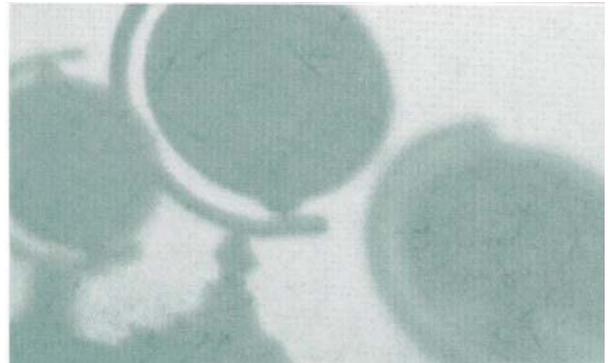# DEMOCRATIZING SECURITY FOR A SAFER WORLD PARLIAMENTS AS PEACEBUILDERS

Rasheed Draman
Parliamentary Centre
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<u>PEACEBUILDING:</u> Effective democratic legislatures serve as deliberative assemblies that help society mediate and resolve deep seated conflicts. We pay particular attention to the representation of ethnic and regional groups and the relations between political parties in the legislature.

Contributor to this Issue

Mr. Rasheed Draman is Program Coordinator of the Parliamentary Centre's Poverty Reduction Network.

Mr. Draman works out of the Parliamentary Centre's Poverty Reduction Network. He works out of the Centre's Africa Poverty Reduction Office in Accra, Ghana. Dr. Draman received his PhD in Political Science from Carleton University in January 2005. His dissertation is a comparative study of four cases of Conflict Prevention in Africa. He has an MA in International Relations from the International University of Japan and a BA (First Class) from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Before joining the Parliamentary Centre, Dr. Draman worked for one year as Consultant for the Africa Branch and the Multilateral Programs Branch (Peacebuilding Unit) of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) at its headquarters in Gatineau, Quebec.

Dr. Draman's interests include the links between poverty and insecurity, governance and conflict prevention. He has written extensively on these issues. He also teaches Development and Conflict (part-time) in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University. He has a number of publications to his credit, among them: **Managing Chaos in the West African Sub-Region: Assessing the Role of ECOMOG**, with David Carment, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies,* Fall 2003, Vol. 6, 2, pp. 1-31; **Warlords, Resources and War: Who arms, who pays and who trains?***The Journal of African Policy Studies,* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2001, pp. 31-48; **Preventing Conflicts in Africa: Reality, Empty Dream or Just Difficult?***Civil Wars,* Vol. 4. No. 2 (Summer 2001), pp. 121-141.

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DEMOCRATIZING SECURITY FOR A SAFER WORLD: WHAT ROLE FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS?

Rasheed Draman
September 2003

Preliminaries

In sub-Saharan Africa and other developing regions of the world, civil wars are probably the greatest threat not only to individual security, but also to the development of parliamentary democracy. In the nascent democracies of the developing world, the role of parliaments in the growing national security dialogue is critical as these countries wade through the messy period of consolidating democratic government. According to Dr. Jan Nico Scholten, the president of the Association of European Parliaments for Africa (AWEPA), "The basic role of Parliament is to substitute the power of physical violence by the power of words and arguments, and to replace the law of force by the force of the law".[1] Dr. Scholten's statement highlights the significance of parliaments in national security. However, the pivotal role that parliaments can assume in many parliamentary democracies in the developing world, particularly in Africa, has consistently taken a 'back-seat' to more immediate concerns related to protracted insecurity and unrest.

In a recent World Bank policy document, Paul Collier and his colleagues declared that today, most wars are civil wars. According to them, although international wars (such as Iraq) attract greater attention than civil wars, they have become infrequent and brief while civil wars have become more rampant and drag on for years.[2] It is estimated that since the end of the Second World War, 16.5 million people have died in civil wars, compared with 3.3 million in wars between states. And over the same period, there have been about 122 civil wars compared with 25 conventional wars.[3]

And there is nowhere that civil wars are more widespread and devastating than in Africa. From West to East Africa and from Central to Southern Africa, most states are red-flagged in some form or another and face an ever-growing challenge to peace and stability. (See Appendix 1). According to the *2003 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook*, in 2002, there were 21 major armed conflicts in 19 locations and Africa continued to be the region with the greatest number of these conflicts.[4] In addition, in a recent study, Ted Gurr and his colleagues noted that while the prevalence of armed conflict has declined significantly in the 1990s, "Africa, along with *very poor and non-democratic state*s elsewhere in the world, will continue to experience serious warfare in the future."[5]

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[1] AWEPA, "Parliament as an Instrument for Peace," *Occasional Paper Series*, No. 8, 2001, p. 5.

[2] Paul Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2003, p. 1.

[3] James d. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War", **www.yale.edu/irspeakers/Fearon.pdf**, p. 2.

[4] Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg and Peter Wallensteen, "Apppendix A: Patterns of major armed conflicts 1990-2002," *SIPRI Year Book 2003*, at http://editors.sipri.org/pubs/yb03/ch02.html.

[5] Ted Robert Gurr, Monty G. Marshall and Deepa Khosla, Peace and Conflict 2001: *A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy*, University of Maryland: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2000, p. 13 (emphasis added).

In addition to these depressing statistics, there are a number of other compelling reasons why civil wars and insecurity should be of concern to parliaments. First, achieving human development depends to a large extent on peace and personal security of citizens of a country. Second, as clearly articulated by Collier and his colleagues, insecurity is development in reverse since it generates or intensifies global poverty.[6] Third, and for the purpose of this audience, insecurity and civil wars also constitute democracy in reverse. Democracy cannot thrive in an environment of insecurity, usually characterized by serious violations of human rights. Once civil war breaks out, all democratic gains disappear.

This background paper aims to spell out the central role of parliaments in the growing security discourse. The argument of the paper is two-fold: first, the paper argues that democracy is an important element for ensuring the peaceful resolution of conflict; and second, the democratization of the security sector is an important condition both for reducing insecurity and for consolidating democracy and good governance. This is mainly because the lack of security for the state and for its citizens is a major obstacle to political, social, and economic development. Simply put, democratic control of the security forces is a sine qua non for both democracy and development.

The paper is divided into five main sections. In order to highlight the importance of democratic control of the security sector, I begin by examining the link between the security sector and conflict. In the second section, I examine the nature and consequences of civil wars. I argue that even though civil wars are confined to the developing world, particularly Africa, their impact is global. Having examined the nature and consequences of civil wars, the obvious question that comes to mind is "why isn't it possible for societies to resolve their differences peacefully without resort to violence?" Evidence about the location of civil wars seems to point to the absence of democratic institutions in these countries. Based on this thinking, the third section of the paper examines the Democratic Peace Thesis. The argument here is that democracies have peaceful ways of managing internal conflicts and by extension, do not go to war with other democracies. The fourth section examines the case for democratizing the security sector. In the fifth section, I put forward some recommendations on the role that parliaments can play in the growing security dialogue. The concluding section pulls together the arguments of the various sections and raises some questions for discussion.

[6] Paul Collier et al., Breaking the Conflict Trap, p. ix.

Section 1: The Security Sector[7] and Insecurity

The causes of civil wars, irrespective of their location are many and varied. In general, they can be classified into two main broad categories; with a third, minor category: structural root causes, proximate causes (commonly referred to as accelerators and triggers), and perpetuating factors. Structural root causes refer to the underlying fundamental incompatibilities of a conflict. They represent factors such as weak states, discriminatory political and economic systems, that predispose a society to conflict. Triggers, on the other hand, constitute more proximate events or factors that cause a conflict to escalate and can be exemplified by collapsing states, political transitions and mounting economic problems. Perpetuating factors are events that continuously make a society prone to conflict. Table 1 is a summary of the two categories of conflict causes. As it indicates, there are four main clusters of variables that predispose a society to violence and the corresponding proximate factors often precipitate an escalation.

Table 1: Causes of Civil War

STRUCTURAL ROOTS CAUSES	PROXIMATE CAUSES
Structural factors: Weak states Intra-state security concerns Ethnic geography Discriminatory political systems	Collapsing states Changing intra-state military balances Changing demographic patterns Political transitions
Political Factors: Exclusionary national ideologies Inter-group politics Elite-politics Economic problems	Increasingly influential exclusionary ideologies Intensifying leadership struggles
Economic/Social Factors: Discriminatory economic systems Economic development and modernization	Mounting economic problems Growing economic inequalities Fast-paced development and modernization
Cultural/Perceptual Factors: Patterns of cultural discrimination Problematic group histories	Intensifying patterns of cultural discrimination Ethnic bashing and propagandising

Source: Michael Brown (1996)

[7] The security sector is generally broad and involves not only the military, but other organs of the state that have some role, directly or otherwise, in ensuring the safety of the citizens of a state. For the purpose of this paper, the security sector is taken to mean all organizations with authority to use force: the military, police, paramilitary forces, gendarmeries, intelligence and secret services, coast guards, border guards, customs authorities, reserve and local security units (civil defence forces, national guards, presidential guards, militias).

One common thread that runs through all these factors is the role that the security sector plays as a contributing and sometimes perpetuating factor. Since the end of the cold war, there have been 58 different major armed conflicts in 46 different countries.[8] In almost all these conflicts, the security sector is implicated because it often reflects and perpetuates the already existing deep societal divisions that are at the root of violence.

The relationship between the security sector and the structural root causes of civil wars is very easy to discern. In most developing countries, security forces often reflect structural causes and can perpetuate or amplify their impact.[9] For example, in a quest to entrench themselves in power, most governments in developing countries intentionally crowd the national security force with members of their primary ethnic and social groups. This results in security forces serving only certain sectional interests in those societies leading to mistrust among the general public. The link between the security sector and the structural root of violence is even more pronounced under authoritarian regimes in which the military and police constitute the nerve centre of power. Due to the lack of accountability, these forces use their unlimited power in intimidating instead of protecting members of society leading to further polarisation of society.

The unfettered power of the security forces in most societies is itself a trigger for violence. Military adventurism, mostly in the form coups d'état, gross human rights abuses in the form of abductions and murder of political activists and innocent civilians, corruption and abuse of power by the security forces are all events that can trigger violence.[10]

The security sector is linked to perpetuating factors of conflict in a very important way. Security forces, especially in countries going through civil wars often indulge in certain practices that give them every incentive to ensure the continuation of war. In Sierra Leone and Liberia for instance, both the national security forces and peacekeepers were alleged to have been heavily involved in the 'grey economy' through trafficking, extraction and manipulation of natural resources at the centre of war economies. Here is the "logic":

When security forces become economically independent of the political state structures, their accountability decreases and they may be a perpetuating factor in conflict and in preventing the establishment of democratic structures, as they act in their own interests, instead of those of the state as a whole.[11] The security sector's role in perpetuating conflict is even more serious in situations where there are "irregular" armed groups that serve their own interests and those of the rebel organizations to which they belong.

The role played by the security sector in either promoting or perpetuating conflict is often symptomatic of the inadequacies within a country's political system, particularly a lack of democratic control of, or enough resources for the security sector such as adequate pay, housing and health care.

As already indicated, state security forces, instead of being the guarantors of personal security, can occasionally become its greatest threat, especially in developing countries where governments often draw most of their power from security forces. For example, through much of Africa, there is evidence

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[8] Eriksson, Sollenberg and Wallensteen, "Apppendix A: Patterns of major armed conflicts 1990-2002," SIPRI Year Book 2003.
[9] The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', "Towards a better practice framework in security sector reform: Broadening the debate," Occasional SSR Paper, No. 1, August 2002, p. 2.
[10] For more on this, see Ibid.
[11] Ibid, p. 3.

of widespread torture, intimidation and harassment of civilians by police, acting on behalf of ruling governments. During the 20th century for instance, death by governments commonly referred to as "democide" – mainly through organs of security, whose actions caused the number of death to far outnumber those fatalities caused by civil wars. Table 2 illustrates this.

As the table indicates, about 170 million people have died in the hands of government as compared to 33 million in civil wars. Sadly, in some cases,

government excesses, through state security forces, lead to civil wars so the number of people killed as a result of civil wars could be indirectly attributed to the security sector. This is a compelling reason for democratization of the security sector in new democracies that are either emerging out of conflict or are conflict-prone and where military adventurism and interference in politics is rife.

As I indicated earlier, the most violent continent in terms of the global share of civil wars is Africa. Accordingly, most of this discussion focuses on Africa.

Table 2: Deaths through Democides and Civil Wars

Type of Government	Death through government action (millions)	Death through civil wars (millions)
Democratic	2	4
Authoritarian	29	15
Totalitarian	138	14

Source: Rummel (1997)

Re-tooling for New Challenges – Parliaments as Peacebuilders

Section 2: Civil Wars: Local Nature, Global Consequences

Nature

A close look at the nature of conflicts in Africa reveals certain patterns. First, the conflicts, which normally assume communal forms, are characterized by military hostilities between organized rebel groups, and the incumbent government. For example, in the former Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Laurent Kabila organized rebels to launch an incursion against the government of Mobutu Sese Sekou in Kinsasha 1997; similarly, Charles Taylor (who has himself been driven out by rebels) led the rebels of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to fight the government of Samuel Doe in Monrovia in 1989. Thus, there is, as Douglas Anglin observed, "the widespread acceptance of force as an appropriate dispute settlement procedure" and since most of the incumbent governments came to power through the barrel of the gun, the tendency exists for them to react to any challenge to their power with force.[12]

Rebel groups such as NPFL, LRA, LURD, MODEL, SPPLA, RUF etc. often succeed in mobilizing several different groups against the government, which usually consists of people of the same ethnic make-up in the majority. Thus, the nature of most of these conflicts, as already mentioned, is communal and calls into question not only the legitimacy of specific regimes but also the essentials of state power. Most states in Africa are colonial creations with large numbers of subnational groups. According to Ted Gurr, in 1994, about one-sixth of the world's population, or 989 million people, belonged to some 292 groups whose members either have experienced systematic discrimination or have taken political action to assert their collective interests against the states that claim to govern them.[13] According to Gurr's breakdown, of the world's 190 countries, 120 have politically significant minorities. Sub-Saharan Africa has 81 groups – the greatest concentration; Europe has 59; Asia, Latin America, and the Western democracies have the smallest proportions, between 11 and 13 percent each.[14] If these statistics are right and bad governance continues to be the order of the day in most of sub-Saharan Africa, the region will continue to be characterized by widespread turmoil unless decisive and workable measures are initiated.

Besides the use of force to settle disputes in Africa, most conflicts in Africa assume the form of "irregular warfare" in which for strategic reasons, civilians instead of professional soldiers are subjected to the most heinous atrocities. As Secretary General Kofi Annan has pointed out, in domestic conflicts, "the main aim, increasingly, is the destruction not just of armies but of civilians and entire ethnic groups'" with the prime targets being women and children.[15] Indeed, the "rules of war" have now given way to sheer bestiality, especially in Africa.[16] The Revolutionary

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[12] Douglas G. Anglin, "Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1997-1998," Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, July 1998, p. 5 (Unpublished article).

[13] Ted Robert Gurr, "Communal Conflicts and Global Security," Current History, May 1995, pp. 212-217.

[14] Ibid.

[15] UN document S/1998/318, 13 April 1998, p. 21.

[16] D. G. Anglin, p. 6.

United Front (RUF) of Forday Sankoh in Sierra Leone was one group notorious for perpetrating crimes against innocent civilians – the group has been accused by victims of hacking hands and arms of civilians in a reign of terror that has put Sierra Leone in the spotlight since 1991.[17] Rebel movements in other parts of Africa are guilty of similar crimes. But as Douglas Anglin reminds us, these gross abuses of civilians are not confined to undisciplined rebel movements; governments too are guilty.[18]

A third regrettable pattern, is the extent to which almost all conflicts in Africa have been commercialized. According to Anglin, "war has become big business in which the major motivation of an emerging class of military entrepreneurs is the accumulation of wealth, either to finance the war effort or, all-to-often, personal enrichment."[19] Annan notes that in Liberia for example, the control and exploitation of diamonds, timber and other resources was the motivating factor driving the warring factions and since the protagonists are those who benefit significantly from controlling these strategic resources, they have much interest in prolonging the war.[20] It is not only these organized groups that struggle to control and exploit these resources. Smaller groups, such as those characterized as "rebels without a cause" found in the dense forest area bordering Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, are driven to a life of extortion, looting and plundering in order to make a living. This is also true of the remnants of the Rwandan interahamwe.

Whatever patterns conflicts assume in Africa and elsewhere, they have and continue to exact a high toll on the lives of civilians and the economic and social potentials of the continent – a continent blessed with more resources than any other continent, yet immersed in deep poverty and profound misery.

Confined as they are to African and other developing regions of the world, it is interesting to note that the effects and consequences of most civil wars resonate far beyond the borders of these developing regions. This makes civil wars a global issue that deserves global attention.

Global Consequences

Even though confined to Africa and most failing states, the negative effects of civil war resonate far beyond the borders of states that are engulfed in these wars. According to Collier and his colleagues, in their Breaking the Conflict Trap referred to earlier, in the past 30 years, civil wars have been responsible, to a large extent, for three major global social evils – hard drugs, HIV/AIDS and international terrorism.[21]

Through both production and distribution, civil wars have links with hard drugs. Countries facing civil wars are mostly failed states in which there is no recognized government. Where any such government exists, its control does not go beyond the capital city. The large percentage of the country that is not under any recognized government control is usually under the control of warlords who are not subject to any international rules. And this is usually the fertile ground for drug production. Collier and his colleagues found that about 95 % of global production of opium, for example, is in civil war countries.[22] The link with distribution follows the same logic as production – distribution and storage of hard drugs thrive better on the lawlessness that civil wars generate. Conflict ridden countries of Western and Southern Africa have increasingly

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[17] The war in Sierra Leone ended in 2001 and there is currently a fragile peace in that country.
[18] Ibid, emphasis added.
[19] Ibid.
[20] UN document S/1998/318, 13 April, 1998, p. 5.
[21] Paul Collier et al., Breaking the Conflict Trap, p. 41.
[22] Ibid.

become transit areas for trafficking drugs from South America to Europe.[23] The social effects of hard drugs are perhaps more severe in the consuming destinations than in the countries of origin. In most industrialized countries, organized crime and prostitution thrive mainly on hard drugs.

With regards HIV/AIDS, there are epidemiological claims that the initial spread of HIV is as a result of the 1979 war in Uganda. According to Cambridge University geographers, Small man-Raynor and Cliff, "the apparent geographical pattern of clinical AIDS in Uganda partially reflects the diffusion of HIV associated with civil war during the first six years of the post-Amin period."[24] The argument of the researchers is that the rampant rapes that took place during the war were significantly responsible in making HIV/AIDS a global epidemic. Rape, coupled with promiscuity and dislocation during and after the war made HIV an epidemic infection.[25]

Like civil war itself, today, the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS, is sub-Saharan Africa where entire villages are being decimated. In many countries, particularly in Southern Africa, young adults are being slowly wiped out with very serious economic and social implications.

As for international terrorism, the events of September 11, 2001 were clearly indicative of the fact that failed states are a big threat to international peace and security. Like drug barons, warlords and international terrorists need a lawless society to function. In fact, the link between civil war and international terrorism is simple: civil wars produce safe havens for organizations like Al Qaeda. Afghanistan under the Taliban, provided an ideal atmosphere for Al Qaeda and its operatives to hatch their plots over many years. After the fall of the Taliban, Al Qaeda has been on the run and there are rumors that it might likely relocate to Somalia – another collapsed state with no recognized government.[26]

The global impact of international terrorism cannot be over-emphasized. The effects of the events of September 11 are not only limited to the massive loss of lives and property in New York. The World Bank estimates that global GDP is currently 0.8 percent lower than it would have been without September 11 and about 10 million more people worldwide live in poverty.[27] True, civil wars are confined to the peripheries of the global economy but their impact is global. As a result, they have become global issues that deserve concerted global attention. It is important to stress here that strengthening state institutions in Africa is central to the war against terrorism since terrorists have discovered that if they cannot strike directly at the West, they can strike indirectly. Eastern Africa in particular has become a target for terrorist operations in recent years. Al-Qaeda has been blamed for three deadly attacks in East Africa in recent years: A car bomb attack on the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya on 28 November 2002, claimed the lives of 15 people in a resort being visited by Israelis; an unsuccessful attempt was also made to down an Israeli airliner with a surface-to-air missile at the same time; and in 1998, the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed, killing 224 people, most of whom were Kenyan.[28]

It is interesting to note that the developing world, where civil wars are concentrated are also parts of the world which are in immersed in deep poverty

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[23] Ibid.
[24] M. R. Smallman-Raynor and A. D. Cliff, "Civil War and the Spread of AIDS in Central Africa, Epidemiology and Infection 107, p. 78, cited in Ibid., p. 47.
[25] Collier et al., Breaking the Conflict Trap, p. 47.
[26] Ibid., p. 48.
[27] Ibid.
[28] See for instance, "New East Africa Terror Warnings," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2849611.stm.

and which lack well-established institutions of governance capable of dealing with the day-to-day conflicts that are characteristic of every society. For the purpose of this paper, such an observation raises a very interesting question about the links between poverty and the absence of democratic governance on the one hand, and conflict on the other. In international relations, there is the widely held belief that democracies have domestic institutions that regulate conflict so they resolve their conflicts before they turn violent and by extension, they do not fight other democracies. That is the democratic peace thesis, the subject of the next section.

Section 3: The Democratic Peace Thesis

The democratic peace thesis, perhaps the most widely accepted thesis among international relations theorists posits that democracies rarely go to war with other democracies and by extension, have non-violent methods of resolving internal disputes. Although not without critics, the consensus view of advocates of this thesis is summed in the oft-repeated observation that the "absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations."[29]

The theory advances three explanations about why democratic polities are pacific: **institutional constraints; democratic norms and cultures; and economic interdependence**.[30]

Institutional Constraints

Another variant of this argument looks at three features of the domestic political structure of a state: executive selection, political competition, and the pluralism of foreign policy decision-making process.[31] A country is constrained in terms of its decision to go to war if it has executives who are answerable to a selection body, a political competition that is institutionalized as well as a decision-making responsibility spread among multiple institutions or individuals. In other words, in such a country, there are legal and constitutional restraints that limit the power of leaders to make war-prone decisions.

The second institutional argument is the fact that democratic governments must answer to their citizens since the latter "at the price for war in blood

Figure 1: Institutions and Democratic Peace
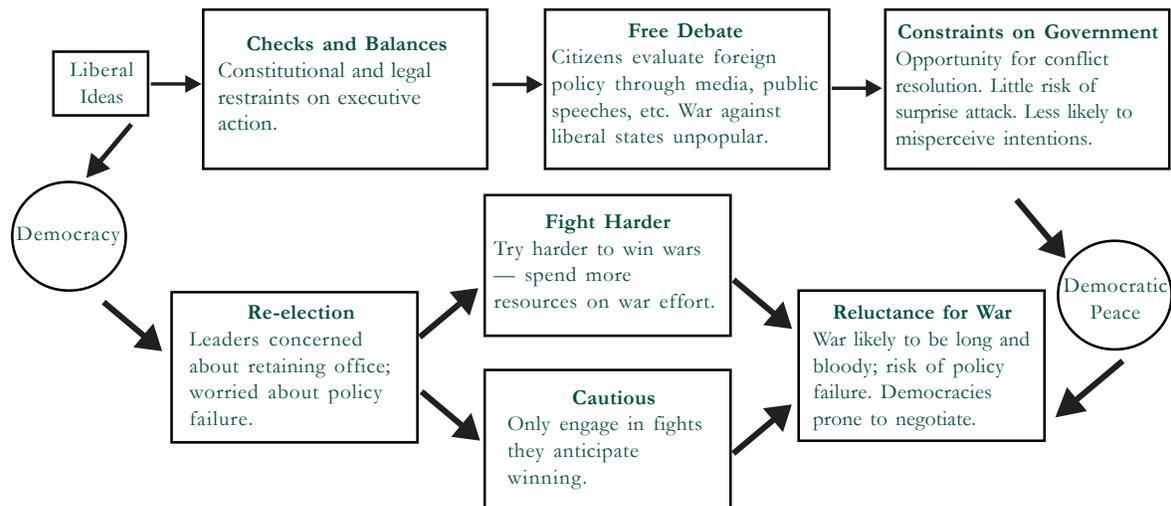
Source: "The Democratic Peace Idea," Rand (2001).

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[29] Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb, eds., The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 88.
[30] See for example, Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," International Security, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall 1994), p. 8; "The Democratic Peace Idea," at www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1346/MR1346.appc.pdf
[31] Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," p. 9.

and treasure."[32] The higher the price of war, the less likely a government can get re-elected and since one of the primary concerns of politicians is getting re-elected, they are particularly concerned about policy failures that can cost them their job. The table below provides a graphic illustration of these arguments.

Democratic Norms

The normative argument posits "the culture, perceptions, and practices that permit compromise and the peaceful resolution of conflicts without the threat of violence within countries come to apply across national boundaries toward other democratic countries."[33] The basic underpinning of this argument is that democracies are reasonable, predictable, and trustworthy and this leads to a

positive perception from other democratic states. As Michael Doyle puts it, democracies "which rest on consent, presume foreign republics to be also consensual, just and therefore deserving of accommodation."[34] These explanations are illustrated in Figure 2, below.

Economic Interdependence

One hallmark of democratic states is free-market economies, the principal advantage of which is the fact that they are better able to offer credible commitments regarding the terms of trade and capital flows than authoritarian states. As a result, democracies are more inclined to trade with one another.[35]

Figure 2: Norms and Democratic Peace
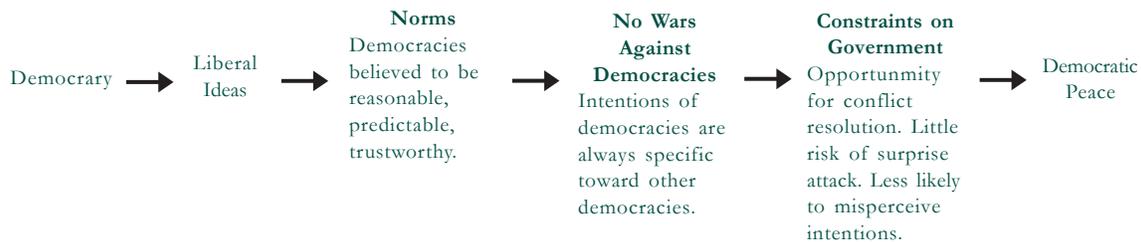
Source: "The Democratic Peace Idea," Rand (2001).

As illustrated in Figure 3, trade fosters economic interdependence which in turn promotes peace. It helps in creating ties that encourage compromise rather than conflict. Furthermore, trade is mutually beneficial to its participants and war may negatively affect a country's economy because it could potentially cut off critical imports or exports. Simply put, the potential loss of trade and other economic

disruptions decrease the willingness of democracies to go to war.

For new and emerging democracies the challenge that confronts them is not only entrenching democratic values and norms but, as a priority, ensuring that all organs of the state with authority to use force are brought under firm democratic

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[32] "The Democratic Peace Idea," at www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1346/MR1346.appc.pdf

33 Bruce Russett, Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 31, cited in Ibid.

34 Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs," Part 1, Philosophy and Public Affairs, Vol. 12, 3, (Summer 1983), p. 230, cited in Ibid.

35 "The Democratic Peace Idea," at www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1346/MR1346.appc.pdf

control. This is very important because in most developing countries, security organs have the tendency not only intervene in politics at the least opportunity, but also to perpetuate divisions within societies. Evidence from a significant number of African countries attest to this.

Figure 3: Economic Interdependence and Democratic Peace
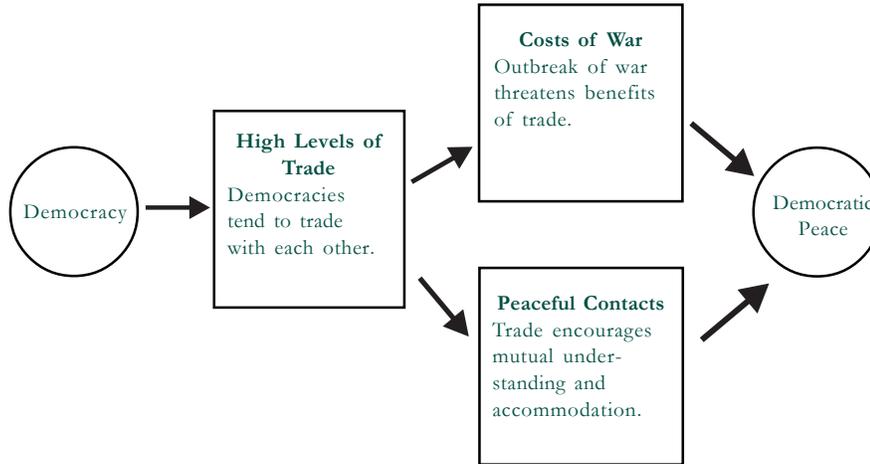
Source: "The Democratic Peace Idea," Rand (2001).

Section 4: Democratizing the Security Sector

Once a country embarks on the route to democracy, one of the principal tasks that needs to be accomplished is putting the entire security apparatus under democratic control. The need for this is already evident from the preceding discussions. But before democratizing the security sector, one urgent preliminary task is that of "de-politicizing" the security sector.

In both democratic and non-democratic regimes in Africa, governments are guilty of crowding the national security apparatus with members of their primary ethnic and social group in an effort to entrench themselves in power. To illustrate, during the Rawlings era in Ghana, the government was alleged to have packed the security forces with members of the Ewe ethnic group who critics say pay allegiance to the Rawlings government and not the state. Today, the Kufuor administration is being accused of the same thing – packing the security apparatus with members of the Akan ethnic group. In Togo, the security apparatus is packed with members of Eyadema's ethnic group. In Nigeria, the army in particular is dominated by Muslim Hausaspeaking northerners. The story is similar across most of Africa. The consequences of such practices are the deep mistrust and insecurity that characterizes most of these societies. There is therefore an urgent need for governments in Africa to recognize that it is in their interest and in the interest of society and global peace to desist from such practices. They should re-orient and professionalize the security apparatus to serve broad societal interest instead of the interest of a small segment of society. Once this is done, then the democratization of the security sector will have an impact.

Before proceeding to discuss the underpinnings of the democratic oversight of the security sector, it is important to conceptually clarify what is meant by "democratic oversight". For the purpose of this paper, democratic oversight means a system of over-viewing and setting broad guidelines by parliament for the executive and its agencies as well as a system of ensuring that the security sector is democratically accountable for its power. And here, both parliament and the executive play a significant role.

Basically, the logic of democratizing the security sector is simple: formal control of the security sector, like all other segments of society must be transferred to civil authorities. A well-established norm in democracies is that all organs of state must be under civil control. To this end, there is no justification for making an exception to the security sector, especially given the possible threat that this sector poses to the very existence of democracy in most developing societies. The chart on the following pagew gives a graphic illustration of how a democratic control of the security sector could be achieved.

As the chart indicates, there are six stakeholders involved in the process of "demanding accountability" from the security sector for its power. Among all these stakeholders, Parliament bears the heaviest responsibility because it is the only body that has the direct mandate of citizens. To achieve accountability, seven important principles have to be followed.[36]

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[36] These principles are based on DFID 2000 but have been modified for the purposes of this paper. See Security Sector Reform and the Management of Defence Expenditure: High Risks for Donors, High Returns for Development, UK Department for International Development: Report on an International Symposiue, London, 2000.

Figure 4: Security Sector Accountability
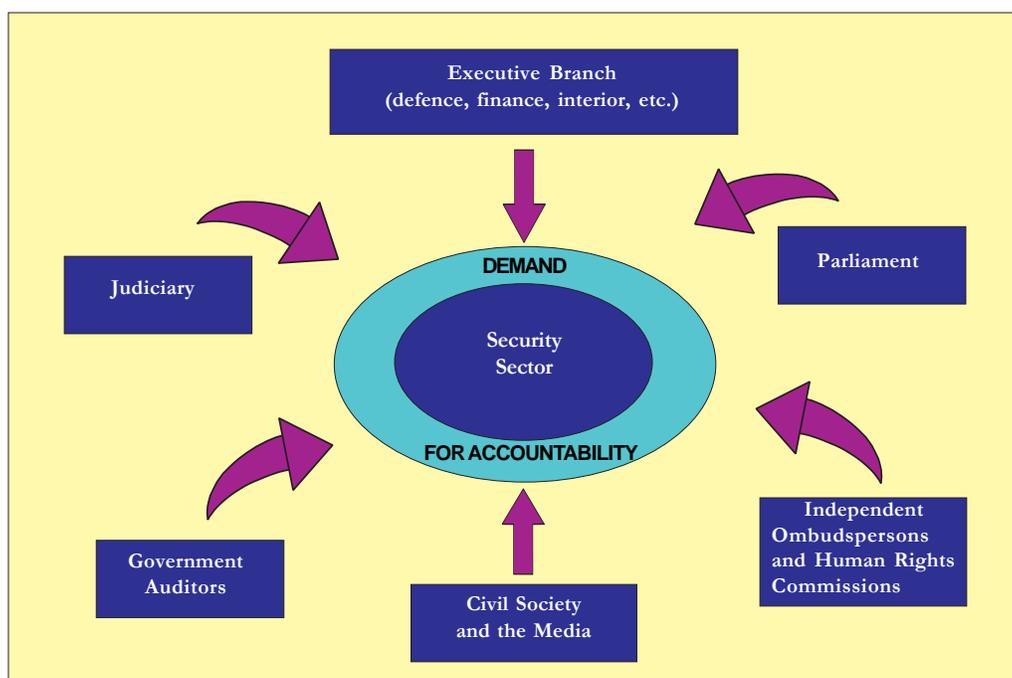
Source: Based on U. K., DFID, 2000; Nathan 1994; Bland 1999, and Legault 2001. Adapted for this paper.

Core Principles of democratic governance in the security sector

1. Ultimate authority on key security matters must rest with elected representatives;

2. Security organizations should operate in accord with international and constitutional law and respect human rights;

3. Information about security planning and resources must be widely available, both within government and to the public. Security must be managed using a comprehensive, disciplined approach. This means that security forces should be subject to the same principles of public sector management as other parts of government, with small adjustments for confidentiality appropriate to national security;

4. Civil-military relations must be based on a well-articulated hierarchy of authority between civil authorities and defence forces, on the mutual rights and obligations of civil and defence forces, and on a relationship with civil society based on transparency and respect for human rights;

5. Civil authorities, particularly elected representatives, need to have the capacity to exercise political control over the operations and financing of security forces;

6. Civil society must have the means and capacity to monitor security forces and provide constructive input into the political debate on security policy;

7. Security personnel must be trained to discharge their duties professionally and should reflect the diversity of their societies – including women and minorities.

Section 5: Policy Options

It is evident from the preceding discussions that the role of parliamentarians is central in the security dialogue not only in new and emerging democracies but also well-established Western democracies like Canada. This section examines policy options for the government of Canada and members of parliament in Canada and Africa.

To the Government of Canada

In section three of this paper, I demonstrated that civil wars have dangerous global consequences beyond the territories of the states within which they occur. For example, terrorists continue to target the United States and its allies and Canada's geographic location makes it a soft target for future terrorists attacks. To eliminate these potential threats to global security, the prudent policy choice seems to be one that is aimed at addressing the structural roots of conflict identified in Table 1. As Bishop Desmond Tutu once remarked, "external circumstances such as poverty and a sense of grievance and injustice can fill people with resentment and despair to the point of desperation."[37] Some suggestions to eliminating the structural root causes can take the form of protecting and deepening democracy in the developing world. Democracy is perhaps the best vehicle for establishing stability in multinational states, on the basis of which growth and development can occur. A leading advocate of promoting democracy once remarked

…democracies must vigorously mobilize their legitimate instruments of law enforcement to counter this growing threat to their security. But a more fundamental and enduring assault on international terrorism requires political change to bring down zealous, paranoiac dictatorships and to allow aggrieved groups in all countries to pursue their interests through open, peaceful, and constitutional means.[38]

All countries represented here are poised for transitions to or have embarked on democratic governance in their societies. Admittedly, the trajectory from autocracy to democracy is burdened with colossal difficulties. Developing countries in transition require support if they are to weather the difficult problems of growth and maturity. In my opinion, Canada's role can be located in its assistance to countries/societies in transition to democratic government. It is no coincidence that this dialogue is taking place in Canada. Over the years, through various bilateral and multilateral programs, Canada has supported the development and nurturing of democracy in Africa and other parts of the developing world. According to International IDEA, Canada, together with the "group of like-minded countries"[39] has been instrumental in exerting considerable influence on the international development policy debate by mainstreaming democracy-oriented policies into aid programmes.[40]

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[37] See Janet J. Jai, "Getting at the roots of terrorism", Christian Science Monitor, at http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/1210/p7s1-wogi.html

[38] Larry Diamond, Promoting Democracy in the 190s: Actors and Instruments, Issues and Imperatives, A Report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995.

[39] These countries include the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

[40] Peter Harris and Ben Reilly, eds., Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators, Stockholm:International IDEA, 1998, p. 380.

But more still needs to be done. In the relatively stable countries that have embarked on a course of democratization – Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Niger, Mali, South Africa to name a few, there are a number of policy options but the most urgent is political assistance.

Such assistance should be along the lines of what the Parliamentary Center has been doing in some of these countries over the years. Through its Africa Program and the current Africa – Canada Parliamentary Strengthening Program, the Center works with parliaments to strengthen systems of good governance and accountability including building capacity for effective parliamentary oversight. Parliament is able to assume this role because of linkages with other branches of governments. A note of caution is prudent at this juncture. Nurturing democratic government in different societies (notably multi-ethnic societies) with different social, political, and cultural factors entails careful appreciation of the initial disruptive effects on these societies. Under such circumstances, insisting on what Marina Ottaway has described as maximalist approaches inhibits the development of democratic governance culture in these societies. Although well intentioned, the examples of Mozambique, Angola, Cambodia, and Bosnia demonstrate to the international community that fragile infrastructure exists in these countries for wholesale approaches to democratic government.[41] Rethinking this approach, as Ottaway has suggested, is one of the burdens that donors such as Canada and the rest of the West can assume.

To be sure, the emerging democracies represented here are weak institutionally. The legislatures in these countries have limited autonomous power. This leads to "executive dominance" of governance. Therefore, parliaments need to be strengthened to play their oversight role properly and effectively. In this regard,

the capacity of key parliamentary committees needs to be strengthened through legislative assistance programs that will improve the legal and technical ability of legislators and staff to conduct research and write legislation thereby strengthening the committee system which is central to the proper functioning of parliaments. Currently, most parliamentary committees in the countries represented here have very limited to perform their functions. From Malawi to Mail, from South Africa to Senegal, parliamentary capacity is weak. Parliamentary capacity-building programs can indirectly impact parliament's ability to manage and resolve conflict. Greater oversight skills, for example, may assist parliaments in ensuring that resources are more fairly and efficiently distributed and that the needs of more vulnerable population such as women, the poor and minorities are taken into account.

As a broad policy option, particularly in countries that are fragile and emerging out of civil war, peacebuilding support is crucial. Through its peacebuilding unit, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has supported a number of initiatives in countries like Somalia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Burundi, Rwanda, etc. in their effort to consolidate peace. Laudable as they are, some of these initiatives have not achieved the desired results because they are mostly short-term. They are also targeted initiatives undertaken once hostilities die down. But the critical stage in a conflict cycle is the period between the initiation and escalation of hostilities – a dangerous period that sometimes needs a quick diplomatic and in most cases, military response.

The current thinking about peacemaking and peacebuilding in Africa is the call to support regional and sub-regional organizations by building their capacity to manage and prevent conflicts on the continent. Peacekeeping in civil war situations is a very dangerous task. Since the end of the Cold War,

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41 Marina Ottaway, "Promoting Democracy after Conflict: the Difficult Choices," International Studies Perspectives (2003) 4, 314-322.

the demand for peacekeeping operations has increased while the supply of both troops and money has shrunk dramatically. As it stands now, **the UN has neither the will nor wallet to effectively engage in peacekeeping**. Given that regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa have clearly demonstrated a will to intervene in their backyards (clear cases: ECOWAS' intervention in the numerous conflicts in West Africa and SADC's intervention in Lesotho in 1998), it might be cost-effective for donors such as Canada and the international community to help build the capacity of these organizations to mount the 'risky' peacekeeping operations that the international community is either unwilling or unable to undertake. ECOWAS is currently playing a key role in stabilizing Liberia, and so is the African Union in Burundi. The problem however is that these organizations are heavily under-resourced and usually operate on ad hoc basis. Both the AU and ECOWAS have mooted the idea of a stand-by force ready to deploy at short notices. This has not been possible mainly due to lack of resources. Investing in strengthening the capacity of these organizations will not only help in stabilizing the continent but will relieve donors of the burden of having to deploy peacekeepers each time a crisis emerges.

To Canadian Members of Parliament

As lawmakers in a country that is traditionally very peaceful and well respected around the world, Canadian members of parliament can play a leadership role in the search for peace around the world. Canada is a middle-power, but one that wields a lot of moral authority in the eyes of most countries. This quality puts Canada in a very suitable position to be a peace-broker.

Historically, Canada has enjoyed a reputation for diplomacy ever since Lester B. Pearson came up with a novel solution – peacekeepers – for the Suez Crisis in 1956. Through Lloyd Axworthy, Canada has played a leading role in the treaty banning Land Mines as well as the creation of a global court that

will try governments, guerrilla groups and others for war crimes. Parliamentarians can build on this success and get involved in mediating some of the difficult conflicts in Africa and other parts of the world. Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) – a unique network of over 1350 members of parliament from 105 elected national legislatures (including Canada), have engaged in a range of action-oriented initiatives that promote democracy, peace, justice and development throughout the world. PGA has over the past decade sent missions to Burundi, the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Tanzania etc. to mediate emerging crises. The role of Canadian members of parliament can be modelled along similar lines. Other specific roles envisaged for Canadian members of parliament include but are not limited to:

• Initiatives supporting the government agencies such as CIDA that are actively involved in the promotion of democracy abroad;

• Ratification of international treaties on conflict management – the Kimberley Process Certification scheme for "blood diamonds", the International Criminal Court etc;

• Initiatives guiding the operation of Canadian companies in conflict environments to ensure that their operations do not perpetuate conflict;

• Deepen engagement with African Parliaments to share experiences and lessons on the role and functioning of democracy in ensuring peaceful co-existence in society;

• Actively support the promotion of respect for human rights.

To African Members of Parliament

Finally, African members of parliament need to demonstrate commitment and leadership in the search for peace on the continent. They have a moral obligation in this regard. Their role vis-à-vis management and prevention of conflict is two-fold: ensure the entrenchment of the democratic culture

and put the entire security sector under democratic control. I begin with the security sector.

Parliamentarians and the Security Sector

The chart above indicates that when it comes to holding the security sector accountable, there are six different groups in society that hold such a responsibility. But as elected representatives, Parliamentarians are central and more important than all other facets of society. As already indicated, if the security sector is to be democratized, then ultimate authority on key security matters must rest with elected representatives.

Parliaments have to develop a comprehensive security policy as well as keep track of all security sector organizations. Parliaments can play two important roles in the security sector: (1) ensuring the non-interference of the security sector in domestic politics; and (2) the democratic control of the defence budget and policy.

First, non-interference in politics. There is the need for Parliament to ensure that the security sector, particularly the military, does not dabble in internal politics. This could be achieved by doing two interrelated things: (a) Professionalizing the security sector. This will involve the reorientation, reform, and capacity-building of the security forces through professional courses. Once professionalized, security forces need to be reoriented away from domestic politics towards those tasks for which they are most appropriate – ensuring the security of the nation and its citizens; and (b) It is not enough to professionalize and re-orient security forces. For any reorientation to be effective, Parliament must ensure that they are well resourced and adequately remunerated.

With regards to defence budgets, ideally, Parliaments have a constitutional responsibility in adopting and overseeing budgetary provisions relating to the

security sector. In many developing countries however, a culture of secrecy and unaccountable authority has come to shroud all discussions concerning defence budgets. The Executive, in the name of national security, has persistently excluded all major stakeholders, Parliaments inclusive, from participating in deliberations relating to defence budgets. These odds notwithstanding, there is a crucial role for Parliament.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union Handbook on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector notes that Parliament can play its oversight role of the defence budget by being attentive to security issues in the four main phases of the typical budget process:[42]

1. **Budget preparation**: though limited to the executive, parliament can contribute to the process through different formal and informal mechanisms;

2. **Budget-approval**: parliament should be able to study and determine the public interest and suitability of the money allocation and may in certain contexts complement security-related appropriations with specific guidelines;

3. **Execution**: parliament reviews and monitors government spending and may strive to enhance transparency and accountability;

4. **Audit**: parliament needs to scrutinize misuse of the money allocated by the government. In addition, parliament needs to periodically evaluate the entire budget and audit process to ensure accountability, efficiency and accuracy.

To ensure security within a state, democratic control of the security sector must go hand in hand with good governance. If democracy promotes peace as argued by the proponents of the Democratic Peace Thesis, then parliament has a role in ensuring the entrenchment of the democratic culture if societies are to remain peaceful. Parliament can do this by: (1)

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42 IPU-DCAF, Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, mechanisms and practices, Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 5, 2003, p. 124.

creating a space for dialogue; (2) strengthening the rule of law; and (3) increasing the participation of marginalized groups, especially women in the political process. I examine these issues in turn.

Space for dialogue

Conflicts occur in all societies and, so long as they are channeled into peaceful for a, they can sometimes spark positive social and economic reforms. Daily, all societies are confronted with conflicts of different kinds, but as clearly indicated earlier societies that subscribe to the democratic ethos are able to manage conflictual situations within their borders and beyond such that they are resolved peacefully. In Africa and other developing regions two things are common: (1) either the government, by its repressive nature, does not create the space for negotiation; or (2) it completely stifles dissent in a violent way. This leaves people with grievances with only one option – the use of force to make their case.

Parliament has a very important role to play in this regard. First, parliamentarians have a duty, as elected representatives of the people to ensure that a space is created at all levels of government for people to air their grievances. It is not enough to just listen to grievances; serious attention should be paid to those grievances no matter how trivial they may appear. Second, they have a duty in not only tolerating dissent, but also encouraging it and seeing it as a constructive way to move society forward. If the democratic thesis is anything to go by, once society begins to imbibe the democratic ethos of tolerance and freedom of opinion, societies will begin to see a decline in the resort to violence to resolve differences.

Strengthen the rule of law

The rule of law is an indispensable part of developing democracy and promoting human rights.

Strong legal regimes promote political stability and economic development and weak legal regimes promote injustice and instability. Political excesses and violations of human rights in a society without recourse to due process create resentment and eventually lead to conflict. In fact, the prospect of conflict in a country to a large extent depends on the fairness of the legal system.

Parliaments have an important role in ensuring the existence of a fair legal system. This will encompass a strong, independent legal framework with a judiciary that is independent of political influence; one that will administer the law fairly and justly. Confidence in the legal system has one key advantage: it will reduce the incentive for recourse to other methods of seeking justice that oftentimes lead to violence.

Increase the Participation of Minority Groups and Women in Political Dialogue

A political system that does not allow the full and equitable participation of citizens, especially when certain groups are systematically excluded, creates the conditions for conflict within a society. As Michael Brown notes, closed as well as authoritarian systems are likely to generate considerable resentment over time, especially if the interests of some ethnic groups are served while others are trampled.[43]

Brown's observation has great relevance for Africa, where most countries are made up of several hundreds (Nigeria has about 300 and Tanzania about 150 ethnic groups) of different ethnic and religious groups. In many African countries, as Raymond Copson observed, "[t]he tendency of many African governments to rule through arbitrary and repressive means has provoked violent and armed resistance in many instances."[44] Not only do African regimes

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[43] Michael E. Brown, "Introduction," in Michael E. Brown, ed., International Dimensions of Internal Conflict, Cambridge: MIT, 1996, p. 16.

[44] Raymond Copson, "Peace in Africa?" in Francis Deng and I. William Zartman, Conflict Resolution in Africa, Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institutions, 1996, p. 20.

sometimes cultivate a "politics of exclusion," they design mechanisms that stifle civil societies. The consequences of such vicious policies are the numerous killing fields on the continent.[45]

It is not only ethnicity and religion that constitute the basis of exclusion in most political systems. Women too are usually excluded. In most developing societies such as those in Africa, systemic gender biases in the form of customs, beliefs and attitudes as well as women's economic and domestic workloads play a significant role in limiting the participation of women in the political process. The end result of this exclusion is not necessarily conflict, but society is denied the very valuable and peaceful perspectives that women bring to the political process.

In this regard, parliament has a role in formulating policies that aim at ensuring a balance in participation in the political process; policies that are respectful of all ethnic and religious groups and are sensitive to the unique life experiences of women.

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[45] For a similar view, see Donald Rothchild & Letitia Lawson, "The Interactions Between State and Civil Society in Africa: From Deadlock to New Routines," in John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan, eds., Civil Society and the State in Africa, Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner, 1994, p. 271.

Conclusion and Issues for discussion

This paper demonstrated two things: first, democracy is central to conflict management; and second, democratization of the security sector is an important condition for reducing insecurity and consolidating democracy and good governance. In the first section, I examined the link between the security sector and conflict. In section two I looked at the nature and consequences of civil wars and highlighted the depressing regularity with which they erupt around the world. Notably, Africa is teetering on the edge of anarchy. Ignoring intra-state conflict in Africa and other parts of the developing world will not produce a world war but might well produce failed states, regional instability, the spread of disease and even safe havens for terror groups. As Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo recently noted in Liberia, "If there is no peace in Liberia, there will be no peace in West Africa, if there is no peace in West Africa, there will be no peace in Africa. And if there is no peace in Africa, there be no peace in the world."[46]

The third section focused on the democratic peace argument in which I demonstrated that the liberal nature of democracies, their institutional constraints and their norms provide the primary explanation of why democracies do not fight each other. While these benefits accrue to established democracies in the industrialized West, similar advantages elude the vast majority of people and states in the developing world. In this paper I suggested that one approach to bringing the benefits of democratic governance to conflict management is the extension of parliamentary control over the security sector. I

envisage that the norms and institutional advantages inherent in the democratic tradition will guide conflict management in these fragile states. But the suggestion of civilian democratic control of the national security apparatus in states with recent histories of civil war whips up a lot of trepidation among the military. In section four I showed that while this fear is not unexpected, there is a compelling case for democratizing the security sector. Section five posited recommendations on the role Parliaments can play in promoting the peaceful resolution of conflict especially in the newly emerging democracies.

To wrap up, I raise the following key questions for discussion:

In the last decade, the challenges to African security have been overwhelming. How best can African and Canadian parliamentarians work together on a strategy for African security?

Generally, military budgets in most developing countries are greater than the combined budgets for education, health, and agriculture. Admittedly, governments especially in countries with recent histories of civil war have a responsibility to ensure the security of their citizens and deter any rebellious movements. But no country has had peace by neglecting the basic needs of its people. This issue is complicated by the unwillingness of governments to disclose their security budgets. Given that national security tends to be the dominant concern of the executive, how can members of parliament in these

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46 See "Liberians Cheer Obasanjo", http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3200723.stm, September 2, 2003.

societies address the delicate issue of budgetary allocations for security?

Given the global impact of civil wars, especially their link to terrorism, how can African and Canadian members of parliament co-operate to counter terrorist threats?

Canada is a leader in democracy. What has been parliament's role in democratizing the security sector and in the defence budget process? Any useful lessons for emerging democracies?

Appendix

Conflict-torn Sub-Saharan Africa during the 1980s and 90s

	Central state seriously incapacitated during conflict	Central state relatively intact during conflict
Ongoing or recently-ended large scale conflicts	Liberia Rwanda Sierra Leone Somalia	Angola Burundi Sudan
Previous large scale conflicts	Chad Uganda	Ethiopia Eritrea Mozambique South Africa
New large-scale conflicts (began late 1990s)	Congo DRC Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire	
Smaller-scale more localized conflicts		Comoros Djibouti Mali Namibia Niger Senegal Zimbabwe
Political violence short of war Central African		Central African Republic Ghana Kenya Lesotho Mauritania Nigeria Togo

Source: Robin Luckham, Ismail Ahmed, Robert Muggah and Sara White, "Conflict and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: an assessment of the issues and evidence, **IDS Working Paper 128**.