Strengthening United States Foreign Policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

A White Paper Commissioned by Eastern Congo Initiative

With thanks to the authors of *Strengthening United States Foreign Policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo:*

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Acronyms

ADF-NALU	Allied Democratic Forces
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program
CAF	Country Assistance Framework
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission
CENTCOM	Central Command
CEPGL	Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
CLPC	*Comites locaux permanent de conciliation* (interethnic reconciliation committees)
CNDP	*Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (National Congress for the Defense of the People)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EUSEC	European Union Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	Congolese Armed Forces
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FY	Fiscal Year
GDRC	Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
HAP	Humanitarian Action Plan (for the DRC)
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country

ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
I-SSSS	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NFI	Non-Food Items
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCD	Congolese Rally for Democracy
S/CRS	State Department for Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilization
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STAREC	Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Zones in the East
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
USG	United States Government

The Democratic Republic of Congo: Between Hope and Fear

The Democratic Republic of Congo (hereafter Congo) has made remarkable progress towards security and stability after years of armed conflict and foreign intervention within the region. With the signing of the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement in 2002, the Congo is now governed under a democratically-elected government. Former rebel leaders and combatants have been demobilized or integrated into public service, and economic growth has resumed. While the country has achieved these notable milestones, armed conflict and violence in its eastern provinces continues to undermine progress, threatening to throw the country back into chaos.

With national elections scheduled for 2011 and critical institutional reforms about to be launched, the Congo today is at a critical juncture in its history. If remaining threats to security and stability in eastern Congo are not addressed in the immediate future, not only will the elections and planned reforms fail, but they could further destabilize the country by provoking new armed rebellions and violence, weakening governance institutions, and encouraging authoritarian practices among political actors.

The Great Lakes region has been wracked with civil wars and is characterized by fledgling democracies. Weak states are susceptible to hosting armed groups and enabling illegal commerce in weapons and natural resources. It is these very trends in the eastern Congo that continue to threaten the region's stability. The Congo, situated within the Great Lakes region and sharing its borders with nine countries, has already suffered greatly, with an estimated 3.5 million conflict-related deaths over the past ten years, and its infrastructure and institutions having been laid to waste. The Congo has yet to recover from this devastation; the impact of further destabilization and conflict would be magnified, and could result in casualty rates and destruction far greater than has occurred in the past. Untold hundreds of thousands of people, already in an extreme state of vulnerability, would be uprooted once again, except this time with coping mechanisms that are extremely weak or non-existent. The world cannot afford a new tragedy in eastern Congo that would reverse the gains achieved after so much effort over the past years, and threaten the stability of the Great Lakes region as a whole.

Today the Congo has a population of 64 million and a territory the size of western Europe, and ranks among the five poorest countries in the world, with 80 percent of the population living below the poverty line at 2 USD per day.

Yet the region also has some of the greatest agricultural potential in Africa. Agricultural productivity has been identified as key for regional development and for gains in the standard of living. In addition to its agricultural potential, the Congo benefits from abundant natural resources which, if properly managed, could yield revenues for the Congolese state to improve its social services and infrastructure. For the region to realize this potential, the Congo, and specifically eastern Congo, first needs to be stabilized.

The international community—and the U.S. in particular—must do more to address the challenges in eastern Congo if another failure of humanity is to be averted in Central Africa. Averting the breakdown of efforts to create peace and democracy in the Congo has never been more urgent than now. For these reasons—regional stability, strengthening the Congolese state, and preventing further human suffering—the Great Lakes region and specifically the Congo is a regional security priority for the U.S. Addressing these challenges necessitates breaking a vicious cycle caused by three specific conflict dynamics: 1) the Congolese State's inability to project an effective presence in the east and protect its citizens; 2) the continued violence and abuse of civilians perpetrated by remaining armed groups and the war economy that sustains them; and 3) the deep socioeconomic and ethnic tensions between communities.

What is needed to break the current cycle of instability and conflict is a radical re-focusing and expansion of international assistance. This assistance must address urgent stabilization needs and confront the structural causes and dynamics of these regional problems, while at the same time laying the foundations for longer-term recovery, governance reform and economic development.

The international community provides strong support through diplomatic, humanitarian, and development assistance. International investment in the Congo is significant—more than 14 billion USD between 2007 and 2010. However, for the U.S. to help Congo ensure a successful transition and meet its own foreign assistance goals, its focus must extend beyond financial assistance to a reframing of existing strategy. The U.S. must address specific security and stabilization objectives in eastern Congo, while also catalyzing broader international engagement in this context. It must capitalize on past gains and seize opportunities for a more stable future for the Congo and the region, while meeting U.S. foreign policy objectives.

The time for renewed commitment and action to bolster stabilization efforts is now. The Congo is at a tangible confluence of windows of opportunity, opening simultaneously at 1) the regional level, given recent support of agriculture-based economic initiatives by the region's heads of state; 2) the national level, with the upcoming presidential and local elections; and 3) the international level, with a renewed mandate for MONUSCO and two mandates that are specific to the United States.

A more strategic and directed policy of U.S. engagement in the Congo could build on the potential that the windows of opportunity offer, and significantly contribute to efforts by the Congolese government (GDRC) and the international community to stabilize the region. Thus it is possible to prevent a new tragedy from threatening the stability of the Great Lakes region as a whole and avoid a reversal of the gains achieved after so much effort over the past years.

Averting a Tragedy: Nine Objectives for Critical Support and Empowered U.S. Leadership

The following nine objectives and corresponding priority actions outline the requirements for U.S. support for eastern Congo. The first five objectives focus on the most urgent and critical interventions needed to interrupt current cycles of violence and conflict in the east, to improve the discipline and professionalism of security forces, to restore critical state services, and to prevent the impending return movement of displaced populations from reigniting interethnic and communal conflicts. The final four objectives focus on securing and coordinating U.S. leadership so that the U.S. is empowered to provide necessary diplomatic leadership and development assistance. With this empowerment, the first five objectives may then be implemented.

These objectives are derived from existing goals and priorities supported by the government, current U.S. foreign policy towards the Congo, and the recent UN Security Council mandate for MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), as well as by other major multilateral and bilateral partners.

Objective 1: Facilitate renewed political engagement

The U.S. must provide strong support to the GDRC in addressing political bottlenecks to urgent peace and stabilization measures. The U.S. should also link provision of further technical and financial assistance to demonstrated commitment and action by the GDRC in this context. Priority areas include 1) the ending of impunity for crimes committed by security forces; 2) the payment of salaries to state personnel deployed or supported by the international community; 3) the prevention of political interference in the military and civilian justice systems; and 4) the implementation, in good faith, of GDRC obligations within the 23 March Peace Accords.

Objective 2: Support a multidimensional strategy to protect civilians

The U.S. must support a multidimensional strategy to create a safe environment for civilians through a range of measures, including 1) the strengthening of the professionalism and discipline of vetted Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) troops in eastern Congo; 2) provision of technical and logistical support to the FARDC and UN in neutralizing foreign armed groups; 3) exerting

diplomatic pressure within the UN Security Council to ensure more proactive engagement by MONUSCO in protecting civilians; and 4) supporting ongoing efforts to demobilize and reintegrate combatants into civilian life.

Objective 3: Support GDRC *reforms including the 2011 and 2013 elections*

The U.S. must provide more diplomatic pressure to catalyze action on critical institutional reform processes and continue technical assistance to ensure an appropriate environment for the upcoming elections. U.S. priority areas include 1) the reform of the security sector; 2) improved institutional transparency and accountability; 3) renewed attention on decentralization; and 4) strengthened democratic practices within government, including the organization of the 2011–2013 elections.

Objective 4: Support GDRC *in regulating trade in natural resources and ensuring deployment of justice and administrative services*

The U.S. must strengthen its financial and technical support for the GDRC to restore law and order and access to justice, in addition to essential administrative and other public services in former conflict areas, and also to establish regulatory control over the production and trade in natural resources in eastern Congo. U.S. assistance should be specifically focused on strengthening provincial institutions to manage and support the deployment of personnel in remote conflict areas, and also to support GDRC efforts to extend road and communications infrastructure, thus ensuring access by state services to areas where the civilian population is most vulnerable to attacks by armed groups.

Objective 5: Support IDP *and refugee returns and encourage socioeconomic recovery*

The U.S. must reorient and expand its current support in the area of economic recovery to specifically target and support the return and reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) and refugees. Specific priorities include 1) supporting GDRC and UN efforts to establish interethnic reconciliation committees at the local level; 2) strengthening community dispute resolution capacities; and 3) targeting economic recovery assistance in return areas to support the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees within a broader community recovery framework.

Objective 6: Reappoint a U.S. Special Advisor for the Great Lakes region

It is imperative that the U.S. continue the office of the U.S. Special Advisor, and appoint a U.S. Special Advisor—preferably to the Great Lakes region specifically, or secondarily as another viable option, to the Congo as a whole. The new advisor must be appointed immediately to assume responsibility and help lay the groundwork for next year's milestone election events.

Objective 7: Encourage a regional response to the crisis

The U.S. must develop a regional strategy for the Great Lakes region no later than January 17th, 2011, this being 180 days after the date the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was adapted into law (Public Law 111-203).

Objective 8: Support and complement multilateral efforts

The U.S. must actively support the development of a stronger relationship between the GDRC and the international community. The U.S. should also promote the alignment of international efforts in eastern Congo within the framework of existing stabilization strategies, and the adequate resourcing of MONUSCO to fulfill its mandate.

Objective 9: Engage the U.S. advocacy community

The U.S. must engage the U.S. advocacy community for the Congo by soliciting their input and participation in the development of a U.S. Government (USG), regional, and Congolese strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of Congo (henceforth Congo) is at a critical stage in its decades-long transition from war to peace. From 1994 and into 2003, the Congo experienced armed conflict and human suffering on a scale unparalleled in the history of the African continent. Today, eight years after the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement ended conflict and foreign intervention throughout most of the country, significant progress has been achieved towards a more secure and stable country. The country is governed under a democratically elected government, former rebel leaders and combatants have been demobilized or integrated into public service, and economic growth has resumed. In a country the size of western Europe, with little public infrastructure intact, devastated state institutions, and levels of poverty that make it among the poorest in the world, the importance of these gains cannot be underestimated.

At the same time, the Congo remains a fragile state, where further progress is threatened by recurrent political crises, weak and ineffective state institutions, extreme poverty, and continued violence and conflict in the eastern provinces.[1] The Congo has suffered greatly, with an estimated 3.5 million conflict-related deaths over the past ten years. In eastern Congo, approximately 2 million people are still internally displaced and another 200,000 are refugees in neighboring countries.[2] Armed conflict continues between government forces and a number of foreign and Congolese armed groups. In many areas, impunity reigns in the absence of functioning courts, while the Congolese army and police, suffering from poor management, control and discipline are at best ineffective, and at worst themselves party to the terrible violence that continues against civilians. Hundreds of thousands of others are victims of serious human rights violations, sexual abuse and other forms of violence, committed by armed groups as well as undisciplined members of the national security forces.

But violence and devastation aside, the Congo with its natural and economic resources, is not an intrinsically poor country. The Congolese government (GDRC) has access, in principle, to important revenue streams that could allow it to partially meet the demands of reconstruction and decrease its reliance on international aid. The Congo's growth potential is significant, as well, with its resources able to provide important revenue streams to finance the country's long-term recovery, and progressively reduce its reliance on international assistance.

1 With a population of 64 million and a territory the size of western Europe, the Congo is also one of the poorest countries in the world, with 80 percent of its population living on 2 USD per day. Source: United Nations Development Programme—Human Development Report.

2 Source: UNHCR statistics, 2010.

The current forms of armed conflict, insecurity and human suffering that still plague eastern Congo, and undermine the stability of the country as a whole, are attributable to three interrelated dynamics that perpetuate a vicious cycle of violence and conflict:

- the Congolese state's inability to project an effective presence in the east and protect its citizens;
- the continued violence and abuse of civilians perpetrated by remaining armed groups and the war economy that sustains them; and
- the deep socioeconomic and ethnic tension between communities.

With national elections planned for 2011–2013 (beginning with Presidential elections), the Congo today is at a critical juncture in its history. Current threats to security and stability in eastern Congo must be addressed to ensure the success of the electoral process, as well as the implementation of critical institutional reforms. Free and peaceful elections in the Congo could help consolidate the process of national unification started in 2003, and establish sound foundations for accelerated democratization and economic growth in the country. If organized in the present context, however, elections could further destabilize the country by provoking new armed rebellions and violence, and weakening an already fragile government. The implosion of the Congo a second time would constitute a crisis of significant proportions that would also place a massive burden on the international community, the U.S. included, to provide massive funding for peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, at a time when these resources are stretched globally.

While acknowledging the important contributions made to date by the international community in supporting Congo in its path from war to peace, this White Paper argues that current levels of assistance in the areas of peace and security, and humanitarian and development assistance are insufficient to address current threats to stability. This White Paper calls for a radical refocusing and expansion of security and stabilization measures over the short to near term, focused primarily in eastern Congo, coupled with a support for accelerating key governance reforms and ensuring the success of the electoral process. Addressing a number of urgent priorities within this framework at sufficient scale and in a timely manner will be key to breaking current cycles of violence and conflict, while simultaneously establishing the foundations for long-term economic development and democratic reform, not just in eastern Congo, but throughout the country as a whole.

The role of the U.S. in this context will be critical, both in terms of its direct support and contributions, but also through its leadership in mobilizing the international community to act more decisively and coherently, and through its diplomatic influence in both Congo and the Great Lakes region. The U.S. government must therefore make stabilization in eastern Congo the central focus in its engagement in the Congo between 2011 and 2013, while at the same time taking a lead in working with the GDRC and the international community to translate critical reform plans into action. To this end, this White Paper proposes that current U.S. assistance as articulated in its Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan for the Congo 2009–2013 be refined and strengthened to address a number of specific priorities, which are outlined in chapters III and IV.

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CHAPTER I

The Difficult Road From War to Peace in the Congo

Map No. 4007 Rev. 8 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

A. BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW (1996–2010)

The following section provides a brief historical overview of developments in Congo since 1996 and outlines the key challenges and opportunities that exist today, with a specific focus on the continuing crisis in eastern Congo. This section also provides an overview of international assistance to the Congo, and highlights the U.S. contribution as well as current obstacles and challenges to maximizing the impact of international efforts.

1. A decade of war to peace (1996–2006)

Between 1996 and 2002, the Congo (formerly known as Zaire) experienced two devastating wars which delivered the final *coup de grace* to a country already in a state of collapse following decades of mismanagement and corruption in government institutions. The influx of Hutu refugees into eastern Zaire following the Rwandan genocide in 1994 sparked the first Congo war (1996–1997), which, with the support of Rwanda, Uganda and Angola, led to the overthrow of the Mobutu regime by Laurent Kabila. In 1998, a second war commenced in which armed militias who were supported by Rwanda and Uganda fought against Kabila's government.[3]

Despite the signing of the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, armed conflict and foreign intervention in the Congo continued until the end of 2002.[4] During this period, the country was literally carved up among the belligerents, with armed militia groups controlling and administering large parts of the country. Hyperinflation and the breakdown of commerce and markets led to economic collapse, and numerous armed groups (including self-defense militias known as the Mayi-Mayi) filled the vacuum left by the collapse of state authority, law and order. During this period, millions were displaced, and an estimated 3.5 million people[5] lost their lives due to the conflict, disease and starvation.

The signing of the *Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (henceforth referred to as the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement) in late 2002 resulted in the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity, comprised of key actors from the various armed groups, the political opposition, and civil society.[6] This was followed by the withdrawal of foreign forces, the progressive reunification of the country's infrastructural systems and institutions, modest economic growth, and the adoption of a new constitution in 2005. The organization of national elections in 2006 confirmed Joseph Kabila as president, and resulted in the establishment of a democratically elected parliament. It is important to note that the 2006 elections constituted the first free and democratic electoral process to be organized in the Congo since the elections of 1960.

3 A number of neighbouring countries provided direct or indirect support to parties in the conflict, including Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

4 The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement called for, inter alia, a cessation of hostilities, the release of prisoners of war, and the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force (MONUC). The agreement was signed by Angola, the Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe on July 10, 1999.

5 Estimate of the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

6 The Global and All-Inclusive Agreement was signed in December 2002 between the Congolese Government, main armed groups, the political opposition, and civil society. These agreements were the fruit of months of negotiation in Sun City, South Africa, and outlined the key elements of a political transition culminating in legislative and presidential elections.

2. Progress in a context of fragility (2003–2010)

Despite the many challenges facing the Congo, the country remains on a broadly positive trajectory since 2003: armed conflict has largely ceased throughout the country, except in specific areas in eastern Congo; many former armed opposition leaders have been integrated into the institutions of government and political mainstream; tens of thousands of combatants have been integrated into the army and police, or demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life;[7] and the government exerts territorial administrative control over most of the country. Since 2007, the GDRC also embarked, with international support, on an ambitious process of institutional reform and economic recovery, with the achievement of important gains in recent years, including a significant write-off of the national debt by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in 2010. Progress also continues in the implementation of a number of national development plans and strategies, including the national Poverty Reduction Strategy and associated Priority Action Programs.

At the same time, these important gains remain fragile and vulnerable to threats to peace and security in eastern Congo, including continuing high levels of abuse of civilians, and population displacement (see next section, "Causes of conflict in eastern Congo"). Deep structural problems in government institutions and a volatile political environment also constitute significant challenges, and are compounded by a slide towards more authoritarian rule by leaders in government. The rate of economic growth has not increased significantly since 2006, which is symptomatic of the continued inability of the GDRC to stimulate economic growth, increase its national budget, and establish institutional and regulatory control over economic activity. Crucial governance reforms, most notably in the security and justice sectors, have come to a standstill in this volatile environment that, if not improved, could derail the 2011 electoral process and lead to a general destabilization of the country once again.

3. Causes of conflict in eastern Congo: Between hope and fear

In eastern Congo specifically, conflict and insecurity continue while the guns have fallen silent in other parts of the country. The period between 2006 and 2010 is characterized by the continued presence and operations of foreign and national armed groups which, together with ill-disciplined elements of the national police and army, continue to exact a terrible toll on the population. Approximately 2 million people are still internally displaced and another 200,000 are refugees in neighboring countries.[8] Hundreds of thousands of others are victims of serious human rights violations, sexual abuse and other forms of violence, perpetrated in a climate of impunity. According to the UN,

7 During this period, over 130,000 combatants were demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life. Source: World Bank MDRP Program.

8 Source: United Nations High Commission for Refugees UNHCR Statistics, 2010.

over 17,500 rapes were reported in 2009 alone, and recent incidents (including the acts of sexual violence committed by armed groups in North Kivu in August 2010 against over 200 people) illustrate how sexual violence is increasingly being used as a weapon of war.

While the number of military confrontations has declined, violent crimes and banditry have increased dramatically, and a number of armed groups, supported through illegal exploitation of natural resources, continue to operate freely. At the same time, military operations supported by the UN have achieved modest results against foreign armed groups (notably the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF-NALU)), while a series of peace agreements negotiated with Congolese armed groups in the Kivu provinces (most notably the *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (CNDP)) has led to a fragile ceasefire. While the scale of killings and starvation is not as high as in past years, people continue to live in a situation of extreme vulnerability where the future is uncertain, and basic livelihoods and rights remain a distant ideal.

An overview of the key causes of conflict in eastern Congo does, however, reveal that though the situation remains dire, progress is being achieved on a number of fronts and provides hope for the eventual stabilization of the region. This progress reflects the combined efforts of the GDRC, the UN, and key bilateral partners such as the U.S. and the European Union.

1. Interethnic and communal tensions exacerbated by refugee returns

Eastern Congo has a long and tragic history of interethnic tension and conflict, which has often been manipulated by various actors in pursuit of political and economic power. The roots of this tension include three problems: the immigration of *Rwandaphone* (i.e., ethnic Hutu and Tutsi) populations into eastern Congo since the 17th century; the emergence of ethnic and tribal power networks and periodic incidents of ethnic cleansing; and the competition over land, natural resources and economic markets in an environment of widespread poverty and overpopulation. These problems can only be resolved through inclusive representation in the political system and institutions of governance, and equitable economic development. In the near term, the demographic imbalance created by years of conflict has exacerbated tensions and threatens to create new forms of conflict as over 2 million IDPS and refugees prepare to return home.[9] A major source of tension in this context is the potential conflict over housing, land and property. The impending returns are also seen as an opportunity by some negative actors to gain political capital by manipulating the returns process. To the surprise of many, however, the preparations for the

9 According to estimates from the UNHCR, over 1.9 million people are internally displaced within the Congo, and over 300,000 are refugees in neighbouring countries, including Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

returns of IDPS and refugees have proceeded peacefully with the participation of most ethnic communities. The recently concluded Tripartite Agreements between the GDRC, UN and the governments of Burundi and Rwanda in 2010 also provide a transparent framework for managing the returns process.

2. The presence of foreign armed groups and exploitation of natural resources

Since the early 1990s, eastern Congo has served as a haven for foreign armed groups. These groups have capitalized on the relatively weak presence of the state and control large geographic areas in which they sustain their operations through the illegal exploitation of natural resources. These include most notably the FDLR (remnants of the Hutu militias who fled Rwanda following the genocide in 1994), but also recently Ugandan groups such as the LRA and ADF-NALU. These armed groups constitute a significant threat to the Congolese state and have exacted a heavy toll on the civilian population. Since 2009, more effective operations against these groups were launched with UN support (albeit with serious collateral damage among civilians). This led to the reacquisition of important territory (notably, mining areas) and a weakening of their military and logistical capabilities. These operations have also been accompanied by international efforts to apprehend leaders of some of these groups abroad, and to disable their foreign financial and resupply networks. Although the threat posed by armed groups remains, it is being gradually mitigated.

3. Congolese armed groups in the Kivus and the peace accords

Although the peace accords of 2002–2003 brought an end to the activities of most Congolese armed groups and facilitated their integration into state services or civilian life, a number of groups remained outside this framework and continued to pursue their objectives through violence. The most important of these groups was the CNDP, led by former Congolese General Laurent Nkunda. Following a failed attempt to integrate into the Congolese national army (FARDC), the CNDP once again took up arms in 2007. This led to major armed confrontations in North and South Kivu. At the same time, over 20 smaller armed groups—mainly local militias known as the *Mayi-Mayi*—continued the use of armed violence to acquire political and economic control over key areas and to contest their alleged exclusion from the peace accords and their associated benefits.[10]

The Goma Accords (*Actes d'Engagement*) of early 2008 provided a framework for ending the conflict with the CNDP and 21 other armed groups, and included comprehensive provisions related to integration of armed groups into the army and police, disarmament and demobilization, restoration of state author-

10 The 2002 and 2003 Peace Accords included only the major rebel groups as signatories. Most of the Mayi-Mayi groups, the majority of which do not exceed several hundred combatants, were not recognized as signatories.

ity, and the return of IDPS and refugees. While the Goma Accords collapsed due to renewed fighting between the GDRC and CNDP in August 2008, key provisions were revived in the Peace Accords for North Kivu and South Kivu signed in 2009 (the so-called 23 March Accords). Unlike the 2008 Goma Accords, the 2009 Accords still hold, despite serious delays and political problems associated with their implementation. Since signing the 2009 Accords, the CNDP has integrated most of its troops into the FARDC and announced its transformation into a political party. Following the CNDP's example, remaining armed groups either have already demobilized (including over 4,500 combatants who have been reintegrated into civilian life) or are pursuing negotiations with the GDRC and UN in this regard. This has dramatically reshaped the political landscape in the Kivus, reduced the number of military incidents, and enabled almost one million IDPS to return home in 2009.

4. Absence of state control and authority perpetuates abuse and exploitation

Years of conflict and the occupation of large areas of eastern Congo by armed groups resulted in—and was partly a consequence of—the near-total collapse of state institutions and infrastructure. Combined with the inability of the central government to project authority and control, this has created a dangerous law and order vacuum. This vacuum has been, and still is, exploited by armed groups and other criminal actors to operate with impunity in abusing the civilian population, dominating local economies, and perpetuating a war economy in eastern Congo focused on illegal exploitation of mineral and timber resources. In addition, the integration of tens of thousands of untrained former combatants into the army and the police has seriously undermined the professionalism and discipline of these institutions. It has also overwhelmed the ability of these institutions to exert managerial control and ensure regular payments of salaries.[11] As a result, in certain areas the army and the police are as much a part of the problem as the armed groups. Although the situation still remains extremely problematic, the GDRC, supported by the international community, has increased efforts to reestablish military, police and civilian control and presence in eastern Congo. These institutions and services, however, remain extremely weak, under-resourced and often ineffective.

B. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE CONGO: ITS IMPACT AND LIMITATIONS

The Congo has benefited from strong international engagement and support in its transition from war to peace over the past decade. This support spans peace and security, humanitarian assistance, stabilization and development interventions and is implemented in partnership with the GDRC by a wide range

11 The national army (FARDC) is currently not a viable entity with over 150,000 troops, approximately 50,000 of which are deployed in the Kivus alone.

of multilateral, regional and bilateral partners. During the period 2007–2010, total investments (excluding foreign direct investment) have amounted to over 14 billion USD, most of which have been concentrated in eastern Congo (approximately 70–80 percent). The U.S. has contributed approximately 15–20 percent of this total amount (including additional funds not recorded in Table 1, as well as funds provided to the Congo indirectly through multilateral organizations such as the World Bank).[12] While critical in helping Congo recover since the end of conflict in 2003, a number of challenges still exist to maximizing the potential impact of international assistance.

12 Data compiled from multiple sources, including the USG, UN, and GDRC statistics on international assistance to the Congo.

TABLE 1 Overview of international assistance to the Congo (2007–2010), millions of USD*

SECTOR	DONOR	2007	2008	2009	2010	TOTALS	U.S. CONTRIBUTION (%)
HUMANITARIAN	IC	491	583.4	556	321.8	1,951.8	
	U.S.	120	122.1	156.2	89.9	488.2	25%
PEACE & SECURITY	IC	1,370	1,350	1240	1,170	5,130	
	U.S.	°	300	263.1	402.7	965.8	19%
DEVELOPMENT	IC	2,024	1,848.4	1,321.3	1,726**	6919.3	
	U.S.	57.7	116	127.2	144.4	445.3	6%***
YEARLY TOTALS	IC	3,884.9	3,781.8	3,117.3	3,217.1	14,001	
	U.S.	177.7	538.1	546.5	637	1,899.3	14%****

* The table is based on indicative data compiled by the GDRC and UN. As such, it is not fully representative of all donor contributions and should be considered indicative. IC refers to International Community.

° Data for U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping in the Congo for 2007 is missing.

** Projected figure based on average annual disbursement rates for 2007–2009.

*** The U.S. contribution for development programs as presented does not represent the full real assistance in this sector, given that it does not include development funds for Congo allocated through the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

**** This figure is based on incomplete data and does not include funding provided through other sources and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank. The real contribution of the U.S. can be estimated at between 15–20 percent.

This section provides an overview of current international investments, their impact and the challenges faced in providing assistance in the Congo.

1. From MONUC to MONUSCO: Build and maintain peace and security in the Congo

Since 2000, the UN has played a leading role in supporting the GDRC in its efforts to build peace and restore a secure environment through the UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC). Over the past ten years, MONUC evolved from a small military observer mission to the world's largest UN peacekeeping operation. With over 22,000 uniformed and 4,000 civilian personnel, MONUC has played an important role in helping protect civilians (notably, in the eastern Congo), neutralizing armed groups (foreign and national), organizing elections, monitoring and supporting the implementation of ceasefires and peace accords, and most recently, supporting efforts to strengthen national institutions, including through stabilization efforts in eastern Congo. In addition, the UN system, through the International Criminal Court (ICC), has actively pursued the arrest and indictment of several key figures suspected to have been responsible for war crimes.

Following the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1925 of 28 May 2010, the mission—now known as MONUSCO—has been reconfigured to specifically address protection, stabilization and peace consolidation priorities.[13] Although criticized for sometimes failing to protect civilians, there is a consensus within the Congo and the international community on the continued need for the mission: it serves as a powerful deterrent to would-be spoilers, provides essential logistics capabilities, and plays an important coordinating and supporting role within the international community. A number of additional international partners are also involved in supporting peace and security efforts, including support to security sector reform (notably training and provision of equipment for the army, police and justice). These organizations have also been actively engaged at the diplomatic level in the negotiation and monitoring of peace accords.

2. Humanitarian assistance provides life-saving support

Over the past ten years, the Congo has received significant humanitarian assistance (over 3.4 billion USD), which has contributed to saving millions of lives, primarily in eastern Congo, but also throughout the country.[14] A number of multilateral organizations and over 20 bilateral donors have consistently provided funding, either through parallel funding mechanisms or through the

13 Source: Text of UNSC 1925: http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions10.htm.

14 Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), Data compiled for yearly statistics on financial contributions for the DRC (http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fts.nsf/doc105?OpenForm&rc=1&cc=cod).

UN-administered Humanitarian Pool Fund. The funding is used to address urgent needs for populations in war-affected areas as well as displaced and vulnerable groups. The international community's strategy for providing humanitarian assistance is articulated in the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) for the Congo and is updated on an annual basis.[15]

Specific priorities targeted by this assistance include provision of emergency shelter and non-food items (NFIS); water and sanitation; education; nutrition; protection of vulnerable populations; reintegration of IDPS/refugees and community recovery; and food security and logistics. Significant achievements in this regard include supporting approximately 2 million IDPS during their period of displacement, be it in camps or host families, reestablishing education and health facilities in areas devastated by conflict, and increasing food security for millions of others affected by a collapsed economic system and reduced access to markets.

3. STAREC/I-SSSS supports security and stabilization

Since 2007, the UN and international community have been actively engaged in supporting security and stabilization efforts in eastern Congo. With the development of the GDRC's Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Zones in the East (STAREC) in mid-2009, existing UN and international efforts realigned within the framework of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (I-SSSS). This provides a common programmatic, funding, and coordination architecture to maximize the coherence, strategic targeting and impact of international support. The STAREC/I-SSSS framework currently covers the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and the districts of Ituri, Haut-Uele, and Bas-Uele in Orientale Province, as well as the district of Tanganyika in the province of Katanga.

To date, over 300 million USD out of a total assessed requirement of approximately 1 billion USD has been mobilized within the STAREC/I-SSSS framework to support programs aimed at enhancing security and protection of civilians; restoring essential state services in conflict-affected areas (notably police, justice and local administration); rehabilitating key road and bridge infrastructure; and supporting the peaceful and sustainable return and reintegration of IDPS, refugees and other vulnerable groups within a broad community recovery approach. While it is a relatively recent initiative, the following achievements within this framework have resulted.

- The demobilization or army integration of over 25,000 combatants from armed groups.

15 For the 2010 HAP, see:
http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/webpage.asp?MenuID=14031&Page=1873

- The reintegration of over 4,500 combatants and child soldiers into the social and economic life of communities.
- Construction of over 70 police stations, courts, administrative buildings and prisons, and support for the deployment of over 3,000 state personnel.
- Rehabilitation of over 2,500 kilometers of roads.
- Resolution of hundreds of housing, land and property disputes.
- Creation of basic social services and income generating activities for over 300,000 people, including both returnees and host populations.

4. National and international partners promote long-term development and institutional reform

With the end of the transition period and the election of the GDRC in 2006, both national and international partners turned their attention to defining a collective vision for development in the Congo. The GDRC's strategy, articulated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) developed in 2006, currently receives support through the joint World Bank/UN coordinated Country Assistance Framework (CAF). First developed in 2007, this program is the model to which many donors have aligned their country development strategies and programs.

Between 2007 and 2010, the international community—including the UN, other multilateral organizations, bilateral partners and the private sector—committed over 11 billion USD in international assistance, excluding foreign direct investment.[16] The following are important results achieved to date in eastern Congo.

- Large-scale programs to rehabilitate energy, communications and transport infrastructure (albeit, outside conflict areas).
- Strengthening of the justice sector, local governance and the capacities of national services responsible for road construction and maintenance.
- Economic recovery and development programs with a focus on reviving local agricultural and industrial production.

A number of other countries also invest in the Congo outside formal aid frameworks, most notably China, which has invested 6 billion USD since 2008 as foreign direct investment in large-scale infrastructure programs. However, symptomatic of the challenges in implementing development programs in

16 Data compiled by UNDP and the DRC Ministry of Planning, 2010.

volatile and post-conflict environments, less than half (6.9 billion USD) of the reconstruction funds have actually been disbursed.

5. The U.S. contribution encourages peace, stabilization and development efforts in the Congo

The U.S. is a major contributor to international efforts in the Congo and is active in a wide range of domains. The U.S. has supported a range of strategic interventions that have been critical in helping address the political and security situation, providing humanitarian assistance, launching critical stabilization interventions in eastern Congo and helping strengthen institutional capacities and economic recovery. The direct U.S. contribution to the Congo from 2007 to 2010 (excluding funding through multilateral organizations such as the World Bank) has amounted to over 2 billion USD, which represents 15–20 percent of the total contribution made by the international community during this period (including funds channeled through other sources such as the World Bank).[17] Highlights in this regard are as follows:

- Support for peacekeeping efforts under the aegis of MONUC, where the U.S. is the largest single contributor with over 900 million USD disbursed during the 2007–2010 period (or approximately 350 million USD per annum), representing 19 percent of the total budget for this period.

- Support for provision of humanitarian assistance, where the U.S. has provided approximately 500 million USD during the 2000–2010 period, representing 25 percent of total contributions.

- Support for stabilization interventions in eastern Congo within the STAREC/I-SSSS framework, where the U.S. has provided approximately 50 million USD during the 2008–2010 period, representing 25 percent of total contributions, and making it the second largest donor in this framework.

- Bilateral support in the security sector, including most notably the provision of military training support to the FARDC, for a total budget of 1 million USD during the 2009–2010 period.

- Provision of development support, where the U.S. has provided approximately 500 million USD in direct bilateral contributions during the 2007–2010 period, excluding funding through other multilateral organizations such as the World Bank.

6. Challenges of international investment in the Congo

The size of the Congo and the complexity of its challenges create obstacles for the coherent and well-coordinated provision of international assistance.

17 Indicative data compiled from USG, UN and GDRC sources.

As a result, international assistance does not often maximize its potential for impact in the Congo. A general problem is that assistance is fragmented due to the reticence of international partners to subscribe in practice to common strategies and program frameworks. This is compounded by the weak capacity of the GDRC to coordinate international aid. Additional factors include the following:

- Due to fragmentation and lack of alignment with national goals and priorities, **the targeting of international assistance often does not address urgent priorities** in the areas of civilian protection, stabilization and peace building.

- Despite the existence of national plans and sectoral reform strategies, many international donors prefer to allocate funding based on their own priorities and national agendas. This has led to **significant fragmentation and duplication of efforts at sectoral and geographic levels** and hindered the ability of the Government to develop actionable reform policies and programs.

- The absence of a coherent approach to allocating funding among donors has also **undermined the attempts of the GDRC to respond quickly and with flexibility to emerging priority needs** and unforeseen circumstances. As a result, in many cases important projects go unfunded while resources are spent on interventions which do not correspond to top national priorities.

- The GDRC and international community **lack a common vision on how international assistance can be transitioned** from a focus on peacekeeping and humanitarian support to addressing stabilization, peace consolidation and development needs in eastern Congo.

- **Donors are reluctant to directly fund the GDRC** (e.g., through budgetary support). This has a significant negative impact on generating national ownership and capacity due to an excessive focus on building up and using international organizations as implementing partners.

- Most international partners still provide project-based assistance, which results in **high transaction costs for national and implementing partners**, including multiple coordination and reporting mechanisms.

CHAPTER II

Strategic Importance of U.S. Engagement

Goals, Momentum, Timing and the Cost of Delay

The 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy emphasizes that "America's national security depends on these vibrant alliances, and we must engage them as active partners in addressing global and regional security priorities and harnessing new opportunities to advance common interests."[18] The Congo is a strategic partner of the U.S. The U.S. considers advancing "constructive cooperation [with emerging new and successful partners] essential to the security and prosperity of specific regions."[19] The overarching U.S. Foreign Policy goal is "the emergence of a stable democratic Congo that is at peace with its neighbors." According to the United States Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo 2009–2013:

> The FY 2007–2012 Department of State (DOS) Democratic Republic of the Congo Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan 2009–2013 and USAID Strategic Plan, implementing this policy agenda, named the DRC as a regional priority in Africa and set the stage for a renewed and expanded U.S. Government (USG) engagement in finding a solution to the crisis in Eastern DRC. The elevation of the DRC to a priority country within the Africa region has been implemented through two parallel tracks, as reflected in the FY 2010 Mission Strategic Plan: diplomatic initiatives to broker a negotiated end to conflict between the GDRC and militia groups and an expanded foreign assistance program with the specific inclusion of renewed security cooperation.[20]

The GDRC and the USG share a history of a strong alliance from which to build on to ensure security within the Congo and the region. However, the GDRC's limited ability to address threats to security and peace in eastern Congo could undermine the entire country's progress and threaten the region's security.

The Congo is in a unique period in which momentous windows of opportunity have opened simultaneously at the regional, national and international levels to bolster the stabilization efforts. The five key windows of opportunity include: 1) a mandate for change within the Congo via upcoming presidential and local elections; 2) a call by the region's heads of state for renewed regional economic cooperation; 3) the international community's endorsement of the new MONUSCO mandate; 4) an increased U.S. interest in the moral imperative of the Congo; and 5) U.S. bipartisan congressional support to be translated into concrete action. A more strategic and directed policy of U.S. engagement in the Congo could build on the potential that the opportunities offer while the windows remain open, and significantly contribute to efforts by the GDRC and the international community to stabilize the region and prevent the worst-case scenario from coming to fruition.

18 Source: The 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy.

19 Source: The 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy.

20 FY 2007–2012 Department of State (DOS) Democratic Republic of the Congo Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan 2009–2013.

Inaction could lead to further destabilization in eastern Congo, causing the contagion of destabilization to affect Congo's neighbors. Increased destabilization will undoubtedly cause an increase in casualty rates and destruction on a greater scale than has occurred in the recent past. This will create an insupportable burden for the international community. Additionally, a U.S. strategy of piecemeal efforts could undermine its support of stabilization, good governance, and human rights, and greatly diminish the stature of the U.S. within the Congo and the region.

This chapter details the importance of and urgency for U.S. engagement in the Congo. It also outlines the reasons the U.S. must be engaged at this time. Lastly, this chapter identifies the cost of inaction, highlighting the inevitable and grave consequences that could occur if the U.S. does not engage.

A. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE CONGO FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS

The FY 2007–2012 Department of State Democratic Republic of the Congo Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan 2009–2013 identified the Congo as a regional priority in Africa. The highest foreign assistance priority of the U.S. in the Congo is to support the processes and mechanisms to end the conflict.[21] This is a reflection of both the strategic interest of the U.S. in responding to the crisis, and the moral imperative to end the suffering. The U.S. cannot afford to neglect the Congo; to do so would be at the significant expense of its own interests and would result in greater suffering.

There are three key U.S. strategic interests that highlight the importance of the Congo for U.S. foreign policy.

1. Prevent threats to U.S. security

The world has witnessed how quickly an unstable state can consume its neighbors, engulf the region in uncontrolled violence, erode core state capacities, and result in ungoverned territories. Ungoverned territories quickly become inhabited by armed groups, criminals and terrorists, and create an enabling environment for illegal trade in weapons and natural resources. President Obama's Strategy to Promote Global Development and Democracy identified weak states that cannot control their territory or provide for their people as one of the top three security threats of this century. He further linked weak states and extremely poor societies to breeding grounds for disease, terrorism and conflict.

21 Source: Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan: Democratic Republic of the Congo FY 2009–2013.

The Congo is ranked as the fifth most failed state in 2010 by the Foreign Policy Failed State Index;[22] the instability in the eastern Congo is due to the state's limited ability to project its power throughout its territory. It is this limited ability that causes, and is exacerbated by, the presence of armed groups and the war economy (perpetuated by illegal commerce in natural resources). Until recently, these armed groups have not been directly linked to terrorist activity. However, the ADF, a suspected Islamic terrorist organization fighting the government of Uganda, has recently extended its activities into the Congo, and there is speculation that it has entered into an alliance with Somalia's terrorist organization, the Al Shabaab.[23] While this particular case does not prove that the Congo is becoming a haven for terrorists, it demonstrates a worrying potential for the Congo to host terrorist organizations.

U.S. policy priorities in Africa for 2011, and specifically for the Congo, reflect this concern that instability within the Congo generates potential security risks for the region. Though the possibility remains remote at this time, U.S. prevention of this scenario is in the interest of U.S. foreign policy and requires advancing stabilization, consolidating democratic gains, and bolstering the GDRC.

2. Strengthen a positive sphere of influence

U.S. foreign assistance to the Congo has focused on establishing a representative liberal democracy and capitalistic economic structures. This strategy is based on the premise that the Congo's democratic institutions will become the means through which the Congo overcomes its internal political divisions and establishes a government that is responsive to its citizens' needs.[24]

The U.S. and international financial institutions have provided the bulk of the development assistance received by the Congo since 2002. Recently however, China has increased its development assistance and foreign direct investment in the Congo, providing vital support to the country's infrastructure. Touted as the Marshall Plan for the Congo, China signed an agreement with the GDRC in 2008 to provide 9 billion USD (later reduced to 6 billion USD) for investments in the mining sector, focusing on cobalt and copper.

Unlike Western assistance, Chinese support comes without governance-related stipulations. With the increase in China's aid and investment as well as the achievement of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) completion, the

22 Source: Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan: Democratic Republic of the Congo FY 2009–2013.

23 Source: All Africa.com Andrew Mwenda "Uganda: Terror in Kampala" July 18, 2010. http://allafrica.com/stories/201007200909.html.

24 Source: Foreign Assistance Strategic Plan: Democratic Republic of the Congo FY 2009–2013.

GDRC does not need to rely as heavily on Western aid and investment. As a result, the Western value-driven approach has become increasingly at odds with the agenda and political ambitions of certain GDRC leaders.

Recent events suggest that the shift in sources of foreign aid correlate with the GDRC's most recent indications of backsliding in the authoritarian direction. According to the Freedom House Index, the Congo is ranked as "Not Free" and has regressed in the area of political liberties from 2008 to 2009.[25] The shrinking space for the Congolese voice is indicative of a worrying trend whereby some actors believe they can violate human rights with impunity, in contrary to the principles of democracy—as illustrated by the recent, suspicious death of the Congo's best-known human rights activist, Floribert Chebeya.

With a number of pivotal elections scheduled in the Congo and neighboring countries over the next several years, it is important for the U.S. to remain committed to a strong diplomatic presence in the region, to build on its relationship with President Kabila, to maintain its foreign policy priority of establishing a culture of democratic and accountable governance, and to promote respect for human rights. Whether the Congo's democratic gains in 2006 are consolidated or the country slips further towards authoritarianism, in part, will reflect whether the U.S. sidelines itself in the region or engages with China and the GDRC to strengthen its sphere of positive influence.

3. Safeguard U.S. investments

With popular opinion concerned about the U.S. budget deficit, those with "Congo fatigue" could argue against spending more money in another African country in need. Yet, the U.S. diplomatic role and assistance to the Congo is unique, modest, and specific—with clear milestones over the next two years.

The response to the crisis in the Congo is truly a response by the international community, and the U.S. is a key actor in these efforts. Compared with "picking up the bill" in other crises, the U.S. is funding approximately 20 percent of MONUC's 1.3 billion USD annual budget.[26] U.S. investments are leveraged and multiplied by other donors through bilateral and multilateral assistance. The scale of assistance necessary to address key security and stabilization needs in the Congo, and eastern Congo in particular is modest compared to other regions of instability. Financial requirements for addressing priority security and stability issues in key conflict-affected areas of eastern Congo, as outlined within the STAREC/I-SSSS, amount to less than one billion USD over three years. U.S. support is essential to the multilateral stabilization efforts in the Congo.

25 Source: Freedom House Index reports 2006–2010 (http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010).

26 Source: http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm.

Rather than trying to rebuild the entire state, U.S. assistance to the Congo is specific, focusing on establishing a culture of democratic and accountable governance, promoting respect for human rights, and fostering broad economic development.[27] Over the next two years, there are clear milestones in the governance-related areas linked to elections and decentralization. The Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 stipulated that the Secretary of State could withhold assistance if the GDRC does not make sufficient progress towards the policy objectives or demonstrate adequate political will to reform.

As important as the U.S. support to increase security and stability is the key diplomatic role of the U.S. in the region and in the Congo. Building on its relationship with and support of President Kabila, which began in 2001, U.S. support for the various peace processes has been pivotal. Despite the fact that President Kabila's rhetoric has become more antagonistic towards the international community, the U.S. continues to maintain a close relationship with President Kabila as well as other leaders in the region.

Increased U.S. engagement is key to safeguarding its previous investments in stability, governance, and development in the Congo. If, in the absence of a more rigorous U.S. and international engagement in the Congo, the country were to destabilize once again, these investments and relationships would be lost. Strengthening the strategic focus of the U.S. and increasing foreign assistance to the Congo will safeguard prior investments and ensure that they achieve their intended impact.

B. WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

Despite the remaining challenges in the Congo, investments made over the last decade have begun to generate significant improvements. There is currently a tangible and unprecedented confluence of windows of opportunity. These opportunities are open at: 1) the national level with the upcoming presidential and local elections; 2) the regional level, based on the heads of states' recent support for agricultural-based economic initiatives; and 3) the international level via the renewed mandate for MONUSCO; and include 4) an increased imperative for the U.S. to respond to the humanitarian crisis; and 5) increased bipartisan U.S. support.

If properly utilized, these opportunities could benefit the Congo's citizens, their government, regional neighbors, and the international community, leading to significant gains over the next two years. Each individual window of opportunity is significant, and collectively they could enable the Congolese to concretize the current soft foundation of democracy and peace and usher the

27 Source: CBJ Foreign Operations Annex: Regional Perspectives, pg. 43.

country into the twenty-first century as a regional power. These opportunities, matched with strategic leadership and targeted and timely investments, could propel the Congo towards real change, and prevent it from backsliding into renewed instability and autocracy.

1. Congolese mandate for change through the election process

The Congo is scheduled to hold presidential elections in 2011 and local elections are being proposed for 2012–2013. If supported appropriately, these two critical events can catalyze democratic consolidation. Much of the Congo's future will be defined by the outcomes of these processes.

The constitutionally-mandated decentralization process[28] similarly creates a window of opportunity for the Congolese to participate in a national dialogue regarding the structure of their government and sharing of power and resources. Decentralization can be linked to improving governance, establishing a new national balance, and preserving territorial integrity.

As each window of opportunity is paired with a window of vulnerability, these elections also pose a risk of increased national instability. There is already rising controversy regarding the dates that the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) identified for the elections. The space for Congolese dialogue is rapidly shrinking, driven by harassment, arbitrary arrests, death threats and the mysterious murders of political activists. The decentralization process also poses a threat to the country's upcoming political processes and stability. The decentralization mandate lacks united political support and could become a divisive force within the country. There are concerns that the upcoming referendum in Sudan could have a contagion effect, inspiring aspirations of succession, particularly in Katanga Province. The decentralization process, if undertaken, will affect the outcomes of the local elections and undoubtedly shape the Presidential and National Assembly elections scheduled for 2011.

Democratic consolidation will remain elusive without a commitment from the Congolese people, GDRC and the international community to a strategic path forward. However, with strategically-oriented and sufficient support from the U.S. and the broader international community, the upcoming elections could propel the country toward a stronger democratic future.

2. Pursuit of greater regional cooperation towards economic development

Regional economic development through agricultural-based growth is key to increasing food security, reducing poverty, and increasing peace-time economic incentives. The Congo is central to the region's economic development.

28 Decentralization is one of the key steps that still needs to be completed to fully implement the Congo's constitution following the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement and referendum establishing the Third Republic (2006).

In recognition of this, in June 2010, the Congo began to plan for a short- and long-term strategy to pursue economic growth through agricultural development as part of its preparation for the signing of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) Compact. The Congo joined its neighboring countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania) to promote the development of dynamic agricultural markets. The GDRC's engagement in the Compact opens a critical window for further institutional reform within the Congo and a regional dialogue focusing on an Africa-driven technical initiative.

To further support the region's economic growth, the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) recently met in an attempt to revive the economic bloc. The economic success of the Congo and its neighbors depends largely on building investment alliances and agriculture-related infrastructure.

The region is similarly intertwined politically. As much as the GDRC will be evaluated by its citizens, the leadership of neighboring countries in the Great Lakes region will be similarly evaluated by their citizens. With six presidential elections in the region scheduled to be held by the end of 2011, along with the referendum in Sudan, there is ample opportunity for the citizenry to hold their leaders accountable.[29] The Congo's stability is connected with the stability of its neighbors, and promises of internal peace and regional stability will be a common campaign platform for the presidential candidates in these countries. Partly in anticipation of the upcoming elections, the region's leaders are increasingly vocalizing the significance of positive relations with the Congo.

The burgeoning economic cooperation and upcoming presidential elections provide an opportunity for the international community to contribute to the increasing momentum for greater regional cooperation and incentives for regional stability.

3. Renewed international support for the Congo: The new MONUSCO mandate

While calling on the Congo's neighbors to join efforts to ensure a sustainable peace in eastern Congo, and international partners to focus their efforts on supporting the GDRC, the new mandate for MONUSCO stresses that primary responsibility for security, peace building and development lies with the GDRC. This new mandate mirrors Congolese calls for a greater emphasis on stabilization and peace consolidation, while maintaining the protection of civilians as a priority.

29 Presidential elections scheduled this year are in Burundi, the Central African Republic and Tanzania, and next year in Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia.

Mr. Roger Meece, former U.S. Ambassador to the Congo from 2004–2007, was recently appointed as the head of MONUSCO. Under the auspices of a new MONUSCO leadership and mandate, there is a window of opportunity for change. This change requires the GDRC and the UN to scrutinize the successes and failures of the past mission and define how to best align MONUSCO's strategy and operations with those of the GDRC and broader international community. This change also calls on the GDRC to ensure it has the institutional capacity to fully assume its responsibilities in eastern Congo when MONUSCO withdraws. Lastly, the new mandate calls on the international community to realign its structures and resources to support the protection, stabilization and peace consolidation priorities outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 1925 to complement the activities of MONUSCO.

The change of leadership and mandate creates an opportunity to identify the gaps in strategy, political will, capacity and funding, and revise the short- and medium-term plans appropriately. Due to the limited timeframe of MONUSCO, it is important for the U.S. to play a vital role for continuity, particularly related to the protection of civilians and Security Sector Reform (SSR). The U.S. can draw on its leadership role within the region, while the UN and the Congo guide these discussions.

4. The moral imperative towards accountability, not impunity

Since 2004, three of the four individuals who have been indicted by the ICC for perpetrating crimes ranging from conscripting and enlisting children under the age of fifteen years and using them to participate actively in hostilities to war crimes and crimes against humanity will now stand trial. Some had hoped that the indictments of these four armed group leaders would serve as a deterrent, conveying a message to the leadership and troops of other groups that such crimes would not be tolerated by the Congo, a signatory of the ICC, or by the international community.

However, the culture of impunity continues, with atrocities being committed on a regular basis. Estimates have put the toll of the conflict in eastern Congo at 45,000 conflict-related deaths per month over the last decade, equivalent to the loss of the population of the state of Colorado.[30] Late last year, the LRA committed one of the worst massacres in a northeastern province of the Congo, killing 321 civilians.[31] During the first three months of 2010, 1,244

30 Source: IRC Fact Sheet: Measuring Mortality in the DRC. http://www.theirc.org/sites/default/files/resource-file/IRC_DRCMortalityFacts.pdf, http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L22802012.htm.

31 Source: Human Rights Watch report, *Trail of Death*, March 28, 2010. http://www.hrw.org/en/node/89320/section/3.

women were sexually assaulted throughout the country, averaging almost 14 assaults per day[32] and MONUSCO recently reported 240 rapes between July 30th and August 2nd, 2010 in North Kivu Province.[33]

There is a global protest against the human suffering and the lack of accountability. While the legal mechanism of the ICC and the protection mandate of MONUSCO are important tools to stopping this suffering, it is an understatement to say that more can and needs to be done. The U.S. cannot idly stand by or maintain its commitment to a minimalist mandate in the Congo. The U.S. has the foreign policy interests, legislative mandate, political support and financial resources to elevate its level of engagement and support in the Congo.

5. Increased U.S. bipartisan support

There is a history of bipartisan cooperation and support for the Congo under the Bush administration that has continued under the Obama administration. While each piece of relevant legislation addresses one aspect of the crisis in the Congo—the need for bilateral and multilateral assistance, a regional response to the LRA-related crisis, and the destabilizing effect of the conflict minerals originating in the Congo—the legislation does not address the overall needs of the Congo in a unified fashion. Despite the bipartisan congressional support for increased U.S. engagement in the Congo, the U.S. Government's (USG) policy toward the Congo remains piecemeal and has not been translated into an overall strategy or into concrete action. There is therefore the need, and the opportunity, to build on the bipartisan congressional support to develop a comprehensive strategy that would synthesize the various legislative acts and hone the foreign policy rhetoric.

In December 2005, then-Senator Obama (D-IL) introduced the DRC Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act in the Senate which later passed in 2006. The bill was adopted into law by unanimous consent and received significant bipartisan support, led by then-Chairman of the Subcommittee on African and Global Health of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chris Smith (R-NJ). The law (Public Law 109-456) promoted relief, security and democracy in the Congo through conditional bilateral and multilateral assistance.

Last year, Congressmen Jim McGovern (D-MA), Ed Royce (R-CA), and Brad Miller (D-NC) and Senators Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Sam Brownback(R-KS) introduced the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda

32 Source: UNHCR "UNHCR Condemns endemic rape in the DRC, helps survivors." April 23, 2010. http://www.unhcr.org/4bd18e7e9.html.

33 Source: UN News Center "UN measures to protect civilians in eastern DR Congo bearing fruit" September 15, 2010. http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35934&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo.

Recovery Act of 2009, which was adopted into law in May of this year (Public Law 111-172). The Act requires the U.S. President to design and implement a comprehensive strategy with multilateral and regional partners to address violence by the LRA in Uganda, the Congo and the Central African Republic.

In July 2010, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was adopted into law (Public Law 111-203). It includes significant financial disclosure requirements for the purchase of conflict minerals. As with previous instances of congressional support for the Congo, the conflict mineral provision received bipartisan support. The provision was proposed by Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS)—although he later voted against the overall bill—and by Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT), then-Chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee. The conflict minerals provision of this act built on the Conflict Minerals Trade Act (H.R.4128) and the Congo Conflict Minerals Act (S.891) in Congress, which were sponsored by Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA7) and Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS).

The provision requires American companies to publicly disclose to the Securities and Exchange Commission the measures they have taken to exercise due diligence regarding the source and the chain of custody of minerals originating in the Congo and adjoining countries. The provision further requires that the U.S. Department of State, in consultation with others, submit to Congress a strategy to address the illicit minerals trade in the Congo region, and compile a map to address linkages between human rights abuses, armed groups, and conflict minerals no later than 180 days after the enactment of the Act.

In 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's trip to the region highlighted the crisis in the eastern Congo and the U.S. interest in the Congo's stability, but little follow-up has occurred since. From December 2009 through February 2010, the U.S. State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), in close collaboration with the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), coordinated an interagency assessment in five technical sectors to enhance U.S. engagement in the Congo through a "whole-of-government approach." Almost half a year later, no definitive policy for the Congo has been released.

The interagency country assessment, combined with a congressional mandate to develop regional strategies to address the LRA and the sale of conflict minerals, should lead to a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for the Congo and Great Lakes region that is focused on invigorating U.S. engagement at the diplomatic and foreign assistance levels.

The combination of all the (above) windows of opportunity necessitate that the U.S. renews and redirects its engagement with and support to the Congo.

C. THE COST OF INACTION

Windows of opportunity are dynamic and can open and close unpredictably. It is rare that such opportunities for structural change at the domestic, regional, and international levels coexist simultaneously. Failure to capitalize on these opportunities to solidify past gains and create conditions for a stable future could prove disastrous for the Congo, the region, and for the U.S foreign policy agenda in the region.

1. Regional deterioration and destabilization in the Congo

Following the historic Kagame-Kabila summit last year, Secretary Clinton noted that "regional peace is in the making."[34] Despite this gesture of bilateral diplomatic coordination, competition and tension characterize relations between the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. Though they have improved recently, official diplomatic relations between the countries remain fragile. Renewed unsolicited involvement by national armies from neighboring countries could have grave consequences for the Congo and the region. Continued instability in eastern Congo could provoke, or create a justification for the presence of, uninvited foreign troops.

> THERE WAS AN INTER-CONGOLESE DIALOGUE AND THERE NEEDS TO BE AN INTER-RWANDAN DIALOGUE, OTHERWISE OUR REGION WILL CONTINUE TO BE INSECURE DUE TO THE CONFLICTS THAT ARE NOT ADDRESSED AND REMAIN IN THE RWANDAN COMMUNITY WHICH ARE FOUGHT ON CONGOLESE SOIL. WE CAN'T TALK ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS WHEN THERE IS STILL INSECURITY AND WE CAN'T TALK ABOUT SECURITY UNLESS THERE IS AN INTER-RWANDAN DIALOGUE.
> Noella Katembo, local NGO program manager and student

The Congo has already suffered greatly, with an estimated 3.5 million conflict-related deaths over the past ten years, and its infrastructure and institutions having been laid to waste. The Congo has yet to recover from this devastation; the impact of further destabilization and conflict would be magnified, and could result in casualty rates and destruction far greater than has occurred in the past. Untold hundreds of thousands of people, already in an extreme state of vulnerability, would be uprooted once again, except this time with coping mechanisms that are extremely weak or non-existent. Furthermore, democratization and economic reform, including the gains achieved due to the involvement of numerous national and international actors, would be set back for at least another decade. Current production and export of hydroelectric power, timber and mineral resources, as well as agricultural produce would cease and constitute a disaster for the Congo and the countries that depend on Congo's production.

34 Source: Rwanda News Agency "Clinton hails Kagame-Kabila summit but wants more from Congo" August 11, 2009. http://rnanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1739:clinton-hails-kagame-kabila-summit-but-wants-more-from-congo&Itemid=47.

A second implosion of the Congo would constitute a crisis of significant proportions. It would place a significant burden on the international community, in particular the U.S., to provide massive funding for peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, at a time when these resources are already stretched thin globally. The international community is strained politically and financially by its peace-keeping operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the African Union (AU) is equally strained by its missions in Darfur and Somalia. With contributing countries confronted by their own domestic demands, MONUSCO is currently facing a reduction in support, such as India's recent withdrawal of its helicopters. An intensification of the crisis in eastern Congo, or the spread of the crisis into adjoining states, would create an overwhelming demand on the AU and the international community's organizational capacities, which are already understaffed and underfunded.

The lack of strong U.S. engagement in the Congo could render the region, and specifically the eastern Congo, more susceptible to destabilization. The international community, the AU, and MONUSCO cannot afford another regional crisis and an escalation of the conflict in the east, and neither can the U.S. The international community cannot endure another failure of humanity.

2. Loss of political goodwill and influence

The consequences of the U.S. maintaining the status-quo of piecemeal efforts, or worse, inaction, could establish a negative precedent and send a message that regardless of declared intentions, there is limited will to act in support of stabilization, good governance, and human rights. Further, the continuation of an approach defined by the implementation of disparate interventions will likely prevent U.S. assistance from having a significant impact on the current dynamics in eastern Congo. Both factors run the risk of greatly diminishing the stature of the U.S. within the Congo and the region. Reduced stature translates into reduced influence on the decision-makers in this context; it also serves as a disincentive to other international and regional partners who are relying on strong U.S. engagement and leadership.

While the Central African States have made progress in establishing a culture of democratic and accountable governance, stagnation during the democratic transition process, or reversals towards autocratic regimes, has also occurred. The international community's standards and expectations for these events will set a precedent. If the international community is not unified and does not sufficiently support an enabling environment for the elections, overly ambitious leaders could construe the mixed signals as the "go-ahead" to undermine the elections. In the worst case scenario, there could be a domino effect of elections that are neither free nor fair.

CHAPTER III

Objectives for U.S. Engagement in the Congo

Securing and Stabilizing Eastern Congo

The following chapter provides an overview of the recommended strategic objectives and corresponding priority actions for U.S. support for eastern Congo. These are derived from existing goals and priorities supported by the Congolese Government, current U.S. foreign policy towards the Congo, and the recent UN Security Council (UNSC) mandate for MONUSCO, as well as from other major multilateral and bilateral partners. As such, they reflect the most urgent and critical interventions needed to interrupt current cycles of violence and conflict in the east, improve the discipline and professionalism of security forces, restore critical state services, and prevent the impending return movement of displaced populations from reigniting interethnic and communal conflicts. Chapter IV similarly includes additional objectives that focus on securing and coordinating U.S. leadership so that the U.S. is empowered to provide necessary diplomatic leadership and development assistance.

Many of these issues are already being supported by the aforementioned actors; as a result, the priorities proposed for U.S. engagement reflect specific interventions for which there is currently insufficient or non-existent attention and resources. These priorities are also those which a wide range of national and international stakeholders have repeatedly flagged as urgent priorities to be addressed and which, if successful, will be key to preventing the resurgence of armed conflict and destabilization in the near term, and creating an environment in which the 2011 elections, as well as longer-term democratization and economic development, can proceed peacefully.

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR U.S. ENGAGEMENT

The United States is already providing significant support to the Congo, as detailed in Chapter I. For the 2011–2013 period, the focus of U.S. engagement must extend beyond financial assistance to a reframing of efforts to ensure a more comprehensive and strategically targeted approach aligned to broader international efforts. This will result in a more significant impact on the current situation and the future trajectory of the country.

In this regard, a number of key principles must serve to structure and guide U.S. policy and investments in the Congo.

1. Emphasis should be placed on pursuing objectives through **programs that address specific priorities and that are sufficiently funded** to achieve concrete and tangible impacts on the situation in eastern Congo. In this regard, a few large programs should be prioritized over many small projects.

2. The **multi-sectoral approach adopted by the United States should be articulated through an integrated strategy** that ensures the chronological and geographical alignment of security, diplomatic, state-

building and development interventions, as well as its integration with broader international efforts.

3. U.S. support programs for eastern Congo should be developed **with the strong engagement of Congolese actors at national, regional and provincial levels**, within the framework of the STAREC/I-SSSS, and should prioritize the strengthening of local and national capacities.

4. The U.S. should strive to **catalyze and guide broader international support for stabilization, peace building and development interventions**, through both its investments and leadership role in coordinating with GDRC, UN and international actors.

5. The U.S. should ensure **flexibility in the design of its support programs** in order to adapt to specific local realities and dynamics, changing circumstances and the emergence of new priorities.

B. PRIORITIES FOR U.S. ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Objective 1 : Facilitate renewed political engagement

PLAN — The U.S. must provide strong support to the GDRC to catalyze greater political will and engagement. This will eliminate bottlenecks and foster the implementation of urgent peace and stabilization measures, including local peace agreements.

PLAN DETAILS — Peace consolidation and stabilization are by definition deeply political processes, given that they often support political agreements and desired outcomes, cross-cut important considerations of a political, economic and social nature, and are vulnerable to shifts in political will and engagement. At present, however, critical peace and stabilization measures cannot be implemented successfully due to the absence of political will and engagement by key government actors. U.S. technical and financial support for such interventions should therefore be accompanied by diplomatic efforts with Congolese and international stakeholders—including those within the Great Lakes region—to strengthen political engagement and create conditions for their implementation. Following are key priorities for the U.S. in the context of eastern Congo.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Ensure that the U.S. provides technical and financial support on the basis of reciprocal engagement by the* GDRC. A number of stabilization interventions will certainly fail if the GDRC does not make its own contribution to these efforts. In many instances, international technical and financial support will fail without clear GDRC political will and engagement (for instance in addressing corruption or subversion of justice processes by the military

chain of command). U.S. support should be based on a pact regarding shared responsibilities for outcomes, and further assistance made conditional on continued GDRC engagement and involvement. The following are specific areas where GDRC political will and engagement are critical.

- End impunity among FARDC commanders and remove those accused of abuses.
- Guarantee payment of salaries to state personnel deployed in former conflict areas.
- End political interference in the working of the civilian and military justice systems.
- Prevent political interference in the process of refugee return.
- Actively pursue the implementation of peace agreements.

THERE IS NO COHERENT NATIONAL ARMY AND THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE IN DRC. WE FOUGHT BEHIND KABILA IN THE FIRST REBELLION AGAINST MOBUTU AND IN SECOND WAR TO DEFEND OUR TERRITORY AGAINST THE RCD. IN ORDER FOR DRC TO SECURE THE EAST, IT NEEDS TO CREATE A FUNCTIONING ARMY. TODAY, THE POPULATION HAS MORE ARMS THAN THE FARDC. THERE MUST BE A NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY WHERE ROTATING BATTALIONS ATTEND THE SAME TRAINING WITH THE SAME CURRICULUM AND THEN ARE REDEPLOYED INTO AREAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

Didier Bitaki Weteshe, spokesperson of the Mai Mai Militia group in North and South Kivu and the spokesperson for the Mai Mai throughout the 2008 peace process and the Goma Accords

KEY PRIORITY B — *Help break the deadlock in the implementation of the 23 March 2009 Accords* to end mounting frustration and disillusionment by over 22 armed groups that are signatories to the accords. This will also reduce internal fragmentation and tensions within groups, and diminish the temptation to return to conflict to secure aspirations by violent means. Strong diplomatic support from the U.S. State Department is recommended to encourage the parties to move forward in fulfilling their commitments in good faith, and to address remaining political problems in the implementation of specific provisions. The latter includes the return of refugees, payment of salaries to ex-combatants integrated into the army and the police, and the dismantling of parallel administrations maintained by armed groups. Decisive diplomatic engagement by the U.S. along with other actors (including the EU and UN) will help check the current unraveling of the accords, and prevent a relapse into armed conflict.

To complement the proposed diplomatic engagement, the U.S. must also support the GDRC and UN in implementing specific provisions requiring resources that the GDRC and other parties do not have. These include support for the integration of former combatants into the national police and local administration, the transformation of armed groups into political parties, and support for war-wounded and war widows. The U.S. should consider providing direct political and diplomatic engagement with the parties to advance implementation, while also funding specific programs developed, and initially financed by the UN within the STAREC/I-SSSS framework.

Objective 2: Support a multidimensional strategy to protect civilians

PLAN — The U.S. must support a multidimensional strategy to create a safe environment for civilians in eastern Congo through targeted support for a range of short-term measures, including strengthening FARDC discipline and internal control, and disbanding armed groups.

PLAN DETAILS — Despite a wide array of peace and security interventions implemented by the GDRC with the support of the international community, levels of abuse against civilians remain extremely high in eastern Congo, and perpetrators continue to act with impunity. Existing efforts must not only be strengthened, but also integrated within the framework of an overall multi-dimensional strategy targeting the most critical and urgent causes of abuse against civilians. In the immediate term, the U.S. should target two specific sub-objectives which focus on addressing the perpetrators of abuse.

Sub-objective 2.1: Strengthen security forces

PLAN — The U.S. must increase its assistance to the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) through expanding U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) support for training and other capacity strengthening programs coordinated by USAID and the U.S. State Department, all in an effort to ensure public order and protect civilians.

PLAN DETAILS — The Congolese army today is unfortunately one of the primary perpetrators of violence and human rights abuses against civilians. Improving internal control, discipline and conditions within army units deployed in eastern Congo is urgently needed to begin the transformation of the FARDC from abusers to protectors. Addressing the problem of impunity for high-ranking army officers responsible for major human rights violations, not to mention rank and file troops, is also central to improving protection of civilians.

Continued and strengthened U.S. support for the FARDC must be conditional on proactive GDRC implementing national army reform plans, as well as on concerted efforts to remove commanders responsible for serious abuses. The U.S. must not provide assistance to units commanded by identified perpetrators of serious human rights and other abuses.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Support improved discipline and control of* FARDC *troops, as well as living conditions for dependents, through their regroupment in temporary and permanent garrison facilities.* The cantonment of FARDC troops is identified as an urgent priority by the GDRC and the international community in order to improve living conditions for troops and dependents, enable control of weapons, and allow commanders to exercise effective control and discipline over their troops.

At present soldiers are scattered throughout eastern Congo living in subhuman conditions. This results in their need to prey on the local populations to feed their dependents who are deployed with them. Additional resources are urgently needed for the construction of approximately 30 provisional and 20 permanent battalion-size (i.e., 900 soldiers and 5,000 dependents) facilities. Financial requirements amount to approximately 350 million USD (assessments still ongoing), of which over 40 million USD has already been disbursed or committed by donors. The garrisoning of troops in eastern Congo is expected to contribute to a significant reduction in abuses committed by the army against civilians through improved ability of commanders to ensure discipline and decreased pressures on soldiers to live off local populations. The following are priority activities for which U.S. support is urgently needed.

- Construct temporary and permanent garrison facilities using local materials, and provide water, electricity, sanitation services and food for a limited period of time.

- Relocate FARDC dependents to the new temporary facilities, followed by the troops themselves. Provide income-generating opportunities for dependents, as well as basic social services (health and education).

- Construct armories in garrison facilities, and train FARDC in weapons management and control systems.

- Strengthen the FARDC Engineering Corps to progressively assume a leadership role to manage the construction and maintenance of garrisons.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Support strengthening of the military justice system* to reduce the high levels of abuse and impunity within FARDC units deployed in eastern Congo. While a number of training programs exist in this sector,[35] the military justice system today is still unable to effectively receive, investigate and prosecute criminal complaints due to a lack of adequately trained personnel, infrastructure and equipment, and the interference by the military chain of command. A comprehensive assessment of needs in this respect exists,[36] but an accurate budget has yet to be developed. The estimate of 5 million USD contained within the STAREC/I-SSSS program is widely considered to be an overly conservative figure, and needs to be significantly increased. The U.S.

35 This includes a recently completed program for the training of 400 military justice personnel conducted by the U.S. Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS).

36 See the study on military justice in the DRC prepared by MONUC, 2008.

should reorient and expand its military justice support programs to target high-risk army units in eastern Congo, while supporting the UN in fostering better coordination within the international community on military justice reform issues. The following are critical gaps for which U.S. support is urgently needed.

- Retrain existing military justice personnel, as well as recruit and train new personnel for key positions in the investigative, magisterial, corrections and administrative branches.

- Reconstruct and rehabilitate essential military justice infrastructure (including temporary facilities), including courts, tribunals and prisons in areas which are currently high priority for reestablishing the operational effectiveness of the military justice system (notably, operational zones and areas of concentrated deployment of troops).

- Acquire equipment for military justice facilities, most notably computers, communications and vehicles, without which operations are not possible.

- Deploy international "prosecution support cells" to provide technical advice and operational support to the investigative and prosecutorial branches of the military justice system.

KEY PRIORITY C — *Increase training programs and advisory support to the* FARDC*, with a focus on newly integrated battalions in eastern Congo.* Training programs provided by the U.S., Belgium and other bilateral partners have proven effective in improving FARDC behavior, discipline and professionalism. Current ad hoc and partial training programs managed by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) should be significantly expanded, targeting as a priority army units into which former armed group combatants have been integrated. Greater coordination in this sector could also constitute a priority for U.S. support, given the multiplicity and fragmentation of bilateral efforts. The following are specific urgent interventions for which U.S. support is required.

- Establish comprehensive training programs for newly integrated battalions in eastern Congo, conditional on a vetting of the command structure and rank and file troops.

- Rehabilitate training centers in eastern Congo, and construct temporary facilities where necessary to ensure access to targeted units.

KEY PRIORITY D — *Support the establishment of an effective salary system for the* FARDC. A major structural problem contributing to the incidence of abuse against civilians by the FARDC is the insufficiency

of salaries (which average 60 USD per month for rank and file troops). Compounding this problem, the salary payment system suffers from mismanagement, corruption and serious logistical problems. In this context, EUSEC (the European Union Mission that provides advice on and assistance with security sector reform in the Congo) has helped improve the salary payment system through its support to the biometric census of troops in eastern Congo, the monitoring of salary payments to brigade level, and the establishment of a computerized system for managing and tracking payments. However, significant problems still persist. Ensuring the provision of more regular and decent salaries to troops would significantly reduce the incentives to extract goods and revenue directly from the population, and reduce the incidence of abuse. The following are specific priorities for U.S. support that will complement existing efforts.

- Provide advisors to monitor and offer advice on the transport, distribution and management of salary payments at battalion level, which is currently the level where most of the mismanagement occurs.

- Recruit and train specialized FARDC financial and administrative personnel responsible for the day-to-day management of the salary system at the levels of General HQ in Kinshasa and military regions in eastern Congo.

- Provide equipment to ensure the secure and efficient transport and distribution of salaries at field level, including off-road vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft.

Sub-objective 2.2: Neutralize and dismantle remaining foreign and Congolese armed groups

PLAN — The U.S. must provide logistical, technical and other forms of assistance to the FARDC to facilitate its operations against foreign armed groups, while keeping in mind the need to ensure protection of civilians, and to support the UN in funding programs for the demobilization and community-based reintegration of ex-combatants, including, in particular, child soldiers.

PLAN DETAILS — Although greatly reduced in number, some foreign and Congolese armed groups still operate and control territory in eastern Congo, perpetuating violence, armed conflict and high levels of abuse against civilians. They constitute a primary threat to the stabilization of eastern Congo, the further restoration of state authority, and the future of democratic governance in the region. At present, and despite limited progress during 2009/2010, neither the FARDC nor MONUSCO have proven effective in neutralizing the threats posed by these groups. While the latter possesses a peace enforcement mandate

and is authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to use deadly force to protect civilians, it has been far less effective than expected.[37] The following are specific actions the U.S. must provide to meet the sub-objective.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Support the neutralization of foreign armed groups in the Congo*. This will be accomplished through provision of technical, intelligence, logistical and other forms of support to the Congolese Army and the UN in fighting or demobilizing the FDLR, LRA and ADF-NALU. Collectively, this constitutes several thousand combatants. This support could be decisive in disrupting the operational capacities of these groups, providing immediate relief to hundreds of thousands of civilians, and reclaiming strategic territory controlled by these groups (including mining areas). Detailed priorities for U.S. support are as follows.

- DOD to provide military assistance to screened and selected FARDC units including technical and logistical assistance and the deployment of specialized units.

- Request, through the UNSC, to strengthen MONUSCO's capacities to prevent and respond to violence against civilians perpetrated by armed groups, including through more effective command and control, logistical and human assets, and by exerting more pressure on troop-contributing countries to implement Chapter VII provisions in the MONUSCO mandate.[38]

- Ensure that USAID programs support restoration of state authority, and that community recovery target areas are cleared by GDRC and UN forces.

- In recognition of the limits of military action, the U.S. must also consider supporting the Congolese government in non-military actions to address foreign armed groups, including working with other countries to arrest leadership figures in the Congo and abroad, disrupting supply networks for weapons and munitions, and strengthening efforts to encourage combatants to voluntarily surrender and demobilize.

37 International observers cite in particular the UN's failure to prevent the massacre of 150 people in Kiwanja, North Kivu in 2008. Also cited was its lack of response to the incursion of the LRA into Haut-Uele province in December 2009 and the subsequent killing and abduction of over 600 people. Most recently, the UN has been criticized for its failure to react to the mass rape perpetrated by armed groups in North Kivu in July/August 2010. Sources: Human Rights Watch & International Crisis Group reports.

38 "Chapter VII" provisions in the UN refer to the chapter in the United Nations Charter which authorizes the use of force by the international community to address an issue which is threatening regional or global peace and security. In recent years, many UN peacekeeping operations have been mandated under this chapter to respond with force to threats within this framework.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Support* MONUSCO *in disarming and demobilizing combatants from armed groups, and in facilitating their socioeconomic reintegration into civilian life.* Military action alone is not a sufficient or realistic single measure to neutralize remaining armed groups; it must also be complemented by disarmament and demobilization programs that offer combatants alternatives to conflict-based livelihoods. The GDRC and UN currently estimate residual caseloads of 12,000 ex-combatants in eastern Congo (with 5,000 in the Kivus alone) that need to be urgently addressed, which is particularly urgent given the fact that the World Bank-supported national Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process (that supported the demobilization of over 130,000 combatants, including 35,000 child soldiers, between 2003–2009) has exhausted its funds. It is expected that the demobilization of this remaining caseload—who are currently responsible for a majority of acts of armed banditry and other criminal activity—will result in a significant decrease in violence against civilians, and prevent the "remobilization" of these groups by negative actors. Detailed priorities for U.S. support are as follows.

> I THINK PEOPLE ARE REALLY JUST TIRED OF WAR, OF COURSE THEY LEARN TO GET ALONG AND HOW TO SURVIVE, BUT PEOPLE ARE TIRED. I THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE EASILY MANIPULATED BECAUSE THEY ARE TIRED AND JOBLESS. IF I HAD A GOOD JOB, WHY WOULD I WANT TO TAKE UP ARMS? BUT, IF I HAVE NO BETTER OPTION AND I FEEL ASHAMED BECAUSE I CAN'T FEED MY FAMILY, THEN AT LEAST I CAN FEEL SOME IMPORTANCE BY CARRYING ARMS. THE SHORTCUT TO GET MONEY IS TO JOIN A REBEL GROUP.
> Congolese UN Employee

- The U.S. should consider funding, or realigning existing programs to address the current financial gap of demobilizing 8,000 ex-combatants (estimated at approximately 8 million USD), within the framework of the recently launched STAREC/I-SSSS program for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (UN-funded programs are covering the remaining 4,000 combatants).

- Support for the community-based reintegration of ex-combatants should focus on the creation of viable economic alternatives to violence-based livelihoods, targeting armed groups formerly deployed in mining areas.

- The involvement of community-based organizations (CBOS) in the design, execution and monitoring of the ex-combatant reintegration projects should be promoted to facilitate broader community reconciliation processes around demobilization.

- A specific focus should be placed on supporting the separation of children from armed groups and their reunification with families. Over 2,500 children were separated from armed groups in 2009 and 2010, but resources currently do not exist to fully address the thousands of children who remain within the ranks of these groups.

Objective 3 : Support GDRC reforms including the 2011 and 2013 elections

PLAN — The U.S. must provide more diplomatic pressure to catalyze action on critical institutional reform processes and continue technical assistance to ensure an appropriate environment for the upcoming 2011 and 2013 elections.

PLAN DETAILS — The dialog on institutional reform must include strengthened U.S. engagement in order to accelerate the translation of existing sectoral reform policies and plans into concrete actions on the ground. In addition to promoting action within specific sectors, the U.S. should also work with other multilateral and bilateral partners to promote collective and strategically focused partnerships and compacts with the GDRC, including through the revival of the 2007 Governance Compact. One mechanism that the U.S. could support is the organization of a roundtable with the GDRC and key international partners under the auspices of the AU or CEPGL. This would promote greater coherence in the dialog and action on institutional reform. The following are specific priorities for U.S. support.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Help make security sector reform (SSR) a reality*. Without effective reform of the security sector—notably the army, police and justice system—neither stabilization nor long-term democratization is possible. SSR in the Congo today is characterized by a multitude of competing visions and prescriptions championed by different international partners, and also by weak and ineffective coordination mechanisms, and uncertainty about how to realize national reform plans. Given the importance of SSR for consolidating and sustaining security and stabilization gains in eastern Congo, the U.S. must play a leadership role within the international community in working with the Congolese Government to "regain the driver's seat." This involves developing a coherent strategy for implementing SSR, as well as detailed and costed operational plans at sectoral level, and prioritizing the army, police and justice sectors. At the same time, the U.S. must assume leadership, working closely with the UN, Belgium, the EU, the UK and South Africa, in improving coordination within the international community on SSR, and most importantly, in promoting the alignment of plans and programs with national reform objectives and priorities. In working with both national and international actors, the U.S. must emphasize political and legislative requirements for enabling effective SSR, the development of concrete technical options and plans (with an initial focus on eastern Congo), and the need to establish a single set of coordination and funding structures.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Support the* GDRC *in improving transparency and accountability*. Because it contains abundant natural resources, the Congo is not an economically poor country, and the GDRC has access, in principle, to important revenue streams that could allow it to partially meet the demands of reconstruction and decrease its reliance on international aid. Making this a reality, however, will necessitate drastic improvements in how the GDRC manages and oversees its resources, which today are squandered due to institutional

weaknesses, corruption, and the lack of appropriate control mechanisms. Strengthening national capacity in this regard should constitute a priority for U.S. support in the near to medium future, and should be linked to efforts to increase transparency and accountability, thus ensuring that resources are allocated to the most pressing needs. The U.S. should, both bilaterally and through the World Bank and IMF, promote the need for much broader technical and advisory support to assist in making these revenue streams available, which could considerably accelerate the country's recovery from crisis and conflict, and open the door to other forms of international assistance, including direct budgetary support.

KEY PRIORITY C — *Renew attention on the importance and challenges of decentralization.* Decentralization, where local and provincial authority maintains their affairs, is a constitutionally-mandated process in the Congo. Until now, it has failed to be operational due to lack of political will and capacity, as well as weak engagement of the international community. Decentralization stands to considerably strengthen the role and capacity of provincial authorities in managing their own budgets, revenue and investments—thereby reducing the problems associated with managing local affairs from the capital in a country the size of Western Europe. However, its proposal to increase the number of territorial-administrative units (provinces and districts) also risks multiplying the organizational and management challenges faced by an extremely weak and indebted government. In this context, the U.S. must assume leadership within the international community in re-launching the dialog on decentralization with the Congolese Government. The U.S. must also provide badly needed policy and technical assistance (including through the deployment of advisors) to determine the way forward on decentralization and development related operational plans and budgetary estimates.

KEY PRIORITY D — *Help ensure a successful electoral process.* For many, the holding of free and fair elections in 2006 marked a decisive turning point towards democratic governance in the Congo. This trend, unfortunately, is increasingly at risk as a number of key Congolese leaders reflect a growing inclination for the use of authoritarian methods to preserve their power, authority and privileges. Without strong U.S. and international community support to counter the political forces trying to close the democratic space, it is unlikely that the upcoming elections in 2011 will be free and transparent. A fraudulent election at this juncture in Congo's history could jeopardize the gains achieved with such effort in recent years. The election could also polarize the political environment and create incentives for disgruntled actors to revert to armed violence as an alternative to pursuing their interests within a democratic system. The following are specific actions the U.S. must consider.

- Prioritize strong diplomatic engagement and dialog with key government and other political figures to ensure the peaceful and orderly organization of the 2011–2013 elections, as well as their participation in the electoral process.

- Provide technical and financial support to the Congolese Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to effectively organize and oversee the upcoming elections.

- Provide technical assistance to political actors, to improve their knowledge of democratic electoral processes, and to strengthen their capacity to organize and implement electoral campaigns, and participate peacefully in the electoral process overall.

- Increase support for the strengthening of democratic institutions, with a priority on the executive and legislative branches of government, as well as the political party system.

Objective 4: Support the GDRC in regulating the trade in natural resources and ensuring deployment of justice and administrative services

PLAN — The U.S. must strengthen its financial and technical support for the GDRC to restore law and order and access to justice, essential administrative and other public services in former conflict areas. This would create an enabling environment for social and economic recovery and the long-term protection of civilians.

PLAN DETAILS — A number of programs in eastern Congo are currently supporting the deployment of thousands of policemen, judges and court officials, penitentiary personnel, and local administrators. However, additional resources are required to ensure their access to the hardest hit areas, as well as the long-term sustainability of these deployments. Without these investments, current efforts to restore state authority in former conflict areas are unlikely to succeed. This will only perpetuate the problem of impunity and increase the vulnerability of civilian populations to further abuse. The following specific actions by the U.S. can reduce these risks.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Help address institutional capacity gaps at the provincial level to sustain deployments of police and justice personnel, and to regulate mining activities in conflict areas.* Support for the deployment of essential personnel in former conflict areas where state services are most needed has not been accompanied by efforts to strengthen the capacity of provincial institutions to support and sustain these efforts. While the U.S. supports programs targeting local governance and justice efforts, these need to be strengthened and specifically focused on provincial institutions to strengthen their logistical, organizational, financial, administrative and other capacities. No financial estimates are currently available for this requirement, but indicative costs could exceed 30 million USD for 3,000 personnel. The U.S. should increase its funding for this sector as well as for the provision of technical advisory services, with a key focus on supporting provincial ministries responsible for police, justice and the regulation of natural resource exploitation. Strengthened U.S. support will directly contribute both to ensuring the continuation of essential public

services in former conflict areas once the UN has left, and to creating the foundations for long-term protection of civilians. The following are key priorities for U.S. support.

- Engage with the GDRC and international partners (in particular the World Bank and the IMF) in identifying financial resources to ensure payment of salaries and adequate working conditions for deployed state personnel.

- Strengthen the administrative and logistical capacities of national and provincial institutions (in particular justice and the police) to ensure that adequate support services are provided to police, justice, penitentiary and administrative officials in the field.

- Strengthen the organizational capacity of national and provincial institutions to integrate new deployments from a managerial and chain of command point of view, and to ensure effective communications and coordination.

- Ensure that U.S. support in this sector strives to create linkages between field deployments and longer-term institutional reform programs and reform processes in order to secure the long-term sustainability of field-level state services.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Support the establishment of regulatory control over the production and trade in natural resources.* In 2010, the GDRC and the UN launched a program to extend state authority and introduce regulation of mining activities in areas formerly controlled by armed groups. The current pilot phase of the program targets five sites cleared of armed groups by MONUSCO and the FARDC, and focuses on establishing mining trading counters (*Centres de Negoce* in French) which oversee and regulate the trade and production of run-off mine metals and minerals. It also provides support to the Ministry of Mines and the *Service d'assistance et d'encadrement small scale mining* (SAESSCAM) to regulate, license and monitor the activities of diggers, and conduct spot checks of transport agents (all of which will be directly supported and accompanied by UN officials). This program is expected to help improve the legitimacy and transparency of the supply chain, and begin depriving armed groups and other criminal actors of access to important resources in eastern Congo. At present, funding only exists for five pilot sites—an additional 8 million USD is required to expand the project to an additional 20 sites. The following are key priorities for U.S. support.

- Deploy technical advisors and monitors to complement UN efforts to support and monitor the activities of GDRC officials in target mining sites.

- Provide financial support to enable the expansion of the program to additional sites in eastern Congo.

KEY PRIORITY C — *Support the expansion of communications and transport grids to high-risk areas*. In many former and current conflict areas in eastern Congo, the ability of local governments to extend their presence and authority is severely curtailed by insufficient or non-existent communications and road transport infrastructure. This encourages insecurity, violence and crime, and prevents the state from responding to or stopping such threats. While a number of international partners (including the World Bank and the EU) are funding large-scale infrastructure rehabilitation, these are long-term development programs that will not bear fruit for a number of years to come. To speed this process, the U.S. government must invest, as a priority, in the rehabilitation and construction of communications and transport infrastructure in areas where extension of state authority is most needed to support protection of civilians. Key geographic areas in this regard include the area of Oriental Province affected by continued LRA operations, as well as North and South Kivu, which are vulnerable to continued attacks by the FDLR and ADF-NALU groups. Strengthened U.S. support will directly contribute to reducing the vulnerability of populations to insecurity and attacks in these areas as the state will react to and prevent the actions of armed groups. The following are key priorities for U.S. support.

- Increase U.S. funding for road and bridge rehabilitation in strategic areas where humanitarian, security and stabilization efforts are most urgent. This includes areas targeted by the LRA for abduction of children and adults, refugee and IDP return areas in the Kivus, and zones in which police, administrative and mining officials are expected to deploy. Indicative estimates of immediate requirements range between 30–50 million USD.

- Support GDRC and private sector efforts to expand cellular and satellite-based telecommunications infrastructure to remote and high-risk areas for use by local authorities and communities. Target remote areas of the Kivus and the LRA-affected areas of Oriental Province.

KEY PRIORITY D — *Support the strengthening of local government capacities to address abuses against civilians, including sexual violence*. To ensure the long-term protection of civilians, the U.S. must support the strengthening of state authority and its institutions in former conflict areas. A specific focus is on strengthening those specialized capacities that prevent and respond to incidences of abuse against civilians, and that can end impunity within the Congolese government for acts perpetrated by officials. The Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in DRC developed by the international community on the basis of national priorities currently provides a framework for organizing assistance in eastern Congo, but is currently underfunded (28 million USD has been funded to date out of a total assessed need of 80 million USD). The following are key priorities for U.S. support.

- Help combat impunity for abuses committed against civilians by increasing technical and financial support to develop and implement criminal justice policies for sexual violence, and improve access to justice for victims.

- Increase capacities within the Congolese National Police to prevent and respond to incidences of sexual and other forms of violence by strengthening dedicated and specialized capacities at the provincial level, notably, deployment of specialized sexual violence cells within police units being deployed in eastern Congo within the STAREC/I-SSSS framework.

- Support measures to urgently improve internal accountability and oversight policies and mechanisms within government institutions to both prevent and punish perpetrators of abuse against civilians, and establish robust vetting mechanisms that would exclude individuals responsible for abuses.

Objective 5: Support IDP and refugee returns and encourage socioeconomic recovery

PLAN — The U.S. must expand its support of local reconciliation efforts and the peaceful return and reintegration of IDP and refugee populations in order to prevent further interethnic and community-wide conflict.

PLAN DETAILS — The expected return of over 2 million IDPS and 300,000 refugees in eastern Congo where continued interethnic and economic tensions are high could create a potentially explosive situation in eastern Congo, with increased armed conflict and new waves of violence between communities. The UN and the international community are currently implementing a range of programs to support the returns, strengthen community reconciliation efforts, and provide basic social services and income-generating opportunities in conflict-affected areas, but a number of critical actions need additional support.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Sustain* IDP *and refugee returns*. Currently, there are agreed frameworks governing the return of IDPS and refugees (including the February 2010 Tripartite Agreements concerning returns from Rwanda and Burundi). Also, humanitarian funds exist to provide temporary support to returnees, and many economic recovery programs are in place. However, very few resources currently exist to ensure the viable socioeconomic reintegration of these groups in their areas of return. At present, only 80 million USD out of the total estimated funding requirement of 280 million USD has been mobilized. Key funding gaps include support for provision of basic social services (education, water/sanitation, health and shelter) as well as income-creating opportunities (notably, in the agricultural sector). Additionally, the recovery programs do not always target those return areas that are in unstable regions. It is recommended that the U.S. give a higher priority to economic recovery programs that complement security and state-building measures in the unstable return areas. This will help decrease the vulnerability of returning populations and promote reconciliation and co-existence.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Support local reconciliation and conflict resolution*. The process of defining return areas and managing the return process is fraught with risks. Unresolved community and interethnic tensions exist in return areas; there is a tendency of those in control to manipulate the demographic composition. In addition to diplomatic support to address the political issues around

the returns process (most notably, its possible impact on the forthcoming elections), U.S. assistance is urgently needed to support the operations of local interethnic reconciliation committees (*Comites locaux permanent de conciliation*, or CLPC) which the 23 March 2009 Peace Accords recognized to serve as the primary vehicles for managing reconciliation and return efforts. The CLPCs are being established but lack resources despite initial seed funding provided by the UN. The U.S. should direct funding of local reconciliation by following the framework of the STAREC/I-SSSS program that directly supports the establishment and functioning of their operations in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri district in eastern Congo. In addition, the U.S. must increase its support to programs coordinated by UN-Habitat and other national and international partners within this same framework. This would support the mediation and resolution of housing, land and property-based conflicts linked to the return of IDPS and refugees, which are currently constrained due to lack of funds. At present, approximately 7 million USD has been mobilized for these programs, out of a total of 70 million USD needed. Strengthened U.S. support for promoting peaceful returns and management of these disputes will constitute a major factor in preventing new forms of conflict from appearing, and could quell political tensions in eastern Congo and the Great Lakes region as a whole.

KEY PRIORITY C — *Promote economic growth in the most affected areas.* Current short-term assistance for restoring basic social services and creating short-term employment should gradually be replaced by long-term programs for increasing economic productivity, stimulating the private sector, rebuilding large-scale infrastructure, and creating sustainable livelihoods. The focus will shift from the current model of small-scale community-level projects to one of stimulating local and regional economies, markets and industries, as follows.

- Involvement of the private sector, including the renewal of small and medium size industries.
- The opening of markets and commerce at the regional level with Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.
- The reconstruction of large-scale infrastructure, including roads, communications and energy production.
- The development of legal and regulatory frameworks critical for sustaining economic growth in an equitable manner (most notably for private investment, exploitation of natural resources and management of land and property).
- Concerted efforts to strengthen local-level capacities of government- and community-based organizations in planning and managing economic programs that are critical in creating a sustainable basis for economic growth.

U.S. support will allow this shift in focus to promote, facilitate, and support an economic growth agenda focused on a transition from short-term economic recovery to long-term sustainable development priorities.

POEME
Je pleure
Je pleure, oh! Je pleure
Acause de
Acause de
Acause de
Nos sœurs
Vous
Elles sont
mariages
Je pleu
Oh, Je
ou eau à
mangeons notre
ancien.
pour payer

CHAPTER IV

Objectives to Secure and Coordinate U.S. Leadership in the Great Lakes Region

The USG is currently drafting "a plan to promote peace and security in the Congo by supporting efforts of the GDRC, adjoining countries, and the international community." The effort, which was mandated by the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Law, creates an opportunity for the U.S. to advance its dialog with the GDRC, as well as realign current resources to better advance the revised strategy and integrate lessons learned.

This chapter provides an overview of the plan to secure and coordinate U.S. leadership in the Great Lakes region to ensure that the proposed objectives for a U.S. strategy for the Congo, as outlined in the previous chapter of this paper, are successfully implemented. This plan covers the period from 2011 to 2013, and has a specific focus on the eastern provinces. To meet the strategic objectives of this plan, the U.S. must catalyze and guide broader international support for stabilization, peace building and development interventions, through both its investments and leadership role in coordinating with GDRC, UN and international actors. As well, the U.S. must implement structural modifications and diplomatic initiatives. The recommendations below largely focus on the need to appoint a U.S. Special Advisor and the necessary structure to effectively support the Office of the U.S. Special Advisor.

Objective 6: Reappoint a U.S. Special Advisor for the Great Lakes Region

PLAN — It is imperative that the U.S. continue the office of the U.S. Special Advisor, and appoint a U.S. Special Advisor preferably to the Great Lakes region specifically, or secondarily as another viable option, to the Congo as a whole. The new advisor must be appointed immediately to assume responsibility and help lay the groundwork for next year's milestone election events.

PLAN DETAILS — Diplomatic leadership at the highest levels is the greatest need. The complexity of the challenges within the region, the short timeline of scheduled events, and the multiple responses needed from the various USG departments requires a strong center/focal point for U.S. leadership in the region during this pivotal time. U.S. President Obama took those initial steps to increase diplomatic engagement with the Congo last year through the appointment of a U.S. Special Advisor to the Great Lakes region, Howard Wolpe. The term ended for the advisor to the Great Lakes region on August 6th of this year and a new advisor has yet to be appointed. It is imperative that the USG fill this leadership vacuum immediately.

The appointment of U.S. Ambassador James Entwistle to the Congo accentuates the need for the U.S. Special Advisor position to be filled to demonstrate U.S. commitment to elevating its engagement with the Congo. By fully filling the USG leadership vacuum with respect to the Congo, the U.S. will be well-positioned to prepare and initiate the necessary interventions to support the stabilization of eastern Congo, engage the region's leadership, and create an enabling environment for the upcoming elections. The following are key priorities for the U.S. Office of the Special Advisor.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Sustain a public role within the U.S. and the Great Lakes Region*. In recent negotiations in eastern Africa, the USG, with support from the Special Advisor, has served as a catalyst by garnering greater support from the regional heads of state and the international community for peace processes when these processes were stalled. By appointing the U.S. Special Advisor, the USG can again provide the necessary diplomatic leadership to galvanize the region's leadership and the international community to identify, commit to, and implement a regional strategy to mitigate the region's crises. With the numerous and significant upcoming events in the Great Lakes states, the U.S. Special Advisor should be appointed immediately to address the following priorities.

- Be known by the region's leadership.
- Be known and resonate within the international community.
- Reflect the promises and commitments of the U.S. Secretary of State and the campaign in the Congo with confidence and authority.
- Coordinate U.S. efforts in the region while projecting a significant presence both in the region and in Washington DC.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Integrate the "whole-of-government" approach.* As the international community's response needs to be integrated and coordinated, so does that of the USG. Using its 3Ds strategy, *Diplomacy, Development and Defense*, the approaches/activities of key USG actors must be synergized.

Diplomacy — within the Department of State, the Office of the Ambassador, S/CRS and the Great Lakes Officer with the International Organization Bureau (the Peace Keeping Bureau).

Development — within USAID, OFDA, Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and the Office of Democracy and Governance.

Defense — within the Department of Defense, AFRICOM and Central Command (CENTCOM).

While the S/CRS provides the operational management of the regional effort, the U.S. Special Advisor should be the diplomatic focal point to direct and harmonize the various USG actors. The previous U.S. Special Advisor had minimal access to the Secretary of State and limited access to the heads of state within the region. This greatly diminished the authority and influence of this office. Inter-departmental coordination can help align U.S. diplomatic efforts to address the lack of political will on critical reforms with technical assistance designed to support them. This will magnify the impact and effectiveness of the technical assistance. A "whole-of-government approach" to the Great Lakes region, and the Congo specifically, will ensure that USG efforts from the various actors will be leveraged for a synergistic effect. To establish

the necessary structure that synergizes the stakeholders and resources across the USG, the U.S. Special Advisor must take the following steps.

- Report directly to the Secretary of State, or Assistant Secretary.
- Serve as the Coordination Chair on an interagency working group.
- Bridge the State Department's Offices of Central Africa and East Africa. (The previous Special Advisor was under the auspices of the State Department's Office of Central Africa, which included the Congo. However, many of its neighbors to the east fall under the purview of the Office of East Africa. This made a regional response to the crisis difficult to coordinate. For example, efforts to respond to the LRA, a regional problem affecting the Congo, were managed within the Office of East Africa.)
- Host an interagency workshop to be held in conjunction with (or shortly following) the appointment of the Special Advisor by the Secretary of State.

KEY PRIORITY C — *Maintain a robust structure.* Due to minimal staffing, results from the Special Advisor's office were limited. The previous Office of the U.S. Special Advisor was staffed with only one experienced Foreign Service Officer, one staff member, and part-time State Department staff, to respond to the needs of the Great Lakes region or to coordinate with the governments and stakeholders within the region. The new Office of the U.S. Special Advisor should be structured as follows:

- Be staffed with a full-time interagency detail and State Department staff with regional and technical expertise.
- Second full-time liaisons from each of the U.S. departments to the Office of the Special Advisor.
- Include staff knowledgeable of USG contract management and procurement experience as appropriate.

Objective 7: Encourage a regional response to the crisis

PLAN — The U.S. must encourage the development of a regional strategy for the Great Lakes region by the highly preferred date of the end of 2010 but, no later than January 17, 2011 (180 days after the date of enactment of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act).

PLAN DETAILS — While the Kagame-Kabila summit is a strong start for regional peace, diplomatic and military collaboration must expand from bilateral to multilateral cooperation. A USG regional strategy that addresses the regional causes and enabling factors would provide an overarching strategy for the vari-

ous USG actors to implement, coordinate USG efforts between countries, and enable the USG to identify and utilize diplomatic leverage points in support of a stable region. Without this kind of guiding role, there is a significant risk that variables—including the elections, individual economic interests, and cross-border activities of certain armed groups—could destabilize these relationships and lead to an aggravated situation in the Congo. The U.S. Office of the U.S. Special Advisor must perform the following key priorities:

KEY PRIORITY A — *Develop a short- and medium-term* USG *strategy.* As mandated by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the U.S. Special Advisor should lead the process of developing the U.S. strategy for the Congo as Chair of an interagency working group. A regional strategy to address the regional crisis will help resolve the root causes and create the possibility for peace in the long-term as well as for short-term stability in the region. The strategy should:

- Reflect the analysis resulting from the interagency assessment conducted from December 2009 through February 2010.
- Be inclusive of the strategy and map to address the linkages between conflict minerals, armed groups, mining of conflict minerals, and commercial products.
- Integrate the strategy to address the violence by the LRA in Uganda, the Congo, and the Central African Republic.
- Target the eastern Congo to promote security and peace.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Expedite the timeline to develop the U.S. regional strategy.* While the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act allows 180 days for the submittal of the strategy to the appropriate congressional committees, adherence to this timeline would place the submittal on January 17, 2011. The amount of time that Congress is in session and focused during the last months of the year is significantly reduced due to the combination of the mid-term elections and the holidays. Given that many political events in the region are scheduled in the near-term, the USG needs to develop its regional strategy in advance to lay the groundwork for, and help shape, these events.

KEY PRIORITY C — *Engage the Region's leadership.* Under the previous U.S. Special Advisor, there were few individuals dedicated full-time to addressing the regional crises and pursuing regional solutions.

The U.S. Special Advisor needs to draw upon USG expertise and establish, as well as build on, diplomatic relationships within each of the Great Lakes states. Building on these relationships, the U.S. Special Advisor should conduct shuttle diplomacy to promote discussion on specific issues common to the Congo and other individual countries in the region. Upon building mo-

mentum and consensus on the need to convene, the U.S. should host a summit with the region's heads of state.

Objective 8: Support and complement multilateral efforts

PLAN — The U.S. should actively support the development of a stronger relationship between the GDRC and the international community, while promoting the alignment of international efforts in eastern Congo within the STAREC/I-ISSSS frameworks and the adequate resourcing of MONUSCO to fulfill the UN's mandate.

PLAN DETAILS — The U.S. has a history of playing a significant role in helping resolve crises in Africa, including the Congo. It has directly supported the mediation of peace agreements and provided a framework within which parties could come together. This type of catalytic and leadership role must be strengthened in the Congo to address a number of strategic, policy and funding gaps that reduce the effectiveness of national and international efforts, as outlined in Chapter I under "International Assistance in the Congo." While the UN has been trying to lead efforts with the GDRC to address the complex and multi-faceted challenges of stabilization and peace building in the Congo, there is a pressing need for the direct involvement of other international partners to complement its efforts. Strong U.S. involvement in this context could significantly improve the effectiveness of international efforts by ensuring that the most important priorities are targeted in a coherent and collective manner. Thus, the U.S. should perform the following key priorities.

KEY PRIORITY A — *Lead diplomatic efforts to strengthen the international community's partnership with the* GDRC. Strong international diplomatic and political engagement with the GDRC is critical to the success of stabilization and peace consolidation efforts in eastern Congo. Over the past several years, however, the relationship between the GDRC and the international community has been challenging. Communication between the GDRC, UN and international partners has been irregular, and cooperation at the diplomatic and regional level remains structured around bilateral relationships. Attempts to develop a compact between the international community and the GDRC outlining common goals, most notably the 2007 Governance Pact,[39] have stalled due to lack of political will. As a result, there have been several missed opportunities where the international community could have worked with the GDRC to address and resolve political challenges. In this context, the diplomatic and political engagement of the U.S. (as well as that of the UN and other international partners) should be oriented towards the following goals:

- Lead diplomatic efforts within the international community to forge a stronger relationship with the GDRC, with a focus on the Executive and Legislative Branches.

39 A Governance Compact developed by the GDRC in 2006–2007 with World Bank and UN support reflecting these elements was included in the 2007 GDRC plan, but it was never implemented.

- Renew attempts to develop an overarching political compact with the GDRC, defining the engagement of the international community in the Congo, which would outline common goals for the short- to medium-term period, as well as priorities and the underlying strategy for their achievement.

KEY PRIORITY B — *Help address the policy and coordination gap in eastern Congo.* Although most international assistance goes to eastern Congo, projects are developed in a piecemeal manner and correspond to priorities developed on a bilateral—and not a national—basis. While the development of the STAREC/I-SSSS now provides a collective strategy for security and stabilization efforts, only a fraction of the current international investments for eastern Congo (approximately 300 million USD out of several billion USD) are aligned and coordinated within this framework. The strong engagement by the U.S. in promoting the STAREC/I-SSSS framework would have a catalytic impact, encouraging other international partners to align their efforts accordingly. In particular, the alignment of financial resources would help address critical funding gaps and reduce the amount of additional funding required from the U.S. to meet the shortfalls identified in the previous chapter, including resources to garrison the FARDC, programs to reintegrate ex-combatants, and financing for peace, reconciliation and economic recovery activities. This would go a long way towards ensuring that international assistance is focused and targeting priority issues, thus maximizing its impact on the overall situation in the east.

KEY PRIORITY C — *Ensure that* MONUSCO *is adequately staffed and resourced to implement its protection and stabilization mandate.* The UNSC and General Assembly are notorious for designing and funding missions whose ambitions far exceed their resources, and MONUSCO is no exception in this regard. Given that the U.S. is the largest contributor to the UN for peacekeeping, it has great influence within the UN to ensure that the mission is properly staffed and structured to address its civilian protection mandate and stabilization priorities. At the same time, the U.S. should also play an important advocacy role with other member states. This will ensure that MONUSCO's efforts are complemented by other international actors and can address the issues that the mission does not currently have the capacity to address, because they require outside complementary funding and expertise.

Objective 9: Engage the U.S. advocacy community

PLAN — The USG should engage the U.S. advocacy community for the Congo by soliciting their input and participation in the development of a USG, regional, and Congolese strategy.

PLAN DETAILS — There are many disparate voices within the international and Congolese advocacy community for the Congo. Each advocates for a specific issue, such as gender-based violence or child soldiers, and targets different constituencies. Engaging the U.S. advocacy community regarding the Congo

will help revitalize the advocacy community and focus their constituencies' interests in USG efforts in the Great Lakes region. The U.S. Office of the U.S. Special Advisor should:

1. *Provide a platform for the advocacy community.* This platform will contribute to the USG stabilization efforts. There are a number of coalitions focusing on the Congo and the crisis in eastern Congo, including working groups within the Society for International Development, Interaction Group, and inter-faith networks. These networks reach important constituencies who are interested in, and can contribute to, raising awareness and mobilizing Americans. These networks can be better utilized and supported by the U.S. Office of the Special Advisor.

2. *Raise awareness within the U.S. constituency of the crisis in eastern Congo and the* USG*'s efforts.* The U.S. advocacy community has been effective in raising awareness about select humanitarian crises overseas. Notable examples include the International Crisis Group and the Enough Project. Awareness raising techniques include regular communication from the U.S. Office of the Special Advisor, with updates about activities and achievements, and dissemination of information through regular news feeds.

3. *Mobilize Americans to act.* U.S. advocacy groups have effectively employed grass-roots mobilization techniques through the use of information communication technologies (ICT) tools to mobilize American citizens. Organizations such as Genocide Intervention Network (GI-NET) and Enough Project are particularly effective, and have strengthened links between Americans and their government representatives. Similar techniques, as noted below, can be utilized to raise awareness regarding the crisis in the eastern Congo.

    - Engage citizens with their representatives through a hotline that links callers directly to their representatives, or by using a letter which is completed by citizens and sent directly to the appropriate representative.

    - Encourage citizens to reference a scoring system developed by the advocacy group to inform their voting decisions for members of Congress.

    - Provide opportunities for concerned Americans to make donations, regardless of size or frequency, to directly support Congolese organizations working towards peace.

Overview of Objectives and Priorities for Strengthened U.S. Engagement in Eastern Congo

	OBJECTIVE / PLAN	PRIORITY ACTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
1	**Facilitate renewed political engagement** The U.S. must provide strong support to the GDRC in addressing political bottlenecks to urgent peace and stabilization measures, and link provision of further technical and financial assistance to demonstrated commitment and action by the GDRC.	• End impunity for crimes committed by national security forces. • Ensure GDRC pays salaries of state officials deployed in former conflict zones. • End interference in the military and civilian justice systems. • Accelerate implementation of the 23 March 2009 Accords.	• Strengthened U.S. diplomatic engagement with the GDRC. • Further U.S. assistance conditional on active GDRC engagement.
2	**Support a multidimensional strategy to protect civilians** The U.S. must support a multidimensional strategy to create a safe environment for civilians in eastern Congo by a) improving the discipline and professionalism of national security forces, and b) effectively dismantling foreign and Congolese armed groups.	• Construct garrison facilities for FARDC units and regroup soldiers and dependents. • Strengthen the military justice system. • Increase training programs and advisory support to newly integrated FARDC battalions. • Establish an effective salary system for the FARDC. • Strengthen support to FARDC and MONUSCO in neutralizing foreign armed groups. • Support MONUSCO in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants.	• Expanded geographic scope and funding levels for existing U.S. programs in relevant areas (e.g., training, military, and justice). • Additional funding allocated to cover critical gaps in relevant areas (e.g., garrisoning, DDR). • Existing programs reoriented to address conflict affected areas (e.g., economic recovery programs).
3	**Support GDRC reforms, including the 2011–2013 elections** The U.S. must support the Congolese government in sustaining short-term stabilization and peace consolidation efforts by helping accelerate the implementation of critical sectoral reform policies and plans, and catalyzing more strategic and coherent engagement by the international community.	• Accelerate the implementation of security sector reform plans. • Improve GDRC institutional transparency and accountability. • Renew attention on decentralization. • Strengthen democratic practices within government, including for the organization of the 2011–2013 elections.	• Strengthened U.S. leadership role in facilitating and coordinating international efforts. • Strengthened U.S. diplomatic engagement with the GDRC. • Increased technical and financial assistance for new programs targeting key interventions.

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4 **Support the GDRC in regulating the trade in natural resources and deploying justice and administrative services** The U.S. must strengthen its financial and technical support for the GDRC to restore law and order and access to justice and essential administrative and other public services in former conflict areas, and establish regulatory control over the production and trade in natural resources in the eastern Congo.	• Address institutional capacity gaps at the provincial level to sustain deployments of police and justice personnel, and regulate mining activities in conflict areas. • Establish regulatory control over the production and trade in natural resources. • Support the expansion of communications and transport grids to high-risk areas. • Support the strengthening of local government capacities to address abuses against civilians, including sexual violence.	• Strengthened U.S. leadership role in catalyzing greater coherence and focus of international assistance. • Realignment and expansion of U.S. programs in relevant areas. • Increased U.S. funding for specific sectors.
5 **Support IDP and refugee returns and encourage socioeconomic recovery** The U.S. must reorient and expand its current support in the area of economic recovery to specifically target and support the peaceful and sustainable return and reintegration of IDPs and refugees.	• Sustain IDP and refugee returns through restoration of basic social services and income-generating activities. • Support local reconciliation and conflict resolution in return areas. • Promote economic growth in the most affected areas, including return areas.	• Reorient geographic focus of existing economic recovery programs to target return and other high-risk areas. • Increase funding for critical activities (notably restoration of social services and peace and reconciliation).
6 **Reappoint a U.S. Special Advisor for the Great Lakes region** It is imperative that the U.S. continue the office of the U.S. Special Advisor, and appoint a U.S. Special Advisor preferably to the Great Lakes region specifically, or secondarily as another viable option, to the Congo as a whole. The new advisor must be appointed immediately to assume responsibility and help lay the groundwork for next year's milestone election events.	• Sustain a public role within the U.S. and the Great Lakes region to provide diplomatic leadership to galvanize the region's leadership and international community. • Integrate the "whole-of-government" approach. • Maintain a robust structure staffed with a full-time interagency detail and State Department staff with regional and technical expertise.	• Demonstrated U.S. commitment to elevating its engagement with the Congo by fully filling the USG leadership vacuum with respect to the Congo. • Galvanized leadership within the region and international community to commit to and implement a regional strategy. • Leveraged efforts from the various USG actors to amplify the effect of U.S. efforts and resources. • Capacitated U.S. Office of the Special Envoy to effectively represent U.S. foreign policy interests within the region and to pursue solutions to the crisis.

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7 **Encourage a regional response to the crisis** The U.S. must develop a regional strategy for the Great Lakes region by the highly preferred date of the end of 2010, but no later than January 17, 2011, 180 days after the date the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was signed into law (Public Law 111-203).	• Develop a short- and medium-term USG strategy to address the crisis in the eastern DRC as well as the regional dynamics contributing to this crisis. • Expedite the timeline to develop the U.S. regional strategy in preparation for the upcoming elections. • Engage the region's leadership through shuttle diplomacy and build on diplomatic relationships.	• Targeted and coordinated response through the synthesis of the various U.S. strategies towards the region, and specifically the Congo. • Well-prepared and well-supported initiatives for the upcoming political processes scheduled in the Congo. • Strengthened U.S. relationships within the region.
8 **Support and complement multilateral efforts** The U.S. must actively support the development of a stronger relationship between the GDRC and the international community, while promoting the alignment of international efforts in eastern Congo within the framework of existing stabilization strategies and the adequate resourcing of MONUSCO to fulfill its mandate.	• Lead diplomatic efforts to strengthen the international community's partnership with the GDRC. • Help address the policy and coordination gap in eastern Congo to streamline international support with the STAREC/I-SSSS framework. • Ensure that MONUSCO is adequately staffed and resourced to implement its protection and stabilization mandate.	• Successful engagement with the GDRC to address and resolve political challenges. • Specific and appropriate programming provided, resulting from coordinated strategies amongst the international community and with the GDRC. • Improved human security through a robust MONUSCO that is properly equipped and staffed to fulfill its mandate.
9 **Engage the U.S. advocacy community** The USG must engage the U.S. advocacy community for the Congo by soliciting their input and participation in the development of a USG, regional, and Congolese strategy.	• Provide a platform for the advocacy community, including the various coalitions focusing on the Congo • Raise awareness within the U.S. constituency of the crisis in eastern Congo and the USG's efforts. • Mobilize Americans to act through grass-roots mobilization techniques and through the use of information communication technology tools.	• Amplified impact of the various coalitions to elevate the debate within the U.S. as well as to weigh in on and inform the policy options. • Increased awareness and mobilization on the crisis in the east for an informed and concerned citizenry, messaging to U.S. Representatives on the importance of effectively mitigating the crisis in the east.

Founded in 2009 by Ben Affleck, the Eastern Congo Initiative (ECI) is the only U.S.-based advocacy and grant-making initiative wholly focused on working with and for the people of eastern Congo. ECI is a special project of the New Venture Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization registered in the United States. ECI investors include the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, Humanity United, the Bridgeway Foundation, and others. To learn more about our work please visit us www.easterncongo.org.

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