CHAPTER 3

USAID and Ethnic Conflict: An Epiphany?

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This chapter examines the approach of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to ethnic conflict—whether it addresses ethnic conflict in its policies, programs, or projects; why it is interested in ethnic conflict; and how it approaches ethnic conflict and ethnicity.[1] As an independent agency within the U.S. foreign policy establishment, USAID is both actively involved in and greatly affected by the current heated debate on the formulation of post–Cold War foreign policy in the United States. Therefore, the first section of this chapter attempts to address some of the foreign policy themes that are emerging from the post–Cold War foreign policy debate and shaping USAID's response to ethnic conflict. A policy of "selective involvement" seems to best capture U.S. foreign policy today. In the second section of this chapter, both internal and external motivations for USAID's engagement in ethnic conflict are examined. In the third section, USAID's past experiences with ethnic conflict are briefly described. In the fourth section, the way in which USAID is now attempting to deal with ethnic conflict is detailed.

What Are U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives?

Since the end of the Cold War, borderless problems, such as civil, religious, and ethnic conflict, seem to have emerged with a vengeance as the predominant form of conflict in the world. Issues that were long buried under the tense stability of the Cold War have resurfaced—including separatism, the reconfiguration of state borders, war-crimes tribunals, and even genocide. The intensity of the problems has generated among donors a new terminology, including such phrases as "complex disaster," "early warning systems," "preventive development,"[2] and "failed states." The problems have even begun to push the international community into operating with different methodologies and theories—to dust off and revisit

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Irrigation and Society in the Context of Mahaweli, Sri Lanka, at Monte Verita, Ticino, Switzerland, August.

Smith, M. G. 1965. *The Plural Society in the British West Indies.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tambiah, S. J. 1986. *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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Van Arkadie, Brian. 1990. "The Role of Institutions in Development." In *Proceedings of the World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics, 1989.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

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——. 1993a. *Early Experience with Involuntary Resettlement: Impact Evaluation on India Maharashtra Irrigation II Project.* Washington, DC: World Bank Operations Evaluation Department.

——. 1993b. *Early Experience with Involuntary Resettlement: Impact Evaluation on Thailand Khao Laem Hydroelectric.* Washington, DC: World Bank Operations Evaluation Department.

——. 1993c. *Early Experience with Involuntary Resettlement: Overview.* Washington. DC: World Bank Operations Evaluation Department.

——. 1994. *Resettlement and Development: The Bankwide Review of Projects Involving Involuntary Resettlement, 1986–1993.* Washington, DC: World Bank Environment Department.

Young, Crawford. 1976. *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

old methodologies and theories, such as containment, public safety programs, and spillover effects. A 1994 report in the *Chicago Tribune* read:

This turmoil caused by civil conflict could disrupt export markets, encourage terrorism and other extremism, fuel regional arms races, and trigger refugee crises. "We no longer have the singular threat of communism," said Brian Atwood, a former Clinton administration top foreign aid official and administrator of USAID, "we're now dealing with the threat of chaos." (Atlas 1994, 1)

Without the anchor of political and economic realities and theories of the Cold War, recent U.S. foreign policy has been contradictory. Warren Christopher, while U.S. secretary of state, stated that the primary foreign policy task of the United States is "heading off the surfacing of long-suppressed ethnic and religious conflict" around the world (as quoted in Jenkins 1993). However, the White House has focused its foreign policy on a strategy of "enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies," and such economic issues as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) comprise the main pillar of the Clinton doctrine (Nacht 1995, 194).

Alexander Nacht, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, reviewed recent academic foreign policy literature and suggested that five schools of thought represent the major diagnoses of world politics in the post–Cold War era (ibid. 197–201).

- The "end of history" school, advanced by Francis Fukuyama, is based on the thesis that liberal democracy is the endpoint of ideological evolution and the final form of government; thus, U.S. foreign policy should focus on the spread of democratic ideals.
- The "clash of civilizations" school, advanced by Samuel Huntington, is based on the concept that the fault lines of international conflict will be based on culture divisions; thus, U.S. foreign policy should concentrate on containing the challenge of Confucian and Islamic culture to the predominant Western liberal tradition.
- The "balance of power" school, founded by Hans Morgenthau and practiced by Henry Kissinger, is based on the concept that five (or six) power centers will dominate world politics in the years ahead; thus, U.S. foreign policy should focus on ensuring that no single power, or combination of powers, threatens U.S. vital interests.
- The "primacy of economics" school, advanced by Charles Johnson, is based on the concept that increased attention to economic competition will define the future course of world politics.

- The "humanitarianism and global trends" school, put forward by Jessica Mathews and Robert Kaplan, stresses humanitarian and global trends that "transcend national borders" and blur "the dividing line between foreign and domestic policy" (Mathews 1989, 162); accordingly, U.S. foreign policy should be based not only on national interests but also on global issues, such as population growth, renewable-resource decline, and environmental interdependence.

Individually, none of these five schools comprehensively captures the rationale for U.S. policy. Instead, it appears that each of the five have contributed at times to the rationale for engagement. U.S. foreign policy seems to be based more on James Schlesinger's concept that the U.S. needs to "husband its strength and to choose with care those policy objectives that reflect interests sufficiently weighty that they can garner the public support to sustain them in the long run" (Nacht 1995, 204). This concept of selective involvement effectively captures the power of the media in determining where U.S. interests are at stake (e.g., as concerns Somalia), the power of U.S.-based ethnic or racial organizations in determining U.S. policies (e.g., those involving Iraq), and the power of U.S. geopolitical concerns (e.g., those involving Haiti).

This last point suggests that the major problem with Schlesinger's concept of selective involvement is that public opinion is fickle and events often change faster than a response can be articulated. Thus, at times U.S. foreign policy may seem capricious, slow, and vague while it fumbles for an appropriate response in time to be relevant. Clough (1994, 2) suggests that the answer to this debate over the direction of U.S. foreign policy is that "the American people are in the process of reclaiming foreign policy from the 'Wise Men' who have so assiduously guarded it for the past 50 years." It becomes obvious, then, that the failure to compellingly articulate a new direction for U.S. foreign policy will continue to constrain USAID's ability to react coherently to ethnic conflict. The concept of selective involvement, however, may allow USAID to act and react to ethnic conflict until there is a more comprehensive (or possibly restrictive) foreign policy.

USAID's Interest in Ethnic Conflict

USAID continues its attempts to cope with these new world realities, even as U.S. foreign policy and the international community fail to articulate a

definite strategy relevant to ethnic conflict. Indeed, frustration seems to fill the halls of USAID's sister agency, the State Department, as well as the CIA—where "coping with ambiguous ethnic struggles just isn't as exhilarating as leading a global crusade against a Soviet menace" (McManus 1995, 23).

Despite the lack of clear articulation of an ethnic conflict policy, two recent events may serve to further focus USAID's attention on ethnic conflict. First, in 1995 the USAID administrator was designated as the president's special coordinator for international disaster assistance. With this designation, the president has directed all executive departments and agencies (including the Defense Department) to treat the special coordinator as the focal point for interagency deliberations on international disaster assistance for natural and complex disasters. Second, the National Security Council (NSC) asked then Administrator Atwood, in his capacity as special coordinator, to chair an interagency review of U.S. and international capabilities to respond to humanitarian emergencies. Presidential Review Directive number 50 (PRD-50) made a number of recommendations to the NSC on the capacity of U.S. government agencies to respond quickly to these situations. Ethnic conflict and ethnicity are specifically mentioned in the sections of PRD-50 that deal with prevention, early warning of crisis, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Both of these events might indicate that the White House perceives USAID as a key player in matters of international security and, possibly, that USAID is the natural U.S. entity to deal with ethnic conflict in crisis countries.

External Forces Driving USAID's Interest in Ethnic Conflict

Events in Bosnia (and, to some extent, the other Central European countries), Kosovo, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Indonesia, Liberia, Somalia, and the Greater Horn of Africa[3] have focused USAID attention on ethnic conflict. Indeed, according to former Administrator Atwood (1994a): "these failed states threaten our nation. They cost us too much. They create diseases that impact on us. They destabilize other nations. They stymie economic growth and they deny us economic opportunity in the largest new marketplace—the developing world."

Both natural and man-made disasters (which include ethnic conflict) have escalated in number and complexity during the past several years. In 1998 an estimated 418 million people were affected by humanitarian crises of which man-made disasters accounted for 26 percent. According to the Interdisciplinary Research Program on Causes of Human Rights Violations (PIOOM) researchers at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands, between mid-1997 and 1998, there were

- 16 high-intensity conflicts (where there were more than 1,000 deaths due to armed conflict);
- 70 low-intensity conflicts (where there were between 100 and 1,000 deaths due to armed conflict);
- 114 violent political crises (where there were fewer than 100 deaths due to armed conflict);
- and 26 countries with peacekeeping operations (both UN and other). (PIOOM 1999)

In past years, USAID had determined that approximately 50 countries experience some sort of major conflict in any given (post-1990) year. Now, using PIOOM's trend analysis and other early warning systems, the agency finds that the forecasts are grim. Not only are pre-conflict situations, active conflicts (including ethnic conflict), and armed conflicts escalating in the post—Cold War era, but interstate conflicts are also on the rise. Analysis of trends indicate that:

- More than 100 "political tension situations" could develop into crisis;
- Active intrastate conflicts are increasing, leading to state collapse in countries such as the former Yugoslavia or near-state failure in countries such as Angola, Colombia, Cambodia, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Loene, Somalia, Sudan and Congo-Zaire;
- In 1995 there were 101 armed conflicts; 135 in 1996; 161 in 1997; and 200 in 1998;
- Interstate conflicts are likely to escalate in the near future, including: Nagorno-Karabakh; Burma-Thailand; China (Spratly Islands); China-Taiwan; Venezuela-Colombia; East Timor; Ecuador-Peru; Eritrea-Yemen; Ethiopia-Eritrea; Ethiopia-Somalia; Ethiopia-Sudan; Kashmir; West Bank/Gaza; Israel-Syria; Japan-China; Latvia-Russia; Western Sahara; Nigeria-Cameroon; Nigeria-Chad; Poland-Belarus; Northern Uganda; Russia-Azerbaijan; Russia-Georgia; Russia-Chechnya; Saudi Arabia-Yemen; Serbia-Montenegro; Sudan-Egypt; Syria-Turkey; Turkey-Greece; and Cyprus. Many of these conflicts include countries of strategic and national interest to the U.S. government.

Other U.S. government agencies, including the State Department, have directed USAID efforts in areas characterized by ethnic conflict. In some cases, embassies focus USAID involvement in the field, quietly directing funding toward the areas most sensitive and vulnerable to ethnic

conflict. In other cases, the embassy may set the entire tone of U.S. government assistance. Because ethnic conflict is likely to be a regional phenomena, at the same time U.S. embassies in neighboring countries might have different ideas of which ethnic group needs assistance. Since 1994, embassies in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo targeted different and warring ethnic groups for assistance, causing confusion and frustration among NGO partners operating near national borders.[4]

In some ways, academic theory has contributed to USAID's interest in ethnicity. Some experts have suggested that the application of the political economy perspective to the development process can underscore groupings of ethnic communities.[5] Indeed, it seems that more USAID staff members are adhering to the methodology of political economy than in the past. Others have suggested that as USAID began to rely more on anthropologists in the mid-1970s and early 1980s to perform social soundness analysis or assessments, it began to focus more on ethnicity and ethnic communities. More recently, articles and books by Robert Kaplan, John Stremlau, Peter Sollis, Jessica Mathews, Ted Gurr, Alan Tonelson, and others have generated lively debate within the agency. One reporter has noted:

Overpopulation, environmental decay, ethnic tensions and economic stagnation are an explosive mix in many countries in the developing world, leading them to 'either fragment or become more authoritarian,' contends Thomas Homer-Dixon of the University of Toronto, a leading researcher on the link between environmental scarcities and violent conflict. His research has impressed [Vice President] Gore, who has discussed it many times with President Clinton, White House officials say.

Along with Homer-Dixon's work, the administration's thinking about underlying environmental and social factors has been influenced by journalist Robert Kaplan's cover story in February's *The Atlantic*. The article, "The Coming Anarchy," presented a compelling picture of spreading chaos growing out of poverty, disease, environmental damage, and tribalism. Not only did Clinton read the article but, in an unusual move, asked for an assessment from the National Security Council staff, CIA, State Department, and Pentagon. They endorsed many of Kaplan's concerns but faulted him for ignoring some positive trends, such as expanding democracy in this hemisphere. (Atlas 1994, 2)

Some longtime observers of USAID suggest that the agency responds more to popular culture represented by the media than to aca-

demic literature. In the period starting with northern Iraq in 1991 and continuing with Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, and Kosovo, observers have quipped that Ted Turner and his Cable News Network (CNN), rather than the U.S. president, are in charge (Weiss 1994, 151). Weiss (ibid., 152) has argued, "As well as dramatizing needs, publicizing human rights abuse, stimulating action, and generating resources, the media have distorted the kinds of assistance provided, skewed the allocations of resources and personnel among geographical areas, ignored the role of local humanitarians, and focused international attention on the perceived bungling of various agencies." Policy makers within the agency, however, have noted that USAID's current interest in ethnic conflict was initiated by the agency's efforts to deal with the crisis in the Greater Horn of Africa—before the media really began to focus on ethnic conflict.[6]

It is not unusual for U.S. foreign policy to be shaped with an eye toward politically potent, domestically based ethnic, racial, or religious groups—as the "American political system is peculiarly susceptible to ethnically based pressures" (Gedda 1995).[7] For example, Gedda argues, "American Jews have weighed in on Middle East policy for years,[8] and lately Arab Americans are being heard from more than before" (ibid.). In the 1980s, African Americans largely succeeded in laying claim to U.S. policy toward Africa, especially toward South Africa (Clough 1994, 4). Later, the Congressional Black Caucus helped Clinton shape U.S. policy toward Haiti (Gedda 1995) and Nigeria. Indeed, as Haupt has noted (1994, 12), "Poland also has that most valuable entity for an ethnic group that wishes to affect U.S. foreign policy, a vocal American diaspora." And some experts suggest that Greek Americans have often successfully headed off a U.S. tilt toward Turkey and that Cuban exiles in south Florida exert a strong influence over U.S.-Cuba policy.

USAID is not exempt from pressure by U.S.-based ethnic organizations. In particular, there is growing pressure on USAID to use the ethnic-diaspora communities in the U.S. who have by now "accumulated the experience, the know-how, the personnel and the projects needed and wanted" by ethnic communities in USAID-assisted countries ("Get on the Right Track" 1994, 6). Indeed, Serge Duss, associate director of World Vision, and other NGO leaders have criticized USAID programs for not using American ethnic organizations for the implementation of democracy and economic programs—stating that U.S. ethnic organizations are the most qualified for this task ("Helsinki Commission Examines Aid" 1995, 1–2). Therefore, the more localized foreign policy becomes, the more likely it is that domestic organizations with ethnic ties to the developing world will influence the debate and place new demands on USAID, espe-

cially as more African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are elected to local, state, and national political offices (Clough 1994, 5).

Internal Forces Driving USAID's Interest in Ethnic Conflict

One of the major concerns of USAID is the increasing amount of resources being diverted from development programs toward humanitarian assistance. The costs of ethnic conflict are incalculable, but the Joint International Program on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity (INCORE)[9] has estimated that the financial cost of a "low-level" conflict, such as that in Northern Ireland, reached around $9 billion between 1969 and 1982. In 1993 alone, according to UN and USAID estimates, expenditures on emergency relief worldwide totaled more than $6 billion. Of this amount, international donors contributed $4.5 billion, of which the U.S. government's share was $1.5 billion. As evidence of the upwardly creeping costs of ethnic conflict, $1 billion was spent on just one disaster in Rwanda between April 1994 and August 1995 (Kumar 1995, 1–4). More recently, the U.S. government alone has committed $38.5 million to the crisis in Kosovo since March 1998. These escalating costs of humanitarian assistance do not necessarily include other costs associated with ethnic conflict, such as post-conflict development assistance focused on reconstruction and rehabilitation (e.g., repairing, demining, demobilization, and more).

For example, of the 100 million land mines placed in the world (100 million more are stockpiled), 18 to 30 million are estimated to be deployed in Africa in 12 mine-impacted countries. Of those 12 countries, Angola has 9 million mines, Mozambique has 1–2 million, Somalia has 1 million, and the Western Sahara has 1–2 million. Ethiopia/Eritrea and Sudan are likewise considered to suffer severely (ICRC 1994, 60–68). Land mines have a severe impact on economic and social structures. In Angola thousands of hectares of agricultural land in the fertile Mavinga Valley are largely abandoned owing to the widespread use of mines (ibid.).

In the case of Rwanda, the $500 million that the U.S. government committed to help refugees was more than double the entire amount of development aid that the United States has given that nation in the three decades since its independence (Atlas 1994, 2). This "development diversion" has meant that greater amounts of USAID's resources have been diverted from development activities toward humanitarian assistance programs focused on dealing with the consequences of ethnic conflict. In fact, as recently as November 1995, Administrator Atwood notified the rest of the agency that crisis prevention was a goal of the agency and that there is

a direct link between "development indicators and the vulnerability of nations to implode and collapse" (Atwood 1995, 3). Lois Richards testified (1994):

> In Sudan, an ethnic war between Northern Sudanese and the South has lasted for over a decade and cost tens of thousands of lives. The United States has spent $731 million since 1983, mostly for emergency feeding programs, to save hundreds of thousands of people from starvation. There seems to be no solution in sight to this cycle of conflict, though the country is nearing exhaustion of its resources.

This effort has motivated USAID to take an increasingly active role in formulating foreign policy options to deal with ethnic conflict and has galvanized an increasing amount of internal debate. At the same time, USAID has not been able to link the need for development and costs of violent conflict to the domestic priorities of U.S. citizens.

The implications and implementation of USAID policy decisions have gradually focused the agency's attention on ethnicity and ethnic conflict. At the policy level, USAID staff members discuss ethnic issues with other donors, the White House, the Congress, and others. USAID's recently released "Strategies for Sustainable Development" (1994) articulates the Clinton administration's strong view that development is driven by stabilizing population growth, fostering broad-based economic growth, helping democracy to take root, protecting the environment, and effectively responding to both natural and human-made disasters. Carol Lancaster testified (1994a): "These strategies are propelled by the notion that we must involve traditionally disenfranchised groups in the developing world, groups such as women, rural agricultural producers, ethnic and religious minorities, and the poorest of poor, in the social and economic decision-making of their nations if real progress is to be attained."

Likewise, USAID's focus on participation, as both a crosscutting issue and a policy, reinforces the concept that development efforts—including project design, implementation, and evaluation—should include the potential beneficiaries (and other interested parties) of that effort. USAID, however, needs to make choices about what level of participation is appropriate or possible. USAID must decide if it can be responsible for expanding participation at all levels in a wide range of development decisions (and risk including competing or even combating ethnic groups) or if it should limit costs, complexity, and unpredictability by dealing with just a few groups and/or leaders (and risk creating the perception that the agency is taking sides) (McHugh 1995b, 9).

At the field and bureau levels, USAID staff members have become aware that ethnic conflict constrains the agency's ability to effectively engage in many development activities.[10] Likewise, other staff members are extremely concerned about identifying and dealing with the root causes of ethnic conflict.[11] For instance, many development experts mention that democratization itself can stimulate ethnic conflict. Indeed, a 1993 report on Kenya from the United Nations Development Program stated baldly that the "principal causes of the violence in the past two years are directly and unequivocally related to the ongoing process of democratization" (Richburg 1994, A1). A recent analysis of the relationship between democratization and ethnic conflict (McHugh 1995a, 15) has shown that as participation in the democratic process increases,

- demands on the system also increase, which can overwhelm the issues and views of ethnically nondominant groups (e.g., as more citizens turn toward the legal system for redress, the courts become overburdened and unable to respond to demand);
- the number of contending views also increases (e.g., as each ethnic group forms its own political party or associations and begins to advocate for its members' interests, this trend can overwhelm politicians and promote what some analysts call *demosclerosis*, or the inability of the system to promote many interests as participation in the democratic process increases); and
- entrenched elites become concerned about losing control over their traditional spheres of influence and respond by undermining the democratic process itself (e.g., as political parties expand, the government may respond by gerrymandering district lines to maintain the dominant ethnic group's majority representation).

Thus, within USAID there is considerable awareness that democratic development itself plays an important—if short-term—role in opening the door to ethnic strife.[12]

Where people sit within USAID (e.g., in the field or in Washington, in central bureaus or in the regional bureau) seems to determine whether they believe that the agency is responding to either internal or external signals to deal with ethnic conflict. It is apparent, however, that USAID has begun to take on ethnic conflict as a discrete issue, although the debate about how to deal with ethnicity and ethnic conflict is still raging.[13] The continued lack of consensus on U.S. foreign policy objectives may have serious implications on where USAID directs its assistance.

How Has USAID Dealt with Ethnic Conflict in the Past?

In the 1960s and early 1970s, USAID's experience with ethnic communities around the world eventually generated a reluctance to engage in activities associated with U.S. "national interests" on the part of some agency staff members (Elliott n.d., 4). In particular, USAID's experience in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos highlights the problem of interventions focused in part on ethnic conflict—USAID had to become involved in the domestic politics of these countries to seek political solutions to ethnic conflicts.

USAID was heavily engaged in these countries, so much so that at one time more than 25 percent of the USAID staff was located in Vietnam. After the war, the agency tended to recruit staff from the "antiwar" movement who tended to shy away from highly politicized USAID development programs.[14] Indeed, between 1975 and 1985 those agency staff members who ended up serving in such locations as Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Central America (to name just a few places) were considered to be stigmatized by these assignments.[15]

At the same time, foreign aid bills became the foci for legislative battles over the content and conduct of development programs. In particular, Congress wanted to make sure that USAID did not become involved in any more "Vietnams" (or "Chiles") and thus prohibited the agency from providing any assistance to foreign militaries, including police training. The new legislation also mandated decentralization of USAID staff located in Washington as well as an emphasis on direct in-field implementation of projects through private contractors. As a consequence, the implementing orders issued by USAID "effectively called for programs which transferred resources directly from the U.S. to the 'poorest of the poor' or the 'rural poor'" in developing countries—a substantial change from the agency's earlier emphasis on production-related training and experience (Elliott n.d., 3). The result of these legislative changes within the agency was to reduce USAID's involvement in "high-level" foreign policy operations, where development programs could be construed to be related to ethnic conflict.

The new agency programs, called the New Directions (or New Mandate) programs,[16] attempted to create equity by focusing on six selected areas: participation of the poor, rural poor beneficiaries, urban poor beneficiaries, nutrition, women beneficiaries, and specific sectoral norms (agriculture, health and population, and education). The Congressional Research Service (1981, 400) reported that the "New Directions programs involve[d] efforts to by-pass, to a greater or lesser extent, existing political and social structures by a foreign government agency to deliver services

directly to the least productive group in the recipient society." The programs were often structured by the USAID field staff in terms of rural communities and equity issues, and in that sense they often dealt with ethnic groups.[17] Thus, field staff often directly dealt with issues related to ethnicity, despite the tenor of policy guidance from the agency's Washington headquarters.

However, an emphasis on equity did not mean that the agency focused on managing the specific concerns and issues of ethnic and other marginalized groups. Rather, it seems that any programs that focused on ethnicity in any capacity were more interested in integrating marginalized ethnic communities into the "modern" world and attempting to reduce the salience of ethnic identity.

Likewise, the indigenous peoples movement started influencing some USAID staff members by the late 1970s, and according to some staff members it was a full-blown movement within USAID by the mid-1980s—but not at the policy level.[18] Indeed, at the policy level within the agency in the 1980s, there was a de-emphasis of social analysis and social equity and therefore a concomitant de-emphasis of ethnicity. Some USAID officials have stated that during this period, the field could not actively promote ethnic issues but had to concentrate on economic growth issues.[19] Indeed, USAID emphasized economic growth because of the belief that a growing economy was the best way to solve development problems, but the agency later found that social and political problems continued nevertheless. For example, in the Dominican Republic, many Haitian sugarcane workers may have been put out of work because of USAID funded agricultural diversity programs. In general, because agency staff members were not allowed to treat ethnicity as an expressed issue, no social safety nets were created (or even allowed to be discussed) to deal with the possible development impact of economic programs on ethnic groups.[20]

As Cohen notes in chapter 4 in this book, aid agencies seem to be split internally over whether or how to deal with ethnicity. At USAID a disconnection exists between the operational realities field missions face in developing countries and the political realities USAID's Washington staff face in the U.S. capital. Indeed, if any USAID-Washington policy or program had any impact on ethnic communities, it was indirect—the result of the fact that many ethnic groups are part of the poor/rural population. USAID field missions, however, seem to have learned to hide project objectives targeted toward ethnic communities and toward reducing ethnic tensions, under the rubric of whatever policy guidance was in fashion in Washington at the time.

Despite efforts to distance USAID policy makers from ethnicity and

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ethnic conflict, over the years USAID's Washington bureaus have funded approximately 15 studies of ethnic issues, most actively in the early 1980s. USAID also funded 128 studies dealing with issues related to "indigenous populations" and 77 studies related to "tribes." USAID has consistently struggled with terminology for certain groups. Such terms as *ethnic*, *racial*, *tribal*, and *indigenous* are used sometimes interchangeably and sometimes distinctly. In the "USAID Thesaurus of Keywords Used to Index Documents" included in the USAID project information databases, ethnic groups are related to linguistic groups, minority groups, racial groups, religious groups, and tribal groups, whereas indigenous groups are related to aboriginal groups, foreign groups, and regional populations (USAID 1991a, 194, 245). These documents and descriptions of project activities are keyed into the system by individuals, so relevant classifications are extremely subjective.

The studies focusing on ethnicity include

- in Latin America, a study of four ethnic groups in Brazil (Kayayan 1973); education policy toward speakers of indigenous languages in Peru (Grant 1974); ethnicity and social class formation in Bolivia (Painter 1985); a study of ethnic minorities in Belize (Wilk and Chapin 1988); and reproductive health in six ethnic groups in Mexico (Cabral et al. 1998);

- in Africa, a study of social and economic variables, including ethnicity in Ghana (Kpedekpo 1975); a look at the multiethnic factor in Namibia (Shack 1977); cultural traditions and coping strategies in the Sahel (Riesman 1979); ethnicity and agriculture in Upper Volta (Saunders 1980); a study of the Bamileke ethnic group and economic growth in Cameroon (McPherson 1983); land tenure and nationalism in Mauritania (Park et al. 1991); a study of the role of religious institutions in Kenya (Kwamboka 1994); an Africa regional study of the effect of ethnicity on leadership succession (Bienen, Londregan, and van de Walle 1994); cross-border trade and ethnic groups in West Africa (McCorkle et al. 1995); a series of evaluations of international emergency assistance to Rwanda (Eriksson et al. 1996; Sellstrom et al. 1996; Adelman et al. 1996; and Borton et al. 1996); a look at ethnicity, gender and fertility in Nigeria (USAID/Africa Bureau 1996); and a study of civil conflicts in Northern Uganda (Gersony 1997);

- in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States, a study of emergency shelter which focused on the potential for ethnic hostilities (Cuny et al. 1992); community peace building in Bosnia and Croatia (Guest 1997); ethnic tension and conflict in Macedonia

(Blumhagen 1998); and a study of reconciliation possibilities in Bosnia and Croatia (Augenbraun et al. 1999);

• in the Middle East, a study of scientific cooperation and peace building (Kumar and Rosenthal 1998);

• in Asia, a study of tribal people in Thailand (Hanks et al. 1964); an analysis of interethnic assimilation and population change in Singapore (Lee 1973); ethnicity and fertility in Malaysia (DaVanzo and Haaga 1981); ethnicity in Hawaii[21] (Wright and Gardner 1983); private sector projects in Sri Lanka (Garms 1987); ethnicity and agriculture in Indonesia (Colfer, Newton, and Herman 1989); and a look at internally displaced people in Sri Lanka (Baron 1994); and

• at the Multi-Regional level, a study of ethnic socioeconomic redistribution in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Trinidad and Tobago (Grove and West 1978); a social analysis of the impact of development on ethnic minorities in Iran, Afghanistan, the Sudan, and Brazil (Maybury-Lewis et al. 1980); the link between democratization and ethnic conflict (Peterson and Sayari 1992); a worldwide study of ethnicity and voting districts (Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1993); an examination of ethnicity throughout the world (Crosby and White, 1995); conflict in the Greater Horn of Africa (USAID/Africa Bureau 1996); an evaluation of post–civil war reconstruction which includes an examination of ethnic conflict (Kumar 1997); another evaluation of post–civil war reconstruction with a focus on elections (Kumar 1998); and a look at social reconciliation in postwar societies (Kumar 1999).

In addition, USAID has funded two examinations of ethnic conflict, including a worldwide study of ethnic conflict in developing countries (Horowitz 1981) and a study of lessons learned in ethnic conflict resolution (McHugh 1995a). Project experience, directly targeted toward ethnic groups, is difficult to document. The project documentation does not always articulate ethnic concerns, although the project designers, managers, and evaluators may have been well aware of underlying ethnic concerns in the field. A search of the USAID project database has identified 319 discrete projects that deal with ethnicity as either the direct or indirect focus of development activities.

How Is USAID Attempting to Deal with Ethnic Conflict Now?

One of the major problems in analyzing USAID's intervention criteria for ethnic conflict is the problem of defining what constitutes an ethnic

TABLE 1.   USAID Project Experience with Ethnicity

Project Number	Country/Region	Status*	Ethnic Focus
2680360	Lebanon	A	relief and redevelopment programs for communities with more than one ethnic or sectarian group
3060204	Afghanistan	A	rehabilitation and repair of locations selected on the basis of various factors, including ethnicity
3830101	Sri Lanka	A	focused on the orphaned victims of ethnic conflict
3910488	Pakistan	I	a quota system for acceptance into the agriculture university
3980280	Near East, regional	A	increasing the access of ethnic groups to judicial and political processes
4100006	East Asia, regional	P	the provision of health care to Burmese ethnic refugees
4100008	East Asia, regional	?	focused on the cross-border transmission of HIV/AIDS among ethnic and highland minorities
4920419	Philippines	I	the provision of health care to ethnic minorities
4920470	Philippines	I	the provision of health care to ethnic minorities
5110460	Bolivia	I	leadership training for selected members of thirteen minority ethnic groups in the Amazon River basin
5110638	Bolivia	?	landholding rights of major ethnic groups
5200304	Guatemala	I	a research program focused on addressing ethnic factors affecting the social promotion of the population in the Altiplano area
5040105	Guyana	?	amelioration of ethnic tensions
6740000	South Africa	?	ethnicity
6980422	Africa, regional	C	assistance to Somali ethnic groups in Djibouti
6980541	Africa, regional	A	access of ethnic groups to political and judicial processes
6980541 (15)	Africa, regional (subproject)	A	human rights violations against the ethnic Somali group of northeastern Kenya
6980662	Africa, regional	I	health mass media campaign adapted to ethnic groups
7300335	Vietnam	C	ethnic minorities
9683008	Zaire	?	emergency assistance for displaced persons from the ethnic conflict in Zaire
9684005	Rwanda	C	emergency assistance to the victims of ethnic conflict

*A = active; C = completed, closed; I = incomplete; P = planned; and ? = status unknown

conflict. Most of the literature on ethnic conflict focuses on Sri Lanka, Iraq, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Cyprus, Bangladesh, Sudan, India, Nigeria, and the Congo (Zaire). Other experts add to that list Haiti, Somalia, Mexico, Guatemala, Somalia, Ecuador, Peru, Bosnia, the former Soviet republics, the Philippines, and more.

One way USAID has dealt with this issue of the diversity of opinion on what constitutes an ethnic conflict is by dealing with ethnicity under the rubrics of "civil conflict" and "complex emergencies." As identified at a recent workshop sponsored by USAID, complex emergencies[22] are "forms of human-made emergencies in which the cause of the emergencies as well as the assistance to the afflicted are bound by intense levels of political considerations" (USAID 1995d). Thus, the reasoning seems to be, because of its political nature ethnic conflict can constitute one of the components of a complex emergency.

Humanitarian Assistance Policy Level

Because ethnic conflict has been so closely identified with much of USAID's disaster assistance programs, the agency's Bureau for Humanitarian Response (BHR) has begun to address ethnic conflict directly. In particular, BHR is attempting to identify the root causes of conflict; the differences between providing humanitarian assistance during a natural disaster and providing it during a complex disaster; reconstruction, rehabilitation, rebuilding, and redevelopment issues after a complex emergency is over; effective prevention techniques; early warning indicators; and more. Most importantly, BHR has identified a gap between short-term disaster assistance programs and longer-term development aid. To fill that gap, the Clinton administration created the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which is intended to allow the agency to respond more rapidly to opportunities to initiate recovery from complex emergencies:

This initiative will: provide mechanisms to rapidly assess the political and economic issues associated with transition from emergency relief; will implement on-the-ground programs that answer short-term needs; will begin the process of institutional and political recovery; and, will ensure a coordinated U.S. Government and international donor response. (Richards 1994)

Examples of specific activities that might be financed under the initiative include

- peace and security initiatives, such as initial demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, surveys and removal of land mines

(in cooperation with the Defense Department), and support to international tribunals or local commissions examining war crimes;

- political initiatives, such as community development and political decentralization programs that encourage political participation at the local level, support for alternative and indigenous media and public information campaigns, human rights support, conflict resolution and mediation training, and leadership development for elected, appointed, and future officials; and

- technical assistance to new governments, both at the national and local levels.

OTI has already tested new approaches, made some progress, and learned some harsh lessons through its programs in Haiti, Kosovo, Nigeria, Rwanda, Bosnia, Angola, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Croatia, Liberia, East Timor, Indonesia, and elsewhere. However, it continues to struggle with many issues: When does the transition from humanitarian assistance to development assistance begin? What are the indicators for when the transition ends? How will USAID make or manage the transition from humanitarian assistance to development assistance in countries where it has no presence? How can the agency work more effectively with other bilateral donors and the UN system, particularly in areas where national foreign policies are different? One of the strengths of OTI is that it continues to work very closely with USAID's democracy and governance staff in other bureaus. This coordination allows the agency to begin to operationally integrate its humanitarian and development assistance activities.

Other offices with BHR (in particular the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) deal directly with the consequences of violent ethnic conflict. The strategic goal of the bureau is to save lives and mitigate suffering. The largest percentage of OFDA's assistance goes to relief and rehabilitation project grants managed by NGOs. Relief efforts can include airlifting relief supplies to affected populations in remote locations, managing primary health care and supplementary feeding centers for refugees, and providing shelter materials to disaster evacuees and displaced persons. Rehabilitation efforts typically focus on immunizing dislocated populations against disease, providing seeds and tools to farmers, and rehabilitating water systems.

But humanitarian assistance has been complicated by the political sensitivities that surround crisis caused by ethnic conflict.

Complex emergencies require sensitivity in the provision of humanitarian assistance. This type of emergency brings with it a host of new issues: attacks on humanitarian convoys, targeting of relief workers, and the denial of access to affected populations, to name just a few. If

not done correctly, aid can exacerbate the humanitarian situation, rather than provide assistance. *Relief organizations must appear apolitical and ensure that their actions do not contribute to violent tensions in societies* [emphasis added]. Providing assistance to civilian populations can often be perceived by warring factions as supporting their opponents. Certain kinds of assistance, especially food, are vulnerable to manipulation when warring forces and armies gain control of supplies provided for humanitarian assistance, either by imposing levies on assistance operations or by stealing commodities. (OFDA 1996, 11)

OFDA's response is to try to "appear" to be apolitical when providing assistance to the victims of ethnic conflicts and civil war. However, such a principled position may be impossible to operationalize in the field. For example, when an ethnically identified group wins the war, or seizes control over the central government, or maintains control over centralized authority, donors and relief organizations face a serious quandary: the increasingly ethnic salience of humanitarian assistance. In particular, since donors are "programmed" to work through host governments, they are then perceived to support the ethnic group that controls central authority while relief organizations, which typically partner with NGOs and international relief organizations that target refugee and displaced populations directly, are seen as supporting the ethnic identity of those not in power. Moreover, if U.S. foreign policy doesn't initially recognize the new government, or if it is suspicious of the new government, it may choose to support NGOs rather than the central authority, increasing perceptions that it is biased against the ethnic identity of the new government.

This sort of problem arose in Rwanda after the genocide, where the international relief community was initially suspicious of the possible guilt or motives of the new government of reconciliation and began to work through NGOs. This caused the new Rwandan government to feel that they were being prejudged by the international community and found guilty. Frustration and anger grew as the international community funded NGOs while the new government lacked the desks, chairs, typewriters, computers, phones, even paper clips they needed in order to govern while NGOs were fully staffed, had functioning offices, and paid higher salaries to the few experienced and capable local staff available.

To complicate matters, many relief organizations did apparently bias their assistance toward particular ethnic groups. Other relief organizations tried to maintain neutrality in a very difficult and politically and ethnically charged situation. Eventually, the Rwandan government threw out most of the international NGOs (including the United Nations' human rights team), and still seems to resent many bilateral donors.

It is nearly impossible for the international community to respond to complex emergencies and violent conflict that have ethnic overtones in any way that is perceived to be neutral or apolitical. Therefore, how donors deal with ethnic issues related to humanitarian crisis is even more important than dealing with development programs but it is also the least likely area where donors will develop policies for how to deal with ethnicity.

Overlap between Development Assistance and Humanitarian Assistance

The link to development programs becomes a critical issue when the humanitarian crisis includes ethnic conflict. Donors are often remembered for their perceived biases during the relief phase of international assistance and might find it impossible to develop "neutral" development programs. Likewise, many development experts are naive about the humanitarian phases of international assistance and believe that they are starting out carte blanche. In Rwanda many people believe that the U.S. government favors the Tutsi government. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the U.S. government was alone in providing nontraditional humanitarian assistance and initiating development assistance, the perception grew that the United States initially favored the former rebel leader, now president, Laurent Kabila's regime. When Rwanda invaded the Congo, U.S. foreign policy toward each country was in conflict, which continues to have implications for relief efforts focused on the various ethnic communities in these countries. And in the Balkans, the U.S. government's foreign policy was hijacked by diplomats' biases toward different ethnic groups which eventually led to a "flawed" diplomatic response (see *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* by Laura Silber and Allan Little for a terrific account of what happened during the war).

Even as it becomes more obvious that there is significant overlap between humanitarian assistance and development assistance (especially where ethnic conflict is an issue), the level of understanding within USAID is not yet notable. Rather, programs and activities are still frequently implemented as though in a vacuum, based more on budgetary "pipelines" directed from Washington, DC than on field realities. It is also apparent however, that the agency is becoming increasingly sensitized to ethnic conflict—sometimes at its own expense as staff are directly impacted by conflict—as field situations sober the agency's programs.

Development Assistance Policy Level

Will the new interest in ethnic conflict be consistent within USAID, or will it soon disappear as yet another new concern diverts the agency's atten-

tion? The answer depends on the extent to which issues related to ethnic conflict become institutionalized, as a problem area, within the agency. Some USAID officials have stated that ethnic concerns should be part of the agency's overall policy guidance to the field on how development projects should be designed, implemented, and evaluated.[23] Others have expressed doubt that this would lead to effective programs to deal with ethnic conflict. Some policy analysts are hesitant to ascribe every conflict to ethnic root causes, so there is little desire to develop embracing policy guidance on ethnic conflict. Even if there were agreement within the agency on the need for such guidance on ethnic conflict, it is doubtful that including ethnic concerns in policy would be rapidly institutionalized.

Prevention

USAID has made great strides, however, to incorporate conflict prevention into its mission. Indeed, prevention is so intuitively attractive that, in the aftermath of Somalia, the Balkans, and Rwanda, USAID and the Department of State each launched efforts, with the help of the intelligence community, to forecast similar complex disasters. "In spite of the difficulties in moving beyond rhetoric, the political and economic costs of outside intervention in civil wars so dwarf those of forestalling them that prevention is emerging as the diplomatic issue of the late 1990's" (Weiss 1994, 155).

Recent policy guidance issued by USAID on prevention follows on the heels of a commitment by the Clinton administration to seek to reduce regional conflicts by finding ways "to address the root causes of conflict both multilaterally and bilaterally, using development assistance and support to democracy" (USAID n.d. [1999], 2).

The Agency remains committed to develop more preventive country, and/or regional strategies that address the root causes of deadly conflict and economic and political crisis where these theaten USAID strategic objectives or broader U.S. national interests. Our goal is to improve the use of development assistance to mitigate and to the extent possible prevent potential economic and political crisis. (ibid.)

Nowhere in the otherwise commendable policy document is there any mention of ethnicity or ethnic conflict. Unfortunately, this seems consistent with the belief among some USAID staff that the agency has only a superficial interest in ethnicity.[24] There are a number of hypotheses that may explain this attitude: 1) that development staff are more comfortable dealing with ethnic conflict as a subset of conflict; or 2) that ethnicity is a

politically sensitive issue, and most development staff would rather not deal with politics. The possible result of this curious failure to address ethnicity directly is that USAID will not be able to reformulate its interventions to respond to ethnic conflict in an effective and participatory manner. Instead, there may be a temporary tendency to tweak existing sustainable development programs and approaches toward a focus on conflict, while attempting to remain apolitical.

Nevertheless, the agency's conflict prevention policy has made some positive changes in the way it addresses conflict. An informal conflict prevention contact group meets regularly to bring together representatives throughout the agency who are interested in and committed to dealing with conflict. During discussions of regional strategies and country programs, ethnic conflict is addressed and seems to be one of the key concerns of the group. And some USAID country mission plans now include conflict prevention, many in countries where ethnic conflicts abound (e.g. Senegal, Georgia, Nepal, and Tanzania). Indeed, it seems that the agency's Africa Bureau, in particular, has recently adopted an unwritten policy to deal more robustly with conflict.[25]

Another effort of USAID has been to work closely with the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, and the Defense Department to determine indicators for "failed states" and how the U.S. government will respond to early warning of state failure. One of the preliminary consequences of this integrated approach to prevention and early warning has been increased understanding that the timeline for response is different for each U.S. government branch. For instance, an adequate lead time for a warning of potential violence and disaster for the State Department is generally between 6 months and a year. USAID is inherently more concerned, with a lead time of "five to fifteen years"[26] to design and implement development programs that may have relevant impacts in the future.

The thinking at USAID seems to be that since the impact of development projects and programs takes such a long time before results (either positive or negative) are seen, development projects have to be created or adjusted early in the process for prevention to be effective. A number of assumptions are apparent in this thinking: that development assistance, by either a single donor or all donors together, has a real impact on developing societies; that the causes of ethnic conflict can be determined early enough so that projects can attempt to address these causes; that development can have an unintended negative impact on ethnic conflict; and that the cause of conflict remains fairly stable throughout a period of time.

A specific regional preventive response to existing ethnic, political, and food-related crises has been the U.S. interagency Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI). In 1994, President Clinton sent a delegation, led

by USAID, to discuss appropriate short-, medium-, and long-term responses to the situations in "affected" countries with host governments and key donors. This delegation recognized that there is strong economic and political interdependence in the Horn—ethnic conflict in one nation has the potential to destabilize its neighbors; food shortfalls in one nation may cut off traditional cross-border trading practices in another. "Therefore," noted one participant, "the delegation determined that it was not enough to meet the needs of one country but rather to look at development of the entire region" (Hicks 1994).

Furthermore, the delegation found that meeting urgent humanitarian needs in the region was not enough: "In order for the region to attain food security and stability, donors, host countries, and the NGO community need to look beyond relief to recovery and development assistance" to deal with the root causes of conflict (ibid.).[27] The delegation recommended that

- in the medium term, assistance is needed to help African nations overcome the effects of war and famine and begin the transition from crisis to development by creating democratic institutions that are capable of responding to the needs of their people;

- in the long term, the causes of insecurity require a strategic focus on sustainable development in the region to help governments increase agricultural yields, decrease population growth, and promote stable democratic institutions.

The GHAI attempts to work with other donors, recipient governments, and NGOs to develop a strategy for linking humanitarian assistance and development activities. The focus of the initiative is prevention, early warning, and response. For example, the 1994 delegation reported: "relief feeding should be done in ways to keep recipients productive on the land instead of building dependency in feeding camps; at the same time, long-term development programs must address the recurring food insecurity to prevent food crises" (ibid.).

One issue that remains unresolved is that when USAID begins to target opportunities for preventing ethnic conflict, it might conclude that development activities are called for in a nonpresence country. Indeed, some USAID staff have begun to chafe at the limitation of only being able to offer the full range of program options to countries characterized by sustainable development criteria, which often is felt to restrict USAID's ability to act appropriately.[28]

An example of this agency-created paradox of funding activities in nonpresence countries has occurred in Sudan, where ethnic tensions have been reduced to civil war. Because until recently Sudan was not considered

to be a sustainable development country,[29] USAID has not been able to provide any development assistance programs. It has, however, continued to provide "short-term" emergency assistance throughout the 1980s and 1990s to populations in the south. This assistance has included funding of many projects that would normally be funded by development assistance programs (e.g., strengthening local productive capacity—seeds, tools, fishing equipment). Additionally, many USAID staff members are concerned about similar "corruption" of humanitarian assistance in northern Iraq, where the building of schools has generated questions about the definitions of rehabilitation and development. Recently, USAID policies and initiatives have suggested that the agency may be able to provide "limited" support for "modest" development assistance programs to nonpresence countries by channeling such assistance through local and international NGOs (USAID 1995b, 8). Whether this limited opening will allow for effective strategies for the prevention of ethnic conflict may become more apparent in the future.

Democracy and Governance Programs

A recent USAID survey of the theory and practice of the resolution of ethnic conflict found that most prescriptions for such resolution could be framed in terms of traditional development project activities (see McHugh 1995a). Two concepts can be deduced from this: first, since development activities can unintentionally contribute to ethnic conflict, better-designed and better-implemented development activities will at least be a partial solution to reducing, mitigating, or preventing ethnic conflict; second, development can be deliberately targeted toward preventing ethnic conflict in the first place by supporting the process of institutionalizing peaceful change within society. The latter concept has recently been coined as *preventive development* by the United Nations and is rapidly gaining adherence. The idea seems to be (at least in theory) that effective institutions, such as legal systems, constitutions, and schools, will provide outlets where ethnic communities can express their concerns and will provide systems to address those stated concerns.

An examination of academic, USAID, and other donor documents found that activities with significant effects on ethnic groups and ethnic conflict roughly correlated with traditional development project activities. Thus, economic growth, health, population and nutrition, environment, and education programs were found to have significant effects on ethnic groups and ethnic conflict—although democracy and governance programs proved to be the most meaningful. Within the program area of democracy and governance, the study found that relevant development

activities fell into six major categories: (1) legal systems reform efforts; (2) political, civil, and human rights concerns; (3) electoral systems programs; (4) decentralization; (5) regional arrangements; and (6) media. Within each of these categories, the study proposed particular strategies for addressing ethnic conflict.

The findings from the aforementioned study are focused mostly on project and program activities; the relevance of USAID's democracy and governance policy options to ethnic conflict and ethnicity is less obvious. Indeed, USAID is currently in the process of developing guidance for the design, implementation, management, and evaluation of democracy and governance activities. The democracy and governance section of USAID's general policy paper, "Strategies for Sustainable Development," does not address ethnicity or ethnic conflict (or any obvious proxy terms) anywhere in its somewhat vague contents.

USAID democracy officers have been developing separate policy guidance papers—focused on different democracy and governance program areas, including elections, rule of law, civil society, and governance. These papers were reviewed for clues to whether USAID sees ethnic conflict and ethnicity as a key component of democracy activities and, if so, how USAID policies attempt to deal with ethnicity.

Guidance on Rule-of-Law Programs

The official USAID policy guidance paper on rule of law (ROL) notes that this program is a key element in the agency's overall approach to sustainable development and that it is critical to its overall democratization strategy (USAID 1995c, 1). This very brief paper does not, however, discuss ethnicity, marginal groups, or conflict—although it does suggest that further discussion and policy decisions by USAID senior staff are still needed (ibid., 2).

A 1994 global evaluation of ROL programs conducted by USAID—the foundation for the policy guidance paper—does address this issue. In the evaluation, the authors found that ethnic groups are most affected by ROL programs focused on access creation (Blair and Hansen 1994, 36). Indeed, they found that minority, ethnic, or racial groups are particularly vulnerable to their rights being transgressed by government agencies or third parties without legal rectification (ibid.). The evaluation report suggests strategies to increase access by ethnic groups, including using public defenders, support for traditional legal-aid efforts, legal literacy, nurturing paralegal networks, assisting legal-advocacy NGOs, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (ibid., 36–37).

Guidance on Alternative Dispute Resolution

In 1998, the agency completed a comprehensive guide for practitioners on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) (see Brown et al. 1998). In the document, minority and ethnic issues are addressed throughout. The authors find that ADR programs are more effective than courts for addressing ethnic conflicts when the formal courts are discredited or ineffective (ibid., 11). The reasoning seems to be that specialized issue-specific ADR systems can be more effective when dealing with minority issues and that ADR systems offer more attractive outcomes than do the courts. Moreover, the guidance recommends using ADR programs to reduce tension and prevent conflict in a community when moderate ethnic conflict is focused around particular issues (ibid., 19). The authors have found that "evidence for managing conflict and tension around discrete policy issues, such as education policies (Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations) and land reform (Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources) is positive" (ibid.).

Guidance on Electoral Systems Programs

USAID's Center for Democracy and Governance has produced a paper on electoral assistance. Although this document has not been sanctioned as official agency policy guidance, it has become the de facto electoral assistance guide for the agency. In the paper, significant attention is devoted to "political conflict" and "social cleavages" within societies. Cleavages, based on religion, ethnicity, race, language, nationality, class, caste, or geographic region, are said to beget conflict and marginalization (Hirschmann and Mendelson n.d., 8–9). Therefore, the guide suggests, elections will not be effective if there are deep social cleavages and if ethnic groups are excluded from participation (ibid., 5).

The election guide further notes that some governments prohibit political parties from basing their programs on ethnic origin, religious affiliation, common linguistic group or region, and more. Other governments have literacy requirements that exclude certain categories of people from voting. Although the guide warns that violence or irredentist movements are possible when even small ethnic or regional groups are left out of the election process, it suggests that in "particular circumstances, these are understandable exclusions, but they do set a potentially dangerous precedent" (ibid., 12, 46).

The guide advises that in times of transition it "may be problematic" to press for the effective inclusion of ethnic groups during the first election, but "as one moves to second and third elections, and so to the consolida-

tion and broadening of democracy, the policy dialogue that accompanies democratic assistance should give attention to the fuller inclusion of the poor, religious minorities, etc." (ibid., 9).

Guidance on Civil Society

Policy guidance in the area of civil society is being developed now, and two draft reports have been circulated within USAID. One key document suggests that special consideration will be given to democratic concepts and ideas coming from minority and regional groups in more remote provincial areas and to the promotion of the rights and participation of minority groups (Vermillion 1995). The other draft report, "Constituencies for Reform" (Hansen 1995), describes donor support for civil society in Kenya, Thailand, Chile, Bangladesh, and El Salvador. However, the report never mentions ethnic groups' participation in or exclusion from civil society, even when discussing Kenya.[30]

Guidance on Governance

Specific USAID policy guidance in the area of governance has not yet been developed. However, the agency has initiated a global evaluation of democratic decentralization, and most probably policy guidance will evolve from this evaluation's eventual findings. The concept paper developed for this evaluation contains valuable indications on where future agency guidance may be directed and includes sections relevant to projects focused on ethnic conflict.[31] For example, in the section on the benefits of decentralization, the concept paper discusses two strategies: decentralization projects have the potential to indirectly empower marginal and ethnic groups who find little or no political voice at the national level; and decentralization can directly reduce ethnic conflict (Blair 1995, iii).

The concept paper suggests that ethnic groups that are denied political participation at national levels may more easily establish a significant political influence at the local level—where it is "simpler for everyone to get involved . . . for political matters are more likely to enjoy a critical mass in small areas" [where] minorities are more likely to enjoy a critical mass in small areas" (ibid., 10). The author of the concept paper further notes that decentralization can be an effective method of reducing ethnic conflict by "allowing geographically based groups to dominate in their own regions in return for accepting only a share of power at the national level" (ibid., 11). Actual policy guidance focused on decentralization will further refine these strategies and possibly propose other areas relevant to ethnic conflict.

Guidance on Media

A recent document on the role of the media in democracy suggests a policy approach for media activities that directly focuses on ethnicity. The Global Bureau's Democracy and Governance Center's media strategy document notes that in "some societies an antagonistic relationship between media and government represents a vital and healthy element of fully functioning democracies" (Hudock, 5). However, it warns that in certain country situations where ethnic conflict exists, such a confrontational, "tension-ridden relationship may not be appropriate," and the role of the press should be to "disseminate information as a way of mediating between the state and all facets of civil society" (ibid.). The rest of the document examines the issue of minority access to news and employment within media outlets and includes ethnic identity as a proposed assessment tool.

Crosscutting Policy or Program Issues

USAID and NGOs. For a variety of reasons, USAID is examining the potential for increased utilization of NGOs for project design, implementation, and funding. It is believed that NGOs have certain advantages over traditional development vehicles. For example, many believe that NGOs can have a more flexible response to complex emergencies and are less constrained by sensitivities to sovereignty and protocol (Stremlau 1995, 8–10).

In response, in March 1995 Vice President Gore announced USAID's New Partnership Initiative (NPI) at the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen. The overarching purpose of NPI is to "abandon our old model for combating poverty" based on government-to-government foreign assistance by channeling 40 percent of aid funds through NGOs (Gore 1995, 18). Thus, NPI seems to echo the concerns expressed in the 1973 New Directions program, where USAID focused on bypassing foreign governments in the delivery of foreign assistance.[32]

Although the focus of NPI will be to increase the role of NGOs, religious, ethnic, or cultural organizations will be excluded from participation with NPI unless "the purpose of the work which USAID supports is clearly developmental" (USAID 1995b, section 1, 3, 5). Other than this prohibition, NPI does not directly deal with ethnicity, ethnic issues, or communities where ethnic cleavages exist. Indirectly, NPI suggests that ethnic concerns can be dealt with through an emphasis on participation, a recognition of the diversity of conditions in the developing world, and a focus on capacity building at the local level.

Coordination of activity is important: NGOs must work together rather than pursue projects in relative isolation from each other, and they should consult with USAID during project planning and implementation stages (Saunders 1993, 25–26). The State Department Secretary's Open Forum Working Group on Conflict Resolution, Civil Society, and Democracy seeks to coordinate information and activities of various U.S. agencies (including USAID) and NGOs working in these development areas. Other interagency groups and forums that are mandated to include NGOs in activities, decision-making processes, and project design—such as the GHAI—either exist or are being instituted.

Starting such a process of working with NGOs does not require huge expenditures or direct involvement by foreign governments. Concerning Eastern Europe, where states are not at risk from outside aggression but goals of irredentism linger, the Project on Ethnic Relations based in Princeton, New Jersey, seeks to reduce tensions between the government of Romania and leaders of the Hungarian minority and to promote efforts to counter violence against the Romany (gypsy) populations throughout the region. Similarly, a USAID-funded project in Macedonia is attempting to reduce tensions between the Macedonian and Albanian populations in ethnically diverse areas by focusing attention on problem solving in schools and on parent-teacher associations.[33] This experiment of grassroots efforts to lower barriers to accommodation among groups may provide practical lessons for other international NGOs that try to reduce the risk of factional conflict elsewhere (Stremlau 1995, 8).

USAID has experienced some difficulty with NGOs, particularly region-based NGOs, that provide humanitarian assistance to ethnic communities. In Rwanda, in particular, Catholic Church leaders and organizations are having problems participating effectively in the reconciliation process because of contention surrounding the church's role in the genocide (Kumar et al. 1995, 38).[34]

Likewise, international NGOs face the challenge that in situations of ethnic conflict their assistance to any domestic or refugee group may not be considered neutral (ibid., 46). As Anderson reports: "Sometimes NGOs align themselves with one sub-group in a society out of solidarity in a 'just' cause espoused by that group. This support may add to inter-societal tensions and contribute to the will of the side with whom the NGO is aligned to continue fighting rather than negotiate" (Anderson 1995, 4). In Rwanda, for example, many NGOs refused or showed reluctance to officially register with the government of Rwanda, thereby creating tension between themselves and the government (ibid., 63). This has furthered the impression by many Rwandans that international NGOs are concerned about the legitimacy of a government dominated by an ethnic

minority and that certain NGOs have already judged the new government of Rwanda and found it guilty of participating in further human rights abuses.

USAID is aware of the potential for tension between NGOs and ethnic communities. The agency is also aware that NGOs are often effective providers of assistance during ethnic conflict and are often effective in helping to prevent ethnic conflict from erupting into violence. Commitment to NPI processes means that USAID will have to find a workable balance between support for NGO programs and institutional independence, while at the same time ensuring that NGOs do not indirectly contribute toward continuing ethnic conflict and that NGOs are not perceived to be biased against any particular ethnic community.

Structural Adjustment Programs. An examination of USAID's involvement with structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and macrolevel economic or political reform efforts reveals that USAID has articulated relatively little discrete concern with ethnicity and ethnic conflict in these programs. This could be an indication that when there is "tension between achieving objectives of economic efficiency and protecting the welfare of particular socioeconomic groups" (Hood, McGuire, and Starr 1988, 5), the socioeconomic groups are of secondary concern. It could also be an indication of USAID's relatively small investment in SAPs.

Analysts have suggested that there should be a special focus by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), other donors, and NGOs to attempt to reach those peoples—including ethnic groups—who suffer during these transition periods. Thus, some of USAID's privatization efforts have been directed toward specific ethnic concerns. For example, in several Asian countries where sensitivity to ethnic groups exists, a certain percentage of shares of privatized firms are set aside for particular ethnic and minority groups (Lancaster 1994b).

In addition to focusing social safety nets on ethnic groups that may be worst hit by the economic transition period, USAID should be aware of the potential impact SAPs may have on ethnic groups. For example, some host governments may be distributing resources according to allocations based on ethnic considerations, which could exacerbate or initiate ethnic conflict (Kingsbury 1994, 55).

The implementation of SAPs could be conducted in such a way that ethnic conflict is minimized. For example, ethnic leaders and organizations could be involved in the discussion and negotiation process from the start of the World Bank and IMF programs. Likewise, the World Bank and the IMF should be involved in postconflict peace negotiations if there is likely to be any sort of macrolevel economic or political reform. Accordingly, the potent combination of SAPs, because of their "pauperizing"

impact," and general resistance to the state, because of its increasing neglect of its basic democratic responsibilities toward its citizens, will contribute to increasing ethnic tensions (Adekanye 1995).

Conclusion

This review of USAID's past and present policies, programs, and projects reveals that the agency does indeed address ethnicity and ethnic conflict—although the level of focus seems to depend on where agency staff members are located. USAID staff members in the field have been directly addressing ethnicity and ethnic conflict and will continue to do so, with or without Washington support. But until the end of the Cold War, USAID staff members in Washington have dealt with these issues marginally at best.[35] Now, however, both the role that ethnic conflict can play in dismantling the benefits of development activities and the costs—in human, financial, and other terms—of humanitarian crisis based on ethnic violence and conflict have captured the attention of many USAID Washington staff members and policy makers. Nevertheless, USAID's Washington headquarters seems unsure of how to proceed and appears overwhelmed by the realities of dealing with the consequences of ethnic conflict without any coherent foreign policy guidance and with changing domestic and international pressures.

Thus, development assistance, like world economics, is increasingly a seamless process of continuous interactions between domestic and international actors, as traditional distinctions between foreign and domestic affairs lose salience in the formulation and implementation of national policy (Stremlau 1995, 15). As the influence of ethnic, religious, and other grassroots organizations on U.S. foreign policy grows, the "wall separating foreign affairs from domestic influences has come crumbling down" (Mills 1994). USAID will face increasing pressures from domestic organizations, lobbying groups, and ethnic groups as it seeks to define its role in the U.S. foreign policy agenda. For example, some U.S.-based ethnic groups count as a victory the recently enacted Foreign Assistance Appropriations Act, which includes a provision that directs USAID to "report . . . on steps being taken to include individuals and organizations with language or regional expertise in the provision of assistance to the new independent states of the former Soviet Union." This provision has been translated by many ethnic organizations to mean that the U.S. Congress "wants USAID to involve Central and East European American ethnic communities in the delivery of assistance to that region" ("Get on the Right Track" 1994, 1–2). As USAID seeks to involve the nongovernmen-

tal sector in more of its development activities, as with NPI, this relationship with ethnically-based NGOs will be complicated when ethnic conflict and ethnicity command the development situation.

In addition to being concerned that ethnic conflict is increasingly diverting resources away from development activities and toward humanitarian crisis, USAID is also increasingly aware that development itself can trigger ethnic conflict. Development can cause change, and change can trigger conflict. The need, then, is for USAID to assist developing countries in institutionalizing the peaceful process of change. It seems that both the White House and USAID have begun to respond to this need by beginning to position the agency to take the lead in preventing ethnic conflict in developing countries and to be a key player in U.S. security matters.

If U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives remain vague, unarticulated, and subject to domestic influences, USAID may be stuck in a reactive role, unable to respond to ethnic conflict and other development problems in a coherent and comprehensive manner, and therefore unable to produce clearly defined results. USAID, then, must articulate its own goals, objectives, and methodologies—an extremely risky, perhaps impossible, venture. The fundamental necessity is that USAID should function as the long-term development assistance arm of the U.S. government, laying a solid economic and political base for the future, and not simply as a reactive, short-term diplomatic policy arm. As Atwood has reported (1994b, 1):

The U.S. will continue to need the tools of traditional diplomacy: a strong military, an enhanced early warning and intelligence capacity, and a capable foreign service. But to protect our national interests in a changing world, we will also need [development] programs to address population growth, enhance food production, stop environmental degradation, create broad-based economic growth, and strengthen democratic institutions. These are investments in prevention. Given the mounting costs of chaos, they are economical indeed.

As USAID becomes viewed as an agency fulfilling political (and even security) needs of U.S. foreign policy in an increasingly interdependent world and is less viewed as an "economic" agency, the agency could find itself with more room to maneuver in response to ethnic conflict.

But has USAID really experienced an epiphany regarding ethnic conflict? or is the agency's approach more superficial and transitory? The answer seems mixed. USAID—at many levels—has an interest in ethnic conflict, but there is relatively little clarity about how to deal with the issue. At the moment, USAID staff is divided between those members who

believe that ethnic conflicts are unique and separate from other types of conflict and those who believe that ethnic conflicts are a subset of conflict in general. The distinctions are important and have large implications for how donor organizations go about the business of development assistance, how they conceptualize conflict prevention, and how they strategize postconflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. At the moment, the best that can be said for USAID is that it employs a strategy of selective engagement with respect to ethnic conflicts. This reflects the larger pattern of U.S. foreign policy in general and highlights the lack of consensus within USAID that would allow the agency to develop concomitant policy guidance.

NOTES

The views presented herein are those of the author and should not be interpreted as reflecting those of USAID or the Academy for Educational Development.

1. As part of the process of writing this chapter, career and appointed USAID officials were interviewed off the record. The offices within USAID that these officials represent include the Policy Bureau, the Bureau for Humanitarian Response, the regional bureaus, field missions, and the office of the USAID administrator. An extensive literature search, including USAID and academic sources, was conducted as well.

2. This means not, as it might seem, that donors are trying to prevent development but rather that donors are attempting to cast development in terms of preventing conflict and crisis.

3. USAID includes in its definition of the Greater Horn region the countries of Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, and Tanzania.

4. From conversations with USAID officials. Additionally, some State Department officials have mentioned that USAID is taking the lead in the search for policy, program, and project options to deal with ethnic conflict.

5. From conversations with USAID officials.

6. Ibid.

7. Indeed, a Japanese foreign ministry official had to deny claims by some political observers that Japan had offered foreign aid to Eastern Europe to assist the then U.S. president George Bush to win the favor of ethnic Slavs in the U.S. Midwest in anticipation of the presidential election in 1992 ("Japan Pledges 400 Million" 1992).

8. The influence of American ethnic communities on U.S. foreign policy was discussed at the Senate's questioning of then ambassador Strobe Talbott's nomination to deputy secretary of state. During the hearing, it was noted that Talbott's early writings on Israel suggested that he was concerned about the "disproportionate" influence the U.S. Jewish communities exerted over U.S. foreign policy

toward Israel and about the influence of other ethnic organizations on U.S. foreign policy. During the hearing, Talbott agreed that such attempts to influence U.S. policy are in effect "promoting American values abroad" ("Senate Committee OKs Talbott" 1994, 1).

9. INCORE is a joint program of the United Nations University and the University of Ulster and is located in Northern Ireland. The purpose of the program is to provide a systematic approach to the study of ethnic conflict and to encourage links between research, training, policy, practice, and theory.

10. From conversations with USAID officials.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. The New Directions legislation was passed in 1973.

17. From conversations with USAID officials.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. This study by the East-West Population Institute was funded by the agency's Bureau for Science and Technology and focused on immigration trends and on whether the various ethnic groups in Hawaii were moving toward social and economic parity.

22. Complex emergencies are also called political emergencies or complex disasters.

23. USAID defines policies as mechanisms that provide guidance on the way USAID approaches program activities (USAID 1995a, 1). Policy guidance attempts to assist the field missions in developing USAID strategic plans and specific sector programs (ibid.). Projects are a set of interrelated activities taking place in a specific location (in a country or region or, if funded by Washington, globally), focused on a specific development sector (e.g., environment), and implemented for a specific period of time. Programs are "the sum of the project, non-project and policy dialogue actions undertaken by an A.I.D. field mission in pursuit of a given strategic objective" (USAID 1991b, 2). The agency's reengineering effort—aimed at redesigning processes, jobs, structures, and controls to achieve dramatic performance improvements—is part of the president's initiative for reinventing government. With this effort, terminology used within the agency is changing.

24. From conversations with USAID officials.

25. From conversations with USAID officials.

26. From conversations with USAID officials.

27. USAID's appeal for prevention funds to deal with the "root causes" of conflict—poverty, overpopulation, and environmental degradation—seems to be strongly influenced by the "humanitarianism and global trends" school of foreign policy.

28. From conversations with USAID officials.

29. Sudan's status with USAID is due to the overthrow of a democratically elected government, failure to repay debts, and its alleged sponsorship of international terrorism.

30. See Cohen's chapter in this book (chap. 4) for a closer look at the politics of ethnicity (or tribalism) in Kenya.

31. See Blair, November 6, 1995.

32. As Brysk observes in her contribution to this book (chap. 8), all donors in the 1990s experienced the eclipsing of government as a development arena. USAID's NPI definitely exemplifies this trend. Furthermore, as Brysk warns, in situations where one ethnic group has captured the state, such a policy of ignoring the state could unintentionally contribute to furthering ethnic competition and tensions.

33. This project (1800016) is titled "Emergency Medical Supplies." Nothing in this title would indicate that this project is targeted at reducing ethnic conflict. Likewise, the title suggests that the project is focused solely on humanitarian assistance, rather than including components dealing with development concerns. This illustrates the difficulty in identifying and categorizing ethnic conflict activities.

34. It is interesting to note similar difficulties with NGOs in Lebanon.

35. From conversations with USAID officials.

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