftermath of genocide, with the poisonous legacy of ethnoracial myths still prevalent, the government issued a moratorium on the teaching of history. “Seventy-five percent of teachers were murdered or subsequently imprisoned for participating in the genocide,” she said. In such an environment, it is easier to teach history through the refracted lens of a similar event—in this case, the downfall of the Weimar Republic. “I gathered a diverse group of refugees, survivors, and so on, and they drew their own parallels regarding the collapse of the economy and the impact of

See *History, Divided*, page 14

# The Sudanese Hecatombs

## Are massive crimes against humanity going unchallenged?

Three recent events at the Institute have brought into focus the realities of Sudan's complex humanitarian and political conflicts. The events included compelling firsthand accounts of the killings in Darfur, in western Sudan; analysis by one of Sudan's leading public intellectuals on the religious component of the conflicts; and forceful advocacy from NGO representatives for a greater UN and U.S. role in stopping the crimes against humanity.

In December 2005, the Sudan Peace Forum at the Institute convened with **Sloan Mann** of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), **Michael Chu** of the UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, and **Jonathan Morgenstein** of the Institute.

The panelists painted a grim picture of what is happening in Darfur. Militia groups are increasingly attacking civilians and internally displaced people. Rape remains grossly underreported because of stigma and bureaucratic hurdles. The African Union's mission in Darfur is increasingly under attack from Sudanese forces allied with the government. The number of bandit attacks on civilian and commercial trucks carrying humanitarian supplies has increased to an average of ten to fifteen per week. Because of the insecurity, humanitarian activity has slowed and even ceased altogether in some areas.

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The UN mission is far too limited in troop numbers, equipment and training, finances, and mandate to keep the peace in Darfur, participants said. For example, compared to NATO's mission in Bosnia and Kosovo, where there was more than one soldier per square kilometer, in Darfur, there is one African Union soldier for every eighty-eight square kilometers. And the mission is vastly underfunded, a problem not helped by the U.S. Congress's apparent decision [subsequently amended] to cut the \$50 million earmarked for the effort.

In March 2006, Africa Action executive director **Salih Booker** and the head of mission for the embassy of Sudan, **Khirir Ahmed**, gave very different interpretations of the causes and consequences of the conflict in Darfur. **David Smock**, the Institute's vice president for mediation and conflict resolution, moderated the session.

Booker argued that Darfur had become a killing field, with a death toll surpassing 400,000. He argued that the United Nations needs to assume leadership of the peacekeeping force in the Sudan for three reasons: to stop the killing, rape, and displacement of people; to provide humanitarian relief currently shut off because of the violence; and to facilitate the



return of refugees and internally displaced people and help them reconstruct their homes, communities, and livelihoods. There is a peacekeeping "apartheid" in place, Booker said, with the international community saying, in effect, "We are not prepared to intervene in African conflicts." Booker said that the U.S. government has refused to pressure the Khartoum government because of its help in the "so-called war on terror." This logic is sadly reminiscent of the Cold War, Booker maintained, when the United States supported corrupt dictators because of their professed anticommunism.

Ahmed observed that the Sudanese government rarely has a chance to mount a public defense of its actions. He argued that the situation in Darfur is far more complicated, and that the "whole blame" cannot truthfully be laid on one party or another. He

**An internally displaced family waits by their sick relative, infected with hepatitis E, at the city hospital in Mornei, West Darfur, Sudan.**

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## History, Divided

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*“Are you simply trying to give a more accurate account of the nation’s past than the distorted histories that are often promulgated in times of war?”*

demagogic propaganda. They began to ask questions, and that’s the most critical thing. With support from the Institute, we’ve developed a project to encourage teachers to get their students to ask why, rather than simply to lecture to them. The specifics of the curriculum really do come later.”

**Tony Gallagher** of Queen’s University, Northern Ireland, observed that structural features of the Irish school system tended to dampen the resonance of messages of unity. Students are segregated by religion and sex; religion, an integral part of students’ education, is rarely presented in ways that foster critical thinking; and an abiding sense of fatalism, of cultural pessimism, encourages passivity and silence. **Elizabeth Cole** of the Asia Society outlined the huge commitment of time and knowledge that it takes to adequately evaluate pedagogical programs. So far, she said, the key to success seems to be giving teachers a sense that they are safe and supported.

Barsalou closed the session by noting nine topics that need further study. Among them: the need for a more thorough review of the cross-disciplinary literature about history teaching and learning; the question of how learning history relates to other social processes, such as identity formation, and to recovery from psychological trauma resulting from exposure to violence; the gap between public history as learned in the classroom and through civic institutions and the more private histories that circulate in families and other social groups; the relationship between educational reform and other transitional justice interventions; and, not least, the need to “get a fix on what’s really happening in classrooms.”

## Sudanese

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pointed out that the United Nations and various governments—Canada and Germany, for example—have declared that what is happening in Darfur is not genocide. And he suggested that the conflict there is really a continuation of long-standing conflicts between different groups over grazing rights.

Smock invited **Charles Snyder**, a long-standing member of the U.S. foreign policymaking community, to make a few remarks about U.S. policy toward Sudan. Snyder said that he was heartened by recent U.S. efforts, which have brought the “full panoply” of American power to bear on resolving the conflict in Darfur. “I think you’ll see that we’re fully engaged, USAID is engaged, the State Department is engaged, the Defense Department has studied what can be done to radically alter the situation.” But, said Snyder, the government is focused on

*The United States has brought the “full panoply” of American power to bear on resolving the conflict in Darfur, said Snyder.*

taking practical measures, not on assuming high-minded positions for their own sake. The ideal, said Snyder, is to have “an African solution to an African problem.”

In February 2006, the Institute hosted a meeting with the Sudanese scholar **al-Tayib Zain**. The head of the Sudan Inter Religious Council (SIRC), Zain provided a message of hope that contrasted with the dire warnings of speakers at other events. SIRC had hosted, with the Institute assistance, a path-breaking conference for Christian and Muslim leaders in July 2005 to prepare an action plan for Sudanese religious leaders to help implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Zain also provided useful background on the conflicts in the Sudan, noting that the north-south political divide, the differential levels of development, and the percep-

tion of a cultural gap were all artifacts of the colonial era. Islam in Sudan was traditionally influenced by Sufism, said Zain, with its emphasis on peace, tolerance, and cosmopolitanism.

SIRC’s efforts are based on real, not theoretical, discussions about interreligious issues, Zain emphasized. He noted that the efforts of SIRC were vital in stemming violence and rioting after the tragic accidental downing of the helicopter carrying Sudanese rebel leader John Garang. “We called religious leaders—Catholics, Episcopalians, and leaders of the Ulama association—and all of them agreed to address the public and calm them down. We published their statements in the press, and put them on TV and the radio. The accident happened on Monday. By Thursday, we had calmed things down.” ☉

## Lessons from Colorful Revolutions

The recent peaceful revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine—the so-called Rose and Orange Revolutions, respectively—raised international hopes that democratic forces could overcome corrupt, authoritarian regimes and wrest power on behalf of free people. But what made these revolutions possible? What conjunction of circumstances, events, and personalities brought them about and how easily, if at all, can they be replicated elsewhere? An Institute public event brought together some of the leading scholars and participants in these revolutions to discuss their lessons for nonviolent political change elsewhere in the world.

Panelists were Anika Locke Binnendijk of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, Alexander M. Gupman of Freedom House, Giorgi Kandelaki of Kmara (Georgia), Taras Kuzio of the George Washington University, Sergiy Taran of PORA (Ukraine), and Cory Welt of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The Institute's Daniel Serwer moderated the event.

The speakers agreed that a key element in the success of the revolutions was that they both occurred under semiauthoritarian, rather than highly authoritarian, regimes. No figure possessed absolute power, and some independent media, civil society organizations, and opposition parties were tolerated. Another critical factor was growing public dissatisfaction with government corruption. Although Georgia was experiencing an economic crisis and the Ukraine was flourishing, in both countries the public had come to distrust the capacity of the government to manage the economy. Finally, in both cases,



Opposition supporters rallying in front of the Georgian Parliament in Tbilisi, in November 2003.

*Both local and foreign would-be revolutionaries should understand, as the Ukrainian activist Giorgi Kandelaki put it, that “they are playing with fire.”*

what triggered street protests was evidence of electoral fraud.

Neither revolution would have been successful, however, if the opposition leaders had not been able to generate large enough crowds of protesters to discourage government repression. Protest leaders were highly disciplined and trained in nonviolent resistance; crowds remained calm, organized, and rarely responded to provocations from the security forces.

There is little evidence that international actors played a significant role in helping these revolutions. Western diplomats did not side with the revolutions until it was clear they would succeed; for their part, international NGOs were often prone to “take

too much of the credit.” These were largely internal events, several of the participants stressed.

Lessons for other countries are not as clear or as hopeful as they might at first appear. The success of the revolutions depended on a number of factors coming together at an opportune moment. No one predicted either revolution, and other, similar outpourings of public protest—such as in Uzbekistan and China—have been met with violent repression. Both local and foreign would-be revolutionaries should understand, as the Ukrainian activist Giorgi Kandelaki put it, that “they are playing with fire.”

## Developing a Consensus on Balkan History

The aftermath of a civil war often brings disputes over its causes, justifications, and conduct. These disputes, if left untended, have the potential to reignite the controversies that led to war. The conflicts that rent the Balkans and led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s are a case

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## ShortTakes

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in point. People of the region remain deeply divided by contradictory accounts of what happened, and these differences hinder mutual understanding and reconciliation.

With grants from the United States Institute of Peace, Purdue University professor Charles Ingrao brought together more than 250 scholars from the Balkans, Europe, and the United States to develop a consensus history of the Balkan wars anchored in solid scholarship. The objective was two-fold: to develop a reliable history that can serve as the basis for regional understanding, and to build bridges and reinvigorate discussions among the scholars of the region by engaging them in a collaborative enterprise

In the five years since its inauguration, the Scholars' Initiative has produced tangible results. Two hundred and fifty scholars from twenty-eight countries participated. Eight of the eleven planned chapters are complete. Its main findings were unveiled at the American Historical Association in January 2006 in Philadelphia.

"The initiative has introduced a very important notion into discussions in the region," said Dan Serwer, vice president of the Center for Postconflict Peace and Stability Operations. "That notion is that historians, if we are committed to the truth, should be able to talk with each other."

A surprising consensus emerged on some of the most contentious questions. Ethnic nationalists—especially Serbian leaders Radovan Karadzic and Slobodan Milosevic—caused the wars by exploiting concern over the rights and safety of Serbian minorities living in other repub-



**Khalil Shikaki (center), one of the foremost authorities on Palestinian public opinion, spoke at the Institute shortly before Palestinian elections in late January, 2006.**

lics. The international community made things worse by failing to facilitate a peaceful transformation of Yugoslavia, and then by creating six "safe areas" that provided humanitarian assistance but not effective security. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia provided "legal" justice in trying and sentencing some of those responsible for the more egregious human rights violations, but did little to promote reconciliation and develop respect for the rule of law.

The process itself has recently migrated from the scholarly to the policy and political arenas. As each chapter is completed, it is translated into local languages and promoted by publicists from each country. Political leaders are briefed on the key findings. Ingrao hopes that the project will eventually influence the development of history textbooks and foster a consensus not just among scholars, but among the various peoples of the region.

### Palestinian Public Opinion

"Palestinian public opinion is not an impediment to progress in the peace process," says

Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki; to the contrary, "over time the Palestinian public has become more moderate." This perhaps surprising conclusion was reached by Shikaki after analyzing survey data from more than 100 polls conducted over the past eleven years to identify long-term trends in Palestinian public opinion concerning the peace process, the use of violence against Israelis, and the Palestinian Authority.

Shikaki is one of the foremost authorities on Palestinian public opinion and Palestinian national politics.

Shikaki presented his findings in a report titled "Willing to Compromise: Palestinian Public Opinion and the Peace Process." The report was published in late January, 2006, shortly before the Palestinian elections that brought to power the Islamist movement Hamas. Shikaki found that "willingness to compromise is greater than it has been at any time since the start of the peace process." This increased willingness to compromise provides policymakers with greater room to maneuver, he said.

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Among Shikaki’s conclusions:

- For the first time since the start of the peace process, a majority of Palestinians support a compromise settlement that is acceptable to a majority of Israelis.
- Palestinian opposition to violence increases when diplomacy proves effective. Public support for violence increases in an environment of greater conflict and suffering, and decreases when threat perception is reduced.
- Palestinian misperception of Israeli public attitudes is evident even when it comes to one of the core elements of the peace process: the two-state solution. Lack of normal personal interaction, because the only Israelis most Palestinians encounter are soldiers or armed settlers, encourages misperceptions and the desire to portray the other side negatively.
- Support for violence against Israelis, while still high, is declining. This post-Arafat period is also characterized by tougher competition between Fateh and Hamas, with the latter benefiting from weaker Palestinian Authority legitimacy at the local level, while corruption emerges as a weakness for Fateh and traditional nationalists.

Shikaki’s report is part of the Institute’s Project on Arab-Israeli Futures. This research effort is designed to anticipate and assess obstacles and opportunities facing the peace process in the years

ahead. Stepping back from the day-to-day ebb and flow of events on the ground, it examines deeper, over-the-horizon trends that could foreclose future options or offer new openings for peace.

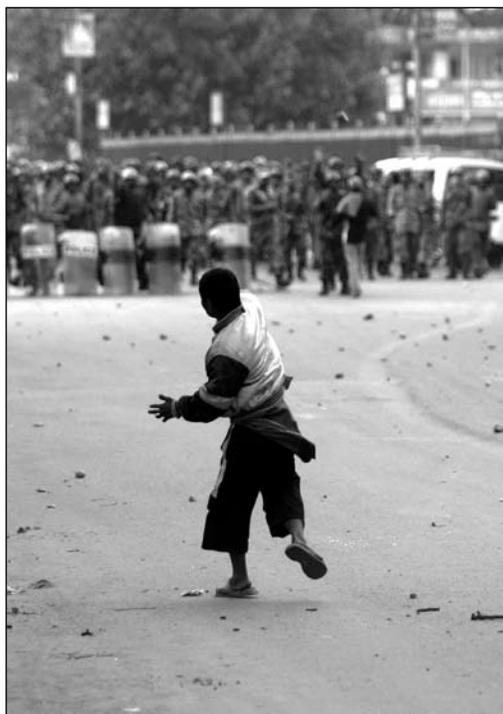
### Troubled Kingdom of Nepal

In February 2005, Nepal’s King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency and imposed martial law. Since then, Nepal’s security situation has precipitously deteriorated, while human rights abuses have escalated. The Maoist insurgency continues to impose fear and violence upon the population in the countryside, and the government continues to respond with extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, and arbitrary arrests.

The Institute has held two briefings on the situation in Nepal, chaired by Institute staff Colette Rausch and Christine Fair. The first was held in mid-July 2005, with a panel that included Jonah Blank and Lisa Curtis of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Sushil Pyakurel and Shambhu Thapa, leaders of Nepali NGOs; and Veena Siddharth of Human Rights Watch.

Panelists agreed that the Maoists shared responsibility for the declining security situation and were as culpable, if not more, of gross human rights abuses as the government. They noted that the king’s decision in February 2005 to remove the prime minister and to rule by fiat was a serious blow to notions of accountability, judi-

cial oversight, and the protection of basic freedoms. But they disagreed over how the United States could improve the situation. The threat from the Maoists has caused the U.S. government to close ranks behind the king, doubling aid and providing counterinsurgency training. Some but not all panelists felt that such an uncritical approach might be counterproductive in the long run. They suggested that



A pro-democracy supporter throws a stone at policemen in Katmandu, Nepal, April 25, 2006.

the alternative would be to support British and Indian efforts to pressure the king to restore democratic rule.

The second briefing was held in February 2006 and featured Rhoderick Chalmers of the International Crisis Group. He said Nepal was on a downward spiral. Elections were taking place that day in Nepal, but were widely viewed as illegitimate. Violent protests surrounding the elections, the seizure of absolute

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## ShortTakes

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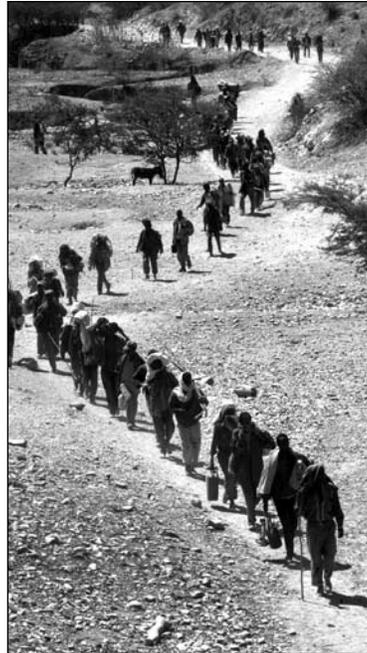
rule and the crackdown on civil liberties, widespread arrests of protesters, and increased Maoist insurgent attacks have created an alarming situation. On the question of whether these elections are a pathway to democracy, as some have suggested, Chalmers answered: “In a word, no.”

Chalmers described a triangular conflict among the Maoists, the nonviolent political parties, and the palace—particularly the king. Nepal’s conflict is not, however, an insoluble conflict, nor is it even among the world’s more intractable. “We know what is required to resolve it,” said Chalmers.

At the time of Chalmers’ talk, international opinion had appeared to move toward a more aggressive stance against the king. The United States issued a statement that palace rule has “only made the security situation more precarious, emboldened the Maoist insurgents, and widened the division between the country’s political parties and the king.” The European Union said the elections would be a backward step from democracy and condemned the royal government’s repressive measures against the protesters. Continued and better coordinated pressure from the international community might yet yield results, Chalmers said.

### Ethiopia and Eritrea: Is War Approaching?

Three years after the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission delineated the border between the two countries, there are renewed fears of conflict. In recent months, Eritrea has suspended helicopter flights by the UN Mission in Ethiopia and



**A line of Ethiopian militia members carrying supplies for Ethiopian soldiers arrives at the military position of Bohdo, at the central Ethiopian-Eritrean front.**

Eritrea (UNMEE), restricted UNMEE’s border patrols, and expelled UNMEE’s Western staff. At the center of the ongoing tension lies the disputed claims to the border town of Badme, Ethiopia’s assertion that the Boundary Commission’s rulings are illegal and unjust, and a stalemate over the border demarcation process.

The UN Security Council has warned that Eritrea could face sanctions if it does not lift its restrictions on UNMEE. The Council has also demanded that Ethiopia accept the findings of the Boundary Commission. A delegation from the U.S. government arrived in Ethiopia recently to attempt to mediate between the parties.

The Institute held a public event to consider the critical questions such a mediation effort might entail. What actions can the United States and the international community take to pre-

vent another border war? How can UNMEE keep the peace? How can the border demarcation process move forward? Dorina Bekoe, a senior research associate in the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention, mediated the discussion. Among the speakers were Frits Bontekoe, of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations; John Prendergast of the International Crisis Group; and Gilbert Khadiagala of The Johns Hopkins University.

Bontekoe outlined the UN’s policies and provided an overview of the origins of the problem. “There are regular violations of the no-fire zone,” he said, with numerous deployments by both sides into the security zone. “The protracted stalemate has gotten worse, and this is very disappointing because both parties had agreed to UN resolution of the crisis.”

Prendergast compared Eritrea to the eponymous hero of “Cool Hand Luke,” the movie starring Paul Newman. “Eritrea, like Luke, has backed itself into a corner,” he said. Prendergast called for targeted sanctions and continued diplomacy, leading ideally to a resolution that encompasses the concerns of both nations. “The stakes are high,” he said. “Renewed warfare would destabilize the entire Horn of Africa.” 🌍



# Letter from the Webmaster

## New features have made the Institute's Web site easier to use than ever

by Dida Atassi, Webmaster

The success of an organization depends on its ability to disseminate information, and the evolution of the Internet has made this task quicker and more efficient than ever before. An organization's web site is often the first impression many users have of the organization as well as an essential outreach tool.

For web sites, physical appearance is critical. A clear, organized, and visually appealing Web site makes it easier for a user to read and find content and encourage the user to stay and browse, potentially discovering additional important content.

It is with this in mind that we recently launched a redesign of the Institute's web site. Our goal was to maximize our presence by creating a comprehensive and consistent web site to inform and educate the public about our work on conflicts around the world.

The following are the new features of the Institute's redesigned web site, which we hope will become an invaluable tool for researchers, policymakers, academics, and the general public.

### • New Homepage Design

The new design allows a clearer presentation of the Institute's "do, think, teach, and train" mission and includes more space to highlight our on-the-ground work, grants, events, publications, and more.

### • Drop Down Menu

The site features a new drop down menu, accessible from every page,

for easy access to all parts of the Web site. The drop down menu allows for simple navigation and a cleaner overall look to the site.

### • Google Search Engine

Our new, powerful search engine allows users to search our site, [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org), and or to focus on certain areas of the site such as events, reports, books, and specialists.

### • Printer-Friendly Pages

Our users have the option of printing a clean, easy-to-read, version of the text without navigation bars using the new "Printer Friendly Version" link.

### • Online Media Kit

The new Online Media Kit is a special, easy access place for journalists looking for quick background information on the Institute. It features:

- the latest Institute fact sheet, news releases, media mentions, and staff-written op-eds;
- a link to our online Guide to Specialists with high-resolution photographs;
- Our new photo galleries collection, with high-resolution versions of the photos and logos available for download.

### • Podcasting

Podcasting is a way to subscribe to the Institute's audio programs and



have the latest releases download automatically to your desktop.

### • RSS Feeds

RSS Feed (Really Simple Syndication) is a way for users to receive the Institute's latest news directly to their desktop. RSS allows a user to receive the most updated content and headlines from a Web site by providing short summaries with links to the full content. RSS feeds, including the Institute's, are different from podcasts in that they do not provide audio.

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The new, clean, user-friendly design reflects the increasing breadth of Institute programs and activities and makes it easier to locate general and specific information related to conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution. 🌐

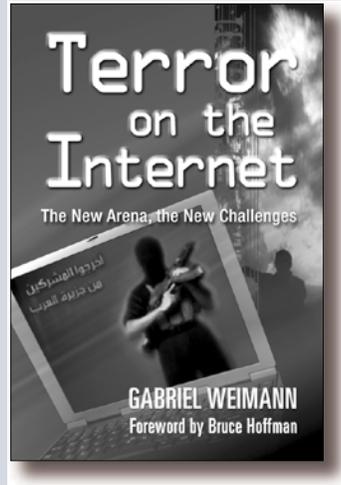
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