

COURIER



Provoking Thought and Encouraging Dialogue on World Affairs

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Empowering Voices, Connecting Lives

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The Best Person for the Job

By Keith Porter, President



News in the United States, and beyond, has been dominated all summer by coverage of the 2016 presidential race. For those of us interested in more-effective global governance, however, there is another leadership battle looming large next year: the selection of the ninth secretary-general of the United Nations.

Since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, all secretaries-general have been men, and all have been selected in a secretive fashion with no public debate, no formal vetting, and no choices presented to the vast majority of UN member states. Early signs indicate that at least some of this could change in 2016.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's term ends on December 31, 2016. Weeks (hopefully months) before then, a successor will be chosen. Tradition holds that the UN Security Council will nominate a single candidate and send that name to the full UN General Assembly for approval. Recall, however, that the Security Council operates as a post-World War II anachronism, with permanent seats and full veto powers given to only five members (known as the P5): China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In practice, therefore, representatives of those five nations gather in the 21st-century equivalent of a smoke-filled room to choose the next secretary-general. The other ten members of the Security Council, and the other 178 member states of the United Nations, can either take it or leave it. History says they take it, even if they often don't like it.

Changing the system permanently would require changing the UN Charter, and that seems increasingly impossible. The

good news is that changing the tradition can be done at will if a majority of UN member states demand change and reject any nomination not presented to them through a reformed process.

Commonsense reforms being discussed include creating a job description that defines qualifications for a UN secretary-general, carrying out transparent candidacies by all hopefuls, holding public forums where candidates face questions and spell out their approaches to major world problems, disclosing the final vote by each of the P5, and having the Security Council send more than one finalist to the UN General Assembly to create greater ownership of the final selection.

In parallel with these reforms efforts, there is an exciting movement to make sure female candidates are given unprecedented consideration for the job. On August 22, the *New York Times* ran an article headlined, "After 70 Years of Men, Some Say It Is 'High Time' a Woman Led the UN." Wrote reporter Somini Sengupta, "Three dozen countries, led by Colombia, are promoting the idea that it is a woman's turn to lead the organization." That same day the *Times* ran an editorial calling attention to the Colombian effort, saying, "None of the permanent members of the Security Council have backed it. The United States, which is represented at the United Nations by Samantha Power, who has championed women's rights, should be a vocal supporter."

I agree. As you will see in this issue of *Courier*, the Stanley Foundation has a vested interest in a strong, effective United Nations. We need a world body dedicated to ending the scourge of genocide and mass atrocities; safeguarding the international order in which China, the United States, and other great powers operate; and shepherding the world away from climate disaster. These goals cannot be met without the strong leadership of a legitimate and credible secretary-general chosen wisely and deliberately from among all the best humanity has to offer.

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Cover photo: A child displaced by conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is seen here at the Kibati 1 camp near Goma. (Ron Haviv/VII)



A conflict-resolution curriculum that promotes dialogue, compromise, and common solutions should be developed at all levels of education, from primary school through adulthood. In this photo, children in Bomassa, DRC attend the first school in their village. (Michael Nichols/National Geographic Creative)

Hope in Darkness

Shedding Light on Atrocity Violence in the
Democratic Republic of the Congo

By Anthony Kasongo

The story of war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) began over 20 years ago. Since then, millions of lives have been lost and others have fallen prey to the country's inability to protect its most vulnerable people. Most of the mayhem has taken place in the eastern region, home to beautiful landscapes, waterfalls, and many other natural resources.

It is also home to precious minerals, including those sometimes referred to as the three t's: tin, tantalum, and tungsten. These three minerals are used in gadgets that the Western world uses on a daily basis. Cell phones, computers, cars, airplane engines, and many other electronics cannot operate without these minerals.

Sadly, the Congo's natural resources, especially these minerals, have proven to be more of a curse than a blessing. They have brought about violence and turmoil between the Congolese government, surrounding countries like Rwanda and Uganda, and various militia groups that are attempting to enter the Congo and sell the minerals abroad. Most of these entities want control of this region because they believe that through such control they will ensure financial and political gain for themselves.

The Victims of War

To date, over eight million people have died in this region, and half of those have been children younger than ten. These children are not dying primarily from bullets but from sickness and malnutrition in refugee camps as a result of the wars. Women are also main victims of the wars. Many nongovernmental organizations in the area have reported that an average of about 48 women get raped every hour in the DRC. The government has done little to help them, and the international community is limited in what it can do.

The Congolese government has proven its inability to maintain peace in that part of the country. The United Nations was given the mandate to protect people in that region and has installed there the largest UN force in the history of the world, but it still has not been able to stop the atrocities. The violence will stop only when we shed light on the issues and push companies that are buying minerals from that region to become more responsible for the products they manufacture and sell. When their customers become socially conscious of what is happening in the DRC and stop buying from these multinational corporations that perpetuate the violence, the violence will stop.

Compelled to Action

Personally, I have been affected by these atrocities. In the early 2000s, I received a call from home telling me that the wife and four children of one of my uncles had been barricaded in a house and burned alive because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

About five years ago, two of my closest friends and I joined to create an organization dedicated to increasing awareness of and real-life solutions for those affected by war and the mass atrocities taking place in the DRC. The result was a 501(c)3 registered nonprofit called Congolese Genocide Awareness. Since its inception, the group has not only



At the One Million Bones event on the National Mall in Washington, DC, Anthony Kasongo (third from left) carries a few of the one million bones made out of clay as a symbol representing the victims of mass atrocities and genocide. In June 2013, his global movement united young people in 31 countries, including the United States to take a stand against the genocide crisis. (Photo courtesy of Anthony Kasongo)

raised awareness but also thousands of dollars and relief for victims of war, civil unrest, and rape.

Last year, I was selected to be a Carl Wilkens Fellow through the nonprofit organization i-ACT. The mission of the fellowship is to build political will to end genocide and mass atrocities. Each fellow develops a project for this movement. My vision is to create a conflict-resolution curriculum for the eastern DRC that can be taught from primary school all the way to university level, as well as to teach adults who are no longer in school. Many people in this region do not have a traditional academic education. In order to address this need, I envision developing a curriculum through the use of images for illiterate people.

Teaching Conflict Resolution and Prevention

One of the objectives of this project is to teach people how to live together in a community and deal with conflict peacefully. Many of the people in the eastern DRC do not know how to resolve conflict. They lack the skills needed to dialog, compromise, and find common solutions.

So how do we create something that can be used to teach people who cannot read or write? We can, for example, act out a play so they can understand how to defuse conflict without resorting to fighting. We can also organize community cooperatives. Providing those cooperatives and plays that can be shared with each other on the weekends and teaching people how to create peace are tools to prevent violence.

We have already developed the curricular materials and are translating them into French and some local languages, such as Swahili. We are planning to meet with the minister of education from the DRC in the United States to see if we

can cooperate in the education sector not only in the eastern part of the Congo but in the rest of the country as well. We are building a coalition with other groups that have worked in the area, and we are trying to understand how we can use this information to help people without formal education.

Stronger Than a Bomb

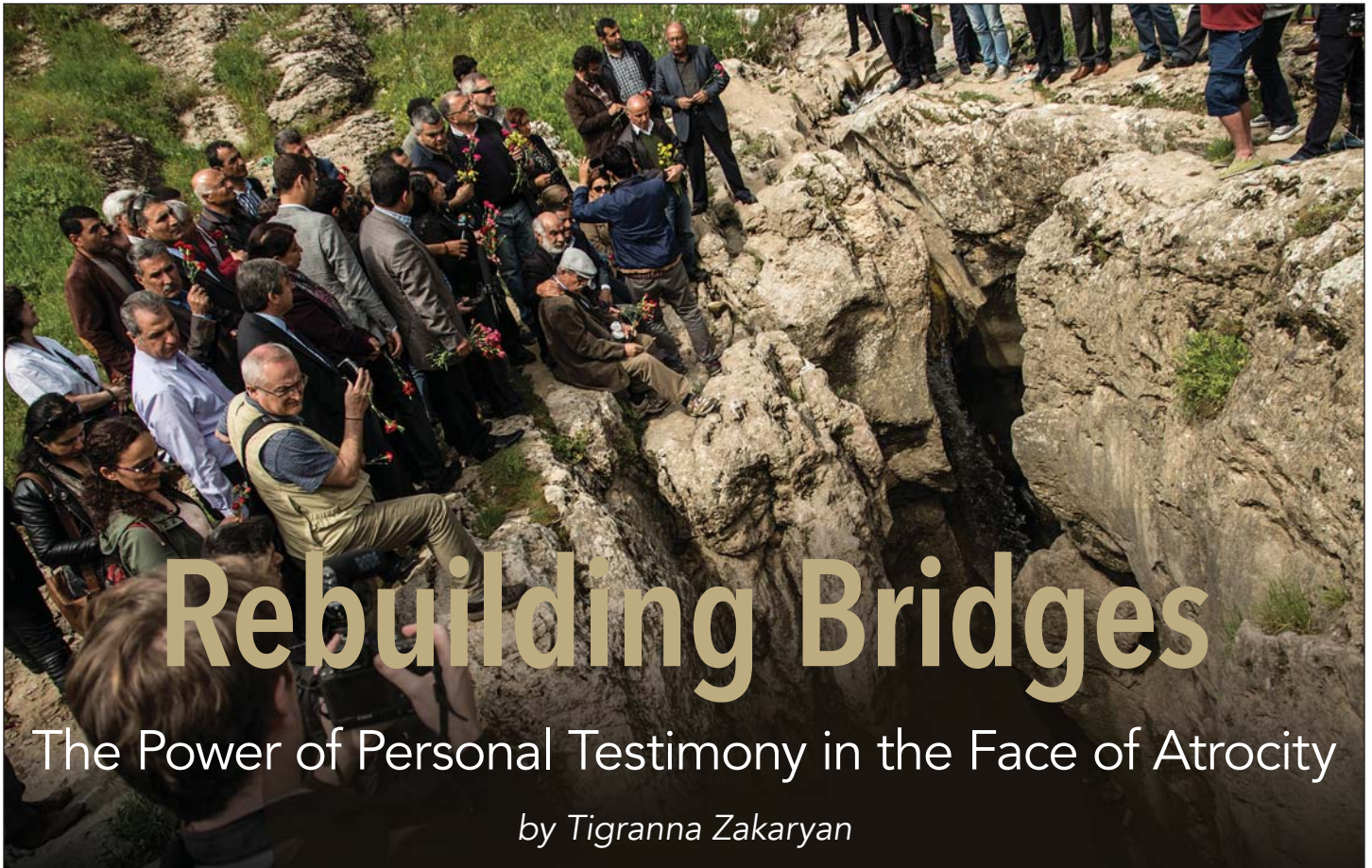
The main challenge is funding. We must have funding to be able to create a product that will be replicated in different areas. The second challenge is security. There has been a semblance of peace for about the past year and a half in the Congo, but that peace is very fragile. How do we engage the local government to focus more on security? Also, how do we bring people together and make them understand this is something they are responsible for? We have to teach people to be part of the solution instead of waiting for the government to provide one. We want to teach them that it doesn't depend on the government; it depends on them. If they come together in strength, it will result in positive change. Building the people's consciousness will be one of the more challenging things we must do.

The biggest weapons unleashed against our people are not guns but the division among them and the lack of education. A united people is stronger than a bomb, and education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.

Anthony Kasongo was born in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He lived in both the Kivu region and Kinshasa, the capital of the Congo. After coming to the United States, Kasongo earned a degree in information technology and eventually worked for a private energy company as the director of information technology. He is the executive director of Congolese Genocide Awareness and lives in Massachusetts. For more information on Congolese Genocide Awareness, please visit www.drcga.org.



Anthony Kasongo is one of 12 Carl Wilkens Fellows named in 2014. The fellowship program, a project of the California-based nonprofit organization i-ACT (<http://www.iactivism.org/>), aims to give a diverse set of individuals with varying degrees of experience the tools and resources to build sustained political will to end genocide and mass atrocities. With the belief that the citizens of the United States have the power and the responsibility to prevent genocide, the goal of the fellowship is to grow a nationwide network of leaders who will shape US policy so that it is effective in preventing and ending genocide. See pages 6-9 for articles by two other Wilkens Fellows regarding their work .



Rebuilding Bridges

The Power of Personal Testimony in the Face of Atrocity

by Tigranna Zakaryan

My passion and commitment for working with diaspora and refugee communities that have been impacted by genocide are a manifestation of the many years I have spent pondering my place in the world as a first generation Armenian-American woman and a descendent of Armenian genocide survivors.

This sense of curiosity has led me to the ancient ruins of my ancestral homeland, the genocide memorials of Rwanda, and to the various diaspora communities in Los Angeles. The underlying question fueling this journey sought to unearth the interconnectivity that binds humanity together and the invisible threads that transcend all geographic boundaries, cultures, and generations that demonstrate genocide is a shared human experience.

I vividly recall the moment I stood at the bank of the Akhurian River at the northeastern tip of Turkey along the Turkish-Armenian border; I listened to the river flow quietly below the crumbled bridge that once connected the two

landscapes. In that moment I was saddened by the systemic denial of my history, a denial that contrasts deeply with the truth of what I witnessed. The return to my homeland gave birth to the inspiration of rebuilding that bridge through my life's work in advocating for cross-cultural dialogue, tolerance, and international human rights.

With this vision at heart, I traveled to Armenia as the first person in my family to return to our country since relocating to the United States. This allowed me to better understand the educational and socioeconomic opportunities my life in the Armenian diaspora has granted me. My desire to continue mobilizing toward ethnic reconciliation between

◀ Around 250 people, including members of the press, gather on April 22, 2015 for a remembrance ceremony near Dudan, Turkey. At this site in 1915, around 10,000 Armenians were thrown into a cavern during the Armenian genocide. People across the globe continue to face the threat of mass atrocities and genocide. (Julia Buzaud/Flickr Photo/<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Turks and Armenians further catalyzed my work in a manner that combines education and political advocacy with grassroots activism.

Shortly after my visit to Armenia, I traveled to Rwanda to discover the parallels between the Armenian genocide—the first genocide of the 20th century—and that of a nation with a more recent history of genocide. I spent five months living with a family of genocide survivors who welcomed the opportunity to host an Armenian-American and were as interested in learning about my Armenian heritage as I was about their culture.

I sought to learn the root causes of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the social and psychological impacts of genocide on survivors and perpetrators, and the institutional and community-led initiatives pertaining to justice and reconciliation. During this period I worked closely with Congolese refugees who had fled to Rwanda following the spillover of the 1994 Rwandan genocide into the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I examined their displacement within the context of postcolonial ethnic tensions that characterize the Great Lakes Region of Africa and the role the Rwandan genocide played in exacerbating forced migration patterns within the region. I aimed to critically understand the broader paradox between national and ethnic identity and to use this knowledge to support Congolese refugees in establishing a rightful sense of belonging.

This opportunity allowed me to reach a deeper understanding of my own experience of displacement and realize my passion for supporting refugee populations through sustainable repatriation and local integration strategies.

Community Action

Through this journey I have discovered the responsibility of bringing the same level of determination I experience abroad to the forefront of my community in the United States. The quest for interconnectivity that has driven my work, from Armenia to Central Africa, serves as the foundation for understanding how the 1915 Armenian genocide continues to effect on our present world. My participation in the Carl Wilkens Fellowship has given me the resources and network I need to develop my capacity to support my local community to take direct action on

behalf of those who have been and continue to be affected by genocide worldwide.

In April 2015, I organized an Armenian genocide commemorative event, “Sharing Our Stories: Voices of Survivors.” I facilitated a panel discussion between an Armenian priest, two Jewish Holocaust survivors, a Cambodian, a Rwandan, and a Bosnian survivor, and guided the conversation about life before, during, and after genocide. The program highlighted the Armenian genocide centennial by emphasizing genocides that have occurred since 1915 and related the dialogue to broader concepts of healing, forgiveness, and reestablishment of livelihoods within diaspora communities in Los Angeles. Through the power of personal testimony, the audience was able to conceptualize genocide as an issue that is prevalent in their immediate environment and further understand it as a universal and ongoing multigenerational experience.

Making Genocide Personal

The manner in which we raise awareness of genocide and mass atrocities has the potential to either ignite the inherent ability each individual possesses to take action or make one feel completely powerless in the face of continuous adversity. It is my sincere belief that as antigencide advocates, it is our responsibility to carry out our work in a manner that personalizes the reality of genocide. The possibility of building and sustaining local engagement lies in the potential for community members to realize that genocide impacts the lives of those in their immediate environment such as their friends, neighbors, teachers, and peers. The more the significance of each individual life within our movement is upheld, the greater our personal connection and willingness to take action becomes.

Tigranna Zakaryan, a 2014 Carl Wilkens Fellow, is a first generation Armenian-American from Los Angeles who moved to the United States shortly after the 1988 Nagorno-Karabakh war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Zakaryan's Armenian heritage is the backbone for her commitment to genocide advocacy and education, and she believes in the importance of utilizing her educational and cross-cultural experiences to teach her knowledge forward and raise awareness.





Defying Mass Violence and Genocide

Giving Women of the
Democratic Republic of the Congo a Voice

by Lee Ann De Reus

In the larger global community, few people are aware that over the last 20 years, nearly 6 million people have died in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) because of many armed conflicts and a failed state unwilling to care for its citizens. In those same decades, Panzi Hospital in Bakavu, the capital of the DRC, treated the injuries of over 20,000 women, men, and child survivors of sexualized violence.

Extensive documentation by the United Nations (see 2010 UN Mapping Report) and humanitarian aid organizations (e.g., International Rescue Committee and Human Rights Watch) of such atrocities suggest that this is genocide. However, world leaders and judicial entities do not apply this label for a variety of political and economic reasons.

Lending an Ear

"I tell you my story because so many people don't know. I want you to tell others." This was my mandate from 14-year-old Mateso (her name has been changed as a safety precaution), a survivor of sexualized violence whom I met at Panzi Hospital in 2009. She was one of over 1,900 women who received treatment at Panzi that year for injuries due to rape. I was there to interview some of the

◀ Bwimana Yanfashige lives in Mugunga Camp 1 in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. She has been there since April 2011 and sells fish in the camp to earn a living. She says: "I left my village because of fighting. It happened at night—we were surprised, everyone was asleep. So we had to leave in the dark. But my husband was killed and so I ran with the children. I took nothing, nothing at all. Just my children. I want to go home, of course. But we can only go back when it is peaceful. When I see men with guns I'm afraid. Even during the day." (Control Arms Photo/Flickr Photo/<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)

survivors for a research project about the immense social stigma exacted on those who suffer sexual assault. As a scholar-activist, my objective is to serve as a witness, messenger, and advocate on behalf of Congolese women. They have a voice, but few people are listening.

Mateso was too young to participate in the study as she was under 18. Despite her ineligibility, she was the first to arrive at our interview site three days in a row. I quickly realized that this determined young lady had something to say. Not wanting to deny her sense of agency, I sat and I listened. She shared unspeakable horrors that belied her confident demeanor, ease, and quick smile. Each of the 28 women I interviewed had similar accounts.

Getting It Right

Most of the information communicated to the world about the Congo is shallow in analysis, steeped in negative stereotypes, focused on sexualized violence, and produced by outsiders (e.g., the media, academics, nongovernmental organizations). For example, frequently used labels such as "rape capital of the world" and "worst place in the world to be a woman" are provocative sound bites that fail to recognize all that is positive, vibrant, healthy, and functional in Congolese society. These gross oversimplifications do not account for the many men who are victimized or for nonsexual manifestations of violence, including torture, forced labor, child soldiers, murder, and child abuse. The phrase "rape as a weapon of war" is similarly problematic as it blurs the distinction between sexual assault as a strategy of an armed group versus a practice. Further, it implies there is an active war when the Congo is in fact post-conflict, and it obfuscates the difference between conflict-related and all domestic forms of intimate partner violence.

These narrow conceptualizations result in ineffective responses to human suffering and stifle Congolese self-determination. The mass atrocities in the Congo must be understood as a symptom of failed economic, social, and political structures rooted in the legacy of colonization, the geopolitics of the region, corruption, the scramble for natural resources, and the inferior status of women.

A Place to Heal, to be Heard

Fueled by my passion to make a difference with Congolese and not for them, I teamed up with Dr. Denis Mukwege, the globally renowned Congolese obstetrician/gynecologist and founder of Panzi Hospital, to establish the Panzi Foundation USA (PFUSA) in 2010. Dr. Mukwege founded the hospital in 1999, and it includes the departments of pediatrics, internal medicine, surgery, and gynecology/obstetrics. With a staff of about 370 people, including 40 physicians, Panzi provides world-class care for more than 18,000 patients a year in an environment characterized by continued violence, poverty, and a lack of basic services such as consistent water, electricity, sanitation, and passable roads.

A particularly unique aspect of the hospital is Maison Dorcas, an after-care facility for survivors of gender-based violence. Following discharge from Panzi, many women are unable to return to their homes for a variety of reasons such as needed follow-up care, conflict-related displacement from their communities, or family rejection due to the heavy social stigma associated with rape. At Maison Dorcas, women can extend their stay and receive counseling for the treatment of trauma, legal assistance for prosecution of perpetrators, literacy instruction, and skill-based training, all designed to enhance a woman's ability to heal, provide for herself and her family, and take an active role in her community. The restoration of women's lives strengthens civil society and is one essential measure for stemming mass atrocities.

The mission of our organization, its Board of Directors, and staff is to raise awareness about the challenges in eastern Congo, engage in strategic advocacy to end violence against women, and provide grants to Panzi Hospital to heal women and restore lives. Part of our task at PFUSA is to shift the narrative by amplifying indigenous voices like Mateso's and offering more nuanced understandings of the country's complex realities in order to restore dignity, hope, and a secure future for all Congolese women and their families. This is how we begin to defy mass atrocities and genocide in the DRC.

Lee Ann De Reus, Ph.D., is a 2009 Carl Wilkens Fellow, associate professor of human development and family studies and women studies at Pennsylvania State University-Altoona, and cofounder of Panzi Foundation USA. As a scholar-activist, she travels regularly to Panzi Hospital in the eastern DRC to conduct research, develop programs for rape survivors, and inform her advocacy work in the United States.



Climate Change as a Test Case for Global Governance

#COP20



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (center) speaks with Manuel Pulgar-Vidal Otorala, minister of environment of Peru and president of the 20th gathering of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP20) in Lima. COP21, scheduled for late November and early December 2015 in Paris, is intended to achieve a new international agreement on the climate, applicable to all countries, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C. (UN Photo/Mark Garten)

To curb climate change and cope with its effects, the world must decide how it should act to bring down greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a rise in temperatures. As the world works to address this challenge in the setting of international politics, it faces the question of what a global agreement on climate change should say.

Currently, global negotiations focus on countries announcing their own commitments, but will this approach to governance be enough to ward off the threat to global peace and prosperity posed by climate change?

To gain perspective on how to stimulate international collective action on climate change, Stanley Foundation associate program officer Rei Tang sat down recently with Arunabha Ghosh, chief executive officer of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), an independent policy-research institution in India.

The Stanley Foundation (TSF): What are the current challenges of international climate governance?

Arunabha Ghosh: The number one challenge is that we have a structure of climate negotiations that is not aligned around solutions. The negotiations are aligned around commitments, whether a country's national commitments or those of other countries, but they are not aligned around solutions. The commitment tracks of technology, mitigation, adaptation, finance, and capacity building were made for the purpose of efficient negotiations, but when you look at issues—whether it is power plants, solar pump sets, or renewable energy—they'll all have components of all of these tracks, but the fact that we don't have a structure for solutions makes it very hard to translate commitments into action.

Another major problem is that we are unable to translate ambition into something that is deliverable. Instead, we have a war of values going on over common but differentiated responsibilities, ways of life, compensation, loss and damage—all very important and legitimate issues and questions, but we have not been able to find a common ground where these values have been translated into something concrete that is measured, monitored, and acted upon.

And the third major deficit of the negotiations structure is that it is unable to currently capture all that goes on outside of government action and translate what that means for climate change, so that despite the more recent trends, *bottom-up* has been defined in a very restrictive way, allowing countries to say whatever they want, rather than a more broad definition of *bottom-up* that allows the international community or the regime to capture the range of actions that are going on, whether through state actors or nonstate actors or through partnerships across countries.

TSF: With the a new global climate agreement set to be negotiated in Paris and the post-2015 development agenda, what should the international community try to achieve this year in multilateralism and global governance?

Ghosh: I believe they should try to achieve both, but I think the drivers are different for the two. I believe the sustainable

development goals [SDGs] allow for a much wider set of actors, processes, and institutions to be involved. So long as, again, the big targets that come out of the UN summit on SDGs in September get translated or managed to include all of these actors, whether it's in habitation, energy, water, or oceans, and so forth. Equally, the climate negotiations also have to look beyond just the deal around intended nationally determined contributions and instead, or additionally, see them as a forum or a platform where several other crosscutting partnerships can be launched, which then serve as the baseline for creating momentum in the future.

TSF: What do nongovernmental organizations like CEEW contribute to tackling the climate change challenge?

Ghosh: CEEW is an independent research think tank, therefore our work is to make sure that the analysis that policymakers, businesses, or other civil society organizations draw upon is of world-class quality, that we draw increasingly on primary data, and that we are able to ask or anticipate questions of policymakers.

Specifically, from the point of view of climate change, our work on hydrofluorocarbons [HFCs] is pioneering, as we have done the first analysis of HFC emissions in India. Our work on renewable energy target setting for India is pioneering because it allows the government to raise its ambition but also understand the implications of doing so in terms of finance or the cost of electricity for the poor. Our work on subsidy reforms is pioneering because we've looked at it from a household perspective, not just a macroeconomic perspective, which allows the government and the world to consider subsidy reform in a more nuanced way. Our work on energy efficiency is pioneering because we have analyzed efficiency beyond just improving energy efficiency to reducing energy emissions for major industries even while it delivers positive economic returns. These are just examples of how our analytical work translates directly into climate-related actions.

TSF: How important is climate change to global governance?

Ghosh: Climate change is a test case for global governance in two fundamental ways. One, in a simple way, is whether international climate negotiations can learn sufficiently from other models of global governance, regimes, or institutions, like trade negotiations, other multilateral environmental treaties, the governance of finance and money, and the governance of technology. There are lessons out there to be tapped into that the climate regime needs to pay

attention to, including on how new technologies need to be developed, how intellectual property is developed and shared, how innovative finance is brought to bear on solving problems, how monitoring can be effective. That is the easy test for climate change, even though that might already be happening.

The harder test is how we redefine collective action, because global governance is undergoing many transitions. The most important transition is not about regime complexity or regime design, it is about multiplicity of actors that have a stake in how global public goods are provided or how global public "bads" are mitigated. We need to find a way not just to promote collective action but to frame it in a governance arrangement that allows all these different actors—subnational, national, transnational, and international—actions, and voices to be captured with a common governance framework. The absence of that will find an absence of collective action. If we find that governance framework, we'll actually manage to identify and acknowledge a lot more that is going on in climate change than we recognize.

TSF: We've discussed global governance, but in India, what are the perspectives on international climate change politics?

Ghosh: India has two main considerations. One, as a country that still has very low per capita energy consumption—just under 800 units of kilowatt hours per person compared to about 14,000 for the United States—it has an important role in providing energy access to its citizens, while keeping in mind that meeting additional energy needs will likely have implications for the climate globally. India will have to figure out how to increase access while learning lessons from other countries about what we can do.

The second important consideration is to think of itself as an emerging country. Now that India is the fastest growing economy in the world, beating China, there are certain economic sectors that have a very high growth impact. India needs to consider what kind of industrial policy it will follow, whether it's in manufacturing, research and development, urbanization, or transportation. Those are the kinds of access issues which will require India to think hard about what kinds of products to produce in India, what kinds of research and development to do, what kinds of cities to build, etc. These are largely going to be the two considerations to juggle when it comes to climate change.

China's Passive-Aggressive Strategy

Competition Between the United States and China
Seems Inevitable, but It Doesn't Have to Lead to War

By Victor Cha



Thousands of activists march toward the Chinese consulate in Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines, during a June 2015 protest over the South China Sea disputes. (Reuters/Erik De Castro)

In Asia today we see a region of incredible economic potential, high growth, growing trade interdependence, regional interaction, and more. Yet as former South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan wrote late last year, “The supposed ‘Asian century’ is being thwarted by a paradox: deep economic interdependence has done nothing to alleviate strategic mistrust.”

In fact, since at least 1993, some experts have been saying the region was “ripe for rivalry,” a phrase popularized by Princeton University Professor Aaron Friedberg. No end of books and articles point to Asia as the next region for great power conflict. Asia is still hampered by long-standing security tensions, nationalism, power rivalries, territorial disputes, historic animosities, arms buildups, conflicting energy needs, and a lack of effective security institutions—in other words, it is a field of powder kegs in search of a spark.

Yet despite occasional flare-ups, no major conflicts have erupted. Instead, a different kind of competition has emerged between China and the United States. Rather than being destined for war, this contest is much more subtle. One important reason is China’s adoption of what can almost be described as a passive-aggressive strategy. Regional power is still the issue, but it is power refracted through the prisms of both legitimacy and creating new facts on the ground.

China is not confronting the United States head-to-head but rather challenging the perception of the United States as a reliable partner for others in the region. China is not asserting its own leadership. On the contrary, it wants to continue free riding off US leadership while at the same time making sure all in the region know that the weaknesses in the US economy and the US political system mean it cannot be a legitimate, reliable guarantor of security over the long haul.

The strategy does not involve bullying US allies (too much). Instead, it is built on a hope that if the United States fails to deliver on regional allies’ expectations, China will become the default partner for countries in Asia—a *fait accompli*.

Elements of this passive-aggressive approach are at work today. This year, China created the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a multilateral development bank intended to finance infrastructure projects in the region and seen as a rival to the US-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. The failure of the United States to reform the IMF in a way that would provide more of a voice for China is portrayed as one more example of US obstinacy while the AIIB is portrayed as a commonsense alternative. US allies in the region and around the world have rushed to join the new bank.

China’s activities in the South and East China Seas typically involve probing disputed waters and pulling back when needed. This increases the demand by some for an increased US presence in the region, but US credibility is damaged when its response fails to meet local expectations. In particular, the Chinese know that the atolls and sandbars they claim in the South China Sea are not core national security concerns for the United States, so China can simultaneously expand its influence and convey US unreliability.



China's finance minister, Lou Jiwei (center), adds his name to the signing document at the signing ceremony of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in Beijing on June 29, 2015. The AIIB was created to fund roads, mobile phone towers, and other infrastructure needs in poorer Asian countries. (Reuters/Takaki Yajima)

Adding to the passive-aggressive agenda, America's decades-long reluctance to join the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) reduces its options in this territorial water dispute, highlights an American distaste for treaties, and gives China (a 1996 UNCLOS signatory) an opportunity to act as the bigger supporter of international law even as it tries to redraw the map.

Along these lines, supporters of more-effective global governance can take some comfort that China is actually operating within—rather than railing against—an international order established by the United States and its allies 70 years ago. The AIIB is modeled after the existing international financial institutions and is hiring staff directly from those bodies. UNCLOS is supported by 167 of the United Nations' 193 member states. Chinese sophistication about and involvement in a wide variety of multilateral forums continues to grow.

So how can the United States respond to a Chinese strategy marked not by military provocation but by passive-aggressive actions designed to undermine confidence in the United States? Increased transparency in the US-China relationship with more military exchanges

and an institutionalization of practices around hot-button issues, like those from the US-Soviet Cold War era, could help. But in a larger sense, US legitimacy and reliability in the region will be judged not by China but by American allies. The United States must set reasonable expectations and communicate these clearly to its partners. In the end, the United States must recognize the game being played and reduce opportunities for China, or any other power, to reduce American credibility or outplay US diplomacy in international arenas.

Competition between the United States and China, on a wide variety of fronts, seems inevitable, but it doesn't have to lead to war. If strategically managed, it could, in fact, lead to a more diverse and vibrant international system.



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Campers attending the Investigation U. day camp visited the High Trestle Bridge in Madrid, Iowa. (Amy Bakke/The Stanley Foundation)

Investigation U., the Stanley Foundation's Muscatine day camp for seventh and eighth graders, is designed to challenge students to go beyond their comfort zones, attain new knowledge, explore the local community, and widen their global perspectives. "Bridges" was the theme for the June 2015 program, and students enjoyed learning about, building, and visiting many bridges.

They investigated their own community through a scavenger hunt on the Mississippi riverfront and learned more about the bridge located there. On a trip to Central Iowa, they visited one of the highest and longest trail bridges in the United States, as well as a glass-bottomed pedestrian bridge in Des Moines. On other days, presenters from Russia and Costa Rica bridged cultures by talking about their countries and traditions. And participants bridged the generation gap at local senior citizen living centers to offer hand massages to residents.