

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

CRISIS IN CONGO: THE SEARCH FOR AN INTERNATIONAL  
RESPONSE

Washington, D.C.

Friday, November 14, 2008

**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Moderator:**

MICHAEL O'HANLON  
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

**Discussants:**

HER EXCELLENCY FAIDA MITIFU  
Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the U.S.

ANTHONY GAMBINO  
Former USAID Mission Director, Democratic Republic of Congo

JAMES KIMONYO  
Ambassador of Rwanda to the U.S.

DAVID SMITH  
Deputy Director, United Nations Information Centre

\* \* \* \* \*

## PROCEEDINGS

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you for coming at this important time to discuss Congo and the crisis in the Congo. I'm Michael O'Hanlon from the Brookings Institution, honored to be moderating this panel with no particular claim to expertise, but a great interest in Congo as a former Peace Corps volunteer there, as was Anthony Gambino, who is also the author of the recent Council on Foreign Relations Report on Congo, now available; "Congo: Securing Peace, Sustaining Progress from the Council on Foreign Relations." You can get it from their website; you can also buy it in hard copy, and it's that nice intermediate size where it could be a stocking stuffer or a wrapped present for Christmas.

But you shouldn't wait, of course, until Christmas to read this report, and we are delighted that this panel has agreed to convene on such short notice because of the urgency of the situation in Congo. I think it's fair to say that along with the Horn of Africa, the Congo is the epicenter of conflict and of security worries in Africa today, the place from which a lot of immediate security concerns are present, but also where the region is clearly quite concerned and involved and has a lot at stake.

We know the Congo borders nine different countries that's a period of sort of international war, at the turn of the century just a few years ago involved several of these neighbors and where Rwanda in particular still has acute security concerns of its own right now.

And for that reason, we are honored to have the ambassadors of

both Congo and Rwanda speaking here today. What we'll do is begin with Tony's presentation, which will be a bit of an overview of the situation in Congo as well as some of the recommendations from his report.

Then, if she's able to make it by then, Ambassador Mitifu from Congo will speak second; if not, we'll delay her presentation until a little later in the panel.

After the Congolese ambassador, we'll hear from the Rwandan ambassador, James Kimonyo, who has agreed kindly to be part of this panel on short notice.

And then finally, David Smith, who is at the United Nations Office in Washington and with also considerable personal experience in Congo in various capacities, including in recent times I believe just through this summer having spent a good deal of time there on the ground.

I should say about Tony Gambino, my good friend and former Peace Corps colleague, that he was also the AID Country Director for Congo several years ago, and so his experience extends throughout the range of issues.

And Madam Ambassador, delighted to have you here. As you can see, we're all set to go. I will now turn things over to Tony. Each panelist is going to speak for about 10 minutes or so to get things going, and then we'll look forward to a discussion with you.

So without further ado, Mr. Gambino.

And I think some people will speak from their chairs; some may

speak from the podium. We'll mix and match. Thanks.

MR. GAMBINO: Mike, thank you very much, and it is a privilege to be on this panel to talk about this urgent situation (inaudible) the Congo. As we all know, the Congo crisis is deepening. We have gotten word since the final weeks of the -- (inaudible)

MR. O'HANLON: We should thank the Carnegie Endowment when I have a moment for providing the facility. We are delighted to be doing this through a Brookings and Council on Foreign Relations joint sponsorship with Carnegie blessing and help.

MR. GAMBINO: So now does this work? Can you hear me? Thank you. We all know that the Congo crisis is deepening. On top of the humanitarian emergency that's been going on now for roughly 17 years, we've seen over the last few months displacement of another quarter-million or more people. Many of those people cannot be reached by international efforts because of the ongoing fighting occurring.

In my view, it is only the international community with the lead of MONUC, the UN force, the peacekeeping force in the Congo, that can take the necessary actions to protect civilians in Eastern Congo and create the conditions for a return to peace. The mandate of the UN peacekeeping force is up for renewal at the end of this year, but urgent action is required now to end the violence and instability. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has urgently requested 3,000 additional military and police personnel for MONUC.

In the last few days we've gotten very good news, I think, about the consideration of this request by the UN Security Council: First, the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown publicly endorsed this request announcing Britain's support for it just a few days ago; and yesterday, Jendayi Frazer, the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa of our government, of the United States government, also publicly endorsed this request that we have two of the five permanent members of the Security Council now endorsing this request. I am told that there are still some states on the Security Council who have questions, but I am hopeful that the Security Council will be seized by the urgency of this and move forward soon.

To avert regional war, response to the immediate humanitarian needs of hundreds of thousands of displaced Congolese and to secure Eastern Congo, MONUC needs to be strengthened. But what should their mission be? Eastern Congo is buried in multiple layers of violence and exploitation. The present crisis of displacement, humanitarian emergency, massacres, looting, fighting is, of course, the result between -- of a struggle between the Congolese government and the CNDP force led by Laurent N'kunda.

But that crisis grows out of and is related to the horrific abuses committed over the last 14 years by a militia group now called the FDLR. And that group is led by Rwandan Hutus who were involved in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. So that layer of conflict sits on top of the fact of the

Rwandan genocide and its spill over into Eastern Congo in 1994.

Finally, it can't be forgotten that under that layer is another one of ethnic enmity and conflict in Eastern Congo that predates the Rwandan genocide. In my view, though, there is a bedrock issue, a fundamental problem underneath all these layers which is where the international community has to start to respond to the crisis in the Congo and that is the inability of the Congolese army to establish and maintain control over territory.

Unfortunately, the Congolese army has shown itself incapable of fighting effectively and very abusive towards its own population, toward Congolese civilians. Recent reports from Goma demonstrate yet again that the army has been looting, raping, murdering rather than fighting, and this has caused terrible problems for the UN force, for MONUC, because MONUC's specific mandate right now is to function in the Congo in support of the Congolese army. In my view this is a fiction; it has to end, and MONUC soldiers, not the Congolese army, needs to be given the mission to secure Eastern Congo and protect the civilian population.

Many people talk about the need for a political settlement, and that is certainly part of what is required. And they talk about discussions in particular between the President of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, and the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. We certainly need these actions by international actors, but we also need to recognize that President Kabila commands an army that just right now is incapable of implementing any part

of an agreement, including the one that President Kabila signed with Rwandan President Kagame one year ago in Nairobi.

In that Nairobi Agreement, the Congolese government promised to work to end the threat of the FDLR; however, again it is just the facts that the Congolese army has taken no effective actions against the FDLR in the intervening time.

African and European leaders have been discussing also the possibility of some kind of multinational force to come in and support MONUC. It should be remembered that the Europeans already have done this in the Congo when a few years ago they deployed a force into the Congolese Province of Ituri, particularly to protect the population of the City of Bunya. In my view, such a force appropriately led and with the right mix of troops from Africa, perhaps from Europe, could greatly help in solving the problems of Eastern Congo.

With MONUC given a clear mission to stabilize Eastern Congo and provided with the resources they need to accomplish this, the U.S. should also think about providing intelligence and logistics assistance to this operation. The additional troops for MONUC, the 3,000 requested by the Secretary General, will given them the enhanced capacity necessary to do the following: Once surprise attacks on concentrations of rebel militias, disrupting their operations, denying them access to mining sites, and, very importantly, protecting concentrations of civilians in both urban and rural areas, a rapidly deployed multinational force could provide the enhanced

capacity to work on these issues as well as a buffer to help avert regional conflict, secure more of Eastern Congolese territory, and end the humanitarian crisis by establishing humanitarian quarters and protecting concentrations of displaced people.

We need to remember that just two years ago the situation was much more stable. MONUC had brought Eastern Congo under control in mid-2006 when the Congolese held elections. MONUC, given the necessary mandate and resources, could do it again. In 2006 what happened? MONUC had the specific mission to guarantee that the election succeeded. North Kivu, where I was based during the electoral period, was not completely secure, but it was calm and N'Kunda's troops were not fighting. Actually, many were deserting his movement at that time. MONUC soldiers were deployed throughout North Kivu in advance of the election. They'd made it clear to N'Kunda's forces and other rebel leaders that interference in the electoral process would not be tolerated.

Furthermore, the Congolese army agreed that their greatest service to the nation during the electoral process would occur if they stayed in their barracks, and they did so. So on election day, July 30, 2006, imagine this: In exactly the same area where all these horrific events are occurring, there was not a single incident of violence. Nowhere in this part of North Kivu was there violence just two years ago.

Why? MONUC turned out in force. There were tanks clearly present on the outskirts of Goma, patrols aggressively moving throughout



the region. This strategy worked, Congo held relatively successful democratic elections, the first since winning independence in 1960.

If these steps aren't taken, no political agreement will hold as long as Eastern Congo with all its rich mineral resources remains lawless. The incentive for renegade groups like N'Kunda's, the controlled territory and negotiate from positions of strength are just too great. So I think it is critically important to get the sequence of actions right: First, MONUC, hopefully aided by some kind of multinational force, needs to be strengthened so they can secure Eastern Congo. As MONUC does this, aggressive action needs to be taken against the FDLR, including efforts to destroy as much of the leadership of that organization as possible.

However, in my view, MONUC should not deploy as aggressively against Congolese forces, including N'Kunda's; rather, their efforts should be simply to assert control over areas warning various armed groups that they need to accept this, and if those groups don't, then MONUC and NEMNF must be prepared to act militarily.

At the same time, the Secretary General's special envoy, Nigerian President Obasonjo, and other diplomats need to be aggressive in working with Congolese President Kabila and other leaders in the region to make sure that steps are taken to support this return to peace. Only when it is clear to N'Kunda and other militia leaders that they can't control territory anymore, then can processes of discussion be renewed. All these groups signed an agreement in Goma earlier this year to come together and work

for peace. We need to get back to that, but that will not occur until the military steps are taken.

As part of that discussion, in my view, an elite Congolese force should be formed with training coordinated by MONUC. This force, once trained which will take time, should have the initial mission of co-deploying with MONUC and then after a time should be able to protect Congolese territory on its own. This group must be ethnically mixed to reflect the complexities not just of Eastern Congo but the entire Congo, and such a force must be vetted so that it does not contain people credibly accused of human rights abuses. That would rule out, among others, N'Kunda himself.

So it is important for the international community to accept two things: No. 1. The set of actions that I have set out are the minimum required to give the Congo a chance at stabilizing and moving forward

No. 2. This process will take time. Assuming that the Security Council approves the request to reinforce MONUC sometime this month, that force won't be in place until February or March of next year. Even if a multinational force is deployed before the end of the year, it certainly would be initially occupied with establishing humanitarian corridors, protecting the delivery and provision of urgent released supplies, and basic military functions to begin to secure the province. Securing Eastern Congo, then, will take a good part of next year, maybe most of the year.

Effective training of the proposed elite Congolese force, initial training takes roughly a year under the most optimistic scenarios, and the

training can't be shortened. If it is, it simply is not effective, therefore that force won't be ready to co-deploy with MONUC until late 2009 or early 2010.

It certainly wouldn't be ready to protect Congolese territory without outside assistance before 2011, and then we need to remember the Congolese society is scheduled to have its next round of presidential elections in 2011. I am told that the Congolese political class in Kinshasa are already beginning to doubt that these elections will be organized and take place. Yet we know that second elections in new democracies are at least as important as the first ones. So if we are serious about seeing Congo stabilize and move forward, these steps must be taken, including support by MONUC and other international actors to these elections in 2011.

Finally, think about another state in Africa much smaller than the Congo but one that was facing a similar challenge just eight years ago. Sierra Leone was ravaged by militia groups, the state was in collapse, violence, it looked hopeless. The British intervened in 2000, stabilized the situation, a UN force came in. Eight years later Sierra Leone still has plenty of problems, but people who follow the country now are clear that the war is over. The war is behind the people of Sierra Leone. They can work on the peaceful issues they face regarding economic development.

The same thing can happen in the Congo. The violence that we are seeing right now, although the Congo is a huge state as big as the United States east of the Mississippi, actually is occurring within a region

roughly the size of Sierra Leone. So this can be managed. We can look forward to a future in a few years -- it'll take some time -- but perhaps by 2011, 2012, when we can say the war is over in the Congo, in the Congo these people can move forward peacefully in terms of economic and political development.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Tony, for a very sobering yet very hopeful presentation.

Before we proceed to Ambassador Mitifu, I should invite anybody who would like to sit up front, there are four or five seats up here. Of course, you're welcome to stay where you are as well, and thanks to all the folks helping bring in additional chairs.

We're now going to hear from Ambassador Mitifu of Congo, and then Ambassador Kimonyo of Rwanda, and then David. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: Thank you very much. I would like first to express my gratitude to the organizers of this panel. Indeed the current humanitarian crisis in North Kivu today reminds us of the crisis in Congo that goes back to 1996, if I can say so, and this crisis has caused close to five million lives. And, unfortunately, it doesn't seem to fade that much. The international community, the press, it hasn't gotten that much coverage, if I can say so.

This war that was imposed upon the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has many layers, like Tony has just stated. And it

has many facets in terms of the level of violence. We're talking about the death of life -- the loss of life, close to five million so far. We cannot forget the issue of the sexual violence demonstrated against women, and it has been systematic. Rape has been used as a weapon of war in the DRC.

We cannot talk about it without talking about the plundering of the mineral resources, the mineral resources in the DRC which are supposed to be a blessing for the people of the DRC. Some might say that it has become a curse for the people of the Congo since the minerals themselves have become the driving force behind the war.

I can remember a documentary put out by the Japanese, in Japanese TV station. They went in Eastern Congo -- this was during the war, I believe it was in 2002

-- and they made this documentary, and they put out a map of Congo and where all the mineral concessions were. And at that time we had a dozen or maybe close to 20, 20-some arms groups, and everywhere, whether they were foreign forces or local armed groups, everywhere there were mineral concessions each mineral concession was controlled by armed groups, whether they were foreigners or whether they were local militia groups.

So this layer is very important in terms of why the war continues in the Congo today. We can dress it with different types of clothes and costumes, but the bottom line is the minerals themselves. And we've seen what difference that made in the case of Sierra Leone, for instance, and Liberia. With the Kimberley Process, the Kimberley Process had helped at

least to cut down the plundering of diamonds. In the Congo, the Kimberley Process even has helped to increase the revenue in terms of diamonds.

So which means that part of the recommendation I am going to make without repeating everything that Tony -- I think Tony gave a good presentation, -- I will focus more on problems and the recommendation. And part of the recommendation I would like to make to this audience today is to support efforts in Congress that certify minerals coming out of the Eastern Congo, because those who were at the base, the driving force behind the N'Kunda -- behind even the foreign countries involved in the war in the Congo -- is still the minerals. So such support of certification can be extremely helpful and can cut down on the rape of women, on the mutilation of the population in Eastern Congo.

The other issue is really what I would call the lack of a strong political will from the international community, and in this regard I think Tony alluded to that. We saw what happened during the elections. The people of the Congo, 26 million of them, registered to vote their leaders. It was a way for the statement that they were sending to say no to violence and no to war. And we saw what happened. People walked 10 kilometers, 20 kilometers to go vote.

What is going on today is really a slap in the face of the people of Congo. It's a slap in the action that they took to decide finally the fate of their country. It's up to the people of the Congo to sanction their leaders. They have a mandate. If they don't fulfill the mandate, then during the next

election they can decide who they can choose. It's not through guns that -- I think they say no to guns with the past elections.

The other problem in the Congo -- we go back again several years back -- has been the issue of impunity. The people of the Congo wanted to make again a statement: Nobody to come to power with their hands full of blood. And what we have witnessed has been you pick the gun, you create an armed group, you fight the government, then you can sit at the negotiating table as equals with the government. The statements that the people have sent, they have sent a statement that said no to that. Nobody should access to power through guns. It has to be through elections.

And the democracy in the Congo is still a fragile one. The challenge is great. We can go back to the history of the Congolese armed force. We can go back to Leopold, King Leopold II, and we go through the colonial times with the Belgium and the post public . It was as if the Congolese armed force were trained to mistreat its people. That has to change, and this is why the idea with the integration of the army has been to have a profile of who should be in the Congolese armed force. But the challenge has been also in the name of peace with all the multiplicity of the armed groups. Each armed group wants to be part of this integrated Congolese force, whether you are illiterate or whether you are literate, everybody wants to be part of it. If you were a small commander of a small militia group, you want to be an officer even if maybe you don't have the

requirement.

But this again is a problem because there hasn't been enough mobilization of -- I'd say of the mobilization of resources that can allow the creation of structure that can absorb those who cannot be qualified to be part of the new Congolese army. So this is where maybe the assistance or development comes in, because when there is sufficient assistance or development for the DRC, that' can open the doors to create structures, to create vocational schools or to create, you know, any kind of structure that can absorb those -- at least they see that they have an alternative, and that the sole alternative to earn a living is not being part of an armed group but whether there is something else that someone can do and that you can still earn a living by doing other activities.

The next problem has been also neighboring countries who have benefitted so much with the war in the Congo that it's very difficult for them to stay away from it, so which means that they have proxies inside the Congolese territories who basically continue to help them benefit from the plundering of the resources. Again, this can be taken care of if there is some kind of specification of all the minerals that are being plundered in the eastern part of the Congo.

But also, the countries that transform these minerals are also as guilty as those who are plundering this -- I mean the middlemen, if I can put it so. We know some of the industries that use the minerals. At one point the price of colton went down, which was more or less beneficial, but today



it's fasteries that is the money-making in the region.

And all the neighboring countries if they really have the political will to see the violence end in the Congo, there is something that each of us we can do to put an end to the violence, because Congo's minerals is for everybody as long as we operate in a legal framework. We can see how some of the provinces where we don't have that much violence, the economy has begun to thrive because at least they are operating in a legal framework.

We have the mining reviews that have been going on. All this is within the efforts to make sure that the Congo is benefitting from the revenue from its resources. So what the government of Congo want the most is -- particularly the people of the Congo want the most is peace, is the respect that they deserve by just going and voting for their leaders, for saying no to violence, and no to impunity, because if they continue this trend of constantly negotiating with people who have taken on -- why did we have elections? Why did the international community invested so much money? These were the most expensive elections. Why did we invest in that if we are going to continue to keep a blind eye on some of the exaggerations and scandals that are going on in North Kivu.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much, Ambassador Mitifu.

Ambassador Kimonyo.

AMBASSADOR KIMONYO: Thank you so much, Mike, for giving

me this opportunity. I prefer to speak while standing. I feel more comfortable from a governor who used to speak in public while standing, and it's always my pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to the distinguished audience like this of scholars and diplomats and forticians on such a sensitive issue, and it's a very good combination of such as who discusses the facts and, at times, we tend to be diplomats on some issues and so I prefer to speak very briefly and allow a more, much more intellectual discussion.

And I want to focus on three issues: The origins of the conflict; the efforts made to address these challenges; and probably touch on the way forward. First and foremost, I want to thank Tony for the wonderful, incredible, this activity he have done on this topic, and I'm very sure many, many people will be using your discussion to address some of the issues and some concrete recommendations made in your report are very, very important to all of us.

As you understand, every time the Congo crisis, especially this time Congo crisis is discussed, we want to compensate, and understandably, we want to compensate because of what happened in 1994. The people, the criminals who killed our people in 1994, they crossed the border and went to the DRC.

Some of them went to Europe, some of them are in U.S., but those that went to DRC and reorganized, rearmed, and redefined their original agenda and they are determined to kill people again. They have been killing

people in the Congo; they have attempted a number of times to come back in Rwanda and to kill more people. They have raped women in the Congo. They have caused misery to Congolese and the people who lives in Eastern Congo.

Now, there are a number of layers and facets and issues that are raised in terms of discussing and defining this problem. It's a complex problem, but one of the many issues that we should be addressing and I think is discussed in Tony's report is the fact that you needed to really deal with the core issue. The core issue is armed Rwandan militias living in the Eastern Congo. Much as we can discuss the possibility of people taking advantage of that situation and the plundering the resources the DRC, it is very important in the first place understanding the core issue, address the core issue, and attack all of the issues that are related to that core issue.

And it is a very, very common understanding from the UN perspective, from the regional perspective, from the bilateral perspective. Here I mean between Rwanda and the DRC. This is our common problem. And so if you address this core issue, and according to the statement issued by the State Department just recently, it says the confidence between CNDP and the Congolese government is just a detraction from the core issue, which is the FDLR, the Rwandan militias that kill people in Rwanda and continue to kill people in the Congo. So if we have that core understanding as the region, as the international community, as UN, to the extent that United Nations Security Council on 14th of March they came up

with a resolution, it seems, therefore that clearly defined the steps to be taken to dismantle this core group.

Other protocols were assigned in that regard. You recall the Lusaka Agreement, the Pretoria, the Nairobi communique just recently in November last year, and even this year. We have had numerous resolutions and protocols in accord to address the issue of FDLR, one of the militias present in Congo.

Now, it's very unfortunate is the frustration is the fact that these people are in the Congo. If you want to address this issue you have to be able to deal with the Congo government -- Congolese government. I think what the ambassador said which is very important is to really sustain the international community to help the government to get rid of these forces.

Let me -- one assumption, and I'm sure people will raise the question during the discussion, people says -- and I think the ambassador said, the issue of proxy having relationship with the people in the Congo -- I'm assuming I'm talking to most of you who are a scientist . That is -- assumptions. I'm a scientist, by the way. Assume Rwanda has interest in Congo and so supports CNDP, this is an assumption, because it's in the media, it's everywhere, and we strongly deny that. But it is thereon the pretext of the presence of FDLR.

CNDP, assuming that even if they have in their -- have said they have another agenda, assuming they have another agenda but they use FDLR as a pretext, if MONUC is complaining at FDLR, if we all of us,

including other partners who are complaining about FDLR, why don't we find a solution to this problem? And then once you are done with that, then we want to hear what Rwanda will say, if FDLR is no longer there, what Rwanda going to say?

They're going to say: I'm protecting my people because they are being killed by FDLR. What is he going to say after they have dismantled this force? If people going to plunder the resources on the pretext of fighting FDLR, remove FDLR. Good news is the fact that UN, AU, the region, all the partners in the region have proved to be unable to deal with this very force that is creating this havoc and misery in the Congolese people, and causing security threats to Rwanda.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I think if you look at this very issue, then you understand the origins of this conflict that has brought in other forces, also, and I have just mentioned the effort that have been made to address the issue. The Congolese government is signatory, the UN is part of that, the EU is part of that, everybody is part of the solution. The missing link here is the action. These thugs in the forest , they are armed, they rape, they kill, they don't care who are you, who you are, they just kill you. So once we bring together all these efforts and deal with the FDLR, I don't remember to the fact that the Congolese government has consented to the same defeat , and this is the group that has existed in the Congo for the last 14 years before Rwanda came up.

This is the group that killed Americans in the green forest in

Uganda. Three of them are facing charges in the U.S. These are the guys who openly said they killed people in Burundi. Some of them are enjoying a good life in Western capitals, but having said that, I think we need to look at the way forward as Tony mentioned and I think the ambassador, a little bit of some of the aspects of the way forward.

And I think one of the way forward is to implement the contents of all protocols and the ACOL Agreement, and the corrections immediately, because in the process of escalating the conflict in Eastern Congo, you are building the capacity of these armed groups because they take advantage of the situation to get to the arms, to get new weapons. We have incidences of people who are supplying weapons to the FDLR in their different derivations.

So if we don't implement the contents of the protocols with the immediate effect, then we are likely to face much more bigger problem.

No. 2, I think it's very, very important -- and this has been in a number of arguments with the DRC and a different arrangement including the Tripartite Plus which is backed by the U.S. government to establish the diplomatic relations among these countries and have these kinds of discussions going on, but I just want to make sure the audience understands that there are two governments -- the ambassador here and talking as a meeting. And I think as I speak today, the Foreign Affairs Minister from DRC, and she's very into a way to try and find a way forward.

But in a more concrete way, this is how it goes through much

channels, strengthen to be able to address these issues before they turn into conflict. And, of course, as the ambassador said, and I agree with her that we need once we are going to address the issue of the militias -- I'm talking about the foreign militias present in the Congo -- and then address the address the issue of the militias and the groups present in the Congo as nationals, the CNDP group included, engage in the more useful activities, regional, infrastructure, political, economic activities, because let me point out one last thing.

It's important to understand that Rwanda well came from what we think is important; why we are an East African community; why are we joining the Commonwealth? If the DRC, if the Eastern Congo is stable, is prosperous, Rwanda is the only country in the world that will benefit first, but the other countries who are just next door, if there are shopping malls, if they are mining, if there's a first country to benefit, it's Rwanda.

So in my view, I'd benefit more if we have stability of benefitting in a situation where you go and dig and get one diamond there, and one there, and one there, and one on the border there, but is the situation is stable, the administration is established there I can go, as a Rwandan businessman, apply for a license, and do transparent business and benefit to all.

Even I would speak now, despite the crisis that is going on, people are still trading because there is no way out. The Congolese in the Bucov, in the government, they want to trade with Rwandans and Rwandans want to do so. So I think it is in our best interest to have a stable Congo, and for

that matter a stable Eastern Congo, so that you can benefit. We cannot benefit in the situation of a crisis, as other people may think.

So I think the way forward is to create a regional infrastructure for this region of business commissions, and the drains commission is to be able to generate opportunities and prosperity for their people, for people in the region and probably the entire continent.

So I'll end up my discussion there and allow for questions, but this is what I think it should be done in terms of addressing this issue. But I think time in this issue is very, very important. I thank you so much for attention.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, very much.

David?

MR. SMITH: Good morning, everyone. I hope you can hear in the back because there's nothing more frustrating when I come to a meeting like this, when you can't hear in the back.

First of all, thanks to Brookings and thanks especially to Mike. Mike, as we know, is a very brave spirit, and I think anybody on the morning of a major financial crisis meeting at the White House, who he dares to hold a meeting on Congo and dares to suggest that Tony's rather extraordinary report -- it's a wonderful report -- should be a stocking stuffer is a brave fellow. So thank you, Mike, for doing this. And, look, we've been rewarded with a terrific crowd.

Just so that everybody understands, I represent the Secretary General here in Washington. I shall be leaving here to go and see him



because he's coming into town a bit later for the G-20 tomorrow, tonight and tomorrow, but for 30 years I was a foreign correspondent, and you can probably tell I'm a Brit. I used to work for ITN all across our world, in the late '70s was based in Africa for ITN, News IEA under Mbutu in those days.

And earlier this year the UN Secretariat this summer asked me to go to Congo, look at our operations there with a fresh pair of eyes and, hopefully, come up with some thoughts about how we dealt with what we were trying to achieve, how far we'd come, and how far we had to go. That, by the way, is Julius Nurrari, who was a great African statesman of my time when I lived in Africa, and every time I think of Congo I think of that, how far we have come because we have come a long way, but how far we have yet to go.

Let me say to you first and foremost -- and this is very much as a journalist -- but going back to Congo this summer, as a UN officer I've been to meetings at the White House and in the Congress, when I first joined with a wonderful American called Bill Swing, who ran the UN's operation in Congo. Ambassador Swing is a legend at the State Department, and he was a wonderful partner. And I've heard Bill Swing roll out those statistics. This is three or four years ago: 7 million displaced, 4 million dead, 1.5 million HIV. And when it came to rape we all knew that we couldn't put a number on it.

Going to Congo this summer, I have to tell you there are people who stick in my mind as -- there's a mother at the UN Compound in

Kinshasa who has lost her husband, who's lost her parents, who's lost four out of her five children. I get to Goma on UnAIR, which is just about the only air service that really works is the UN's. It should be said it was a fairly rusty soviet helicopter, and my guys in the Soviet Union has taught me to go white knuckle when you ride their helicopters.

We get to Goma and there are families pitched at the edge of the runway. And when I asked who are they, I learned that they are the families of the Congolese army which has moved into Goma in recent weeks. And I don't know about you, ladies and gentlemen, but I think of Napoleon, I think of camp followers, and I realize quite starkly what we're dealing with here.

We then go to the IDP camps all around Goma, and you see hundreds of thousands of people for whom the only imperative is survival and who, frankly, have nothing left to lose but their misery. And then one day you go to the hospital in Goma, the city hospital, and you discover that there are 128 victims in the rape unit, many of them requiring surgery. And if that's happening in the urban environment of Goma, then you know what's happening out in the bush defies those numbers. And it hardly -- it hardly bears thinking about.

At the same time you go and spend a day, as I did, with a South African unit who were literally sitting in a valley between N'Kunda's militia, who are sort of tending cattle and looking down on the UN peacekeepers. And on the other side is a group -- I think it was toward the Mai Mai on the other side of the valley, who are also looking down on the UN unit, and the

unit is South African.

And, forgive me, but I lived as a journalist in the bad days in South Africa in the late '70s and early '80s, and thereon presented with a Black South African colonel and a White adjutant, and the two of them are telling me that we know about fighting to rebuild our country. We know about dreadful governments and what it does to people. We have experienced this, and that's why we're here. And I have to tell you, my heart lifted because the thought of South African units -- and when you go on and you see the Indians, and the Pakistanis, and all the way from Uruguay and Latin America, the Uruguayans, you realize how the world is trying and how the UN on one level is doing what we'd all like our UN to do,

However, there are issues on that, and the issues facing the largest peacekeeping force in the world are very serious ones. I'm delighted to hear Tony say: Get behind the UN. And hopefully, the United States and my own country Britain are going to do something in the Security Council, but I have to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, on October the 3rd -- that's six weeks ago when this crisis was already well underway -- the special representative, Bill Swing's successor, was in New York, Alan Doss. He went to the Security Council, and he made very specific requests. He didn't ask for the moon, he asked for 3,000 troops. He asked for two battalions, one mobile for obvious reasons given what's going on, the other like infantry, again pretty obvious.

He asked for Special Force units, given what Tony said about

trying to create an elite Congolese union that can get out into the bush and deal with the people on the other side. You'll understand why. He asked for aviation support and he asked for engineering. He asked for reconnaissance six weeks ago.

The Secretary General has followed up, and I hope you all saw that Ban Ki-Moon this week was warning of the human tragedy that is well underway now, but equally the human catastrophe that awaits unless we move.

I'd like to think, and I hope Tony's right, that when my government in London and Gordon Brown says that he is ready to get behind this and make it happen, I'd like to think it will happen. But I think we need to recognize the clock has already started running, and it has been several weeks.

This is a dilemma of reconfiguration. What you see in the UN force do in recent days is move thousands of troops to Goma and draw the line, which obviously has to be the way to go. However, that means moving from places where there are also problems, in Turing , Katanga, Orientale. And the dilemma of reconfiguration for me is crystallized by those fellows from South Africa, is that if you pull them back from sitting in the valley between two enemies, then your forward deployed military in a sense can destabilize the bush. The advances you have made you lose because you reconfigure in a way that deal with the process of the hour maybe rather than that which is truly important.

I'd like us all to feel when we look at what the UN's trying to do, the scale of this operation, I'm sure we've all heard, you know, what's the Nurope without roads? Or that North Kivu is the size of the Benelux countries. The one that always gets me is Ituri and the Kivus are the size of France and Germany. Well, I come from a very small island that lives very close to France and Germany, and just imagine. I say this because it's not just about peacekeeping on that scale.

One soldier in the Kivus for every thousand people. It's also the fact that there's the rule of law, one of the things that I hadn't realized until I spent some time in Congo with the UN this summer is that we're working around the clock on trying to build the rule of law.

Madam Ambassador has a wonderful point about impunity. Impunity has to end, but it will only end if, for example, you get mobile courts out into the bush to bring some of the bad guys to justice, because it will be only then that people will see, however symbolically they may be at the beginning -- and you know how symbolic that may seem, bringing people to justice through mobile courts, for example, would send a powerful message to what's really going to happen here and to the community at large.

What's the problem? Madam Ambassador, I think we have 350 miles of paved road in the entire country. Forgive me, it's something like that. It's getting there that's the problem.

There's the humanitarian. All the time you have to make military decisions based on providing humanitarian corridors to keep people alive.

And, finally, there's demilitarization, a process that had been underway and had been making some success until recent events.

Ultimately, ladies and gentlemen, I don't think it's about 17,000 peacekeepers or 170,000 peacekeepers; it's about a political solution, and I was very struck by going across the border into Rwanda with the special representative in June for a day at the Peace Conference that brought together special envoys from Tinguili and Kinshasa. I was -- I have to share with you, ambassadors, you could feel in the room how far we still have to go in terms of coming together. It was very evident, and I felt ignorant about this, that your two countries still have to work together and have a way to go in terms of building that dialogue.

But it was very striking it was taking place, and it was taking place under our auspices, and I would argue that it's certainly going to be the UN in the region that's going to have the credibility to bring two countries together and other neighbors, who as we know have behaved with their own agendas. So there's a peace process.

Listen, the UN force -- I hate using acronyms, by the way, apart from the UN; I think our eyes glaze over when we start talking about the acronyms in the UN system -- the UN peacekeeping force is the only force truly on the ground that is protecting civilians. And I would urge give us what we need. Everybody recognizes the significance of the Congo. As Madam Ambassador spelled out, everybody recognizes what the bottom line is here, you know. That mineral colton I think goes into every cell phone

in our world. Congo has two-thirds of it, we believe.

However, the agenda must not be confused by turning on the UN. Without the UN, this country could never have emerged from the horrors of its civil wars in the last 10 to 12 years. Without the UN, that mother would not have a future, let alone those rape victims. Without the UN, where would we be in Congo? And I would argue, seeing as what we've raised in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and elsewhere, there are many success stories here. What we need is support, and what we need is the Security Council to act.

And, quite frankly, we need Tony, my foreign secretary from Britain, and the French foreign secretary maybe not just visit the region but also to say we are prepared now to step in and provide the kind of short-term help that the UN operation needs.

Remember, UN peacekeeping is only ever an interim measure. It can only ever be a bridge to a better future, and it should be. And having seen it for myself, I am aware that we don't want to be there forever; we do want to move forward now; we do want to rescue this rather desperate situation that has emerged in the past few weeks, so give us the support.

Thank you very much.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, David, and everyone. We have about a half hour now for discussion. What I'd like to do is request that because of the limited time and the very good turnout that people be as specific as possible with a question. Pose it, please, to one person, if you can, and please pose it as a question rather than a comment, and I will

exercise my role of moderator, if need be.

We'll start with the gentleman in the back, and I think there are microphones that can be passed around.

MR. KABANGU : My name is Kamba Kabangu. I am the President of the Washington Office of the (inaudible). I want just to make a point.

MR. O'HANLON: A quick one.

MR. KABANGU: Quick one. The international community is responsible of the situation that is going on in Congo. In 2006, we had the discussion here, the EDEFSD participate through the (inaudible) election organized in 2006. I hope that their possibility is not going to lose their job if I give this opinion.

The international community and the UN put more than \$10 million program as the election and ending up with a weak central government. The problem of Congo, it is a weak central government. The people organized the election in 2006. The European and the UN, we send a member to the UN about the situation. They select Tabula, they maintain Tabula, they put Tabula in bigger in power, and today with all the expense of the U.S., all the organization, you end up with a weak central government.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to ask you now to pose a question.

MR. KABANGU: And (inaudible) not to worry, even dealing with the Hutu tribe, we didn't see someone (inaudible) from Rwanda, (inaudible)



one part of their country --

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, thank you.

MR. KABANGU: -- talking about why --

MR. O'HANLON: We're going to move on.

MR. KABANGU: -- we have to go back to the situation of bringing all the political leaders, we have to solve the political situation in Congo, bring all the political leaders back to the negotiating table, have a strong central government with some (inaudible) --

MR. O'HANLON: That's it.

MR. KABANGU: -- the (inaudible) international community is winning to select and put someone in power like Abuda. You put someone that doesn't have a high school diploma as the leader of the country, expecting --

MR. O'HANLON: On that comment, we're going to stop.

MR. KABANGU: -- to solve the situation.

MR. O'HANLON: If anybody can, please pass on the microphone.

MR. KAGANGU: That's our opinion.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, in the back, yes, please? And, by the way, I will not even tolerate that long of a comment any longer because that -- try to --

MR. KAGANGU: (Still talking -- inaudible)

MR. O'HANLON: I've tried to impose the ground rule that this is just about questions for the panel.

MR. KAGANGU: (Still talking -- inaudible)

MR. O'HANLON: Please, we heard you.

MR. : I have a question to the Ambassador of Rwanda, and one to the gentleman from the UN.

You brought up the question of the inter (inaudible). Rwanda has occupied Eastern Congo from 1996 to 2003. When, exactly, did you go after the Hutu (indistinguishable). You said you are a scientist. I'd like to talk about Fox , let's go there.

The second question is what are you going to do with what the local populations in Goma and Bukavu called the Inter-Rakagon meaning the Hutus that you brought from their presence in Rwanda to work in the colton mines in the Congo and that you left there. I would like to hear that answer to that question.

MR. O'HANLON: And two questions is enough, thank you.

MR. : Can you allow me to ask a question for the UN, please?

MR. O'HANLON: No, we don't have enough time. Two questions are already more than I intended for a person.

AMBASSADOR KIMONYO: Do you want me to respond?

MR. O'HANLON: If you like.

AMBASSADOR KIMONYO: First of all, Rwanda is not in the Congo. and so you are walking through a subject regional arrangement and international arrangement to deal with the issues of FDLR. I have never had, I think, what you call is a government something you are

(inaudible) you are bringing. I don't have any clue about that. If you want to talk to me, personally, so if I can understand what you are saying. I don't really have a --

MR. O'HANLON: Tony wishes to comment, also, and then we'll go to someone else.

MR. GAMBINO: I would just say a couple of things. First, whatever the past history is, I think we should start with the facts on the ground today, and it is a fact, as best as I can tell, that the FDLR is still present in the Congo and that it is still led by people who were responsible involved in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. That is a fact and something, as the Rwandan ambassador said and as the Congolese government has agreed, is something that needs to be dealt with.

Further, in terms of the overall discussions about these issues, in my view too often people who either approach it by thinking about issues within Rwanda or by issues within the Congo try to get to recrimination, so it becomes Rwanda support N'Kunda. But then the other side says, but the Congolese are supporting the FDLR. And then we just run around that circular racetrack forever in terms of mutual accusations which get us nowhere.

My own view is to say let's look at another fact which is that Eastern Congo is lawless and that there is no effective force, unfortunately, today. I'm not happy that the Congo's army is not capable of controlling the territory. I wish there was a capable professional army that could control the

Eastern Congo that was part of the Congolese state.

That's not what we have. That's why we have to look to what David was talking about, some kind of interim force strengthening MONUC, hopefully both served by some kind of multinational force to secure Eastern Congo, to resolve the problem with FDLR as well as at the same time the problems of these rogue renegade Congolese militias. At that time, then we can work towards the kind of peaceful stable future that I really do believe both countries would like to see.

MR. O'HANLON: There's a question here in the front, please.

MR. MAKUNDA-MOMBUYU : My name is Jacques Makunda-Mombuyu . I'm the representative of UDPS through the U.S. organization and through the United Nations. Please, can you allow me to make a small preliminary and then I ask a question to Mrs. Ambassador?

MR. O'HANLON: We have tried to construct a balanced --

MR. MAKUNDA-MOMBUYU: Very small. Very, very small. The thing I want to say, I think the crisis that's happening now in my country starts as we fail to make that we call the National Inter-Congolese Reconciliation. When we failed to do that after the National Sovereign Conference, the problems started in the east, and we had the Congolese army evolve in the fight within Rwanda, and then the backlash from in 1994.

And so my question is -- I want to be short -- if, Ms. Ambassador -- and also the international community -- if the solution of the Congolese crisis is not to return in the Inter-Congolese National Reconciliation because

from there they start to fight in the Kivu between the Congolese Tutsi and the Congolese Hutu. And then Congolese army went to fight in Rwanda, and then we had 1994, and then we had all those people -- all those in Terra Mai and others come from Rwanda.

And so I say the international community have to start by to help Congo, our country, I think our president, national president of my political party, Mr. Tin Fisakadi is the one who was elected in the National Conference for to lead the National Inter-Congolese Reconciliation process. And I want to have the point of view of Mrs. Ambassador. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: I don't -- I'm not sure that there was a fight between Congolese Tutsis and Congolese Hutus that you are talking about. It wasn't between the two communities unless anybody contradicts me in the audience. So I would like to correct that.

I think the problem you are alluded happen in 1991 with -- 1991-92, and this was -- I think it was a land issue in North Kivu with the not pit Hutu against Tutsi because communities in North Kivu, I think against the Rwanda fund community in North Kivu. So let's correct that (inaudible) unless I'm mistaken, but I don't think so.

In terms of, I think we cannot roll back to the Conference Nationale. The Conference Nationale has its place in the political history of the Congo, and the change from recommendations or the conclusions of the Conference Nationale, that can still be a reference to the political system in the Congo. We had the peace process, we had a government of conditions.

Whether we liked it or not, we went through all the negotiations, we went through -- to South Africa, and we had elections and nobody was excluded from participating in this election.

UDPS, for the reasons that you give, refused to participate in the process that led to elections in 2003. And I still do believe, and the government did -- UDPS can still play a constructive role as we move forward. We need to move forward rather than going back again to the Conference Nationale because in 1993 --

MR. MAKUNDA-MOMBUYU: I'm talking mainly about the National --

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: The National was once a year, sir. That's something we can do. We have the U.S. delegation that is on the way to Goma today to -- we have the Wilson Center that has been working on such a project in terms of looking at how to ease tensions among communities, among people with different views. So there are instruments out there that we can use and work with our local partners but also international partners to overcome some of this.

There are initiatives, local initiatives in North Kivu, in South Kivu, and they are working with international partners in order to build up a good base for community reconciliation, but also expand to development in the region, because part of the program was -- is the lack of access to resources, the lack of resources. The economic -- the question also doesn't help. It's one important point, so what I will do here, I will look at your advice

again, UDPS, I'm here in Washington, I'll be more than happy to meet with you and to talk. Let's exchange and let's see what we can do in order to build on what we have today in order to strengthen what we have today.

MR. O'HANLON: Here in the second row.

MS. FALENGER : Thank you. My name is Paku Falenger of Refugees International. I have a question which is for any of the panelists, as you allow.

It's clear that it has been identified as one of the group -- I mean the group in Eastern Congo, North Kivu particularly, and in South Kivu causing all the instability and which is leading to the current conflict and rape as was mentioned by the ambassador and all other source of abuses that are happening.

We have a different situation of -- I mean you have the morning you have the all different diplomatic forces that are happening. We have the different peace agreements that have been signed, but (inaudible) arguments are the center of all the problems. So why until now nothing has been done to deal with it?

I mean two years ago when things seemed to be started, he said it's because of FDLR. So why haven't we addressed that core issue? What's happening? Why?

Thank you.

MR. GAMBINO: First, there have been a number of actions against the group. It's had various names over the years, as you know, now

called the FDLR.

MONUC, itself, back when Ambassador Swing was running it, for a number of years had a very successful program whereby thousands of former FDLR soldiers left the FDLR and were repatriated, returned to Rwanda. So that was an action that occurred about a half dozen years ago.

After the elections, we had this process that culminated in Nairobi Agreement, and I think we should recognize the significance of that. That's an official act taken between two heads of state. The agreement is about the FDLR. And, as I said before, although the Congolese state promised to take action against the FDLR, for various reasons the army has not. So that was because I gave my analysis of why I think the FARDC has been incapable.

That takes us -- and, of course, there are many other details -- but just for reasons of brevity I won't get into that -- that just takes us to where we are today, and I want to insist just one more time that is why I think people who in good faith insist on we have to get a political agreement are missing a fundamental point, even if President Kabila and President Kagame would shake hands again and say, "We'll implement the Nairobi Agreement," and even if President Kabila would say that in all good faith, he does not have the capacity within his own army to do that.

There are other reasons as well, but let's start with the basis capacity issue; therefore, given the fundamental nature of this problem, other actors must engage to do so. That has been part of MONUC's



mandate with strengthening in various ways with internal primitives and potentially by other international forces. I think it's clear to everyone that effective action against the FDLR needs to be taken.

And, by the way, just perhaps an important military detail that my friend, Michael O'Hanlon knows much more about this than me, the FDLR will not be completely destroyed. That's not the purpose. This is not to get MONUC or any other action of trying to get involved in a guerilla action of chasing people through the hills and the forests of Eastern Congo.

But their present circumstance where they can operate in the open, have bases in the open, have headquarters established in various parts of the region, that needs to be stopped, and modern militaries can do that, deny the FDL leadership their ability to operate in the open. When those actions are taken, a lot of us believe that we will see again this process of people -- and there are many Congolese who now are fighting with the FDLR, but the FDLR will weaken, and people will leave it. Hopefully, some of the Rwandan members of the FDLR will choose to return to Rwanda again, and then over time it'll finally become not a factor at all in terms of what's going on in Eastern Congo.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, sir, here in the second row, and then we'll come up to the first row again, then toward back.

MR. DUPONTE: Okay, thank you. This is Philippe DuPonte from Eurasia Group. My question is we talked about a political solution. Is it possible to have one without the rebels and the militias actually participating

in such talks and, more specifically, are Rwanda and Congo prepared to have mediations include on some level the FDLR as well as N'Kunda's forces?

MR. O'HANLON: Would you like to start with that, again?

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: I think I will combine the young lady questions and your question. I think again what Tony has just said -- and this is what I was referring to when I was talking about the lack of political will -- there is a lack of a strong political will from our international partners because we know that the hierarchy doesn't have yet an army with the capacity of dismantling the FDLR.

And even the Rwanda and compare, we have asked for a third party to come in and help us dismantle FDLR. We saw what happened in Sierra Leone with the intervention of the British. We saw even what happened in Ituri with the intervention of the Spanish Group as they need .

We don't have anything like the (inaudible) in the Kivu, and I think that's what we need in the Kivus, in operation as the needs like, or the kind of intervention that the British did in Sierra Leone, because the UN -- the UN first of all in the beginning they didn't really have the mandate to fight the FDLR. And here today sometimes when you raise the issue of dismantling the FDLR, the UN, they'll say: That's not part of our mandate. So when we are pleading for the strengthening -- and I think there was an appeal from David to strengthen the UN -- to rebuff the UN, and to expand its mandate

to dismantling FDLR, then that will take away all these weapons being used, and as the base of the violence in North Kivu.

The other thing also, when we look at all the conflicts that have happened in Africa, some of them -- I mean many of them atrocious. What happened in Rwanda was atrocious. What has been happening in Congo is atrocious. What happened in Angola with UNITA was atrocious, but I think at the end of the day Rwanda has the least of those who are most wanted, who participated or led people to commit genocide in Rwanda. And once all the countries participate because the ambassador has said this clearly, FDLRs are not only in the Congo, they are also everywhere. So these people can be brought to justice. That's why we have the ICP.

But then, Rwanda also has a role to play. Rwanda can open doors to members of the FDLR who want to convert into a political party. We converted RCD, MST came in, you know, with negotiations. We -- they converted into political parties, and you need that even in Angola. Today it's a political party.

So I think there are things, steps that we can all take if we really value humanity and we really value our region, and we want to take advantage of the resources that the entire region has. There are steps that can save difficult states, and I think each of us have different difficult steps. We just have to have one more leap forward in making Congolese reaching the ultimate peace and security in the region and process on development.

MR. O'HANLON: Do you want to comment?

AMBASSADOR KIMONYO: I just wanted to make one comment on that. Rwanda has always been open, and our institutions have worked with the international organizations to make sure that the main barriers of FDLR and others who happen to be in exile, especially in the Congo, to be repatriated with intelligence.

And the acid test, one of the generals was commanding some of these persons who didn't want to commit is back home. He came back with 100 men . His reason was now the commission, in our commission of the organization and repatriations of ex-combatives , we are open for these people to repatriate, but that does not remove the factors if you committed crimes against the (inaudible), you have face the trial. The ambassador from the (inaudible). So if members of (inaudible) some of them feel that they are innocent, they are not guilty of anything, they very well know that there are a public procedure for them to repatriate and go through what we call forget the count, (inaudible) the second count, they go and get trained about doing business, about getting above their community of origin and be a natural citizen, and those who want to continue being the enemy, live in the alleys; and those who have committed a crime, who participated in the genocide never want to come back because they know for sure they will face trial.

There is no way I won't tell us that, you know, my telling you I'd rather submit to repatriate and I would just want to be part of the process, that always brings someone who could -- telling your people to be there just

because you want to remain in the political process.

So there are clear statements (inaudible) for all these people to (inaudible) and one I will (inaudible).

MR. O'HANLON: Here, yes?

DR. ALULA : Thank you for giving me this opportunity to ask my question. I'm Dr. George Alula. I'm a former presidential candidate in the DRC, in the 2006 election.

My question would be go to the Rwandan ambassador. Sometime in the story, one man needs to make a right decision for all his country. My question is this one: We have seen in South Africa the vote and reconciliation process that brings all the people together. And I think the UN ambassador cited as an example my question. Do you have a problem to bring all the Rwanda's people back home in a kind of inter-Rwanda's dialogue?

And I will end up with this question that many Congolese are asking: Do you support the creation of the Republic of Kivu? That's my question. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR KIMONYO: First of all, I think of all countries Rwanda seems to be put on the task to guess whether we are able to reconcile and bring together our people. I think this is one of the leading examples of the country that has gone through so much, that has been ever to bring together its people. I remember in 2002 visited by the police chief from Talvania asking me, "How are you going to allow these killers to go

back into your communities?" And asking me a question, "Do you think, if they are given the capital punishment you are going to promote a reconciliation?" He kept quiet .

The government of Rwanda decided that despite all these serious crimes, we have some understanding that at least before we are manifestly by (inaudible) to keep and to talk. Rwanda has been promoting (inaudible) and this was the (inaudible) of our government. And in (inaudible). And in 1999, the Inter-Congolese Reconciliation Commission that has done an incredible job in (inaudible) bringing together our people did have occasions of reconciliation. I assume that this is the one American calls, as if for me, you need to work it out, and see how people -- how can I tell you this -- (inaudible) and have come together (inaudible) their country. There is nothing like the Republic of the People have never heard about it, but maybe someone knows it. Thank you.

MR. ITA : My name is Kabu Ita, and I'm just a simple citizen formerly from Congo, and naturalized American. Correction, first.

Madam Ambassador, to say that nobody will be excluded from the elections, I think it's a little bit wrong because the people who are refugees were not accepted to come and participate on the election. It's partly for that you ask it for that right. Many of those people still are refugees in Rwanda.

Second, I would like to make a correction, also, what you said about the Reconciliation Nationale. During the Conference Nationale, the Rwanda forum, because the one (inaudible) Rwanda, and who live in

Northern Kivu is citizen, please, were ejected from the Conference Nationale. Kokomu has been a politician since the '60s, were rejected because just the fact that he's taking Rwanda off, he has the more (inaudible) duty. So, thank you.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: I think when I said nobody will be excluded from elections, I was speaking in terms of political parties. I know there was a problem with their (inaudible) of repatriation of refugees. And this is an issue that was debated at the Conference in Goma this past January. And there was a follow-up committee that was supposed to put in place the mechanism for this repatriation of all the refugees back to Congo. So I would like just to make that clear.

In terms of the Reconciliation Nationale, yes, I know what happened in the Conference Nationale, and this is why I'm referring to local initiatives. I mentioned local initiative that's working on the issue of communities reconciliation, and they have been working with partners such as the Woodrow Wilson Center, the program that is headed by Ambassador Wilke, has been working on that. They have -- I think -- did they have an office?

MR. O'HANLON: In Conchevla .

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: They have an office in Conchevla. They have been to North Kivu several times and been to South Kivu several times. To me, I see that as a business . I think many times we have problems because we tend to deal with problems from the top rather than dealing with

problems from the bottom.

What happened in Conference Nationale, when you look at it, it's still a problem from Kivu. And if we are out to deal with this problem, we have to deal with it from Kivu. And this is why, despite the disagreements -- you know there were so many people who were uneasy about the conference in Goma. I was lucky enough to be there, and I learned a lot. And I think it was a very good thing, and if we can go back and revisit the recommendation of the conference in Goma, that can also be yet another basis to really deal from the bottom up this issue of Nationale Reconciliation.

MR. O'HANLON: What I'm going to do, if you don't mind, as you can see, we've already reached and passed our time, but I sense a fair amount of enthusiasm. I'm going to hope the panelists don't mind staying for five or ten more minutes, if that's okay.

And what I'd like to do is take two groups of two questions, and then we'll wrap up. So what I'll do is here, right in the middle, there are two people next to each other, about -- yes. And then -- yes, the two of you -- and then I'll take two more after that.

MS. SZEWICK : I've got a question that actually aims to the couple of weeks that we are looking at now, from now on. My name is Natalia Szewick. I work for Women For Women International. We run a big program in the Eastern Congo.

What is going to happen? I mean as a humanitarian organization,



we kind of need to know is it going to get worse? We hear that Angolan troops might get involved. Can we expect more fighting? We just don't know. I spoke to our country director this morning, and she doesn't know either. So it would be good to know what we --

You know, I think what you are talking about is really middle and long-term, but I think we need to know what's going to happen next week, next month.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And then right over here.

MR. FREEMAN: Thank you. Lawrence Freeman from Executive Intelligence Review, Africa Desk.

Ambassador -- Madam Ambassador, you mentioned the fact that you thought one of the key issues was the natural resources being at the center of the fire. I agree. I think the looting of the resources has been going on for many, many decades.

It seems to me the connective issue is sovereignty, that the sovereignty of the Congo has been violated from Day One, and it only lasted a few months under the First Premier in 1960. And isn't it the case that the international community, in addition, has never stood up for the Congo sovereignty? The Lusaka Agreement was weak. Both Uganda and Rwanda were allowed to have their forces come into the country and overthrow a government, whatever we thought of that government, and that the sovereignty question is very much tied to this question of resources and the lack of respect for sovereignty seems to me to be a key issue which I

thought you might -- would you address?

MR. O'HANLON: David, do you want to start the first question?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. I would hate to make predictions about what happens next. I mean coming here this morning I was reading that the Congolese army has actually succeeded in pushing back the rebels at a very critical point outside Goma. And what we're trying to do, I know, over the past few days is to move, I think about 60,000 people who are effectively in No Man's land back to a more secure position closer to Goma, because one of the things that I know that the head of our operation there is very concerned about is this quarter of a million who, effectively, have been behind enemy lines.

I think we're trying very hard now to get them back into a more secure position, but weakened secure, and let the Congolese army move forward on the rebels. So let's hope. But I would go back to where we came in: reinforcements.

MR. O'HANLON: Madam Ambassador, the second question?

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: What was the question?

MR. O'HANLON: It was a sovereignty question.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: I thought it was a question that (inaudible). Was the question --

MR. O'HANLON: It sounds like you agree with his point, but if you want to say anything, feel free.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: I thought you agreed with my point.

MR. : On the first one, do you (inaudible).

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: Yes, I think in my presentation I alluded to that. I presented -- I went back to Leopold II, which was also yet another -- I don't know whether I would call it a massacre of genocide, 10 million Congolese who died because of the raw material. At that time it was rubber, and then the Belgians came in. We saw what happened in 1960 with the death of Lumumba because he was asking for the autonomy of the -- the economy of the Congo. And we saw how we had a dictatorship that lasted more than 30 years because though it was again, thought it was, you know, Mbutu was perceived as to be strong, but, unfortunately, he served more the interests for the people outside of the Congo rather than serving the interests of the Congo.

And then we saw what happened after Mbutu was gone. Again, it was all around the resources. And this is why one of my recommendations has been since those resources in many ways have been the obstruction of this violation of the Congolese sovereignty, this is why we need to put in place a mechanism such a certification of the minerals coming in and also call -- give really a strong call on neighboring countries, because they can help, too. They know when these minerals are going to their countries. They can help us so we can work together by putting together a mechanism that will help to press down on the plundering of these resources, and we can all, all together benefit from these resources.

Congo is very much endowed of resources and is ready to share

these with us, and as long as we are operating in a legal framework.

MR. O'HANLON: Here in the front, and then I'll take, right, you in the middle second. I know we'll wrap up here, I'm afraid.

MR. LUKULA: Yes. This question is addressed to Mr. Gambino.

In your opinion, if groups like CNDP or others that claim to protect the Tutsis, if they want to be disarmed in this lawless place that you speak of, what would be their fate? Who is there to protect them?

And the second question is, Madam Ambassador, in your constitution, is there a place that addresses the concerns of Rwanda fronts ? Since they do have low populations, is there a protection for minorities both in a security framework and in a representative framework such that their voices and their concerns are addressed?

MR. O'HANLON: Another way -- thank you -- what I'm going to do is after this next question, then give each panelist a chance to respond and/or give any final comments, briefly.

Let me thank again the Center for Preventive Action at CFR and Brookings and Carnegie for helping make this possible.

But, sir, please go ahead, and then we'll finish up.

MR. LUKULA : Okay. My name is Lukula. The question was, the first part was addressed our Excellency Ambassador Madam Faïda, but I will come to it again.

In 2003, we showed an openness by having our Inter-Congolese Conference, and we even agreed to have a vice president who was a

former refugee from Rwanda, Mr. Rubira. We made him a vice president even though he downed a plane, he did a lot of killings, enough killings. So I wanted to come back to one thing: Every time we reach -- the question pretty much to the United Nations -- every time we got close to fighting in detail pretty much neutralizing Conda Batwori and his friends, the United Nations came in between. It was that's the time when they come and say, "Please negotiate for peace and talk, you know, have" -- I mean, "Sit down and talk."

So somehow it's strange because in 2004, we were close to crushing him, and his friend Mutabazi, by the United Nation's stopped Buzama Bey, who was then demoted by our vice president, Mr. Rubira, who was a (inaudible) refugee from Rwanda. I want to know, is the United Nations there to help people, or United Nations there to help stop the fighting every time we get close to crushing the enemy? Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: A good tough question to finish with. Okay, so, David, would you like to address that or, if you want to avoid that one feel free to address it to somebody else.

MR. SMITH: Could I just speak to this. You were saying N'Kunda, yes, specifically?

MR. LUKULA: Yes. Yes.

MR. SMITH: Yes. Okay, listen you all know far more than I do about the history of this. Let me just assure you, you know, the No. 1 mandate that the UN has is to protect people. And when it comes to dealing

with those who have a totally different vision of the Congo, then you have to understand -- and I'm sure you understand far better than I do -- that folks I've been talking to -- Mr. N'Kunda not the UN but others have -- and that conversation, as you will be very well aware, has been going on for some time, and, you know, that inevitably there has been an attempt to bring a conversation together, to bring all the parties together, not led by the UN but the EU has been in there, the United States has been in there, and the conversation with folks like Mr. N'Kunda has been going on.

Now, whether -- I don't believe that has influenced the military decision -- however, it is part of the reality of what has been happening in Congo, and I'd urge you to look at it when you say: Why isn't the UN, in effect, simply taking N'Kunda out?

MR. O'HANLON: Mr. Ambassador, any final thoughts?

AMBASSADOR KIMONYO: Well, I really want to thank you for arranging this, and I hope this discussion will lead to some results in terms of making input to the (inaudible) process to bringing it to (inaudible).

MR. O'HANLON: Madam, you've got a few questions, I guess, for you, as well as any final thoughts you'd like to offer?

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: I think I have one. I have one question. The question was whether the constitution addressed the issue of the Rwanda front .

MR. : Minority populations.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: Minorities, yes. The constitution does

address the issue of minorities in general, and again, when we get to the issue of minorities, my god, I don't know who is minority in the Congo. The Congo has more than -- close to 300 ethnic groups.

MR. : But there seems to be a consistent (inaudible) trying to get to the one the (inaudible).

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: I think this was brought up by the war itself, and this is an issue again that can be solved through these reconciliation processes. In 2006, nobody was excluded except for the case of refugees who were outside of the Congolese territory and who, with all due respect to my brother Kavaita, even you Congolese who are in the United States, you were not allowed to vote, okay?

So it didn't exclude any Congolese who was on the Congolese territory, okay, including the Rwanda front . I've studied the North Kivu (inaudible) with the highest majority for the current president, President Kabila. That way we have a stronger concentration of Rwanda front community.

So if I didn't address the issue of Rwanda fund , it does address the capitulation of four groups in the DRC, all the ethnic groups of the DRC.

MR. O'HANLON: And Tony.

MR. GAMBINO: Thank you. The question is a profound one, and actually a good one to say what I want to say at the end.

There are certainly legitimate concerns about protection of the Tutsi populations in North Kivu and elsewhere in the Congo, but I'm sure

that many people here, and probably all the Congolese who are here, know that today rumors are rife in the City of Bukavu, particularly among the Bazi populations, which have a large concentration of people in Bukavu, that just like the actions a few years ago where N'Kunda and Jules Mutabutzi took over Bukavu; that you know these rumors that various people are infiltrating -- this is what they say -- the City of Bukavu, and then the kind of violence that was seen in Bukavu is going to occur. So now you have a non-Tutsi population that also is concerned about its own protection.

Natalia Szewick's screw up Women For Women has been very focused, as many organizations have been on the horrific violence committed against girls and women throughout North and South Kivu over a long period of time.

So the fundamental question, really I think, behind your question is, who will protect the people of Eastern Congo? It cannot be today, regrettably, the army of the Congo. One wishes that is the logical conclusion in our world of sovereign states. That's the fundamental task of an army and police force, to protect its own civilians.

Unfortunately, the Congolese state does not have that capacity. So various groups ask, quite legitimately, who will protect us? Who will protect me? And many Congolese have been upset because, as David said, MONUC has that, and while they have succeeded in some, I say with respect, David, MONUC has failed in other areas to protect civilians.

So in addition to a loss of faith in the capacity of the Congolese



state to protect its own people, among some Congolese there's been a loss of faith in MONUC or the international community's abilities to protect civilians.

That is why I advocate two steps: No. 1, an effective international force. MONUC has to be at the center of it with the reinforcements that we've talked about that will actually go out and protect as much of the population of not just urbans, North and South Kivu, so that mainly the cities of Goma and Bukavu, but also concentrations. You can't put that to every family on every hillside in Congo. That's an impossible mission for any force. But there are concentrations of populations in some rural areas. I believe that an international force can do that and should do that.

So that various populations, including the parts of North Kivu where there are heavy concentrations of Congolese Tutsis and Hutus can feel protected in a period of time .

Second, we need to remember that people have to be concerned about the abuses committed by General N'Kunda's CNDP. They may be protecting some people but they are abusing, killing, raping other Congolese. So the long-term, there must be the development of some Congolese force with an appropriate ethnic composition that the Congolese themselves in North and South Kivu and throughout the country have confidence in that those troops and over time a police force will protect them. If that does not occur, then these cycles of violence that we've been discussing that have been roiling the region for about the last 20 years will

not end.

MR. O'HANLON: I want to thank all of you. Oh, pardon me, David?

MR. SMITH: Can I, just briefly, comment?

Listen, I always get very heartened as a UN officer in Washington when I see a crowd like this, and, please, everybody out there who cares, one of the things I feel very strongly is a few years ago I was one of the people who persuaded Time magazine to do a cover story which, hopefully, some of you will remember called The Most Dangerous Country in the World, with some truly very stark images that brought it home.

We all have a duty to get out there and remind everyone of the stakes involved in the Congo. And as for the UN role (inaudible), you're not going to hear from me that it's been one blatant trial of success. For every step forward, there's one step back. Look at the past few weeks. What I do think is interesting this morning is that I think everybody on this panel would agree that the UN is the only way that we can move this forward and move it back to a peaceful process and that the UN needs support.

So give us the wherewithal to do the job. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Madam Ambassador, one second, quickly. We'll have a pause in just a second. She also wants to say thank you to you first.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: Yes, I would like to thank again the Brookings for organizing this panel, and I hope this is not going to be the last

one. And, hopefully, we can always come up with some creative ideas.  
And I would like to say a word of thanks to the wonderful audience. Please  
come again.

MR. O'HANLON: Hear, hear.

(Applause)

\* \* \* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

Notary Public # 351998

in and for the  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
My Commission Expires:  
November 30, 2008