

**Conflict Prevention and Resolution Forum: June 8, 2004**  
***Inclusion in Peace Processes: Who Should Have a Seat at the Table?***

**Notes from the comments of Paul J. Hare and William A. Stuebner**

**Ambassador Hare**, Executive Director of the US-Angola Chamber of Commerce and Special Envoy to the Angolan peace process, began by outlining the negotiations between Portugal, the colonial power, and three liberation movements that had led to the independence of Angola in 1975. After the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), backed by the Soviets and Cubans, prevailed in the ensuing conflict among the three liberation groups, the military forces of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) were effectively decimated and those of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which had been backed by the US and South Africa, retreated to the southern region of the country. With the decline of the Cold War and apparent military stalemate between the government and UNITA at the end of the 1980's, the stage was set for the first major international intervention to end the war in Angola. The mediators were the former colonial power, Portugal, and the respective patrons of the MPLA and UNITA, the Soviet Union and the United States. This mediation team succeeded in negotiating the Bicesse Accords in 1990.

Under the Bicesse agreement, Angola's first multi-party elections were held in 1992. Although they were deemed to be generally free and fair by the UN, UNITA claimed they were fraudulent. This led to collapse of the peace agreement and initiated another round of intense fighting between the two military forces. Despite this setback, Hare argued that the elections were a critical turning point for Angola because they further diminished the legitimacy of UNITA, led to the imposition of sanctions against UNITA by the Security Council, and provoked the establishment of diplomatic relationship between the US and the Angola.

Hare cited some of the major reasons why the international community continued to seek a peaceful resolution of conflict following the failed Bicesse effort. At the top of the list was the urgent need to curb the humanitarian crisis that was claiming 1000 lives per day. Angola was also viewed as the last remaining conflict area in the southern African region following the successful transitions to independence in Zimbabwe and Namibia and the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Finally, in view of Angola's abundant natural resources, including its rich oil reserves, the country could become an engine for economic growth if a peaceful resolution was achieved.

Hare described the next international intervention to end the war, which led to the signing of the Lusaka Protocol in 1994 and, then, its collapse in 1998. Various reasons were given why Lusaka failed. They included the lack of sufficient input by Angolan civil society in the negotiating process, inattention to the human rights abuses by both sides thus weakening the authority of the UN, and for those of UNITA persuasion that the Lusaka agreement unduly favored the Angolan government in its political provisions. For its part, the government attacked the UN for failing to disarm UNITA effectively as called for in the agreement.

Hare emphasized, however, that the principal reason why the peace process failed was Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's leader, and his overriding ambition to rule Angola. Savimbi was a charismatic, intelligent, ruthless and dominating leader who was constitutionally unable to play a secondary role to anyone else. During his last meeting with Savimbi in July 1998, Hare realized that the "game was up" and that the UNITA leader was not prepared to take any steps to reverse the downward spiral of the peace process and fulfill the remaining provisions of the Lusaka Protocol. Hare subsequently resigned his position and advised that he should not be replaced because it would send the wrong signal to Savimbi. He also argued against any renewal of dialogue with Savimbi until UNITA fulfilled the last provisions of the Lusaka Protocol relating to the extension of state administration into certain critical UNITA-controlled areas.

Hare said this position was controversial. There were many Angolans and others, such as the South Africans, who believe it was imperative to continue to reach out to UNITA in order to end the suffering in Angola. Hare felt this approach would serve to confer legitimacy to Savimbi, who had after all twice in the 1990's thwarted the achievement of peace in Angola, and that it would lead to another round of protracted and fruitless negotiations. In the end, Savimbi perished in a government ambush in February 2002, and the government and the remaining UNITA leadership in the field quickly agreed to the terms for ending the conflict, based on the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol.

In conclusion, Hare reflected that it could be argued that there should not have been the offer of a return to the negotiating "table" following the collapse of peace after the 1992 elections. Ironically, many lives might have been saved and Angola's resources conserved if the government and UNITA had simply fought it out to the end. Given the uncertainties of war and the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Angola, this would, however, have been a difficult path to follow and defend.

Finally, Hare addressed the issue of human rights in negotiations. He said that if human rights abuses had been used as a standard on who could participate in negotiations, the two sides to the conflict would have been disqualified from the outset. Both the government and UNITA recognized this fact of life. Indeed, during the Lusaka negotiations, the one point, that the parties could immediately and unconditionally agree to, was having a general amnesty for past crimes and abuses. Hare agreed with this position and thought a truth and reconciliation commission, or similar mechanism, would have been inappropriate to the Angolan situation. He said other ways would have to be sought to bring reconciliation and justice to Angola over the longer term.

**William Stuebner**, Executive Director of the Alliance for International Conflict Prevention and Resolution, shared his experiences working to end bloody conflicts in El Salvador and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He began by stating that one can't take a blanket approach to human rights as a basis for bringing parties to the table. Who you include depends on the short and long-term goals of the process. It is easy for people who haven't been directly involved in negotiations to take a "black and white" approach, but this can be counterproductive because it may force the inclusion of individuals who have

committed acts that are incompatible with the peace process, or force the exclusion of key players to resolving the conflict.

Mr. Stuebner chronicled the twelve-year civil war in El Salvador, which he identified as the most hard-fought civil war in recent Central American history. He explained that much of the peace process needed to occur away from the table because certain key players instrumental to securing peace could not be allowed to sit at the table due to their gruesome human rights records.

One such player Mr. Stuebner identified was former Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, whose dogmatic and charismatic oratory abilities led others to commit human rights violations. However, these very same qualities made D'Aubuisson extremely influential over right-wing El Salvadoran groups and allowed him to exert considerable control over potential spoilers to the peace process. Mr. Stuebner outlined unconventional methods used to convince the general to constructively participate in the peace process. D'Aubuisson was terminally ill and his strong religious beliefs as he approached death were a factor in securing his cooperation in keeping potential spoilers in check.

Mr. Stuebner also identified players such as General Mauricio Vargas as equally instrumental because he possessed both the trust of the military and had a comparatively clean human rights record so the guerillas were willing to negotiate with him. These types of individuals were the ones that needed to be at the table in official negotiations.

Mr. Stuebner also identified challenges in working with the US Congress, for example when Senate staffers made radical comments about how the government of El Salvador should be completely restructured. He used this point to emphasize the importance of a unified message from the US government about the importance of a peace process and how spoilers could come from unexpected directions.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mr. Stuebner acceded that without players such as Milosevic and Tudjman at the table, no agreements formed would hold water with the different ethnic populations. He also pointed out that these leaders almost never saw themselves as guilty of committing any sort of crime, and that these differing perceptions made behind the scenes negotiations of vital importance.

Mr. Stuebner also addressed the question of what to do when individuals don't comply with the peace process. He emphasized the importance of understanding certain cultural norms for effective negotiations, as well as of manipulating players at the table who stood to lose lucrative war-related benefits in the event of peace. The negotiators had to put themselves in the participant's shoes to see what motivated them. There needed to be a necessary, credible threat to ensure compliance with the peace process. Often the threat of public exposure was enough.

Mr. Stuebner argued that negotiators gave Milosevic too much leverage in the Dayton Accords, and only later realized that he was not a trustworthy player in the peace process. Mr. Stuebner also believes that the war crimes tribunal lost credibility with two of the

three ethnic groups involved because the tribunal regarded the international community as its clientele instead of the victims of war crimes and their families. He believed that because the Special Court in Sierra Leone was more attuned to the needs of its population as a constituency, it was more successful as an instrument for peace than either Rwanda's or Yugoslavia's international justice mechanisms.

Mr. Stuebner concluded by affirming the need for flexibility in peace processes and an understanding that there is no "one size fits all" formula for establishing a stable peace in regions of conflict with dramatically different social, cultural and economic concerns.